

Validation procedure for the recognition of non-formally and informally acquired skills in Germany



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Manual for Consultants in Validation Procedures

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Introduction



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The manual at hand is a handout for consultants trained in the implementation of the conCert - validation procedure. It is also a handout for the aspirants in order to support them to prove their non-formally and informally acquired competences with the validation tool, in order to obtain a recognition of a vocational training.

At the same time, it is also suitable as accompanying material in the training of consultants in the validation procedure. It complements and supports the curriculum of the consultant training and is part of the training concept.

The manual is a work product of the innovation transfer project conCert, which has adapted and tested a validation system for the recognition of non-formally and informally acquired skills.

In the process, the system of validation of non-formally and informally acquired vocational skills, developed and successfully applied by the Swiss SVEB (Schweizerischen Verbund für Weiterbildung), has been transferred and adapted to the circumstances and requirements of the German further education system.

The conCert project "Development and preparatory actions for the implementation of a validation system for counseling and recognition of non-formal and informally acquired skills on the example of a work place tutor" was funded in the framework of the Lifelong Learning Programme, Leonardo da Vinci - Transfer of Innovation.

Non-formal and informal acquisition of competences

The acquisition of relevant vocational education takes place both as formal acquisition of competences at institutions and institutions for vocational qualification (institutions of vocational education and training, colleges and universities) as well as in a non-formal and informal ways through experiential knowledge. Through a steady growing and differentiated range of tasks in the work process as well as through voluntary work outside the labor process people acquire experience and skills that go far beyond the competences acquired formally.

While formal learning is an intentional, purposeful, organized and structured process, whose success is documented by a diploma or certificate, the results of non-formal and informal learning are not verifiable in this manner.

From the learner's perspective (possibly also of the teacher)



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non-formal learning is indeed an intentional learning process, which is, however, embedded as a learning element in mostly practical activities. The intended learning is less subject to strong regulations with regard to temporal structure and organization. An explicit control of a learning success, which is proven in a certificate or certificate with qualitative assessment, does normally not take place.

Informal learning takes place both in the field of work and in everyday life and leisure. It is not intended as learning, the learning effects arise, without being planned and aimed at in a targeted manner.

Professional exploitable and recognized so far are in Germany especially the formally acquired skills, as diplomas and certificates prove those.

At the same time, require both the trends in the national labor market and the European free movement regulations to make all existing competences exploitable for employment visible and comparable. Regardless of the type of competence acquisition, existing knowledge and skills shall be documented, recognized and be equaled with formally acquired qualifications.

The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the respective national implementation (the German Qualifications Framework DQR for Germany) offer the conditions to make Europe-wide comparability of qualifications feasible. The EQF and DQR are explicitly aimed to classify existing qualifications, regardless of the educational path on which they were acquired. This includes non-formal education as well as informal education.

To map non-formally and informally acquired competences adequately, valid methods of competence assessment are required at the operational level. Methods (test, exam etc.) borrowed from the formal education paths are not optimally suited to any case. Especially in professional training, there are often time-consuming training courses to complete in order to acquire formal evidence of existing knowledge.

The procedure in the consultation process and the role of the consultant



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Consultants in validation procedures act as a companion in the process of documentation of existing competences. They provide support and advice based on an appreciative attitude, depending on individual needs of the aspirants in the preparation of the dossier to be submitted. The consultants do not assess.

The intensity of cooperation between consultant and aspirant depends on the individual need of the aspirant and varies from a short introduction to the handling of the validation tool to the intense joint elaborating of existing competences and their adequate description.

In order to assist the aspirants to become aware of his/her non-formally and informally acquired skills, different methods and techniques of client-oriented counseling can be applied. In the tested approach the methods "timeline" and "travelogue" were used, which are available as material. The use of other techniques is possible, insofar as they are likely to make the non-formally and informally acquired competences of the aspirants visible.

The first step of the consultation is initially only about the collection and listing of skills. In the course of counseling, the compilation can be extended, supplemented and specified.

An important task of the consultant is to assist the aspirants in naming the relevant competence, but more importantly to describe their acquisition and characteristic in a concise and understandable way. It may be helpful to structure the description with key points: with what specific action(s) was the competence acquired; over which period / in which intensity were those actions carried out; what was the technical / methodological base for the actions; in which way were results and objective achievements checked and documented?

If necessary, the consultant must elaborate the important facts for the description as a start having a conversation with the aspirants, while systemic issues can support the generation of information effectively.

The validation instrument (competence dossier)

Core component of the validation is the validation dossier. It is edited in digital form and forwarded to the experts for evaluation. In the validation dossier, the existing non-formal and informal acquired competences are named, situations are described and evidence documents cited in order to prove the existence and characteristics of the competences.

The competence dossier consists of individual action and competence fields which are underpinned with a with a concrete requirement profile. For the purposes of a self-assessment, the aspirant identifies the requirements that he/she meets. For relevant subunits follows a detailed competence assessment, as in the following example of the competences in individual and group learning processes in teaching and learning situations.

II. Design Individual learning processes and learning processes in groups		
II.1	I have designed individual learning processes and learning processes in groups.	Wählen Sie ein Element aus.
	If YES => continue with II.2 If NO => describe next field of action	
II.2	Please describe in which capacity and at which institution/organisation and how long / how often you have accompanied learners in real work and business processes (real work). Please also indicate how autonomous your actions were.	
	Function:	Click here to add text
	Institution / Organisation:	Click here to add text
	Duration / Frequenzy::	Click here to add text
	Level of autonomy (please tick a box – multiple selections are possible):	<input type="checkbox"/> I have reflected other-directed goals, implement self-directed and answered for. <input type="checkbox"/> I have defined and self rated goals for my work myself and acted autonomously and responsible. <input type="checkbox"/> I have defined and assessed goals for new tasks and acquired the necessary resources and competences independently for an independent self-realization
II.3	Please describe in detail by means of two concrete situations how you have proceeded in designing the individual learning processes and learning processes in groups. Your descriptions should show on which knowledge you fall back on and which considerations (reasons) and values guide your actions significantly.	
	Situation 1: Click here to add text.	
	Situation 2: Click here to add text.	
II.4	The following evidence documents prove my competence in this field of action: (Please indicate number and short title)	Klicken Sie hier, um Text einzugeben.

The description of the situation is of particular importance. It needs to be described in a concrete way, in which context the presence of the respective competence shows. The number of characters of free text is limited, requiring a focused description. In the consultation process, the consultant should work towards a short and concise situation description, which is understandable to outsiders. In addition to describing the concrete action, it clearly needs to be elaborated on which technical basis and for which purpose and with which methodological / didactic approach the aspirant was acting.



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Evidence documents

While for formally acquired learning certificates and certificates exist, which demonstrate the competence, this is not the case in this form for non-formally and informally acquired competences. In addition to the specific description for the acquisition of non-formally and informally acquired competences, in the validation process also (external) evidence for the presence of specified competences is required.

As evidence documents in the required form very different papers could be used, in which evidence on the specified competences is stated.

That may be, inter alia:

- Qualified job references (possibly interim certificates/references) in which the specified task leading to the stated competence is named and assessed qualitatively (if possible)
- References by noted expert staff

- Documentation that has been created in the implementation of the task which led to the acquisition of competences (e.g. concepts, schedules, delivery planning, objective agreements) and prove existing competence by the professional quality of their execution
- presentation of results, documentation of objective achievement

The evidence documents must be clearly attributed to the aspirant and they should show clearly, to which competence they relate.

It is possible that an evidence document, e.g. a job reference, refers to multiple areas of competence fields. It has also to be stated in each case in these areas of competence.

Within the conCert project an overview grid for the evidence documents has been developed, in which the evidence documents used are listed. In the competence dossier, only just the number and the short title of the relevant evidence document needs to be specified.

Materials, literature, handouts

Within the project conCert a number of materials was created. The worksheets are used in the direct work with the aspirants. The handouts are supposed to inform the consultant and to assist the consultation process.

The listed worksheets can be used in the consultation process in order to make it easier for the aspirant to become aware of the existing non-formally and informally acquired skills. You find the worksheets in the print version of the manual on a disk attached and they are available for downloading.

Handouts

- (1) Competence assessment WPT *
- (2) Compendium competence assessment process **
- (3) Definition formal, non-formal and informal learning
- (4) Consultant profile
- (5) Validation procedure***
- (6) Systemic issues in the consulting process
- (7) Feedback rules

Arbeitsblätter

- (8) Timeline - life profile
- (9) conCerte travelogue *
- (10) Overview proof documents ***
- (11) Competence Dossier *

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