

2009

Methodology of recognizing qualifications, acquired through work



R5 Discussion paper of APL Methodology (5.1)

Discussion paper covers results of discussion and questionnaires, provided by the partners, on the APL assessment proceedings in their countries in preparation for the Polish pilots and commonly agreed APL methodology for the project.

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission.

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WARSZAWA 10.02.2009

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1. THE ADOPTED ASSUMPTIONS

For a long time, any uniform ideas and definitions concerning recognition of non-formal and informal education have not been established. At present, the definitions of the most of ideas have been already specified.

In consequence, definitions of ideas, employed in the project APL-Bud have been adopted in accordance with the provisions of the European Union, being contained in: the Resolution of the Council of the European Union dated 27 June 2002 on lifelong learning – Official Journal of Laws of the EU 2002/C 163/01; the recommendations of the European parliament and of the Council dated 29 January 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) for lifelong learning as well as Decision no 1720/2006/EC of 15, November 2006, establishing the programme of actions in the field of lifelong learning and in publication CEDEFOP "*European Guidelines for the Validation of Non-formal and informal learning*". In relation to the conception alone as well as to the employed practice, many terms are used¹ but in the present elaboration, it will be defined as *recognition of prior learning* (RPL).

The examination, recognizing the professional qualifications may be entered by everyone who meets the criteria contained in the procedure for recognizing the qualifications.

The examination which recognizes qualifications takes place few times a year, depending on the number of the applying persons in a given

¹ from among the employed terms, we may mention: APEL – accreditation of prior experimental learning; PLAR – prior learning and assessment recognition; VPL – validation of prior learning

profession. It is possible to enter into the discussed examination in a given profession once a year.

2. PROCEDURE FOR RECOGNITION OF QUALIFICATIONS

There are many various methods for recognition of the prior education, taking place outside the formal education. Less complicated ones concern the exams which measure the level of skills and competences. The more complicated methods include the analysis of the so-called *portfolio*, submitted by a candidate – it is the package with materials and documents, confirming the knowledge of specified domains and the level of knowledge and vocational skills.

To recognize the qualifications, obtained through work the following procedure has been employed:

1. **Classification of the professions.** The mentioned classification will be performed by the Polish Partners with the participation of 3 experts in each profession. To this end, the elaboration **"CLASSIFIED LIST OF EXISTING CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY QUALIFICATIONS IN POLAND"** will be utilized. To distinguish qualifications, the analysis of correlation of skills with the vocational tasks and then, the correlation of vocational tasks with qualifications in a given profession² will be employed. Practically, the correlation between the skills and vocational tasks has been already performed in elaboration *"Classified list of existing construction industry qualifications in Poland"*. In consequence, the Team, establishing the qualifications in profession will have to establish the relationships between the vocational tasks and partial qualifications in the professions.
2. **Enabling to obtain information** on the possibility of recognizing the qualifications, acquired through work. According with the project the information on the project and possibilities of the verification of

² „Outline of methodology of creating the modular programme of teaching for the profession” National Centre for Support of Vocational and Continued Education” Warsaw, 2002, pp.33 - 39

the qualification will be spread across Internet site, regional employment exchanges, the information in the local press and the radio and also across structures of the Trade Union „Budowlani” and Confederation of Building and Real Estate.

3. **System of information and advisory assistance for candidate.**
The possibility will be created for the candidates who wish to confirm their vocational qualifications, in respect of obtaining the additional information on the way and dates of validation of qualifications and also, on the scope of the required knowledge and skills. To this end, 2 guidebooks for the candidates will be developed. One of them will include general problems concerning the whole construction industry and the second guidebook will cover specialist issues for a given profession and for partial qualifications. The guidebooks for candidates will be developed by the end of October 2009. Apart from it, in order to strengthen the system of monitoring and advisory assistance, the existing organizational network of the Trade Union “Budowlani” and Confederation of Construction Industry and Real Estates will be utilized. The Trade Union “Budowlani” in Poland possesses the organizational structure consisting of the union offices in each of 15 regions in Poland and in 580 enterprises. The Trade Union “Budowlani” cooperates also with the organizations of building employers and NGO organizations.

4. **Self-assessment**, the tool of self-assessment should be elaborated – the sheet of self-evaluation. The self-evaluation sheet will be developed by the end of September 2009.

5. **Medical examination of the applicant which would confirm the suitability for the profession** (that is, confirming the admission to the profession)

6. **Application form**; obtaining of printed form of the application should be available via Internet as well as in labour offices, advisory vocational centres, organizations, centres for education of adults and other organizations and institutions connected with the labour market and education (the application form should be elaborated)

7. Examination, recognizing the qualifications³

The examination which confirms the qualifications is an examination enabling to evaluate the level of knowledge and skills in the field of the profession, occurring in classification of vocational education professions, provided for education in primary vocational school; passing such examination enables to obtain a professional title.

The examination commission will be composed of auditors who should earlier obtain the appropriate competences.

The examination team shall consist of 3 persons.

It is assumed that the examination, as recognizing the qualifications, will consist of two parts:

I – Theoretical written examination

II – Test of work

Part I – Theoretical written examination will include two blocs of problems:

General vocational part – including the problems concerning safety and protection of health in work environment, fire-preventing and environmental protection. The examination should also cover the contents common for qualifications, distinguished in the profession, concerning the knowledge of materials, their properties and application, reading out the denotations employed in construction, and also, use of technical documentation, catalogues and instructions.

Specialist part – covering the problems from the scope of the defined qualification, as being distinguished in a given profession.

³ Cf.: „On education for labour market. Part I”; MEN, *Library of Reforms 38*. Warsaw, October 2008. pp.96 – 97. The publication was elaborated by Ryszard Szubański, Zofia Stypińska, Jolanta Kornalewska, Zdzisław Kolan, Ewa Lemieszek, Beata Dąbrowska, Krzysztof Jędrzejczyk, , under the guidance of Wojciech Książek and “Validation of informal competences, obtained through experience in work”; Henryk Henryk Narwojsz, Cezary Krawczyński, Krzysztof Symela, Karolina Zwiefka; Warmia and Mazury Center of Vocational Improving; Olsztyn, 2008; Project EQUAL “Let’s construct together”. Also, the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Science dated 3, February 2006 in the matter of obtaining and supplementing general knowledge, skills and professional qualifications in non-school forms by adult persons (Official Journal of 27 February 2006) was taken into consideration.

Part II – Practical examination, being a test of work.

Examination, which recognizes the qualifications, is carried out during one day. The written theoretical examination is conducted in a form of written test. Theoretical examination lasts for 120 minutes. For the persons who have the special educational needs, the time of examination may be prolonged up to 180 minutes.

Practical examination lasts for not shorter than 180 minutes and not longer than 240 minutes. The procedures of conducting and time of duration of practical examination have been specified in informing guidebook for a given profession. For the persons with the special educational needs the time of examination may be prolonged by 60 minutes.

The results of each stage of the examination are evaluated in scores (points).

Theoretical stage – general-vocational part – 60 scores

Theoretical stage – specialist part – 60 scores

Test of work – 100 scores

In order to pass to practical examination, i.e. test of work, it is necessary to obtain at least 40 points from theoretical general-vocational part and at least 40 points from theoretical specialist part. In order to pass practical examination, it is necessary to obtain at least 65 points.

The individuals who obtain 30 – 39 points for theoretical general-vocational part or (and) also 30 – 39 points in theoretical specialist part, may apply for additional retake examination in a form of oral examination. The oral test is organized on the same day, directly after theoretical examination and lasts for maximum 15 minutes. The examination commission decides on passing of the test and admitting to further examination procedure (test of work).

1. Documentation

The documentation of the procedure for recognition of qualifications shall consist of the following documents:

- **Results of medical examination, stating the suitability for the profession**
- **Sheet of self-evaluation**
- **Results of the test of written examination**
- **Chart of evaluation of practical task.** The chart should contain: evaluation of such criteria as organization of work stand, correctness of performing the task, application of the rules of safety and hygiene of work, esthetical level of the performed task.
- **Protocol from the conducted examination, recognizing the qualifications in the profession**

2. Sub-system of quality assurance in the field of recognizing the qualifications, obtained through work

The sub-system of quality assurance contains such elements as objective examination tests, penalties in evaluation of practical task, criteria, specifying the requirements in relation to auditors who evaluate the examination, documentation of the examination procedure and evaluation of the process of recognizing the professional qualifications.

This document has been prepared by dr MICHAŁ BUTKIEWICZ (Education and Labour) on the 10.02.2009

Subsequent discussion lead to conclusions and proceedings of the Polish pilots described in the publication "Uznawanie kwalifikacji zawodowych w Polskim sektorze budownictwa, nabytych w procesie pracy" (chapter 7) published in October 2010 as the Polish conference handout.