



QBAKE PROJECT



VET STUDY

**Non-formal Vocational Education and Training
in Baking Technologies**

Objective and Scope

The aim of the VET study is to find out the state-of-the-art situation in the 4 participating countries about the VET in the Bakery industry and to explore how it relates to the training proposed in the QBake project.

Study outline

AINIA, CAMPDEN, IBA and ETAT will conduct a brief research and determine:

- Systems for recognising the non-formal qualification provided by the QBake project (Training in Baking Technologies)
- Authorities in the participating countries for non-formal VET recognition
- Value of the certificates given by the QBake consortium to trainers and trainees.

Introduction

The QBake project responded to the demand of the employees in bakery industries to be trained in new baking technologies. Many of the workers in the sector are non-qualified workers who have years of experience. Others have relevant qualifications, but lack a path for keeping their knowledge updated, since technological changes are rapidly introduced in their sector. The QBake project proposed a methodology to detect such needs, create and *ad hoc* course to meet these training needs with a short but relevant training product, develop an assessment methodology and sharing good practice and knowledge across the participant countries. Both the trainers and the trainees will obtain the corresponding certification once they have successfully taken the course.

The project also wants to address the issue of the value of such certification. Therefore, this study into the recognition of non-formal VET is undertaken by the QBake consortium.

The legal framework

Non-formal education can not be validated currently by using the Europass, which is only valid for Formal education and training. In the case of Bakery, the official training is typically a L2 2-year training, and it addresses a wide number of topics within bakery, but not necessarily the main technologies in the sector. Also, due to the increase of technical solutions to boost the competitiveness of bakery companies, these technologies change and improve very quickly, demanding from the workers in bakery companies constant training in their principles and use. Few training centres offer solutions, mainly by means of short or tailored courses. The issue of the certification obtained by the trainee, however, remains unsolved: the new skills and competences acquired through these courses are not recognised at the same level as formal training.

The European Council is aware of this situation. Recently, on September 5th, 2012, it issued the “Proposal for a Council recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning”, which includes and analysis of the current situation of non-formal learning and the corresponding certification:

“In such context, education and qualification systems need to give an opportunity to all citizens to make visible what they have learnt outside school and to use it for their career or further learning. This can be achieved by a process of validation of learning outcomes acquired through non-formal and informal learning; in this process an authorised body confirms that an individual has acquired learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and competences) measured against a relevant standard.”¹

Moreover, it states the intentions of the European Council in promoting a change in this situation in order to meet the targets set for Europe 2020:

¹ Proposal for a Council recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning, 05.09.12, p. 2.

“Validation of non-formal and informal learning experiences in the EU Member States makes an essential contribution to EU's ambition to achieving smart, sustainable and inclusive growth set by the Europe 2020 Strategy.”²

However, the methodology needed for the official bodies to authorise and recognise the skills and competencies acquired through non-formal education are not available as yet. Therefore, the Qbake project will not be able to issue, as it had intended, a “Europass” or equivalent certification for those who take and pass the course proposed and developed in the project.

Nonetheless, considering the “invitation, in relation to the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning, the Member States and the Commission within their respective competencies”³:

- To disseminate and promote the use of the common European principles.
- To encourage the European social partners, in the context of social dialogue, to use and adapt the common European principles for the specific needs of the workplace.
- To encourage non-governmental organisations engaged in providing lifelong learning opportunities to use and adapt the common European principles as appropriate.
- To support the exchange of experiences and mutual learning including the development of a European Inventory on the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning.
- To strengthen co-operation with international organisations with a view to achieving synergies in this field.
- To develop and support coherent and comparable ways of presenting the results of the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning at European level, and consider how the existing instruments in the Europass framework for transparency of qualifications and competences can contribute to this.
- To consider how the common European principles could support ongoing work on credit transfer and accumulation, quality assurance and guidance and, in general, contribute to the development of a European Qualifications Framework which was called for in the Joint Interim Report of the Commission and Council, February 2004.
- To support the development of quality assurance mechanisms and, in particular, to consider how to promote the professional development of those

² Proposal for a Council recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning, Brussels, 05.09.12, p. 2.

³ Draft Conclusions of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on Common European Principles for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning. Brussels, 18.05.2004.

who carry out assessment, for example, through support networks aimed at developing and disseminating good practice.

The Qbake project will adhere to the principles mentioned in the Draft, set out under the following main headings:

- Individual entitlements. The identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning should, in principle, be a voluntary matter for the individual. There should be equal access and equal and fair treatment for all individuals. The privacy and rights of the individual are to be respected.
- Obligations of stakeholders. Stakeholders should establish, in accordance with their rights, responsibilities and competences, systems and approaches for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning. These should include appropriate quality assurance mechanisms. Stakeholders should provide guidance, counselling and information about these systems and approaches to individuals.
- Confidence and trust. The processes, procedures and criteria for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning must be fair, transparent and underpinned by quality assurance mechanisms.
- Credibility and legitimacy. Systems and approaches for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning should respect the legitimate interests ensure the balanced participation of the relevant stakeholders. The process of assessment should be impartial and mechanisms should be put in place to avoid any conflict of interest. The professional competence of those who carry out assessment should also be assured.

Until then, the European Council has decided on the following set of recommendations⁴:

The proposed actions include practical recommendations to Member States to provide by 2015 every citizen with the opportunity to have his/her skills acquired outside formal education and training systems validated and to use this validation for working and learning purposes throughout Europe. On a more concrete level, these actions entail the following recommendations to Member States:

- To ensure that by 2015 national systems for the validation of non-formal and informal learning have been established providing the opportunity to all citizens to have their knowledge, skills and competences validated, irrespective of the contexts where the learning took place. This validation provides the basis on which the award of a full or partial qualification takes place, with no prejudice to other applicable Union law, in particular Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications;

⁴ Proposal for a Council recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning, Brussels, 05.09.12, pp. 7-8.

- National systems of validation of non-formal and informal learning should focus on the following four aspects of validation: the identification of learning outcomes, their documentation, their assessment against agreed standards and finally their certification;
- In the form appropriate to each national context, to ensure that information on validation opportunities is widely available (in particular to disadvantaged groups), that access to validation is affordable for citizens who wish to undertake a validation procedure, that appropriate guidance and counselling is available and affordable for citizens who wish to undertake a validation procedure and that transparent quality assurance mechanisms are established and applied to the validation system in relation to both the assessment (methodologies and tools, qualified assessors) and its results (agreed standards);
- Provide individuals with the opportunity to undergo an audit of their skills and competences within three months of an identified need such as the perspective of unemployment or insecure forms of employment. For this purpose the use of the current and future Europass tools to facilitate the identification and documentation of learning outcomes should be promoted. The links between validation arrangements and credit systems such as ECTS and ECVET should be strengthened;
- Involve social partners and other relevant stakeholders, namely employer organisations, trade unions, chambers of commerce, industry and skilled crafts, national entities involved in the process of recognition of professional qualifications, employment services, youth organisations, youth workers, education and training providers as well as civil society organisations in the development of the validation mechanisms and in documenting the learning outcomes acquired through non-formal and informal learning;
- promote partnerships and other initiatives to facilitate the documentation of learning outcomes developed within SMEs and other small organisations;
- Provide incentives to employers, youth organisations and civil society organisations to promote and facilitate the identification and documentation of learning outcomes acquired at work or in voluntary activities;
- Provide incentives to education and training providers to facilitate access to formal education and training and to grant exemptions on the basis of learning outcomes acquired in non-formal and informal settings and ensure co-ordination between education, training, employment and youth implementation services as well as between relevant policies.

Consultation with the Europass Office

Representatives of the QBake project contacted the Europass Office in order to gather more information about when the Europass can be issued. Firstly, it can only be issued when the training undertaking, either in the trainee's own country or abroad, is formal (official and

recognised) training. Since the course offered in QBake is not, there is no possibility of issuing the Europass, not even for the trainers, who will attend a preparatory workshop in order to assess the training materials and methods.

No credit system currently exists that will allow to recognise the certifications issued for trainers and trainees of the QBake course in baking technologies.

Conclusions

According to the current legal framework, there is no official, recognised, European tool to validate non-formal training (as the Europass is valid only for Formal Education).

The QBake consortium will be responsible for issuing the corresponding certifications for trainers and trainees successfully undertaking the QBake Training Course in Baking Technologies. It will be issued in four languages, and will be recognised by all the RTDs in the consortium, all of them training-providers of reputation in their own countries.

A joint certificate will add to the European added-value of the course, the contents and methods of which are a result of a joint effort between the participating countries.

The certificate will list the course contents, skill and competences developed by the students, and it will be obtained after passing the course by taking all the training and successfully passing the evaluation process, which combines 3 different assessing methodologies.