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D2.5 SPARKLE

Assessment Methodology Guideline

The SPARKLE Method for Excellence in TVET

Supporting Productive jobs, Awareness and Resilience through Knowledge and Learning for Electrotechnicians

Proposal number: 101182990

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1. Introduction: Rethinking Assessment in TVET Systems

Across European and international Vocational Education and Training (VET/TVET) systems, assessment is undergoing a significant transformation. No longer conceived as a final checkpoint, it is increasingly understood as a **central mechanism for improving learning, ensuring quality, and enhancing the visibility of competences**.

This shift is strongly supported by the work of **Cedefop**, which highlights the importance of learning outcomes, evidence-based approaches, and the alignment between training systems and labour market needs. Similarly, the **EQAVET framework** emphasises the role of continuous improvement, feedback and systematic evaluation in ensuring the effectiveness of VET provision.

Within this context, the SPARKLE methodology introduces a structured and operational approach to assessment that is:

- embedded within the learning process
- grounded in real technical performance
- supported by digital and practical tools
- oriented towards documentation and recognition

Rather than focusing on abstract knowledge, the SPARKLE method places emphasis on **what learners and professionals are able to do in real situations**, ensuring that competences are not only developed but also made visible and transferable.

2. Vision: The Trainer as a Facilitator of Learning and Success

At the heart of the SPARKLE approach lies a redefinition of the trainer's role. Traditional models often position the trainer as a judge of performance. In contrast, SPARKLE recognises the trainer as a **facilitator of learning, reflection and progression**.

This perspective is grounded in the work of **Perrenoud (1997)**, who emphasises the importance of competence as the mobilisation of knowledge in complex situations, and **Schön (1983),** who highlights the role of reflection in professional practice.

Within this framework, the trainer:

- observes learners in action
- provides structured and constructive feedback
- supports self-assessment and reflection
- collaborates with peers to improve teaching practices

Assessment is therefore not an isolated activity, but part of a **continuous pedagogical cycle**

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that includes observation, interpretation, feedback and adaptation.

This transformation allows training systems to become more:

- inclusive
- responsive
- aligned with real-world needs

3. Pedagogical Foundations: Competence as Performance in Context

The SPARKLE methodology is based on a competence-oriented approach that integrates knowledge, skills and responsibility. However, unlike traditional models, competence is not treated as an abstract concept, but as something that can only be understood through **performance in context**.

This means that:

- competences are not directly assessed
- they are inferred from observable actions
- they must be supported by evidence

In technical fields such as electrotechnology, this approach is essential. Learners must demonstrate their abilities through:

- practical tasks
- use of tools and equipment
- problem-solving
- interpretation of results

This ensures that assessment reflects real professional practice and provides meaningful information for both learners and employers.

4. The Technical Core: SPARKLE Modules and Tools

Module 1.1 – Understanding Electricity

This module introduces foundational concepts such as voltage, current, power and the distinction between AC and DC systems. Assessment focuses on the ability to interpret and apply these concepts in simple contexts.

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Module 2.1 – Electrical Systems

This module addresses electrical distribution systems, grounding and safety. Learners are required to interpret system configurations and understand the relationship between design and risk management.

Module 3.1 – Invisible Guardians

This advanced module focuses on protection systems, insulation and safety procedures. Learners engage in practical tasks such as testing and analysis, demonstrating both technical competence and understanding.

Across all modules, SPARKLE tools serve as:

- learning supports
- self-assessment instruments
- observation frameworks
- evidence generators

5. Peer Collaboration: Building a Community of Practice

Quality in VET systems cannot be achieved in isolation. The SPARKLE methodology promotes a collaborative approach, where trainers engage in continuous dialogue and reflection.

The **Trainer Reflection Sheet** supports this process by providing a structured way to analyse teaching experiences. Trainers document:

- challenges encountered
- learner difficulties
- effectiveness of materials

These reflections are shared and discussed in peer meetings, enabling collective problem-solving and innovation.

This process contributes to the development of a **professional learning community**, where knowledge is co-constructed and continuously updated.

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6. Practical Assessment: Observing Competence in Action

The SPARKLE approach to assessment reaches its full expression in practical activities. Using the **Practical Task Observation Sheet**, trainers evaluate learners during real or simulated technical tasks.

Assessment focuses on:

- technical accuracy
- safety compliance
- autonomy
- problem-solving
- depth of understanding

Learners are also required to explain their actions, demonstrating that they understand not only how to perform a task, but why it is performed in a certain way.

This ensures that assessment captures **authentic competence**, rather than superficial performance.

7. Continuous Quality Improvement: The Curriculum Review Logbook

Assessment is not only a tool for evaluating learners, but also for improving the training system itself.

The **Curriculum Review Logbook** allows institutions to systematically document changes based on feedback and evidence. Each modification is recorded, justified and monitored.

This approach aligns with the **EQAVET quality cycle**:

- Plan
- Do
- Check
- Act

In particular, the Logbook supports the transition from evaluation to action, ensuring that feedback leads to concrete improvements.

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8. From Assessment to Portfolio: Structuring Competence Documentation

Once competences have been observed and validated, they must be organised in a structured way. The portfolio serves as the main tool for this purpose.

In the SPARKLE methodology, the portfolio is a **coherent and evidence-based representation of learning and professional development.**

It includes:

- descriptions of situations
- tasks performed
- evidence collected
- reflective elements

Trainers support learners in constructing the portfolio, ensuring clarity, accuracy and consistency.

9. Europass: Building a Systemic Approach to Competence Management and Visibility

9.1 Introduction: Beyond a CV – Towards a Structured Competence System

Within the SPARKLE methodology, Europass is not approached as a simple tool for creating a curriculum vitae, nor as a final administrative step. Instead, it is understood as part of a broader process that supports learners and staff in developing a systematic and conscious management of their competencies over time.

In many training contexts, one of the main limitations is not the lack of competences, but the lack of organisation and visibility of those competences. Learners often accumulate experiences, practical skills and technical knowledge without structuring them, which makes it difficult to present them effectively when needed.

Europass responds to this need by offering a framework that encourages individuals to build a coherent and accessible representation of their professional profile.

9.2 Europass as a Personal Repository and Organisational Tool

A key function of Europass within the SPARKLE approach is its role as a personal repository

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of competences and experiences.

Rather than being used only when applying for a job, Europass should be progressively built and updated throughout the learning journey. It becomes a space where individuals can:

- collect evidence of their activities
- store certificates and supporting documents
- organise experiences in a structured way
- reflect on their own development

This approach allows learners and staff to develop a systemic habit of documenting and archiving competences, avoiding the need to reconstruct their profile retrospectively.

In this sense, Europass supports not only visibility, but also continuity and coherence in competence management.

9.3 Developing a Culture of Continuous Competence Valorisation

The most important aspect of using Europass is not the tool itself, but the mindset it promotes.

Within SPARKLE, learners and staff are encouraged to adopt a continuous approach to competence valorisation. This means:

- recognising competences as they are developed
- documenting them progressively
- organising them in a structured way
- keeping them accessible and updated

This process helps individuals to build awareness of their own professional growth and to maintain an up-to-date and reliable representation of their skills.

Over time, this creates a habit of managing one's competencies in a systematic way, rather than in a fragmented or occasional manner.

9.4 Accessibility and Readiness: Competences Always Available

A major advantage of this approach is that competences become immediately available when needed.

Instead of searching for documents, certificates or evidence across different sources, individuals can rely on a single structured environment where all relevant information is already organised.

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This is particularly important in situations such as:

- applying for a job
- participating in training opportunities
- engaging with companies
- presenting one's profile in professional contexts

Europass, when used correctly, ensures that competences are not only stored but also easily retrievable and ready to be communicated.

9.5 Supporting Mobility and Collaboration with European Companies

Another important dimension of Europass is its role in facilitating interaction with companies and organisations beyond the local context.

By structuring competences clearly and recognisably, Europass supports learners and staff in engaging with:

- European companies operating in different countries
- international training opportunities
- mobility programmes

This is particularly relevant in the SPARKLE framework, where the objective is to enhance the transferability of competences across contexts.

A well-structured Europass profile allows individuals to present their skills in a way that is understandable and credible, even outside their original training environment.

9.6 Europass for Both Learners and Staff

Within the SPARKLE methodology, Europass is not limited to learners. It is equally important for trainers and staff, who can use it to:

- document professional development
- record technical upskilling
- organise teaching and project experiences

This contributes to strengthening the overall quality of the training system, as both learners and trainers engage in a process of continuous competence documentation and valorisation.

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9.7 Final Perspective: From Tool to Practice

Ultimately, the value of Europass does not lie in the tool itself, but in the practice it enables.

When integrated into the SPARKLE methodology, Europass supports a shift:

- from occasional documentation → to continuous competence management
- from fragmented information → to structured organisation
- from hidden skills → to visible and accessible competences

In this way, Europass becomes part of a broader system that empowers individuals to take ownership of their professional development and to maintain a clear, organised and up-to-date representation of their competences.

10. Context Adaptation: Implementing the SPARKLE Method in Uganda and Sierra Leone

10.1 Introduction: From Transfer to Contextualisation

One of the key strengths of the SPARKLE methodology lies in its ability to be transferred across different contexts while maintaining its core structure. However, transferring a methodology cannot be understood as a simple replication. It requires a conscious process of contextualisation, where principles are preserved but implementation is adapted to local realities.

In contexts such as Uganda and Sierra Leone, this need becomes particularly relevant. TVET systems in these environments are often characterised by a strong practical orientation, limited access to digital infrastructure, and a significant presence of informal learning pathways. Within this framework, the value of the SPARKLE methodology lies in its capacity to offer a **structured yet flexible approach**, capable of integrating into existing practices without disrupting them.

10.2 Operational Adaptation of Tools and Practices

Adapting the SPARKLE methodology does not mean simplifying its principles, but rather rethinking how they are applied. The tools developed within SPARKLE—such as observation sheets, technical modules and reflection instruments—can be effectively used even in low-resource environments.

For instance, digital tools can be translated into paper-based formats while maintaining the

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same logical structure. Similarly, technical content can be contextualised through local examples, such as:

- domestic electrical installations
- off-grid energy systems
- basic maintenance activities

This ensures that learning remains grounded in real-life situations, increasing both relevance and effectiveness.

10.3 Recognising and Valuing Informal Competences

Another essential dimension of adaptation concerns the recognition of competences already present in local contexts. In many cases, learners and practitioners possess valuable technical skills developed through informal experiences rather than formal training.

The SPARKLE methodology enables these competences to be made visible by:

- observing performance in real situations
- collecting evidence of practice
- structuring and documenting competences

In this way, the methodology does not impose external standards, but rather provides a framework to **recognise, organise and valorise existing knowledge and skills**.

10.4 Balancing Standardisation and Flexibility

The effectiveness of the SPARKLE approach depends on maintaining a balance between methodological consistency and contextual flexibility. Core elements—such as performance-based assessment, evidence collection, validation and portfolio development—must remain stable, while their application can be adapted.

This balance ensures:

- methodological coherence
- sustainability over time
- real impact on local training systems

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11. The Facilitator Toolkit: Making the Method Operational

11.1 Introduction: From Conceptual Framework to Daily Practice

For any methodology to be effective, it must be translated into practical tools that can be easily integrated into everyday teaching. The SPARKLE method is supported by a structured toolkit designed to operationalise its principles and support trainers in their daily work.

The toolkit is not an additional layer, but the **practical infrastructure** through which the methodology becomes actionable.

11.2 Integrated Tools for a Coherent Process

The SPARKLE toolkit comprises three main instruments, each addressing a specific dimension of the training process.

The **Practical Task Observation Sheet** supports the observation and assessment of learners during real technical activities. It ensures that evaluation is based on clear and shared criteria, reducing subjectivity and increasing consistency.

The **Trainer Reflection Sheet** enables trainers to analyse their teaching practices, identify challenges and reflect on learner performance. It acts as a bridge between classroom experience and professional development.

The **Curriculum Review** Logbook provides a structured way to document changes and improvements in the training programme. It ensures that feedback is not lost, but systematically transformed into action.

11.3 From Isolated Tools to an Integrated System

The true value of the toolkit lies in the way these instruments interact with each other. Rather than functioning independently, they form a continuous cycle:

- **observation → reflection → improvement**

This integrated approach prevents fragmentation and supports the development of a coherent training system in which each phase is connected to the next.

11.4 Supporting the Trainer's Role

Through the use of the toolkit, trainers are supported in their role as facilitators of learning and quality. The tools provide a structured framework that helps them to:

- observe performance systematically

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- provide meaningful feedback
- document learning processes
- contribute to institutional improvement

This reduces reliance on intuition or informal practices and strengthens the overall quality of teaching.

12. Conclusion: Towards Systems of Visible and Recognised Competences

12.1 Introduction: A Necessary Transformation

VET/TVET systems are currently facing a fundamental challenge: ensuring that competences are not only developed, but also visible, recognised and transferable. This requires a transformation in the way assessment is conceived and implemented.

The SPARKLE methodology provides a concrete response to this challenge by proposing an integrated model that connects learning, assessment and competence valorisation.

12.2 From Process to Visibility

One of the most innovative aspects of the SPARKLE approach is its ability to transform everyday learning activities into structured evidence of competence. Through the use of SPARKLE tools, observation sheets and portfolio development, competences emerge clearly and can be documented in a reliable way.

This process enables a shift:

- from implicit competences → to explicit competences
- from isolated experiences → to structured learning pathways
- from generic evaluation → to evidence-based assessment

12.3 Building an Integrated and Sustainable System

The strength of the SPARKLE methodology lies in its integration. It is not a collection of separate tools, but a system in which each element contributes to a shared objective:

- improving training quality
- supporting learners
- enhancing staff development
- increasing competence visibility

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This integrated approach ensures sustainability, as improvement is embedded within daily practice rather than relying on external interventions.

12.4 Final Perspective

Ultimately, the SPARKLE methodology supports the development of training systems where competencies do not remain hidden but become part of a visible and accessible professional identity.

By integrating:

- performance-based assessment
- systematic evidence collection
- structured reflection
- portfolio development and Europass

TVET systems can evolve towards models that are more transparent, inclusive and effective.

The goal is not simply to assess better, but to ensure that competences are recognised, accessible and continuously valorised over time.

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Annexes

1. Practical Task Observation Sheet
2. Trainer Reflection Sheet
3. Curriculum Review Logbook

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ANNEX 1

Practical Task Observation Sheet

Structured Tool for Assessing Technical Performance in Real Situations

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◇ Purpose of the Tool

This observation sheet is designed to support trainers in assessing learners' performance during real or simulated technical activities. It ensures that evaluation is based on observable actions, clear criteria and collected evidence, in line with the SPARKLE methodology.

◇ General Information

Training Provider: _____

Module / Unit: _____

SPARKLE Tool Reference: _____

Date: _____

Trainer: _____

Learner: _____

◇ Description of the Technical Situation

Provide a clear description of the context in which the task is performed.

Example: "Measurement of voltage and resistance using a multimeter in a laboratory setting."

Description:

◇ Task and Expected Performance

Describe what the learner is expected to do.

Task:

Expected Performance:

Correct use of tools

Safe execution

Accurate results

Ability to explain actions

◇ Observation of Performance

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Dimension	Observed (✔)	Notes
Tool selection	☐	
Equipment setup	☐	
Execution of the task	☐	
Interpretation of results	☐	
Time management	☐	

◇ Assessment Criteria

Criteria	Basic	Intermediate	Advanced
Technical accuracy	☐	☐	☐
Safety compliance	☐	☐	☐
Autonomy	☐	☐	☐
Problem-solving	☐	☐	☐
Understanding	☐	☐	☐

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◇ Evidence Collected

Select and describe evidence supporting the assessment:

☐ Photos

☐ Measurement sheets

☐ Technical report

☐ Video

☐ Trainer observation

Notes:

◇ Trainer Feedback

Provide constructive feedback to support improvement:

◇ Validated Competence (for Portfolio)

Formulate the competence clearly:

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ANNEX 2

Trainer Reflection Sheet

Supporting Professional Dialogue and Continuous Improvement

◇ Purpose of the Tool

This sheet supports trainers in reflecting on their teaching practice and sharing insights with colleagues. It is a key instrument for building a community of practice and improving training quality.

◇ General Information

Trainer: _____

Module: _____

Date: _____

◇ Reflection on the Session

Describe how the session was conducted and its overall effectiveness.

◇ What Worked Well

Identify successful aspects of the session.

Engagement of learners

Clarity of explanations

Effectiveness of SPARKLE tools

Practical relevance

Details:

◇ Challenges and Difficulties

Identify issues encountered during the session.

Technical complexity

Lack of understanding

Time constraints

Equipment limitations

Details:

◇ Learner Difficulties

Focus on specific learning gaps.

Example:

"Learners struggled to interpret electrical diagrams."

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◇ Proposed Improvements

Suggest concrete actions for future sessions.

Introduce additional practical examples

Adapt SPARKLE tools

Use local materials

Adjust teaching pace

Details:

◇ Peer Discussion Outcomes

(Completed after meeting with colleagues)

◇ Follow-Up Actions

What will be implemented next?

This tool supports:

reflective teaching

peer learning

continuous improvement

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ANNEX 3

Curriculum Review Logbook

Documenting Change and Supporting the EQAVET Quality Cycle

◇ Purpose of the Tool

The Curriculum Review Logbook ensures that feedback collected during training is transformed into structured and documented improvements. It supports transparency, accountability and continuous development.

◇ General Information

Training Provider: _____

Programme: _____

Review Period: _____

◇ Identified Issue

Describe the problem or need that emerged.

Example:

"Learners required more practical activities to understand electrical systems."

◇ Source of Feedback

☐ Learners

☐ Trainers

☐ Assessment results

☐ External stakeholders

◇ Action Taken

Describe the change introduced.

◇ Record of Changes

Date	Module	Change	Reason	Expected Impact

◇ Monitoring and Evaluation

How will the impact be assessed?

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Improved learner performance
Increased engagement
Better understanding
Notes:

◇ Link to Quality Cycle

✔ PLAN → Identify issue

✔ DO → Implement change

✔ CHECK → Evaluate results

✔ ACT → Consolidate improvement

◇ Final Remarks

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