



MuSA
museum sector alliance

R 6.2 – REPORT ON PROCEDURES TO VALIDATE NON-FORMAL, INFORMAL AND PRIOR LEARNING IN THE MUSEUM SECTOR



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Table of Contents

1	Validation of non formal and informal learning	5
1.1	Introduction	5
1.2	Implementation of the Recommendation in Italy	7
1.3	Implementation of the Recommendation in Greece.....	12
1.4	Implementation of the Recommendation in Portugal	14
2	The Mu.SA proposal for the validation of non-formal, informal and prior learning	15
3	References	18



Abstract

This report focuses on the evaluation of procedures to validate the non-formal and informal learning in the museum sector that have been applied in the project. It will serve as a guide to VET organizations and other stakeholders that are faced with a similar task of enabling learners to demonstrate what they have learned in different learning and experience settings. Volunteering, self-learning, work experience and creative activities in free time are indicative settings that learners acquire invisible knowledge and skills.

The rationale of this report follows the spirit and letter of the 2012 Council Recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning.



1 Validation of non formal and informal learning

1.1 Introduction

Beyond the formal classroom setting, people can acquire the most valuable of knowledge, skills and competences in their daily lives, be it at work, at home or during leisure. Learning throughout life is a key route to personal development and acknowledging such learning can give greater value to citizen's achievements and their potential contributions to society.

The key questions raised for the Mu.SA project were:

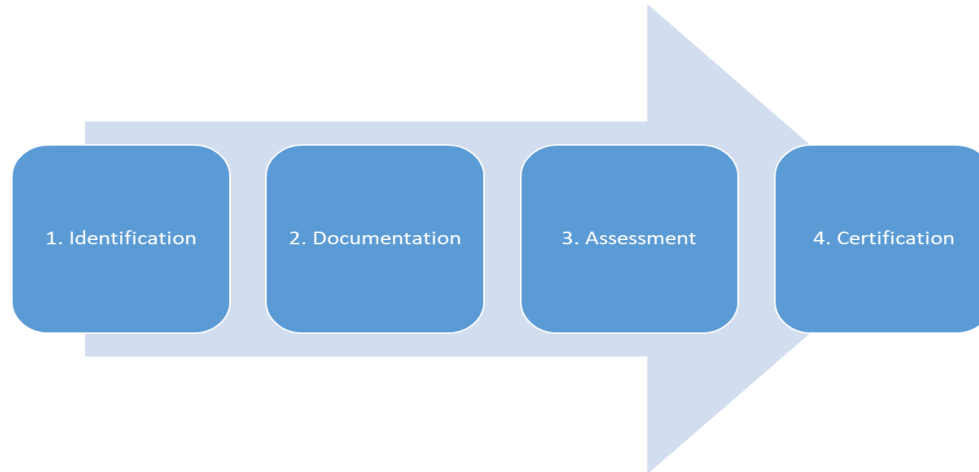
- How can we increase the visibility and value of learning taking place outside formal education and training systems, so that learners with different background can apply for the courses and by evidence receive exemption from one or more modules?
- What are the methods and tools for such a procedure?
- Who is involved?
- How can the social recognition and acceptance be guaranteed?

Such an idea was introduced by the European Council in 2012 with the launch of the COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning (2012/C 398/01). The afore mentioned Recommendation stressed the value of making prior learning visible for enhancing employability and mobility, as well as increasing motivation for lifelong learning, particularly in the case of the socio-economically disadvantaged or the low-qualified.

Accordingly, the Recommendation on the Validation of Non Formal and Informal Learning (hereof VNFIL), proposed to develop a procedure including the following components, whilst allowing each individual to take advantage of any of these, either separately or in combination, in accordance with his/her needs:



Figure 1 – The components of non-formal and informal learning process



1. **Identification** of knowledge, skills and competence acquired

This stage is crucial as learning outcomes differ from person to person and will have been acquired in various contexts: at home, during work or through voluntary activities. In some countries identification is supported by the use of standardised ICT tools allowing self-assessment. This stage will frequently require active involvement of advisors and counsellors able to enter into a dialogue with the candidate and direct him/her to appropriate options and tools.

2. **Documentation**

Documentation involves provision of evidence of the learning outcomes acquired. This can be carried out through the 'building' of a portfolio that tends to include a CV and a career history of the individual, with documents and/or work samples that attest to their learning achievements. Validation needs to be open to various evidence types, ranging from written documents to work samples and demonstrations of practice. Objectivity, reliability, credibility and validity define here the qualitative criteria to ensure the acceptance of the results.

3. Assessment

Individual's learning outcomes are compared against specific reference points and/or standards. Oral, written tests, exercises, projects, observation of executing tasks, etc. Assessment methods are based on learning outcomes and refer to the competent professional standard / profile.

4. Certification

Final valuing – of the learning identified, documented and assessed. This can take different forms but is commonly the award of a formal qualification (or part-qualification). Validation reaching the stage of certification requires a summative assessment officially confirming the achievement of learning outcomes against a specified standard.

The 2012 Council recommendation on validation encourages Member States to put in place national arrangements for validation by 2018. These arrangements aim to enable individuals to increase the visibility and value of their knowledge, skills and competences acquired outside formal education and training: at work, at home or in voluntary activities. To this regard CEDEFOP developed the European Guidelines to identify main challenges facing policy makers and practitioners and present possible responses to those challenges. The guidelines are practical, and provide advice for individuals and institutions responsible for initiating, developing, implementing and operating validation arrangements. Their impact relies exclusively on their relevance and ability to add value at national or local level.

1.2 Implementation of the Recommendation in Italy

According to the CEDEFOP, in Italy the National Technical Committee (which according to Decree 13/2013 is the institutional authority in charge of the implementation of the system) has not yet defined the National Guidelines on validation of non-formal and informal learning and certification of competences. Though, the National Qualifications Framework, aligned with the European Qualifications Framework, is in place.



Table 1 – Summary of main ruling acts concerning the validation system in Italy (2012-2018)

Ruling acts	What does it change	Who is involved
The National Law 92/2012 June 2012 Reform of the Labour Market	The law reforming the Labour market foresees the immediate institution of a national system of competence certification and validation of non-formal and informal learning (within six months)	Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Education
Legislative Decree 13/2013 16 January 2013 on the national certification of competence and validation of non-formal and informal learning	The national certification and validation system was designed and had to be fully implemented within 18 months of its entry into force (March 2013) by defining National Guidelines on validation of non-formal and informal learning and certification of competences. The National Technical Committee had responsibility for this task, but it has not yet been completed.	The National Technical Committee in charge of the system development is composed of the 'entitling bodies' or qualification authorities: Ministry of Education, University and Research, for the qualifications of the School and University system; Regions and Autonomous Provinces of Trento and Bolzano for the regional qualifications (vocational training); Ministry of Labour and Social Policies, for the qualifications of those professions not organized in professional associations or colleges or otherwise regulated; Ministry of Economic Development – EU Policies Department (leading the other national authorities) for the qualifications of regulated professions.
Inter-ministerial Decree 30 June 2015 on National Framework of Regional Qualifications	It establishes: 1) a mechanism of mutual recognition among the regional qualifications; 2) process, attestation and system standard procedures for the services of identification/validation of non-formal and informal learning and certification of competences.	Regions in collaboration with Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Education as ruling actors. The other qualification authorities for the shared or overlapping institutional fields.
Interministerial Decree of 8 January 2018 concerning the establishment of the National Qualifications	Defines a set of descriptors for the eight levels of qualifications by identifying knowledge, skills and autonomy/responsibility elements attributable to each level. Structures the procedures for referencing every	All the 'entitling bodies' or qualification authorities: Ministry of Education, University and Research; Regions; Ministry of Labour and Social Policies; Ministry of Economic Development –



<p>Framework (NQF) in response to the European Recommendation on the European Qualification Framework (EQF)</p>	<p>qualification to the NQF</p>	<p>EU Policies Department.</p>
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(Source: Perulli, 2019)

In the Table 1, we see that:

- The Decree 13/2013 defined the important principles and features for the validation (i.e. validation as a central point, whole qualifications or parts of them can be validated, centrality to the individual, etc).
- The Italian NQF was established on 2018, according to the Recommendation of the European Qualifications Framework.
- The National Repertory of education, training and professional qualifications, which is a single framework for the certification of competences has been established. To be included in the National Repertory the qualification must be referenced to the EQF and over time there will be progressive work of descriptive standardisation to allow greater permeability between sub-systems and recognition of credits.
- The Decree 13/2013 identified three types of standards for validation and certification services; the process standards (aligned with Recommendation 2012/C 398/01, the attestation standards (what kind of information must be registered), and the system standards (roles, responsibilities, guaranteeing adequacy, quality and protection of beneficiaries).

Before Decree 13/2013 coming into force, Italy had 21 regional certification systems coexisting in different stages of implementation. At present, there are still differences in regional policies and practices on validation, necessitating a common act and coordination.

Concerning the professional qualifications, the system designed by Decree 13/2013 has entitled the Ministry of Labour and Social



Policies and the Ministry of Economic Development to address the validation issue; still, they have not managed to do that, mainly due to internal reforms and changes in relation to the European and Italian policies on professions. On the Regional level, there are efforts but not coordinated yet, and conducted seamlessly by public or private employment services.

Concerning the first step in the procedure, i.e. "Identification", Italy has set up the "Libretto formativo del cittadino" to be used in Skills audits, similar to the Europass Portfolio and European Skills Passport, differing from it mainly to the fact that it is not self-managed but issued by the institution as the outcome of a service to the individual.

Moreover, according to the Decree 13/2013, only competences belonging to qualifications included in the National Repertory of Qualifications can be validated and / or certified by the entitled bodies. The National Repertory is currently implemented under the Atlas of Work and Qualifications (Atlante del Lavoro e delle Qualificazioni¹). The Atlante describes the contents of the work in terms of activities (processes and tasks) and of potentially deliverable products-services, with the classification scheme used made of 24 professional economic sectors (SEP), obtained from the official classification codes.

The Decree on the National Framework of Regional Qualifications of 2015 defines the three functions in charge of the different steps of the validation process:

- 1) **Dossier counsellor - Function of Accompanying and supporting the identification and transparency of competences.** In line with the standards process, this function is intended to oversee the identification phase of the recognition and validation procedures and of the certification of competences.

¹ https://atlantelavoro.inapp.org/atlante_repertori.php



- 2) **‘Assessment responsibility’ – Function of planning and implementation of assessment activities.** This function is intended to oversee and guarantee, as a responsibility, the evaluation stage of the process of identification, validation and the certification of competences.
- 3) **‘Assessment sector expert’ – Function of implementation of assessment activities concerning curricular and professional content.** The function is mandatory in the case of direct assessment (in presence of the candidate). If the procedure requires only the dossier, technical examination is optional.

Review of the state-of-the-art in Italy identifies that, at present, there is a formal agreement on the procedures and methodologies to be used to validate non-formal and informal learning in Italy. The following table identifies the state:

Table 2 – Comprehensive framework of processes and procedures of validation and certification in formal, non-formal and informal learning

Process phases	PROCESS IDENTIFICATION AND VALIDATION of non-formal and informal learning	PROCEDURE FOR CERTIFICATION OF COMPETENCES AS A RESULT OF VALIDATION of non-formal and informal learning	PROCEDURE FOR CERTIFICATION OF COMPETENCE ACQUIRED IN FORMAL CONTEXT
Identification	Identification of the competences, evidence collection and elaboration of a Dossier.	Admission through the ‘Document for validation’ or validated Dossier	Admission through formalizing the attainment of the learning outcome
Assessment	Technical examination of the Dossier and optional direct assessment (audition or technical structured interview or other testing methods)	Summative assessment carried out with technical structured interviews and / or performance tests. Commission that ensures compliance with the principles of impartiality, independence and	Summative assessment carried out with technical structured interviews and/or performance tests. Commission that ensures compliance with the principles of impartiality, independence and



		objectivity of the process	objectivity of the process
Attestation	'Document for validation' or Dossier Validated (value at least of second part)	Qualification Certificate (value of third part)	Qualification Certificate (value of third part)

(Source: Perulli, 2019)

Overall, the MuSA Job role profiles have to be added officially to the Italian Atlas of Work and Qualifications so as to implement the procedure of validation of non-formal and informal learning, at least on the degree it is current implemented.

1.3 Implementation of the Recommendation in Greece

Based on the latest CEDEFOP's report (Manoudi, 2019) on the implementation of the 2012 Council Recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning, the progress is slow, and the inclusion of informal learning gained through working experience is not in the immediate plans. The last years, VET policy priorities focused mostly to the accreditation of CVET programmes, the development of two-year post-secondary vocational training programmes organized by the Universities (EQF 5), and the certification of the fourth year of Vocational Upper Secondary School alumni. The development of a National System for the Certification of Outputs remains one of the strategic objectives of the National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP), which will ensure that the certified qualifications correspond to the requirements of the related certified occupational profiles².

The validation of non-formal and informal learning is not yet developed in Greece, mainly for cultural reasons. The CEDEFOP's study underlines also a discrepancy in the definitions of non-formal learning and validation between the Greek legislation / practice and the 2012 EC Recommendation. Moreover, the EOPPEP (responsible

² Currently, there are a bit more 200 available occupation profiles, produced by EOPPEP with the active involvement of social partners.

for validation of non-formal and informal learning), takes into account learning coming only from specific Initial and Continuing VET providers.

Though, there are some “islands” of validation of non-formal learning, which could lead to the adoption of the 2012 Recommendation. These include the following:

- Certification of curricula based on learning outcomes.
- Accreditation of CVET study programmes (linked to the accreditation of training structures).
- Certification of outputs of CVET centres
- Improvements to IVET (exams twice a year, VET apprenticeship year, two-year IVET programmes initiated by Universities, etc).
- Validation of IVET and CVET.
- Greek Qualifications Register (<https://proson.eoppep.gr/el>) (674 qualifications available).
- National System for Certification of Outputs (in progress).
- Certification for specific sectors (e.g. public sector, Greek language
- ECTS system has been implemented, but ECVET not yet.

The 2012 Council Recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning (2012/C 398/01) has been partially adopted for particular occupations profiles. For example, three of the four stages of validation take place: documentation, assessment, certification, with the focus being in assessment (mainly through written tests) and identification missing totally.

Overall, the Mu.SA Job role profiles has to be added officially to the Greek Qualifications and an occupational profile has not yet been developed. The 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning (2012/C 398/01) has not been adopted yet in Greece, but only some parts of it. Therefore, it is not possible to implement yet this procedure for the [+++] Job role profile in Greece.



1.4 Implementation of the Recommendation in Portugal

In Portugal (Guimarães, 2019), the 2012 Council Recommendation on validation of non-formal and informal learning is quite matured. validation of non-formal and informal learning is considered a strong element of recognition, validation and certification of competences (RVCC)³. Portugal has established more than 300 Centros Qualifica that ensure the offer of validation of non-formal and informal learning in the whole country and Madeira Island and to the increase of access of adult learners in recognition, validation and certification of competences (RVCC). These centres allow the development of validation of non-formal and informal learning within a public offer of basic/secondary education and professional certification on a larger scale.

In general, the 2012 Council Recommendation for the validation of non-formal and informal learning in Portugal is implemented to a great degree. It is part of RVCC, and provides professional certification, according to the National Catalogue of Qualifications⁴. The RVCC is in general not well accepted in practice (market), although it is part of the public offer and strategy / policy. Moreover, due to funding issues, the adult learners enrolled for professional certification related to RVCC is still low, and mainly for holders of school education. For VET, there is a National Catalogue of Qualifications, updated by the Sectoral Councils of Qualifications. Given the fact that, in practice, employability is affected by economic and working conditions, RVCC is not very popular. And in practice, validation does not always lead to certification outcomes recognized by sectoral regulations.

Last, in Portugal, validation of non-formal and informal learning is based on Key Competence Standards (for general education validation) and Professional Competence Standards (for VET).

³ Reconhecimento, Validação e Certificação de Competências

⁴ Catálogo Nacional de Qualificações



Overall, the Mu.SA Job role profiles has to become official qualifications in the Portuguese National Catalogue of Qualifications so as to take advantage of the RVCC procedures that are – more or less – in line with the 2012 Council Recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning (2012/C 398/01).

2 The Mu.SA proposal for the validation of non-formal, informal and prior learning

The state of play on the adoption and implementation of the 2012 Council Recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning (2012/C 398/01) is different in the three Mu.SA project countries (Italy, Greece, Portugal). Moreover, the Mu.SA Job Role Profiles have to be added in the three national qualifications registries, being a different but time consuming effort in all three cases. Therefore, the Mu.SA offer after the piloting project activities could foresee a procedure, compliant with the 2012/C 398/01 Council Recommendation, and contextualized accordingly in each country (which could be different from the three Mu.SA project countries).

Before starting the procedure, each VET provider offering the different Mu.SA VET curricula, should explore whether the Mu.SA Job Role Profiles exist in the national qualifications database. If not, then it should collaborate with the responsible bodies of the country so as to establish the Mu.SA Job Role Profiles selected to be delivered as qualifications. Of course, this procedure could be initiated by the national museum professionals' representing body playing the role of the most relevant social partner contributing to the development and update of sector-specific VET curricula. We remind the reader that the Mu.SA VET curricula address the level 5 of the European Qualifications Framework fostering professional development in the form of continuing vocational education and training for museum professionals who are spotting opportunities and therefore introducing digital technologies as means for upgrading the museum offers and services.

In parallel, the VET provider should establish a procedure internally aiming to the identification, documentation, assessment and certification (thereafter mentioned as “Mu.SA VET curricula validation office”).

1. **Identification** of knowledge, skills and competence acquired

The Mu.SA project has developed training modules / competences synthesizing the Mu.SA training offer. These modules / competences were built based on learning outcomes. The Mu.SA VET curricula validation office should invite the candidates into dialogue with counselors / advisors, possibly using particular tools, so as to identify which of each Mu.SA VET curricula learning outcomes the candidate already disposes.

2. **Documentation**

Following the establishment of the previous list, the Mu.SA VET curricula validation office asks the candidate to provide evidence, so as to synthesize his/her portfolio. Almost every evidence should be taken into account, respecting always the national legislation.

3. **Assessment**

The Mu.SA VET curricula validation office compares the candidates existing learning outcomes with the ones included in the Mu.SA VET curricula using particular assessment methods. In this stage, the candidate becomes eligible to attend only the competences that he/she needs so as to reach the range of the learning outcomes of each Mu.SA VET curricula. No written or oral tests are foreseen so as to complete the assessment.

4. **Certification**

Learners attain and complete the course and its partial competences and take part in the final certification procedures, e.g. assessment tests, projects, etc.

After that, the learner who completes successfully the final exams gets recognition of the achievement of particular learning outcomes and is in principle able to follow the particular Mu.SA competences and eventually get the same Mu.SA Job Role Profile Certificate with



the learners that followed successfully the complete Mu.SA VET Curricula training offers. The same Certifications are awarded to every learner who has successfully completed the course, regardless of his/her type of enrolling, e.g. full course learner or partial course learner deriving from prior experience.



3 References

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