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**Defined criteria for memoranda of  
understanding and acknowledgement/  
recognition with the purpose of promoting  
permeability within the country**

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**LEONARDO DA VINCI TRANSFER OF INNOVATION PROJECT  
“PROPER CHANCE – IMPLEMENTING ECVET IN THE FIELD OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE FOR THE PROMOTION  
OF PROFESSIONAL PERMEABILITY AND GEOGRAPHICAL MOBILITY”  
DE/11/LLP-LdV/TOI/147429**

For more information on the project “PROPER CHANCE” go to our website  
[www.proper-chance.eu](http://www.proper-chance.eu)

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## CONTENT OVERVIEW

1	Foreword.....	2
2	Criteria for Memoranda of Understanding with the Purpose of Promoting Permeability within the Country .....	3
	a. Objective of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).....	3
	b. Identification of partners and qualifications .....	4
	c. Activities to be implemented.....	5
	d. Validity Period .....	7
	e. Attachments .....	7

## 1 Foreword

It is the objective of the LdV Transfer of Innovation Project “PROPER CHANCE” to support professional permeability and mobility for workers in the field of health and social care by promoting the use of ECVET to support transparency and recognition of learning outcomes and qualifications, including non-formal and informal learning.

One of the means for achieving this objective is, according to the European Parliament’s “Recommendation on the establishment of a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET)”<sup>1</sup>, the conclusion of a Memorandum of Understanding between competent institutions.

The European Parliament’s recommendation states that the following criteria shall be included in a Memorandum of Understanding:

“The MoU should confirm that the partners:

- accept each other's status as competent institutions,
- accept each other's quality assurance, assessment, validation and recognition criteria and procedures as satisfactory for the purposes of credit transfer,
- agree the conditions for the operation of the partnership, such as objectives, duration and arrangements for review of the MoU,
- agree on the comparability of qualifications concerned for the purposes of credit transfer, using the reference levels established by EQF,
- identify other actors and competent institutions that may be involved in the process concerned and their functions.”<sup>2</sup>

The project “PROPER CHANCE” does not only aim at facilitating permeability of qualifications and the recognition of learning outcomes at international level, but also at national levels. It is thus necessary to define criteria for Memoranda Understanding which focus on the promotion of permeability within one country, taking into account the special requirements for the recognition of learning outcomes in national qualification systems.

To promote recognition at national level, the following criteria should be considered by the partners and be fulfilled by the time of signature of the Memorandum of Understanding:

*The partners have verified:*

- their mutual interest in cooperation with the purpose of recognizing learning outcomes to motivate learners to pursue further education,

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<sup>1</sup> RECOMMENDATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 18 June 2009 on the establishment of a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET). Available for download under: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2009:155:0011:0018:EN:PDF> (Date: 20.02.2013)

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, p. C 155/16

- the legal possibilities of recognition of learning outcomes regulated by national and / or regional law.
- who the relevant competent institutions are in order to assure the successful implementation of the recognition process. The term “Competent institutions” refers to institutions “responsible for designing and awarding qualifications or recognising units or other functions linked to ECVET, such as allocation of ECVET points to qualifications and units, assessment, validation and recognition of learning outcomes, under the rules and practices of participating countries”<sup>3</sup>. If the relevant competent institutions do not belong to the partnership, the partners have to seek approval and permission of the recognition process by the competent institution.

*The partners have agreed:*

- on a set of learning outcomes of qualification a. which is recognized for qualification b. *or* on a common methodology for describing and comparing learning outcomes,
- on common assessment standards,
- on a common procedure for recognizing learning outcomes and on a set of documents for learner application.

The criteria which are detailed in the following pages are recommended by the project partners of “PROPER CHANCE” to be included in a Memorandum of Understanding for the promotion of permeability within one country.

## 2 Criteria for Memoranda of Understanding with the Purpose of Promoting Permeability within the Country

### a. Objective of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

The first paragraph states the document’s objective. In the context of ECVET, objectives usually refer to the promotion of transparency of learning outcomes, of vertical and horizontal permeability in and between the educational systems as well as of international mobility of learners and employees.

However, ECVET instruments are most suitable for promoting permeability not only on European level, but also at national levels.

The objective of a MoU in this context is usually to assure permeability and recognition of learning outcomes between specific qualifications or its parts (provided by different training institutions). The specific qualifications or a set thereof which are subject to the MoU should be given in this section as well.

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<sup>3</sup> from: European Commission, Directorate General Education and Culture (2011): GET TO KNOW ECVET BETTER - Questions and Answers, p. 34, available under: [http://www.ecvet-team.eu/sites/default/files/ecvet\\_qna\\_web\\_21\\_04\\_2010\\_1.pdf](http://www.ecvet-team.eu/sites/default/files/ecvet_qna_web_21_04_2010_1.pdf) (Date: 25.02.2013)

*Example:* This MoU sets out the general framework of cooperation between the partners with the objective of granting recognition of learning outcomes for graduates of the training programme “ab” at Institution XX, who want to continue their training as “bc” at Institution XY.

The MoU can either be concluded for individual recognition processes, or blanket recognition processes on the other hand:

- In case of individual recognition, the institutions signing the MoU only agree on the general recognizability of learning outcomes achieved at one institution for continuing training at the other institution. A set of qualifications, for which recognition might be possible, can be given. However, the institutions have not yet found an agreement on which specific learning outcomes are to be recognized. This will be decided for every applicant individually. In this context, it is crucial to agree on common procedures for the comparison of learning outcomes. This form of Memoranda of Understanding is most likely to be concluded in the early stages of cooperation between two institutions, which have not yet had the chance to compare their qualifications’ learning outcomes in detail.
- In case of blanket recognition, the MoU refers to a specific set of learning outcomes or to a complete qualification which is to be recognized. This means, that the two institutions concluding the MoU already have undergone the process of commonly comparing learning outcomes and have come to an agreement on recognition which they confirm with the signature of the MoU.

Furthermore, the first section of the Memorandum of Understanding should state that the partner institutions accept each other’s status as competent institutions:

*Example:* The partner institutions mutually accept their respective criteria and procedures for quality assurance, assessment, validation and recognition of knowledge, skills and competence for the purpose of transferring credit.<sup>4</sup>

Before concluding a Memorandum of Understanding, it is essential that partners verify the legal possibilities of granting such recognition. According to the valid regulations, it might also be necessary to ask education authorities for approval of the recognition procedures.

## **b. Identification of partners and qualifications**

The following data are to be detailed for every partner organisation:

- Name of the organisation
- Address with postal code, city and country
- Legal representative and position of legal representative
- Contact person and position of contact person

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<sup>4</sup> from: ECVET Users’ Guide working group (2012): Memorandum of Understanding – Draft version for testing. Available for download under: <http://www.ecvet-team.eu/en/content/ecvet-european-templates> (Date: 20.02.2013)

- Telephone number and e-mail of contact person
- Short description of the organisation including fields of activity and general objectives
- Specifications on the role of the institution in the partnership, especially statement on whether it will act as sending or receiving institution:
  - o sending institution, meaning the institution at which a learner has achieved specific learning outcomes or a complete qualification
  - o receiving institution, meaning the institution which recognizes learning outcomes achieved at the sending institution and at which the learner will continue training
- If a specific qualification or training programme (or several of these) are subject of the Memorandum of Understanding, these qualifications or training programmes should be detailed as well:
  - o Title of qualification (original language)
  - o Title of qualification (English)
  - o Relevant legal framework (if applicable)
  - o EQF / NQF level (if applicable)
  - o Comments, including reference to the comparability of the qualification with regard to other qualifications for the purposes of learning outcome recognition, using the reference levels established by EQF

### c. Activities to be implemented

All activities, in which the partners engage in aiming at the objectives described in section a., are to be detailed in this section. The partners have to agree on the responsibilities for a variety of tasks; some of the tasks can be performed by single partners according to their expertise, objectives and role in the partnership, others can be performed by all partners. For every task, details on how and when it will be performed should be given.

First, to define a common framework of activities, the partners should state their commitment to the implementation of the following tasks:

- Providing counselling to interested target groups (learners and workers) with the aim of motivating them for further training by making use of the recognizability of learning outcomes, including criteria for the selection of trainees, if applicable envisaged number of permeabilities to be implemented; in case of declaration of intent by a learner, providing the necessary information, contacts and documents (in particular application forms) leading to the recognition of learning outcomes by a suitable receiving training institution
- Granting validation and recognition of learning outcomes on the basis of common methods for the description and comparison of learning outcomes or granting validation and recognition of a set of learning outcomes of qualification a. for qualification b.

Further on, the partners should agree on the procedures, which are implemented to grant recognition of learning outcomes for a learner including:

- description of assessment standards (Who will assess what, how and when?),
- description of methodologies for description and comparison of learning outcomes with the aim of recognizing them, *or* commitment to the result of a common comparison process, which presents the learning outcomes which are to be recognized, and
- development and decision on a common set of documents which is to be used in the recognition process (e.g. application form for the learner, validation and recognition forms, standards for documentation).

It is also essential to define common evaluation procedures among the partners, both for individual permeability and for continuous evaluation of the whole partnership, with the aim of continuously improving permeability implementation. Details, which can be specified for assuring evaluation, are:

- How to collect evaluation data?
- How to handle possible problems or the need for change?
- How will collaboration between pedagogical staff (trainers, social workers, mentors etc.) be coordinated?

Depending on the context of the Memorandum of Understanding and the nature of the partnership, the following further criteria can be specified:

- Continuation of multilateral comparison of learning outcomes suitable for recognition for the next training programme or module, and their acceptance among local, regional or national stakeholders.
- Commitment to dissemination activities by all partners (e.g. informing local, regional or national stakeholders about opportunities of permeability and recognition of learning outcomes).
- Pedagogical accompaniment and monitoring for learners (including psycho-pedagogical care).
- Details on the administrative framework, available resources in terms of learning facilities, materials, staff.
- Fostering the development of training courses, assessment tools and procedures for the recognition of learning outcomes in order to facilitate the recognition of learning outcomes, for the implementation of permeability between qualifications.
- Support other VET providers in developing partnerships by providing guidelines and templates for learning outcome comparison, memoranda of understanding and learning agreements, as well as by sharing experiences.

#### d. Validity Period

The validity of the Memorandum of Understanding has to be specified. Usually, a validity period of two to four years is chosen. However, depending on the nature and objectives of the partnership, the duration can be longer or shorter.

Furthermore, the partners can agree on regular intervals of review processes and on regulations for (automatic) prolongation of the Memorandum.

#### e. Attachments

According to the specifications made above, the following documents can be attached to the Memorandum of Understanding:

- Learning outcome descriptions of the relevant qualifications
- Common assessment standards
- In case of blanket recognition, set of learning outcomes of qualification a which is to be recognized for qualification b
- In case of individual recognition, common methodologies for the description and comparison of learning outcomes
- Common documents for recognition process:
  - o Application Form and / or
  - o Requirements for Learner's Portfolio