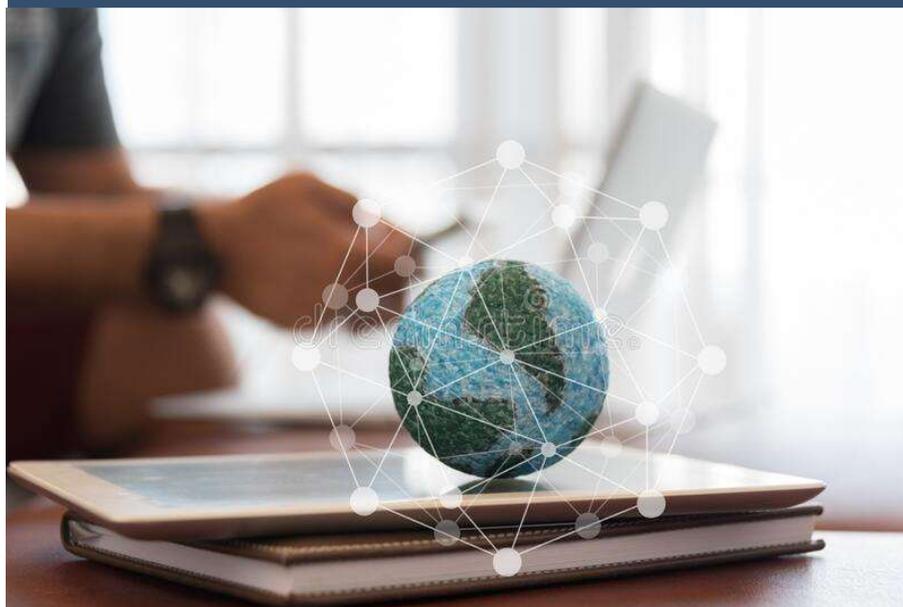# 2022

Handbook with guidelines for Lifelong Learning, pedagogical approaches and validation procedures of non-formal and informal learning

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USAGE
UpSkilling of Agricultural
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Christina Paulus, Vladana Vidric

Department for Lifelong Learning BOKU

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Contents

1. Introduction to Lifelong Learning and global trends

Lifelong learning became key concept for any educational establishment and guiding principle for the development of education and training policies.

Understanding lifelong learning: "Lifelong learning refers to learning opportunities for people of all ages and backgrounds. It takes place in diverse learning contexts, including digital environments. It covers a wide range of learning purposes and contributes to skills enhancement for the benefit of individuals, communities and the planet. Lifelong learning denotes a culture of engagement in learning throughout life made possible by flexible learning pathways. It is fostered by individual curiosity and the pursuit of knowledge, community-based learning initiatives and multi-sectoral policy-making and programme implementation." — UNESCO

Towards a vision of LLL by 2050
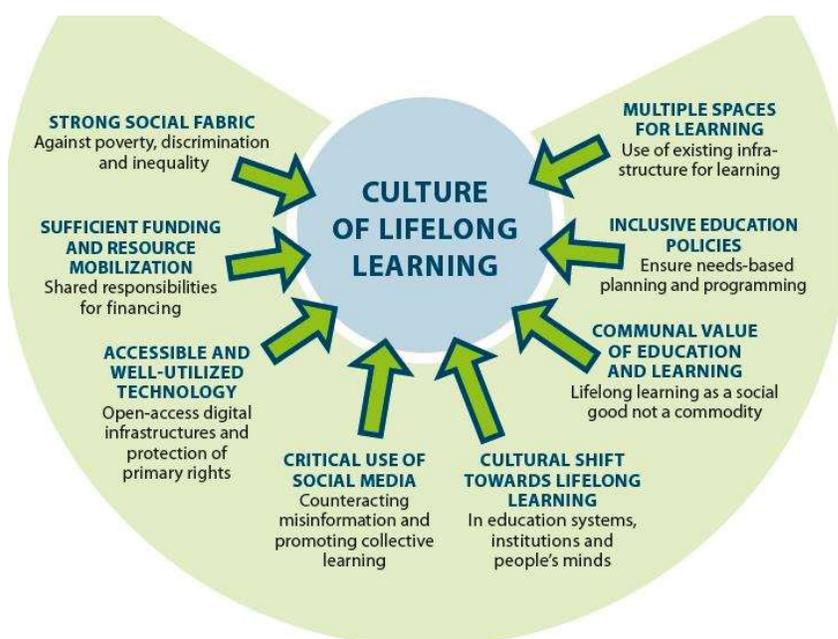
Figure 1: Embracing a culture of lifelong learning: contribution to the Futures of Education initiative.[1]

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[1] Unesco. (2020). *Embracing a culture of lifelong learning: contribution to the Futures of Education initiative. A transdisciplinary expert consultation.* Ed: UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning. Hamburg, p. 16. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000374112

Figure 2 gives an overview of the 10 key messages for fostering the culture of lifelong learning (LLL) and its expected positive effects on different dimensions of human life and on sustainable development
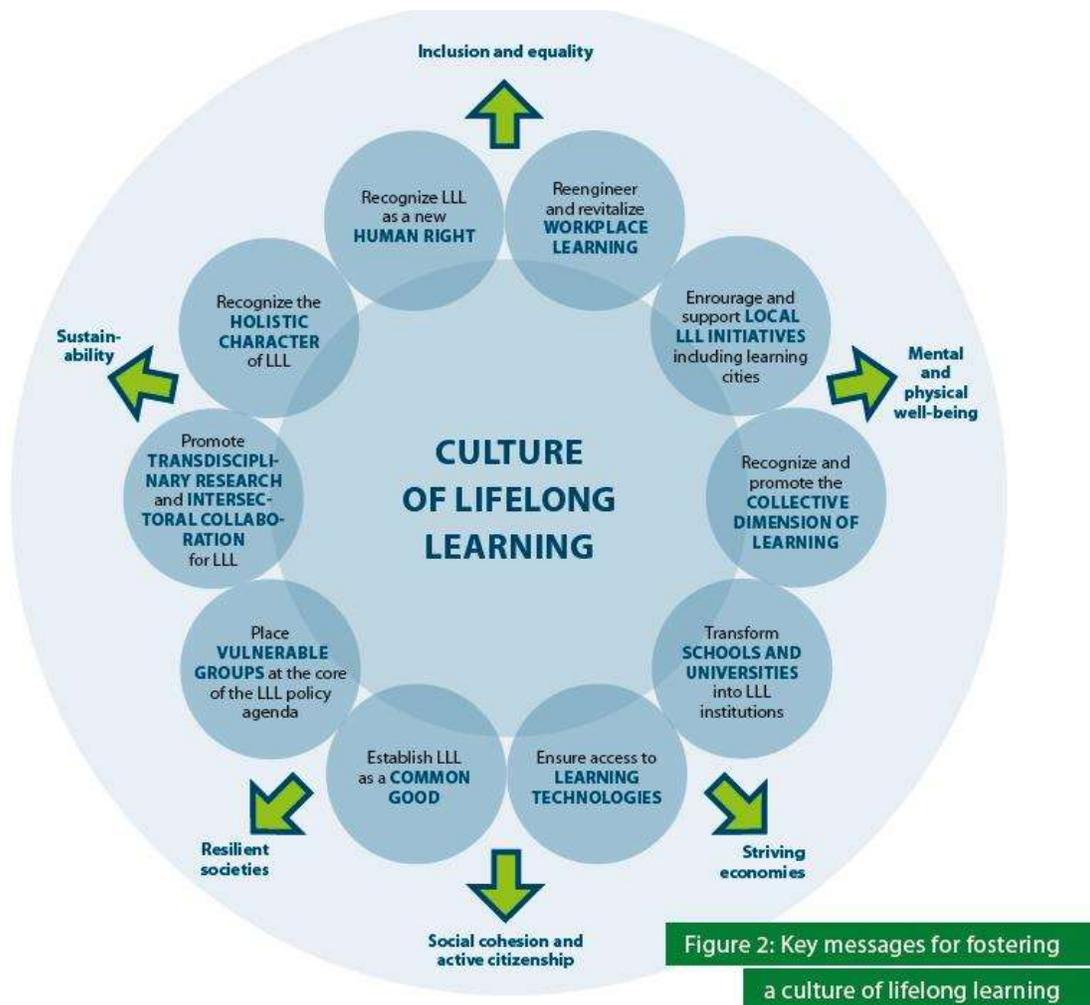
Figure 2: Key messages for fostering a culture of lifelong learning.[2]

Holistic approach of LLL:

- ➢ To provide easily accessible learning opportunities that respond to learning needs in a diversity of areas
- ➢ Providing a lifelong learning competency framework containing the inventory of expected skills, competences and attitudes for lifelong learners
- ➢ Integrate recognition, validation and accreditation (RVA) mechanisms to creating flexible learning pathways that recognize non-formal and informal learning outcomes

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[2] Unesco. (2020). *Embracing a culture of lifelong learning: contribution to the Futures of Education initiative;report;a transdisciplinary expert consultation.* Ed: UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning. Hamburg, p. 20. https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000374112

Lifelong learning is a powerful tool to promote sustainability regarding society, economy and environmental protection. Learning process must go beyond disciplinary and sectoral boundaries and lifelong learning can be useful tool to promote and foster transdisciplinary and intersectoral collaboration for sustainable future. This reflects through joint research, implementation of innovative learning and teaching practices such as blended pedagogy and flipped classroom, digital learning and flexible learning pathways. Furthermore, involving different stakeholders into a transdisciplinary dialogue, sharing knowledge and experience and actively participating in a creation of competence-oriented curricula to fulfil their needs.

1.1.   Lifelong learning systems and the role of digital technologies

Due to rapid changes in societal needs as response to economic growth, climate change and the fourth industrial revolution demands, educational systems including lifelong learning systems also evolve by using technology in order to take advantage of all opportunities.
According to this, digital skills are paramount to achieving key policy goals, including maintaining employability, meeting labour market needs, strengthening social inclusion and contributing to democratic life.
Regarding education (including adult education), new digital technologies are innovative ways that already provide opportunities for more adaptive, personalized and responsive learning and can engage, support and assess learner's education.

Actions to be taken:
- ✓ Fostering initiatives to ensure that educational technology is developed for and with learners as part of the educational commons
- ✓ Promoting publicly owned technology development and fostering cooperation with industry and tech communities willing to work in the interests of and for the public good.
- ✓ Identifying and upscaling existing promising technological tools and collective management models.
- ✓ Paying attention to excluded groups with a view to reducing educational inequalities

1.2.   Turning Higher Educations into Lifelong Learning institutions

Lifelong learning systems regarding Higher Education institutions are confronting many obstacles such as rigid funding schemes, college admission criteria, hiring based on certificates, low recognition of non-formal and informal learning and lack of opportunities for teachers to introduce new pedagogies, among others. In a promotion of lifelong learning higher education institutions should change their current actions and put more responsibility to prepare students to become lifelong learners and to provide lifelong learning opportunities to all people, irrespective of age and educational background.

That requires more openness when it comes access to educational institutions through multiple learning pathways depending on learner's abilities and needs.

Measures to be taken:
- ✓ Dedicated LLL units or staff responsible for LLL
- ✓ Funding schemes that include LLL opportunities
- ✓ Quality assurance procedures
- ✓ Revise curricula - more flexibility in terms of study programmes and learning formats, including the introduction of stackable credits as an alternative to full degree programmes-accreditation
- ✓ Changing the role of teachers and applied pedagogies - the teaching role could shift from being an instructor of knowledge to being more of a guide and facilitator of learning processes. Approach that cultivates a critical and explorative attitude among students and support the development of different perspectives on particular subjects
- ✓ Open up to the community – meeting the needs of a wider community by making the higher education's institutions facilities and resources available for adult learning and education.
- ✓ Technology-enhanced learning
- ✓ Engagement with local communities

1.3.   Promoting Lifelong Learning through the collective learning

 "Learning is about becoming global citizens who care about each other, other communities and the planet".

In the collective learning the roles of teachers and learners is interchangeable where the people share their expertise while, at the same time, learning from others. This is called a peer-learning.
This collective dimension of teaching/learning puts renewed emphasis on face-to-face learning. At the same time, it acknowledges the potential of digital technologies, enabling digitally linked learning collectives with similar interests.

Actions to be taken:
- ✓ Creating a digital learning platform – bring the people together online to foster collective learning at larger scale
- ✓ Development of personalized management tools- digital tools and guides for individuals to guide and track their own learning pathways
- ✓ Development of policy environments – support of Lifelong Learning in higher education and collective learning through policies
- ✓ Provision of adequate funding to support collective learning for vulnerable groups
- ✓ Enabling access of digital tools freely

1.4.   Workplace as a learning environment

Considering the ongoing transformation of the nature of work and changes regarding labour market, the workplace is a key driver for lifelong learning and therefore crucial for the creation of learning environments. Through such environments, people have the chance to improve, granting them a variety of new opportunities, including more autonomy and personal development. Learning at the workplace can be made more accessible with improvements in digital technology.

Actions to be taken:
- ✓ Short flexible courses following the worker needs

✓ Vocational and technical trainings that use integrational learning for the transmission of competences and experiences
✓ Recognition, validation and accreditation

Fostering a culture of learning in the workplace can have a positive impact on the lead to a more inclusive labour environment (e.g. for people with disabilities, the elderly or people lacking certification).

Lifelong learning is strongly connected to the idea of learning as freedom with an ecological dimension which may be even considered to be a fundamental human right. Following these statements and its holistic approach, Lifelong Learning should be guided by:

➢ Access to learning: always, across countries and languages.
➢ Resilience: an educational common that can withstand different crises: ecological, economic, epidemiological and political.
➢ Transparency: learning resources and facilities, including software and technology, must be open and part of the public domain.

1.5. Digital transformation of Higher Education and global trends

Development of "smart technologies", digital applications and educational resources of MOOC, SPOOC and several other is a key factor related to the digital transformation of higher education. Following the growing trends such as network in education, development of micro-credentials and blended learning, higher education is inclined to open up new horizons in education organization and to foster more flexibility and mobility.

1.6. Massive Open Online Courses – MOOC

MOOCs are online courses available to anyone that possesses a computer and internet access. They are flexible and can be accessed without paying tuition or committing to an academic program. Digital platforms, including MOOC, provide three possibilities that are seen as values: distance, scale, and personalization.

1.7. Blended Learning

Blended Learning or "hybrid learning" is an educational approach that combines learning with a teacher (face-to-face) and online learning. Blended Learning involves elements of student's independent control of their educational route, time, place and pace of learning, as well as the integration of learning experience with the teacher and online.

There are six main models of Blended Learning that vary in terms of teacher roles, physical space, delivery methods and scheduling:

1. Face to face (where the teacher drives the instruction and augments with digital tools);
2. Rotation (students cycle through a schedule of independent online study and face-to-face classroom time);

3. Flex (most of the curriculum is delivered via a digital platform and teachers are available for face-to-face consultation and support);
4. Labs (the entire curriculum is delivered via a digital platform but in a consistent physical location; students usually take traditional classes in this model as well);
5. Self-blend (students choose to augment their traditional learning with online course work);
6. Online driver (all curriculum and teaching is delivered via a digital platform and face-to-face meetings are scheduled or made available if necessary)
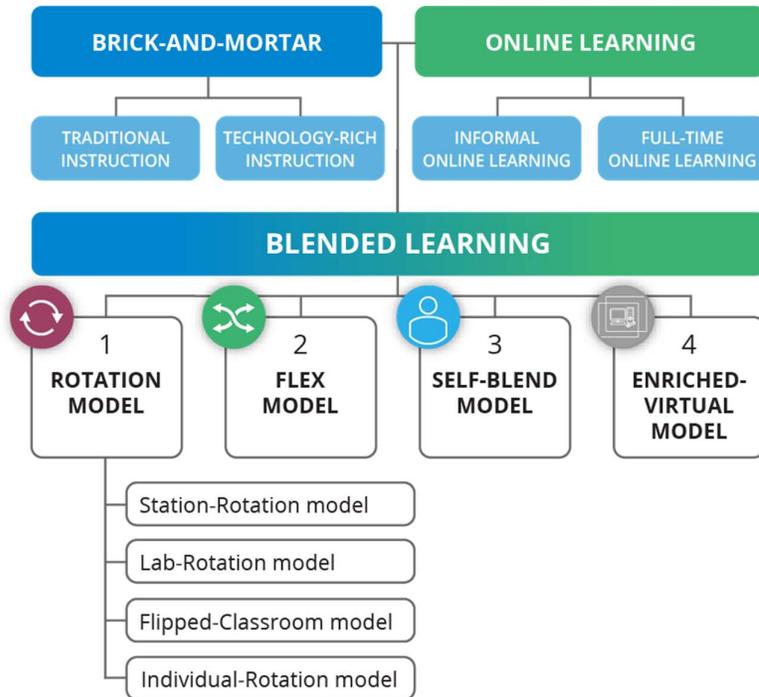

Figure 3: Blended Learning[3].

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[3] *Digital Learning / Instructional Practices*.(n. d.).https://www.cherrycreekschools.org/Page/http%3A%2F%2Fwww.cherrycreekschools.org%2Fsite%2Fdefault.aspx%3FPageID%3D2636 [accessed on: 19.02.2023.]

1.8. Micro-credentials

A micro-credential is proof of the learning outcomes achieved following a short learning experience. Micro-credentials in a European context:

Micro-credentials certify the learning outcomes of short-term learning experiences, for example a short course or training. They offer a flexible, targeted way to help people develop the knowledge, skills and competences they need for their personal and professional development.

Given their flexibility, micro-credentials can be designed and delivered by a variety of providers in many different formal, non-formal and informal learning settings.

Ways to speed up professional qualifications are being developed rapidly across Europe and the world. These opportunities are made available by a wide variety of public and private providers in response to the demand for more flexible, learner-centred forms of education and training.

Micro-credentials can be particularly useful for people who want to upskill or reskill to meet labour market needs or to develop professionally after having started to work.

European Commission, 2021

The main objective of the European approach to micro-credentials is to facilitate their validation, recognition and portability and to foster a larger uptake to support individual learners to gain and update their knowledge, skills and competences in all subject areas, learning environments and career stages.

2. Guidelines on pedagogical approaches – learner-centered approach and Integration of IO3

These guidelines serve as a tool to support teachers in higher education with the implementation of active teaching practices that contribute to students'/learners' personal and professional development.

By implementing strategic teaching methods, learning environments have the potential to create the conditions for the development of students' skills, competences and attitudes to face the challenges of real life- and professional contexts.

In line with the Lifelong Learning holistic approach in USAGE and with the SLU expertise in the pedagogic field, teachers will develop a range of constructive teaching strategies and the ability to use different pedagogical approaches to:

* promote meaningful learning in a supportive and stimulating environment
* develop self-directed learners
* address learners´ needs and specific objectives of the module(s)
* understand the diverse profile of each participant as well as their changing profile throughout the learning process

Meaningful learning means that learners can deeply understand learning outcomes and topics in generally. In this process learners are:

* self-directed
* self-aware
* motivated
* able to enhance their personal development
* provided with new skills and competences and ready for real world challenges

Effective learning processes and teaching strategies are reflected through the alignment between curriculum, pedagogy and assessment:
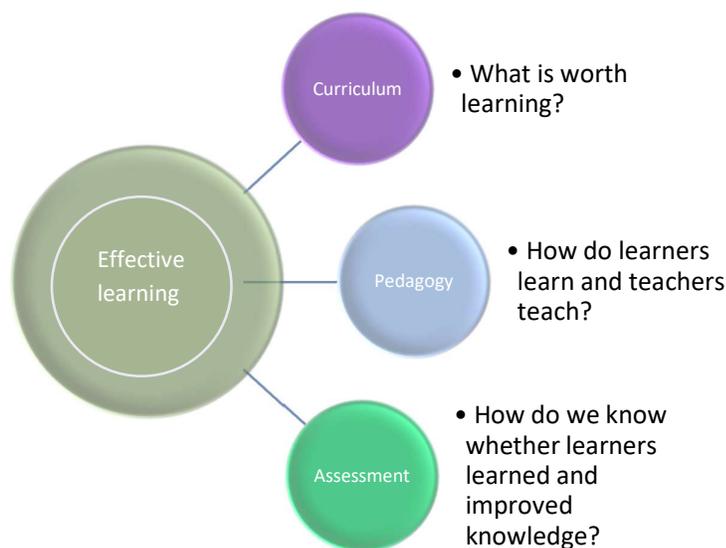
Figure 4: Effective Learning.[4]

For a deep and meaningful learning process and to develop self-directed learners, teachers may use different pedagogic approaches such as:

A. Direct instructions – explicit teaching of new content of knowledge by introduction of new concepts and demonstration of new skills

B. Enquiry learning – learners perform a range of tasks (e.g. asks, formulating, processing, discussing, designing, evaluating and concluding-critical thinking)

C. Co-construction – learners work with other learners and teachers and contribute to building the knowledge

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[4] (n.a.) (2017). *Booklet 3: Effective Learning and Teaching: Developing Lifelong and Self-directed Learners.* Ed: Education Bureau. The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China. https://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/curriculum-development/renewal/Guides/SECG%20booklet%203_en_20180831.pdf

In this collaborative learning process among learners, between learners and teachers, and among teachers, digital technologies play an important role. A flipped classroom is a type of blended learning approach, a flexible concept where face-to-face interaction is mixed with independent study – usually via technology. E-learning activities can be taught as synchronous or asynchronous activities.

2.1. E-learning activities[5]

I. Synchronous		II. Asynchronous
➢ Chat and IM ➢ Video and audio conference ➢ Live webcasting ➢ Application sharing ➢ Whiteboard ➢ Polling		➢ E-mail ➢ Discussion forum ➢ Wiki ➢ Blog ➢ Webcasting

The range of learning methods will support the learning objectives of each learning outcome in the course/module to be successfully reached.

The design of module(s) and e-learning courses may use a combination of the following instructional methods.

2.2. Instructional methods

expositive methods	application methods	collaborative methods
Presentations Case studies Worked examples Demonstrations	Demonstrations-practise methods Jobs aids Case-based exercises Role plays Simulations and serious games Guided research Project work	Online guided discussion Collaborative work Peer tutoring

For content presentation the following methods are foreseen:

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[5] Beatrice Ghirardini. (2021). *E-learning methodologies and good practices*. E-learning Methodologies: A Guide for Designing and Developing E-learning. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Rome Rome, 2nd edition. https://doi.org/10.4060/i2516e

- storytelling
- scenario-based approach
- tools
- demonstration-practise approach

2.3. Categories of teaching strategies and their description:

- Strategies involving small/large group discussions: Teaching practices that require interaction in small or large groups carrying out a task.

- Project work strategies: Teaching practices that require not only group activity and knowledge sharing but also designing and delivering a product.

- Conversational strategies: Teaching practices carried out in response to a debate around a stimulus (e.g. world café, role-play), where everyone participates by making use of transversal knowledge, integrating, expanding, arguing what has already been said by others.

- Flipped classroom strategies: Teaching strategies that require students to present content to the class after working on materials assigned by the teacher individually or in groups.
- Case-based strategies Teaching strategies that explicitly refer to a case study or that require learners to identify a solution through group discussion.

- Metaphorical reflective strategies: Teaching strategies that support students in their reflection process. They involve the use of pictures that students can use to metaphorically explain their thoughts on pretty much any kind of learning or situations/ experiences.

- Icebreaking strategies: Strategies used to introduce each other and to develop a group atmosphere, reducing distances between people

The below figure shows implementation of different categories and teaching strategies:

Categories	Teaching strategies
Strategies involving small/large group discussions	Jigsaw
	International variation of the group puzzle
	Academic knowledge meets practice
	Seminar group discussion
	Dialogical assessment and feedback method
	Observation & reflection
	Reflect
	Consensus workshop
Project work strategies	Project work discussion
	Design thinking
	Writing-based learning
	Mixed methods group presentations
Conversational strategies	World café methodology
	Combined world café methodology & intergenerational learning together
	Role-play
Flipped classroom strategies	Reflective understanding of roles and functions of international organizations of adult education
	Current issues in adult learning and education
Case-based strategies	Case study (a)
	Case study (b)
Metaphorical reflective strategies	Photolangage (a)
	Photolangage (b)
Icebreaking strategies	Things that we share
	I AM

Figure 5: Clustering in the teaching practices.[6]

Following these methods and approaches where the teacher creates an "experimental learning environment", it is important for students to experiment and develop skills that can help them face changes, solve problems, create simulations, be creative, communicate with different kinds of people, share knowledge, be flexible and identify personal and professional goals.

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[6] Frison, D. et. al. (2020). *Guidelines on teacher's practices. A guide for instructors and practitioners to innovate practices in higher education and adult learning*. Pensa MultiMedia Editore. Lecce, p. 32. https://www.hw.uni-wuerzburg.de/fileadmin/intall/IO2_Learning_community/Online_Teaching_Guideline/E-BOOK-published_guideline.pdf

3. Guidelines on validation procedures of informal and non-formal learning – harmonization with project partners

3.1. Preface

This concept on possible validation procedures in the context of Lifelong Learning has been adapted since the original concept. The original version is the first step in implementing the project C3.3. "Continuing Education" of the Performance Agreement 2019-2021 between the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research and the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna-BOKU.

The objective is the establishment of transparent procedures for access and recognition respectively accreditation of formal and non-formal pre-qualifications adapted and valid for each university partner of USAGE project, as well as the necessary equivalence test for admission to a continuing education curriculum.

> ❖ *The European Agenda on ´the Social Dimension of Education and Training´ states that recognizing prior learning and providing individualized support enhances participation of underrepresented groups and nontraditional learners in higher education (HE)*

Expert review of VNFIL decisions ensure development and progress. VNFIL offers a holistic approach in terms of internal and external collaboration (e.g. university partner countries).

This is an essential contribution to quality assurance, whereby all relevant organisational units of each University in Partners country have to be involved (see chapter Organization). Essential contents of the concept were developed and tested as part of an international research project. The concept also includes the developed quality framework, which can be used for various forms of university continuing education at the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences (BOKU) and abroad.

This concept provides a well-founded framework for the VNFIL approach and practical guidelines for recognition, considering equivalence of certificates and diplomas both on a national and international level.

3.2. Background, experiences and sources

In the following chapter, the experiences of Lifelong Learning and existing documents will be presented. This documents the existence of comprehensive competence and shows the complexity of the topic.

Based on the initiative of the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research, the follow-up project[7] "Implementation of procedures for the recognition and accreditation of non-formal and informal acquired competences at universities" was launched in 2018 following the development of

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[7] Birke, Barbara, & Hanft, Anke. (2016). *Anerkennung und Anrechnung non-formal und informell erworbener Kompetenzen. Empfehlungen zur Gestaltung von Anerkennungs- und Anrechnungsverfahren.* Ed: AQ Austria – Agentur für Qualitätssicherung und Akkreditierung Austria. Wien: Facultas. https://doi.org/10.25656/01:12648

recommendations for the design of recognition and accreditation procedures by AQ Austria. In order to support universities in the implementation of procedures and instruments and to promote awareness, AQ Austria has developed a setting that is accepted by all university sectors. It includes individual counselling for the universities as well as an exchange between them in the framework of joint workshops. The counselling is provided by external experts.[8]

The counselling should focus on the implementation of recognition respectively accreditation procedures to support the transfer of non-formal and informal skills. In addition to the counselling provided by external experts at the universities, the staff of the universities exchange their own experiences during workshops. The concept for possible validation procedures in the context of LLL is based on the Lisbon Convention, the UG 2002 and a publication by AQ Austria: "Recognition and Accreditation of non-formal and informally acquired skills – Recommendations for the design of recognition and accreditation procedures. "[9]

In addition, BOKU was invited by AQ Austria to actively participate in the Erasmus+ project "RPL in Practice" and to further develop RPL (Recognition of Prior Learning) with other international institutions in the field of HE, NGOs and LLL departments of education ministries in Austria, Sweden, Croatia, Ireland and Belgium.

In recent years, the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences-BOKU has developed a wide range of continuing education programs that contribute to lifelong learning and enable people with different educational backgrounds to receive continuing university education. These programs include several university courses. The admission requirements for these courses are not laid down by law at public universities – unlike regular studies – but are to be regulated in the curriculum, meaning the admission requirements are the responsibility of the university.[10] Persons with a lower level of formal education may also be admitted here.

First experiences at BOKU were already made during the admission procedures of the university course (program) "Rural Property Management. "[11]

Within the scope of the Erasmus+ project "Transnational Peer Review for Quality Assurance in Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning (VNFIL) Extended"[12] addressed in the LV, the admission procedure of the university course (program) "Rural Property Management" was subjected to a peer review procedure. As part of this process, a self-report and a peer report were prepared.

This project ran from October 2015 to June 2018, implemented an international peer review process and included comprehensive quality areas. The quality areas are based on a first quality framework developed in the project "Europeerguid-RVC" (2014-2015). In this project, broad research of the

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[8] AQ Austria – Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation Austria. (ed.) (2016). *Recognition of non-formally and informally acquired competences. Recommendations for recognition and crediting procedures.* Vienna: AQ Austria – Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation Austria.
https://www.aq.ac.at/en/news/documents-news/AQ_Austria-2016_Recommendations-RPL.pdf?m=1537350370
[accessed on 28.01.2019]

[9] Ibid., 2016.

[10] *RIS - Universitätsgesetz 2002 § 70—Bundesrecht konsolidiert, tagesaktuelle Fassung*. (2002).
https://www.ris.bka.gv.at/NormDokument.wxe?Abfrage=Bundesnormen&Gesetzesnummer=20002128&Artikel=&Paragraf=70&Anlage=&Uebergangsrecht=

[11] Active contributions came from course directors Mansberger, Wryzents Eckmüller, course manager Hofer and Head of Life-Long Learning Paulus

[12] Smit, M. (ed.) et. al. (2018). *European Reader for Peer Review in Validation of NonFormal and Informal Learning (VNFIL)*. Borne. http://www.peer-review-network.eu/media/VNFIL%20Extended/IO%2009%20Peer%20review%20reader%20VNFIL.pdf

national quality systems in validation was carried out in France, Portugal and the Netherlands. The results of this research were analysed simultaneously with the quality frameworks of previous peer review projects (VET, guidance and counselling) and the first version of the "European guidelines for the validation of non-formal and informal learning" (European Commission and CEDEFOP, 2009). Within the project, this first set of quality areas has been greatly developed – both in terms of content and structure. Information on quality assurance in the field of validation in Austria, Slovakia and Lithuania (IO 1 country reports) and feedback from the partners served to revise the quality criteria. The updated "European Guidelines for Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning", published in 2015, were used to restructure the quality areas and ensure their compatibility with existing European quality requirements in the field of validation.

The three-year project of the LV will also include further documentation and training, consisting of documents and projects from the international LLL network EUCEN such as the "VINCE project" or the planned Erasmus+ Mobilities at the Sorbonne in Paris and at universities and institutions in Iceland.

At the national level, strategies for lifelong learning have been developed in the light of international developments, as set out for example in the "Guidelines for a coherent LLL strategy for Austria", in the position paper "Chance Education", in the paper "Knowledge – Chance –Competences. Strategy for the implementation of lifelong learning in Austria" and ultimately in the "Expert Report on the Consultation Process"[13]. Based on these national and international documents, the Austrian Lifelong Learning Strategy "LLL:2020"[14] was adopted by the Federal Government in July 2011. Action line 10 of the national LLL strategy includes visions, objectives and measures on procedures for recognising non-formal and informal learning. This implements the Council's recommendations on the validation of non-formal and informal learning, which were developed in parallel with the national LLL strategy. Action Line 10 foresees that acquired skills and competences "are recognised and certified as qualifications irrespective of where they have been acquired, which means that non-formal and informal education processes are equal to formal education pathways"[15].

3.3. Definitions

In order to provide a uniform understanding of the terminology when reading the concept, here are some definitions used by the aforementioned publications of AQ Austria, Cedefop, the Erasmus+ project and the website of the Continuing Education Academy.[16]

"Formal learning" is organized, structured learning in a context that serves learning (school, university, etc.) and concludes with a diploma such as certificate, certificate of competence, etc.

"Non-formal" learning takes place in the context of planned activities (in terms of learning objectives and learning time), learning is supported in a certain form, e. g. learning within the framework of a teacher-student relationship, in-company training, courses.

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[13] Bundesministerium. (2011). *Strategie zum lebensbegleitenden Lernen in Österreich. LLL 2020.*
https://www.qualifikationsregister.at/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Strategie1.pdf

[14] Ibid., 2011.

[15] Ibid., 2011.

[16] wba. (n.d.). *Was ist Validierung: Fachinfo: Weiterbildungsakademie (wba) - zertifiziert und diplomiert Erwachsenenbildner/innen*. wba.
https://wba.or.at/de/fachinfo/definition-validierung.php [accessed on 24.06.2020]

"Informal learning" means learning in everyday life, for example at work, in the family, in leisure time; not organised, not structured, partly unintentional; life and work experience.

One speaks of "recognition" of competencies in access to study and of "recognition" of parts of the study such as exams or courses.

"Recognition" (of prior learning) means that access validates the learning outcomes achieved through formal education or through non-formal or informal learning.

"Adjustment" (recognition) means that services already provided are credited and do not have to be re-provided. This may lead to a reduction in study time or study relief. The term "study period" is to be understood as "every part of a university programme which is evaluated and for which a certificate has been issued and which, although not a complete programme of study, involves a substantial acquisition of knowledge or skills". Thus, the recognition of exams in accordance with § 78 UG corresponds here conceptually to the credit.[17]
"Access" (to higher education) refers to the right of qualified candidates to apply for admission to higher education and to be considered.

"Admission" (to higher education institutions and programmes) describes the process or system whereby qualified applicants are allowed to study at a particular institution and/or programme.[18]

Equivalence test": study of the equivalence of competences from different educational contexts
"Level and content equivalence": Different levels must be taken into account.

"Formal approach": a development-oriented approach to validation procedures. Identification and documentation of non-formal and informally acquired competences without using a standard (e.g. Reconciling Curriculum). The goal is to make people aware of their own strengths and experiences.

"Summary approach" means a final approach to validation procedures. Non-formal and informally acquired competences are also identified and documented, but then measured against a given standard such as a Curriculum. The aim here is to review, finalise and to improve the quality of the data respectively certification.

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[17] Summarised from: Beschluss der Kultusministerkonferenz vom 28.06.2002. (2002). *Anrechnung von außerhalb des Hochschulwesens erworbenen Kenntnissen und Fähigkeiten auf ein Hochschulstudium (I)*.
https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/veroeffentlichungen_beschluesse/2002/2002_06_28-Anrechnung-Faehigkeiten-Studium-1.pdf [accessed on 26.7.2016];
Der europäische Hochschulraum – die Ziele verwirklichen. Kommuniquéder Konferenz der für die Hochschulen zuständigen europäischen Ministerinnen und Minister, Bergen, 19.-20.Mai 2005,
http://wissenschaft.bmwfw.gv.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Bologna_Grundsatzdok/Bergen_Communique_2005_-_dt..pdf [accessed on 26.7.2016];
Erfolgversprechende Faktoren für extracurriculare Maßnahmen in der Studieneingangsphase Empfehlung des Runden Tisches Ingenieurwissenschaften des Projekts nexus der HRK. (2016). https://www.hrk-nexus.de/fileadmin/redaktion/hrk-nexus/07-Downloads/07-02-Publikationen/Ing_Handreichung.pdf [accessed on 26.7.2016];
Council of Europe. (1997). *Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region.* Part I, Article I. https://rm.coe.int/168007f2c7 [accessed on 26.7.2016]
[18] Council of Europe. (1997). *Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region.* Part I, Article I. https://rm.coe.int/168007f2c7 [accessed on 26.7.2016]

Content is to be understood not in terms of the content of a module/course, but in terms of competences. The review must be appropriate, reliable, valid and transparent. Whether a competence exists or not does not depend on where it was acquired (university, professional context ...), when it was acquired (can competences become obsolete?), the temporal scope (ECTS credit points) or who the mediating person was (Prof. X or Prof. Y).

3.4. Background to validation

Validation helps to reveal the diverse and rich learning experiences of people. The process must inspire confidence by demonstrating that requirements of reliability, validity and quality assurance are met. The elements of visibility and value of learning must always be considered during the development of validation procedures which is to be done in a quality-assured and internationally recognised procedure, with the help of various tools. However, this first draft concept does not yet address different target groups, which will happen in the second phase of the project.

Validation is voluntary and it is up to the individual to take a first step and decide to start the process of identifying, documenting, assessing and certifying their learning. The person undergoing a validation procedure must receive adequate information and counselling both before and throughout the entire process. Candidates need to know what to expect, what requirements are to be met and what evidence to provide. It is therefore necessary to inform about the costs and benefits of validation, so that potential candidates can make a well-founded decision about whether to undergo a validation procedure.

3.4.1. Validation procedures

The concept is based on the European Guidelines for the Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning.[19] In 2009, the European Commission, together with Cedefop, published European Guidelines for the Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning (Cedefop and the European Commission, 2009) for the first time, which were republished in revised form in 2016. The issues referred to in the Recommendation should not be seen individually, but rather as building blocks that form the basis for a coherent approach to validation of non-formal and informal learning.

The European guidelines for validation consisting of 4 phases are standard throughout Europe and Austria. This is reflected in the presentation of the Austrian Strategy[20] on non-formal and informal learning in Austria, as well as in the national strategies for validation of partner countries. See also the EU Council Recommendation of 2012 and 2017.[21]

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[19] Cedefop. (2016). *Europäische Leitlinien für die Validierung nicht formalen und informellen Lernens.* http://dx.doi.org/10.2801/669676

[20] BMB. (2017). *Strategie zur Validierung nicht-formalen und informellen Lernens in Österreich*. https://www.qualifikationsregister.at/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Strategie_zur_Validierung_nicht-formalen_und_informellen_Lernens.pdf

[21] wba. (n.d.). *Bildungspolitischer Kontext: Fachinfo: Weiterbildungsakademie (wba) - zertifiziert und diplomiert Erwachsenenbildner/innen*. wba. https://wba.or.at/de/fachinfo/bildungspolitischer-kontext.php [accessed on 24.06.2020]

competence acquisition	formal learning e.g. school, vocational or tertiary education	non-formal learning e.g. vocational training, e-learning	informal learning e.g. jobs, voluntary work
personal goal setting	potential motivation • employment • further education • personality development		
central access and counselling portal	services • counselling • target analysis • Introduction to suitable validation measures		

identification	documentation	assessment	certification
rather formative		rather summative	

result	potential benefit	result	potential benefit
competence description documentation without equivalent in formal or non-formal further education (e.g. portfolio, competence balance, Europass-CV)	continuation of validation process/transition in summative process	proof of qualification Issuing of a diploma/ certificate for acquiring a formal or non-formal qualification/ part of a qualification incl. reference to NQR-level	application process/employment entry/professional development
	application process/employment entry/professional development		entry in further education/profession al further education
	entry in further education/professional further education		further validation steps

Figure 6: Validation as a comprehensive progress.[22]

3.4.2. Structure of the validation procedure

Curricula are to be seen as a starting point in the validation process. Universities can only use validation methods (except in the first phase) that follow the summative approach. There must always be a transparent review of whether the existing competences previously acquired meet the required pre-established standard. A formal procedure would not be sufficient. Applicants' existing competencies are transferred to the curriculum (or parts thereof; hence module, course etc.) in relation to each other.

The competence-oriented formulation of curricula and the formulation in the form of learning outcomes are a prerequisite for this process: "Learning outcomes are statements about what a learner knows, understands and is able to do after completing a learning process. "[23]

The accreditation target is whole modules or whole courses (the Austrian Matter laws speak of lectures and exams). It is important to note that the smaller the unit of the credit target, the easier it is to establish consistency, but with a higher administrative burden. Crediting can only be based on competences/learning outcomes defined in the curriculum.

Particular attention should be paid to the correct procedure and transparency. Proof of previously acquired knowledge is very individual and context dependent. As part of the process, attention will be paid to ensuring that competences acquired informally by third parties (e. g. employer). As with formal documents, verifying the authenticity of confirmations is a challenge. The level and content must be identifiable from supporting documents. However, the emphasis lies on the responsibility of the individual and, to a certain extent, the mutual trust between university and applicant.

This draft assumes that a procedural scheme will apply to both areas of "approval" and "imputation". This is based on the recommendations of AQ Austria as well as all the other institutions mentioned. Within the recommendations of AQ Austria, a distinction has been made between admission and accreditation. This is also reflected in this concept in the area of documentation and assessment.

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[23] Official Journal of the European Union. (2008). *EQR recommendations of the European Parliament and Council, 2008.*
https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2008:111:0001:0007:EN:PDF

Table 1: Process steps in accrediting procedures

| Process steps	Description	Recommendations
Information and counselling	for interested parties and students	• Information and counselling is not a time-defined process step, but must be carried out at least before the application is submitted
Submission	application documents, evidence on already delivered benefits/existing Competences	• Transparency of required documents needs to be ensured If applicable: Templates, application forms • Deadlines for submitting applications should be set and transparent (usually at the beginning of the semester). Recommended Timeframe: mid-term of the previous semester, ensuring enough time to assess the applications and expose candidates to the equivalence tests and/or competence demonstrations • Applications in written form
Processing of applications, verification	Examination of the submitted documents and, if applicable, claims, equivalence review in terms of content and level	• Multi-level principle or multi-level verification (e. g. instruction manual, LV Accreditation Officer responsible, Commission) promote the validity and reliability of the procedure • counselling and assessment must be separate
Accreditation decision	Authorisation or reasoned refusal; including information for the students	• must be based on technical criteria and ensure consistency, objectivity, fairness and transparency • Options for opposition and appeal need to be provided
Accreditation	Accreditation ruling (e.g. notification letter, entry in a portal or a database)	

Source: AQ Austria adapted

Table 2: Process steps for approval procedures

Process steps	Description	Recommendations
Counselling	Information talks about access requirements or the process, "Pre-Check"	• Counselling is not a time-defined process step, so can/should be carried out at any time or as required
Applications are submitted in writing or online	Typical documents: Application form, CV, certificates, evidence documentation	• Required documents should be available on the website
Selection	Checking of requirements, plausibility check, if applicable obtaining reference documents	• Based on defined criteria, e. g. access requirements, motivation, level of professional experience, … • Information about the fulfilment/non-compliance of the conditions • Responsibilities in selection: Pre-check executers cannot be part of the selection decision
Incl. Selection talks (meetings)		• Preparation of a protocol (as structured as possible) should be provided for - justification - the derivation of decisions/transparency
		• Transparency of the decision should be ensured, inter alia through the measures mentioned above

Source: AQ Austria adapted

3.5. The phases of the validation process

The validation procedure is divided into the following phases:

Phase 1	• IDENTIFICATION
Phase 2	• DOCUMENTATION
Phase 3	• ASSESSMENT
Phase 4	• CERTIFICATION
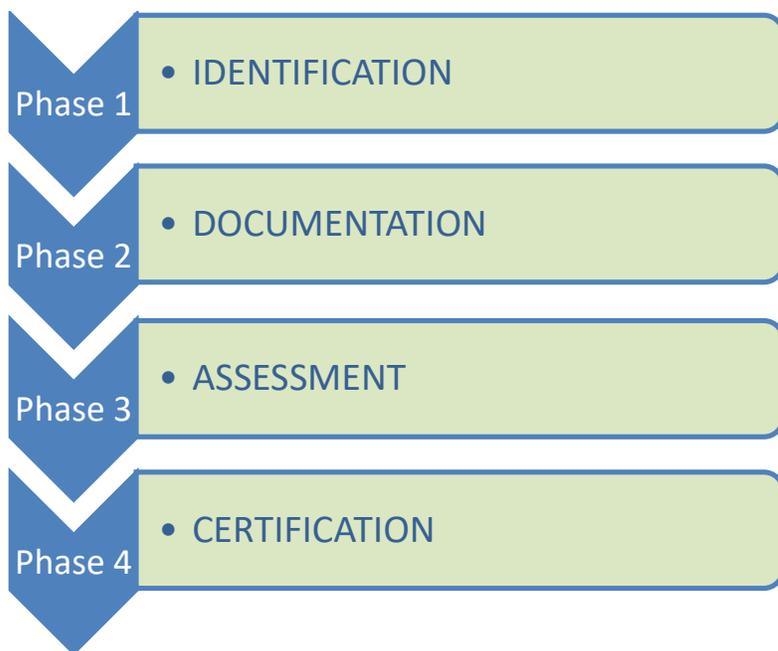
Different approaches to validation can be used for the different phases. For the first phase of identification, an emphasis is placed on the formative approach in order to give the candidates the possibility of self-reflection. In the phases of documentation, assessment and certification, a summative approach is pursued, which is requirement- and standard-related. This includes steps to verify acquired competences based on the standards defined for the desired formal qualification.

3.5.1. Identification

Validation starts with the identification of existing knowledge, skills and competencies. In this phase, the candidates become increasingly aware of their own previous achievements. This phase is crucial because learning outcomes differ from person to person and are acquired in a variety of contexts: at home, at work or as part of volunteering. (For many, discovering and growing awareness of their own abilities is already a valuable result of the validation process.)

Recognising this non-standardised aspect of non-formal and informal learning is a considerable methodological challenge. The methods and approaches used must be "open to the unexpected". They must not restrict the range of knowledge, skills and competences in question through their design. Furthermore, good counsellors are important. They require social skills and need to offer guidance to suitable options and instruments. In this first phase, the candidate must be made aware of the costs and benefits of validation.

What needs to be considered?

ⓘ Methods and procedures for identification must be open to the unexpected and do not limit the range of knowledge, skills and competences that can be considered.

ⓘ A balance is needed between the use of standardised (IT-based) instruments and approaches based on personal dialogue (see instruments).

ⓘ The link between the validation process and other activities of the candidate's professional development.

ⓘ The personal development plan, which describes the individualised learning pathway and includes further orientation, formal and informal learning, work experience, further validation steps, etc.

Objective of this phase

➢ The candidate is aware of the value of his/her already acquired knowledge, skills and competences.

Instruments and tools – you need:

☞ Web offerings with comprehensive information and e-tools

☞ Declarative methods such as: Descriptions, portfolios, written reflections (can be carried out independently and unaccompanied)
   o Offline examples and templates are available and can be adapted according to the target group of the university course
   o Online tool for validation for all phases!

☞ Self-assessment (formative) with the aim of reflecting on one's own learning processes or the learning career. They are intended to reflect on one's own resources in order to determine the individual location. The self-assessment should be based on the competencies of an individual.
Offline examples and templates are available and can be adapted according to the target group of the university course-program (interviews, discussions, portfolios, observations). However, a sustainable online tool would be useful.
   o Online-tool for validation with a self-assessment tool

☞ Checklist (summative, targeted, standardised and online-based) with the aim of comparing the acquired competences with standardised procedures in order to prepare further stages (II, III, IV) and procedural steps - for both procedures - for access and accreditation.
   o Online-tool with a checklist - especially for each procedure - for access and accreditation

☞ Online area information, submission, application, e. g. terms and conditions, information on costs, etc.

Example of the procedure for PHASE I – Identification – for a university course-program at BOKU

1. Candidates have access to information via the BOKU website, telephone or e-mail. If applicable an initial appointment is made.
2. A first interview takes place for comprehensive initial information:
   - he/she learns about the contents and learning outcomes of the university course-program (module) for which he/she wishes to apply; for which he/she wants to get his/her competences accredited.
   - Candidates are informed about the procedure and costs. (Due to the experience already gained and the feedback of the "VNFIL extended" project, it was better for the candidates to meet in a familiar environment to obtain information.)
   - The applicant needs to log onto the online tool where he/she confirms the Agreement to Terms and Conditions for the continuing education offers and pays a fee for Phase I.
   - The applicant now gains access to the personal login area, the online portfolio and the self-assessment. (to create: tools, log-in area, provision of on- and offline self-assessment tools)
3. Further interviews, including discussions and observations – as needed – will take place.
4. The candidates prepare a comprehensive self-assessment and fill out a questionnaire in which they explain their previous learning and education pathways. They share their personal motivation to participate in this university course/program respectively why they want access, or the individual modules to be accredited. The interviews are standardised so that a comparable comprehensible decision basis can be made as to whether the candidates enter the next phase.
5. Candidates and counsellors decide whether the candidate will continue to enter the next phase. This is very important, because the next step of the procedure is summative and more expensive. The results and documentation of Phase I can also be used by the applicants for other projects. (Costs!)
6. When entering the next phase, the candidate pays the full fee. (incl. costs for certification, to consider the possibility of accreditation eligibility in case of university course-program participation)

3.5.2. Documentation

Documentation includes the provision of evidence of the learning outcomes acquired. Validation must be open to many different types of evidence, from written documents to work samples to practical demonstrations. This evidence must provide sufficient insight into non-formal or informal learning outcomes: a simple enumeration of professional titles or positions is not sufficient.

The documentation usually includes a portfolio including a CV, the career history of the candidates with documents and work samples, a documentation of the activities that took/take place voluntarily, and examples of other forms of informal learning.
The digitized documentation is not a completed individual step but takes place continuously during the validation process. It begins with the moment of registration and ends with certification (potentially it may also go beyond this if the validation procedure within the meaning of the LLL is to be used beyond this specific crediting process).

What needs to be considered?

- ⓘ Clear criteria for the university courses-program to document non-formal and informal learning. Evidence of skills already acquired must be included in the documentation.

- ⓘ To what extent do existing documentation formats support the transferability of acquired knowledge, skills and competencies?

The aim of this phase:

- ➢ Each candidate holds a file with all the data (e. g. a portfolio) that identifies relevant references and insights.

Instruments and tools – you need:

- ☞ clear criteria for the documentation of non-formal and informal learning (incl.: Deadlines, etc.)
- ☞ a web-based form, which was created similar to an equivalence list form - for the recognition with the learning outcomes of the university course-program and - for the admission with the admission competencies required for the university course-program (Learning Incomes)
- ☞ Online tool for validation with the possibility to upload the following documents:
    - o Europass and/or any other way of presenting a curriculum vitae
    - o Evidence of formal qualifications
    - o Evidence of initial and continuing training, including short courses
    - o Qualifications, business licenses, professional / commercial registrations
    - o Employment documents such as service certificates, performance assessments
    - o Confirmations/documents on previous employment relationships and experiences
    - o Letter of recommendation from current and former employers, superiors and colleagues
    - o Recommendations from persons with relevant qualifications in the areas assessed
    - o Recommendations from superiors indicating skills and knowledge in professional practice
    - o Photographs and/or work samples
    - o Reports, critiques, articles indicating the level of knowledge, as well as analysis and written expression skills in relation to the topic
    - o Confirmation or, in the case of self-employment, proof of the management of an undertaking and the necessary skills and knowledge
    - o Videos from everyday work, which are recorded by colleagues via video cameras and show typical tasks in everyday life

Example of the PHASE II documentation procedure for a university course-program at BOKU

1. Establishment of an online portal (server identification for data preservation and security) in which all documents of the candidates, the communication with counsellors and the results of the process are documented trough the following questions: How and in what form do I document my validation process - with what and for what?
2. For crediting procedures: All documents are compared with the learning outcomes of the university course-program. Several documents should be uploaded for each learning outcome. At the same time, this includes a field describing the skills already acquired and explaining why the applicant believes that these skills have been acquired based on previous learning experiences.

3. Counselling and support of the entire process, assistance and explanation of the guidelines, etc. (First experiences in the university course "Rural Property Management" have shown that this documentation requires a lot of counselling. In many publications and recommendations, "Guidance as a QA feature" is cited.) It needs standardised conversation logs, results of checks, etc.
4. Setting of deadlines for submitting applications – set timetable
5. Verification of the submitted documents and, if applicable, receivables.

3.5.3. Assessment

Within this phase we must distinguish whether these procedures are a matter of recognition with admission or an accreditation for an existing university course-program.

For accreditation procedures, the learning outcomes already acquired must be compared with the learning outcomes of the curriculum during the assessment phase. This may be written and documented evidence, but also evidence of a different kind. The assessment is essential for the credibility of the validation of non-formal and informal learning outcomes and must be accompanied by quality assurance procedures to ensure that all phases of validation, including assessment, are subject to critical review. Access to the university course-program requires clear documents that show which learning incomes must be available for a person to be admitted to the university course-program, even if he or she does not formally meet the admission requirements.

The instruments and procedures must be used with the highest degree of transparency.

AQ Austria explicitly states transparency and recommends:

- Transparency refers to the development and design of procedures, to all decisions and to the continuous application of criteria.
- Transparency must be ensured internally (internal university) and externally (applicants, candidates and students).
- The use of the procedures also requires applicants and students providing transparent proof of their competences.

As validation involves the recording of a variety of individual learning experiences, assessment tools must be designed to capture and assess the specific learning of each individual and the context in which that learning took place. A combination of a variety of tools is deemed to be the optimal approach in this context. This might be a combination of a written exam with practical tasks and a practical demonstration or simulation.

Particular attention will be paid to the demonstration of competences in relation to the learning outcomes of the curriculum in the university courses-programs for which credit is to be awarded. This requires a weighting. The assessment is carried out by a jury that meets the requirements of the respective competence standard. We have already gained experience with the university course-programs in the context of admission. The form of the 6-eye principle has already proven itself here and is to be maintained as a quality feature.

What needs to be considered?

ⓘ The assessment is carried out in an appropriate and supportive setting.

ⓘ The assessment is based on pre-agreed criteria.
ⓘ There is feedback on the results of the assessment.
ⓘ The assessment methods must be valid, reliable and fair.
ⓘ The assessment methods must be within an appropriate cognitive range.

The aim of this phase:

➢ The assessment is based on an appropriate use of valuation methods.
➢ The university informs the candidates sufficiently about the requirements of the assessment instruments used and the expected level of performance.
➢ The assessment design fits the needs and possibilities of the candidates and reflects the learning environment.

Instruments and tools – you need:

✎ A jury that carries out the assessment (e. g. course management, LV-manager, accreditation officer, a subject-specific external person). Criteria for selecting persons for this task.

✎ A form for comparing portfolio analysis as a collection of materials that compares previous learning with the learning outcomes of the curriculum.

✎ A form for the assessment results of the documented work samples (videos, etc.) in order to verify skills and their application in practice on the basis of examples and to test the quality of the actual work, or to check the application of theoretical knowledge in a structured way.

✎ According to the university courses-programs it is likely that different methods of simulation for examination situations would have to be developed. They are adapted to enable candidates to be placed in a situation that is close to actual practice in order to assess their competencies.

✎ Standardised forms.

✎ A standardised examination form, also to clarify open questions arising from the evidence and/or to check the scope and depth of learning, in order to verify a profound understanding of complex topics and the ability to explain them in simple words.

Example of the procedure for the PHASE III - assessment - for a university course-program at BOKU

1. Examination of the equivalence of a jury of experts regarding content and level.
2. Testing with the above methods with an additional joint principle (min. 6 eyes).
3. Expert jury consisting of course director, course manager, credit officer, a subject-specific external person.
4. Transparent procedures protocols and standardised forms are used (see above).
5. The expert jury makes a proposal/recommendation, including a justification leading to a decision.

3.5.4. Certification

The final phase of validation concerns the certification – and final assessment – of the identified and documented learning outcomes. In any case, an assessment is required at the certification stage to officially confirm that the learning outcomes identified are in line with a predetermined standard. The use of summative approaches for the validation of non-formal and informal learning for university courses-program should be linked to the national qualification system. This means that, in the case of university courses-programs, the correspondence between the university level and the accredited qualifications must be clear. The learning outcomes of the curricula of the university courses-program must be assigned to the NQF levels. The results of the validation process are recorded in a report and/or confirmed in a certificate or diploma.

What needs to be considered?

- ⓘ the methods used are suited to the individual variants of non-formal and informal learning.
- ⓘ The decision on the assessment results is transparent, reasoned and complies with the requirements of the respective qualification standard.
- ⓘ The candidate receives a document/certificate.
- ⓘ There is an opposition procedure.

Instruments and tools - you need:

- ☛ A standardised form for admission or accreditation.
- ☛ A standardised form for the documentation of the assessment results.
- ☛ A standardised form for an objection.

Example of the procedure for PHASE IV certification for a university course-program at BOKU

1. The protocol and the standardised forms with the decision of the expert jury are forwarded to the responsible service unit of the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences-BOKU.
2. This service unit sends the documents to the Rectorate.
3. The Rectorate is responsible for the admission and therefore takes the final decision.
4. The notification is issued by the responsible service unit.

3.6. Framework conditions for the development and implementation of validation

3.6.1. Information, counselling and support

Experience at national and international level underlines the importance of unbiased and comprehensive information, counselling and support throughout the validation process.

Existing guidance methods and tools developed for the needs of specific target groups based on age, employment, socio-economic and/or migrant backgrounds can be integrated into the validation services. There is a plethora of different instruments that have been developed with EU funds and are freely accessible. (See https://vince.eucen.eu/de/about-vince/)

What needs to be considered?

ⓘ Potential candidates need sufficient information about the validation process regarding opportunities, timeframe, costs, procedures, forms of evidence of learning outcomes, standards applied, assessment, existing support, opposition procedures and results of validation.

ⓘ Counselling must take place in such a way as to ensure transparency and educational value of the counselling process and to promote self-reflection in a manner appropriate to the target group.

ⓘ In the introductory phase, there are comprehensive information materials.

ⓘ It is assured that these are explicit procedures of the highest confidentiality (procedural standards on confidentiality and protection of privacy – data protection).

ⓘ It is assured that the results of the trial are the exclusive property of the candidates

ⓘ The candidates can give feedback at any time.

ⓘ There are sufficient digital planning documents and reports available on the implementation of the validation process for candidates and employees.

ⓘ There is a contract and/or report on agreement (s).

ⓘ There is sufficient competent staff to provide counselling.

ⓘ The counsellors actively support the candidates in maintaining their motivation throughout the validation process (for example by reminder messages, by telephoning when appointments have been missed, etc.)

3.6.2. Information and stakeholder involvement

For the intended target groups of the candidates for university continuing education, it is necessary to involve the decision-makers (companies, NGOs, etc.). Experience has shown that participation fees are usually paid by the employing companies, so it would be advantageous provide them with sufficient information as well.

What needs to be considered?

ⓘ There is active public relations/information and promotional activities.

ⓘ Social stakeholders are informed and interested.

ⓘ The opening hours of the responsible department correspond to the needs and expectations of the target groups.

3.6.3. Professional competencies of validation practitioners

Confidence in validation also depends on the competence of the counsellors and examiners. The counsellors are needed at all stages of a validation process. This includes orientation, but also process support. The counsellors not only need to be well versed in validation procedures, but also have "soft skills" such as social or intercultural skills. The same applies to the examiners. In addition to social skills (e. g. A demonstrable examination of the topic of testing is still necessary.)

The specific competence requirements for counsellors and examiners in validation procedures have not yet been laid down. However, there are some approaches in the description of the required competencies (see chap. 8 in the "Quality Criteria Catalogue for Validation")[24].

In any case, the clear separation of roles between counselling and testing is important to ensure the greatest possible objectivity and fairness.

What needs to be considered?

- ⓘ Sufficient human resources in relation to the number of candidates.
- ⓘ Dividing roles and tasks and avoiding possible conflicts of interest.
- ⓘ The provision of in-house training for counsellors: knowledge of the validation process, the education system, certificates; ability to formulate learning experiences as learning outcomes; understanding of the labour market and professional development.

3.6.4. Quality management

Quality management in validation must be systematic, continuous and an integral part of the process.

What needs to be considered?

- ⓘ Institutional self-evaluation and evaluation of the process by the candidates by means of feedback questionnaires, interviews and focus groups.
- ⓘ Evaluation of validation procedures and results by experts.
- ⓘ Evaluation of former candidates according to e. g. B. 6 months.
- ⓘ Regular independent external evaluation of the validation process with the involvement of external stakeholders with legitimate claims, e. g. B. by peer review.
- ⓘ The security, confidentiality and coherence of the process must be ensured and continuously improved.

3.6.5. Organization

The validation process should be organised as smoothly and flexibly as possible to ensure continued success. In order to ensure a sustainable implementation, it is necessary to involve all relevant service units and staff positions at the University of each partner countries, above all the study services, the teaching development, the staff unit quality management, public relations etc., through the continuing education academy as the responsible service institution. The precise definition of responsibilities is carried out by the university's management.

What needs to be considered?

- ⓘ A well-defined project management.
- ⓘ Clear, rational and effective organisation of the validation process.
- ⓘ Integration of all relevant service units and staff units.

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[24] BMBWF. (2018). *Kriterienkatalog zur Förderung der Qualität von Validierungsverfahren im Bereich der Berufs- und Erwachsenenbildung in Österreich. Version 1: Grundlage für erste Pilotphase im Rahmen der Arbeitsgruppe Qualität.*, p. 20. https://www.qualifikationsregister.at/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Qualitaetskriterienkatalog.pdf [accessed on 26.11.2019]

ⓘ Clearly defined professional requirements for the validation staff, clear boundary of roles between counselling and support on the one hand and assessment on the other, thus avoiding conflicts of interest.

ⓘ Space and financial resources.

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