

Work-Based Competence Development and Recognition

VNIL is intended to recognise and to validate people's visible and invisible skills. The workplace is considered to be a powerful learning environment for acquiring and developing competences. **Key learning points:**

- Organisations/companies must ensure that their formulation of demands is effective. Formulation of demands means that there is clarity concerning (1) the competences present within the organisation, and (2) the required competences within the framework of the organisational aims. A match can be made between (1) and (2), so that (3) the competency demands within the organisation and ultimately an action plan (4) for the validation and development of already acquired competences, as well as those that need to be developed, emerges.
- Employees need to be as self-reliant and programme-independent as possible in the elaboration of their personal development programmes following a VNIL-procedure. In this sense, it is up to the individual to make choices concerning the degree of self-determination or external direction within the development programme. Choices range between 100 % self-determination of the form and content of the programme (empowerment) and 0 % (pampering).
- A more customer-centred orientation of education institutions towards organisations/businesses is needed in order to help anchor VNIL in Human Resource Development (HRD). On the other hand, increased formulation of demands is needed from organisations/businesses in order to help anchor VNIL in the policy of educational institutions.
- Collaboration between public and private organisations and educational establishments is essential to ensure work-based learning can be customised following the VNIL-procedure. Companies have to facilitate and provide guidance in workplace learning, and educational establishments must accept and value the workplace as a learning environment.
- Research is needed into the added value of VNIL, among other things focussed on its economic, financial and social effects and also the relation with other assessment systems (e.g. in-company, social, etc.).

Voluntary work is equally important for work-based competence development and recognition as work in public and private sectors. Voluntary work allows volunteers to acquire and develop competences and to improve specific qualities (mutual aid, altruism, cooperative spirit). It offers opportunities to learn and to acquire work experience and to become an active citizen. Assessing voluntary experiences could be a way to bridge the gap between voluntary work and employment.

Rockwool B.V. (NETHERLANDS)

BACKGROUND: Since the 1990s the role of learning is a key element in the human resource management (HRM) policy of Rockwool. This HRM policy can be regarded as an on-going process of linking learning and working for each individual employee by means of competence-steered assessment methods and work-based development-programs.

ACTION: VNIL came into practice in 2001 when the company wanted to broaden the classical approach of HRM, and its focus on formal learning outcomes like qualifications and certificates, with the co-ownership with employees in the decision making on learning goals.

RESULTS: In the period of 2003-2013, 77 employees were involved in a multiple VNIL procedure and 9 in a single VNIL procedure. In the same period 450 employees filled in traditional learning programmes at VET schools. Thus, 16% of all staff active in any form of learning, were involved in VNIL training. Indirectly, 55 staff members were involved in VNIL in the same period: assessors, guiders, managers and HRM staff.

Schweizerischer Gewerbeverband SGV (SWITZERLAND)

BACKGROUND: Switzerland faces a considerable shortage of skilled workers in some specific areas. This is especially evident among SMEs, which are usually led by the owner. In most of the SMEs the spouse supports her partner in administration, financial and other management matters, but her work has no national recognition.

ACTION: Creation of a new nationally recognised diploma in the management of SMEs with a specialisation in the management of family SMEs specifically designed for spouses of family SME owners, obtained both by modular route and VNIL. It aims to encourage spouses and/or family to get their skills acquired through work experience recognised and to seek additional support to achieve a higher level of qualification.

RESULTS: The standard Swiss VNIL process has been adapted to include a tailor made VNIL with a coaching process, a self-assessment tool, an equivalence and a performance folder enabling spouses to optimise their time, facilitate the preparation of the VNIL portfolio and to avoid drop-out. Around 100 spouses have shown interest in the programme. 15 spouses are currently engaged in this VNIL programme.

Be inspired by 3 cases of Best Practice

Navreme Boheme, s.r.o. (CZECH REPUBLIC)

BACKGROUND: Act No. 179/2006 Coll. and its new amendment of the Verification and Recognition of Continuing Education Outcomes sets up legislative conditions for advancing in VNIL.

ACTION: The project 'NQF 2' has created a National Register of Vocational Qualifications, which is a publicly accessible register of all full and partial qualifications and their qualification and assessment standards with a national objective to create an open area of lifelong learning and supporting recognition and validation of non-formal learning. The tool can be used by people pursuing the recognition of the knowledge and skills they have acquired during their work, in courses or through self-study.

RESULTS: The National Institute for Education has registered about 70,000 passed professional qualifications. 90% of all passed qualifications are the exams of the profession 'Security Guard'. The evaluation process of this profession involved over 200 authorization persons, firms and educational institutions from all over the Czech Republic.

Project Details

OBSERVAL-Net

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Web <http://www.observal-net.eu>

Mail observal-net@eucen.eu



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