

EFFECT VPL

THE ROLE OF EMPLOYERS



Erasmus+

EFFECT VPL

THE ROLE OF EMPLOYERS



Erasmus+

EDITOR

Aleksandra Lis

Wszechnica UJ, The Jagiellonian University, Poland

AUTHORS

Monika Gąsienica, Rafał Stożek

Wszechnica UJ, Poland

Ewa Bodzińska-Guzik, Joanna Łuszczki

Regional Labour Office in Cracow, Poland

Anne Lund, Jeanette Lindholm, Bodil Lomholt Husted

VIA University College, Denmark

Bodil Mygind Madsen, Margit Thordal

Social and Health Care College East Jutland, Denmark

Özlem Ünlühisarcıklı

Bogazici University, Turkey

Dr. Eva Anslinger, Franziska Laudenbach

University of Bremen/Center for Labour Studies and Political Education, Germany

Lynda Kiefer, Jan Jerzewski

Senator für Wirtschaft, Arbeit und Häfen, Germany

PROJECT WEBSITE

<https://blogs.uni-bremen.de/effectvpl/>

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Olga Kałwa, Regional Labour Office in Cracow, Poland

Magdalena Krakowska-Buszek, Wszechnica UJ, Poland



The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

FREE PUBLICATION

CONTENTS

5 "Keeping an ear to the ground"
– does it concern my company?

21 Practical solutions in HR processes

42 Guidebook: what to do and how to do it?
National VPL systems

73 Good VPL practices



Labour market is a highly challenging environment for entrepreneurs.





Moreover, it is dynamic and highly varied, as the challenges may, although they do not have to, vary depending on the size and sector of the entrepreneur, and the place of operation: country, region, and even location.

Many are similar or downright the same!



As part of Effect VPL, a joint Erasmus+ Project, partners from Denmark, Germany, Poland, and Turkey have cooperated in each country for three years, operating in tandem partnerships, with the practical partner connected to the labour market, and the theoretical one focusing on the content.

The purpose of the cooperation was to work out products concerning the effects of non-formal and informal learning:

-  evaluation reports with solutions in partner countries
-  a handbook on advantages validation offers individuals
-  a handbook on the role of the employers in the process of validation
-  a training module for the employees of labour market institutions

The manual on the role of the employers was based on case studies in four countries, where representatives of partner institutions talked to entrepreneurs of various sizes from various sectors and regions.

Table of contents:

- Keeping an ear to the ground – does it concern my company?
- Practical solutions in HR processes
- Guidebook: what to do and how to do it? National VPL systems:
 - Denmark
 - Germany
 - Poland
 - Turkey
- Good VPL practices

“KEEPING AN EAR TO THE GROUND” – DOES IT CONCERN MY COMPANY?

The questions that let you decide whether a given challenge is present in your company or not are presented on the following pages. Moreover, each challenge is additionally illustrated with contributions from the entrepreneurs who meet the same or similar challenges, and a description how to use the brochure to learn more about the opportunities of coping with the challenges. There is space left after each of the case studies for your reflection and recording your own examples, if you have any.



HIGH EMPLOYEE CHURN

If your answer to any of the questions/statements below is "yes", this challenge concerns your company:



Do the staff often leave?



Do you need to keep on retraining new staff?



Is your recruitment a continuous process, because you always lack people to do the job?

Other employers also face high employee churn:

Our factory had a yearly churn of 68.5%. It is very high, but most factories have a high churn rates. But since our factory is far away from the cities, the situation was more intense. Working in the heavy industry, the worker is already very tired at work, and it takes 3 hours to commute. Once, a person applied for a job. He came for the interview. You can't even find a commercial taxi in XXX, so why would that person come here? If you get daily wages below TL 200, it's natural you prefer locations closer to home, and I think it is right. We are located away from the centre. (...) I said, "Why are you quitting?" He said "The workplace is distant, there are shifts, and it is a dirty job."



(Case study 1, Human Resources Manager, TURKEY)

This is how a Danish employer coped, investing in employee qualifications:

They often feel they need new tools. We look in our intern course catalogue. (...) If we do not have any intern courses that meet their requirements, we recommend diploma degree modules and we try to guide them in what to choose, and motivate them into education (...).



(Case study 2, VIA UC, DENMARK)

Your notes

You can find more about:

- ▶ practical solutions in HR processes - see page 29
- ▶ guidebook: what to do and how to do it? National VPL systems - see page 42
- ▶ good practices - see page 73



LACK OF PROVED/ACTUAL QUALIFICATIONS IN SPITE OF DIPLOMA(S) HELD

If your answer to any of the questions/statements below is "yes", this challenge concerns your company:



Candidates for the job present the diploma but they have no experience.



Candidates include qualifications in their CVs but have no documents to prove having obtained them.

Other employers also face challenges connected to the lack of actual skills:

We do not look at what people write in the resume, as you can write anything, but we investigate what he or she can do. Come and show what you can do. We pay for the trial day, we wait for the employee, we arrange a meeting, but if someone does not fit in any way, it immediately becomes evident that he or she does not want to work. The fact that someone finished school or has a certificate doesn't mean that that person is able to work as a professional. For us, it is important what someone can do, not what diplomas she or he has.



(Case study 3, Gastroservis, POLAND)

This is how a Polish employer perceives the opportunity to use the system of validating:

(...) Validation would be very helpful in recruitment processes, we think. We might save time and money we need to spend now to check if candidates actually have the qualifications they claim they do, and those are not always qualifications from the formal education system, for instance, computer related skills.



(Case study 4, VCC, POLAND)

Your notes

You can find more about:

- ▶ practical solutions in HR processes - see pages 29, 31
- ▶ guidebook: what to do and how to do it? National VPL systems - see page 42
- ▶ good practices - see page 73



EMPLOYING FOREIGN STAFF

If your answer to any of the questions/statements below is "yes", this challenge concerns your company:



Staff present documents that are unknown in your country.



Staff have no documents confirming their professional/vocational qualifications.



Is your recruitment a continuous process, because you always lack people to do the job?

Other employers also face challenges connected with the employment of migrant workers:

We had experience with Ukrainians, from a job agency, and it was not a good experience. Many people had higher education, not related to the job, yet they accepted physical work, which they were just learning to perform. They worked eagerly and long hours, even on weekends, but slowly and less efficiently – they would go “behind the desks”, had no strength or experience at the construction site, and after some time they gave up because they were not able to work like this. They were cheaper, but they worked longer because they were learning. They were also less efficient, because they were not used to such work and they simply did not have the strength, they also wanted to work on Saturdays, without rest, but it only made them have no time to regenerate, and after some time they had to give up, because they were physically unable to cope.

(Case study 2, Energopol, POLAND)

This is how a Polish employer sees the opportunity of using the system of validating skills while employing migrant workers:

(...) validation of qualifications would be useful for Ukrainians and/or other migrants. Those who came to us were inexperienced, could not do anything, everyone was just learning, did not have any certificates or documents. Perhaps such a validation could be most useful for them, as it could make them know what construction works are all about, what they can expect and whether they can do it. If they had been trained before, they would receive documents that they can do something.

(Case study 2, Energopol, POLAND)

Your notes

You can find more about:

- ▶ practical solutions in HR processes - see pages 29, 31
- ▶ guidebook: what to do and how to do it? National VPL systems - see page 42
- ▶ good practices - see page 73



INSUFFICIENT COMPETENCES OF THE STAFF/FAULTY PERFORMANCE OF WORK

If your answer to any of the questions/statements below is "yes", this challenge concerns your company:



Services and products are often faulty due to the incompetence of the staff.



There is shortage of sufficiently trained staff, and it is hard to find candidates with proper qualifications.

Other employers also face challenges connected to the employment of staff with insufficient qualifications:

I keep on talking about lack of certification. OK, there would be a fire in the kitchen, someone might cut themselves with a knife, the fryer would short-circuit... There are a lot of dangers, but we are careful and meticulous about these issues. I do not understand how the VQA document eliminates the hazards here. I see there is requirement for VQA certificate for heavy jobs in cookery/tourism/food industry... but I really do not understand why.



(Case study 3, Partner/Chief Chef, TURKEY)

This is how a Turkish employer sees the opportunity of using the system of validating skills in reducing the number of errors at work:

I think validation of competences is very important for employees in manufacturing. The most important part in determining the quality of the product is manufacturing. In a series of cases where you cannot stop the error at the source, enormous material losses occur. You lose control if you don't produce quality product.



(Case study 1, Production Manager, TURKEY)

Your notes

You can find more about:

- ▶ practical solutions in HR processes - see pages 33, 39
- ▶ guidebook: what to do and how to do it? National VPL systems - see page 42
- ▶ good practices - see page 73



LACK OF QUALIFIED STAFF; THE NEED TO BUILD UP QUALIFICATIONS BY THE STAFF

If your answer to any of the questions/statements below is "yes", this challenge concerns your company:



Your staff have no formal qualifications.



Your staff have no qualifications.



You need to provide additional training for the staff who are experienced but not professionals, so you need to validate some of their qualifications.

Other employers also face this challenge:

We cannot hire just anyone to take care of our elderly citizens (...). some of our employees have low self-esteem. They often need a gentle push to accept the need for improving of skills.



(Case study 4, SOSU East Jutland, DENMARK)

This is how a Danish employer coped with the problem of unqualified/poorly qualified staff:

I help my nurses in peer learning and in training assistants. I bring them together so that peer learning could occur. They will not do that by themselves (...)

I make sure they go to a course to learn more about the issue. I take notice of current needs. It could for example be related to dementia, where the municipality has run a course about dementia.

(...) For some staff, maximum shortening of the training may be good, for example if they have children and many expenses. They do not have time for the full course. They need to complete the VET as quickly as possible."



(Case study 4, SOSU East Jutland, DENMARK)

Your notes

You can find more about:

- ▶ practical solutions in HR processes - see pages 23, 25, 35, 37, 39
- ▶ guidebook: what to do and how to do it? National VPL systems - see page 42
- ▶ good practices - see page 73



TEMPORARY WORKERS: A POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITY TO RECRUIT PERMANENT EMPLOYEES, IF YOU INVEST IN RECOGNITION OF QUALIFICATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT

If your answer to any of the questions/statements below is "yes", this challenge concerns your company:



Do your staff have informally obtained qualifications?



Do your foreign staff need recognition of their qualifications?

Other employers also face this challenge:

We have a large number of workers, for instance kitchen helpers who can do a lot of things on their own, and they do it. We trust them and pay for their work, they have been our employees for years but there is no need for the ladies who have worked so long in this kitchen as helpers to have certificates. It was crucial for them that we give them a chance to have their skills recognised and let them earn more.



(Case study 1 ASPEN, POLAND)

This is how a German employer coped with the challenge:

But we would not recruit systematically with regard to informal competences, though if an applicant gives examples that support the competences that we need, experience earned as the board manager in the local rabbit association are relevant to us as well. (...) Our departments focus more on what a person can do. They usually follow a pragmatic approach: come to our premises for a day's or week's work trial. And then we will see if we can get together.



(Case study 2, Dipl.-Ing. H. Sitte GmbH & Co. KG, GERMANY)

Your notes

You can find more about:

- ▶ practical solutions in HR processes - see pages 23, 25, 35
- ▶ guidebook: what to do and how to do it? National VPL systems - see page 42
- ▶ good practices - see page 73



PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS IN HR PROCESSES

PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS IN HR PROCESSES

The challenges that employers encounter in the labour market require the adjustment of various HR processes in the companies, notably recruitment and training.

These processes are present in the daily operation of the company and involve a range of dilemmas. Their efficiency calls for fulfilment of various requirements. Additional challenges issuing from the situation in the labour market also require that even more attention is paid to HR processes. For example, lack of qualified staff in the labour market calls for more intensive internal recruitment and competence development programmes. The tables below describe various solutions that employers use in individual HR processes.

A system for validation of prior learning (VPL) can be a great advantage. It makes it possible to identify, document, verify, and finally certify the competences that a member of your staff has acquired in non-formal and informal learning and training. From the employer's standpoint, you can say that the VPL system is highly helpful to define "what an employee should know and/or be able to do" at work, and furthermore relieves the employer in checking whether the employee "knows and/or can do it". There are plenty of options to obtain financing for your validation or use the system free of charge, both in case of individuals and organisations.

The VPL system and intricacies of its operation in individual states are described in greater detail in Part 3 further below, while this part contains suggestions as to how to use VPL for solving various dilemmas and answering challenges in managing HR processes.

CURRENT CHALLENGES RESULTING FROM MARKET SITUATION, DESCRIBED IN THE CASE STUDY

- ▶ Lack of qualified staff, the need to improve the qualifications of the staff (challenge 5).
- ▶ Temporary workers: potential opportunity to recruit them as permanent employees, if you invest in recognition of their qualifications and their development (challenge 6).

RELEVANT HR PROCESS IN THE ORGANISATION

Balance of the potential and competences: how to have an increasingly good recognition of the skills that people in your organisation have?

CHALLENGE

1. **How to obtain a better recognition of staff competence capital?**
2. **How to reach the people with necessary competences within the organisation quickly?**

What is the challenge?



Many employers say that it is difficult to find people with qualifications necessary to complete certain tasks. It makes plenty of sense to ask the following inside the company:

- Who to invite to project X?
- Who to encouraged to take up role Y?
- Is there anyone who could support team Z?

At the same time most people who work learn in informal and/or non-formal ways. They have acquired plenty of more or less ordered competences. They contribute various experiences and skills from previous places of employment, which you, as their current employer, may not necessarily know of. It is often the case that people in a company have useful competences, but the company doesn't know about them.

It would be advantageous if employers had more thorough information about employee competences and qualifications. The matter gains on urgency when it is difficult to hire people with necessary competences from the market, yet even when there are plenty of professionals available in the market, internal recognition is beneficial for the organisation.

What can
you do?



- Analyse the scope of competences validated in your country and choose the ones that are interesting for your company.
- Encourage your staff to participate in the processes of competence validation (include validation in the long term development processes, motivation and recruitment systems, and encourage staff to validate their competences as part of their developmental goals).
- Gather data about certified qualifications.
- Find descriptions of the competences/qualifications that your company needs in the national competences/qualifications database (or in sectoral framework).
- Descriptions of selected competences/qualifications can be included in your system for gathering personal information, and you can collect information about the competences that belong to the set you have selected, and that the staff declare (even in the case they are not confirmed).
- Only verify the competences at a later stage (e.g. as part of internal recruitment).

CURRENT CHALLENGES RESULTING FROM MARKET SITUATION, DESCRIBED IN THE CASE STUDY

- ▶ Lack of qualified staff, the need to improve the qualifications of the staff (challenge 5).
- ▶ Temporary workers: potential opportunity to recruit them as permanent employees, if you invest in recognition of their qualifications and their development (challenge 6).

RELEVANT HR PROCESS IN THE ORGANISATION

Internal recruitment

CHALLENGE

- 1. How to choose objectively the selection criteria for internal recruitment and yet not overdevelop the process?**
- 2. How to obtain a confirmation that a candidate has the needed competences? How to make the candidates perceive the process as ethical?**

What is the
challenge?



To assess correctly whether a person is a proper candidate for position X, you need to:

- define the set of qualifications and competences that a good candidate should have (i.e. "what you need to know and be able to do at this position")
- be assured that a candidate really has them.

Some organisations have competence models and profiles. If you are among those, your internal recruitment is easier. If you are not, you need to describe competences and qualifications necessary for a given position so that they are clear both for the assessors and the candidates themselves.

The second task is the correct assessment of the degree to which a candidate has the necessary competences/qualifications. Many employers fall back on information obtained at the interviews with the candidate and the candidate's manager. This is not always sufficient.

"Employment trial" is a valuable idea. Assessments based on such trials are most precise in indicating the competences the candidates have. However the labour- and time-consuming nature of such procedures is a downside of it, as is the fact that they require from recruiters to be skilled in constructing such trials. Other companies require that candidates prepare "projects" on a given subject, and subsequently assess their way of thinking and knowledge of the subject (e.g. a project that would increase client comfort in internal recruitment for hotel reception coordinators).

Why do internal recruitment processes require special attention?

Participation in internal recruitment is highly significant for the staff. In many companies, recruitments primarily involves various levels of management, with no or only a limited participation of recruiters from the HR department. Their knowledge of the competences that a candidate to a given position should have is often based on their experience and accurate, yet not expressed through objective criteria. In result, assessments are believed only to be based on the subjective beliefs of the recruiters. Such organisations pay a high price: the staff don't understand the reasons behind their positive and negative results, and people who have not been recruited ask about precise feedback ("What do I still have to learn?") and never receive it, while the whole process appears to be subjective and uncontrolled.

What can
you do?



➤ Check the descriptions of competences in the national competence/qualifications database and in sectoral frameworks – you can obtain hints and/or ready descriptions of competence requirements to various positions.

Check which of the qualifications you need are validated in your country. Obtaining validation of qualifications by candidates entering internal recruitment can provide a clear and objective criterion for selection, and remove the burden from the internal process.

CURRENT CHALLENGES RESULTING FROM MARKET SITUATION, DESCRIBED IN THE CASE STUDY

Lack of appropriate individuals for managerial positions (only external recruitment)

RELEVANT HR PROCESS IN THE ORGANISATION

Internal recruitment to line management positions (foreman, team leaders, etc.)

CHALLENGE

1. **How to encourage appropriate candidates?**
2. **How to make people selected through recruitment have proper notions about competences required on a managerial position?**
3. **How to assess what freshly nominated managers can do, and what they should develop as part of managerial training programmes?**

What is the challenge?



One of difficulties in recruitment to the positions of line managers, which organisations are aware of, is flawed understanding of tasks and responsibilities on fundamental managerial positions.

- Team members are unlikely to apply for managerial positions, as they are afraid they will find the managerial responsibility and tasks too difficult. People with potential and predispositions for holding managerial positions don't have an opportunity to learn about their capacities, as they find applying for recruitment being thrown at too deep an end. Such apprehensiveness is obviously only one of the factors that block people from embarking on specific tasks. Their key role, however, becomes evident to companies organising the so-called "pilot days" when the staff can learn and experiment with new tasks: such exercises increase the number of people eager to take over the given position.
- Team members believe that being a line manager is only a privilege and entails no additional tasks. In result, people who apply for e.g. for the post of a foreman have no idea about the competences necessary to hold that position and overestimate their potential. The solution to that case, described in the case study, is purely external recruitment.

What can
you do?



To wrap up: the staff have a very limited understanding of the competences that are actually required at managerial posts.

Some companies include education-related criteria (e.g. requiring higher education) into requirements for managerial positions. However, it makes sense to consider to what degree the level of formal education is needed case by case, and to what degree these are just specific managerial competences that are necessary.

- Define clearly what competences and qualifications are necessary at the positions of line managers in your company, and make this information accessible to your staff.
- Find qualifications aligned with your requirements in the system of validation.
- Encourage people considering promotion to validate their selected qualifications: this is how they can gradually develop and confirm qualifications before they apply for internal recruitment.
- Make validation of selected qualifications an element of training and development programmes for managers.
- Follow the development of the validation system towards validating purely managerial competences.

CURRENT CHALLENGES RESULTING FROM MARKET SITUATION, DESCRIBED IN THE CASE STUDY

- ▶ High employee churn (challenge 1)
- ▶ Lack of proved/actual qualifications in spite of diploma(s) held (challenge 2)
- ▶ Employing foreign staff (challenge 3)

RELEVANT HR PROCESS IN THE ORGANISATION

External recruitment,
how to increase its accuracy?

CHALLENGE

1. **How to obtain the largest number of credible proofs that a candidate recruited externally has the necessary skills?**
2. **How to increase the certainty that the proper person is being selected?**

What is the
challenge?



People responsible for recruitment speak of candidate qualifications becoming ever more vague, and it is hard to understand what the potential candidates can do well and what their strengths are. Although this may have limited significance in the employee market, because the demand for staff is greater than the number of hands to work, assessment of external candidates poses challenges.

- The main criterion for some companies is the previous employer (as an established brand guarantees competences) plus potential recommendations. However, what about competent individuals who have no hallmark names in their CVs?
- Other companies use more extended methods of selection, for instance employment trial, which, however, are labour consuming to design, prepare, and run.
- Another difficulty brought up by businesses is recruitment to senior positions. People applying to these have good education but no experience. Companies apply the following solution: they employ a candidate for a three-month trial period, followed by competence reassessment.

- Some organisations source processes of recruitment and selection out to specialised external businesses or build internal departments that employ professional recruiters. That solution is not available to all organisations, nor can it be used in recruitment for all types of posts.
- Recruitment is at times also accompanied by the conviction that candidates simply have no necessary qualifications, and simply need to be taught all the occupational competences. Some organisations are successful in using this approach for some positions. It should be connected with a reliable stage of instruction and training.

What can
you do?



- As a future employer, expect that candidates confirm selected qualifications: this in obvious way facilitates the process of recruitment.
- If qualifications you seek in your staff are not validated, submit information to sectoral organisations (they have the possibility of developing sectoral qualifications frameworks and initiate the process of validation).

CURRENT CHALLENGES RESULTING FROM MARKET SITUATION, DESCRIBED IN THE CASE STUDY

- ▶ Employing foreign staff (challenge 3)
- ▶ Lack of proved/actual qualifications in spite of diploma(s) held (challenge 2)

RELEVANT HR PROCESS IN THE ORGANISATION

Recruitment of foreign staff.
Support of foreign staff in improving qualifications.

CHALLENGE

1. **How to effectively help foreign workers develop competences in case of language barriers?**
2. **How to recognise the qualifications they have?**

What is the challenge?



The specific nature of recruiting foreigners comes on top of the above-mentioned difficulties connected to accurate recruitment:

- High motivation is not accompanied by skills. Employment often entails retraining, which the staff are very eager to embark on. However, language may be a barrier in training. Companies employ translators and interpreters, which, however, does not fully solve the problem.
- The staff cannot speed up the process of learning or become more mobilised to it, because they don't understand the expectations.
- It is very difficult to assess the potential and skills of foreign workers. Sometimes it's hard to refer to the diplomas they have, and due to the difficulties in communication, the employers say that "either they have no competences or we cannot recognise them" (PL case study 1).

What can
you do?



- Start cooperation with organisations that are responsible for the system of confirming qualifications in the country of origin of your staff, and recognise what qualifications they could confirm locally.
- Identify the qualifications that can be confirmed in your country, and make use of the activities developing and confirming qualifications that are ensured in the system.
- Use competence descriptions from a national database of competences/qualifications standards as information about the expected competences (helps foreigners understand the scope of requirements, and helps in learning).
- Notify validating institutions of the need to conduct validation in national languages.

CURRENT CHALLENGES RESULTING FROM MARKET SITUATION, DESCRIBED IN THE CASE STUDY

Insufficient competences of the staff/faulty performance of work (challenge 4)

RELEVANT HR PROCESS IN THE ORGANISATION

Programmes for improving occupational skills: achieving the required level to maintain standards of performance.

CHALLENGE

1. **How to furnish the employees with competences that are necessary to perform work of appropriate quality?**
2. **How to find competence gaps and how to provide additional/complementary training, especially in large teams?**
3. **How to make staff sensitive to maintaining appropriate quality standards?**

What is the challenge?



Some employers find the gaps in the professional competences of their staff so severe that they prevent them from working to appropriate standards. Worse, they "don't even know what they don't know" nor are they aware that they should do something otherwise. Sometimes this results in poorer quality, errors, lower effectiveness, and even situations that are a threat to security and safety.

Employers can expect appropriate instruction, notification of standards, and execution of the standards by the superiors.

However, there are also cases that cause major problems:

- line managers manage large teams, also working shifts, in whose case the limited time available makes a real impact on the potential of persistent learning process;
- the superior must not necessarily be an expert in every task that an employee performs: in many cases, they don't know how to provide their staff with support in certain areas in spite of genuine intentions;

What can
you do?



- skills, which in everyday practice are believed to be of lesser importance, are a separate question. These include the skills of working with personal data, assuring digital security, first aid, etc., but also literacy in popular office software (there is a silent assumption that most people know how to use it). The employees find it hard to be motivated to develop such skills, although, all things told, their impact on efficiency may be high and the potential mistakes significant.

- The existing processes of validation that correspond to competences your staff require can be made obligatory. In this case, it will be an employee's obligation to obtain the skills that will let them pass exams and obtain the certificates that your company requires. You can bind the confirmation of qualifications to the payroll.
- Encourage staff to validate skills that are "of lesser everyday significance" making them an element that is optional but appreciated (both in motivation systems and in the strategy of promotion).

CURRENT CHALLENGES RESULTING FROM MARKET SITUATION, DESCRIBED IN THE CASE STUDY

- ▶ Lack of qualified staff, the need to improve the qualifications of the staff (challenge 5).
- ▶ Temporary workers: potential opportunity to recruit them as permanent employees, if you invest in recognition of their qualifications and their development (challenge 6).

RELEVANT HR PROCESS IN THE ORGANISATION

Staff development processes:
how to motivate to improve
competences and acquire new ones?

CHALLENGE

1. **How to encourage staff to develop competences above "the required minimum"?**
2. **How to channel the general readiness of adults to learn into the development of competences necessary at work?**
3. **How to mobilise, reinforce satisfaction from development, and attach significance to development?**

What is the
challenge?



Most adults learn continuously, in an informal manner, developing competences, whether occupational or non-occupational, in a more or less ordered manner. As part of the Polish Balance of Human Capital Study II, 70% of respondents declared that they participated in informal or non-formal learning during the previous year. Most of the remaining stated "there was no reason to develop any competences at work" as the reason for lack of learning.

- How then can you make use of the natural readiness to learn, and channel it more on the occupational competences?
- How to get the "passive" staff involved in development?

If you want to make sure that your staff have conditions that support motivation for developing skills, first point to the alignment of specific competences with their tasks at work, and secondly give them an opportunity to control the process of learning. How can an employee control learning? First, he or she should know the endpoint: what competences and at what level must be obtained, in other words, when he or she can say "I have the required skill". An employee should also be capable of assessing their progress (what and how do I still need to learn).

Many organisations designing long-term efficient development programmes for the staff follow these principles. An example comes in the development of Lean and Six Sigma management competences: there are clearly described competences required at individual levels, detailed descriptions of means of obtaining confirmation of competences ("successive bands"), and a clear scope of training connected to the tasks the participants will be prepared for.

What can
you do?



- Use competence descriptions in national competence/qualifications databases as clear guidelines for the areas to learn/levels of competence development.
- Use the existing processes of validation of competences, including them into longer development programmes conducted in your company.
- Encourage the superiors to account for validation in their development goals agreed with the staff.
- Attach appropriate significance to the certificates confirming competences (through appreciation, celebration, and awards). Companies often look for ways of assigning meaning to development programmes: in this case there is a way (validation exam), and it is worthwhile to give it appropriate height.

CURRENT CHALLENGES RESULTING FROM MARKET SITUATION, DESCRIBED IN THE CASE STUDY

RELEVANT HR PROCESS IN THE ORGANISATION

Lack of qualified staff, the need to improve the qualifications of the staff (challenge 5).

Recruitment and development of unique/rare roles in the company.

CHALLENGE

1. **How to recruit to highly specific positions, for example, when there is only one in the company?**
2. **How to assess whether a person playing a non-standard role is properly qualified?**
3. **How to support such people in competence development?**

What is the challenge?



Developing products and ways of managing the organisation, employers need people to play the roles that were previously absent from organisations. Community building manager, project manager, facilitator, social media expert, and UX expert are some roles that have only recently cropped up. Each of them calls for a specific set of competences that are not necessarily well researched in or known to your organisation.

As an employer, you can find yourself in a situation when you'll find it difficult to assess whether someone has the competences necessary to play such a role, and to choose the best training for/manners of developing such competences.

What can you do?



- Make use of competence profiles developed by sectoral organisations that define standards for occupational roles (e.g., associations, chambers, etc.).
- Else: check the existing sectoral qualifications frameworks developed in professional circles.

- Follow the national database of competences and qualifications (National Qualifications Frameworks (NQF), and the Integrated Qualifications Register), which persistently expands by having new descriptions of competences added.
- If there are no available validation processes for non-standard/novel qualifications, notify sectoral organisations of the need for such processes.

CURRENT CHALLENGES RESULTING FROM MARKET SITUATION, DESCRIBED IN THE CASE STUDY

- ▶ Insufficient competences of the staff/faulty performance of work (challenge 4).
- ▶ Lack of qualified staff, the need to improve the qualifications of the staff (challenge 5).

RELEVANT HR PROCESS IN THE ORGANISATION

Development of community skills:
how to make their significance
known?

CHALLENGE

1. **What to do to make social competences a set of skills that is concrete and important for the staff at work?**
2. **How to reinforce motivation to their development?**

What is the
challenge?



Employers seek both vocational and social skills in candidates to employment (Balance of Human Capital Study II, Poland). It seems that everyone, both employers and employees, understand that social competences translate directly into the results of work at most positions. However, practice has demonstrated a number of changes in the area: people are inadequate in self-assessment of their social competences. This usually becomes painful when they overestimate their communication, problem solving, and negotiating skills, whose reception in the environment they work in is entirely different. Yet the opposite is the case as well: some staff do not use their potential as they believe their social competences to be insufficient.

Training in social competences cause mixed feelings. On the one hand, people truly interested in development set a great store by them and consider them an opportunity to introduce changes in an array of different situations that require contact with people. On the other, opinions that "it is not at all specific" and "it's nothing new, after all, we all communicate and sometimes cope" spread.

Another question is the assessment of the level of soft competences during all recruitment and potential assessment exercises and campaigns. Seemingly simple, it requires appropriate preparation for accuracy.

There are companies, including recognised international entities that embark on efficient activities that promote selected social competences. These firms describe such competences (e.g., conflict solving, providing feedback, running difficult talks with clients) clearly and well, and it is usual for the staff to discuss how these are used; all the company's staff are trained in the skill, with training sessions being co-facilitated by board members, or involving them. It is then generally clear that everyone working for the company needs developing these competences. However, as yet, many employers don't have such programs.

What can
you do?



- Check the national competence database (qualifications framework). In some countries descriptions of social competences are obligatory for qualifications.
- Important: in this case, just the descriptions of competences taken from the national database of competences/qualifications can be helpful in making the staff aware of specific competence requirements (social competences) in their positions. However, you need to realise that even given a perfectly precise description, people will not necessarily be able to use it adequately to their skills.
- Try to find validation processes that develop and certify social competences.
- Increase the significance of certification of social competences in your organisation: gather information about them and make them appreciated (e.g. through motivation systems) at par with occupational competences.

PROCESS IN THE ORGANISATION

Building the image of a highly competent organisation: how to show the level of employee skills to clients?

CHALLENGE

1. **How to recruit to highly specific positions, for example, when there is only one in the company?**
2. **How to assess whether a person playing a non-standard role is properly qualified?**
3. **How to support such people in competence development?**

What is the challenge?




Operating in a competitive environment, employers need arguments that confirm the value they provide to the client or contractor. One of the arguments, which seems to be especially valuable in services, is validation of the employers' high qualifications.

It is often difficult for service buyers to assess the service provider's competences: they resort to opinions, the previous experience portfolio, and sometimes to detailed information about the person carrying out the contract/task (descriptions of education and experience).

What can you do?



- As a service provider: certification of your staff in selected competences that are of key importance for the client/customer can be motivating and used as a competitive edge.
- As the commissioning party: if processes of validation of appropriate competences exist, you can include confirmation of competences into the package of requirements from your supplier. If they don't exist but you find it strategically important for your provider to be able to prove them, notify the sectoral organisation of a need for validation.
- If you are a producer who finds it important that people working with your product do it in a competent manner (this concerns assembly, care, servicing.), submit your organisation as one that can design and run the process of validation of the necessary qualifications.



GUIDEBOOK: WHAT TO DO AND HOW TO DO IT? NATIONAL VPL SYSTEMS

GUIDEBOOK: WHAT TO DO AND HOW TO DO IT?

NATIONAL VPL SYSTEMS

In line with the policy of the European Union and national legislation enacted on the grounds of EU policy and recommendations, each and every citizen of the EU has the right to have his or her qualifications recognised, irrespective of the means of obtaining them. This means that not only what you have learnt on the formal path, that is, for example, at school, should be recognised as qualifications but also all the non-formal forms of education, to mention additional courses, and fully informal situations, in which you learn through voluntary employment and/or on-the-job experience.

Moreover, priorities in a dynamic labour market include flexibility, complementary training, and retraining of staff – lifelong learning. Lifelong learning hardly ever assumes the form of formal education, and from the employer's point of view, it is the possibility of validating the qualifications of an employee, whether at the stage of recruitment, promotion or a change of position, that counts more than "owning a diploma". The following part of the publication showcases systemic solutions that can be used at various (regional, national, EU) levels by employers and employees to solve the existing problems and in recruitment and/or employee development. Other purposes can also be envisaged, with the following part also to be used as an inspiration for the future.



WHAT IS VALIDATION AND WHAT IS ITS PURPOSE AND MORE EXTENSIVE CONTEXT?

Validation is an instrument promoting participation in adult education at various levels, Adult vocational training, VET programmes, further adult education and post-secondary adult education.

Validation of non-formal and informal learning is ever more often construed as a means of improving lifelong learning.

LEGAL CONTEXT

The key legislation on validation of prior learning in Denmark is Act no. 556 of 6 June 2007, entitled "Development of the recognition of prior learning in adult education and continuing training".

The legislation gives each individual the right to have his/her prior learning experience validated in relation to specific goals of adult education and continuing training. It focuses on the needs of the individual and aims to make the process as accessible and flexible as possible.

Act no. 556 includes the following six educational fields:

- Single course subjects in general adult education (basic level – AVU)
- Single course subjects in general upper secondary education
- Adult Vocational training programs (AMU)
- The VET programs for adults + 25. The VPL is compulsory for the applicants prior to the VET program for adults.
- Short-cycle post-secondary adult education (Further Adult Education, VVU)
- Medium-cycle post-secondary adult education (Diploma programs)



The legislation does not include Master Programmes.

The implementation of the legislation is decentralized at regional level. The tradition in Denmark is that legislation provides a framework that outlines how the educational institutions have to act to ensure quality assurance and to ensure validation with a view to developing quality systems, methods etc.

The Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Higher Education and Science are responsible for the legal framework concerning the VPL and for the national initiatives undertaken to implement those.

INSTITUTIONS RESPONSIBLE AT THE NATIONAL/ REGIONAL LEVEL

Since 2007, legislation allows individuals to gain access to short-cycle and medium-cycle Higher Education (Bachelor-level degrees) based on an individual competence assessment. The educational institutions are responsible for information, guidance and assessment of the individual.

From August 2015, new legislation in Vocational Education for Adults (EUV) states that adults (25 year old or more) are obliged to start the education based on validation of prior learning. In accordance to this the education will be tailor-made targeted the specific vocational education the individual wants to complete.

In general, assessment of prior learning provides the individual the following opportunities:

- Access to educational programs.
- Tailor-made education



DENMARK

Obtain "Competence-certificate (part qualification), if the knowledge, skills and competences are equivalent with the learning outcomes described in the entire educational program.

Only educational institutions conduct VPL.

The opportunities differ in the different educational fields.

NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORKS AND EUROPEAN QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

Denmark has National Qualifications Framework (NQF) covering all types and levels of qualifications.

The results of a VPL are guaranteed in terms of the linkage to national qualifications frameworks – also in line with European Qualifications Framework.

Most qualifications in the Danish National Qualifications Frameworks are available to people who want to obtain them on the grounds of validation.

https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/national-qualifications-framework-22_de

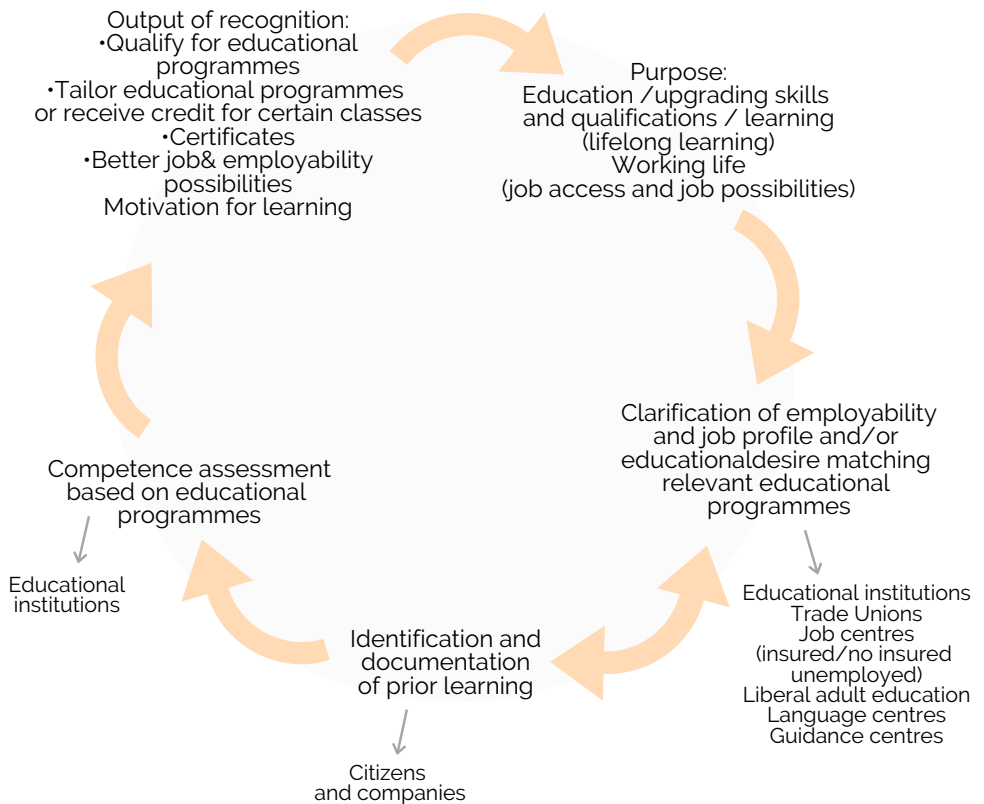
WHAT IS THE COURSE OF VALIDATION / VALIDATION AT WORK?

The recommend VPL process consists of four stages: identification / mapping, documentation, assessment and certification. The VPL providers are responsible for information and guidance.



DENMARK

The proces for recognition of prior learning in an educational perspective and Danish context



CREDIBILITY OF QUALIFICATIONS: QUALITY, STAFF, INSTITUTIONS, QUALITY ASSURANCE

The VPL providers – education and training institutions – are responsible for quality assurance, information and evaluation of the VPL practice.



The assessed and recognised competences are based on transparent quality assurance measures. The VPL is carried out by the educational providers. The providers are responsible for quality assurance and the assessment is based on common standards and criteria. The sector committees are responsible for setting the standards and criteria for recognition. Hence, the reliability and trust of VPL outcomes is high across sectors.

In Denmark, the validation professionals at educational institution level are consultants/advisers, assessors, which are often teachers, administrative personnel. There are no specific formal competence requirements for VPL professionals.

Public Employment Centres and trade unions are responsible for career guidance in a very broad sense, which can include identification / mapping and support for documentation of non-formal and informal learning as well as career guidance before and after the validation process.

A counselling web portal provides general information about prior learning, www.ug.dk and through this, there is a direct connection to eGuidance, <https://www.ug.dk/evejledning/>

An e-platform, My competence portfolio, for support to documentation is available at the Internet. www.minkomptencemappe.dk

The Danish National Evaluation Institute (EVA) is an institution providing quality review in reference to the validation of adult prior learning.



FINANCING

In Denmark, validation is free for individuals, and institutions receive one-off funds for assessment of competences, individual education, training plans (EUV), and assessment of competences (AMU).

Prior learning validation is financially supported by the Ministry of Education or the Ministry of Higher Education and Science. Public financing covers the validation in educational institutions, but does not cover information or explanation/consulting in the process concerning the individual's application.

Educational institutions may charge a fee for the assessment/validation of prior learning in reference to VPL programmes covering higher education. Organisations involved in prior learning validation must cover the relevant costs from their own budgets. However, there are numerous programmes encouraging institutions and employers to run the process of validation; in these cases, they receive financial support.

WHERE TO GO / WHERE TO BEGIN

eVejledning, <https://www.ug.dk/evejledning/>

Knowledge platform for VPL (In Danish RKV) to CVET) <https://viden-om-realkompetence.via.dk/>



GERMANY

WHAT IS VALIDATION AND WHAT IS ITS PURPOSE AND MORE EXTENSIVE CONTEXT?

Validation. An instrument promoting adult participation in continued education and training.

LEGAL CONTEXT

In 2004 the states (Bundesländer) and the German federal government approved a joint lifelong learning strategy, emphasising that learning should be supported at all the stages of life and in various places where it occurs. The strategy makes clear references to non-formal and informal learning that should be connected and included into the formal paths of education.

Validation of informal and non-formal learning (VPL) becomes increasingly significant in educational research and practice in Germany. This is connected to the European lifelong learning strategy, endeavor to support the development of qualified labour, and the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). Validation has only entered an early stage in Germany, yet legislation, programmes, and projects have already been developed and are addressed by various authorities with various jurisdiction. However, joint guidelines and a joint strategy for development of transparent validation processes have not been developed yet. This, among others, results from the following:

- a high degree of regulation in the system of education concentrated on formal qualifications and certificates, and
- strictly interlinked learning at school and at work, as part of a formalised dual system of vocational education and training.



GERMANY

Although informal and hands-on learning at work is considered important, it is not taken into account in the context of validation, mostly because it is held outside the formal system of education.

INSTITUTIONS RESPONSIBLE AT THE NATIONAL/ REGIONAL LEVEL

Due to the federal policy, German educational policy is the domain of the individual states, which makes it decentralised. It covers general, higher, adult and lifelong education, and management of various education sectors. Only individual parts of the system of education are regulated at the national level, which includes legislation on access to higher education, civic education (not covered by school curricula), dual system of vocational training (i.e. vocational apprenticeship), as well as professional regulations concerning specific professions such as lawyers and caring professions.

- Based on the federal principle and decentralised
- At the level of the federal states
 - General education (primary & secondary)
 - Tertiary education
 - Adult education
 - Lifelong learning
- At the national level
 - Regulations governing admission to higher education
 - Civic education
 - Dual vocational training
 - Specific vocational and professional domains (e.g. lawyers)



GERMANY

NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORKS AND EUROPEAN QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

The German Qualifications Framework (DQR) was designed on the grounds of the EQF by a committee of experts and approved in May 2013. The main goals are to improve access to education and training, and to increase interchange between educational paths and the labour market. The eight-level matrix developed for the German Qualifications Framework may generally be used for classifying professional and personal competences required in all the sectors of education. In DQR the term "competence" is construed as referring to the knowledge and skills of an individual, the individual's personal, social and methodological talents, and the individual's disposition to individual and social responsibility (see AK DQR, 2011). Focus on competences is of profound significance while including validation in the DQR, because this approach focuses on what an individual can and cannot do in reference to the educational input data.

WHAT IS THE COURSE OF VALIDATION / VALIDATION AT WORK?

There are two different approaches to validation, recognising prior learning in operation in Europe:

1. System-based approach (Austria, Germany, Switzerland) aims at making the procedures and methods that already exist and are available in the system of education. Validation is subsequently connected to the formal system.
2. Competence-based approach (Denmark, Finland, France, the United Kingdom) develops specific procedures and methods in line with the defined competence standards which are more flexibly connected to the system of education.



GERMANY

Three different types of prior learning validation can be distinguished in German legal grounds:

- a. Validation of prior learning to obtain a permit for regular albeit external examination (i.e. an examination that belongs to the formal system of education). – According to the national Law on vocational qualifications and regulations set up by the chamber of crafts, one can apply for taking up the final vocational examination without the need to participate in the programme of vocational training if one meets defined requirements, which cover a proof of appropriate vocational experience 1.5 times as long as the duration of the regular training programme. Theoretically, it is also possible to take up the final exam in the case of higher education, but it is not used in practice.
- b. Validation of prior learning to obtain access to various parts of education. The goal is to avoid redundancy and shorten the educational paths between vocational and higher education. Various approaches are to a great degree decentralised, and are not regulated at the national level. This is connected to specific procedures, providing access to higher education to individuals with vocational experience but no formal preliminary qualification. This is the so-called "third path in education".
- c. Validation of prior learning as tantamount to the existing educational standards and certificates. – In the case of vocational training, the Act on validation of vocational qualifications was introduced in April 2012. It guarantees individuals the right to have foreign qualifications validated by proper body as equal to corresponding national qualifications within three months.



GERMANY

Although the law concentrates on the assessment and comparison of formal qualifications, qualifications required on the informal path and appropriate vocational experience may be considered in case of lacking or incomplete formal certificates.

The Act on the validation of vocational qualifications defines specific professional fields (currently over 600) regulated by the federal law, in this way, differentiating between the regulated and unregulated professions. The process of validation is primarily based on the assessment of appropriate documents, to mention training certificates, proficiency certificates, and proofs of appropriate vocational experience in a given field obtained in a foreign country or in Germany. There is also an opportunity of a complementary assessment of competences based on practical testing, proofs of employment, and interviews. If major skills gaps make full validation difficult, it is possible to have qualifications recognised partially and have them later complemented, for example, by further training.

Approaches to law-based validation exist in Germany but are not often used because they are either highly time-consuming and costly (the right to recognition) or they require a specialist preparation (external examination).

Validation approaches going beyond the legislative level: various validation instruments have been designed and covered by pilot projects in the recent years. However, most of them are hardly known to individuals as well as businesses and employers. Two case studies follow.



GERMANY

- a. Instruments for competence assessment: a number of instruments for documentation and assessment of competences have been developed to support specific target groups, e.g. youth in need of special support, immigrants, people re-entering the labour market and volunteers. For instance, ProfilPASS is a tool for assessing competences at all stages of life. Biography-oriented, it takes into account all the forms of prior learning as well as practical on-the-job experience. Not result-oriented, it is rather an open tool for self-reflection and identification of own strengths and gaps in learning. Specifically, ProfilPASS is geared for review, documentation, and assessment of informally acquired competences, irrespective of where and in what learning context they have been acquired. It is based on the user's self-assessment supported by professional consulting. This is why its goal is not validation in itself, but further personal and professional development. The ProfilPASS model includes standards concerning instruments, methods, and guidelines for documentation. So far no connection between the DQR and ProfilPASS has been set up.
- b. Company-based procedures: during recruitment, companies often turn to informal competences to base their assessment on a volume of information larger than just formal certificates. These can include interviews, letters of reference, assessment centres, potential analysis, and profiling. On the other hand, employers also employ unqualified staff and people without formal qualifications. Hence, at the level of the company, skills and competences that have been acquired informally and not certified or validated are taken into account for the purposes of recruitment and/or internal promotion. However, such recognition is as a rule not recognised outside a particular institutional context and therefore does not help vertical or horizontal occupational mobility.



GERMANY

CREDIBILITY OF QUALIFICATIONS: QUALITY, STAFF, INSTITUTIONS, QUALITY ASSURANCE

Every approach has its advantages and disadvantages. The systemic approach is ready and based on legal grounds. However, the whole scope of informally acquired competences is not a part of the process of validation. This refers in particular to all the competences that as a rule cannot be assessed through standard examination procedures. On the other hand, competence-based models are criticised for threatening the standards of the formal system of education and ultimately for challenging the principles of vocational training.

In Germany, most of validation procedures aim at obtaining formal qualifications that are part of the formal system. Formative approaches, to mention ProfilPASS, are construed as preparation to validation within the framework of formal qualifications or just as support for personal development.

There are various methods and instruments for the assessment of non-formal and informal learning available in Germany. However, most of the tools have no legally binding connection to validation and recognition. In result, validation procedures, leading to the formal recognition of informally obtained competences are rare and limited in scope. This is caused by the lack of overarching legal VPL frameworks and strategies, lack of involvement in the acquisition of the necessary resources, and partially by lack of credibility. What has as yet been available in Germany, actually does not consider validation, and nor does it give any answer to the key challenges of validation. This means that although there are plenty of uncoordinated instruments for competence assessment based on non-formal and informal learning



GERMANY

available, it is still impossible to draw conclusions concerning the applicability of various mobility tools in the labour market and benefits for the individual.

FINANCING

Free.

WHERE TO GO / WHERE TO BEGIN

Germany. E.g. education recognition centre.

SOURCE DATA USED TO PREPARE THIS SECTION OF THE GUIDEBOOK

Our annual reports from each country.

CEDEFOP tkz inventory of validation 2016 country report.



POLAND

WHAT IS VALIDATION AND WHAT IS ITS PURPOSE AND MORE EXTENSIVE CONTEXT?

Definition of validation provided in the Legal Act which regulates VALIDATION is as follows: checking whether a person applying for being awarded specific qualification, irrespective of the way that person has learned, has achieved a specific part or all of the effects required for that qualification (Art. 2, item 22).

Effects of learning: knowledge, skills, and social competences required in the process of learning; we can learn in different ways – not only formal, as we know intuitively.

The system currently being implemented will be based on the following principles:

- validation should be available irrespective of the fact whether someone has used organised forms of education and training or not,
- validation can be spread over time (it is not necessary to confirm the attainment of all learning outcomes required to be awarded a specific qualifications at once),
- validation can be carried out in various places, e.g. in a workplace,
- the verification of learning outcomes can take place with the use of various methods that are best suited to meet the needs and limitations of persons who undergo the validation,
- validation should be based on appropriate methods adjusted to the qualification that the validation is intended to verify (validation quality),
- the result should be independent of the place, time, methods, and validating persons.[1]

[1] See: Gmaj, I., Grzeszczak, J., Leyk, A. et al. (2016) "Walidacja - nowe możliwości zdobywania kwalifikacji" Warszawa: Instytut Badan Edukacyjnych



POLAND

LEGAL CONTEXT

In Poland, the questions concerning qualifications and validation of effects of learning are regulated by the Act on the Integrated Qualifications System that came into effect on 15 January 2016. The act defines fundamental legal framework for the new order in the matters of qualification, to be found in the Integrated Qualifications Register that currently includes over 9680 qualifications (data as of 8 April 2019, <https://rejestr.kwalifikacje.gov.pl/en/>). The register lists three types of qualifications:

- full and partial qualifications (distinguished in vocational training) from education and higher education, granted on the grounds of the acts regulating the operation of the system. This type of qualifications is included in the Integrated Qualifications System on the power of the act.
- "regulated" qualifications, awarded outside formal education and on the ground of other legislation; these are also partial qualifications
- "market" qualifications, awarded but not ensconced in binding laws; they are also partial qualifications. Entered into the register, they are described in accordance with the assumed standard, with reference to the Certifying Institution and the way of their awarding.

INSTITUTIONS RESPONSIBLE AT THE NATIONAL/ REGIONAL LEVEL

The coordinating institution at the national level is the Ministry of the National Education that supervises in this scope the work of other ministries responsible for qualifications in their area/industry/sector.

The consulting body for the Ministry of National Education.



POLAND

The Polish National Integrated Qualifications System Stakeholders Council consists of representatives of the Polish Chamber of Commerce (KIG), employer organisations, trade unions, the Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland (KRASP), Conference of Rectors of Vocational Schools in Poland (KRePSZ), the Central Examination Commission (CKE), businesses active in non-formal education, local and regional governments, and the minister coordinating the Integrated Qualifications System.

NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORKS AND EUROPEAN QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

There are eight levels in the Polish Qualifications Framework. They are defined by the general characteristics of the effects of learning. The PQF is to serve the classification of qualifications included in the integrated system according to levels, which will make it possible to compare qualifications in various fields in Poland and internationally, in reference to the European Qualifications Framework. The work on the Polish Qualifications Framework (PQF) was completed in 2013, and subsequently a reference report presenting the model of the PQF was drafted, and approved by the Polish government and the European Commission.

<https://prk.men.gov.pl/punkt-koordynacyjny-ds-polskiej-i-europejskiej-ramy-kwalifikacji/>



POLAND

SECTORAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

The act makes it possible for interested parties to develop their own sectoral frameworks, while the decision to include such frameworks in the Integrated Qualifications System is the competence of the appropriate minister.

So far (as of 8 April 2019) Sectoral Qualifications Frameworks have been developed for the following sectors:

- Banking
- IT
- Sport
- Tourism
- Telecommunication
- Construction
- Development services
- Fashion industry
- Public health
- Commerce/Trade

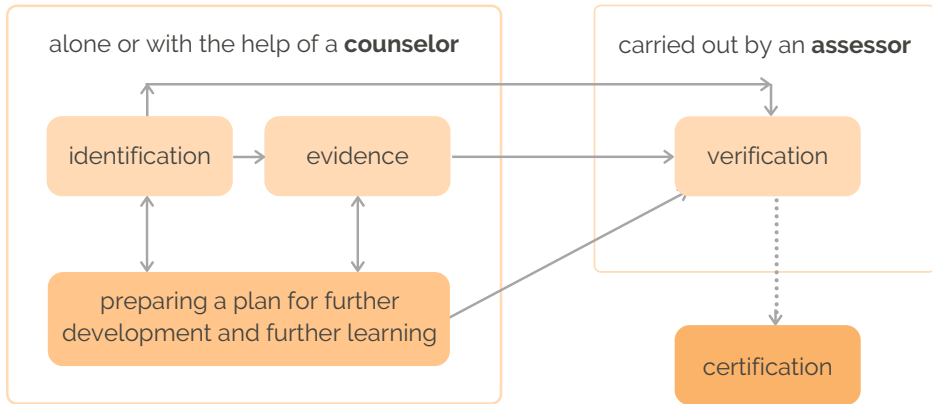
<http://kwalifikacje.edu.pl/czym-sa-sektorowe-ramy-kwalifikacji-2/>

WHAT IS THE COURSE OF VALIDATION / VALIDATION AT WORK?

Validation may consist of three stages: identification, documentation, and verification of the effects of learning.



POLAND



Validation is a multi-dimensional and multi-stage process that covers identification, documentation, and verification of an individual's effects of learning. Identification and documentation are especially important in the case of people who learnt outside organised forms of education. For more information, visit:

<http://walidacja.ibe.edu.pl/metody/>

Currently, the people who want to obtain qualifications may use information available on the website and support from vocational consultants and staff of Certifying Institutions as well as assessor who conduct the process in the institution, Chamber of Crafts, Regional Examination Commission, Voluntary Labour Corps (OHP), at the institution of higher education or training institution. Relevant consulting (competence balance) can be received from public employment services. For the case study from Małopolska Region, see



POLAND

Good Practices. An individual may resort to competence balancing, that is a form of support (a solution regionally available at the Regional Employment Office in Kraków).

CREDIBILITY OF QUALIFICATIONS: QUALITY, STAFF, INSTITUTIONS, QUALITY ASSURANCE

The functions of an external body ensuring quality are entrusted by the minister proper for the given qualification. The list of bodies authorised for external quality assurance results from the role of the Ministry of National Education in the system, as it plays quality assuring functions as an External Quality Assurer.

External Quality Assurer supports certifying institutions in the appropriate management of activities connected to validation and certification. It runs continuous monitoring of activity of the Certifying Institution and its regular external evaluation.

A Certifying Institution is an institution authorised to award defined qualifications included in the Integrated Qualifications System. It must ensure quality of the validation process and also feature an internal quality assurance system.

The staff must have appropriate preparation: training in conducting the process of validation, including verification. The staff are people working for/cooperating with the Certifying Institution, that is: (optionally) vocational consultants, validation consultant, assessors, vocational teachers/educators, and certified examiners.



POLAND

FINANCING

Individuals finance validation from own funds or other sources, e.g. EFS funds, training/education coupons for obtaining qualifications. The National Training Fund can also provide a source of financing for entrepreneurs and their staff.

WHERE TO GO / WHERE TO BEGIN

The website of the Integrated Qualifications Register: <https://rejestr.kwalifikacje.gov.pl/en/>. Here you can find the qualifications you are interested in. How it works – good practice VCC.

Regional coordinators supporting the development of the system: <http://kwalifikacje.edu.pl/> - have a look at the consultants operating in your region. To learn more about the initiative, see the good practices – IBE national – national project.

Małopolska Partnership for Lifelong Learning (Małopolskie Partnerstwo na rzecz Kształcenia Ustawicznego): www.pociagdokariery.pl

➤ See: good practices

The Coordination Point of the Polish Qualifications Framework and the European Qualifications Framework

<https://prk.men.gov.pl/en/1en/>

Documents: Integrated Skills Strategy

<http://www.ibe.edu.pl/pl/projekty-krajowe/zintegrowana-strategia-umiejetnosci>



TURKEY

WHAT IS VALIDATION AND WHAT IS ITS PURPOSE AND MORE EXTENSIVE CONTEXT?

Validation. An instrument promoting adult participation in continuing education and training.

LEGAL CONTEXT

Validation of informal and non-formal education is a new phenomenon in Turkey. Research proves that awareness of validation has recently increased, yet current knowledge does not favour quick development in the area. Validation has only entered an initial stage at the level of higher education.

The Law on National Education No. 1739 concerning both non-formal and formal education operates in the overall education sector, while the Law on Vocational Training No. 3308 organises vocational and technical training. In accordance with the Law on Vocational Education, **the assessment of prior informal and formal competences and also competences acquired during vocational training have been defined**, according to standards and in the context of validation and qualification, in line with appropriate rules and regulations.

While the lifelong learning strategy for 2014–18 focuses on the process of validation, higher education has only entered an early stage in this respect.



TURKEY

Law No. 5544 defines the principles of national qualifications in technical and vocational areas as far as audits, validation, assessment, and certification of formal and non-formal learning. Vocational Qualifications Authority (VQA) operates at the national level and covers the validation of vocational qualifications in all the sectors, with the exception of physicians, dentists, nurses, midwives, pharmacists, veterinarians, engineers, architects, and also other professions requiring at least graduate education level, in whose case, the conditions for entering the profession are regulated by law. VQA's Vocational Qualifications Certificate has become obligatory for the professions listed in the document/act.

Currently there are 633 national vocational standards in Turkey. This means that approximately 25% of standards have been adjusted to individual teaching curricula. People with qualifications based on vocational standards have greater opportunities in the labour market.

INSTITUTIONS RESPONSIBLE AT THE NATIONAL/ REGIONAL LEVEL

The Ministry of National Education (MoNE) and the Vocational Qualifications Authority (VQA, operating since 2006) have been responsible for activities related to validation in Turkey. Besides them, there are many other public organisations involved in validation activity. They include the Ministry of National Education, the Council for Higher Education (CoHE), and the Turkish Employment Agency. Moreover, the private sector is also involved in validation activity. The Lifelong Learning Directorate General (LLL DG) in the Ministry runs a number of projects that have been designed to contribute to the development of the validation system in Turkey.



TURKEY

There is an administrative distinction between vocational education and training (VET) and other qualifications in Turkey. The MoNE is responsible for the competences of non-formal, and formal primary and secondary education (in general and vocational education). Non-formal education is carried out by the MoNE in public education and Vocational Training Centres. While the CoHE focuses on the qualifications of higher education, the Vocational Qualifications Authority coordinates the qualifications set up in Law No. 5544.

NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORKS AND EUROPEAN QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK

Turkey has National Qualifications Framework (TQF) supporting processes of validation, and explaining the meaning of qualification and effects of learning necessary to achieve qualifications. The TQF is developed in cooperation by the TQF, VQA, MoNE, CoHE, Ministry of Labour and Social Security (MoLSS), and other related ministries and public institutions, chambers of industry and trade, labour and trade associations, organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and academics. The VQA, which carries out the process of certification, approves and distributes vocational qualification certificates based on the national Qualifications Framework through Accredited Certification Institutions (ACIs). A qualification certificate awarded by the VQA is valid at both national and international levels.

Validation processes in lifelong learning aim to identify all the knowledge, skills, and competences acquired by an individual through informal and non-formal learning at all TQF levels. Therefore, the qualifications and the relevant VNFIL infrastructure describe the most common practice of validating informal and non-formal learning in Turkey.



TURKEY

WHAT IS THE COURSE OF VALIDATION / VALIDATION AT WORK?

Examination and certification processes are conducted by institutions that have been accredited for specific national qualifications, and have been approved by the VQA. All the necessary procedures concerning documentation are performed by an authorised institution. Those who successfully go through the measurement and evaluation processes administered by ACIs are entitled to VQCs. The requirements for obtaining the VQC are determined by the National Qualifications developed for each occupation. Accordingly, candidates who wish to receive the VQC apply to one of the relevant qualified ACIs. The details of the procedure for certification are determined by the Vocational Qualification, Examination and Documentation Regulation issued by the VQA.

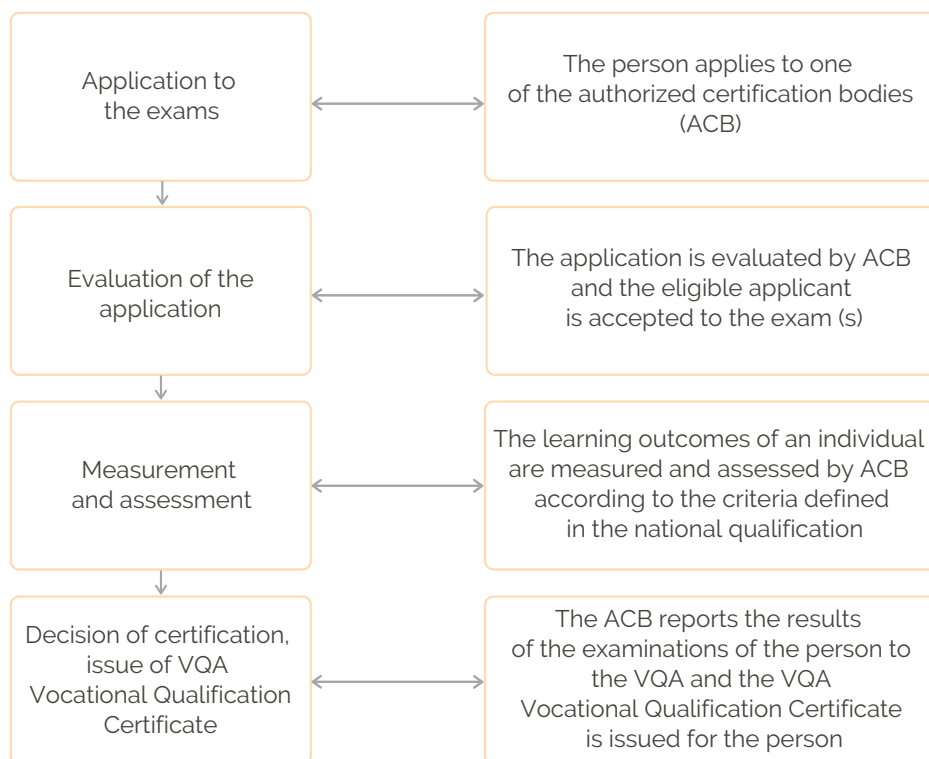
Stages of validation: **review** (an individual applies to a Lifelong Learning Coordination Unit to discuss the VPL with the staff working under the supervision of the IT Manager), **referral** (a member of the IT staff responsible for the explanation of the VPL process and conducting the screening meets the individual), **guidance** (collection of evidence and preparation of the portfolio), **evaluation of the portfolio, internal assessment and internal verification** (based on the VPL Action Plan, the candidate is subjected to the process of evaluation by the Evaluation Commission), **certification**.

The Official Statement on the Occupations that Require Vocational Qualifications Certificate (VQC) by Vocational Qualifications Authority was published in the Official Gazette (25 May 2015, No. 29366). The purpose of this Official Statement is to identify the occupations that required the VQC for employees. This requirement is especially for the



TURKEY

dangerous and very dangerous jobs such as natural gas infrastructure construction controlling, steel welding, and industrial pipe installing.



CREDIBILITY OF QUALIFICATIONS: QUALITY, STAFF, INSTITUTIONS, QUALITY ASSURANCE

As of July 2019 Turkey has 210 Accredited Certification Institutions, in January 2017 this number was 76. There are 482 National Qualifications and 829 national professional standards that have been approved; and evaluation and certification activities are carried out in a total of 117 vocations (VQA website).



TURKEY

There is no information about quality, as validation is a new phenomenon in Turkey. However, those institutes that apply for becoming accredited certification bodies need to send two of their employees who would be in charge of the VPL processes to the seminars organised by the VQA as part of the accreditation process.

FINANCING

If the applicant is successful, costs of documentation and examination fee are financed by the state through Unemployment Insurance Fund. In case of failure, the costs are not financed by the Fund. However, there have been some changes over the years about who pays the fees and to what extent. The exams, which are 100% state subsidized until the end of 2017, are 50% subsidized throughout 2018 and 2019. Each candidate is entitled to two exams and the fee is paid back to the candidate who passed the exam. In case of recruitment of employees with Vocational Qualification Certificate, Social Insurance Institution premiums of the enterprises that meet certain criteria are paid by the state for a period of 48 months.

WHERE TO GO / WHERE TO BEGIN

The website of the Vocational Qualification Authority:
<https://www.myk.gov.tr/>.

Here you can find the links to the ACIs, the vocations to be certified, frequently asked questions about the VPL process, and a portal that allows individual user to track his/her application, examination and results.



TURKEY

Each Accredited Certification Institute also has their own websites, where they provide comprehensive information on the processes, examination, and costs of VPL process.

FINANCING

<https://www.myk.gov.tr/>

<https://myk.gov.tr/TRR/File6.pdf>

<http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2015/05/20150525-4.htm>

<https://www.myk.gov.tr/index.php/tr/haberler/57-yeterlilik/1992-belge-zorunluluuna-ilikin-skca-sorulan-sorular>



EUROPE

Should you like to learn more about validation of prior learning (VPL) in European countries, make yourself familiar with the extensive information in the annual reports from European countries, the guidebook, and relevant EU guidelines.

SOURCE OF INFORMATION AND LITERATURE

European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning
<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/3073>

European inventory of non-formal and informal learning
<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/projects/validation-non-formal-and-informal-learning/european-inventory>

Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning;
<https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/sites/eac-eqf/files/pl.pdf>

Council Recommendation of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/PL/>

Do you want to be informed and updated?
 Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe
<https://ec.europa.eu/epale/en>

European Qualifications Framework
<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/pl/events-and-projects/projects/european-qualifications-framework-eqf>

A person wearing a dark suit jacket, a light-colored shirt, and a patterned tie is leaning over a wooden table. Their right hand, holding a black pen, is pointing at a document on the table. The document features various charts, including bar graphs and circular progress indicators. Several colorful sticky notes (yellow, pink, and teal) are placed on the document. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a modern office setting with large windows.

GOOD VPL PRACTICES

EFFECT VPL. THE ROLE OF EMPLOYERS



DENMARK

NAME / STATE / NATIONAL/REGIONAL LEVEL

MANDATORY VPL BEFORE APPLICATION TO VET FOR ADULTS + 25 YEARS

CONNECTION TO VPL



In 2015, a VET reform with a separate programme for adults (EUV) was implemented. Due to the law, a mandatory VPL for the candidate prior to the education is carried out and leading to an individual shortening of the VET period. Due to the legislation, the assessment for shortening was determined according to principles for both a standardized and an individual part of the VPL, with the criteria for the standardized part of the validation determined by the Vocational Training Committees for each branch.

Based on an evaluation of the EUV (carried out by The Danish Evaluation Institute, EVA, 2017), which clearly showed that shortening – as much as possible – is not a primary motivation for the adult learners, the criteria for the individual part of VPL were revised. VPL no longer leads to a compulsory shortening of the EUV. Instead, this is optional with the individual learner being able to choose whether they would like to make use of it or not.

Additional to this, adult learners, who do not prefer an individual shortening must be offered teaching at a higher level, alternatively other relevant vocational teaching. This adjustment, among others, was brought into effect by 1 January 2018.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT: PURPOSE, ACTIVITIES, EFFECT

According to Danish law, the assessment is conducted by the educational institution, which offers the corresponding study programmes. An individual VET plan is developed for the student based on his or her VPL results.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT: PURPOSE, ACTIVITIES, EFFECT



According to Danish law, the assessment is conducted by the educational institution, which offers the corresponding study programmes. An individual VET plan is developed for the student based on his or her VPL results.

Evaluation shows that the VPL process often lacks the focus on participants' comprehensive prior learning. Furthermore, the individuals sometimes experience that they do not quite understand why the VPL results came out as they did.

In order to self-evaluate and to further develop the institutions VPL practice, an inspiration material has been developed (by the Danish Evaluation Institute) to help educational institutions identify requirements for quality assurance. The self-evaluation is structured in three steps:

1. Describe your practice
2. Assess your practice
3. Develop your practice

SOURCE/CONTACT



<https://www.uvm.dk/erhvervsuddannelser>

<https://www.eva.dk/voksen-efteruddannelse/styrk-realkompetencevurderinger-guide-selvevaluering>

COMMENTS



Information on the VET system for adults and the self-evaluation system for VPL at VET institutions are available on the websites.

RECOMMENDATION



It is a recommendation that the educational institution regularly carry out the a cross institutional self-evaluation with the active participation of staffs that represent the entire VPL arrangement in terms of administration, study guidance/ validation and teaching.



DENMARK

NAME / STATE / NATIONAL/REGIONAL LEVEL

INTERREG PROJECT, YGGDRASIL (2016-2019)

CONNECTION TO VPL



The project focuses on VPL for different groups of citizens, who are, for various reasons, on the fringes of the labour market, either because of long-term unemployment or because of employment in jobs approaching extinction. As the mapping of competences is a complex process, and because support and guidance for this part is not sufficiently provided by the educational institutions, individuals are often left alone in order to develop a mapping of all their relevant prior learning.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT: PURPOSE, ACTIVITIES, EFFECT



The Scandinavian EU Interreg project, Yggdrasil, supported by the OKS programme, 2015-2018 has developed a procedure for the systematic mapping of competences. The target group was mixed in terms of basic qualification level, as some of them already had basic qualifications – others had left school without this qualification level. Several of the citizens were migrants with reading and writing difficulties as well. The development work was carried out in cooperation with the sectors of education, employment service and labour market.

The procedure for systematic mapping of competences is a three-phase procedure comprising: (1) mapping of work tasks with learning outcomes in terms of knowledge, skills and competences. (2) Transformation and translation to competences to be used in (3) other jobs and job tasks or education.

The competences are documented in terms of a competence certificate. The whole procedure with methods and instruments is described in a Handbook for the professional staffs who support the individual's process.

Project partners: Region, Central Denmark, VIA UC, Denmark, Validering Väst, Kunskapsförbundet Väst, Sweden

SOURCE/CONTACT



<https://www.yggdrasil-oks.eu/siteassets/kompetenceattest/handbog-kompetencekortlagning-printbar.pdf>

<https://www.yggdrasil-oks.eu/kompetenceattest/>

COMMENTS



The links provide access to the tools: Handbook for mapping of competences; the competence certificate only in Danish language.

RECOMMENDATION



To support the individual in moving one step up, for work or for access to learning and education, guidance from professionals is needed to help the individual develop his or documentation in a form which provides the best documentation material for the assessment.



DENMARK

NAME / STATE /
NATIONAL/REGIONAL
LEVEL

LONE HINTZE AND LIS KJEMS, BOTH
HEADS OF NURSING CARE UNITS
WITHIN ELDER CARE IN
THE CITY OF AARHUS, DENMARK

CONNECTION
TO VPL



These two Heads of Nursing Care Units both continuously practice VPL processes on a formal and a non-formal level. In a field with a shortage of skilled and professionally trained staff, it is a central point that it is possible continuously to lift the professional level.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF
THE PROJECT:
PURPOSE, ACTIVITIES,
EFFECT



Both heads are very thorough in the employing process of so-called "unskilled" workers and do not just take anyone in without assessing their competences, though there is a shortage of staff in the field. They need to see good personal competences and an interest in the field from the person's earlier experiences and to see what he or she aims for in the future.

When the annual performance review (MUS) is taking place, the employees fill in a competency scheme, which is used as a basis for making plans for further education, being a week's course or a longer and more formal education.

In general, both heads are very conscious in their contact with all employees, continuously moving around in the house, talking with people and listening to what is being said throughout the entire organisation, sensing the atmosphere and the wellbeing of the staff – and the motivation/need for further development and education.

Especially one of the two heads does not hesitate to invite a staff member to a personal one to one talk, as she is very conscious of the fact that low skilled persons have a lack of confidence and will need nudging in private to dare to go into some sort of education.

Both heads are very keen on the development and growth of their employees and take great care in seeing and encouraging to further education. Some of this being courses "in house", one-to-one training, courses at SOSU or formal education.

SOURCE/CONTACT



Margit Thordal, counselor,
SOSU Østjylland, DK

E-mail: mt@sosuo.dk

COMMENTS



For these two heads of Elder Care Units, an ongoing and integrated VPL practise is a guarantee for high standard of health care personnel, whether employed as unqualified or qualified.

RECOMMENDATION



These are examples of good leadership with regard to VPL. We would recommend their stories to be used as cases in various leader educations.



DENMARK

NAME / STATE /
NATIONAL/REGIONAL
LEVEL

PROJECT
"UDDANNELSESAMBASSADØRER"
(AMBASSADORS IN
EDUCATION). JOBCENTER
SILKEBORG, CENTRAL REGION
DENMARK

CONNECTION
TO VPL



In this project, VPL plays an important role in the efforts to get unemployed persons started working in areas where the employers are in need of labour force

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF
THE PROJECT:
PURPOSE, ACTIVITIES,
EFFECT



Both at national level and in many Danish municipalities, there is a political focus on upgrading unemployed, including unemployed recipients of unemployment benefits. All statistics document that there is a shortage of skilled labour within a large number of industries and that the demand for unskilled labour is decreasing.

Jobcenter Silkeborg has received a national grant to implement the project "Ambassadors in Education". The project is anchored in the Job Career function in the Center for Business and Education in the Jobcenter.

The target group is unemployed citizens in the municipality and the project period is from 1st January 2019 to 31st December 2020.

Jobcenter Silkeborg is fully aware of the fact that for some unemployed it may be difficult to change career path and to decide, for instance, to start a vocational training or education. Therefore, the participation in the project starts with a thorough validation of prior learning for the unemployed person. Thus, the VPL will be the starting point for "steps on the road to a job".

After the VPL, the person will choose in which field to work and how to continue. The unemployed person can participate in 6 months' courses or in ordinary training in areas with lack of labour force. If the unemployed person chooses a basic course or receives credit for parts of the program, he or she is expected to complete the program on ordinary education conditions, for example as an adult apprentice.

SOURCE/CONTACT



Jobcenter Silkeborg

<https://info.jobnet.dk/mit-jobcenter/midtjylland/silkeborg>

e-mail:: jobcenter@silkeborg.dk

COMMENTS



In this project, VPL plays an important role in the efforts to recruit labour force in areas where it is needed.

RECOMMENDATION



It can be recommend to offer to all unemployed persons, a thorough VPL to uncover resources, talents and competences before they decide – or are guided to – a new career path.



POLAND

NAME / STATE /
NATIONAL/REGIONAL
LEVEL

BALANCING COMPETENCES;
KIERUNEK KARIERA PROJECT,
REGIONAL LEVEL, REGIONAL
EMPLOYMENT OFFICE IN KRAKÓW,
MAŁOPOLSKA REGION

CONNECTION
TO VPL



Consulting, pre-validation of the portfolio, competence balancing service for people with low qualifications, the 50+, and people with disabilities.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF
THE PROJECT:
PURPOSE, ACTIVITIES,
EFFECT



Kierunek kariera (Literally: "course: career") is a project run at the Regional Labour Office in Kraków. Financed since 2016 from the EFS as part of the Regional Operational Programme, the project is addressed to the employed people with low qualifications, the 50+, and people with disabilities. Its purpose is to develop competences and obtain qualifications, and also to increase the awareness of benefits from lifelong learning. The project offers vocational consulting services based on the process of competence balancing, and bonds for training courses, postgraduate studies and validation. Before using the training bond, project participants may decide, together with a consultant, whether they need:

- training,
- validation,
- basic balance consulting service (1 meeting / 1 hour),
- or an in-depth competence balance (from 3 to 5 meetings / 6 hours) covering the individual's whole educational and professional history,
- competence diagnosis based on biographic interviews, behavioural analysis and competence balance

scorecard – Competence Balance Method and competence testing with the NBK tool,

- preparation of the Individual Development Plan,
- and development of an individual balance-based profile with portfolio by the consultant.

Moreover, the consulting service has an educational dimension, as it informs participants about the possibility of validating their competences and acquisition of certificates that can be useful in the labour market. Over 1200 people have participated at the in-depth process of competence balancing since the beginning of the project. The questionnaires and interviews conducted prove that people set a great store by the consulting process, as it lets them prepare the portfolio and take a closer look at the skills they obtained in formal education. In many cases, these skills are their strong assets, and some of them can be validated. Beginning with March 2019 project participants can also obtain market qualifications introduced to the Integrated Qualifications Register and pay for their validation with bonds (grants obtained as part of the project).

SOURCE/CONTACT



www.pociagdokariery.pl

COMMENTS



Information on the project is available in the publication.

RECOMMENDATION



To support the individual in moving one step up, for work or for access to learning and education, guidance from professionals is needed to help the individual develop his or her awareness of own abilities and encourage one to further education, improve one's situation on the labour market or be an entryway to the validation process.

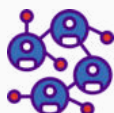


POLAND

NAME / STATE /
NATIONAL/REGIONAL
LEVEL

THE MAŁOPOLSKA PARTNERSHIP FOR
LIFELONG LEARNING
– INFORMATION, INSPIRATION,
INITIATIVE, INNOVATION, REGIONAL
LEVEL, REGIONAL
EMPLOYMENT OFFICE IN KRAKÓW,
MAŁOPOLSKA REGION

CONNECTION
TO VPL



Main subject - Lifelong learning.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF
THE PROJECT:
PURPOSE, ACTIVITIES,
EFFECT



On 20th of May 2008, 55 institutions of the labour, education and training market in Krakow signed a Partnership Agreement. Engaging in cooperation in the framework of this grassroots initiative, they wanted to speak with one voice on key issues for lifelong learning in the Malopolska region, as well as present their own proposals for change regarding this issue. They were also interested in promoting an open attitude to education among the residents of Malopolska. The Partnership currently consists of 131 members. These include public and private institutions, like schools, practical training and centres, colleges, training providers, employers' associations, associations, libraries, cultural centres, counselling centres, district labour offices and the Regional Labour Office in Krakow. The Partnership is always open for cooperation with institutions that want to engage in development of new solutions and creating the appropriate conditions for the comprehensive development of lifelong learning residents of Malopolska.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT: PURPOSE, ACTIVITIES, EFFECT



The bodies of the Partnership are the General Assembly, the Program Council, Office of Partnerships and task forces. The General Assembly consists of all partners, who together define the overall strategy of the Partnership, review projects carried out by task forces, as well as accept new partners. Challenges Regional Strategy Documents: A New Strategy for 2020 – "Malopolska - Unlimited Possibilities" and the Strategic Programme "Intellectual Capital and the Labour Market" create new challenges for the Partnership. They have been formulated in the "The Malopolska Partnership for Lifelong Learning Action Plan of looking forward to 2020."

As of 2013 the partners involved in the role of experts in five thematic areas:

1. programme of development attitudes towards lifelong learning and preparation to use the offer of lifelong learning;
2. lifelong guidance system;
3. programme of building mechanisms for validation and recognition of qualifications acquired via non-formal and informal way;
4. dissemination of subjective system of training financing;
5. programme to strengthen the capacity of the Partnership and its influence on the shape of public policies in the area of lifelong learning.

It works!

Partners talking about the benefits offered by the cooperation in the Malopolska Partnership for Lifelong Learning, pay attention to the joint decision-making. The value of vote of each partner is identical, and the issue raised at the meeting is solved only when all speak up.

The essence of partnership working is also mutual respect and trust of the partners. Without it an effective cooperation would not be possible.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF
THE PROJECT:
PURPOSE, ACTIVITIES,
EFFECT



The partnership enables one to come to know another point of view, the exchange of views and expands the network of contacts, and thus many problems can be resolved during phone calls, by e-mail or during informal conversations.

Some of the tasks related to lifelong learning, of which they became realized by Partners working in the administration, in conjunction with a considerable dispersion of accountability can be realized only in the course of extensive consultations that are possible within the Partnership.

According to Partners, the Malopolska Partnership for Lifelong Learning obeys the rule 4i, which provides information, inspiration, triggers initiative and innovation.

Navigation of an integrated system of qualifications. The Partnership is committed to develop innovative solutions for lifelong learning. Consulting solutions within an integrated navigation qualifications system, which is implemented in Malopolska by the Educational Research Institute in collaboration with the Regional Labour Office in Krakow.

Currently in Poland qualifications are awarded in the system of education and higher education, as well as associations and professional organizations, operating under different rules. Society does not have a complete and systematic know-how about where and how gain qualifications, confirming competences. That's why it was so important to create, like in other European countries, Polish Qualifications Framework, which will allow the integration of different qualifications systems operating in Poland. It will be part of the Integrated Qualification System, which navigation assumes:

- development and implementation of solutions for the model of the Integrated Register of Qualifications;
- preparation and testing of selected tracks validation / confirmation of competence and accumulation as well as transfer of achievements;
- checking guidelines for quality assurance in the context of navigation solutions;
- dissemination of knowledge on the Integrated Framework of Qualifications.

SOURCE/CONTACT



Regional Labour Office in Krakow

RECOMMENDATION



It can be recommended to spread the common knowledge on VPL among employers and local community to make validation more available for individuals. Increased awareness of local stakeholders and employers make it more likely to happen that individuals would be offer / not refuse to validate their qualifications.

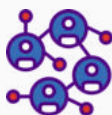


POLAND

NAME / STATE /
NATIONAL/REGIONAL
LEVEL

INFORMATIONAL SEMINARS WITHIN
THE PROJECT "INTEGRATING
INNOVATIVE QUALIFICATIONS AND
SOCIALLY NEEDED TO THE
INTEGRATED QUALIFICATIONS
SYSTEM AND LIMITING BARRIERS TO
THE DEVELOPMENT OF IQS BY
SUPPORTING SYSTEM STAKEHOLDERS
AT THE NATIONAL AND REGIONAL
LEVEL.". EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH
INSTITUTE, MAŁOPOLSKA REGION

CONNECTION
TO VPL



Consulting and information activities supporting the use of the potential of people on the labour market, regardless of formal education.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF
THE PROJECT:
PURPOSE, ACTIVITIES,
EFFECT



The Integrated Qualifications System (IQS) implements Poland's lifelong learning policy. The LLL policy envisions reducing competence gaps by: promoting the development of lacking competences and qualifications, recognising learning acquired in different ways and places at every stage of life, and confirming learning outcomes regardless of where, how and when they were attained. The IQS was established by the IQS Act on December 22, 2015 in response to the clear needs of the labour market. It is intended to provide many practical benefits to both employees and employers. In order for it to be recognised and widely used, informational and advisory activities must be conducted on a broad scale. Therefore, in each of Poland's 16 regions (voivodships), comprehensive support is offered by 2 advisors – working in

a network to promote the development of the IQS. The seminars they have been organising since September 2018 are examples of the tailored-made informational activities directed to targeted groups of stakeholders – e.g. entrepreneurs, career counsellors, representatives of business institutions (chambers of commerce, business/industry associations, etc.), local/regional authorities and decision makers, the staffs of education institutions/higher education institutions, representatives of non-governmental organisations.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT: PURPOSE, ACTIVITIES, EFFECT



Goals:

- to acquire and expand knowledge about the National Qualifications Framework and the Integrated Qualifications System in Poland,
- to demonstrate the connection between current labour market needs and the IQS and its impact on developing human capital,
- to present opportunities to actively participate in developing the IQS by describing qualifications, engaging in consultations, validation, certification and quality assurance,
- to develop practical tools to be used by regional advisors for IQS development,
- to encourage people in the labour market to actively manage their education-professional career paths by taking into consideration the opportunities offered by the Integrated Qualifications System.

As of June 30, 2019 (9 months), 202 regional seminars were organised throughout the country, attended by 5,218 participants.

Furthermore, over 200 consultation meetings were held by regional advisors and over 80 regional partnerships on behalf of IQS development have been established.

The Project is co-funded by the European Social Fund of the European Union from the POWER Programme.

SOURCE/CONTACT



<http://kwalifikacje.edu.pl/?lang=en>

COMMENTS



Institution responsible for maintaining and development of Integrated Qualification System is Educational Research Institute (IBE). A lot of resources about Integrated Qualification System is available in English on the website, including information on the qualification register and validation procedures.

RECOMMENDATION



This is example of promoting the idea of VPL in all institutions through professionalization of the staff involved in the field of VPL, this activities contributes to quality of services provided to individuals on each level.



GERMANY

NAME / STATE /
NATIONAL/REGIONAL
LEVEL

VALIKOM - BERUFSRELEVANTE
KOMPETENZEN BEWERTEN UND
ZERTIFIZIEREN; NATIONAL LEVEL,
IMPLEMENTED ON THE REGIONAL
LEVEL ACROSS GERMANY

CONNECTION
TO VPL



Consulting, competence-oriented self-assessment, external assessment of competencies by professional experts, certification of the validation defining full/partial/no equivalence with the reference job, for people without formal qualification but with working experiences in the respective vocational profession.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF
THE PROJECT:
PURPOSE, ACTIVITIES,
EFFECT



Valikom – Berufsrelevante Kompetenzen bewerten und zertifizieren (assessment and certification of professionally relevant competencies) is a project run by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research and implemented locally by Chambers of Crafts, Chambers of Industry and Commerce, and Chambers of Agriculture. The project duration is from 2015 until 2021. The first three years comprised the development and test phase of the approach, while since 2019 the project is transferred to a broader scope across the country. Currently, the project includes 11 Chambers of Crafts, 17 Chambers of Industry and Commerce, and 2 Chambers of Agriculture.

The project addresses people with relevant working experiences, career changers from other professions, migrants, refugees as well as Germans who are at least 25 years old. In the first phase, the purpose of the project was to develop and test a standardized

validation procedure which allows the assessment and certification of professional competencies that have been acquired outside the formal vocational education and training system. In this phase 164 workers could complete a validation procedure. Since 2018 the project "Valikom Transfer" has the aim facilitate validation procedures nationwide and in 32 professions in the industrial, handicraft, trade and agriculture sector.

The procedure follows the four phases of validation. In the first step, the participants receive information and consultation about the procedure and their potential reference profession. The second step comprises the documentation of their relevant work experiences based on their curriculum vitae. During this step they do a self-assessment related to the chosen reference profession. The third step covers the assessment by external professional experts. Here, the applicant has to complete practice-oriented tasks that are typical in the reference profession. Finally, in the fourth step, the application receives a certification proving the full/partial or no equivalence to the reference profession.

SOURCE/CONTACT



<https://www.valikom.de/startseite/>

RECOMMENDATION



ValiKom unfortunately is still in a project status and is thus not yet legally binding. Furthermore, until now it is limited to specific professions. In general, ValiKom takes up a very good approach to validate non-formal and informal learning and has a high potential to become the core approach of validation of non-formal and informal learning in Germany.



GERMANY

NAME / STATE / NATIONAL/REGIONAL LEVEL

FEDERAL RECOGNITION ACT; NATIONAL LEVEL

CONNECTION TO VPL



Consulting, document-based assessment of formal qualifications, external assessment of competencies by professional experts (in case documentation is incomplete), certification of the validation defining full/partial/no equivalence with the reference job, for people with formal qualifications from foreign countries.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT: PURPOSE, ACTIVITIES, EFFECT



The "Integration through Qualification" Network covers local consulting points in all 16 Federal states of Germany that are responsible for counseling applicants for the recognition of professional and vocational qualifications acquired abroad. Furthermore, the responsible chamber organizes the recognition process and the implementation of the qualification analysis.

The Federal Recognition Act is an equivalence assessment of foreign professional and vocational qualifications. Within the process of recognition, the equivalence of a qualification of the applicant compared to a German reference qualification is evaluated.

By means of an interview as well as a document analysis of formal qualifications, certificates and proof of working experiences, the qualifications and competences of the person applying for recognition are identified. In case the documentation is incomplete/insufficient a qualification analysis can be initialized.

During the identification of learning outcomes, the consultant defines, together with the applicant, a reference profession which serves as the basis for the subsequent validation and recognition process.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF
THE PROJECT:
PURPOSE, ACTIVITIES,
EFFECT



The documentation of learning outcomes comprises a compilation of documents proving professional/vocational training, working experiences, further education, training contents etc. This includes certificates, CV, diploma supplement, transcript of records etc.

The Assessment of learning outcomes is a process of evaluation of the compilation of documents and a qualification analysis (when the documentation is incomplete [2]). The qualification analysis is a skills analysis which has the aim to demonstrate professional competences of the applicant in a practical way. This is an approach to selectively determine skills, knowledge and abilities of the applicant in the reference qualification. It is not an examination.

The Certification of learning outcomes is a written notification of the overall assessment (document analysis and skills analysis, if necessary). The results of this assessment can be:

- full equivalence/full recognition: There are no significant differences between the qualification of the applicant and the German reference qualification;
- partial equivalence/partial recognition: There are significant differences between the qualification of the applicant and the German reference qualification. The differences are listed in the notification. A further education can be done to compensate the existing differences;
- no equivalence/no recognition: There are too many differences between the applicant's qualification and the German reference qualification.

[2] See § 14 Federal Recognition Act: Other procedures for the establishment of equivalence without relevant documents.

The local counseling office will consult the applicant on how to continue. The applicant has the possibility to do an external examination or compensatory measures (such as adaptation period or test).

The Federal Recognition Act was passed in 2012 and gives the legal right to have an equivalence assessment of foreign qualifications in Germany.

According to official statistics (28.08.2018) 111.501 application for recognition in professions governed by federal law have been submitted since the adoption of the Federal Recognition Act. Furthermore, in each of the 16 federal states of Germany applications for recognition in professions governed by state legislation have been submitted. Overall, the Federal Recognition Act has a very broad effect due to the fact that has a legal basis and an effective network of counseling across the country. Nevertheless, it is first and foremost an assessment of formal qualifications and only in the second stage considers non-formal and informal competencies.

[1] See § 14 Federal Recognition Act: Other procedures for the establishment of equivalence without relevant documents.

SOURCE/CONTACT



<https://www.anerkennung-in-deutschland.de/html/de/>

RECOMMENDATION



The Federal Recognition Act places the focus on formal qualifications and considers non-formal and informal competences only in specific cases. A comprehensive documentation of foreign qualifications as well as proofs of working experiences are indispensable.

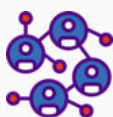


GERMANY

NAME / STATE /
NATIONAL/REGIONAL
LEVEL

AIKOMPASS, AIKO – RECOGNITION
OF INFORMALLY ACQUIRED SKILLS,
STATE OF BADEN-WÜRTTEMBERG,
REGIONAL LEVEL

CONNECTION
TO VPL



Documentation of informal and non-formal skills, individual document-based review of professional career, development of a comprehensive and specialist task profile, for semi-, unskilled persons and skilled workers in the metal and electrical industry.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF
THE PROJECT:
PURPOSE, ACTIVITIES,
EFFECT



The project AiKo – Recognition of informally acquired skills was funded by the regional Ministry of Finance and Economy of Baden-Württemberg and had a project period from 2012 to 2015. A follow-up project, AiKo-ProdLog – recognition of informally acquired competences in the area of near-production logistics, was implemented from 2016 to 2017. Both projects covered all key areas of the metal and electrical industry in the area of Baden-Württemberg.

The aim of the project was to develop a tool which can be used to document informal and non-formal skills of semi-, unskilled and skilled workers in the metal and electrical industry. The tool is a web-based application, which facilitates the documentation of skills and competencies of workers. Based on a task inventory the individual can choose tasks in order to indicate their individual profile. This profile not only includes professional skills but also skills that have been acquired outside working life. After having completed the

questionnaire, the worker can save and print the complete profile and continue to use the results. For instance, the worker can use the profile as a starting point for further professional development but also as an attachment to job applications. Ideally, the process is accompanied by further guidance by supervisors or job counselors.

This project has a small impact with regard to the effectiveness for the individual on the labour market. It is focused on a specific sector and on a small region in Southern Germany but could be transferred to other areas or professions easily. Nevertheless, it has no legal valid in the German labour market or formal education system.

SOURCE/CONTACT



<https://www.anerkennung-in-deutschland.de/html/de/>

RECOMMENDATION



This approach was developed for a specific sector and is thus especially designed for this area. Nevertheless, it is a very good approach to make competences visible (formal, non-formal and informal). The result of this validation should be integrated into a consulting process in order to make it usable in the German labour market.



TURKEY

NAME / STATE /
NATIONAL/REGIONAL
LEVEL

THE HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER
AND PRODUCTION
MANAGER IN A PRODUCTION OF
AUTOMOBILE SPARE PARTS COMPANY
IN ISTANBUL, TURKEY

CONNECTION
TO VPL



These two managers in the Automobile Spare Parts Production Company are aware of the importance of providing certificates and validation for the employees to certify their qualifications, especially for jobs identified as dangerous and very dangerous.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF
THE PROJECT:
PURPOSE, ACTIVITIES,
EFFECT



The Automobile Spare Parts Production Company has been established more than 30 years ago and has experience and know-how in manufacturing air brake compressors, clutch servos, master cylinders and gearbox valves. The company provides spare parts to various brand commercial vehicles to about 95 countries in all over the world. There are about 160 people working at this medium-sized company. The staff consists of expert and experienced technicians besides lower level skilled workers.

The Human Resources Manager and Production Manager give importance to the VPL process as a requirement mandated by the state. They follow the Official Gazette, because the Official Gazette documents the processes related to the procedures a company is required to follow. They are happy that the state requires validation especially for dangerous and very dangerous jobs, since even if it wasn't required they would still expect their employees to have such qualifications. Also, they give importance to other certificate programs and occupational health and safety, fire drills and so on.

Initially they supported their employees to apply the VPL process and get the certificate. Now, when they want to hire someone they look for those who either have a vocational high school diploma or they ask the person to get a VPL certificate. They both considered the biggest problem/disadvantage of VPL in Turkey as certifying someone based only on an examination procedure.

SOURCE/CONTACT



Özlem Ünlühisarcıklı, Boğaziçi University, TR

E-mail: unluhisa@boun.edu.tr

COMMENTS



The feelings about the VPL process is mixed: on the one hand, they find it a process with a cost; on the other hand, it somehow contributes to the employee's identity and self-concept as a worker.

RECOMMENDATION



These are examples of good leadership with regard to VPL. We would recommend their stories to be used as cases in various employers, especially when feeling about VPL processes is mixed and there is still lack of knowledge and understanding of what validation is.



Erasmus+