



European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning 2014

Country report Portugal

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1 Introduction

Since the publication of the European Inventory update of 2010, the Portuguese situation regarding validation of non-formal and informal learning had experienced profound changes. New legislation, initiated with the change of government in June 2011, has influenced the current education system. The changes are due to a new policy perspective regarding education in general, including adult education and training, both for young people and adults, and specifically the validation and certification of competences. In addition, the economic crisis that Portugal has been facing in recent years has also contributed to the redefinition of priorities in the educational sector, which have in turn affected the policies and practices in relation to the validation of non-formal and informal learning.

2 National perspective on validation

At the national level, the last three years have witnessed substantial modifications to the validation of non-formal and informal learning. Since the 2010 update major transformations have occurred which are leading to a distinctly different situation in relation to validation. At the time of writing (January 2014), Portugal is in the process of implementing new policies and guidelines regarding adult education and training. This has led to the closure of the existing centres (CNO) and to the suspension of validation practices under the responsibility of the former National Agency for Qualifications (ANQ), at non-higher education level.

New arrangements have already been approved by the government and it is expected that a new network of centres (CQEP) will be established in the next few months. At this stage there is little information about the concrete results of these developments. New legislation and guidelines for practices of validation will be implemented in forthcoming years and it is expected that the centres will commence operations in 2014. In the Higher Education sector, new legislation passed in August 2013 raises the profile of validation. The new legislation brings better transparency and rigour to these practices, particularly in relation to the existence of clear procedures and limits regarding validation in this sector.

2.1 National legal framework, system or policy on validation

As reported in the 2010 update, a national system for validation — named as National System for the Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competences — was implemented in 2001. Up until 2012, the national system for validation was under the responsibility of the ANQ. Between the years 2001 and 2010/2011, this period can be characterised as an expansion period where validation practices were gradually and widely implemented at the national level. During this period adult education and training programmes and validation of non-formal and informal learning were considered central issues in the national educational agenda under the New Opportunities Governmental Action Plan 2005-2010.

In 2011, under a new legislative framework, the XIX constitutional government has created the ANQEP (Agência Nacional para a Qualificação e o Ensino Profissional/National Agency for Qualification and Vocational Education and Training, by the Decreto-Lei nº 36/2012, 15th February). This legislation provided for the introduction of the ANQEP in place of the ANQ, the former institution with responsibilities on validation at the non-university level, both academic and vocational components. By the end of 2011 and during 2012 and 2013, the existing 450 CNOs (Centros de Novas Oportunidades/New Opportunities Centres) were progressively closed. The new legislation regarding the final closure of CNO and the creation of the new centres in charge of validation processes is relatively recent given that it was announced only on the 28th of March 2013¹.

¹ **Legislation: Portaria n.º 135-A/2013** The legal framework for CQEP was published in March 2013 (Portaria nº 135-A/2013, 28 of March), establishing the scope, mission, competences, technical team, intervention stages and other requirements for their activity.

By January 2014 the functions of the new network of centres had been authorised. These are called CQEP (Centros para a Qualificação e Ensino Profissional/Centres for Qualification and Vocational Training). The new network of centres will target not only people above 18 years old, but also young people of 15 years of age. These Centres will undertake guidance, counselling and validation activities targeted at low-skilled adults, and will also guide and orientate young students just graduated from former compulsory education (9 years of schooling). Significant changes have been made in the composition of the teams and their main duties and responsibilities).

Nevertheless, it is expected that a centralised approach regarding compulsory education and VET will continue, which will include validation processes at a national level, with the same perspectives related to the use of national standards and methodologies; the Key Competences Standards used in the academic process as well as the Standards used for professional processes have not been changed and the stages of the validation process are also the same. Standards used in the academic process are specific to validation but equal in value to those awarded through formal education and training.

As reported in the 2010 update, changes in the area of validation of non-formal and informal learning have also been evident in the higher education sector following the implementation of Decreto-lei nº 64/2006 21, of March and of Decreto-lei nº 74/2006, 24 of March. Recent revisions to Decreto-lei nº 74/2006 has led to a new legislation (Decreto-lei nº115/2013, 7 of August), where validation practices in HE are subject to of a much more detailed analysis. Under new legislation, HE institutions shall have formal internal rules on validation that must then be published in the government official journal. The validation processes and results need to be clearer and must be validated by the scientific board of Universities and Polytechnics. In addition there will be a limit to the number of credits gained by validation processes: up to one third of the total number of ECTS relating to the degree in question. The award of credits in HE is only possible if the student has already been admitted to a course, with the objective of pursuing studies to obtain an academic degree. The new legislation also clarifies situations where it is not possible to award credits (for example through partial crediting of curricular units or through training from unauthorised courses).

2.2 Skills audits

There is no information available in relation to this topic.

2.3 Relationship with qualifications framework and credit systems, and information on standards used for validation

As reported in the 2010 update, the National System for the Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competences (RVCC) is integrated within the National Qualification System.

The NQF is a comprehensive framework that embodies all qualifications awarded by the national education and training system. NQF qualifications from levels 1 to 4 can be granted through the validation of non-formal and informal learning through the national system of RVCC. At the end of a RVCC process, and depending on the competences held, adults are awarded a partial or a full certification. Yet, a NQF qualification is only granted in the case of a full certification. Partial certification leads to a full certification if the non-certified competences are acquired through training.

Only a full certification will lead to a qualification (NQF levels 1 to 4). In Portugal, the RVCC process has two main routes that can be followed in a separate or in an integrated way:

1. The Academic Process — aiming to improve the qualification levels of adults who do not have basic or secondary education certificates,
And;

2. The Vocational Process — for adults who do not have formal qualifications in their occupational areas, aiming to improve vocational qualification levels of beneficiaries (at basic and secondary level).

As reported in the 2010 update, the standards used for validation in the Academic Process is the Key Competencies in Adult Education and Training Reference Framework — which is composed of two different standards: one is specific to the basic level (i.e. corresponding to 4, 6 or 9 years of schooling) and the other is specific to the secondary level of education. Individuals can thus acquire formal qualifications through validation, which are equal in value to those awarded through formal education and training. The qualification levels given by validation and the formal qualification levels of the education system correspond: the Academic Process of validation leads to a basic level certification (a qualification certificate corresponding to the 1st, 2nd or 3rd cycle of basic education — i.e. 4, 6 or 9 years of schooling — and a basic education diploma), or a secondary level certification (corresponding to the secondary education level — 12 years of schooling — and a diploma at secondary education level).

Through the Vocational Process of validation, individuals can acquire a vocational qualification. In Portugal there is the National Catalogue of Qualifications (*Catálogo Nacional de Qualificações*), that currently includes about 280 qualifications from 39 education and training areas in accordance with the National Classification of Education and Training Areas (Ministerial Order 256/2005 of 16 March). At the present, there are around 70 frameworks for RVCC based on the National Catalogue of Qualifications.

As stated in the 2010 European Inventory, qualifications obtained through validation of non-formal and informal learning provide access to next level qualifications in the formal learning system. The certification awarded by the RVCC process has the same value as any other different route of obtaining the same certification, allowing adults to continue studies in the national education and training system.

At Higher Education level, as also reported in the 2010 update, validation is generally linked to the credit system and unit-based structure of the courses and degrees, within the framework of Bologna process. Students who are successful in their validation application are given ECTS credits, which can be used for exemptions from part of the course related to a specific diploma within the first, second or third cycle of Bologna degrees. These credits are portable across HE institutions.

The new legislation sets the limit of the validation processes up to one third of the total number of ECTS relevant for the particular course (example: in a first cycle course, that has a total of 180 ECTS, students can claim up to 60 ECTS). The result of a validation process is the awarding of credits of the curricular units claimed by candidates (those that have been approved), corresponding to the exact number of credits established in the study plan, since the possibility of partial crediting no longer exists.

Standards

As already stated, RVCC processes are based on the national standards for education and training which are integrated within the National Catalogue of Qualifications at the basic and secondary level of education and professional areas, corresponding to the level 1 to level 4 of the NQF, which are linked to the EQF.

2.4 National institutional framework

The national institution responsible for validation is ANQEP. It was created after the abolition of ANQ, in 2012. ANQEP is a public institution that is supervised by the Ministry of Solidarity, Employment and Social Security, the Ministry for Education and Science and in conjunction with the Ministry of Economy. It has administrative and financial autonomy. ANQEP's mission is 'to coordinate the implementation of policies regarding the education and vocational training of young people and adults, as well as to ensure the development and management of the National System for the Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competences'.

Within the higher education sector, the responsibility for validation is devolved to the universities and polytechnics themselves. Due to the scientific and pedagogical autonomy of

universities and polytechnics no single national institution with overall responsibility for validation in HE exists. However, the Ministry of Education and Science coordinates the general policy of higher education. As already referred to, there is a specific legislative framework that allows institutions to develop practices of validation on non-formal and informal learning².

2.5 Governance and allocation of responsibilities

2.5.1 Please describe the allocation of responsibilities (at national, regional, local, social partner, provider level) according to the different aspects of validation

Regarding the design of the national procedure/approach to different aspects of validation, the ANQEP is the institution with responsibilities in this area. As noted in section 2.1., the intervention of the CQEP network will focus its activity on the information, counselling and guidance of young people and adults who seek improvement of their qualifications, through training or through the development of RVCC processes.

The CQEP will have a broader mission than the CNOs, related to:

- Guidance and referral of young people to vocational education and training paths;
- Connecting training providers to enterprises;
- Developing information sessions relevant to enterprises and other employers;
- Guidance of adult people to training paths;
- Developing RVCC processes, which will allow access to qualification paths.

CQEP will function as the starting point for guiding young people and adults to the available qualifying paths within the National Qualifications System. The Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competences, both lower secondary and upper secondary levels, is part of the National Qualifications System and serves as one of the ways by which a qualification may be obtained.

CQEP will serve a wide range of population groups, starting from 15 years old, offering guidance services and RVCC processes.

However, RVCC process will only be available for those who are older than 18 years of age and up to 23 years old. These adults should have at least three years of professional or certified experience to be eligible for validation. The future network of centres "will have a more demanding and rigorous intervention, namely at the level of the RVCC process." (Portaria n^o 135-A 2013, 28th March). The future network of CQEP will comprise 214 units countrywide³.

CQEP centres will also respond to the needs of disadvantaged people, aiming to facilitate their integration into active and professional life.

One of the main focuses of ANQEP will be the creation of a territory function together with the existing education and training structures.

The main roles of the CQEP includes:

- Collecting information, validation, systematisation and dissemination of information;
- Registration and advice;
- Diagnosis;
- Information and guidance;

² Decreto-lei n^o115/2013.

³ In December 2013 a list of the approved 214 CQEP was presented and is available at <http://cqep.angep.gov.pt/rede.html>

- Orientation to training paths;
- Monitoring;
- Recognition and validation of competences;
- Competence certification.

2.5.2 Explain more specifically the role of different stakeholders

Education and training providers:

The new legislation states that CQEP can be created in schools that belong to the national public system (either basic or secondary schools); in Vocational Training Centres under the responsibility of the Institute for Employment and Vocational Training (I.E.F.P) with direct management or participated management; and also in other type of institutions that can provide solutions to local and regional needs. There are around 80 approved CQEP in public schools and 57 approved CQEP in Vocational Training Centres under the responsibility of the Institute for Employment and Vocational Training (I.E.F.P).

Private sector actors (including social partners)

A group of CQEP centres will function under the initiative of private sector actors (around 70 centres). Examples of these centres are private vocational schools, private higher education institutions, and training enterprises.

Third sector organisations

A group of CQEP centres will also function under the responsibility of third sector organisations (associations for local development).

Following the work previously undertaken by ANOP until 2009, Oficinas Ecosol⁴ is a project developed under the responsibility of Caixa de Mitos⁵ — a private agency for social innovation, aiming to support local economic development projects in the territory concerned. Oficinas Ecosol are projects developed at a local level, establishing partnerships with third sector organisations as well as with public services (ex: local authorities, local development associations, cultural centres, other public and private organisations,...)⁶.

One of the strategies consists of the development of Balanços Sociais de Competências (BSC) targeted at unemployed people. BSC is a unique methodology centred on the identification of relevant professional competences that will be informally validated by professionals working in the field, leading to greater social and community recognition. It is a process of valuing competences, allowing small individual projects to be developed with the support of Oficinas Ecosol. This process is considered to be closer to the specific needs of the people concerned and to relate more closely to the local context. The implementation of several Oficinas Ecosol and BSC are planned for 2014, in partnership with other public and third sector organisations. This project is also linked to KELVOA, a European association created in 2013 with the aim of developing guidance and counselling initiatives in relation to lifelong learning.

2.5.3 Coordination between stakeholders

The new legislation on CQEP centres (portaria nº135-A/2013) emphasises the establishment of partnerships, at a territorial level, which encourage cooperation with employers, training institutions, organisations from the third sector and public organisations in order to create synergies and ensure robust actions.

⁴ Oficinas Ecosol is a continuation of a project previously undertaken by ANOP.

⁵ Further information at: www.pracadasredes.com

⁶ We give examples of associations and local authorities that are involved in these activities: CLAP - Centro Local de Animação e Promoção Rural de Amarante; Associação Coração Delta de Campo Maior, SEA - Agência de Empreendedores Sociais em Marvila; Câmaras de Amarante, Lisboa, Cascais, Campo Maior and Palmela; Junta de Freguesia de Santos-o- Velho.

Specifically regarding the validation processes, CQEP are recommended to mobilise their own trainers and teachers in the process, as long as they have adequate competences and knowledge to carry out validation. If necessary, CQEP can establish agreements with schools, Vocational Training Centres, enterprises or other certified organisations to offer their experience in the area of validation.

2.6 Examples of national regional, local or EU funded initiatives

One example of a EU funded initiative — Lifelong Learning Programme — is the project “Plus APL: more flexible VET Systems based on the Assessment of Prior Learning”, started in 2012. This project is led by the National Forum for Lifelong Guidance Policy (NFDK) with the Instituto de Soldadura e Qualidade (ISQ). The aim of the project is to transfer tools and innovative methodology on validation of non-formal and informal learning, used with success in Portugal, and to implement it with groups of VET professionals in Germany, Bulgaria, Spain, Italy and Poland⁷. The implementation and validation of these tools will be linked to the EQF competence profile and to ECVET curricula for assessment of prior learning professionals.

Another example of an EU funded initiative is the project Going Lifelong Learning – for information see the ANQEP website⁸ — that was developed in the framework of the European Agenda for Lifelong Learning, in a partnership between the former Agência Nacional para a Qualificação, (ANQ), the Centro de Estudos dos Povos de Cultura e Expressão Portuguesas (CEPCEP) of the Universidade Católica Portuguesa (UCP). This project was developed between March 2011 and February 2012, aiming to deepen the understanding of lifelong learning dynamics and to contribute to the dissemination of good practices developed in the European context.

2.7 Inputs, outputs and outcomes

2.7.1 Funding

The new centres CQEP that belong to the national public system (basic or secondary schools, Vocational Training Centres under the responsibility of the Institute for Employment and Vocational Training (I.E.F.P) either with direct management or participated management) have financial support from the state budget (from the Ministry of Education and Science and from I.E.F.P.).

As reported in the 2010 update, HE institutions have to allocate their own funding to validation processes. Institutions determine specific fees for the validation and crediting processes, which vary largely across the different institutions.

2.7.2 Distribution of costs

As stated above, the state supports the costs of validation processes in CQEP that belong to the public system. RVCC is a non-paid process for individuals.

Since HE institutions are autonomous, they can determine their own procedures and fees regarding validation processes. There are institutions where candidates pay on the basis of a fixed amount plus a variable amount, depending on the number of credits awarded (ex: Instituto Politécnico de Setúbal) and others where candidates pay for the process as a whole (ex: University of Lisbon), regardless of the number of credits claimed by the students.

2.7.3 Data on flows of beneficiaries

By the end of 2011 the first CNO centres started to close. During 2012 and 2013 the existing CNO centres had progressively closed their activity, and there is no official data on beneficiaries for the current year. However, it is estimated that more than one million people

⁷ Further information about the project “Plus APL” can be found in: <http://www.plusapl.net/>

⁸ <http://www.anqep.gov.pt/default.aspx>

were enrolled within the activity of the former CNO centres, through validation processes and formal training paths, between 2006 and 2012. According to CNE (2011:138), the number of adults enrolled at centres between 2000 and 2010 was around 1.316.955, aiming to get a basic or a secondary certification. The majority of adults enrolled in centres were between 25 and 44 years old, a trend that is still observable in 2012 data (POPH, 2013), and increasing numbers of unemployed people are in evidence. According to POPH (2013), in 2012 a total of 69.915 adults were certified in the RVCC academic process — and women were more represented than men in this group — and 1,346 people were certified in the RVCC vocational process — and men were more represented than women in this group.

In the HE area there is no official data on flows of beneficiaries, but it is estimated that validation activity developed by universities and polytechnics is still very low. However, there are some examples of good practices in this sector, such as the Unit for Development and Recognition of Competences of the Polytechnic Institute of Setúbal, UDRVC-IPS. As reported in the 2010 update, the unit was established in 2007 and from 2008, a validation process was implemented on an experimental basis across five colleges within the institute. Since the 2010 update was published, the Unit has received 72 claims for the validation process, with 81% approved (total validation) between 2009 and 2012 (Pires, 2012).

2.7.4 Evidence of benefits to individuals

The external evaluation of the New Opportunities Initiative (Iniciativa Novas Oportunidades - INO) carried out in the period 2008-2011 by the Portuguese Catholic University (Carneiro et al., 2011) demonstrated the positive effects of validation to individuals. Valente et al { (*in* Carneiro, 2011) based on the New Opportunities Centres (NOC)'s case studies (2008-2010) and skills survey (2008-2009) from the New Opportunities Initiative (NOI)'s evaluation project} evidenced that at the individual level RVCC processes have contributed not only to personal fulfilment, improved self-esteem and self-confidence, but also to develop hard and meta skills. Regarding the learning outcomes, skills that are most evident and valued are: computer and Internet use, literacy and learning how to learn. Results also showed increased motivation after getting the diploma, and a willingness to progress to upper secondary or university level.

This study also pointed out the high degree of satisfaction with the “RVCC” brand and the massive enrolment of citizens, showing positive perceptions of the majority of the interested Portuguese population towards the NOI. Based on the empirical evidence, authors stated “that people perceived New Opportunities initiative (NOI) as a new way of learning and obtaining credit for personal effort to learn in non-formal and informal systems”. There is also strong evidence that NOI is a friendly way of returning to education. There is no support to affirm that NOI is perceived as an effortless way to obtain a diploma. (Liz et al, *in* Carneiro 2011: 256).

An additional national study carried out with the aim of understanding the relationship between validation processes and the labour market (Lima, 2012) evidenced that workers enrolled in the RVCC process between 2007-2011 were more likely to secure a job when in receipt of a professional qualification. The impact was positive in the group of men who received a professional certification or complemented it with a modularised training (FMC – *Formações Modulares Certificadas/Certified Modularized Training*). Results also showed that after the conclusion of the process there was no impact on remuneration, in general terms. However, there were some exceptions and this relates to the case of women with a level of RVCC (B1 and B2) who made the transition from unemployment to employment (Lima, 2012).

Several academic case studies on the impact of RVCC process (mainly developed as part of Master Degrees or PhD research projects) demonstrate the positive effects of the RVCC process at personal and citizenship levels particularly in relation to empowerment, increased self-confidence, greater autonomy, the ability to actively and positively participate in work environments and society. These results were over and above the development of ICT competences and literacy competences; willingness to continue studies and the development of a positive attitude towards learning (Simplício, 2013, Canelas, 2013, Gomes, 2012, Guedes, 2012, Vieira, 2012, Espojeira, 2011, Vieira, 2010, Bastos, 2010, Moreira, 2008, amongst others).

3 Information, advice and guidance

In the non-higher education area, and in relation to the objectives of the future CQEP, information and advice will be provided at the registration stage. Guidance will be provided after diagnosis and profiling which include information sessions, curricular analysis, evaluation of the life trajectory, and an analysis of motivation, needs and expectations. In addition, individual and collective interviews and tests can also be used, in order to identify the specific vocational training or schooling measures to suit the needs of the particular candidate (adult or young people).

In the higher education sector, practices are varied but generally the provision of information and advice are considered and delivered as part of the whole process. With the new legal requirement about the publication of the crediting regulation, institutions are more aware of the existence of validation practices and the need for their dissemination.

3.1 Awareness-raising and recruitment

In 2011 the former NOI developed a national media campaign that was however interrupted with the ending of the Initiative.

On 11th December 2013 the new initiative and network of CQEP was formally presented in a national conference. A new media campaign was launched in December 2013 to raise awareness about the new centres in young people and adults.

3.2 Role of information, advice and guidance networks/institutions

In Portugal, updated information on education and training offers and the validation process at national level is provided by a national database: SIGO — Integrated System of Information and Management of Education and Training Offer (*Sistema Integrado de Informação e Gestão da Oferta Formativa*). It is expected that the future CQEP network will also be linked to SIGO and will have a role to play in the provision of advice and guidance in relation to validation.

3.3 Measures to enhance the awareness of validation initiatives and practices amongst guidance practitioners

A website for CQEP is now available⁹, including a helpline to provide information on CQEP services.

4 Quality assurance and evaluation

ANQEP is the agency in charge of the development of the quality assurance process with respect to the future network CQEP, and also of monitoring and evaluation of CQEP centers.

4.1 Quality assurance systems/procedures

Legislation states that the functioning, results and impacts of the CQEP activities can be the subject of an external periodical evaluation, under a special contract with recognized scientific organisations (Portaria 135-A 2013). The regular mechanisms of monitoring carried out by ANQ/ANQEP on CNO have been interrupted. It is expected that the external evaluation will not be developed following the previous model, but monitoring will be developed using data from SIGO.

⁹ Available at <http://cqep.anqep.gov.pt/index.html>

4.2 Evaluation framework

ANQEP is the national institution responsible for the external monitoring and evaluation of the future CQEP network. According to the new legislation, ANQEP will produce annual reports on this information and will make them public.

CQEP teams will have to self-evaluate their internal activities, according to their development plans, on an annual basis.

In the HE sector, institutions and programmes are subject to external evaluation. A national independent agency for quality assurance was established — Agência de Avaliação e Acreditação do Ensino Superior (AAAES) (Decree-Law 369/2007, 5 of November). Reports and decisions resulting from this evaluation are made available in the website of the Agency, of the Ministry and of the Institution (Law 38/2007, 16 of August). At the internal level, universities and polytechnics prepare their own self-evaluation report, and also have to publish annual reports demonstrating the impact of the Bologna Process. Due to the scientific and pedagogic autonomy of institutions, universities and polytechnics can develop their own internal quality assurance systems, with the support of the previously mentioned agency for quality assurance (AAAES).

Although validation processes are not addressed specifically in the previously mentioned evaluation reports, innovations in accordance with the approach of the Bologna process are encouraged. Regarding validation, there is a need to create clear and transparent procedures.

5 Validation methods

5.1 Methods used and the validation process

The methodology that will be used in CQEP centres will be developed through the following intervention stages (Portaria nº135-A 2013):

Reception: candidate clarification on the mission of the centres, enrolment in centre.

Diagnosis: candidate profiling, based on clarifying sessions, curriculum analysis, individual and/or collective interviews, identification of motivations, needs and expectations;

Information and guidance: information and support is given to candidate in order to define the appropriate education and qualification project;

Orientation to training paths or to RVCC: according to the result of the previous stages, candidate is guided towards an educational and training offer, or to a process of recognition, validation and certification of competences (RVCC) if candidate is 18-23 years old and has already three years of professional experience.

Competences recognition: Self-identification of competences obtained during an individual's life; an activity set is used based on the methodology, several assessment tools are used, by which the adult identifies his or her competences; construction of a learning reflexive portfolio.

Competences validation: assessment of the identified competences by comparison with the qualification standards. The validation process comprises the learning reflexive portfolio self-assessment, the assessment made by the ORVC professionals (those who are responsible for the orientation, recognition and validation processes) and trainers from the qualification areas. The coordinator of the CQEP centre is the chair of the validation meeting. There will be a grade for the result of the validation, in a scale from 0-200.

Certification: a certification jury is established, candidate is evaluated by a written, oral or practical examination, or by a combination of the referred instruments. Results will be graded in a scale from 0-200. After the approval, candidate gets a certificate of the attained full or partial certification.

During the RVCC process, if a candidate needs can be fulfilled with a training programme up to 50 hours, CQEP trainers will be in charge of it.

If candidate gets a partial certification, CQEP will have to define a personal plan of

qualification —to achieve a full qualification — and refers the candidate to an adequate training institution.

It is acknowledged that the use of a diversity of practices is one of the strongest points of the RVCC process, because it is possible to adapt it to the specific needs of the individuals. The main advantage of the use of qualitative methodologies (such as the competences' portfolio) is well known and documented in literature and previous studies within the adult education field.

	Identification	Documentation	Assessment
Debate	X		
Declarative methods	X		
Observation	X		
Portfolio method	X	X	X
Presentation	X		
Simulation and evidence extracted from work		X	X
Tests and examinations	X	X	X
Other (e.g. e-learning methods)- please specify			

Regarding the specific methodologies used by the RVCC system, identification of competences can be carried out through a range of activities. This includes declarative methods, interviews, simulations, tests and examinations with the purpose of organising a portfolio. The portfolio is the instrument that integrates documentation of different types, either biographical or curricular that will then allow the assessment and validation of competences according to the respective standards.

Validation is based both in a self-evaluation and a hetero-evaluation process carried out in an independent way and with different results. It is developed with the support and guidance of staff (guidance and counselling professionals, trainers, teachers and coordinator of the CQEP).

The certification of competences is attributed by a Jury. It is noted that teachers and trainers who were involved in the identification and demonstration process cannot be a part of the jury. The certification process ends with the issue of a certificate as the result of an examination.

The assessment process is based on a written test or examination, a practical situation, or a combination of different assessment methods, under the responsibility of the CQEP team. The inclusion of an examination besides the other assessment tools is mandatory.

ANQEP is responsible for the settlement of the general criteria of assessment. To date, we have general information provided by the Portaria nº135-A 2013.

Validation practices in HE institutions are diverse and the majority of national institutions do not have a specific department/unit and/or specific staff for validation processes. Juries are organised according to the nature of the claim. A Jury is often composed of a President and a number of additional members, with relevant scientific and academic experience in relation to validation methods which may vary from documentation and CV analysis, to interviews, portfolios, practical or written examinations, depending on the specific nature of the request.

6 Validation practitioners

6.1 Profile of validation practitioners

According to the recently approved legislation (Portaria nº135-A 2013), all CQEP teams will have a coordinator and a specific number of counselling/guidance/validation professionals (ORVC — Técnicos de Orientação, Reconhecimento e Validação de Competências). The team responsible for carrying out the RVCC process can be enlarged with external teachers and trainers, from the standards' key-competences areas.

In HE institutions, staff involved in validation are usually teachers at the institutions. As reported in the 2010 update, generally the process involves a Jury, which is composed of a President and three or four members, depending on the nature and the scientific area in which the validation occurs. They usually have a PhD or Master degree and are scientifically recognized in the area of the claim.

6.2 Provision of training and support to validation practitioners

In the past, the provision of training for practitioners fell to the government agency in charge of the RVCC system. Although there is currently no information about the role of the ANQEP in terms of the provision of training and support to validation practitioners, it is expected that it will be announced soon.

According to the report in the 2010 update, depending on the policy of each university and polytechnic, the investment in training and support for those involved in validation is variable and remains at the discretion of each institution. However, there is no evidence on what sort of training support is actually given by the majority of institutions.

6.3 Qualifications requirements

In non-higher education area, the new legislation (Portaria nº 135-A 2013) highlights the importance of experienced staff in CQEP, indicating that staff, teachers and trainers must have certified experience in adult education and training.

The ORVC professional should have training or experience in one of the following areas:

- school guidance or vocational training guidance;
- methodologies of work with young people and with adults, in different types of training, as well as in the area of training in the workplace;
- methodologies of work with people with handicaps or deficiency, in cases where this area is covered by the CQEP strategic plan of intervention;
- methodologies of adult education and training, including identification of competences and portfolio development.

Trainers and teachers must fulfil the following conditions, according to their specific intervention in the RVCC process:

- academic RVCC— qualifications for teaching, according to the law, in the specific area of key-competences of their intervention; experience in adult education and training.
- vocational RVCC— trainer qualifications, according to the law, technical expertise and experience in the specific vocational area.

In a CQEP, the Jury in charge of certification will be constituted according to the type of certification. For example, by a teacher or trainer qualified to teach according to the law, from each key-competences area in the case of the academic certification; and trainers with adequate qualification in the specific vocational area, with a minimum of five years of experience; representatives of employers and unions, in the case of a professional certification.

There are no formal requirements for members of the Jury in HE institutions, but they are usually career teachers, and their qualifications can vary, from a masters to a Ph.D in a large range of scientific areas and domains.

7 References

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Official websites:

Agência Nacional para a Qualificação e o Ensino Profissional: <http://www.anqep.gov.pt>

Instituto do Emprego e Formação Profissional: <http://www.iefp.pt>

Direcção Geral do Ensino Superior: <http://www.dges.mctes.pt>

7.1 List of organisations consulted

- CEPCEP, UCP
- Caixa de Mitos
- ISLA Santarém
- ANQEP