

VNFIL COUNTRY FICHE: LITHUANIA



General description of the system

National terminology: “*Validierung nicht-formalen und informellen Lernens*”

Lithuania does not have a national strategy for validation as a separate comprehensive policy document; however several laws were amended in recent years to pave the way for validation of nonformal and informal learning on a more mainstream basis, both at national and sectoral levels. VNFIL is integrated into education and labour market policies.

The Law on Non-formal adult education and continuing training, provides 3 cases of validation: competences can be recognised as a part of finalised formal education programme, as a competence to perform a regulated job or function and as a qualification, corresponding to a certain Lithuanian Qualifications Framework level. In higher education sector procedures for VNFIL are established by higher education institution, in other sectors – by the Minister of Education and Science.

The most common case is that competences can be recognised as a part of training programme (qualification), thus validation is rather an entrance instrument for the education. There is no special certificate that would evidence the recognition outcomes – for example, in VET, a final result of validation would be profesinio mokymo diplomas (VET diploma).

Validation of non-formal and informal learning in the areas of adult education and the labour market remain relatively basic, but these areas are taken into account in the new strategic documents for the period 2014-2020, and are expected to be developed in the near future.

In terms of validation and recognition of vocational competences gained through non-formal and informal learning, VET standards are being used for validation purposes for the time being. Once the development of sectoral qualifications standards is complete, they will be linked with education and training standards for validation purposes as well.

In order to ensure quality and transparency of the assessment process, the competence assessment and validation process has been separated from the system of formal vocational education and training and can be undertaken by an accredited social partner or another legal entity of the Republic of Lithuania or other member state of the EU, or an organisation/its unit not holding the status of a legal person. The list of accredited competence assessment bodies is published on the website of the Qualifications and Vocational Education and Training Development Centre under the Ministry of Education and Science. The main providers of VNFIL are VET and higher education institutions.

The VNFIL system remains fragmented and the society in general is little aware about validation possibilities and benefits. There is a lack of available analysis about the acceptance of the outcomes of the VNFIL procedure with the relevant stakeholders.

Process and vocabulary

Identification

VET and HE institutions can assess non-formal study achievements and recognise the competences acquired on their basis.

Documentation

VET: Person can apply to any vocational training institution, which has a license to carry out a training program in which the person can formalize their non-formal acquired competences.

HE: Institutions recognise only these non-formal study achievements that can be justified by the applicant and proven to be included into study outcomes of a relevant study programme.

Assessment

VET: Non-formal or informal learning acquired competencies can be recognized and formalized assessing the referring

person's knowledge (test) and having analyzed the documents (available various certificates).

HE: The assessment of non-formal study achievements and recognition of competences is performed in accordance with the study programme or subject by an expert assessor or a group of expert assessors. The assessment abides by the assessment criteria prescribed by the HEI. The applicants are introduced to the criteria.

The methods of the assessment of non-formal study achievements of an applicant are based either on a single assessment method or combined models integrating several assessment methods. The assessment methods are chosen to indicate the study achievements of the applicant and to identify their level.

Certification

VET: If the result of the test and evaluation of certificates held of his knowledge being recognized as sufficient (that is equivalent to a person who has completed a certain training program), it is being recorded in the register of students and passes the qualifying exam, leading to a diploma issued to a student.

If the assessment shows that a person's knowledge is not enough sufficient, it is possible to attend a certain course, continue learning and then take a qualification exam and get a diploma.

HE: Institutions can assess non-formal study achievements and recognise competences to:

- designate acquired study achievements as the basis of competence(s);
- endorse them in a certain study area/field and acquire a higher education qualification/ qualification degree in the area/field.

Usage of VNFIL

Target group

The main target group for VNFIL is students in VET and higher education institutions (EQF 1-7 levels).

Most common targeted diplomas

Information about numbers of validation participants, branches, sectors is not accumulated.

Quality assurance

There is no common QA/QD system for VNFIL in Lithuania and each institution sets out its own procedures and foresees quality assurance measures.

For example, HE providers themselves are responsible for quality assurance framework. At Mykolas Romeris University, for instance, the regular validation procedure includes internal and external audit components providing quality checks on validation procedures: where internal audit reviews appeal applications and assesses qualifications of assessors, assessment methods used and other procedural aspects and external audit looks at overall quality in HE.

Role of Peer review: Observation of VNFIL quality assurance frameworks and tools; familiarisation with QA procedures at different levels – VET and HE institutions, employers.

Status of implementation of the CEDEFOP guidelines on VNFIL (2015)

1. Availability of information, guidance and counselling:

No information available.

2. Stakeholders coordination:

The Ministry of Education and Science (MES) developed and is implementing a national life-long learning strategy, including VNFIL. It accredits upon the approval of the Qualifications and Vocational Education and Training Development Centre, institutions that seek to gain the right to assess individual competences. Social partners are members of national VET Council and Adult Learning Council – advisory bodies on VET /AL strategic issues to the Ministry of Education and

Science. Stakeholders are legally obliged to participate in shaping VET policy, initiate the development of new qualifications, occupational standards, VET curricula, provide content contributions and support for the development of VET standards and training programmes.

3. Links to national qualification framework

The NQF exists and the qualifications targeted by the VNFIL are referenced according to its levels.

4. Standards and learning outcomes

Assessment/recognition (validation) of qualifications is an integral part of the NQF. Nevertheless the system of standards is still incomplete and only VET standards are in place. VET standards are used for validation purposes in the case of validation of competences that have been previously acquired by VET learners, and for the unemployed (as a labour market policy measure). Sectoral qualifications standards (profesiniai standartai) are being developed further and it is the responsibility of the Qualifications and Vocational Education and Training Development Centre to manage this process within the ESF programme for the formation of qualifications and development of modular VET system.

5. Quality assurance

Quality assurance is determined by different organizational context of organizations involved in the provision of VNFIL in different projects. Currently, there is no national QA system in place.

6. Professional competences of practitioners:

In summative approaches, practitioners usually come from the professional field targeted by the validation. In summative approaches, counsellors come from different fields, mostly adult education, social work etc.