

This module concerns: "How can we effectively design and implement quality education policies in complex education systems?"

The quality triangle in education is a concept used to designate the cooperation between departments that prepare and design attainment targets, the Inspectorate to audit schools and pedagogical advisory services provided to schools.

It is based on the Decree on Quality of Education (2009).

In Flanders:

- the Agency for Higher Education, Adult Education, Qualifications and Study Grants (AHOVOKS) takes care of design and maintenance of attainment targets as an executive government agency.
- the Inspectorate is responsible for checking whether schools are implementing the attainment targets in the curricula
- the pedagogical advisers for each of the umbrella organisations support and coach schools to process attainment targets in their curriculum and to deliver high-quality education.

Schools hold primary responsibility for providing high-quality education.

The PBDs provide support for schools to fulfil this task.

The Inspectorate verify if schools reach the attainment targets and if schools are systematically ensuring quality education.

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The key concepts of the Flemish Government is the 'policy-making capacity' of schools. Policy-making capacity is defined as "the extent to which schools use available room for policy making to come to a continuous process of retaining or changing their work in order to improve their educational quality and attain both the external and self-imposed objectives" (Ministry of Education and Training and

Responsible Bodies

The inspectorate

The Flemish Community's educational inspectorate works on behalf of the Flemish government and is responsible for overseeing the quality of education. The inspectorate has competence for elementary, secondary and part-time arts education, boarding schools and CPGs. It is also competent for secondary adult education and adult basic education. It is not competent for

higher education, including higher vocational education, or for the initial teacher training programmes. The inspectorate for religion/ethics [see 11.1.1.2] and for urban and provincial education [see 11.1.1.6] are dealt with elsewhere.

Organisation of the inspectorate The decree of 8 May 2009 introduced extensive changes to the organisation of the educational inspectorate and scrapped the classification into different educational levels. Under the leadership of a single inspector-general (IG), the corps of inspectors now consists solely of around 160 inspectors (working from offices in their own homes) and 8 coordinating inspectors (CIs). The coordinating inspectors together form the Board of Inspectors and control three services. The Implementation Service carries out the tasks described in the Quality decree and any additional tasks assigned by the Minister. The Development Service develops and refines concepts and tools for assessment and for additional tasks. This service is also responsible for monitoring and information management. There is also a supporting Staff Service, consisting of 11 management staff members. The Staff Service is responsible for planning, education and training, communication and so on. An assessment office is responsible for following up on and handling the assessments. Financial management, HRM and religion/ethics fall under the direct responsibility of the inspector-general.

The division between the various offices has not been defined. From now on, the inspectorate will be allocated a lump sum (fixed by the Flemish Government on an annual basis) by means of which it will be able to use professional experience and competences in a more targeted fashion. However, a number of guarantees in terms of the inspectorate's balanced composition were imposed by decree.

At least 35 % of its members must have been recruited from within community education or subsidised official education and at least another 35 % of its members must have a subsidised private education background.

In addition, minima have been defined in terms of relevant professional experience of staff:

- Mainstream Elementary education 40 %
- Mainstream secondary education 26 %
- Adult Education or Adult Basic Education 3 %
- Coordination of pupil guidance or CPG 2 %
- Artistic education or art subjects 2 %
- Special education 7 %

The organisation has also been given leeway to call on external experts for its full school inspections (e.g. at schools dealing with complex health and safety issues at work).

The educational inspectorate and the pedagogical counselling services meet together regularly on a permanent **consultation** body **in the light of their tasks. Where the consultation relates to adult** education, VOCVO (the Flemish Support Centre for Adult Education; see 11.3.1.3) is also involved.

Tasks of the inspectorate

The inspectorate shall invariably issue its advice on whether or not any new institutions seeking accreditation or any institution seeking to have a new programme component accredited have/has met the necessary **accreditation criteria**. Once an application has been received, the inspectorate will conduct an on-site inspection to check whether the accreditation criteria have been complied with. Following this on-site inspection, the

inspectorate presents its report, featuring its accreditation advice, to the Flemish Government. This report must be published within six months of the application, if not the inspectorate will be deemed to have issued a favourable advice.

The inspectorate carries out **full inspections** of the educational institutions (see 11.1.2.3). Every institution is subjected to a full inspection at least once every 10 years.

The full-inspection reports, follow-up reports and any ensuing advice on the accreditation of institutions are governance documents governed by the Decree of 26 March 2004 concerning administrative openness. Since 1 January 2007, the full-inspection reports can be consulted on the inspectorate's website: <http://www.ond.vlaanderen.be/doorlichtingsverslagen/>

The inspectorate is also in charge of monitoring the quality of training and non-formal training programmes organised by institutions which are not classified as educational institutions but which offer courses that nonetheless lead to diplomas, certificates or modular certificates that have the same civic effect as those officially issued by the educational institutions.

Every year, the inspectorate issues a report on its activities in which it also discusses one or more qualitative aspects of the education system. The Flemish Government subsequently presents this report to the Flemish Parliament. For some years now, this report has been published under the name "**Onderwijsspiegel** (Mirror of Education)" (see 11.1.2.3). <http://onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/inspectie/publicaties/>

The inspectorate has no authority to monitor how a pedagogical or agogic project is fleshed out or to check the pedagogical, agogic or artistic guidance methods used. Neither does it have any powers to inspect philosophy-of-life courses.

A code of professional practice is currently being developed for the members of the inspectorate.

Core legislation regarding the inspectorate, the educational development division and the pedagogical counselling services

- Decree of 1 December 1993 concerning the inspection and guidance of philosophy-of-life courses.
- Decision of the Flemish Government of 15 December 1993 implementing the Decree of 1 December 1993 concerning the inspection and guidance of philosophy-of-life courses.
- Decree of 8 May 2009 concerning the quality of education.
- Decision of the Flemish government of 24 April 2009 establishing the internal autonomous agency 'Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Training'.
- Flemish government decree of 01/10/2010] implementing the decree of 8 May 2009 on the quality of education with regard to the way in which some of the inspectorate's powers are executed (B.S. 26/11/2010)
- Flemish government decree of 01/10/2010] implementing the decree of 8 May 2009 on the quality of education with regard to the reference framework for the inspectorate (BS13/01/2011). The CIPO reference framework is described in Annex 1 to this decree. However, it can be consulted more easily on the [educational inspectorate](#) website.

Inspection of and guidance for the philosophy of life courses

The Constitution guarantees all pupils, who are by law deemed to be of school age, two teaching periods per week of moral or religious education at school as part of the curriculum. These subjects are by no means subjected to any form of government control – as long as the basic democratic principles of society are respected.

The Decree of 17 July 1991 on the inspectorate and the counselling services quite specifically did not cover philosophy-of-life courses. Philosophy-of-life education is not governed by the new Decree of 8 May 2009 either. The inspection of philosophy-of-life courses and its educational-support system are regulated by a separate Decree of 1 December 1993 and the executive decision BVR of 15 December 1993.

The recognised bodies of the recognised religions (Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant Evangelical, Anglican, Israeli and Islamic religions) and the recognised association of the non-confessional community specify the operations of the inspectorate and the guidance for the religions concerned and for non-confessional ethics. They are moreover in charge of the curricula of these subjects and the in-service training of the teachers concerned. The appointed inspectors-advisors have amongst others the following tasks and responsibilities:

- checking that the timetable and the statements regarding the choice of religion or non-confessional ethics are adhered to;
- checking the learning tools;
- checking the habitability, didactical suitability and hygiene of class rooms;
- issuing policy advice;
- checking that the curricula are implemented and supervising the standard of education;
- providing external support and evaluating the vocational and pedagogical competences of the teachers in question and stimulating initiatives to enhance professional quality;
- developing initiatives to enhance the quality of education of the subject of study concerned and guarding and stimulating the pedagogical project which was adapted to accommodate the philosophy of life within the subject of study;
- any other tasks assigned to them under the terms of laws and decrees.

The inspectors-advisors furnish information to:

- the recognised bodies of the recognised religions and the recognised association for non-confessional ethics on the contents, the curricula and the vocational competence of teachers;
- the senior chief-inspector – who heads the inspectorate, on the application of the statutory and administrative regulations.

In contrast to the inspectorate, the offices of the members of the philosophy-of-life courses inspectorate and guidance teams will remain level-of-education dependent.

Within the philosophy-of-life courses inspectorate, a **CLBV, Philosophy-of-Life Courses Commission** was set up, which is a consultation cell for inspector-advisors of all recognised philosophies of life. It issues common advice, applicable to the various subjects. Moreover, an **In-Service Training Institute for Philosophy-of-Life Courses**, non-profit association, was set up in which all the recognised and taught philosophies of life are also represented.

- <http://onderwijs.vlaanderen.be/inspectie/lbv/default.htm>
- Interdiocesane Dienst voor het Katholiek Godsdiensonderwijs (Interdiocesan Department for Catholic Religious Education): <http://www.idkg.be/>
- Raad voor Inspectie en Begeleiding niet-confessionele Zedenleer (Non-Confessional Ethics Inspection and Guidance Council): <http://www.ribz.be/>

Agency for Quality Assurance in Education and Training (AKOV)

The mission of the agency, which was set up in 2009, is to create a quality assurance system for educational and vocational programmes and training pathways and for the EVC pathways leading to recognised qualifications by:

- establishing final goals for learning pathways and EVC pathways;
- ensuring unambiguous, clear certification processes;
- overseeing the quality of education, CPG and training institutions in close collaboration with the educational inspectorate.

The **task** of the agency comprises:

- carrying out studies to crystallize the:
 - development objectives, final objectives and key competences;
 - approval criteria regarding curricula and plans of action;
 - programme structure;
- developing proposals regarding the educational qualifications for levels 1 up to and including 5;
- organising and following up surveys in compulsory education, in conjunction with the Department for Education and Training;
- processing the results of the institutions' realisation of the development objectives, final objectives and key competences with a view to fine-tuning these where necessary;
- ranking vocational-qualification profiles as vocational qualifications and issuing advice on their recognition;
- entering recognised educational and vocational qualifications into a qualifications database and administering this database and its website and seeing to the coordination and intrinsic management of the database featuring proofs of learning and proofs of experience;
- directing, organising and attuning the quality control of nursery and compulsory education, Adult Education, the pupil guidance centres, Part-time Arts Education, apprenticeship and the training programmes offered within the framework of alternance training with the pedagogical counselling services; organising the supervision of the implementation of the regulations within the educational institutions and the pupil guidance centres;
- developing EVC quality criteria within the educational institutions, including quality frameworks and procedures for the EVC processes within the educational institutions;
- establishing an EVC knowledge network and an information bureau that specifically deals with EVC enquiries
- ruling on the equivalence of qualification certificates and issuing equivalence certificates;
- organising the Flemish Community exams for people wishing to obtain a diploma secundair onderwijs (diploma of secondary education) and the admission tests for the courses dentistry and medicine and the language tests for teaching staff.

In the future, a number of **tasks will be carried out for policy areas other than** the policy area Education and Training within the same quality framework, by a separate cell within the agency which will organise its activities independently and which has an in-depth knowledge of the policy area concerned. Every year, this cell will issue the Flemish ministers concerned with a report on its findings. It will:

- organise the supervision of the quality of educational and training programmes that do not come under the remit of the policy area Education and Training and which lead to certificates of recognised vocational qualifications (of VDAB & SYNTRA Flanders);
- organise the supervision of the quality of EVC institutions where people can have their competences tested or recognised.

The Minister for Education directs the agency, more specifically under the terms of a **management agreement**. (It is an internally autonomous agency without legal personality). The collaboration protocols with the policy area Work and Social Economy and

the policy area Culture, Youth, Sport and Media form part of this management agreement. Within AKOV, the **Department for EVC Services** is responsible for the certification and recognition of 'acquired competences' or prior learning. This department is responsible for:

[NARIC Flanders](#) [see 11.2.1.4];

[secondary education examination board](#). Young people and adults without a certificate or diploma of secondary education can still obtain these qualifications by taking examinations set by the Examination Board of the Flemish Community. The organisation of the [entrance examination](#) granting admission to university programmes in medicine or dentistry.

The **EVC, Curriculum and Qualifications Projects** Department is responsible for issuing advice, performing development work and providing input on policy for themes such as:

development objectives, final objectives, core competences and surveys: [\(DVO\)](#) programme structure certification and recognition of prior learning: [EVCqualification structure educational inspectorate](#) [see 11.3.1.1] is an autonomous service which is placed by the Flemish government at the disposal of the agency [AKOV](#) with a view to the performance of its tasks.

Pedagogical counselling services (PCSs)

Pedagogical counselling services are organised by non-profit associations, set up by the educational umbrella organisations. Per umbrella organisation, only one PCS is subsidised.

The tasks of the pedagogical counselling services comprise:

- supporting the educational institutions concerned to help them realise their pedagogical or agogic project and supporting the CPGs concerned to help them realise their own mission and guidance project;
- supporting the educational institutions and CPGs in their efforts to promote the quality of education, the quality of pupil guidance respectively and helping them to develop into a professional learning organisation by:
 - promoting the establishment of networks and providing support to these networks;
 - supporting and training managerial staff;
 - supporting the professional competence of members of staff at institutional and cross-institutional level by focussing on beginning staff and staff charged with specific tasks in particular;
 - reinforcing the policy powers of institutions;
 - supporting quality assurance within institutions;
- supporting and guiding institutions in their development of points of action highlighted during a full inspection, at the request of the boards;
- offering, stimulating and supporting educational innovations;
- providing and directing offer-oriented in-service training activities, including in-service training for the boards of the institutions;
- discussing the quality of education and the quality of pupil guidance with the various education actors at the different levels;
- participating in the steering or follow-up of support initiatives organised or subsidised by the Flemish Government aimed at supporting institutions, teachers or counsellors.

All pedagogical counselling services draw up a three-year counselling plan for the three subsequent school years. They subsequently present this counselling plan to the institutions and the Flemish Government.

Every year, they report back to the Flemish Government about their activities of the previous school year and also furnish an account of how their operational resources were used.

All pedagogical counselling services draw up a protocol which they forward to the institutions and their members of staff.

Every pedagogical counselling service systematically examines and monitors the quality of the services it provides. However, they are free to decide how they go about this.

The composition of staff of these pedagogical counselling services is fixed per individual school year, and separately for:

- elementary education;
- jointly for secondary education, Adult Education and Part-time Arts Education;
- the CPG's.

The PDBs also receive operational resources with an extra 84 000 euro per year in supplementary operational resources for the overall network to support the equal operational opportunities policy.

They also receive a global amount of 1 332 000 euro a year to organise in-service and counselling activities for their own members of staff and for staff working at the institutions they support.

To organise in-service training on job descriptions and evaluations at the institutions they support, the pedagogical counselling services receive an extra overall amount of 430 000 euro a year.

To provide training for the directors of the institutions they support, the pedagogical counselling services receive an annual amount of 402 000 euro. (The above amounts apply to 2010. As of 2011 they will be linked to the evolution of the health index).

Every School Head can, throughout his career, seek to have the cost of in-service training covered.

From 2009-2010 onwards, widening and deepening counsellors will join the PCSs to assist special schools who wish to develop an educational offer for youngsters suffering from autism spectrum disorders (ASD).

More detailed information on pedagogical counselling can be obtained from the educational umbrella organisations:

- For information on the PCSs operating within GO!, Education of the Flemish Community, please refer to: <http://www.gemeenschapsonderwijs.be/pbd>
- Within the VSKO, the Flemish Secretariat for Catholic Education, the General Pedagogical Counselling Service looks after the training, further training and guidance of counsellors; it coordinates the various counselling bodies and acts as a study and information service to support counsellors, <http://ond.vsko.be/> > tab diensten > pedagogische begeleiding
- For cities and municipalities, <http://www.ovsg.be/>
- For Provincial Education Flanders, <http://www.pov.be/>
- For FOPEM, the Federation of Independent Pluralist Emancipatory Alternative Schools, <http://users.skynet.be/fopem/>
- For the VOOP, the Flemish Schools' Forum, <http://www.voop.be/>

- For the Federation of Steiner Schools in Flanders, Pedagogical counselling, <http://www.steinerscholen.be/>

Association of network-related pedagogical counselling services

SNPB (the Association of Network-Related Pedagogical Counselling Services), has been created by the educational umbrella organisations Provincial Education Flanders, the Educational Secretariat for Cities and Municipalities, the Flemish Secretariat for Catholic Education and GO! Education of the Flemish Community. The goal of this non-profit organisation is to develop a cross-network collaborative structure in order to support, within the allocated projects, all institutions belonging to the project's target group. This non-profit association is obliged to report back to the competent Flemish Ministry of Education and Training departments.

Every year, subsidies are allocated:

- to develop a **second-line infant-participation support structure** to support nursery schools in municipalities which cater for at least 25 % of GOK pupils, provided these municipalities are located within the working area of a local consultation platform (see 12.3.2): 1 409 000 euro from 2011 onwards;
- for second-line support in the area of **linguistic-skills education in elementary schools'located in the peripheral and language-boundary municipalities and the municipalities in the wider periphery of Brussels'**(see 12.3.2.3); 1 020 898 from 2011 onwards;
- further training for the coordinators and pathway counsellors working at the **centres for part-time vocational secondary education** and the **centres for part-time training**, the directors of the **SYNTRA educational facilities** and the learning-pathway counsellors (see 6.4); 199000 from 2011 onwards. (As of 2012, all the above amounts will be linked to the health index)
- the provision of support to the **Centres for Adult Education [see 11.3.1.3]: €332,000 for 2010-2011.**

In addition, temporary subsidies can be allocated for guidance of educational reform.

Decree of 08/05/2009 on the quality of education.

Evaluationcommittee of the pedagogical counselling bodies

At least once every six years, and for the first time during school year 2012-2013, the workings of the pedagogical counselling services, the permanent resource centres, and, if applicable, of the Association of Network-Related Pedagogical Counselling Services will be evaluated on a six-yearly basis at least. These evaluations will be conducted by a committee appointed by the Flemish Government.

This committee seats members of the academic world, representatives from the institutions and officials from the Flemish Ministry of Education and Training. It will also seat a number of external quality-assurance experts. The representatives from the academic world and the institutions will be appointed upon proposal from the Flemish Education Council. The conclusions of the committee's evaluation will be presented to the Flemish Parliament.

Permanent resource centres within the CPGs

The decree of 1 December 1998 on the CPGs obliged the funded centres, subsidised public centres and independent centres to create a permanent support unit for network-specific support.

The Decree of 8 May 2009 concerning the quality of education stipulates that the role of the permanent resource centres is to boost the professionalization of CPG staff. To that end, they must come to an arrangement with the pedagogical counselling services within their own central network.

Every three years, they draft a counselling plan which they present to the CPGs and the Flemish Government. They report back to the Flemish Government on an annual basis about their activities of the previous school year and furnish an account of how their operational resources were used. They must also draw up a protocol and systematically monitor the quality of the services they provide. They are free to choose how they go about this.

Inspectorate and counselling services of cities and provinces

Some of the larger cities (Antwerp and Ghent) and provinces (Antwerp, Limburg and Oost-Vlaanderen) pay their own 'inspectorate staff' and/or counselling service. These should in fact be seen as senior officials who act on behalf of these authorities, in their role of organising body of subsidised official education (see 2.7.1.9).