



# owls

Outcomes that Work for Learners  
and their Stakeholders

[www.owls-nest.eu](http://www.owls-nest.eu)

## **Training Providers ...**

*Would you attract more learners or more funding by enhancing the quality of your training services?*

## **Learners ...**

*Would better training help you to improve your career prospects?*

## **Employers ...**

*Are you getting the most from your investment in training?*



A brief guide for training providers, employers and learners.

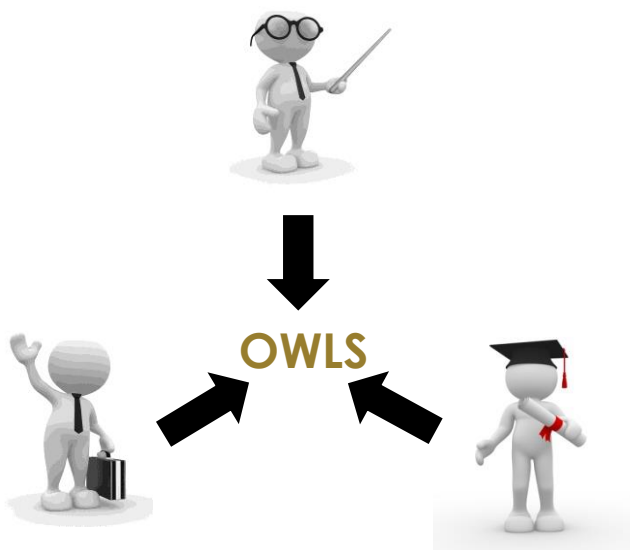
**OWLS** - a tool designed for trainers and training organisations to review their VET provision. OWLS provides trainers and training organisations with a structure to help them reflect on their performance and to improve their results for learners, managers and for their organisation!

OWLS involves working with stakeholders to deliver continuous improvements in vocational training and education.

### What is OWLS?

OWLS is an online, multi-lingual, self-assessment quality assurance system which aims to improve the quality of Vocational Education and Training (or VET). It is **free to use** when you register on the OWLS website. ([www.owls-nest.eu](http://www.owls-nest.eu))

The OWLS system provides a framework for **trainers** to work more closely with **learners** and **employers** to improve VET.



OWLS comprises 4 sections:

1. **Planning**
2. **Implementation**
3. **Evaluation**
4. **Review**

### What are the benefits of using OWLS?

OWLS delivers numerous benefits for a variety of stakeholders.

#### Benefits for trainers and training organisations:

- Improved internal communication and procedures
- Better relationships with employers and learners
- Better evidence to demonstrate the effectiveness of your training services
- Opportunity to benchmark your performance with other VET providers

#### Benefits for learners:

- Better learning outcomes
- Better prepared for your work role
- More able to demonstrate your experience and competence in your work role

#### Benefits for employers and managers:

- More effective training for your workforce, more tailored to the needs of their work roles
- New workers better prepared for their work role
- Better evaluation of your investment in training

*Using the OWLS quality assurance system has helped us to **improve our training services**.*

*It's given us a **different perspective** on what we do and how we can better support our **learners** as well as **local employers**.*

*It's even saved us time on our **EFQM** work too!*

Gail Anderson, Chief Executive  
Voluntary Action Orkney

## How does OWLS work?

The OWLS Quality Cycle provides **training providers** and **trainers** with a structure which enables them to review their VET provision. OWLS is a cycle of continuous improvement and is aligned with the 4 stages of the EU's EQAVET.



You decide where to start and in what order to work through the 4 stages.

- Each stage comprises a number of **Criteria for Success**.
- These are made up of a number of **Contributing Factors** - you score your organisation's performance against each of these factors.
- If you need help there are **examples** of how other training organisations have met each Contributing Factor.



## What support is available to help implement OWLS?

Even if you've never used a quality assurance system like OWLS don't worry! There are a range of support services and resources available for OWLS system users:

- Within the OWLS system itself there is **help information** and numerous **examples** of how different training organisations have evidenced the Contributing Factors.
- Check out our multi-media resources in the **Resource Library** on our website



- Ask the OWLS developers and other OWLS users specific questions or join in on some of our discussion groups in the **Chatroom** on our website.



- Book a place on one of our **on-line tutorials** or **on-line mentoring** sessions by contacting one of our national contacts via the website.

We know from our work with a range of pilot sites across EU partner countries that OWLS is useful for both experienced and less experienced training providers – they can all benefit from **'taking an OWLS perspective'**.

## What makes OWLS so effective?

- OWLS was specifically designed to ensure that any vocational training is more **directly applicable** to the workplace
- It is **not** designed to replace existing systems. It **adds value** to existing quality assurance systems used by training providers.
- OWLS has been tested across a wide **range** of vocational training provision across all **age** groups, different vocational **sectors** and academic **levels** from introductory level to post graduate qualifications
- OWLS works for all kinds of vocational training including **initial** VET and **continuing** VET or **life long learning**.
- OWLS is one of the first 'bottom up' approaches specifically designed to enhance the quality of VET and that is in line with the new EU **EQAVET** framework.



## How long does it take to complete OWLS?

OWLS is a continuous improvement cycle so in many ways it doesn't stop!

Some organisations may be able to work through the 4 stages more quickly than others. Experience in using quality assurance systems may help but it is more important to work with your **learners** and **employers** to research your evidence carefully and thoroughly.

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Even the most experienced training organisations have found that '**taking an OWLS perspective**' has helped them to think differently about their training services.

## How was OWLS developed?

OWLS was developed by 5 partner organisations:

- Reykjavik University, Iceland
- Funding Ideas Ltd, UK
- Thomas More University, Belgium
- abif Research Institute, Austria
- Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania

The OWLS partners carried out focus groups, surveys and interviews with **learners**, **managers** and with **trainers** across 5 **European** countries to learn more about their experiences of VET.

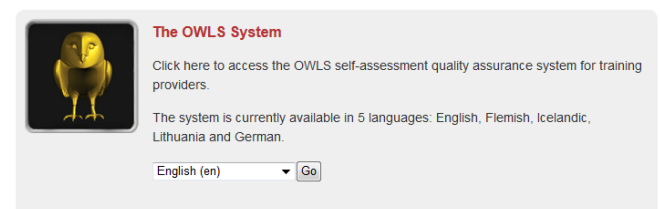
Prototype versions of OWLS were developed and tested with representative samples of VET providers, employers and learners.

## How do I get started?

Simply go to our website [www.owls-nest.eu](http://www.owls-nest.eu) and you will find the OWLS System.



Select the **language** option you require and click on **Go**.



OWLS is a transnational partnership and a 'Development of Innovation' initiative supported by the Leonardo da Vinci Programme of the European Union.



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