

PROJECT WEEK

REPORT

2nd project week | 13 – 16 May 2019 (West Lothian College, Scotland)

ABSTRACT

Students are increasingly subject to social, financial and health difficulties which may impede their learning journey and potentially prevent continuation of their studies. West Lothian College has developed an integrated system of support and intervention designed to help students to remain at college and achieve successful outcomes

QUALITY CATEGORY

- ✓ Guidance
- Learning
- Examination

QMS4VET Consortium

The partners within the QMS4VET project are:

- Aventus (<u>www.aventus.nl</u>)
- ATEC (<u>www.atec.pt</u>)
- BBS Syke EUROPASCHULE (<u>www.bbs-syke.de</u>)
- bit Schulungscenter (<u>www.bitschulungscenter.at</u>)
- West Lothian College (<u>www.west-lothian.ac.uk</u>)
- Kainuun ammattiopisto (<u>www.kao.fi</u>)



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QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING /PROJECT Integration of Learning Outcomes into Quality Management

INTRODUCTION

West Lothian College is a Further Education Institution located in Livingston, West Lothian, in the Central belt of Scotland close to Edinburgh. West Lothian is experiencing economic and population growth which is set to continue but also recognises multiple levels of deprivation within the population which impacts negatively on mental and physical health and employability. The College has a focus on providing vocational training for industry but is now also focused on education for students from age 16 upwards and engaged in the learner journey from school to college to university.

The College put together a team of colleagues from across curriculum and service areas to showcase the integrated support system which has been developed and implemented in reaction to the growing demand from existing and prospective students for support with physical, mental and learning difficulties in order to achieve success in their learning programmes. This is a system which can be adapted to suit the circumstances of any interested organisation.

For more information about the QMS4VET project and other project week reports see <u>https://www.aventus.nl/qms4vet</u>

OBJECTIVES

The following objectives were set for best practice with respect to the West Lothian College guidance approach:

Ensure:

- 1. Learners successfully complete their learning programme;
- 2. Existing problems are identified or recognised at the earliest opportunity;
- 3. Learners are well informed and well supported;
- 4. There is an efficient evaluation system to feedback to management from students.

METHODOLOGY

The overall aim of the West Lothian integrated support initiatives is to allow all our students access to learning programmes, a safe and welcoming learning journey and ultimately, successful learning outcomes. In order to ensure this, the following objectives have to be met:

1. Learners successfully complete their learning programme

In the context of the West Lothian College guidance approach, the guidance system ought to be designed in such a way that student's challenges will be overcome and lead to a successful completion of the learning programme.

An efficient guidance and support system should ensure that, at the end of the learning programme, each student is capable of achieving the best possible qualification according to the ECVET standards (knowledge, skills and competences).

2. Existing problems are identified or recognised at the earliest opportunity

Students should be encouraged to declare a support need and to seek help and support at every stage of approach to the college, from first enquiry to application, then enrolment and onwards through their entire learning journey.





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The process for students to engage with the support team should be well-advertised and very visible in the places that students would look for information. The process should be clear and easy to understand and all staff should be aware and ready to help students to make an approach to the support team.

3. Learners are well informed and well supported

The students should receive a positive induction in to the College ensuring a warm welcome and a safe start. During the first month, all students should be kept informed about the support available to them including learning support, Student Association and any personal support that may be needed.

During the learning process students should be supported if needed. Students must be able to ask for support at any time from their Support Team, who can then respond immediately, together with the lecturer, by putting the appropriate measures in place.

4. There is an efficient evaluation system to feedback to management from students

An effective evaluation tool, such as the 'Sparkle' model, should be developed and rolled out at specified times. Feedback should be provided to all internal and external stakeholders and management act on feedback to make improvements.

SWOT ANALYSIS

The following analyses the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) of the West Lothian College case study.

Strengths	Weaknesses			
 Lecturers can concentrate on teaching and do not 	Difficulty in recruitment of specialist/qualified staff			
have to worry about basic guidance, as other	A budget must be found to finance the resources			
colleagues carry out this responsibility	Student Association President and Vice President			
Support team numbers are flexible for example the	only in roles for a guaranteed one year and			
team growing on demand when increased support	maximum two years			
and guidance is needed	Lecturers are distanced from basic guidance tasks			
• The learner journey is clear and the path the students	and will not have enough basic information about			
follow is clear and well organised	the students and training on how to deal with			
 The support team is located in one area and 	students with additional support needs.			
information is held centrally	Positive destinations are not given enough credit by			
 Barriers to learning are reduced for the students 	government			
 Mental health care is important to the team 	All staff may not be aware of support and able to			
The Student Induction process raises the profile of	signpost students correctly			
the support team and other support available, helps	Formal contact between student and support team			
students to understand the procedures and helps the	needs to be more proactive and frequent			
student to feel welcome, improving the attendance	Communication could be stronger and more			
of the students and allowing them to focus on their	effective between internal teams			
courses, as they are well prepared and informed	No follow up support after college programme has			
 Support workers have good relationships and 	ended			
partnerships with external agencies to support the	There is no formal process to gradually decrease			
students, for example social work, mental health	support in preparation for student to go on to			
agencies etc	university or employment			





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- The Student Association has developed excellent questionnaires and the fact that they are sabbatical students gives them understanding of what the student experience is like
- Feedback from the questionnaires is directed to management and actioned
- The basic need of students are catered for, for example free soup, toiletries etc
- There are various different methods of support, for example one to one, group sessions etc
- Managers are involved in all aspects of support for the students
- Support and guidance is driven by student success, not by financial considerations
- The Student Association are strong, motivated and professional, well organised and well informed
- The Student Association Development Officer provides continuity, has an overview of activities and is well informed
- The Student Association is independent from the college management as the student's voice
- Induction is broken up over several days so that students don't get too much information at once
- Employer involvement in course development and work experience breaks down barriers between employers and students as potential employees
- Support and guidance is not dependent only on certain people but mainstreamed across the whole organisation
- Students are all made to feel included and welcomed
- There is a flexible and adaptable approach to the support structure within the college
- Students experience the security of being taken care off throughout the whole study process
- Support and guidance as a core strategy of the whole college makes sure that it is given the necessary importance and resources
- Information for students is visible through campaigns and posters everywhere on campus
- The Student Association create direct feedback from the students and therefore continuously improve the full guidance system

People with low income/funding issues, physical or

mental ill health and other learning support needs

have the opportunity to become students and gain a

- West Lothian College is identified as a hub to be able to provide support to students and may get increasing demand for support
- Not all students are aware of support opportunities for example, the modern apprentices
- Not all students will take part in surveys
- No formal process for support team to collaborate with lecturers, not proactive enough, more reactive
- Infrastructure missing for sharing knowledge and best practice between lecturers, students and support team
- Too much support may result in students not being independent enough for industry/university



Opportunities

qualification

No specific way of measuring impact of support activities – can support be linked to student success

How do you determine if your process is successful -

are there sufficient methods of measuring success

Threats



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- Offer students a follow up after the initial induction to ensure understanding of signposting and to ensure easy access to information.
- Teaching staff could focus on teaching only, with no overlap with support areas
- The wider community could benefit from the support available
- There could be increased involvement with employer engagement allows good support to the students as the workplace can be advised of any issues for the student when they are placed (in agreement with the student)
- Business opportunities could be maximised by making services that complement the learning available to the public, for example mechanics fixing the cars of real customers. The College must take overall responsibility at point of retail
- There should be greater support for students in developing their CVs, application skills, interview skills and generally helping students into employment
- Set up formal infrastructure to regularly involve students and the support team to keep their profile high with the students, for example develop a 'support app' (e.g. by IT students) for students so they can input their issues and be guided to the right person for support and highlight activities
- Issues identified in 'Sparkle' could be used to highlight professional development opportunities for staff

- Not all students are comfortable in asking for support because of social stigma
- Is there enough consistent access to external support services for students and do the service providers have enough time to invest in individuals
- A financial imbalance between guidance and vocational spending might result in a lower vocational skillset
- Data protection and privacy, if not handled correctly, might be an issue in preventing the sharing of student support requirements with external agencies
- College budgets are dependent on Governmental funds and changes in Government priorities may reduce available finance
- Professionalisation of Student Association support work might lead to less enthusiasm and enrolment in the lead roles
- Wider community issues ie home situation, poverty and homelessness may affect student engagement
- Lecturers disengaged from the support process may not recognise the need to refer students for support

Reflection and awareness on possible weaknesses and threats

In the preceding SWOT analysis an overview was given of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of the West Lothian College integrated system of support. In the following section, the strengths and opportunities are integrated in a Step-By-Step Implementation plan which can be used in implementing all or parts of the system. However, in doing so, it is important to be aware of the weaknesses and threats West Lothian College faces in implementing this guidance and support system. Therefore, in the following paragraph a reflection can be found on the main and most important potential weaknesses and threats based on the results of the SWOT-analysis. This reflection serves to inform potential users of some vital basic steps to put in place when considering implementation of all or part of the West Lothian College integrated system of support.

- 1. Recruit people with appropriate qualifications and develop existing staff by providing development opportunities.
- 2. Allocate sufficient resources needed to implement and sustain the envisaged system both internally and externally.





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- 3. Assign a professional College employee responsible for guiding and supporting the Student Association who have democratically elected President and Vice President.
- 4. Ensure lecturers have basic knowledge of the guidance system and student's additional needs requirements, and keep involved throughout the learner's journey.
- 5. Try to involve and influence local and national decision makers including external (healthcare and employers) organisations and political influencers.
- 6. Encourage the ongoing contact between the student and support team including the lecturer where appropriate.
- 7. Develop and implement a formal communication and promotion plan.
- 8. Ensure students are prepared for moving on from College and where to access further support once College has ended (warm transfer).
- 9. Develop and implement a process for monitoring and evaluating the guidance and support system.
- 10. Easy access to support system by taking social stigma in to account.
- 11. Make surveys and information easily accessible; use Apps and gamification to appeal to students.
- 12. Induction should be broken up over several days.
- 13. Ensure user friendly processes are implemented for all to understand.
- 14. Remember data protection responsibilities and use the principle of privacy by default.

RECOMMENDATION FOR STEP BY STEP IMPLEMENTATION

The following recommendations can be used when implementation of all or parts of the West Lothian College student support system is considered.

- Identify the needs of an intensive guidance and support system.
- Guarantee the support of management for the support process.
- Create a plan to define the learner journey to include targets, finances, planning.
- Identify and find the resources financial and human.
- Team is formed to work collaboratively and are all very approachable and accessible to the students so they feel welcome.
- Identify, contact and inform the networks internally and externally (for example employers) who will support the learner journey, engaging them in a partnership approach.
- Develop the most appropriate tools that will be used proactively to support the students and to share information with staff.
- At the start of the academic year, promote to students to enable it to be embedded throughout their college experience and inform the students of the guidance support in place.
- Management must be involved in all aspects of support for the students and should promote the support activities.

The following recommendations are specific to particular areas of the support system.

Induction

- Ensure a follow up induction is frequently offered.
- Ensure that the students feel welcome, well treated and well supported.





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• Induction should be broken up over several days.

Student Association

- Student Association should be independent, professional, well organised, well informed and motivated.
- Management must commit to act on feedback generated by student surveys.
- Assign a professional College employee responsible for guiding and supporting the Student Association who is able to act independently from management.
- Gather direct feedback from the students and therefore continuously improve the full guidance system.

Recharge Model

- Ensure that the students have access to basic necessities such as food, hygiene products and financial resources.
- Promotion of student success stories.

Student Support Team

- Ensure that assessment of student's support needs is diagnosed and support plan in place as soon as possible.
- Ensure that support team members are appropriately qualified to support the varying needs of each student and are signposted to external experts when necessary (financial, mental health, social, addiction etc).
- Ensure that different approaches are available to students according to their needs, such as one to one, class groups, equipment etc.
- Ensure all students are aware of the support available and have the opportunity to disclose their needs at any point during the academic year, such as application form, during interview, enrolment, induction etc.
- Ensure that the student support process and toolkit is clearly defined, checked and evaluated and is in use by all staff.
- Ensure that opportunities for students to engage with the Student Support Team at every stage in their learning journey are transparent and well-advertised.
- Offer students a follow up after the initial induction to ensure understanding of signposting and to ensure easy access to information.

EVALUATION

After analysis of the West Lothian College integrated support system the following conclusions can be drawn:

Advantages:

The system allows students with social, financial, learning and/or health difficulties to access various flexible methods of support not only from the start of their learning journey but at any point along the way, should their circumstances change. It is a well-advertised system and allows those who might normally hesitate to enrol in further or higher education to access learning, improve their skills levels and make positive life changes which also impact positively on their families and the wider community.





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The system also engages trained experts to support the students, which allows the lecturing staff to concentrate on high quality delivery and assessment of the learning programmes.

Disadvantages:

The system requires engagement from senior levels of management in order to allocate appropriate resources and funding; however there is no guarantee that the students attracted by the high levels of support will actually be able to successfully complete their learning programmes. This may have a negative impact on the amount of funding that an organisation is able to claim from government or other sources, and the organisation may struggle to sustain required levels of learner success.

Tips for implementation:

Create a plan to define the learner journey to include targets, finances, planning and resources, and only proceed if the support of management for the support process can be guaranteed.

APPENDICES

- 1. Agenda and Minutes 2nd QMS4VET project week
- 2. West Lothian College presentations



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MINUTES 2nd PROJECT WEEK MEETING

13 - 17 May 2019, Livingston (UK)

LOCATION	
West Lothian College	
Almondvale Crescent	
Livingston	
West Lothian	
Scotland EH54 7EP	

AGENDA MONDAY 13 MAY 2019

Time	Item	Location	
	Arrival		
19:00	Welcome dinner	Mercure, Livingston	

AGENDA TUESDAY 14 MAY 2019

Time	Item	Preparation/Presentation	
08:45	Departure from hotel/s		
09:15	Welcome to the European Partners	Shelagh Fraser and Julia Simpson	
09:20	Minutes of the Last Meeting and Project Week Report	Durk van Wieren	
09:40	Evaluation of Survey and Impact	Durk van Wieren	
09:50	Dissemination & Impact	Durk van Wieren	
10:00	Introduction to West Lothian College	Jenny Stalker and Graham Clark	
11:00	Introducing the Induction Process	Rhonda Brown/Helen Wilson/Matt Farnham	
11:30	Short tour to the Student Association	All	
12:00	Lunch & Welcome from our Board	Sue Cook + all	
13:15	Re-Charge Model and Our Community in Practice	Michelle Lowe, Gemma Reynolds and Micole Cochrane	





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14:00	The European organisation for Quality seminar	Joao Alves
15:00	Support in the Classroom	Lorna Jenkins/Hellen Wilson/Rhonda Brown
16:30	End of Meeting	

AGENDA WEDNESDAY 15 MAY 2019

Time	Item	Preparation/Presentation		
08:15	Departure from hotel lobby			
08:45	Evaluation of previous day	All		
09:00	Employer Engagement, Support in practice and Student Experience	Graham Clark/Heather Sievewright/Elaine Campbell – with employer input		
10:30	SWOT Analysis	All		
12:00	Lunch	All		
13:30	Recommendations, Step by step implementation and Start of Digitalisation	All		
16:00	Evaluation	All		
16:30	End of meeting			

AGENDA THURSDAY 16 MAY 2019

Time	Item	Preparation/Presentation
08:45	Departure from hotel lobby	
09:15	Evaluation of previous day	All
09:30	Digitalisation of results	All
11:00	Meeting with West Lothian College management to discuss meeting outcomes	Principal
12:15	End of the meeting	





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12:30	Lunch	
13:30	Depart for Edinburgh for Cultural Experience	

AGENDA FRIDAY 17 MAY 2019

Time	Item	Preparation/Presentation	
	Departure	All	

PARTICIPANT'S LIST:

Organisation	Name	13 May 2019	14 May 2019	15 May 2019	16 May 2019	17 May 2019
Stichting Regionaal Opleidingen Centrum Aventus	Durk van Wieren	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark
Stichting Regionaal Opleidingen Centrum Aventus	Teun Gerritsen	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark
Stichting Regionaal Opleidingen Centrum Aventus	Carin Muller	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark
Stichting Regionaal Opleidingen Centrum Aventus	Ron van Duin	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark
ATEC - Associação de Formação para a Industria	Joao Alves	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark
ATEC - Associação de Formação para a Industria	Duarte Silva	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark
ATEC - Associação de Formação para a Industria	Alexandre Barata	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark
BBS Syke EUROPASCHULE	Silke Hillermann	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark
BBS Syke EUROPASCHULE	Jan Lukas Hillermann	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark
bit Schulungscenter GmbH	Laura Reutler	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark
bit Schulungscenter GmbH	Anna-Marie Schmidthaler	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark
Kainuun ammattiopisto	Virpi Kaasinen	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark



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Organisation	Name	13 May 2019	14 May 2019	15 May 2019	16 May 2019	17 May 2019
Kainuun ammattiopisto	Maija Vuorinen	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark		\checkmark
Kainuun ammattiopisto	Mikko Moilanen	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	
West Lothian College	Shelagh Fraser	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	
West Lothian College	Julia Simpson	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	
West Lothian College	Jenny Stalker	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark		
West Lothian College	Graham Clark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark		
West Lothian College	Heather Sievewright			\checkmark		
West Lothian College	Elaine Campbell			\checkmark		
West Lothian College	Lorna Jenkins	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark
West Lothian College	Micole Cochrane	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark
West Lothian College	Michelle Low	\checkmark				
West Lothian College	Gemma Reynolds	\checkmark				
West Lothian College	Rhonda Brown	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark
West Lothian College	Helen Wilson	\checkmark		\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark
West Lothian College	Matt Farnham	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark	\checkmark



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MINUTES OF THE MEETING:

Photo's of the meeting can be found in the QMS4VET Dropbox folder.

TUESDAY 14 MAY 2019

1. Welcome to the European Partners:

Shelagh, Julia and Durk welcomed all participants to the 2nd QMS4VET project week meeting. Durk thanked Shelagh and Julia for hosting this week and their excellent preparation.

The agenda was discussed and it was decided that Impact will be discussed together with dissemination on May 14 at 9:50 hour and that Joao Alves will discuss participation in a Quality conference and its abstract in stead of 'Support in Practice' on May 14 at 14:00 hour

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting and Project Week Report:

The minutes of the 1st Project week (21 – 25 January 2019) were discussed. No changes required.

3. Evaluation of Survey and Impact:

Durk discussed the outcomes of the Survey after the 1st Project week (will be integrated in Quality and evaluation report). Conclusions:

- 12 out of 16 participants responded. Please make sure that next time every participant responds.
- General satisfaction is OK. Point of attention is to make sure that there is enough time and discussion for the analyses, recommendations and step by step implementation.
- Last question regarding 'impact plans' was briefly discussed. Too early to measure impact yet. How to will be discussed during the Steering group meeting in June 2019. Next survey link will be sent together with meeting minutes.

4. Dissemination & Impact:

Participants were encouraged to think about dissemination possibilities and save the evidence. The QMS4VET FB and Instagram group pages are (very) active. Please invite as much as possible friend to join these pages and try to 'connect' other social media pages to ours.

Participants were encouraged to think about ways of getting as much as possible impact (both inside and outside our own organisations).

Dissemination and impact will be a top priority item during the Steering board meeting in June.

5. Introduction to West Lothian College:

Jenny Stalker and Graham Clark introduced the West Lothian College by telling about the history, numbers, region, funding, strategy & planning and models for support & learning (see presentation in QMS4VET Dropbox 'Presentations' folder).

6. Introducing the Induction Process:

Rhonda Brown, Helen Wilson and Matt Farnham introduced the WLC Student induction process. Lots of activities in order to familiarise the students with WLC, its organisation and





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support take place during 7 days in the 1st four weeks after start of the education (see handout in in QMS4VET Dropbox 'Presentations' folder).

7. Short tour to the Student Association:

The QMS4VET delegation visited the WLC support office and was introduced to the Student Association.

8. Lunch & Welcome from our Board:

Ms Moira Niven (member of the WLC joined us during our lunch while having an open conversation with all participants).

9. Re-Charge Model and Our Community in Practice:

Michelle Lowe, Gemma Reynold and Micole Cochrane told us about student representation and student support. Gemma and Michelle are the 'Student Association' and 'voice of the students'. Both are elected WLC students having a paid sabbatical year in order to fulfil this task. All available support (Recharge model and all other aid) including the 'Sparkle communication (including a satisfaction survey) was discussed. Many questions were asked and answered.

(see hand-out in in QMS4VET Dropbox 'Presentations' folder).

10. The European organisation for Quality seminar:

Joao Alves explained. On 23 & 24 October 2019 the 'European organisation for quality' will hold its annual conference in Lisbon and this year's theme will be 'education'. Possibilities are a presentation or a poster. He therefor needs to send in an abstract. This was studied and discussed by the participants. Discussion on how to get as much impact as possible from this dissemination opportunity will be held during the Steering board meeting in June.

11. Support in the Classroom:

Lorna Jenkins, Helen Wilson and Rhonda Brown presented the 'WLC Student support in the classroom' methodology (a Student journey to be compared with a hill walk). All available aid was discussed (see hand-out in in QMS4VET Dropbox 'Presentations' folder).

12. End of Meeting:

At around 16:30 hour the meeting was closed for the day.

WEDNESDAY 15 MAY 2019

13. Evaluation of previous day:

A short evaluation of the previous day was held. All participants were happy with the process. No changes necessary.

14. Employer Engagement, Support in practice and Student Experience:

The participants were divided in two groups and shown around in the automotive & construction and childcare department. Support in practise was explained and the opportunity to discuss with students and a childcare employer was given.





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15. SWOT Analysis:

The participants were divided in 4 groups, forming a carousel to discus the SWOT of the presented guidance methods. It was decided to focus on:

- Induction process;
- Student association;
- Recharge model;
- Support in the classroom.

Outcomes can be found in the Project week report (WLC guidance and support system).

16. Lunch:

17. Recommendations, Step by step implementation and Start of Digitalisation:

After the outcomes of the SWOT analysis were evaluated, the recommendations to overcome or minimise the Weaknesses and Threats and advises for Step by step implementation were discusses and agreed. Outcomes can be found in the Project week report (WLC guidance and support system).

18. Evaluation:

The 2nd meeting day was briefly evaluated. All participants were still happy, so no reason for change.

19. End of meeting:

At around 17:00 hour the 2nd meeting day was closed.

THURSDAY 16 MAY 2019

20. Evaluation of previous day:

During the short evaluation of the previous meeting day, it was concluded that we did not pay enough attention on the 'Support in the classroom' method. It was therefore decided to look again at the recommendations and Step by step implementation and include the 'Support in the classroom method'.

21. Digitalisation of results:

Participants were divided into four groups. Each with the responsibility to write a draft version of a specific chapter of the Project week report.

22. Meeting with West Lothian College management to discuss meeting outcomes:

The meeting and it's outcomes were discussed with Ms Galbraith (Principal at WLC). Main focus was on the Weaknesses and Threats of the WLC guidance and support system.

After thanking Ms Galbraith for hosting the 2nd QMS4VET project week, the outcomes of the digitalisation were discussed and agreed. The final results can be found in the Project week report (WLC guidance and support system).





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23. End of the meeting:

After thanking Julia and Shelagh for their perfect organisation of the 2nd QMS4VET project week, the meeting was closed at 12:30 hour.





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