



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

Country report Sweden

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1 Introduction

Sweden has made progress in the development of validation of non-formal and informal learning since the last European Inventory update was produced in 2010¹. The Government has given the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education (*Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolan*) the task of coordinating and supporting the national structure of validation of prior learning. Cooperation with education and training providers, sector organisations, social partners, universities and regional representatives is an essential part of this work. The commission to develop criteria and guidelines on validation of prior learning started in 2010 and continued in 2011/2012.

2 National perspective on validation

The Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education has developed criteria for validation and guidelines for quality assurance and documentation of validation processes (*Kriterier och riktlinjer för validering av reell kompetens*²).

The criteria and guidelines for validation of prior learning provide a common approach to validation, documentation, process description of quality assurance, description of a person's path through the validation process and guidelines for methods of assessment for the different stakeholders involved in validation in Sweden. The roles and responsibilities of the different actors regarding validation, processes and methods are described. They are applicable to adult education, higher vocational education, higher education, folk high schools (civic education), and the different sectors of the labour market. The document also defines the future areas of development e.g. the need for further development of documentation and statistics, external quality assurance, financing and linking to the national qualifications framework (NQF). The criteria and guidelines for validation of prior learning do not encompass the recognition of foreign qualifications, as this is regulated within the ordinance by the Government (2012:811) with respect to the Swedish Council for Higher Education (*Universitets- och högskolerådet*).

Sweden has a highly decentralised national structure for validation, promoted by the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education and with regard to adult education, the Swedish National Agency for Education. The responsibility for carrying out validation is divided between educational providers, the Swedish Public Employment Service and different sector organisations. There is no regulated right to validation of prior learning, but opportunities exist in most kinds of education and training. Validation within adult education and Public Employment Services (PES) is primarily targeted at persons with less education and/or those far from the labour market. Information and guidance on validation, processes and organisations providing validation etc. are available in the Internet portal: <https://www.valideringsinfo.se/>

The national structure of validation describes the roles and responsibilities of different education and training sectors regarding validation in Sweden. The Swedish system could be described as a dual system, where formal education and training is one key provider and sector organisations and PES the other. Formal education providers, along with sector organisations have the opportunity to adapt the national criteria and guidelines to their needs and contexts. Adult education, higher vocational education, higher education and folk high schools are the main sectors implementing validation within education and training. In addition, the different sectors in the labour market are developing their sector models (*bransch modeller*).

¹ <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/bibliographies/18212.aspx>

²

<https://www.valideringsinfo.se/Documents/Valideringsinfo/Dokument/Nationell%20struktur%20f%C3%B6r%20validering/Kriterier%20och%20riktlinjer%20f%C3%B6r%20validering%20av%20reell%20kompetens.pdf>

Another key document referred to in this country report is a publication 'Validation within adult education 2013', published by the Swedish National Agency for Education (*Validering inom vuxenutbildning 2013, Skolverket*)³. The document states that adults have experience, knowledge and competences, which have been developed in different ways, e.g. in education, in the workplace, at home and through work with associations. Certain knowledge and competences can be documented with certificates from education institutions, while non-formal and informal learning can be documented e.g. with a certificate from an employer. Validation gives an opportunity for an adult to valorise, document and recognise the kind of learning that is not documented. Validation can be used: 1. As a step in ongoing education for the purpose of mapping the level of knowledge, adapting contents in and/or shortening the study period for a person; 2. In connection with guidance in order to define the initial level for further studies and also; 3. In order to document real knowledge and competences prior to applying for employment or in connection with personal development at the workplace.

2.1 National legal framework, system or policy on validation

The definition of validation was decided by the Bill on Validation in 2003 (Ds 2003:23, *Validering mm – fortsatt utveckling av vuxnas lärande*). The definition states "Validation is a process which involves a structured assessment, evaluation, documentation and recognition of knowledge and competences possessed by a person independently of how it is acquired". This definition is now included in the Education Act (Skollag 2010:800).

According to an ordinance by the Government 2011:1162, the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education coordinates and supports a national structure for validation of prior learning and in cooperation with concerned national agencies, promote the participation from public education and sector organizations when strategies, methods and information about validation is being developed. Each concerned national agency is autonomous within their responsibilities and the implementation of validation is decentralised at regional and local level and embedded in the municipal adult education system and public employment services. The responsibility for validation is divided between different actors, e.g. public authorities within the field of education, the public employment service, adult education providers, competent bodies for regulated professions, the Swedish Council for Higher Education etc. The central social partner organisations are also involved in the development and implementation of sector models of validation. A list of providers of validation across the different sectors is available at: <https://www.valideringsinfo.se/>. Any individual seeking validation of prior learning has the opportunity to take up the process of validation, as guided on the website.

Historically, the first initiative in the field of validating informal and non-formal learning was the Adult Education Initiative (*Kunskapslyftet 1997-2002*), which included a number of pilot projects focusing on developing new forms of accreditation of prior learning and validation. Soon after, the Bill on Adult Learning and the Future Development of Adult Education (*Vuxnas lärande och utvecklingen av vuxenutbildningen, 2000/2001:72*) emphasised the fact that any resident in Sweden should be able to have his or her knowledge and competences validated within the framework of municipal adult education, and this validation should be documented. The Bill on Validation (2003:23) stated that more time should be given to pilot projects and to further discussion before deciding on regulations and the passing of acts. As a result, in December 2003, the Swedish government appointed the Swedish National Commission on Validation (*Valideringsdelegationen*) for the period 2004-2007 to promote and further develop validation methods and enhance (regional) cooperation. The Commission's final report⁴ 'Towards a National Structure' (*Mot en nationell struktur*) summarises the work of the commission and provides a number of recommendations

³ http://www.skolverket.se/om-skolverket/visa-enskild-publikation?_xurl_=http%3A%2F%2Fwww5.skolverket.se%2Fwtpub%2Fws%2Fskolbok%2Fwpubext%2Ftrycksak%2FRecord%3Fk%3D3037

⁴ Valideringsdelegationen. *Final report of the National Commission on Validation: Valideringsdelegationens slutrapport – Mot en nationell struktur*. 2008.

regarding the further development of validation in Sweden, which has guided the present development of validation in Sweden.

The Education Act (*Skollagen*, 2010:800) states the possibility to undertake validation in all types of adult education, including Swedish for immigrants (Sfi).

2.2 Skills audits

The notion of 'skills audits' is not relevant to Swedish formal education. All learners, including learners in vocational education and training, who aim to have their prior learning and competences validated, must follow the procedure relevant to the actual level of education. In higher vocational education there is the concept of Real competence (Reell kompetens) which means a person's actual knowledge, skills and competences. This competence can be developed in formal education (organised education in the formal education system), non-formal learning (organised education outside the formal education system) or informal learning (e.g. working life or everyday life). Competence standards define the learning outcomes that an individual must have to be assessed and to be recognized to possess a qualification, such as a degree, a certification or an occupational certificate.

In models of validation developed by sector organisations, skills audits are commonly used especially in the stage of "competence mapping". There is no national classification for skills and this is identified as a field for development by the Public Employment Service as well as the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education. A skills classification would be useful for both skills matching and validation in different trades.

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

Qualifications and qualifications frameworks

The Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education notes that the link between validation and the NQF and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) is under discussion and needs further development. The Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education has received a commission from the Government to propose a Swedish National Qualification Framework (SeQF). The framework consists of eight levels. Validation is recommended to have a role in the future development of the SeQF. This means that the qualifications and standards that will be included in the SeQF should also be subject to validation and thus contribute to better quality assurance in validation. Further information at: <https://www.seqf.se/>.

Credit systems

Swedish curricula are on the whole outcomes-based. Each sector of formal education (e.g. VET, HVE, HE) has its own unit-based credit system, which can be used when validating an individual's knowledge, skills and competences. The individual, probably guided by a counsellor, must decide which credit system could be applicable to that specific purpose and choose an assessor accordingly. The decision must rest upon which sector of formal education is applicable.

Validation can be used to acquire credits or points towards a qualification. Validation can result in both partial and full qualifications. The national criteria and guidelines present the European credit systems applicable to higher education (e.g. ECTS) and vocational education and training (e.g. ECVET) in general terms, but no specific references to the actual use of the European credit systems in the validation process in the Swedish context is explained. The Swedish government has emphasised the mobility aspect of ECVET and there is no regulation that supports the use of ECVET for lifelong learning.

Standards

Standards developed by different business sector organisations are used as trade-specific frameworks for the validation of vocational knowledge, skills and competences. These are

mainly occupational standards focusing on an outcome-based evaluation of the extent to which an individual knows a certain occupation or trade. It is worth emphasising that the sector models have been developed in cooperation with business sector organisations, such as the Swedish Trade Federation (*Svensk Handel*), the Swedish Construction Industry Training Board (*Byggnadsindustrins Yrkesnämnd*) and the Vocational Training and Working Environment Council – Transport Trades, TYA) with part funding and support from national public agencies.

2.4 National institutional framework

There is no regulated framework for validation in Sweden. One national organisation has the responsibility to coordinate validation, namely the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education, appointed by the Swedish Government. Public agencies, such as the Public Employment Service, the Swedish National Agency for Education, the Swedish Council for Higher Education and the National Council of Liberal Adult Education (third sector education covering liberal adult education including folk high schools, study circles, etc.) all have separate responsibilities or governmental commissions to work on validation or the recognition of prior learning in their areas. The central social partner organisations are also involved in the development and implementation of sector models of validation in their specific sectors.

2.5 Governance and allocation of responsibilities

The possibility for validation is regulated in the Ordinance for Adult Education (SFS 2011:1108). The Swedish National Agency for Education has the responsibility to promote validation within adult education. The publication 'Validation within adult education 2013' was published by the Swedish National Agency for Education to support adult education providers in their responsibility to perform validation. Validation is not regulated at other levels of formal education, but it is seen as a useful tool for admission to and credit transfer within higher education.

The national criteria and guidelines make up a recommendation for all validation providers and outline the procedure for validation, including identification, documentation, assessment and certification. The procedure is described to encompass competence mapping and competence assessment. The validation process results either in a statement of competence mapping and a possible recommendation; certificate of competence (partial qualification) and a possible statement for completion; or a competence certification (full qualification). The responsibility for adapting the validation methods to the specific needs of education and training sectors as well as industry has been allocated to the actors themselves. The responsibility for the actual implementation of validation is decentralised at the regional and local levels and embedded, e.g. in the municipal adult education system and the public employment service. Validation performed in adult education by municipalities or in higher education institutions, is handled and monitored within that local or regional setting. Cooperation between educational authorities, business sector organisations, public employment services, universities and municipalities in setting up structures for validation methods and the delivery of validation is emphasised.

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

The national criteria and guidelines describe the allocation of responsibilities at national, regional, local, social partner and provider level according to the different aspects of validation. The Government has given the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education (*Myndigheten för yrkeshögskolan*) the task of coordinating and supporting the national structure of validation of prior learning. In adult education, there is the possibility to validate in all types of adult education. The municipalities and the regional counties are responsible authorities for validation in adult education. In higher vocational education, validation for admission and credit transfer are carried out by the higher education institutions. In higher education, validation is likewise implemented by universities. It is worth noting that there is no possibility to get a full qualification by validation within higher education (both HE and HVE). In civic/liberal adult education, the validation is carried out by

the civic adult education institutions. In public employment offices, validation is performed by external validation actors/experts subcontracted by the employment office. Sector / trade associations are developers of the validation models and they appoint the validation performers related to their models.

2.5.2 Explain more specifically the role of different stakeholders

Education and training providers:

Assessment is undertaken by providers of validation in formal education and training. These are both local and regional public actors (e.g. teachers and guidance counsellors in municipalities and at universities). Education and training providers are obliged to follow law and regulations.

Validation performed within the education system is related to knowledge and competence in a certain subject or field. The goals set in curricula are outcome-oriented, which can be said to be the standards that support the delivery of validation within the formal education system. The focus is on what knowledge or competence a person must achieve within different subjects or courses, rather than how they have been developed.

For example upper secondary education subjects are divided into courses, each of which may consist of 50, 100, 150 or 200 points. Validation can result in both partial and complete qualifications, when followed by "prövning" (see below). The smallest unit is the so-called course, which is similar to a module, and can be validated against the core content of a course syllabus in the formal adult education system. The core content states what the teaching should cover in each particular course. Apart from the core content, teachers can add additional content based on students' needs and interests, but teachers must cover the core content in their teaching. The core content does not state how much time should be spent on the different parts. This validation will not result in gained credits or points. Instead, the formal grading, is set through the process of "prövning", which can be defined as an assessment of knowledge and competences in relation to pre-set knowledge requirements in course syllabi.

In adult education institutions, the role of the Principal (Rektor) is to ensure that validation is carried out in accordance with the Education Act and other regulations.

Private sector actors (including social partners)

Business sector organisations can be involved in the assessment stage of a validation process or together with private education companies perform a full validation process. A list of private sector actors involved is available on the validation Internet Portal. Most private sector actors follow the principles of the national criteria and guidelines; when delivering services to public employment offices they are obliged to follow them. Specific sector models have been developed for the different sectors of the labour market. As mentioned above, standards developed by different business sector organisations are used as trade specific frameworks for the validation of vocational knowledge, skills and competences. These are mainly occupational standards focusing on an outcome-based evaluation of the extent to which an individual knows a certain occupation or trade. A number of sectors and partners of the labour market have developed the so-called sector models (*branchmodeller*) of validation with respect to different sectors, e.g. construction model, retail trade etc.

Third sector organisations

Validation is performed and supported through Swedish "*folkbildning*" (liberal/civic adult education for adults), which is considered to be part of the third sector. It has largely focused on the validation of generic skills and competences. '*Folkbildning*' is a parallel educational pathway to the formal system, with strong connections to various NGOs covering most of civil society. Folkbildningsrådet, the National Council of Adult Education, is one of the partners that the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education will consult in its Government appointed role regarding validation.

2.5.3 Coordination between stakeholders

The Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education promotes the work of validation in Sweden by organising network meetings with the actors and stakeholders in the field of validation. The purpose of the networks is to spread information about validation initiatives, projects and ongoing validation. The networks also discuss the development of methods, models for validation and future needs in the area of validation.

2.6 Examples of national, regional, local or EU funded initiatives

At the beginning of the decade (i.e. from 2000) much validation was project-funded through EU-initiatives such as the Lifelong Learning Programme and the European Social Fund. Over the last couple of years, however, more focus has been placed on making validation a common and integrated part of both formal and non-formal education and training and activities for unemployed people.

1. One of the projects on validating adult learners' educational experiences is KVALUES, where Swedish partners are involved. The KVALUES consortium brings together adult cultural educators from Italy, UK, Germany, Sweden, Estonia and Bulgaria. The objective is to develop and test the digital storytelling methodology as an innovative tool to guide adults and young adults in disadvantaged conditions to self-evaluate and recognise skills and key competences acquired through informal learning contexts such as work, volunteering, family and community related activities. The project aims to identify skills and competences to be validated, develop an innovative tool for self-assessment and describe the skills and key competences acquired in life and working contexts; to raise awareness among young and disadvantaged adults, inactive and unemployed people that life and work environments can be turned into places of learning, strengthening the role of cultural organisations delivering adult liberal educational courses in validating key competence; and to test European guidelines for the validation of non-formal and informal learning. The project is founded within the Grundtvig programme and more information is available at www.kvalues.eu. The Swedish partner in the project is DIK, which is a social partner organisation in the sector of culture and communication.
2. Recent validation initiatives in Sweden have been targeted towards newly arrived migrants. The plan is to make validation a central part of the initial integration activities for immigrants with the aim of shortening the time it takes to make the transition to the labour market. The Swedish Council for Higher Education (Universitets- och högskolerådet) is the public agency responsible for the recognition of foreign qualifications of formal learning. More information can be found at www.valideringsinfo.se. The national criteria and guidelines for validation of prior learning do not cover assessment of foreign education and training.
3. The European Europass tools have been actively used in Sweden, which reflects their awareness in Sweden. There have been a total of 79,000 visits on the Swedish Europass website in 2012. The number of organisations that issued Youthpass certificates in Sweden were 52 in 2010, 71 in 2011, and 52 in 2012. The number of projects that Youthpass was issued were 66 in 2010, 94 in 2011 and 71 in 2012. The number of Youthpass certificates issued were 428 in 2010, 693 in 2011 and 561 in 2012.

2.7 Inputs, outputs and outcomes

The development of the validation of non-formal and informal learning has been mainly publicly funded by the national government through the Ministries of Education and Research, and Employment. Today funding is less and mainly channelled through the Public Employment Service. Currently, the institution/sector that implements the validation is responsible for covering the actual costs of the validation process. The National Agency for Higher Vocational Education states that due to lack of data collection from the different

actors, including education and training and labour market sectors, it is not possible to assess the overall scope of inputs, outputs and outcomes of validation in Sweden.

2.7.1 Funding

Part of the funding has been channelled through the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education, but this is no longer the case. The agency only coordinates and promotes the development of a national structure for validation (i.e. standardised methods and approaches, standardised quality assurance methods and also clarification of the roles and responsibilities of the different actors involved) for validation.

Much of the validation taking place in Sweden today is performed within the funding framework of the formal education and training system. This makes it difficult to assess the total amount of resources used for validation.

The responsibility for adapting the validation methods to the specific needs of a certain industry has been allocated to the business sector organisations themselves. The development of the methods has been funded partly by the Government, but many business sector organisations have also contributed resources to develop methods and procedures for validation.

According to the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education a central area of the development of validation is the question of how validation will be financed regarding both the costs of validation itself and the costs of a person during the validation. There are still structural obstacles and that is the reason why the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education has decided not to take the question of financing into the national criteria and guidelines of validation. The Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education concludes that the financing model must be sustainable to ensure accessibility, quality assurance and equivalence of validation.

2.7.2 Distribution of costs

In the present situation, the institution/sector that implements the validation covers the overall costs and is also responsible for covering the costs of the candidate during the validation process. The individual is usually not required to pay a fee for going through a validation process.

2.7.3 Data on flows of beneficiaries

The collection of national data regarding validation in Sweden has not yet been given priority although many providers of validation hold their own registers of their validation activities. Estimates of the number of applicants or persons actually going through validation are hard to obtain, since the term validation is used for many different kinds of activities and end results. Validation is also performed in many different institutional settings.

In the present situation, it is difficult to carry out monitoring and follow-up analysis, since systematic data collection is lacking in the different areas within the national structure. There is also the problem of how the concept of validation is interpreted in the formal adult education system. "Validering" in Swedish covers the whole validation process, and thus, different persons interpret validation in many different ways. Accordingly, systematic data collection may show fallacies based on this. The Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education does not have authority to monitor and follow up these validations. For the sector validations, the Agency has developed a database for registration of validations that have been implemented, but this information is not publicly available.

2.7.4 Evidence of benefits to individuals

Data evidencing the benefits of validation to individuals is not available. Since Sweden lacks general registers of individuals who have gone through a validation process, no solid evidence of benefits to individuals from validation has been established. There are however several "success stories" available, in which individuals, who have gone through validation testify to the benefits they have experienced both on a private and professional level. Some of these stories are planned to be published as articles in the Internet portal www.valideringsinfo.se.

3 Information, advice and guidance

3.1 Awareness-raising and recruitment

The Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education has the main role in raising awareness and providing information on validation, along with the Swedish National Agency of Education regarding adult education. The main channel for information, advice and guidance is the Internet portal: www.valideringsinfo.se. The website is mainly targeted at counsellors and individual people who need validation. Overall, the website is an example of good practice, where all relevant information is easily accessible to different actors and stakeholders involved in validation.

The Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education also has an overall responsibility to provide guidance to regional and local actors and providers of validation. Each of the levels has a separate responsibility to provide individuals with direct guidance on validation.

A snapshot of valideringsinfo.se

Your way to validation

'Your way to validation' is an aid for those who want to find their way among those who assess education and professional experience. By answering a few questions, in English or Swedish, you learn where to turn. Some of the information sources 'Your way to validation' links to, are only in Swedish. Start by answering the first question below.

I want formal documentation of my skills to be able to apply for work or to study and:

- I have a completed education programme and/or qualification from abroad
- I have an unfinished education and / or have read individual courses
- I have experience from work, from volunteer work or from other learning contexts

(By ticking one option, the portal takes the candidate to the next level of questions etc.)

3.2 Role of information, advice and guidance networks / institutions

In addition to the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education and the Swedish National Agency for Education, other relevant stakeholders are also raising awareness about validation within their areas of responsibilities (e.g. Public Employment Service, the Swedish Council for Higher Education and the National Council of Adult Liberal Education).

Individuals are normally informed about validation through guidance or career counsellors in municipalities, in adult education at upper secondary level and in the public employment services.

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

The measures to enhance the awareness of validation initiatives and practices are the same for the guidance practitioners as for all other actors and stakeholders as listed above.

4 Quality assurance and evaluation

4.1 Quality Assurance Framework

The aim of the national criteria and guidelines is to ensure a common quality approach in validation. However, it should however be noted that although the criteria and guidelines are available for all providers to use, they are not mandatory. The systematic quality assurance requires that validation at all levels by different actors from the national level to individual validations is performed according to national standards. Quality assurance implies a structured and systematic approach with the aim to develop the quality of validation. It is recommended to the actors that they use appropriate quality assurance mechanisms in the validation process.

4.2 Quality assurance systems/procedures

Quality assurance is a central concept in validation in Sweden. According to the national criteria and guidelines, quality of validation will be achieved through carrying out validations in line with the national criteria and guidelines and when the results of validation are recognised in both the labour market and education. In this respect, it is important to achieve transparency with respect to how the validation process has been carried out and what has resulted.

4.3 Evaluation framework

The evaluation framework is provided in the national criteria and guidelines of validation in Sweden. The national criteria and guidelines focus primarily on systematic quality work and assurance to carry out validation at first hand and do not include external quality assurance. The criteria and guidelines may however be used as a basis for future development of external quality assurance. The Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education states that external quality assurance can be organised within the existing system in education and training. External quality assurance in labour market sectors remains to be developed, and could be linked to a national qualification framework.

5 Validation methods

The national criteria and guidelines include a description of the validation processes in Sweden. It is an outcome based approach where the performing of validation varies according to the goals and background of the individual, but it encompasses “competence mapping” and “competence assessment”. The validation result that best supports the goals of the individual, needs to be quality assured according to the level of formal recognition, i.e. a statement of competence mapping does not acquire the same proof and assessors’ qualifications as a competence certification (full qualification).

In adult education, the guidelines from the Swedish National Agency for Education have another approach. First, a general competence mapping aims to describe in general the student’s knowledge and competences in order for the student to identify which possibilities are available to him/her in adult education. The adult learner has a central role in the validation process and his/her interests guide the direction of the process. The general validation process can be carried out together with a guidance or career counsellor and tools and methods such as discussions, self-assessment, portfolio or similar can be used.

After the general mapping of competences, an in-depth mapping of competences can be carried out. It is also possible to go straight to this process, without first carrying out a general competence mapping, if the student already has a clear goal. In-depth mapping is more focused than the general one and aims to describe the student’s knowledge and competence in specific areas. The in-depth validation process can be carried out together with guidance or career counsellors and a subject or vocational teacher. The validation is implemented using the curricula as a standard.

A summarised assessment is made after the mapping of the learner's competences has been completed. A learner who gets his/her competences validated is able to get the assessment in writing in the form of a certificate ("intyg"), but not a formal grade, as in the case of formal adult education.

5.1 Methods used and the validation process

| | Identification | Documentation | Assessment |
|---|----------------|---------------|------------|
| Debate | X | X | x |
| Declarative methods | X | X | x |
| Interview | X | X | x |
| Observation | X | X | x |
| Portfolio method | X | X | x |
| Presentation | X | X | x |
| Simulation and evidence extracted from work | X | X | x |

It is important to point out that there is not one single national validation process; there are in fact different processes in place. The actual process will depend on: whether validation is part of formal education or part of the private sector, adult education or higher education, and/or performed by accredited actors or non-accredited etc. Thus a variety of methods are in use covering the full scale from self-assessment to formal tests and examinations.

In the national criteria and guidelines the methods are described as follows: the competence mapping (*Kompetenskartläggning*) must be structured and can be carried out in different ways, e.g. debate, interview, analysing the existing documents, self-assessment, theoretical tests and practical demonstrations. It is recommended that references are attached.

Competence assessment (*Kompetensbedömning*) may result in a competence certification or a recommendation to undertake complementary studies. The assessment of a partial or a full qualification is carried out in accordance with the qualification requirements through theoretical examinations and practical skills' demonstrations.

5.2 Profile of validation practitioners

Validation practitioners in Sweden include different types of actors responsible for different stages of a validation process. Career and guidance counsellors within adult education, or the employment service, are generally key practitioners in the initial validation in order to identify the purpose of a validation for the individual and to follow up the process at different stages. In order to be able to make assessments of an individual's knowledge, skills or competences in a certain trade or subject, more in-depth knowledge in that specific area is needed. In this stage of a validation process qualified teachers or professionals within that specific area/sector lead the process.

5.3 Provision of training and support to validation practitioners

Courses in validation are not compulsory in the training of career and guidance counsellors and teachers. The Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education states that the education and training of professional validation practitioners is a major area for development.

Different sector organisations offer training programmes for assessors. These training programmes are compulsory to become accredited in specific sector models for validation in certain trades.

5.4 Qualifications requirements

There are no formal requirements for carrying out a validation. When setting grades or issuing a certificate you need to be qualified/authorized/accredited, e.g. as a teacher holding a teacher certificate, but otherwise it is not regulated. The national criteria and guidelines note that those professionals who contribute to carrying out validation should meet set competence requirements. Persons carrying out competence mapping include for example a guidance counsellor for studies or occupations, an advisor in a public employment office, or a teacher of a profession/occupation. The institution carrying out a competence assessment can be a school authority or a dedicated provider of a validation/occupation assessment in a sector. Persons who can make the assessment of a partial or a full qualification include for example a qualified teacher, an assessor or examiner with a mandate from the authority to make competence assessment.

6 References

European Commission; Cedefop (2010). *European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning 2010. Country report: Sweden.*

<http://libserver.cedefop.europa.eu/vetelib/2011/77476.pdf>

Information about validation in Sweden. <https://www.valideringsinfo.se/>.

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