



RALEXILA

Policy and practice recommendations for strengthening quality assurance and governance for ALE ecosystems

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1. Introduction

Strengthening quality assurance and governance in Adult Learning and Education (ALE) ecosystems across Europe requires a standardised yet adaptable approach, tailored to different national contexts and priorities.

Through extensive research, we have analysed key considerations, identified good practise and formulated evidence-based recommendations.

Building on these foundations, we now introduce the RALExILA approach — a strategic framework designed to improve the effectiveness, inclusivity, and sustainability of ALE registries and Individual Learning Accounts.

This approach summarises our findings and translates them into a coherent proposal for policy makers, practitioners and stakeholders, ensuring that ALE systems across Europe are robust, responsive and in tune with the evolving demands of lifelong learning.

2. General recommendations

2.1. STRENGTHENING QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORKS

Establish comprehensive and transparent quality assurance frameworks that incorporate both process and outcome indicators, enabling a holistic evaluation of ALE programmes and services.

There is a critical need to develop and implement structured quality assurance mechanisms that foster trust among learners, providers, and employers. These mechanisms should include transparent accreditation processes and performance evaluations that align learning opportunities with established benchmarks and societal needs. The integration of such frameworks will ensure accountability and contribute to the continuous improvement of ALE systems across Europe.

2.2. ENHANCING GOVERNANCE THROUGH STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION

Governance structures must prioritise stakeholder participation and collaboration by engaging a wide range of actors, including learners, educators, industry representatives, and policymakers.

Ensuring that ALE systems remain relevant and responsive requires participatory governance models that foster shared ownership and accountability. Formal mechanisms, such as advisory boards or consultative committees, can institutionalise this collaboration, ensuring that it is continuous and impactful. Through these structures, diverse perspectives are incorporated into policy design and implementation, strengthening the overall governance of ALE systems.

2.3. INTEGRATING ALE WITH LABOUR MARKET AND EDUCATION SYSTEMS

ALE registries and Individual Learning Accounts (ILAs) should be fully integrated into broader education and labour market systems to enhance coordination and efficiency. Interoperability across databases and platforms allows for seamless data sharing, ensuring that ALE systems align with labour market demands and provide learners with targeted opportunities that improve employability. Centralised data systems facilitate effective monitoring and evaluation, supporting evidence-based policymaking that enhances the effectiveness and adaptability of ALE programmes.

2.4. PROMOTING INCLUSIVITY IN ALE SYSTEMS

Develop targeted measures to address barriers faced by underserved populations, including rural residents, low-skilled workers, and marginalised groups, ensuring equitable access to learning opportunities.

Inclusivity should be at the core of ALE policies, with financial support, flexible learning options, and outreach initiatives playing a crucial role in removing access barriers. Moreover, inclusive governance models must actively involve these groups in decision-making processes, ensuring that their specific needs and challenges are recognised and adequately addressed in policy development.

2.5. ENSURING FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY AND SCALABILITY

Adopt funding models that balance public investment with private contributions to ensure the accessibility and long-term sustainability of ALE systems.

ILAs, for example, can be structured with co-financing mechanisms that involve contributions from learners, employers, and public funds. Such models not only enhance financial sustainability but also encourage greater engagement from all stakeholders, fostering a shared responsibility in strengthening ALE ecosystems.

2.6. RECOGNISING PRIOR LEARNING FOR GREATER FLEXIBILITY

Incorporate Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) mechanisms into ALE systems to validate and accredit skills acquired in informal or non-formal learning contexts.

By integrating RPL into ALE registries and ILAs, learners can build on their existing competencies without redundancy, facilitating their acquisition of formal qualifications and improving employability. RPL frameworks reduce barriers to lifelong learning and provide structured pathways for skill recognition and career progression.



2.7. STRENGTHENING CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (CPD)

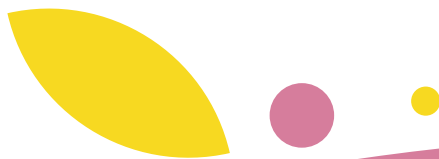
Continuous professional development for educators and ALE providers should be prioritised to ensure high-quality, responsive learning experiences.

Training initiatives should equip educators with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively use digital tools, implement innovative pedagogies, and uphold quality assurance practices. Supporting CPD not only enhances the professional capacities of ALE providers but also contributes to the consistent delivery of high-quality learning opportunities for adults.

2.8. PROMOTING A CULTURE OF LIFELONG LEARNING

Foster a culture of lifelong learning across all sectors of society through public awareness campaigns, employer incentives, and policies that recognise and validate informal and non-formal learning.

Encouraging greater engagement in lifelong learning supports economic and social development, making ALE systems a fundamental pillar of an inclusive and forward-looking society. By embedding lifelong learning principles into national strategies, policymakers can ensure that learning remains accessible, adaptable, and relevant to the evolving needs of individuals and economies.



3. Tailored recommendations

Effective governance in Adult Learning and Education systems requires strategies that are finely tuned to the specific governance model in place. Whether centralized, decentralized, or hybrid, each model presents unique strengths and challenges, necessitating tailored approaches to improve quality assurance and governance. Drawing on the research findings, this section provides targeted recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of ALE systems within these governance frameworks.

3.1. CENTRALISED GOVERNANCE MODELS

Strengthen mechanisms for ensuring responsiveness and inclusivity in centralised systems by incorporating stakeholder feedback and comprehensive national registries.

Centralised ALE governance models benefit from coherence and uniformity but may struggle to address regional disparities or diverse learner needs. To mitigate this, governments should establish feedback loops with local stakeholders, including learners, employers, and regional authorities, ensuring that national policies are informed by on-the-ground realities. Comprehensive national registries should integrate data on programmes, providers, and outcomes to enhance transparency, facilitate monitoring, and align ALE offerings with labour market needs.



3.2. DECENTRALISED GOVERNANCE MODELS

Develop national quality assurance frameworks and interoperable digital platforms to maintain consistency and coordination in decentralised systems.

While decentralised systems offer flexibility and adaptability, they can face challenges in ensuring uniform quality and avoiding fragmentation. Establishing national frameworks that set minimum standards while allowing for regional customisation is key to maintaining consistency. Interoperable digital platforms that connect regional registries with a central database can further enhance coordination and efficiency, enabling seamless data sharing and fostering peer learning networks among regions.

3.3. HYBRID GOVERNANCE MODELS

Balance coherence with adaptability by clearly defining roles and responsibilities across governance levels and integrating ALE with broader education and labour market policies.

Hybrid models combine elements of centralised and decentralised governance, leveraging the strengths of both approaches. However, clarity in role delineation is essential to avoid duplication or conflict. The use of multi-level governance frameworks ensures that national, regional, and local actors operate within clearly defined scopes. Additionally, multi-stakeholder forums can facilitate coordination, ensuring that decision-making processes incorporate diverse perspectives and align with broader policy objectives.

Across all governance models, a shared recommendation is to enhance the capacity of stakeholders involved in ALE systems. This includes providing professional development opportunities for educators, administrators, and policymakers, equipping them with the skills needed to navigate complex governance landscapes. Additionally, the use of data analytics and digital tools should be encouraged to support evidence-based decision-making and continuous improvement. Tailored approaches to governance are essential for creating ALE systems that are not only effective but also equitable and sustainable. By addressing the specific needs and challenges of centralized, decentralized, and hybrid models, these recommendations aim to strengthen the foundations of lifelong learning across diverse contexts. The accompanying research report offers further details and examples to guide the implementation of these tailored strategies.

4. Future directions for policy and research

The dynamic landscape of Adult Learning and Education requires ongoing policy innovation and research to address emerging challenges and opportunities. As societal and economic contexts evolve, ALE systems must remain adaptable, inclusive, and effective. This calls for a sustained focus on continuous evaluation and the development of evidence-based policies that support robust governance and quality assurance frameworks. Drawing on the findings of the research, this section outlines key areas for future policy development and research to advance the field of ALE.

4.1. INTEGRATION OF ALE SYSTEMS WITH BROADER GOALS

Policy-makers should focus on aligning ALE initiatives with national and international goals, such as sustainable development, digital transformation, and workforce resilience.


A key area for policy development is ensuring that ALE systems contribute to broader economic, social, and environmental progress. For example, as digital skills become ever more critical in the labour market, there is a pressing need for policies that prioritise digital literacy, particularly for learners from underserved communities. Research examining the effectiveness of such policies in diverse contexts will be essential to refining and scaling these approaches successfully.

4.2. GOVERNANCE OF ALE SYSTEMS

Policy-makers must explore governance models that strike a balance between centralisation and decentralisation to optimise both coherence and adaptability. Further investigation into the governance of ALE systems is necessary, particularly in terms of how centralised versus decentralised structures affect the system's performance. Comparative studies of governance models can provide valuable insights into how different structures impact the efficiency, equity, and sustainability of ALE systems. Understanding how governance frameworks align with the specific needs of learners, providers, and employers will be crucial for shaping policies that are both effective and equitable.

4.3. EVOLVING QUALITY ASSURANCE IN ALE

Policy-makers should consider integrating innovative approaches to quality assurance, leveraging technology and data analytics.



Quality assurance remains vital to the success of ALE systems, but it must evolve to meet contemporary needs. Research should focus on exploring how technology, including artificial intelligence, can be used to monitor programme outcomes and learner engagement, offering new methods for improving transparency and accountability. Policymakers will need to ensure that these advancements are incorporated into existing frameworks, maintaining high standards while adapting to new challenges.

4.4. ROLE OF INDIVIDUAL LEARNING ACCOUNTS (ILAS)

Research should identify the factors contributing to the success of ILA systems to ensure they are both impactful and sustainable.

ILAs have shown promise in promoting lifelong learning, yet their implementation varies significantly across different countries. Future research should focus on understanding the key elements that make ILA systems successful, such as effective funding models, governance structures, and integration with ALE registries. These insights can inform the design of more impactful and sustainable ILAs, tailored to meet the diverse needs of learners and stakeholders alike.

4.5. PROMOTING INCLUSIVITY IN ALE

Policymakers must prioritise inclusivity by addressing the barriers faced by marginalised groups in accessing learning opportunities.

Despite progress, significant disparities persist in access to ALE, especially for marginalised populations. Research should aim to identify the obstacles that prevent these groups from engaging in learning and explore strategies to address them, such as targeted outreach or flexible learning pathways. Policymakers should ensure that their policies tackle these inequities, promoting social cohesion and economic equality through more inclusive and accessible ALE systems.

4.6. CONTINUOUS EVALUATION OF ALE SYSTEMS

Policymakers should institutionalise regular evaluation mechanisms to ensure the continuous improvement and adaptation of ALE systems.

The ongoing evaluation of ALE systems is essential for driving improvement and ensuring they remain responsive to changing needs. Policymakers should establish mechanisms for regular monitoring and assessment, using the insights gained to refine policies and practices over time. Research can contribute to this process by developing new tools and methodologies for evaluation, enabling stakeholders to more effectively measure the impact of ALE systems and make informed decisions for future enhancements.

5. Specified Recommendations for ALE registry models

The analysis of Adult Learning and Education registries across multiple European countries has revealed exemplary practices that highlight the potential of effective registry models to transform lifelong learning systems.

These practices demonstrate the importance of user-centered design, integration with broader systems, collaboration among stakeholders, and adaptability to changing needs.

Drawing on these examples, this section offers an integrated narrative of good practices and recommendations for strengthening ALE registries.

5.1. USER ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSIVITY

Ensuring that ALE registries are designed with a user-centered approach is crucial for maximizing their impact and accessibility. Registries should be intuitive, multilingual, and easily navigable for all demographic groups, including marginalized populations. Prioritizing features such as multilingual support, accessibility for individuals with disabilities, and mobile-friendly interfaces will enhance user engagement and inclusivity. Additionally, the integration of assistive technologies can provide further support to individuals with specific needs, making the system more accessible to everyone.

Good Practice

Finland's My Studyinfo¹ platform serves as an exemplary model of user-centered design. The platform's intuitive interface and multilingual support enable learners from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds to easily access educational opportunities. This approach ensures that all users, regardless of their digital literacy or language skills, can navigate the system effectively and make informed decisions about their learning paths.

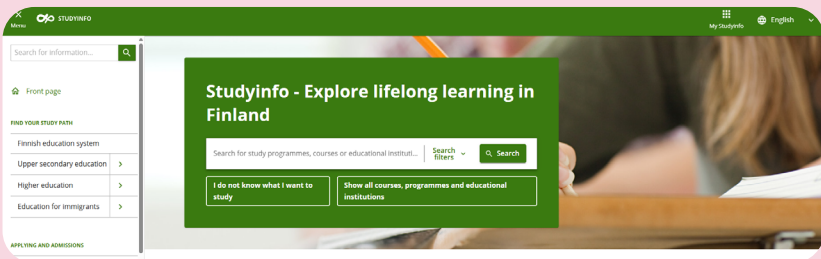


Figure 1. My Studyinfo platform

¹Studyinfo platform, Finnish National Agency for Education, link: <https://opintopolku.fi>

5.2. INTEROPERABILITY AND INTEGRATION

The ability of ALE registries to seamlessly connect with broader educational and labour market systems is essential for ensuring that they remain relevant to current workforce demands. Integrating ALE registries with national education databases, employment services, and skills recognition frameworks facilitates real-time data exchange, improving the efficiency and responsiveness of the system. Standardized data formats and APIs are key to promoting interoperability, enabling smooth communication between various systems. Prioritizing this integration ensures that ALE registries can adapt to the evolving needs of both learners and employers.

Good Practice

In the Netherlands, the *Blik op Werk* portal², *Dienst Uitvoering Onderwijs*³, and *Basisregistry Onderwijs*⁴ registries are interconnected, enabling seamless data exchange between education providers and labour market institutions. This interconnectedness ensures that training programmes are closely aligned with labour market demands, reduces redundancy, and enhances transparency for both users and policymakers.

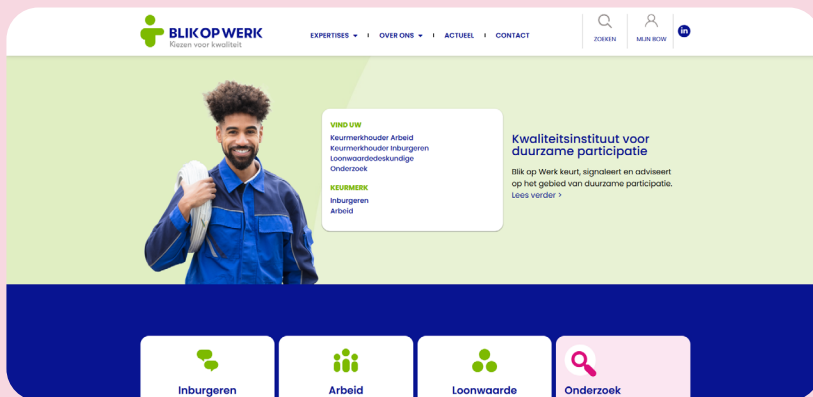


Figure 2. *Blik op Werk* portal

²Blik op Werk portal, link: <https://www.blikopwerk.nl/>

³Dienst Uitvoering Onderwijs, Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, link: www.duo.nl

⁴Basisregister Onderwijs (BRON), Dienst Uitvoering Onderwijs, Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. link: www.duo.nl

Good Practice

DUO Open education data

Public data and publications on funded education in the Netherlands

Search for Open Education Data

Search



Entry into practical education

MARCH 5, 2026

RESEARCH



Students from practical education enter the labor market

MARCH 3, 2026

RESEARCH



Primary education pupil numbers

FEBRUARY 24, 2026

DASHBOARD

[All research and dashboards](#)

Figure 3. DUO Database

5.3. STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION

Engaging key actors, such as employers, unions, education providers, and civil society, in the governance and development of ALE registries is crucial for ensuring that they align with workforce needs and broader lifelong learning strategies. Registries should create multi-stakeholder advisory boards, promote public-private partnerships, and establish user feedback mechanisms to maintain their relevance and responsiveness. Collaboration with a diverse range of stakeholders helps ensure that registries stay reflective of real-world needs and continue to evolve in line with societal and economic demands. In Slovenia, regional registry models actively involve social partners in the decision-making process, ensuring that the system accurately reflects current labour market needs.


This collaborative approach not only enhances the relevance of ALE programs but also builds trust in the system, ensuring that programs are practical and beneficial for both learners and employers.

5.4. DATA-DRIVEN DECISION-MAKING

Leveraging data analytics in ALE registries is essential for monitoring participation trends, assessing programme effectiveness, and supporting evidence-based policy development. Registries should incorporate real-time analytics, track participation and completion rates, and offer reporting tools to help policymakers make informed decisions. Additionally, machine learning can provide predictive insights into emerging learning needs, allowing for proactive adjustments to programs. By utilizing data analytics, ALE systems can foster continuous improvement and enable more effective, evidence-driven policymaking. In France, the centralized ALE registry employs advanced analytics to track learner participation, satisfaction rates, and program effectiveness. This ongoing data analysis allows policymakers to identify gaps, allocate resources more efficiently, and optimize learning pathways to better serve diverse demographic groups.

5.5. EQUITY AND INCLUSIVITY

Ensuring that ALE registries proactively address barriers to access, particularly for disadvantaged and underserved populations, is vital for promoting equity and inclusivity. Registries should include targeted outreach initiatives, promote subsidized learning opportunities, and integrate support services such as career counselling and financial aid. By focusing on reducing barriers and expanding access, ALE systems can ensure that all individuals, including rural learners and low-skilled workers, can participate in lifelong learning opportunities.



In Ireland, the ALE registry implements specific measures to support disadvantaged learners, such as tailored guidance services and outreach programmes targeting rural communities. These efforts help bridge access gaps, ensuring that underserved groups can engage with educational opportunities and benefit from inclusive lifelong learning strategies.

5.6. SUSTAINABILITY AND SCALABILITY

Ensuring that ALE registries are adaptable, cost-effective, and capable of evolving with technological advancements and shifting educational needs is crucial for long-term sustainability. Registries should be built on modular frameworks that allow for iterative improvements, integration of user feedback, and the use of open-source technologies to minimize costs while enhancing flexibility. Sustainability and scalability should drive the development of registry infrastructure, ensuring that systems remain responsive to future demands. In Portugal, the modular ALE registry infrastructure allows for continuous updates and expansion without the need for a complete system rebuild. This adaptability ensures the registry stays effective and aligned with emerging educational trends and evolving workforce requirements, offering a resilient solution to changing demands.

5.7. COMPREHENSIVE ALE ECOSYSTEM INTEGRATION

A holistic approach to ALE registries involves positioning them as central hubs that integrate educational offerings, employment services, and funding opportunities to streamline the transition from learning to employment. Registries should consolidate both accredited and non-accredited courses, job-matching services, and funding applications within a unified digital ecosystem, enhancing the user experience and reducing fragmentation. Strong governance and accountability frameworks are essential to uphold high standards and ensure effective implementation. Malta's ALE registry exemplifies this holistic model by linking learning opportunities with labour market data, thus facilitating smoother career transitions. By providing a one-stop platform that combines education, employment, and financial support, the registry enables learners to seamlessly navigate both educational and career pathways.

By incorporating these recommendations into policy and practice, countries can create ALE registries that are responsive, inclusive, and sustainable, supporting lifelong learning while contributing to broader societal objectives of economic resilience and social equity.



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Ralexila**

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