

Process model for the cooperation between VET and HE institutions (R5)

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

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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 process model for the cooperation between VET and HE institutions.

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 fifth result and part of the set of outcomes/deliverables for WP3.

2 Objective

This desk research was aimed to gather information and practice about process model for the cooperation between VET and HE institutions. 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 on process model for the cooperation between VET and HE institutions 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. Also, interviews to stakeholders have been applied and findings from them were used when rendering this report.

4 Findings

The research findings are rendered below, per partner country.

4.1 The formalised cooperation between VET and HE institutions in Germany

4.1.1 EXAMPLE OF BEST PRACTICE IN GERMANY

The FHD has already established a blanket RPL process for the B.A. study program Social pedagogy & Management for graduates for nursery teacher and curative education therapist with VET diploma.¹

The procedure has been developed cooperatively with a VET institution (Akademie für berufliche Bildung gGmbH, AFBB), who is very experienced in the training of nursery teachers. It enables graduates of this college to start a shortened study course (60 CP). A Memorandum of Understanding has been concluded.

In order to establish the blanket recognition procedure the curricula of the VET course nursery teacher and the HE study course Social pedagogy & Management were compared in terms of qualification objectives (competencies).

In the case of modification of the curricula, the comparison of objectives and course content has to be repeated. Additional to the curricula the procedure is based on the following documents: framework agreements for Fachschulen, Decision of the Standing Conference of 7.11.2002 and the Qualifications Framework for German Higher Education from 21.4.2005.

The Curriculum of nursery teacher VET course is structured in learning fields, which meets the modular structure of the HE course. As the qualification objectives of the HE course are going beyond the objectives of the VET course, the modules were targeted, which oriented on “organizational and practical competencies” or which “impart basic knowledge.”²

The learning outcomes of the VET course can be recognized, when „...at least 50 % of the learning

¹ Verfahren zur Anrechnung von außerhalb des Hochschulwesens erworbenen Kenntnissen und Fähigkeiten auf den Studiengang „Sozialpädagogik & Management“ der Fachhochschule Dresden (FHD) – Private Fachhochschule gGmbH. Dresden (FHD) 2012.

² Verfahren zur Anrechnung ..., a. a. O., S. 3.

inputs are directly matching and if applicable further factually interrelated compensation content exist, so that these two aspects cover ca. 90 % of the total field.”³

Besides the contents (inputs) the learning outcomes to be achieved were considered as well. Therefore the respective number of lessons and the literature, which was taken as a basis, was compared.

Altogether 8 modules in total sum of 60 CP were determined, to which competencies acquired outside higher education of the AFBB graduates can be recognized completely or partly.

4.2 The formalised cooperation between VET and HE institutions in Estonia

4.2.1 EXAMPLES OF BEST PRACTICE IN ESTONIA

In case of simplified RPL between programs of VET HE institutions a pilot has been carried out. The main aim of project RIFA (Integrated development of vocational and higher education curricula in Lääne region- Applied Computer Science and Natural Tourism Management) was to develop an integrated study model between vocational and higher education in order to raise the quality of education and provide continued learning possibilities from vocational to higher education.

The specific goals were:

1. The development and piloting of an integrated study model between vocational and higher education based on the curricula of Tallinn University Haapsalu College and Haapsalu Vocational Education Centre.
2. The integrated development of Applied Computer Science curriculum in Haapsalu College and Computer Services curriculum in Haapsalu Vocational Education Centre: joint development of content and quality based on the integration model.
3. The integrated development of Natural Tourism Management curriculum in Haapsalu Vocational Education Centre and Business and Public Management curriculum in Haapsalu College: joint development of content and quality based on the integration model.
4. The development of specialities based on the needs of Lääne region (training, connection between regional needs and the students' independent tasks/thesis).
5. Raising the quality of practice in enterprises through networking and mentor training for enterprises.

³ Verfahren zur Anrechnung ..., a. a. O., S. 3.

6. Enhancement of lifelong learning in the region through providing better access to higher education and flexible study opportunities for working and less mobile people.

One of the main bases for the activities of Haapsalu College and Haapsalu Vocational Education Centre were in addition to innovative development of specialities the provision of continuous development and competitiveness in Lääne region through highly educated and qualified population.

In order to reach this goal the leaderships of Tallinn University Haapsalu College and Haapsalu Vocational Education Centre agreed upon focused cooperation in specialty and curricula development as well as in providing continued study possibilities in the region.

The activities carried out were:

1. Mapping the common areas by comparing the study outcomes of HE and VET programs.
2. Measuring the overlapping areas in credit points.
3. Bringing out the problems that arose during the comparison and finding solutions.
4. Mapping ideas and propositions of the work groups.
5. Developing an universal unified study model concept for chosen VET and HE programs.

To sum it up based on the previous experiences from VET-HE, RIFA project and other experiences from KRTC and TUHC our experience has shown that the best way for creating a common model would be to compare the concrete VET and HE programs, map the areas that overlap, to think about the (possible) assessment of the VET graduates and counseling about their future HE studies. And when doing that the quality of HE and regulations must be kept in mind.

4.3 The formalised cooperation between VET and HE institutions in Romania

Education & Training Reform in Romania aims to increase the flexibility of structures and processes. In this respect, new entities and educational procedures were legalized, which are specific to lifelong learning. Adults' continuing training and transferable credit system are the two major components of this reform.

In Romania, unfortunately, there is no formalised cooperation yet between VET and HEIs.

However, there are good non-formal practices which are happening and probably will be extended and adapted to new institutions, supporting this way the cooperation VET-HE to become formal. This idea is supported by the findings of the interviews we applied to different stakeholders: despite the fact that some institutions (both from VET and HE) do not know about or do not apply

standardised/formalised ECVET instruments such as Memorandum of Understanding and Learning/Training Agreement (which could ease the VET-HE cooperation), there are universities already using Training Agreement since 2008 in their cooperation with VET companies and enterprises.

4.3.1 EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE IN ROMANIA

Some explanations about such good practices and arguments in favour of formalising VET-HE cooperation are rendered below:

1. Almost all universities in Romania (public and private) have their own Professional Training Centres, through which they provide VET to different target groups, other than students. For example, University of Pitesti has created the “Muntenia Training Centre” – a structure which provides VET training through free of charge and fee-based professional training programmes. The Centre has among its objectives:

- (a) identification of the needs of initiation, professionalization and retraining of the labor market;
- (b) implementation of educational programs for initiation, training, upgrading, professionalization and / or professional conversion delivered as training modules, theoretical disciplines, internships and individual work with the interested individuals and / or stakeholders from the domains: economic, local government, services, health, welfare and environment protection, ministry of internal affairs, military, cultural and educational;
- (c) collaboration with other empowered organizations and individuals, from Romania and from abroad.

In achieving these objectives, as a VET provider, “Muntenia Training Centre” cooperates with the University of Pitesti in terms of deciding on what training programmes to provide, sharing the trainers, establishing the training objectives and the evaluation objectives. As the staff in “Muntenia Training Centre” is mainly the staff of the University of Pitesti, a common vision of describing the Learning Outcomes exists, but there is no formalised approach or collaboration on that.

2. Another example of existing non-formal cooperation VET-HE is represented by the fact that certain VET institutions (VET providers) work usually with trainers coming also from the academic environment. The academic environment is the place where trainers are accredited and validated, it is the “source” of trainers...

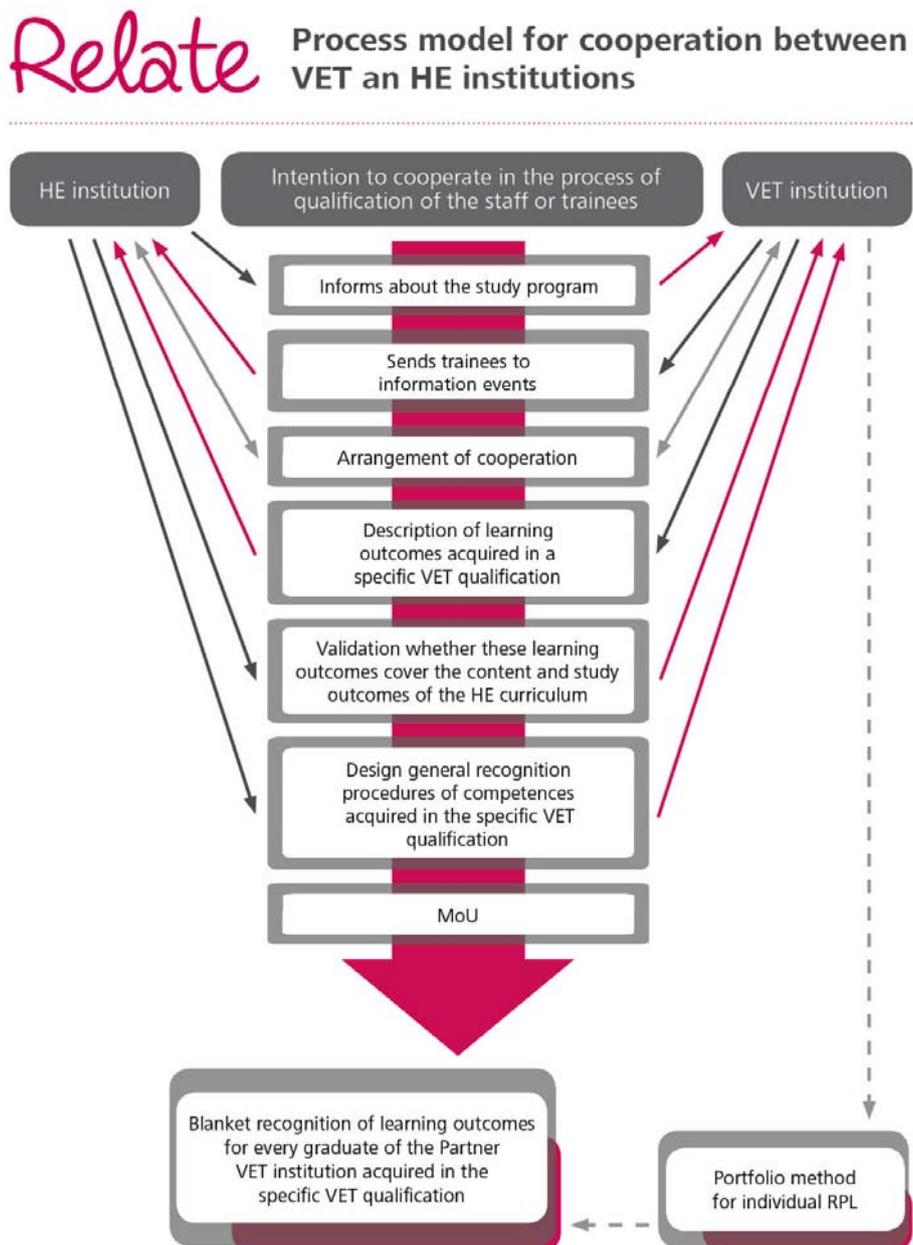
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3. Although we cannot speak already about a formalised cooperation VET-HE in Romania, we should mention here the collaboration that is initiated now through the MO 4543/468 of 2004 regarding the recognition of skills acquired in other ways than formal. This MO stipulates that a person wishing/asking to be evaluated for recognition of professional skills acquired in other ways than formal, based on a occupational standard/ professional training standard, has to address a request to a center authorized for the occupation / qualification in question. The MO explains in details and based on specific steps how the recognition of skills can be acquired. And however there is no clear evidence of any VET-HE cooperation in this MO, the fact that the Order specifies "The certificate obtained after the assessment of skills has national recognition" can be considered as a first step in formalizing cooperation between VET and HE institutions, as the owners of such certificates hopefully could use it in the near future to enter HE.

4.4 Process Model for the cooperation between VET and HE Institutions

The project Partners agreed to the following common process model for the cooperation between VET and HE institutions.



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