

VALIDATION OF NON-FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING



Country Factsheet 2021 Ukraine



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Context and Stage of Development

The validation system in Ukraine is at an early stage of development, and currently available only in one occupation. The recent developments should support the gradual implementation of the service in the education and labour market sectors.

Validation in the education and training sector is introduced through the procedure on recognition of learning outcomes of non-formal and informal learning. In accordance with the Law on Education (2017), a number of higher education institutions have developed validation regulations. Since 2019, it is one of the highly recommended requirements for accreditation of educational programmes in higher education. The government also approved a regulation on granting the right for educational institutions to recognise the learning outcomes of non-formal learning in the workplace.

Validation in the labour market sector is implemented on a limited scale. The recognition procedure approved in 2013 is implemented for the profession 'cook' in three assessment centres, in Kiev, Odessa and Rivne. The typical validation procedure consists of identification, documentation, assessment and certification according to "The Guidelines on the process of assessment and recognition of the results of non-formal vocational training".

Policy and Regulatory Framework

A number of national laws provide the legal framework for VNFIL, including the Law on the professional development of employees (2012), the Law on employment (2013) and the Law on education (2017).

The Law on education, adopted in 2017, defines non-formal and informal learning and introduces a legal right for: recognition of the results of learning outcomes of non-formal and informal learning in the formal education system (Article 8); and assessment of learning outcomes acquired through External Studies / Externship within education programmes and the certification of educational qualifications (Article 9). According to this Law, the qualification centres are authorised to assess and recognise learning outcomes, including those acquired in nonformal and informal learning, and confirm relevant professional qualifications (Article 34).

In the labour market, the first validation procedure was introduced in 2013 with the Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers on approval of the procedure for verification of non-formal vocational training results. The other ministerial orders regulate different aspects of the validation system, such as establishing the criteria for VNFIL providers and the list of occupations available for assessment.

Some important steps have recently furthered the operationalisation of the VNFIL. The validation of professional competences acquired in the workplace is assigned to the qualification centres. The regulation on qualification centres approved by the Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) in April 2021 is the basic national regulatory document on validation that defines the main tasks and functions of the qualification centres. The procedure on accreditation of the qualification centres approved by the Decree of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine in September 2021 defines the basic principles and mechanism of the accreditation procedure for legal entities that intend to acquire the status of a qualification centre to assess/recognise the learning outcomes of individuals, including non-formal or informal learning; to confirm professional qualifications; and to recognise professional qualifications obtained outside Ukraine.

Ukrainian legislation also allows recognition of foreign educational documents (including documents relating to non-formal and informal learning) of labour migrants, refugees and persons who require additional or temporary protection through processes established within international conventions.

The term 'recognition of (learning outcomes of) non-formal and informal learning / training' is prevalent in official documents dealing with validation.

Institutional Setup and Collaboration

The main agencies involved in VNFIL in Ukraine are the National Qualifications Agency (NQA), Ministry of Education and Science (MoES), Ministry of the Economy (MoE), State Employment Service (SES) and the Ministry of Social Policy.

The NQA, which was established in 2019 and is subordinate to the Cabinet of Ministers, is responsible for implementation of state policy in the field of qualifications. According to the Regulation on accreditation of qualification centres, the NQA is authorised to accredit qualification centres responsible for assessment

and recognition of learning outcomes acquired in formal, non-formal or informal education, confirmation of relevant professional qualifications and recognition of professional qualifications obtained outside Ukraine. The NQA is currently the key agency coordinating the validation activities of all relevant actors in the country.

The NQA has developed and launched the Register of Qualifications in close cooperation with the European Training Foundation (ETF). The Regulation on the Register of Qualifications, approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine in June 2021, determines the procedure for creating and maintaining the Register of Qualifications. The Register contains information on educational/professional qualifications, occupational standards, qualification centres, experts on the accreditation of qualification centres, documents on professional qualifications and applications for the development of professional standards, thus providing a unified platform for all validation stakeholders.

The MoE, in cooperation with the SES and its regional centres, has principal responsibility for validation activities in professional qualifications. The representatives of national and local businesses and employers' associations play an essential role in coordination and cooperation with the SES in pilot projects for the validation of non-formal and informal learning, dual education, foresight and the development of occupational standards, the digitalisation of training services, and professional training for adults.

The MoES plays a leading role in policymaking and the introduction of effective mechanisms for the validation system in the education sector, particularly in higher and adult education.



Beneficiaries and Impact

The number of validation users is slowly but steadily increasing. Since 2016, some 673 applicants have confirmed their professional qualification for the vocational occupation “cook” in three assessment centres, in Kiev, Odessa and Rivne.

Validation users receive certificates that are equivalent to the official documents approving the level of their relevant qualification and recognised by their employers. The potential validation users in the labour market are employed individuals, labour migrants and vulnerable groups; in the education and training

sector, they are students of all levels of education.

Since validation is still at the stage of implementation, the impact on beneficiaries has not yet been measured.

Challenges and Opportunities

At present, Ukraine is implementing the concept of lifelong learning in accordance with European recommendations. To facilitate the visibility and benefits of non-formal and informal learning, the validation system has to be introduced to different sectors: education and training, the labour market and the third sector. The crucial factor for operationalisation of validation arrangements is the design and implementation of a unified national VNFIL system that will cover all the above-mentioned sectors and support validation users at each stage of life.

In the education sector, the increasing popularity of distance learning among students requires transparent and reliable validation. But the development of effective validation mechanisms for the recognition of educational and professional qualification is challenging.

Policymakers are aware that simplification of the validation system in Ukraine and making it more flexible are crucial factors for its successful implementation. A new impact is expected from qualification centres that are tasked to recognise professional qualifications independently of the learning path: formal, non-formal and informal. Currently, the first experts in accreditation of qualification centres are being certified, and the applications for qualification centre accreditation are being accepted by the NQA.

An effective legal basis for the National Qualifications System is a key challenge. Currently, all aspects of the National Qualifications System are regulated by the Law on education (2017). This Law anticipated that a special law on the National Qualifications System would be drafted in 2018; however, the draft has not yet been submitted to the parliament.

Significant developments of the current validation system are anticipated in the draft legislation on adult education and training. The MoES has developed a draft Law on adult education that reflects some topical issues on VNFIL, outlining the

benefits, conditions and mechanism of validation for adult learners.

The adoption of the regulation 'on approval of the procedure for recognition of learning outcomes acquired in non-formal and informal learning in higher education', developed by the Ministry of Education and Science, is expected to speed up the implementation of validation procedures in higher education.

Further regulatory changes are needed regarding the National Classifier of Occupations which follows the old classification ISCO-88. It should be updated in accordance with the modern ISCO-08.

Raising public awareness of validation is one of the important missions of the NQA. Currently the awareness on potential benefits of validation among potential users is low. The benefits of information and communications technology should be used for promotion of VNFIL. The website of NQA and the qualifications register could be used to create a unified digital platform for communication with potential users and providers of validation services.

The lack of funding might undermine the potential for scaling up the validation arrangements. State funding should be provided particularly for the vulnerable groups. The qualifications centres will need a financial incentive and a sustainable funding model to engage in validation and expand services.

The procedure for obtaining permission for VET schools from for VNFIL activities should be simplified.

The development of relevant validation methodologies as well as provision of training programmes for assessors and other validation practitioners will be necessary. International experience could be leveraged to facilitate these developments.

The assessment centres in Kiev, Rivne and Odessa have developed a valuable body of experience which could serve as a reference for the newly authorised centres.