

European Inventory on Validation of Non- formal and Informal Learning 2010

Country Report: Germany

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1 NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE ON VALIDATION

1.1 National legal framework, system or policy on validation

In Germany no legal framework and no standardised system for the validation of non-formal and informal learning currently exists. Due to the allocation of responsibilities within the complex educational system, there is a variety of approaches, particularly below political level.

Examples of legislative provisions relating to validation can be found in the field of vocational education and training:

- the External students' examination under § 45 (2) of the Vocational Training Act (BBiG) and § 37 (2) of the Crafts Code (HwO) - and
- in higher education – from 2009 access for qualified workers is regulated by the decision of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the German Länder¹.

Both lead to entitlements in the formal system. The External students' examination leads to the award of a full qualification (there is no difference between this qualification and a regular acquired qualification) in a recognised apprenticeship trade (see the Germany chapter of the European Inventory 2007 for more information) and access to a higher education course can be granted through the access for qualified workers route (again see the Germany chapter of the 2007 European Inventory for more information).

In contrast to other European countries, in Germany most of the approaches are established below political level (i.e. below regulative level), aiming at the acknowledgement of non-formal and informal learning as a precondition for a possible later "further" validation connected with entitlements. By means of public funds, many different approaches at regional and national level have been developed for different target groups in recent years.

The will to animate the idea of lifelong learning concerning the validation of non-formal and informal learning has become more and more explicit in recent years. A number of key publications have been developed: the 2004 "Strategy for lifelong learning in the Federal Republic of Germany"², the 2007 recommendations for further education³ and the 2008 recommendations for vocational education and training⁴.

All in all, validation in Germany can today be described as a colourful mosaic of local, regional and national approaches. An overall framework is lacking up to now.

To illustrate this, three examples are described below: the External students' examination and access to higher education for qualified workers – as procedures at political level, and the [ProfilPASS-system](#)⁵ - as a procedure below political level.

1.2 Relationship with the existing/ developing qualifications framework and information on standards used for validation

The current working status of the German Qualifications framework (DQR) it is expected to support the shift towards the learning outcome principle, i.e. that it is important what someone knows, understands and can do, not where he or she has learned it. Based on descriptors for learning outcomes, the DQR shall support the permeability of the entire

¹ See http://ankom.his.de/material/dokumente/2009_03_06-Hochschulzugang-erful-qualifizierte-Bewerber.pdf, http://ankom.his.de/material/dokumente/2008_09_18-Anrechnung-Faehigkeiten-Studium-2.pdf and [http://www.hrk.de/de/download/dateien/Beschluss_HSzugang\(1\).pdf](http://www.hrk.de/de/download/dateien/Beschluss_HSzugang(1).pdf)

² http://www.bmbf.de/pub/strategie_lebenslanges_lernen_blk_heft115.pdf

³ http://www.bmbf.de/pub/empfehlungen_innovationskreis_weiterbildung.pdf, page 5

⁴ http://www.bmbf.de/pub/IKBB-Broschuere-10_Leitlinien.pdf, page 23

⁵ <http://www.ProfilPASS.de>

system and facilitate access for learners without formal qualifications. All stakeholders agree on the importance of the transparency function of the learning outcomes approach. The VET sector, moreover, stresses the importance of such arrangements to contribute towards the equivalence of VET and Higher Education. As to the credit transfer and progression function, the VET sector sees a more active role for the framework than the general and academic higher education sector. The same applies for the recognition of informally acquired knowledge, skills and competence.

A special Federal-Länder-Coordination-Group has started to analyse curricula and further regulating documents of exemplary German qualifications from general, vocational and higher education and to classify these qualifications within the DQR. This occurs in the vocational fields of metal/electric, trade, health and IT. At first, however, only formal degrees are assigned. Learning outcomes that were acquired informally or non-formally are to be assigned after the completion of the DQR as well, but they have not yet been considered.

In Germany there are no consistent standards for validation. The aforementioned Vocational Training Act (BBiG) determines different possibilities of access to the regular examinations for non-apprentices, which is the external examination in vocational education. Nevertheless, there are no concrete standards for its implementation. A current research project carried out by the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (*Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung*, BIBB) is examining the criteria used for the authorisation of the external examination⁶. The perspective consists of making transparent the procedural methods for the vocational education domain and to establish a standard for use by the Chambers.

Up to now, there are two corresponding decisions of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany which determine the framework for recognition by universities⁷. According to these decisions, outside the higher education system acquired knowledge and skills can be recognised up to a maximum of 50% if their content and level are equal to the equivalent formal qualifications.

Access to university for vocationally qualified people was regulated in 2009 by the above-mentioned regulation. However, only degrees that result from formal further training are relevant to this. Since special work experience is a precondition for the acquisition of these degrees, the approach may also be regarded as recognition of non-formal and informal learning⁸.

The ProfilPASS-system includes quality standards concerning instrument and method, guidance and documentation. Up to now, no link has been created between the DQR and ProfilPASS. But because of various interfaces between them it merely seems to be a matter of time before the ProfilPASS will be linked to the DQR.

1.3 National institutional framework

Due to the lack of legal framework and standardised system for validation, there is neither a central institution nor a standardised institutional framework. The variety of approaches corresponds to a variety of responsibilities, particularly below political level.

'Competent authorities' are responsible under § 71 of the Vocational Training Act (BBiG) for the admission to the External students' examination. Competent authorities are mainly the Chambers of Crafts, Chambers of industry and commerce and Chambers of farming - the responsibility depends on the recognised occupation requiring occupational training.

⁶ http://www2.bibb.de/tools/foddb/foddb_info_n1.php?fpvNr=4.03.301&typ=1&freie_suche

⁷ cf. http://ankom.his.de/material/dokumente/KMK-Beschluss_Anrechnung_2002.pdf and

http://ankom.his.de/material/dokumente/2008_09_18-Anrechnung-Faehigkeiten-Studium-2.pdf

⁸ cf. http://ankom.his.de/material/dokumente/2009_03_06-Hochschulzugang-erful-qualifizierte-Bewerber.pdf

For access to higher education, the German Rectors' Conference has defined the framework for validation (see 1.1 and 1.2). Concrete regulations and procedures are established by the respective university.

To establish the ProfilPASS-system, a national service-centre was established in 2005. Currently it supports 55 local dialogue-centres. The system is built up by multipliers who qualify counsellors. The counsellors work in educational institutions or free-lance.

1.4 Division of responsibilities (national, regional, local, provider level) according to the different aspects of validation

In relation to the External students' examination, responsibility for all aspects of validation is held by local 'competent authorities'. To some extent independent educational institutions offer basic information, guidance and preparatory courses. In handicraft under § 37 (2) of the Craft Code the chairman of the examination board decides on the admission to the final examination.

Responsibility for all aspects of the process for access to higher education for qualified workers is also held by each provider (university).

Also responsibilities of the ProfilPASS-system are centralised. The national service-centre appoints local dialogue-centres based on specific criteria, such as qualified contact persons and capacity to provide information. The dialogue-centres cooperate with regional or local providers. Information, counselling and validation are applied to target groups such as young persons, the unemployed or volunteers.

1.5 Examples of regional, local or EU funded initiatives

Regional, local or EU funded initiatives are generally found below political level. Some examples are provided below:

- "Career choice pass" ([Berufswahlpass](#)) – an instrument for the preparation of career choice used particularly in schools⁹
- "Thematic study group competence diagnosis" ([Facharbeitskreis Kompetenzfeststellung](#)) – different approaches are developed to improve the integration of migrants in the labour market¹⁰
- "Competence certificate for voluntary work" ([Kompetenznachweis Ehrenamt](#)) – an instrument for the documentation of knowledge, skills and competences acquired in voluntary contexts¹¹
- "Competence balance for vocational returnees" ([Kompetenzbilanz für BerufsrückkehrerInnen](#)) - instrument for documentation of knowledge, skills and competences acquired during parental leaves¹²
- "Competence certificate culture" ([Kompetenznachweis Kultur](#)) - instrument for documentation of knowledge, skills and competences gained while participating in cultural events guided by skilled personnel¹³
- "Competence panorama for migrants" ([Kompetenzenpanorama für Migrantinnen & Migranten](#)) – portfolio for making competences visible and improving the process of integration¹⁴
- "Qualipass" ([Qualipass in Baden-Württemberg](#)) – instrument for analysing particularly activities of pupils outside school supported by coaches¹⁵

⁹ <http://www.berufswahlpass.de>

¹⁰ <http://www.migranet.org/>

¹¹ http://www.dji.de/bibs/KN_LisU_Abschlussbericht.pdf

¹² http://www.dji.de/bibs/33_633komp.pdf

¹³ <http://www.kompetenznachweiskultur.de/>

¹⁴ <http://www.innovision-concepts.de/de/bildungsmanagement-und-laufbahnberatung/kompetenzenpanorama>

- [Youthpass](#) – instrument for recognition of non-formal and informal acquired competences in the field of youth work anchored in the Youth in Action Programme¹⁶

The [ANKOM-initiative](#)¹⁷ in contrast to the above approaches is located on a political level and aims to facilitate access to higher education for qualified workers. This initiative, funded by government, has developed and tested approaches of crediting vocational experience for access and accreditation to higher education.

Some of the initiatives mentioned above provide personal support in the period of the initiatives' development and testing. Afterwards information, instruction manuals and records for validation are only available via the internet.

1.6 Link between validation and the existing/ developing credit system, unit-based or modularised structure of qualifications

There is no credit system for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning in Germany. Furthermore, there is neither a unit-based nor a modularised system. However 'Training modules' (*Ausbildungsbausteine*) in vocational education represent a step in the right direction.

A relationship between the recognition of non-formal and informal learning and credit systems can only be seen in two fields. First of all, the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) plays a role in the accreditation of vocationally acquired qualifications at university. Secondly, the national implementation of the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) is being tested in a pilot initiative (DECVET). These two main initiatives have been launched by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research. They are currently in the development, testing or evaluation phase and have not yet been rolled out. The credit systems complement validation procedures in a quantitative way, because through them non-formal and informal learning can be quantified in the form of credits.

Example 1: Crediting vocational prior learning at the interface to higher education: ANKOM

The Federal Ministry of Education and Research launched the pilot initiative 'ANKOM' for a period from 2005 until 2007/2008. The overall objective of the initiative was to develop methods for identifying and assessing qualifications and competences acquired in advanced training and for awarding credits towards higher education programmes (Bachelor and Master). Equivalences between vocational and university qualifications with reference to learning outcomes served as the basis for comparisons. The special feature of the ANKOM-approach is that higher education institutions apply competence-based rather than workload-based methods for assessment. Furthermore, it draws together different perspectives on competences, bearing in mind the more meta-cognitive outlook in higher education and the more proficiency-based outlook in the vocational system. These differences have been taken into account by special procedures for the recognition of learning outcomes, namely individual recognition and blanket recognition. At the moment an evaluation is being undertaken by *Hochschul-Informationssystem GmbH* (H.I.S), with the aim of generating a system-wide reference framework for the recognition of vocational learning programmes, based on the findings in the individual development projects.

Example 2: Developing a German Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (DECVET)

At the core of this initiative is the improvement of the transition opportunities at the various vertical and horizontal interfaces of vocational training by the dual system. Ten projects

¹⁵ <http://www.qualipass.info/>

¹⁶ <http://www.youthpass.eu/en/youthpass/>

¹⁷ <http://ankom.his.de>

shall serve as a vehicle for the development and testing of transferable procedures for the accreditation of competences and learning outcomes. Taking a learning-outcome description in the individual areas of training as a starting point, the projects are working to develop, pilot and implement evaluation, equivalence, assessment and credit transfer procedures. Experiences and tools (e.g. the method of “equivalence check”) gained under the ANKOM initiative are taken into account and – where possible – applied to the framework conditions in VET. It is expected that the pilot-projects explore if and how a unit-based credit-system can enhance permeability in the German context. Moreover, the initiative is supposed to contribute to a better linkage of learning modes and co-operation of learning providers.

Within both of these examples the extent of validation of non-formal and informal learning depends on the individual case. Initially the formal qualifications are relevant for the crediting decision, but vocational experiences are also taken into account.

1.7 Funding framework

Data about the total budget is not available; an overall and standardised funding framework does not exist. Funding can come from public authorities, as well as the private and the third sector. Approaches usually target specific groups using specific methods. Periods of funding vary. Approaches funded by the public sector are required to develop and realise strategies for sustainability.

Chambers are responsible for information, counselling and validation in respect to the External students’ examination. They are funded by contributions from their member-companies. Candidates pay for preparatory courses and examination fees for the final examination. If candidates are sent by companies, usually the companies pay for the preparation and admission to examination. The Employment Agency also plays a part here and currently has a programme entitled *Initiative zur Flankierung des Strukturwandels*¹⁸ or “initiative for accompanying the structural change” in addition to standard funding.

Concerning access to higher education, universities are funded predominantly by the *Länder*. Information, counselling and validation are included within this budget.

The ProfilPASS-system is an example of a public-private-partnership. Originally funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research and the EU, the approach is now financed partly by the distribution of ProfilPASS-folders (each folder costs EUR 27.90 at the time of writing this report). One partner in the initiative is a publisher specialised in the educational sector.

1.8 Data on flows of beneficiaries

Data on beneficiaries is difficult to find.

The data report to accompany the annual report on vocational education and training contains an overview of the number of candidates completing an external examination (about 29 000 p.a. of which about 77% passed the exam)¹⁹, differentiated by trade and industry, public service, agriculture, independent professions and home economics.

Since 2006 the ProfilPASS has been used by more than 80 000 people, of which half were adults (43 000) and the other half young people (41 600). There are now more than 4 000 ProfilPASS Counsellors (“Beratende”), about 70 “Multiplikatoren” (“opinion formers”) and more than 50 “Dialogzentren” (“Dialogue centres”).

¹⁸ http://www.arbeitsagentur.de/nn_27298/zentraler-Content/E-Mail-Infos/Dokument/E-Mail-Info-2009-12-08.html

¹⁹ http://datenreport.bibb.de/media2009/datenreport_bbb_090525_screen.pdf - page 146f.

2 ORGANISATIONAL PERSPECTIVE ON VALIDATION

2.1 Role of the formal education and training sector, including providers

There are several approaches for validation in Germany, which are located below political level. These approaches are not connected with the legally fixed recognition approaches. Universities are exclusively responsible for the recognition of vocationally acquired qualifications and competences as well as for access for vocationally qualified people to university and the accreditation of their competences. The universities generally develop their own approaches according to the legal regulations of the Länder.

Competent authorities (Chambers of Crafts, Chambers of industry and commerce and Chambers of farming) are responsible for awarding degrees in vocational education. They grant an accreditation of vocationally acquired competences with regard to access to the External students' examination. For this they take as a basis the content of the training regulations.

2.2 Role of existing information, advice and guidance networks / institutions

Germany has no central information system or department, responsible for the validation of non-formal and informally acquired competences. Most competent authorities for the External students' examination offer on their websites information and contact persons for advice and guidance for interested parties²⁰.

Likewise universities provide information on their websites about access to higher education for qualified workers²¹. So far networks have not arisen.

With regard to the recognition approaches below political level, one has to consider that they are designed as "one-stop-shops". These approaches are more individual and offer their users a coordinated counseling service. Explicit quality standards were developed within each approach.

2.3 Validation in the private sector and the role of private sector actors

As noted above, the social partners (Chambers) are involved (as 'competent authorities') in the delivery of the External Examination and they are also involved in the development of the National Qualifications Framework.

There are company-specific as well as sector-specific approaches which are used within companies. Large and medium-sized companies with a HR department are involved, whereas in the SME sector such measures are often taken by publicly promoted projects in which different stakeholders take part. One example is the project for the Development of a model certificate for SMEs to evaluate the potential and competences of immigrants, commissioned by the Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology. A second example is the current project "*ProfilPASS in der Wirtschaft*" (ProfilPASS in the economy²²). This project aims at testing, evaluating and adapting the ProfilPASS-system to the needs of private companies. In this respect, the ProfilPASS represents an auspicious instrument that supports companies in establishing a systematic competence management system which especially considers informally acquired competences.

2.4 Validation in the third sector and the role of third sector actors

There are specific approaches which are tailored to domains such as family, honorary posts or migration, which are often launched in the context of projects. Different stakeholders are involved in the publicly promoted projects. Take for example the "cultural competency

²⁰ See for instance

http://www.berlin.ihk24.de/produktmarken/aus_und_weiterbildung/ausbildungspruefungen/zulassung/ExternInternet.jsp

²¹ See for instance <http://www.fh-hannover.de/hochschulzugangspruefung/index.html>

²² <http://www.die-bonn.de/projekte/laufend/projekt.aspx?id=579>

record" ("*Kompetenznachweis Kultur*"²³), a project initiative promoted by the Ministry of Education. This portfolio document is given to young people who actively take part in artistic and cultural events.

Another example is the Youthpass²⁴, which is part of the European Commission's strategy to foster the recognition of non-formal and informal learning. This is a tool to visualise and to validate learning outcomes gained in the "Youth in Action" programme. It documents the added value of "Youth in Action" projects and visualises and supports active European citizenship of young people and youth workers. As a Europe-wide validation instrument for non-formal learning in the youth field, the Youthpass contributes to strengthening the social recognition of youth work by making visible and validating key competences through a certificate.

A recent report on Volunteering in Europe identifies a number of initiatives in Germany to record competences and skills acquired through volunteering²⁵. In the youth sector, voluntary activities can be recognised by certificates, cards and documentation in school reports. An example is the card for youth leaders – the '*Jugendleiter/in-Card*' or '*Juleica*'²⁶ which is the most common certificate for young volunteers in Germany (around 3,000 cards are issued each month).

Another example is the certificate which is given to young people who have carried out a Voluntary Year of Social or Ecological Service. This certificate confirms the nature and the duration of their voluntary service and sometimes also includes a performance rating and the vocational qualifications the young people acquired during their service.

Some federal states have their own system for certifying competences. The 'Qualipass' in Baden-Württemberg for example documents practical experiences and competences of young people (aged 12 to 25 - acquired through voluntary activities, traineeships, time spent abroad etc.). Other examples are the *Hamburger Nachweis*, *Berliner FreiwilligenPass* and the *EhrenamtsCard* in Hessen.

At national level, young people who volunteer in international contexts (including in Germany) can gain recognition for their activities in the form of 'International Certificates' (*Nachweise International*), which recognise various elements of their volunteering activity (participation, engagement, competence).

2.5 Costs to organisations

These costs cannot be specified. Usually procedures of the above-mentioned approaches on political level are part of the institutional offer and the budget is not disclosed separately. Due to the varying range of scenarios, costs for the ProfilPASS-system also cannot be specified. Depending on the target group, it can take between only a few hours to more than a week to complete.

3 INDIVIDUAL PERSPECTIVE

3.1 Awareness-raising and recruitment

In the context of many projects, particularly below political level, awareness-raising has changed for the better in recent years. But still a lot of people do not know about these opportunities. Besides, a great lack of transparency concerning existing procedures can be

²³ <http://www.kompetenznachweiskultur.de/>

²⁴ <http://www.youthpass.eu/en/youthpass/>

²⁵ GHK, 2010, *Study on Volunteering in the European Union, National Report for Hungary*. Internet: http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/news/news1015_en.htm,

²⁶ <http://www.juleica.net>

identified. Internet, information meetings and written information are typical channels of information. Contents are presented in a target-group specific manner.

3.2 Provision of guidance and support

There is no nationwide range of counselling that covers every existing approach. Rather, approach-specific counselling exists. Within the ProfilPASS-system for instance a specific counselling concept has been developed. Apart from the ProfilPASS-counsellors, there are nationwide 55 ProfilPASS-dialogue-centres which promote the prevalence of the ProfilPASS-system in their region. They are field workers which cooperate in networks with the counsellors. Heading the ProfilPASS-process, the users receive information about informal learning, recognition and the ProfilPASS-approach. Within the approach, the identification of competences takes place before the personal and individual educational planning on the basis of the previous results is carried out. The provider is responsible for the counselling; that is why the range of counselling is tailored to the target group of the providers. The consultation is always individual-related, since the ProfilPASS is an individual and personal tool. The development of an E-portfolio is planned. Most of the 80,000 ProfilPASS users make use of the guidance support which is on offer.

Because the HE access example still has the status of single projects no data is available on the provision of guidance and support in this area – in any case guidance and support vary from project to project.

In the context of the External students' examination, the range of support carried out by the Chambers is often significant. The consultation always aims at a successful application for admission to the regular final examination. The users receive advice and, if necessary, a recommendation for additional training. In the case of a successful admission, the users receive further information for the preparation of the examination. Similarly the BMBF-programme "*Perspektive Berufsabschluss*²⁷" aims to reduce the number of unskilled workers by improving access to the use of external students' examination.

3.3 Costs to individuals

Since the approaches proceed differently, it is difficult to make precise statements of the costs to individuals. However, it is possible to identify differences between strongly individualised approaches, in which the competences of the individual are to be documented, and global approaches that aim at the recognition of formerly acquired competences. In general, the individual has to input higher effort using the individual approach. Documentation of one's own competences is highly complex. Yet, individualised approaches offer the possibility to bring in one's learning outcomes to the recognition process.

3.4 Initiatives focused on specific target groups

The External students' examination addresses people with vocational experience and legitimises admission to a final examination in a recognised occupation that normally requires formal training in the dual system.

Access to higher education also addresses people with vocational experience who do not have the formal qualification that is usually required for access to university.

To avoid the effects of discrimination, the ProfilPASS-system has been developed as a non-target-group specific approach. However it is targeted for different target-groups and there is for example a specific ProfilPASS for young people²⁸. The ProfilPASS is based on an abstract process-scheme that has to be transferred to the needs of specific target-groups by qualified counsellors.

²⁷ <http://www.perspektive-berufsabschluss.de>

²⁸ <http://www.profilpass-fuer-junge-menschen.de/>

Further approaches:

- “Competence balance for vocational returnees“ ([Kompetenzbilanz für BerufsrückkehrerInnen](#)) - instrument for documentation of knowledge, skills and competences acquired during parental leaves²⁹
- “Competence panorama for migrants“ ([Kompetenzenpanorama für Migrantinnen & Migranten](#)) – portfolio for making visible competences and improve the process of integration³⁰
- “Competence certificate for voluntary work“ ([Kompetenznachweis Ehrenamt](#)) – an instrument for the documentation of knowledge, skills and competences acquired in voluntary contexts³¹
- “Competence certificate culture“ ([Kompetenznachweis Kultur](#)) - instrument for documentation of knowledge, skills and competences gained while participating in cultural events guided by skilled personnel³²
- “Qualipass“ ([Qualipass in Baden-Württemberg](#)) – instrument for analysing particularly activities of pupils outside school supported by coaches³³

3.5 Evidence of benefits to individuals

As noted in section 1.1, the External students’ examination leads to the award of a full qualification (there is no difference between this qualification and a regular acquired qualification) in a recognised apprenticeship trade. An analysis of the benefits of the External students’ examination was carried out at the beginning of the 1990s (Hecker 1994). Vocational improvement, higher job-security, better chances for personal development and future perspectives were identified by the survey as the main results of the examination.

The development of the ProfilPASS-system was connected with a survey of counsellors and users. In doing so the benefits have been explored and the results used to improve the system³⁴. Benefits include increased awareness of one’s own abilities and competences, as a result of this a growing motivation for further learning activities and the chance to respond better to vocational challenges. There have also been individual inquiries about practice and benefits of portfolio approaches that lead to similar results.

These benefits arise even if a complete procedure of a validation is not performed. The steps of identification and documentation contain processes of self-reflexion and awareness-raising about learning results and own competences. This benefit is a precondition for a possible “hard” benefit.

4 QUALITY ASSURANCE AND EVALUATION

In Germany, there is no implemented overall quality framework for the validation of non-formal and informal learning. Instead, concrete quality standards – usually based on the Common European Principles for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning - have been developed in the context of several approaches. These quality assurance approaches are being developed by projects themselves and they are partly mooted by support groups that accompany the developments consisting of educational practitioners, policy makers and researchers. It can be stated that all

²⁹ http://www.dji.de/bibs/33_633komp.pdf

³⁰ <http://www.innovision-concepts.de/de/bildungsmanagement-und-laufbahnberatung/kompetenzenpanorama>

³¹ http://www.dji.de/bibs/KN_LisU_Abschlussbericht.pdf

³² <http://www.kompetenznachweiskultur.de/>

³³ <http://www.qualipass.info/>

³⁴ http://www.ProfilPASS-online.de/files/endfassung_korrektur_januar_2006.pdf - page 87ff.

approaches basically take into consideration the European Guidelines for Validating non-formal and informal Learning.

In relation to the three initiatives covered in this report, the different approaches taken in relation to quality assurance systems and procedures, as well as evaluation, are described below.

ANKOM

The regulation of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany of 28 June 2002, as amended on 18 September 2008 (*Anrechnung von außerhalb des Hochschulwesens erworbenen Kenntnissen und Fähigkeiten auf ein Hochschulstudium (II)*)³⁵ determines that recognition should be controlled according to the basic principles of the new quality assurance system of universities in the context of accreditation. At the beginning of the German Federal Ministry of Research and Technology initiative, a corresponding performance index has been developed by the scientific support. At the end of the project phase the scientific support developed a guideline for quality assurance of recognition approaches³⁶. It was presented at the networking conference in 2008 and discussed with the accreditation agencies, the accreditation council, projects and further participants. The proposals were included and the consultation process ended in the autumn of 2008.

There is currently no systematic evaluation of validation-procedures in the field of higher education. Results of the ANKOM-project are connected with the development of an overall framework for validation in the context of access to higher education for qualified workers. University professors were surveyed on "qualified workers at universities"³⁷. Amongst other things, the survey enquired about their experiences with the recognition of informal acquired competences.

ProfilPASS

ProfilPASS-counsellors are granted a high degree of advisory freedom, in order to react flexibly to the different basic conditions in which they work. The ProfilPASS-quality-concept guarantees the necessary freedom of action to counsellors and preserves the interests of the users by implementing agreed standards. Processes within the ProfilPASS-organisation are disclosed and responsibilities are defined on different levels, e.g. a qualification and (re-) certification system controls counsellors' access to the ProfilPASS-counselling and the quality of their work. Apart from that, an explicit standard for the input-, process- and output-dimension of the work is formulated. A feedback system grants users and stakeholders the possibility to provide feedback. A periodical evaluation of the entire system enables further development of the ProfilPASS-system³⁸. Furthermore "low-threshold" evaluation is an integral part of the system. These evaluations can address different levels, and be used as a kind of monitoring. The counselling process is evaluated from the user perspective, the qualifications of counsellors are evaluated, the support by dialogue-centres is evaluated from the perspective of the counsellors and the support by the national service-centre from the perspective of the dialogue-centres.

External students' examination

Criteria for the access to External students' examination are set out in § 43 Vocational Training Act (BBiG):

- Persons able to demonstrate that they have been working in the occupation forming the objective of the examination for a period of time at least equal to one and a half times that of the stipulated training time shall be admitted to the final exam.

³⁵ http://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/veroeffentlichungen_beschluesse/2008/2008_09_18-Anrechnung-Faehigkeiten-Studium-2.pdf

³⁶ http://ankom.his.de/material/dokumente/Diskussionsgrundlage_ANKOM_Anrechnungsleitlinie_19_05_08.pdf

³⁷ <http://ankom.his.de/befragung/index.php>

³⁸ http://www.ProfilPASS-online.de/files/endfassung_korrektur_januar_2006.pdf

- Training periods spent in another relevant occupation also count as time of occupational activity.
- Admission is granted if the applicant credibly demonstrates that he or she has acquired the necessary competences by presenting references or by providing evidence in another way.
- Also foreign educational qualifications can be recognised due to the admission procedure.

There has not yet been an evaluation of the External students' examination. Currently, research projects are carried out in order to achieve transparency for the different approaches and to create a basis for the development of corresponding standards. Findings of a research project³⁹ will be used to improve the procedures for testing the prerequisites.

5 ASSESSMENT METHODS

5.1 Methods used

The methods applied in the different approaches are independent from the respective approaches and the aim of the individuals. With regard to the admission to the External students' examination, no detailed information can be provided. There is no difference concerning methods and quality assurance between the regular training examinations and the External students' examination – recognition is based on the individual passing the regular examination but are given access to the examination on the basis of providing valid documentation to prove their competences. A current research project of the *Zentralstelle für die Weiterbildung im Handwerk* ZWH, which deals with the implementation of the External students' examination, has so far shown that in most cases the admission takes place on the basis of input criteria such as work experience. Nevertheless, an admission based on a confirmation of vocational capacity is rare. The admission to the External students' examination is always examined case by case.

In higher education, portfolios are the most common method used. These mostly are expected to contain formal certificates.

Within the ProfilPASS-approach, however, especially declarative methods are linked to the portfolio method for any target group. More information on the assessment methods used in the ProfilPASS approach, which is a formative method of validation, is provided in the box below:

ProfilPASS – “You can do more than you think!”

ProfilPASS is based on user self-assessment supported by professional guidance. The system aims to review, document and assess informally acquired competences, regardless of where they were acquired or their field of learning. It takes into account all learning settings in which learners may acquire competences during the course of their lives. The assumption is that many individuals can only be guided towards knowledge of their competences and the value of them through critical reflection on their own lives.

The ProfilPASS system is formed of two interconnected elements: the ProfilPass-folder and professional support. The ProfilPASS folder acts as a portfolio, which identifies and documents an individual's competences in a biographical and systematic manner. This process is accompanied by professional and qualified guidance.

The ProfilPASS folder is made up of a number of sections:

Section 1 “**My life - an overview**”, which helps the user to identify different activities from across their life phases, such as school, job, family or leisure time.

³⁹ http://www2.bibb.de/tools/fodb/pdf/at_43301.pdf

ProfilPASS – “You can do more than you think!”

Section 2 “**My activity fields – a documentation**” encourages a deeper reflection of all the individual’s activities in different life spheres. The question here is “*Which one of these activity fields is especially important for me? What activities have I carried out and what competences and abilities have I used and how do I value them?*”

Section 3 “**My competences - a conclusion**” is where the user makes a summary of his / her competencies and abilities.

Section 4 “**My aims and next steps**” is where the user can describe his / her wishes and aims.

Skills and competences are then assessed on a four-level scale:

Level 1: activities which can be carried out under another person’s supervision or by following instructions;

Level 2: activities which can be carried out autonomously in familiar conditions;

Level 3: activities which can be carried out autonomously in a different context (other situation, conditions, location, work context);

Level 4: Activities which can be carried out autonomously in a different context, explained and demonstrated to others.

In the “ProfilPASS Plus” folder there is also a supplementary section 5 where diplomas, certification of competences, certificates of attendance or references can be presented.

The guidance provided to ProfilPaSS users is seen as an important part of the ProfilPASS system – without support from experts it can be very difficult for individuals to accurately identify their competences and abilities. Experts can help individuals to distinguish skills, which they might not otherwise have noticed. Guidance is therefore provided either on a one-to-one basis, or in groups.

For further information please see the ProfilPaSS website: <http://www.profilpass-online.de/index.php>

5.2 Advantages and disadvantages of the methods used

The portfolio method is considered too difficult, especially in written form, for people with learning difficulties due to their high requirements regarding analysis and reflection. Additionally, the partly very cognitive orientation of methods includes difficulties for weaker target groups. Self assessment is considered as rather difficult for these people but their competences in this regard can be developed in the course of counselling and support.

6 VALIDATION PRACTITIONERS**6.1 Profile of validation practitioners**

Employees of the competent authorities decide about the admission to the External students’ examination. Under § 37 of the Crafts Code the chair of the examination board is responsible. A specific profile for the chair of the board does not exist - of course the chair (like all members of the examination board) has to be competent in all relevant fields of examination).

Academic staff decides on validation procedures for access to higher education. The specific profile is the respective professional background.

The condition for becoming a ProfilPASS-counsellor is either a formal qualification in the field of counselling or vocational experience connected with further education in the field of counselling.

6.2 Provision of training and support to practitioners

In higher education, as well as for the External students’ examination, there is no information available concerning training and support for practitioners.

Within the ProfilPASS-system, counsellors need to undertake training over two days. The qualification consists of the development and philosophy of ProfilPASS-System, recording and developing competences and developing course scenarios. A formal qualification in

the field of counselling or vocational experience and further education in the field of counselling is the condition for admission. Furthermore there are continuous information meetings for the exchange of experiences with a thematic focus on local, regional or national level offered by dialogue-centres and the national service-centre.

6.3 Qualifications requirements

In the context of the ProfilPASS-approach, an early inquiry is carried out in order to gather the experiences of the potential counsellor. The counsellors are prepared through training events, so that the ProfilPASS is employed in a standardised way. It is also possible to become a ProfilPASS-counsellor as a result of the recognition of equivalent qualifications. Equivalent, such as confirmations about the experience with biographic methods or in the competence determination counselling, can be recognised. The ProfilPASS-multipliers have to decide on each single case. The qualification events for counsellors have to be paid for (by the counsellors) and they are organised by the national service-centre or locally by the dialogue centres. The offer to qualify as ProfilPASS-counsellor addresses people who have counselling qualifications and who are already working as advisors. Those interested should have a university degree, preferably involving advisory work experience.

Counsellors who do not have a university degree can instead demonstrate substantial work experience and confirm their attendance at advisory training initiatives. The preconditions are registered on the application form. Certificates, confirmations etc must be submitted on request.

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Stakeholders consulted:

- Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB) in Bonn
- Institute of Development Planning and Structural Research (IES) in Hannover
- Federal Ministry of Education and Research