European Inventory on Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning 2010
Country Report: Luxembourg

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One stakeholder interviewed for this report suggested that there is currently a shortage of human resources capable of delivering validation in Luxembourg. It can be difficult to find individuals able (and available) to take part in ad hoc validation committees. In short, it appears difficult to find experts who are aware of the methods followed by the committees. This suggests that on the whole, there is a need for further training in this area.
NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

The concept of validation of non-formal and informal learning has progressively risen in prominence in recent years in Luxembourg and is now becoming central in the definition of priority actions for education and training. The 2008 law on vocational education and training, recently complemented by the Règlement grand-ducal du 11 janvier 2010, constitute a strong signal in this respect.

Whilst the impetus behind the current developments in the sphere of validation is similar to other Member States (e.g. need to valorise and validate the country’s human capital, need to adapt education systems to meet the needs of the changing world and labour market, need to attract more adult learners in adult learning provision) and is based on both national and European factors, the situation of Luxembourg is noteworthy.

Its population is relatively small, totalling 502,066, of which the proportion of resident foreign nationals is comparatively high at around 44%. The labour force in Luxembourg is 358,288. Foreign cross-border workers represented around 39% of newly created jobs in 2009. In this context, the size and the geographical position mean that there are competing forces from border regions in neighbouring countries for recruitment of staff.

This regards both the labour market and the education and training system. For instance, in the case of the latter, outgoing student learning mobility flows (e.g. in the case of higher education - particularly prior to the creation of the University of Luxembourg in 2003 - and certain VET specialisations) to neighbouring countries have resulted in learners moving abroad to get access to a broader range of education and training provision but also to benefit from validation processes. Previously, candidates would for example travel from Luxembourg to France to gain accreditation for their skills and competences through the validation system which is in place there and then return to Luxembourg, where the qualifications they had gained could be recognised through a process of recognition.

These factors are important to understand the increased drive in Luxembourg to introduce validation systems.

1.1 National legal framework, system or policy on validation

In Luxembourg, a legal framework consisting of complementary legislations to support validation of non-formal and informal learning exists. At this stage most sectors/levels of learning are concerned. However, general compulsory education has not been targeted so far. As such, the existing system of validation is not yet fully unified. Future developments should foster this, as recommended in the 2009 governmental programme.

Regardless of the level/sector concerned, the validation of non-formal and informal learning is being, as a minimum, introduced as a way of accessing formal learning. The Ministry of Education and the University of Luxembourg are the main stakeholders in the validation of non formal and informal learning processes leading to certification.

The above-mentioned law on vocational education and training of December 2008 and subsequent Règlement grand-ducal of January 2010 provide the basis for the implementation of lifelong learning. They both put a strong emphasis on the rights of all

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1 Règlement grand-ducal du 11 janvier 2010 portant organisation de la validation des acquis de l’expérience pour la délivrance des brevets, diplômes et certificats prévus au chapitre V de loi du 19 décembre 2008 portant réforme de la formation professionnelle.
4 ADEM 2009 report.
5 Programme gouvernemental 2009 - Ministère de l’enseignement supérieur et de la Recherche.
individuals to access validation initiatives in vocational education and training (VET). Vocational secondary education certificates and diplomas as well as vocational upper secondary qualifications (e.g. brevet de maîtrise) can be achieved by individuals who have not followed formal education beforehand. The only requirement is to introduce a formal request (dossier) to have their prior informal or non-formal learning validated. To do so, they must supply evidence that the total length of their prior learning amounts at least three years and is effectively related to the certificate/qualification desired. This validation model is similar to the VAE (validation des acquis de l’expérience) system offered in France, although there is no provision for employees to take time off work to undergo validation (the French ‘Congé VAE’) in Luxembourg.

With regard to higher education, the law of 19 June 2009 notably specifies validation-related rules for programmes leading to higher technician certificates (Brevets de Technicien Supérieur or BTS). The following specificity is worth being noted: whilst these programmes are offered by upper secondary schools which fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, resulting diplomas are overseen by the Ministry of Higher Education.

At University level, the legislation creating the University of Luxembourg in 2003 includes an article allowing a prospective student to request a validation des acquis de l’expérience, which is effectively a validation of non-formal and informal learning of the candidate, as a substitute to certification or other proof of having undertaken the formal education required for entry to the university. This aspect is also pointed out in the 2009 governmental programme which states that the government will reiterate the importance of fostering validation processes when new contractual arrangements with the University of Luxembourg are signed.

In the field of adult learning, the ‘Règlement grand-ducal’ (17 June 2000, revised 18 May 2007) regarding the organisation of adult learning allows in certain cases, the admission to courses (giving access or shortening the length of the regular training) for candidates who do not meet the regular requirements, providing that they have relevant previous professional experience, which can be validated.

In the meantime, a parallel measure aimed to support recognition of prior learning (rather than actual certification) processes is offered to individuals who wish to evaluate their own skills or competences. This is known as the ‘bilan de compétences’. A more detailed description of this initiative was provided in the 2007 European Inventory report for Luxembourg and a summary is provided below.

The ‘bilan de compétences’ or personal skills audit was created via legislation drawn up in 1998, that of the National Action Plan for Employment. Several articles in the legislation refer to the ‘bilan de compétences’ and the cases in which it may be used. It is only available via the ADEM (Administration de l’emploi), to job-seekers. The ‘bilan de compétences’ is used as a tool to explore the personal and professional skills of the individual concerned, and the skills required by the labour market, and is formative in nature.

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

A national qualifications framework (NQF) is under development in Luxembourg. The outline of an overarching NQF was presented for the first time to the Council of Ministers in 2009. This was followed up by an inter-ministerial working group. The final version of the NQF should be submitted during spring 2010 to the Council of Ministers for approval. The upcoming step will consist of a large consultation process with all relevant stakeholders (e.g. social partners, university, etc.). The referencing of the NQF within the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) should be then effective during the first semester of 2011.

The concept of validation is clearly referred to in the forthcoming NQF. This mostly results from the influence of the above-mentioned 2008 law on vocational education and training which has provided the basis for NQF development. This is particularly noticeable with regard to the learning outcomes approach which is now increasingly applied on a more general basis also for the other sectors of the education and training system.

This advanced stage of implementation has enabled the draft NQF proposal to indicate how single qualifications and qualifications types will be placed in the national framework. On the whole, the stakeholders involved, including social partners, agreed that the new profiles developed on the basis of the 2008 VET reform make a referencing possible.

In practice, Luxembourg has decided to introduce an eight-level reference structure. The descriptors reflect experiences gained over several decades. At each level, descriptors are education and training standards differentiated according to knowledge, skills and attitudes. The decision to use these concepts reflects the gradual development of learning outcomes or a ‘competence’-based approach in education and training.

1.3 National institutional framework

As stated above, validation of non-formal and informal learning currently targets the following levels/sectors of learning:

- Vocational education and training (VET), including adult education, and
- Higher education.

With regard to VET, it is to be noted that professional education and training qualifications are delivered solely by the state. As such, developments in the sphere of validation centre on these formal qualifications provided by the state.

The Ministry of Education is responsible for overseeing validation processes. In practice, all individuals (including the low qualified) can benefit from a validation of prior learning and gain access to VET programmes and/or be awarded certificates or diplomas corresponding to their field of competences and knowledge. Depending on the individual’s profile, validation may be full or partial. In instances of partial validation, the candidate is informed by the validation commission which knowledge and skills need to be evaluated by a complementary assessment. Individuals are then offered the possibility to follow modular courses to complement their skills and knowledge and get a formal VET certificate or diploma. The only requirement for individuals who wish to have their prior experience recognised is to submit a validation dossier to the Ministry. The latter is evaluated by the above-mentioned validation commission.

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In the case of higher education, there are two main types of validation processes, which apply to both admission to university or to the award of (partial) qualifications. The first one regards the access to and validation of short higher education programmes leading to a diploma of the Ministry of Higher Education, the Brevet de technicien supérieur (BTS). These programmes are offered by upper secondary institutions (lycées) which fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. In this case, the Ministry of Education is responsible for ensuring the overall process. However, individuals who wish to get their prior experience validated must submit their formal request to the director of the lycée where the programme targeted is offered.

The second relates to first, second and third university cycles. Individuals who possess neither upper secondary nor higher education qualifications may benefit, under certain circumstances, from a validation of prior learning. The University of Luxembourg is in this case fully responsible for ensuring the process. Candidates for such validation must either succeed in an entrance examination organised by the university or supply evidence of their experience and learning outcomes. In the latter case, they must submit a formal request (including documents showing evidence of their experience) to the university and be interviewed by a validation committee comprising academic staff and relevant professionals.

In the area of adult learning, the Luxembourg Lifelong Learning Centre (LLLC), the training department of the Chambre des salariés, is noteworthy. The centre delivers evening courses leading to official diplomas delivered by the Ministry of Education. Those interested in a validation of their prior experience (which may e.g. result from a paid or volunteer activity) must submit a dossier to the LLLC.

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

The legislative framework sets comprehensive rules for the design and the scope of the validation procedure; ways to promote information and raise awareness on existing means to validate non-formal and informal learning; how to undertake and quality assure the process. Ways to monitor the efficiency of the validation process are stated to a lesser extent.

In the adult learning sector, the 2000 legislation (Règlement grand-ducal du 17 juin 2000) contains provisions for the use of validation methodologies for admitting candidates onto adult apprenticeship courses. The completion of a successful adult apprenticeship in Luxembourg leads to the Certificat d’aptitude technique et professionnelle (CATP) which will become DAP (Diplôme d’aptitude professionnelle) starting from autumn 2010.

These apprenticeships are managed by the Ministry of Education. Training takes place either through the Centre National de Formation Professionnelle Continue (CNFPC), or in one of the technical lycées.

On the whole, the information set out above mostly applies to the VET sector. At university level, the 2003 law creating the University of Luxembourg states for example procedures to be followed by applicants and information on the composition of the evaluation commission. The university is free to fix its own rules with regard to the qualifications concerned, information and guidance-related services and monitoring methods.

1.5 Examples of regional, local or EU funded initiatives

No formal examples of sub national initiatives were found for Luxembourg.

An interesting EU funded initiative, namely the ESF supporting the aforementioned Luxembourg Lifelong Learning Centre (LLLC), can be noted. The LLLC was created 40
years ago and results from an initiative of the private sector. Today, the LLLC is perceived as a pioneer in the organisation of continuing education in Luxembourg. The LLLC is financially supported by the EU: EUR 4.5 million has been allocated by ESF to the centre for 2009-2010. This constitutes one of the most important ESF funded projects in the country.

The LLLC is engaged in the validation of prior learning. Jointly with the Chambre des salariés, the LLLC have set a list of diploma\(^9\) which are eligible to validation processes. Access to LLLC’s evening courses and qualifications are open to any learners (provided they meet the criteria which are further described in sub-section 2.3) as validation of prior learning is recognised. In practice, the latter must first submit a dossier to the LLLC which is then assessed by a jury. The jury examines individuals’ learning outcomes and previous school and/or professional achievements that can fit to the targeted diploma. As a result from jury’s decision, applicants may be awarded the full or partial version of that diploma. In the case of a partial validation process, applicants are meant to follow a given number of courses (subdivided into modules) depending on their profiles. They must then pass (within the next 5 years) relating examinations to get a complete validation of their prior learning. The centre furthermore supports actions at regional level (partnerships have been established with several LEADER local action groups and with the Landakemie project which all support lifelong learning). This approach contributes to the offer of evening courses in local areas, thus expanding the overall provision of continued education.

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

The VET sector has its own transfer and accumulation model which is based on competencies and student workload. All VET programmes have a modular structure consisting of units and modules. Each unit can be accumulated, assessed and validated separately. A unit consists of several competences that need to be acquired to attain parts of a qualification. A module is the core element of a single unit. VET programmes usually last three years but can last longer in practice, given the flexible approach offered.

VET programmes are valued in terms of units by the Ministry of Education. Units are designed on the basis of a collaborative process involving the Ministry, VET providers and professionals (employers/private sector’ representatives). Legislation specifies the length of each programme by types of occupations, number of units and modules required as well as the objectives, the content, duration and sequencing of the modules.

In this context, lifelong learning is facilitated as any units acquired from previous VET training can be accumulated. In the case of learners who do not possess any units but who can supply evidence of a professional experience of at least three years, a validation of their informal and non-formal learning is possible as highlighted above. In the meantime, plans to harmonise the modular system with the European credit system for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) are ongoing.

In higher education, ECTS has been introduced for first (i.e. leading to BA) and second (i.e. leading to MA) cycles but is also being used for the short cycle as well as for vocational programmes at the same level.\(^10\)

With regard to validation of prior learning, exemptions are expressed as exemption in terms of credit points. According to the 2007-2009 Bologna Process National report, the validation procedures have been mostly applied in the case of teacher training related qualifications and engineering qualifications.


1.7 Funding framework

Validation of non-formal and informal learning in the VET and non-university higher education sectors (programmes leading to BTS) is publicly funded. In these sectors, the ‘validation des acquis de l'expérience’ falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and a budgetary line is specifically devoted to this activity. This budgetary line for example covers the fees allocated to the members of the validation commissions, the costs for training the latter, administrative and management costs, etc. This budgetary line is fixed on a yearly basis accordingly with national budgetary rules.

No further data on the funding framework was found with regard to the other education and training sectors.

1.8 Data on flows of beneficiaries

Little evidence has been found on this aspect. This may be justified by the fact that validation of non-formal and informal learning constitutes a quite recent development in the country (e.g. in the VET sector, the process has effectively started in March 2010).

The following trends can be however noted:

- According to the 2007-2009 Bologna Process National report, the validation procedures have concerned 300 candidates in the field of teacher training related qualifications; 345 in engineering qualifications and 6 in nursing areas.

- A relatively small number (around 10 persons per year) benefit from a validation of informal/non-formal learning each year at the Luxembourg Lifelong Learning Centre (LLLC), the training department of the Chambre des salariés (see section 2.3 for more information)

2 ORGANISATIONAL PERSPECTIVE ON VALIDATION

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

Resulting from the above-mentioned legislative framework, the organisation of formal education and training is based on a competence-based approach which is complemented in some sectors (VET including adult learning and higher education) by a modular approach.

As such, the organisation of education and training in Luxembourg is clearly meant to value lifelong learning - and thus to better interrelate formal, non-formal and informal learning via validation processes.

The competence-based approach and particularly the implementation of sets of competences (socles de compétences) which must be achieved by pupils/learners at given stages of their educational and training pathway are being progressively mainstreamed in compulsory education. This approach refers to and complies with the EU Key Competences Framework.

Such an approach has been conceived as a means to facilitate individual learning pathways and transition from one school sector to another.

The introduction of modular and credit-related systems in VET and higher education increases individuals’ possibilities to value their competences and skills in a more flexible and tailored way. In VET for instance, the achievement of given modules enable individuals who had for example dropped out of the VET system at a certain stage to reintegrate in the training programme without being obliged to be assessed on the modules already achieved.
As stated above, the university and adult learning (both vocational and general) sectors operate validation autonomously (though in accordance with ongoing legislation) in relation with their own standards.

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

At national level, information on ways to validate prior experience and learning may be found at the bodies officially acknowledged by the Minister of Education (any institution which fulfills the defined conditions). Aside the Ministry of Education itself (e.g. its service responsible for adults’ education and training), individuals may get information from education and training institutions (e.g. the ‘Service des Études et de la Vie Étudiante’ of the University of Luxembourg; lycées offering courses leading to BTS).

Information is furthermore disseminated via different websites including:

- The ‘Guichet public’ (http://www.guichet.public.lu/fr/citoyens/enseignement-formation/education-formation-adultes/formation-continue-diplomante/validation-acquis-experience/organismes-diplomes-vises/index.html). This website provides a comprehensive overview of the possibilities offered to individuals who wish to validate prior learning according to the sector and level of education targeted. It also includes useful information for employers in this area.

- The information portal on lifelong learning (http://www.lifelong-learning.lu). The portal is managed by the Institut National pour le développement de la Formation Professionnelle Continue (INFPC) which is a publicly funded body involved in the promotion of continuing vocational training. Aside from targeting individuals (unemployed individuals being one of its main target groups), promoting information on providers of continuing vocational education and training, the body is also engaged in an active networking with enterprises.

- In addition, the national employment agency ADEM (Administration de l’emploi) offers a guidance service to young and adult people who look for information on career perspective/re-orientation. This service collaborates with the national services of school orientation (CPOS and SPOS), education and training providers and sectoral chambers (http://www.adem.public.lu/demandeur/orientation/index.html).

At provider level, VET schools usually benefit from internal counsellors who provide individuals with information, guidance and support when the process of validation of non-formal and informal learning is ongoing.

At university level, a guidance service enables individuals to address their questions in this area. The website of the institution furthermore offers information on ways and requirements for validating prior learning (http://www.unilu.etudiants/informations_uiles_de_a_a_z/validation_d_acquis).

Faculties’ websites may also include such information (e.g. see the website of the Luxembourg School of Commerce (LSC), http://www.ifcc.lu/index.php?page=50).

Similar information as well as contact details are also found on the website of the Luxembourg Lifelong Learning Centre, LLC (http://www.lllc.lu/up/01-csoir/ValAcquis/ValAcquis.html).

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

The principal private sector stakeholders in the training and lifelong learning sector in Luxembourg are as follows:

- Chambre de Commerce (chamber of commerce)
- Chambre des Métiers (chamber of crafts)
• **Chambre des Salariés** (representation group for all workers)
• **Institut de Formation Bancaire, Luxembourg** – IFBL (Institute for training in the banking sector)

The above-mentioned professional chambers, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, deliver formal apprenticeship schemes. Validation procedures are in place in this area.

In addition, the **Chambre des salariés** (which has been formed from the merging of the former **Chambre de travail** and **Chambre des employés privés**) has set in place provision for validation of skills and competences for candidates to its adult education evening courses in continuing vocational training. The **Chambre des salariés** offers evening courses to adults in a variety of vocational subjects, including ICT and administration, accounting and management, law and sales. The courses are delivered by the Luxembourg Lifelong Learning Centre (LLLC), the training department of the **Chambre des salariés**, and on completion of six modules learners are delivered an official diploma by the Ministry of Education (although it does not constitute a formal state qualification).

### Validation at the Luxembourg Lifelong Learning Centre (LLLC)

Since January 2007, candidates have been entitled to apply for validation of their skills and competences in order to obtain these certificates, at a cost of EUR 150 in total per certificate. Candidates must have a minimum of three years’ relevant experience in relation to the desired certificate. Diplomas acquired via validation processes have the same value as diplomas strictly resulting from training. The diploma does not include any information on the way it was obtained.

Following the 2008 law reforming the VET sector, all LLLC curricula are now based on learning outcomes in order to facilitate VAE processes. As in the case of validation processes in VET or continuing education sectors, candidates must submit a dossier to the LLLC. The LLLC must authorise the validation process, based on this dossier. Approved dossiers are submitted to a jury, made up of professionals and stakeholders from the LLLC evening classes. The jury’s decision on the validation is based on an analysis of the candidate’s experience in relation to the skills, knowledge and competencies required to obtain the certificate. The candidate’s education and continuing vocational training may also be taken into account.

Certain private sector actors deliver Masters courses in collaboration with partner bodies in France and are therefore able to apply the French validation system to these courses. The introduction of the reform of professional training has not had any impact on this.

The **Institut de Formation Bancaire Luxembourg** (IFBL), offers the services of its ‘Diagnostic Centre’ for the purposes of training those working in the banking sector, part of the role of which is to assist workers in this area to assess their skills and abilities relevant to working in the sector. One of the tools used by the Diagnostic Centre to achieve this, is the drawing up of ‘bilan de compétences’ similar to those described in section 1.1 above.

The Ministry of Education was unable to provide examples of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with validation initiatives in place.

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

Third sector bodies have been represented in the design of the reform of vocational training through the representative social partners. Some third sector organisations have also developed their own initiative for the validation of skills and experiences gained through voluntary activities, in collaboration with the Ministry of Youth.

A pilot initiative known as the *attestation de compétences* (renamed ‘*attestation de l’engagement*’ since then) was notably launched in 2006-2007 by the **Fédération Nationale**
des Eclaireurs et Eclaireuses du Luxembourg (Luxembourg Federation of Scouts) and the Service National de la Jeunesse (National Youth Service). It is particularly worth being noted as it has been legislated since then (Règlement grand-ducal sur la jeunesse du 9 janvier 2009).

The ‘attestation de l’engagement’ reflects volunteer activities undertaken by young people. It aims to value the competences and skills acquired by young people; describe the tasks fulfilled and related competences; award a certificate which is acknowledged by the Union des entreprises luxembourgeoises (UEL); support values of self-development.

The Attestation de Compétences (Certification of Competences), Luxembourg

In Luxembourg, the initiative undertaken by the Fédération Nationale des Eclaireurs et Eclaireuses du Luxembourg (Luxembourg Federation of Scouts) and the Service National de la Jeunesse (National Youth Service) since 2004 has now been evaluated and considered successful. The initiative targets young people through their participation in voluntary work. It was initially led by a working group of the Commission Consultative pour la formation d’animateurs et responsables de loisirs (consultative commission for the training of activity leaders) and began with a consultation phase with employers. The pilot phase was run by a Commission d’Attestation. In addition, a steering group has put together of representatives of the project, enterprises and ADEM. This steering group has had responsibility for monitoring the quality of the project. Since its successful evaluation as pilot project, the initiative now runs on a more mainstreamed basis.

In practice, attestations can be awarded to any young individuals aged under 30 years old; who have at least followed 150 hours of training in youth, socio-cultural, education and sport areas; have been involved in youth-related organisations on a voluntary basis for at least 400 hours; have achieved national ‘Voluntary service’ (service volontaire) on a full time basis and without interruption for a minimum of three years. Further details can be found in the 2009 Portfolio de l’engagement, http://www.snj.public.lu/publications/publications-diverse/attestation-competences/attestation-portfolio_2009/portfolio_brochure.pdf.

Three different certificates can be obtained, according to the role and responsibilities the young person has held (leadership, training or project management).

The validation process is based on the following steps.

1) The applicant is interviewed by the member of staff at their youth organisation who is going to prepare their application. This interview should be used to provide the young person with information about the process and to identify what documentation will be required. It should also be used to discuss with the young person the tasks and competences which will be evidenced in the application for the attestation.

2) The application form is completed by the staff member and sent to the National Youth Service (SNJ)

3) The SNJ verifies the form received and completes the attestation.

4) The attestation is signed by the Minister with responsibility for youth affairs.

5) The attestation is sent to the young person and a copy is sent to the supporting organisation.

For applicants who are applying on the basis of a project they have carried out, the process is slightly different and they are required to submit supplementary documentation, as well as undergo an interview by the SNJ.

2.5 Costs to organisations

In the case of the LLLC, the validation process cost EUR 150 in total per certificate. Other costs associated with the process are the costs required to pay the practitioners involved in evaluation committees.

No further evidence was found in relation to this question.
3 INDIVIDUAL PERSPECTIVE

3.1 Awareness-raising and recruitment

According to the legislative framework in place, all individuals (regardless of their age, nationality, education and training background, status, etc.) have the right to ask for a validation of their non-formal and/or informal learning provided that they supply evidence of a minimum level (varying among the sectors and the certificates/diplomas) of experience and professional involvement directly relating to certificates/diplomas desired.

Aside from the activities supported by ADEM which primarily focus on unemployed people, no reference to specific target groups is noted.

As highlighted above (see 2.2), information on validation is provided on several websites and through various channels ranging from national, sectoral bodies to local providers.

3.2 Provision of guidance and support

On the whole, information channels listed under section 2.2 generally offer contact details for further information. More specific information by types of sectors/levels of education and training is set out below.

For validation processes which fall under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education (i.e. for VET certificates, diplomas and brevets and short higher education cycles leading to the Brevets de Techniciens Supérieurs\(^{11}\)), applicants can benefit from guidance and support before, during and after the validation. As reported on the ‘Guichet public’ website (http://www.guichet.lu\(^{12}\)), applicants are firstly invited to consult information and guidance bodies officially recognised by the Ministry to collect practical details (e.g. list of possible certifications, certifications which would most comply with individual’s skills and competences, etc.) prior to their application. During the process, they may have the possibility to exchange directly with the members of the evaluation commission (applicants may be either formally interviewed or observed real or reconstructed situations). Otherwise, they can reach the Ministry’s service in charge of validation processes. Whenever applicable, they can also benefit from further guidance and support from the VET provider where they will e.g. complete their training in case their prior experience is only partially validated. Lastly, the applicants can contact the above-mentioned guidance bodies at the end of the validation process (art. 13 of the 2010 Règlement grand-ducal on vocational education and training).

In the case of short higher education cycles leading to the Brevets de Techniciens Supérieurs, the main contact point for individualised guidance and support is the provider (lycée) where the programme targeted is offered.

Regarding validation processes offered by the University of Luxembourg, individuals can either look for information on the website of the institution (e.g. consultation of University’s programme on offer) or contact directly the service responsible for studies and students (Service des études et de la vie étudiante, SEVE). The application is an online process. The applicant must firstly introduce an admission dossier. Once the latter is approved by the institution, the candidate receives further guidelines and requirements relating to documents/evidence to be sent. At any time of the process, candidates can contact SEVE for further guidance and support.

With regard to adult learning, education and training providers (e.g. the LLLC) provide guidance and support services.

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\(^{11}\) In this case, the overall process is overseen by the Ministry of Education

\(^{12}\) A public website separate from this of the Ministry of Education (www.vae.men.lu).
3.3 **Costs to individuals**

In the case of validation processes in the VET sector, individuals are only required to pay EUR 25 for the formal submission (*droit de timbre*) of their application. The rest is fully free of charge for the applicant.

No information was found on the costs to individuals at university and in the adult learning sector.

3.4 **Initiatives focused on specific target groups**

As stated above, legislative documents all state that validation of non-formal and informal learning targets all individuals. As a result, no evidence of initiatives focused on specific target groups was found.

However, bearing in mind that the fight against school exclusion and early school leaving is one of the key priority actions of the Ministry of Education (as reported in the 2009 National Report for the Education and Training 2010 work programme), initiatives targeting early school leavers and/or unemployed people in the area of validation of prior learning could arise in the future.

3.5 **Evidence of benefits to individuals**

No data with evidence of benefits of validation to individuals was found. With the exception of the LLLC which has carried out validation processes for some years, such processes are rather new in the VET and higher education sectors.

4 **QUALITY ASSURANCE AND EVALUATION**

4.1 **Quality Assurance Framework**

A quality assurance framework embedding the education and training system in a lifelong learning perspective does not yet exist but is under development. So far, the ‘*validation des acquis de l’expérience*’ (VAE) complies with 2004 European principles for validation. The VAE process refers to the requirements in use for formal qualifications. Ad hoc VAE validation commissions use pre-established grids and are notably meant to ensure the relevance and reliability of the entire procedure.

On the whole, the approach followed to design the future framework targets both the education and training system and its providers. The future framework will consider both internal and external evaluation\(^\text{13}\).

Accordingly with the law on the reform of the SCRIPT (*service responsible for coordinating research and pedagogical and technological innovation*) adopted in January 2009, the latter is meant to play a relevant role in the field of quality assurance of education and training in the future.

SCRIPT comprises three entities in charge of the following aspects: pedagogical innovation, quality assurance of teaching in schools and upper secondary institutions (*lycées*); schools and *lycées* teaching staff’s in-service training.

With regard to the quality of teaching in schools and *lycées*, an agency is responsible for ensuring its development. Its missions include for example:

- Guiding education and training providers in the analysis of the evaluation of their teaching provision (which targets the quality of the learning provision and learners’

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Supporting the latter in the design of a quality concept. A scientific board consisting of five members (including two designated by the university) furthermore supports SCRIPT’s activities. One of its main purposes is to formulate recommendations to the Ministry of Education in order to better quality ensure the education and training system: e.g. with regards to evaluation criteria/standards, topics/areas that could be evaluated, etc.

As stated above, no overarching quality assurance framework exists so far. Ongoing developments should however contribute to fostering quality assurance processes in all sectors of education and training (e.g. including actions aimed to link formal and non-formal or informal learning). In the meantime, quality assurance procedures exist to support the validation of non-formal and informal learning in different sectors as further detailed below.

4.2 Quality assurance systems / procedures

In the VET sector, validation commissions are nominated by the Minister of Education and Vocational Training for five years. They comprise employers’ and worker’s representatives and VET providers’ representatives. Whenever needed, they have the possibility to involve external experts. The validation procedure, the composition, the organisation of the committees and the fees paid to its members are set by Règlement grand-ducal. The validation procedure is furthermore supported by a scientific and technical follow-up which aims at collecting, processing, valorising and disseminating information on the validation of prior learning.

In the field of continuing VET, a quality label\(^\text{14}\) for institutions and individuals can be awarded by the Minister of Education for a three-year period. The award can be renewed provided that the institutions meet the criteria stated in the 2008 law.

When it comes to higher education short cycles (BTS), ad hoc evaluation commissions comprise a minimum of two persons who are not part of the teaching staff. This is meant to ensure transparency and allow for an objective assessment of the applicants’ learning outcomes. Whenever members of these committees belong to the same enterprise or institution where the applicant has acquired experience, those cannot take part in the deliberations.

At university level, an ad hoc evaluation commission is set up for each individual asking for recognition of prior learning. It must comprise university lecturers and professionals from the field of activity concerned. On the whole, the university is free to design and implement its own quality assurance processes.

In the private sector, the LLLC uses its internal QA standards for the validation procedure. The LLLC evening courses have been reviewed in accordance with a ‘référentiel de compétences’ – a framework of competences which the learners must develop. Curricula are modularised (there are five main levels) and each competence is broken down into learning objectives. Specific targets to assess individual learners’ learning outcomes are defined on this basis.

4.3 Evaluation framework

An evaluation framework does not yet exist.

There is a plan to create a training observatory that would address governmental and social partners’ expectations in terms of building a solid framework for a quantitative and

\(^{14}\) Article 44 of the 2008 law on vocational education and training.
qualitative evidence-base. The latter would contribute to offering reliable insights to policy-makers and relevant stakeholders for better adapting the competences required on the labour market with those acquired from education and training.

5 ASSESSMENT METHODS

5.1 Methods used

Depending on the sector of education and training and the sector of activity considered, the procedures may range from recognition (e.g. in the private or third sectors) to effective validation/certification of prior learning (i.e. some forms of VET, higher education and adult learning as depicted above).

On the whole, the most commonly used methods for the latter include:

- The portfolio approach
- Assessment of the application dossier of the candidate (including a personal profile, a description of the candidate career history and relevant documentation to confirm his/her training and career history)
- Authorisation of the validation process by the provider, based on this dossier.
- Interview of the candidate and/or observing him/her in his/her occupational setting, either real or reconstructed, if the procedure is allowed by the authority which delivers the certification. In the case of adult learning (LLLC) a test (written, oral or practical) may be requested.

With regard to the methods used in procedures leading to a valorisation/recognition of prior learning, these also include interviews, questionnaires, and observation of the individual being assessed. They may also involve individuals in self-evaluation exercises. The methodology for producing a ‘bilan de compétences’ is via a combination of interviews, questionnaires, and observation of the individual being assessed.

5.2 Advantages and disadvantages of the methods used

No evidence was found in relation to this question.

6 VALIDATION PRACTITIONERS

6.1 Profile of validation practitioners

Regardless of the type of validation process concerned, validation practitioners usually comprise of representatives of the following actors: teaching/academic staff, employers and/or workers. External experts may be also invited to take part in the process. Employers’ and workers’ representatives are usually nominated by the sectoral chambers. In the meantime guidance staff is also indirectly involved to provide support and information to the applicants.

For instance, the 2010 Règlement grand-ducal on vocational education and training states that six members (i.e. two employers’ representatives, two workers’ representatives and VET provider’s representatives) must be involved in the validation commissions. These members must designate a chair (president) and a secretary among them. They can also decide to involve external experts. They cannot take part in validation commissions whenever the applicant is e.g. one of their employees or a relative.
In all cases, validation practitioners are meant to be professionals with a thorough knowledge of the skills and competences required on the labour market for a given occupation and these which can be acquired from education and training in this respect. As such, the members of the above-mentioned validation commission assess the applicant’s learning outcomes in accordance with the skills and competences required for being awarded the certificate, diploma, brevet desired. Accordingly with guidelines from the Ministry, the validation commission establishes an evaluation grid.

6.2 Provision of training and support to practitioners

One stakeholder interviewed for this report suggested that there is currently a shortage of human resources capable of delivering validation in Luxembourg. It can be difficult to find individuals able (and available) to take part in ad hoc validation committees. In short, it appears difficult to find experts who are aware of the methods followed by the committees. This suggests that on the whole, there is a need for further training in this area.

6.3 Qualifications requirements

Qualification requirements are not specified nationally.
7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Literature:


Stakeholders consulted:
Ministère de l'Education Nationale et de la Formation Professionnelle
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Chambre de commerce