

VALIDATION OF NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING



Country Factsheet 2021 Georgia



Contents

<u>Content and Stage of Development</u>	3
<u>Policy and Regulatory Framework</u>	3
<u>Institutional Setup and Collaboration</u>	4
<u>Beneficiaries and Impact</u>	5
<u>Challenges and Opportunities</u>	
General Education	6
RNFE in VET	
Higher education	

Context and Stage of Development

Systems for validation of learning outcomes acquired in informal and non-formal settings are in place in general education and vocational education. In secondary general education, the terms 'formal and non-formal education' are not commonly used; however, there is a possibility to have the learning outcomes acquired independently, without attending an education institution, recognised at each grade and for all three – primary, basic and secondary – cycles. The process is called 'certification of education acquired through external studies / externship' and allows applicants to have their learning outcomes assessed and validated vis-à-vis general education programmes for a particular subject, grade or cycle.

In vocational education (VE), the distinction between formal and non-formal learning and the possibility to have non-formal learning recognised, has been in place since 2007. Recognition of non-formal education (RNFE) is the term established to denote a process comparable to VNFIL in vocational education. The system was re-introduced in 2019 and consists of identification, documentation, assessment, recognition and validation of learning outcomes. The process is still at its early stage of introduction and the services have not yet been performed. First providers have applied for authorisation.

Policy and Regulatory Framework

The Law of Georgia on General Education (2005) and the Minister of Education and Science (MoES) Decree 15N of 2010, create the legal bases for the Certification of Education Acquired through External Studies / Externship in the general education system. It is a process for obtaining a state document, certifying general education, by a person who has independently completed the general education programmes.' The rule covers recognition possibilities for all general education cycles and grades or subjects within general education programmes. Assessment, recognition and validation during an externship is carried out through a written examination and is administered by the MoES directly, or through its regional offices – Education Resource Centres and GE schools.

In the vocational education sector, the Laws of Georgia on Education Quality Enhancement (2010) and on Vocational Education (2018) provide the legal basis for RNFE, and are further stipulated in the Rule for obtaining a right to provide RNFE, GoG regulation No 459 of 20 September 2019, and the Rule for RNFE, a MoES decree. The objective of RNFE is defined as 'to validate/certify the learning outcomes acquired beyond formal education for a person willing to obtain recognition in order to facilitate LLL, personal development, access further education and/or obtain a qualification and/or employment / career development / self employment' (the Rule of RNFE, Clause 3, The objectives of recognition). The RNFE process allows any applicant to get their prior formal, non-formal and informal learning outcomes recognised and counted towards any partial or full formal VE qualification.



Institutional Setup and Collaboration

Certification of GE acquired through external studies / externship is administered by the MoES, Education Resource Centres (regional branches of the MoES) and schools. The achieved learning outcomes are identified and assessed vis-à-vis relevant education programmes (subject, grade or cycle programme). The candidates are assessed through a written examination for each subject within each grade or cycle to be certified. The examination instruments are developed by GE institutions and/or resource centres. The examinations for full general education certification are directly administered by the MoES. The MoES is authorised to allocate external observers on examination sites if and as needed. The applicants are entitled to a consultation about the certification process and the programmes that will be covered by examinations.

RNFE is implemented by institutions specially licensed by the NCEQE, a national quality assurance and qualifications body. Only institutions having a right to provide officially recognised vocational education qualifications are eligible to obtain the right for RNFE within the fields of their current education programmes. To date, the right for VNFIL has been granted to four institutions: LTD Community College – Nataly Academy; LTD Tegeta Academy, LTD Business and Technology Academy and LTD Georgian Business Academy.

The consultation and documentation process is conducted by a consultant trained and certified by the NCEQE. The validation is carried out with regard to the existing education standards and modules.

The validation committee created by a validation body consists of representatives of relevant employers, education institutions and teachers of the vocational field. The RNFE process is partially automatised – applications, RNFE portfolios and RNFE results are registered through a special electronic system.

Beneficiaries and Impact

The validation in general education appears to be high in demand in Georgia. Around 1500-12500 applicants make use of the system each year. The validation users are different groups: emigrant Georgian families who come back and continue their studies in Georgia; individuals who could not attend formal education for personal reasons (mostly illness or migration); graduates of general education programmes with no formal recognition in Georgia, intending to continue higher education in Georgia.

Year grades	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Full GE	Tot.
2016	18	26	23	23	72	74	788	1611	3078	2367	3009	1382	12471
2017	14	27	30	39	45	66	619	969	2313	1492	2277	859	8750
2018	21	48	43	58	72	107	641	1116	2178	1377	2238	1407	9306
2019	49	58	88	67	101	105	648	1283	2935	1813	2484	3072	12703
2020	32	63	70	62	76	88	104	191	282	296	583	333	2180
2021	22	147	52	49	43	51	78	95	172	176	306	384	1575

Challenges and Opportunities

General Education

Considering the number of validations, externship exams seem to be increasingly used by general education students to find an alternative to attending general education schools. This does not seem to be the primary goal of the procedure, and the sheer number of applicants is a strain on the system's resources.

The assessment methods used during certification need to be improved to better address the learning outcomes described in the National Curriculum. The tests mostly check knowledge of facts and fail to check higher skills.

The information about validation is insufficient. There is no webpage providing all relevant information on externship exams and the opportunities they offer.

The MoES, Education Management Information System (EMIS) and involved practitioners should consider improving data collection and analysis of the externship exams to be able to assess the effectiveness of the validation processes.

There is a need to further improve the quality of the validation procedures in general education by training validation practitioners and controlling the quality of the assessment instruments.

The MoES should consider creating a webpage dedicated to the certification of general education acquired through external studies / externship, explaining in a user-friendly language the associated procedures, potential providers, deadlines, opportunities for individual counselling and results. It should also provide better support to applicants in terms of improved and better resourced services, and printed and online tools for guidance.

RNFE in VET

The visibility of RNFE in society is very low, despite some PR activities carried out by the MoES and NCEQE.

RNFE is fee-based. The absence of government subsidy for RNFE might be considered as one of the barriers to potential applicants, especially those who belong to vulnerable groups.

The process of accreditation for RNFE services is burdensome (potential providers obtain authorisation and then apply for a special right for RNFE). The NCEQE could consider making the quality assurance mechanisms for RNFE more efficient and transparent, by applying a one-step procedure.

The quality assurance of RNFE could include aspects such as professional development of practitioners: assessors and validators. The quality of validation procedures would benefit from training programmes for validation practitioners.

Access to VNFIL for vulnerable groups will be limited unless subsidies are made available. In this regard, the NCEQE could consider cooperation with employment services and the exchange of mutual services for jobseekers and legal work migrants.

Higher education

Recognition of learning outcomes acquired beyond the formal education system is almost absent in higher education, where there is an increasing need, especially considering the volume of distance non-formal learning opportunities and work-related experiences. The NCEQE should explore modalities for quality assurance and the recognition of non-formal and informal learning in HE.