

Relate



Criteria for recognition of VET diplomas at international level (R3)

LEONARDO DA VINCI Transfer of Innovation Project

“RELATE – PROMOTING THE RECOGNIZABILITY OF LEARNING OUTCOMES FROM VOCATIONAL EDUCATION TO HIGHER EDUCATION”

Grant agreement number: DE/11/LLP-LdV/TOI/147640

For more information on the project “RELATE” go to our website
www.relate-project.eu

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Content Overview

1	Foreword.....	3
2	Objective.....	3
3	Methodology.....	4
4	Findings.....	4
4.1	Criteria for recognition of VET diplomas at international level in Estonia	4
4.1.1	Recognition process of foreign VET diplomas in Estonia.....	4
4.1.2	General RPL Process in Estonia.....	6
4.1.3	Process model for individual RPL.....	7
4.2	Criteria for recognition of VET diplomas at international level in Germany	8
4.2.1	Recognition process of foreign VET diplomas in Germany	8
4.2.2	General RPL Process in Germany	9
4.3	Criteria for recognition of VET diplomas at international level in Romania.....	11
4.3.1	Recognition process of foreign VET diplomas in Romania	11
5	List of abbreviations.....	15

1 Foreword

WP3 “*Sharing the results of former projects and summarizing key issues*” is a key work package for the development of the project’s core outcomes. Its results represent the basis for designing the methodologies and tools for the transfer of innovation. WP3 relies on desk research and field research to be performed in Estonia, Germany (Saxony) and Romania with the purpose to collect useful data about the partners’ previous projects on RPL, about the current status of RPL implementation from VET to HE in partner countries, on recognition criteria of VET diplomas.

This document is a transnational report presenting the research findings from all partners in the framework of WP3 on the *criteria for recognition of VET diplomas at international level*. Within this project, non-traditional target groups refer to adult learners coming from AE and VET education.

As indicated in the application, this document is prerequisite of WPs 4-6, namely transfer and adaptation of results of former projects and summarized key issue, to German, Estonian and Romanian contexts.

This document represents the project third result and is part of the set of outcomes/deliverables for WP3.

2 Objective

This desk research was aimed to gather information and practice about criteria for recognition of VET diplomas at international level. As explained above, these criteria will help the consortium to better understand realities in the targeted countries, adapt the outcomes for the transfer and perform a successful transfer.

3 Methodology

The desk research was achieved at national level, in Estonia, Germany and Romania, based on standardized template, discussed and agreed by all partners. The template and explanations on how to perform the research are included in the guidelines for partners on collecting data for WP3.

4 Findings

The research findings are rendered below, per partner country.

4.1 Criteria for recognition of VET diplomas at international level in Estonia

4.1.1 RECOGNITION PROCESS OF FOREIGN VET DIPLOMAS IN ESTONIA

The Estonian ENIC/NARIC (Academic Recognition Information Centre) is a subdivision of Archimedes Foundation. It belongs to the international networks of ENIC and NARIC. The European Council and UNESCO network ENIC (European Network of National Information Centres on Academic Recognition and Mobility) and the European Union network NARIC (National Academic Recognition Information Centres) are international networks created for facilitating the true and fair recognition of education obtained abroad and for promoting academic and professional mobility.

The main functions of the Estonian ENIC/NARIC are:

- evaluating foreign qualifications (diplomas, certificates, academic reports, etc.)
- determining the correspondence of education qualifications (academic degrees, titles, diplomas) certified by documentation to the Estonian education system and making recognition proposals
- providing information about foreign higher education systems
- providing foreign countries with information about the Estonian higher education system

The Estonian ENIC/NARIC evaluates foreign qualifications and determines the Estonian correspondence to the attested qualifications for:

- commencing or continuing studies in Estonian higher education institutions
- employment in non-regulated professions

An applicant for the evaluation of foreign qualifications may be the holder of the qualification as well as an employer, higher education institution or another institution where the education document has been presented.

An evaluation determines the correspondence of foreign qualifications to qualifications within the Estonian education system and a proposal is made for the recognition of these qualifications to a higher education establishment or employer.

The Estonian ENIC/NARIC provides information about:

- foreign education systems and qualifications
- the recognition and comparison of academic degrees, diplomas and other qualifications
- international and national legal acts concerning the regulation of qualifications recognition

The Centre provides foreign countries with information about the Estonian education system and qualifications in order to simplify the evaluation and recognition of Estonian qualifications abroad.

Academic recognition is the recognition of a foreign qualification for the purpose of further studies.

In academic recognition the evaluators mainly seek to assess whether the applicant is capable of continuing studies in the chosen direction and at the chosen level.

The need for the academic recognition may rise when a person holds a diploma of the home country and seeks admission to a further stage of studies in a foreign country or seeks admission to further studies in the home country after completion of the previous stage or period of studies abroad.

On principle, academic recognition is sought only for admission to further studies. Some applicants, however, choose to receive a statement of academic recognition before seeking employment in the professions where recognition of a foreign degree/diploma, is not officially required (i.e. in non-regulated professions). This kind of recognition (academic recognition for professional purposes) helps employers to understand what home country's qualification can be compared to the foreign one.

In general in Estonia there is no difference on whether the previous knowledge has been acquired on national or international level. The assessment criteria on RPL applications at Tallinn University are the same no matter if it is national or international experience:

- Prior learning and what has been learned from it needs to be logically connected with the learning outcomes of the module/course;
- Prior experience and the analysis needs to prove that all the learning outcomes have been gained;
- The application forms are filled correctly; the proof material is authentic and proves that all the learning outcomes have been gained.

4.1.2 GENERAL RPL PROCESS IN ESTONIA

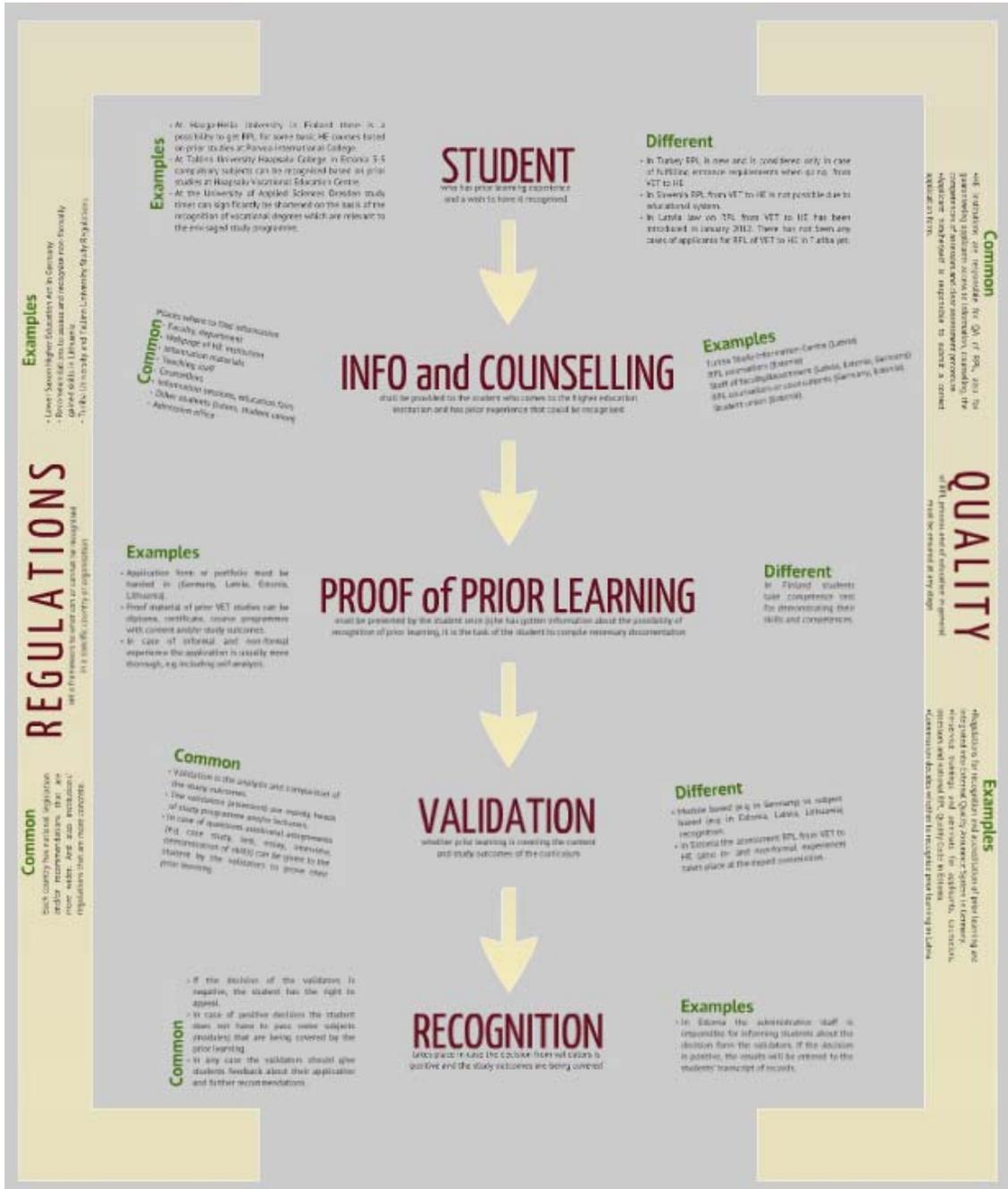
During a project “Bridge Between Vocational and Higher Education, VET-HE”, which was funded by the European Commission under the programme for Lifelong Learning „Leonardo da Vinci“ a best practice model was created for individual recognition.

The aim of the project was to support validation and recognition of learning outcomes from vocational education to higher education. Therefore the project was about sharing best practice models in this field, working out principles that support the validation and recognition of learning outcomes from vocational education to higher education.

The model presents the RPL process that has been composed by combining the main principles that have been presented through best practices from partner organizations. In some of the countries recognizing prior learning from VET to HE is not possible, therefore examples from non-formal and informal recognition have been used and integrated to the model.

The model is about individual recognition. It consists of 5 steps and is surrounded by the regulations and quality of education. Common principles and/or differences and/or concrete examples from partner organizations have been added. The detailed model can be found when clicking to the model.

4.1.3 PROCESS MODEL FOR INDIVIDUAL RPL



4.2 Criteria for recognition of VET diplomas at international level in Germany

4.2.1 RECOGNITION PROCESS OF FOREIGN VET DIPLOMAS IN GERMANY

The Conference of German Cultural Ministers offers a service to inform about the admission of foreign levels of education (Zentralstelle für ausländisches Bildungswesen (ZAB)).¹

In case of a regiment profession (“reglementierter Beruf”) a governmental admission of the certificate is necessary by law. For regiment professions the access to the profession and the pursuit of one’s career is linked to particular professional qualifications by laws, regulations and administrative provisions or the job title is protected by law.² nursery teachers and remedial teachers (Heilerziehungspfleger) are regiment professions.³

To improve recognition of foreign professional qualifications in Germany the Federal Government introduced with the „Bill to improve the assessment and recognition of foreign professional qualifications“ a possibility to recognition. With the Recognition Act a standardized and transparent procedure for all federally regulated professions was introduced. “This provides the basis for establishing the equivalence of a foreign qualification with a corresponding German qualification.”

The Recognition Act includes regiment professions and vocational training within the dual system. Excluded from the Recognition Act are the professions in the responsibility of the Länder (federal states of Germany). Meanwhile the federal states have adopted their own legislation concerning

¹ Zentralstelle für ausländisches Bildungswesen (ZAB) im Sekretariat der Kultusministerkonferenz, Graurheindorfer Straße 157, 53117 Bonn. Anrechnung <http://www.kmk.org/zab/unsere-aufgaben.html>.

² A list of the regiment professions is available in the following database: <http://anabin.kmk.org/anabin-datenbank.html>.

³ Appropriate institutions for admission in Saxonia: *kindergarten teachers*: Saxon state ministry of education, cultural affairs and the saxon agency of education with five district offices. *Social care workers*: Saxon state ministry of education, cultural affairs and district office of the saxon agency of education in Zwickau.

⁴ Gesetz zur Verbesserung der Feststellung und Anerkennung im Ausland erworbener Berufsqualifikationen vom 6. Dezember 2011. Bundesgesetzblatt I No 63, 2011

⁵ Federally regulated professions regiment and non-regiment professions.

⁶ <http://www.bmbf.de/en/15644.php>

the professions (nursery teachers and remedial teachers are regiment professions and in responsibility of the federal states). The “Länder” legislation on recognition became effective on 1 July 2014.⁷ A homepage exists (www.erkennung-in-deutschland.de/html/en/index.php9), which informs about the professions and the procedure of recognition.

After the recognition of the professional qualifications the applicant can apply for crediting of competences acquired outside higher education at any German university for a study program as described in Result No. 1 of WP3.

4.2.2 GENERAL RPL PROCESS IN GERMANY

Since the resolutions of the Conference of German Cultural Ministers 2002/2008⁸ and the Common structural guidelines of the Länder for the accreditation of Bachelor's and Master's study courses (2010)⁹ the crediting of competences acquired outside higher education towards higher education studies is possible up to 50 % of the study program.

The crediting of competences acquired outside higher education towards higher education studies is possible, if terms of content and level are equivalent to the study requirements. The competences can be acquired from the field of vocational education, in the context of the professional activity or on the basis of other competence enhancing activities. By the recognition of competences study and examination abilities will be replaced and the study period will shorten regarding to the presence at the university. A higher education entrance qualification is necessary for crediting of competences acquired outside higher education.

For crediting of competences acquired outside higher education are criteria regarded to terms of content and level required. They are governed in the regulatory instruments of the institutions of higher education – normally in the study and examination regulations. They are reviewed within the accreditation process.

⁷ <http://www.bmbf.de/en/15644.php>.

⁸ Anrechnung von außerhalb des Hochschulwesens erworbenen Kenntnissen und Fähigkeiten auf ein Hochschulstudium. Beschluss der Kultusministerkonferenz vom 28.06.2002. Sekretariat der ständigen Konferenz der Kultusminister der Länder in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Anrechnung von außerhalb des Hochschulwesens erworbenen Kenntnissen und Fähigkeiten auf ein Hochschulstudium (II). Beschluss der Kultusministerkonferenz vom 18.09.2008.

⁹ Common structural guidelines of the Länder for the accreditation of Bachelor's and Master's study courses, 10 October 2003 as amended on 4 February 2010

4.2.2.1 OPTIONS FOR RECOGNITION

INDIVIDUAL ASSESSMENT: the institution of higher Education checks the documents of the candidates whether and to what extent the competences are equivalent to the terms of content and level to the contents of the study program.

BLANKET RECOGNITION: The recognition can be general, if the groups of candidates are homogeneous. In such cases arrangements for cooperation between the institution of higher education and educational establishments exist. For example the recognition of competences from the education to kindergarten teacher and a study program of social pedagogy.

PLACEMENT EXAM: Competences will individually examined by a procedure which is regulated in the examination regulations of the university. For example if the candidate dispose of the competences of study and examination ability to qualify in specific or higher semester of the study program.

4.2.2.2 CRITERIA FOR RECOGNITION

In all cases is necessary that criteria for the recognition exists. Up to a maximum of 50 % of the duration of the studies/the study attainment can be accepted. Usually by bachelor programs with 180 ECTS, 60 ECTS (one year) will be accepted. A greater recognition reduces the duration of studies to 90 ECTS, and bears the risk, to fall short of the aim and the level of the studies. Conditions governing recognition are that the competences of the professional education are described as modules (learning goal, contents, the form of examination), they have to be integrated in the module catalogue of the study program.

In cases of general recognition the institution of higher education enter into a contract with educational establishments (for example: professional schools for kindergarten teachers) regarding to the professional contents of the training and other parameters, which are credit to a study program. On the basis of this contract it is possible to credit competences for the trainees of these educational establishments.

Disadvantage of general recognition is, to reach an understanding about the contents, level and the arrangements with every educational establishment and to write down the agreement in arrangements for cooperation. Only these graduates of these educational establishments can begin their studies on the basis accepted competences and a shorten study period.

By an equivalence test within the placement exam, the outside higher education acquired competence will be reviewed. The institutions of higher education have to establish a procedure in their examination regulations.¹⁰

4.3 Criteria for recognition of VET diplomas at international level in Romania

4.3.1 RECOGNITION PROCESS OF FOREIGN VET DIPLOMAS IN ROMANIA

Recognition of studies or qualifications obtained in another state than Romania is applied in case of:

- refugees;
- person with subsidiary protection;
- persons wishing to continue studies;
- persons wishing to get a job.

Recognition means to analyze a diploma or certificate obtained abroad, by comparing it with diplomas awarded to Romania, in order to see the level at which the person requesting recognition is placed in the Romanian educational system.

The recognition of studies or qualifications observes national and European legislation:

- Education Law no. 84/1995, republished, with subsequent modifications and completions;
- Government Decision no. 366/2007 regarding the organization and functioning of the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports, with subsequent modifications and completions;
- Government Decision no. 49/1999 on the establishment of the National Centre for Recognition and Equivalence of Diplomas;
- Order of Minister of Education, Research and Youth no. 4022/2008 regarding the approval of Rules for Organization and Functioning of the National Centre for Recognition and Equivalence of Diplomas;
- Law. 172/1998 on the ratification of the Convention on the Recognition of Higher Education Diplomas in the states of the European Region, adopted in Lisbon on 11 April 1997;
- Law. 200/2004 on the recognition of diplomas and professional qualifications for the regulated professions in Romania, with subsequent modifications and completions;
- Law. 122/2006 on asylum in Romania, with subsequent modifications and completions;

¹⁰ From 1. January 2015 the regulation of equivalence test in the institutions of higher education will be reviewed by the accreditation agencies.

- Government Ordinance no. 44/2004 on the social integration of foreigners who have acquired a form of protection or a right to stay in Romania, with subsequent modifications and completions.

4.3.1.1 WHO CAN ASK FOR RECOGNITION?

Any person who has a degree, a certificate of qualification or other document issued by a school, college or university recognized abroad may require the recognition.

4.3.1.2 WHO YOU CAN ASK FOR THE RECOGNITION OF DIPLOMAS AND QUALIFICATIONS?

For the recognition of Baccalaureate, undergraduate or post-university diplomas as well as for the recognition of qualifications, an application should be submitted along with supporting documents, to the National Centre for Recognition and Equivalence of Diplomas (CNRED) - an institution that operates within the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports (MECTS).

To continue pre-university studies (classes I - XII), the request has to be submitted to the School Inspectorate which manages the school where the applicant wants to continue his/her studies.

The School Inspectorate will send then the request to CNRED.

4.3.1.3 WHO DECIDES?

CNRED is the institution that decides on the recognition of diplomas and qualifications.

CNRED can:

- recognize the diploma or professional qualification;
- recognize the diploma or professional qualification, establishing countervailing measures (tests of knowledge / other examinations or internships / study period).
- refuse the recognition of diploma or professional qualification, by motivating its decision.

4.3.1.4 WHAT IS THE AUTOMATIC RECOGNITION?

Automatic recognition is simplified procedure. In the CNRED practice, the files of those who benefit from automatic recognition are not subject to regular review.

4.3.1.5 IN WHAT CASES DIPLOMAS ARE AUTOMATICALLY RECOGNIZED?

Diplomas can be automatically recognized if:

- diplomas issued by the same institution have been recognized before (this happens only when the diploma was issued by an educational institution recognized in the European Union or the European Economic Area);

- there is a treaty concluded by Romania with the state that issued the diploma, whereby diplomas issued by schools or universities in that country are recognized without being analyzed.

4.3.1.6 WHAT IS CONTENT OF THE PROCEDURE FOR RECOGNITION?

For university and post-university studies CNRED monitors whether the performed studies are similar to those in Romania regarding:

- the level of the higher education institution where the study has been conducted;
- the diploma level;
- the number of years of study / number of credits;
- the study field, the profile, the specialization;
- the study plan / the corresponding workload;
- the professional qualification (Diploma Supplement) - for the professions regulated in Romania.

For preuniversity studies, Baccalaureate degrees usually are automatically recognized, but when there are differences, CNRED can decide if difference exams have to be taken or studying more is necessary.

If the person has studied in home country in classes I-XII, is a minor and has the status of refugee or subsidiary protection, s/he can participate for free in a Romanian language course during one school year, at the end of which a committee will assess how well the person knows the Romanian language and decide what year of study s/he can enroll.

If the person has studied in home country in classes I-XII, but it is not a minor and s/he wants to continue in Romania the studies initiated in the home country and has school documents to prove the fact that s/he studied there, s/he will be enrolled in the year of study corresponding to the graduation year abroad or to the current graduation year abroad.

4.3.1.7 HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE THE PROCEDURE OF RECOGNITION?

For university and post-university studies:

- maximum 45 days from the date of submission of the complete dossier to CNRED;
- maximum 10 days for automatic recognition, by simplified procedure;
- 5 days in urgent cases, substantiated and proved through justifying documents;
- for PhD diplomas the period of recognition procedure is 90 days.

For preuniversity studies:

- 30 days from the date of submission of the complete dossier to CNRED;
- 3 days in urgent cases, substantiated and proved through justifying documents.

Documents proving the recognition of a diploma or a certificate are called Certificates of Recognition.

Certificates of recognition for study documents in pre-university education (classes I-XII and / or post-secondary schools) are issued by CNRED.

Certificates of recognition for study documents in Higher Education (faculty, master, post-university studies in specialization, doctoral studies / or post-doctoral studies) are issued by CNRED after the approval is obtained by the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports.

4.3.1.8 WHEN THE RECOGNITION CAN BE REFUSED?

Diplomas or certificates are not recognized if:

- diploma presented for recognition was issued by an educational institution that was not recognized in the State of origin;
- when tested, diploma presented for recognition turns out to be not genuine;

CNRED will submit in writing, within 5 working days, the reasons for non-recognition of diploma.

5 List of abbreviations

RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
VET	Vocational Education and Training
HE	Higher Education
LO	Learning Outcomes
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
LA	Learning Agreement
ECVET	European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training
ECTS	European Credit Transferable System