

The official ECVET definition of a unit of learning outcomes:

'A component of a qualification, consisting of a coherent set of knowledge, skills and competence that can be assessed and validated'.

Learning outcomes

Why are learning outcomes important?

- Learning outcomes make it much clearer to learners what they will learn during their time abroad.
- Using learning outcomes shifts the focus onto what is learned and away from how it is learned.
- Learning outcomes provide the 'common language' between partners, avoiding the need to understand in detail the complexities of curriculum and pedagogy in different countries.
- If your learners are already studying towards qualifications, you can work out which learning outcomes might be achieved during their mobility period. You can then discuss this with your partners and see what is possible in light of their timetable, curriculum and pedagogy.

Defining learning outcomes

Across Europe there are different ways of defining learning outcomes.

- In EU policy learning outcomes are defined as statements of what a learner knows, understands and is able to do after completing a learning process. This will be familiar in the UK.
- In the European Qualifications Framework they are defined as knowledge, skills and 'competence' where the latter means attitudes and behaviour, which is slightly different and may not match the UK approach. Many EU countries have adopted the EU definitions, and so you may come across them.
- It is important that you reach a common understanding with your partners of what you mean by the terms used in your project and what you intend the learning to cover during the mobility period.

Organising learning outcomes

Within ECVET the way in which learning outcomes are grouped together into what are termed 'units' plays an important role. Providers involved in mobility periods need to agree which 'units' are to be the subject of mobility periods. These 'units' may not match a unit or units within a UK qualification.

The ways in which learning outcomes are formulated and structured vary substantially from country to country. Most EU countries are working towards adopting a learning outcomes approach within their qualifications, if they do not already have one in place. Implementation in some countries and sectors is slow and patchy. In addition not all countries use units or credits within their qualifications system. Clearly, if learning outcomes are structured in different ways in different countries providers will have to reconcile the differences.

These extracts are taken from pages 6 and 7 of 'ECVET: Getting the credit your learners deserve' (May 2017) published by Erasmus+