



ALLED – Aligning Higher Education with Labour Market Needs

Task 1.4.1. B: Develop capacity of the University of Pristina Centre for Lifelong Learning for developing a training offer

GUIDELINE ON UNIVERSITY LLL FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF PRISTINA

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Abbreviations

ADA	Austrian Development Agency
AE	Adult Education
AI	Administrative Instruction
EC	European Commission
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
ECVET	European credit system for Vocational Education and Training i
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
ET 2020	Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training (ET 2020)
EU	European Union
EUA	European Universities' Charter on Lifelong Learning 2008
EUCEN	European University Continuing Education Network
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
KAA	Kosovo Accreditation Agency
KESP	Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2017 - 2021
LLL	Life Long Learning
LLLC UP	Lifelong Learning Centre of the University of Pristina
MEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of Kosovo
NQA	National Qualifications Authority
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
OS	Occupational standard
QA	Quality Assurance
SCL	Student centered learning
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
ULLL	University Lifelong learning
Uniko	Austrian Rectors' Conference
UP	University of Pristina



Introduction

This document was developed within the project ALLED - Aligning Education with Labour Market Needs (Component 1), which is financed by European Union (EU) and co-financed and implemented by Austrian Development Agency (ADA).

The aim of this activity is to develop capacities the University of Pristina (UP) and its units (faculties, institutes, Centre for Lifelong Learning once it is operational) to establish procedures, develop and provide LLL training programmes (Task 1.1.2.B)

Thereby, in line with the new Kosovo Education Strategic Plan (KESP) 2017 - 2021, the focus is put on courses on level 5 of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

After a short introduction into the general Lifelong learning context (Chapter 1), the Guideline offers a closer look in Kosovo's LLL in the European Context in general and university LLL in particular (Chapters 2, 3). Thereby, having in mind the priorities of the KESP, special subchapter is devoted to the level 5 qualifications (Chapter 3.1.).

Furthermore, the paper reflects on the status quo of the UP Centre for LLL (LLLC UP) and suggests a strategizing process for this Centre - an approach that should help to achieve sustainable operability of the Centre once the basic resources for its work are provided (Chapter 4).

The Guideline than focuses on procedures and regulations on adult education in Kosovo, providing all necessary information on legal procedures and regulations necessary before a LLL course can be offered officially (Chapter 5).

At the end, attention is devoted to specifics of adult learners and suggested teaching and learning methodology for working with adults (Chapter 6).

1. Background

The Republic of Kosovo has been making continuous efforts towards aligning its education with the European education policies and standards. The Ministry of Education and Science of Kosovo (MEST) steers the process and a number of related legislative, strategic and operative initiatives and is supported by a number of other bodies such as the National Qualifications Authority (NQA) and Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA).

Kosovo's government is aiming to create a knowledge-based society and establish an all-inclusive system of education that provides conditions for quality education and training of all individuals by actively involving and promoting lifelong learning (LLL) and the values of democratic society (EQF Referencing Report of the Kosovo Qualifications Framework, 2016, p. 6). One major milestone for

the future development of LLL is certainly the development of the National Qualification Framework (NQF) in 2011 and its referencing to the European Qualification Framework in 2016 (EQF).

Making LLL a reality in Kosovo means that the country shall invest efforts to integrate into the European Lifelong Learning area, with a vision to empower its citizens to move freely between learning settings, jobs, regions and countries in pursuit of learning.

Lifelong learning is understood as “all learning activity undertaken throughout life, which results in improving knowledge, know-how, skills, competences and/or qualifications for personal, social and/or professional reasons” (Cedefop, 2008, p. 123).

Thereby, LLL covers all forms of learning from pre-school education until after retirement and encompasses formal, informal and non-formal learning.

Thereby, formal, informal and non-formal learning are understood as follows^[1]:

Formal learning: Learning that occurs in an organised and structured environment (such as in an education or training institution or on the job) and is explicitly designated as learning (in terms of objectives, time or resources). Formal learning is intentional from the learner’s point of view. It typically leads to certification.

Non-formal learning: Learning which is embedded in planned activities not explicitly designated as learning (in terms of learning objectives, learning time or learning support), but which contain an important learning element. Non-formal learning is intentional from the learner’s point of view. It typically does not lead to certification.

Informal learning: Learning resulting from daily activities related to work, family or leisure. It is not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support. Informal learning is in most cases unintentional from the learner’s perspective.

Whereas formal education is traditionally regulated and commonly recognised by the employers, education providers and the society in general, making LLL a reality and promotion of adult education (AE) opportunities are in the early phases of their development. Importantly, they have been recognised as an important aspect of the NQF:

By providing greater transparency within the national qualifications system, making clear the nature of qualifications and the relationship between qualifications, and by providing a basis for comparison of achievements across all parts of the education and training system, the NQF will support greater progression and mobility for lifelong learning through education and training pathways (National Qualification Framework Kosovo, 2011, p. 15).

^[1] CEDEFOP definitions, see <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/projects/validation-non-formal-and-informal-learning/european-inventory/european-inventory-glossary>



2. Kosovo's LLL in the European Context

“ Making LLL and mobility a reality” is one of four strategic objectives of the “Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training (‘ET 2020’)", the document that provides common strategic objectives for Member States until the year 2020. Reaching of this objective is to be measured by adult participation in LLL, the target being set of at least 15% of adults participating in LLL by 2020.

The 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that make up the Agenda 2030 for sustainable development, include the global education agenda (Education 2030) with the aim to “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”. The Global Goals and targets aim to stimulate action over the next fifteen years in the Five Ps of critical importance: People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership. The success of these goals is driven by the education goal. The SDGs reflect the important role of education by encapsulating targets in a stand-alone goal (Goal 4)^[2].

The Republic of Kosovo has recently (July 2016) developed and approved the new Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2017 - 2021, which sets out seven country's strategic education priorities and an action plan leading to their accomplishment. The KESP is based on the national and international regulatory and policy framework, the international one including ET 2020 and Education 2030, thus including a commitment towards LLL and promotion of adult education opportunities.

However, the country also faces significant challenges to implement adult learning. As described by KESP (Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2017 - 2021, p. 27):

“In terms of Adult learning, there is awareness that “Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality is the first objective of ET 2020. However, the almost total lack of structures and expertise in the field of adult learning in Kosovo, combined with the pressing need to improve the quality of statutory provision, means that it is not feasible to prioritise developments in LLL in Kosovo in the short and medium term. Nonetheless, there will be some attempts via KESP 2017 - 2021 to begin to tackle this area”.

KESP also defines “very limited offer for level 5 of the KCF” as a further challenge (p 26).

To achieve this, KESP includes Adult Education as the sixth of its seven strategic objectives (Vocational education and Training and Adult Education) by setting “creating an open system for adult education”. This is to be achieved by the establishment of an efficient and quality adult education system, which is also to promote gender equality and inclusion needs. Expected results under the 6th objective are thus:

^[2] <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/education-for-all/sdg4-education-2030/>

- VET and adult education curricula are aligned with the requirements of the Pre-University Education Curriculum Framework and the National Qualifications Framework (result 6.4.)
- VET institutions and adult education providers have full financial and management autonomy (result 6.7.)
- Human and infrastructure capacities for the management of adult education exist (result 6.8.)
- Education offer for level 5 qualifications has increased (result 6.9.)

3. University LLL

University LLL (ULLL) is a specific form of LLL. Its definitions vary between countries and universities. European university continuing education network (EUCEN) seeks to include this rich diversity and adopts the following definition of ULLL:

"ULLL is the provision by higher education institutions of learning opportunities, services and research for: the personal and professional development of a wide range of individuals - lifelong and lifewide; and the social, cultural and economic development of communities and the region. It is at university level and research-based; it focuses primarily on the needs of the learners; and it is often developed and/or provided in collaboration with stakeholders and external actors¹"

According to the European Universities' Charter on LLL (EUA 2008), Universities commit to²:

1. Embedding concepts of widening access and lifelong learning in their institutional strategies
2. Providing education and learning to a diversified student population
3. Adapting study programmes to ensure that they are designed to widen participation and attract returning adult learners
4. Providing appropriate guidance and counselling services
5. Recognising prior learning
6. Embracing lifelong learning in quality culture
7. Strengthening the relationship between research, teaching and innovation in a perspective of lifelong learning
8. Consolidating reforms to promote a flexible and creative learning environment for all students
9. Developing partnerships at local, regional, national and international level to provide attractive and relevant programmes
10. Acting as role models of lifelong learning institutions.

¹ <http://www.eucen.eu/aims-and-objectives/>

² www.eua.be



There are different dimensions of the understanding of / vision of the university continuing education, within the above mentioned principles:

- ULLL as a “change agent”, offering community education, impulses for societal changes, sponsored programmes as well as no/low fee/income based specific groups (for example, sponsored lectures for elderly population)
- Catalyst for economic development / growth, with focus on local and regional labour market needs and entrepreneurship
- “School approach”, offering continuing education for adults
- Adult education as “entrance” hall to the university (events like “The University welcomes you - this is what we do”),
- ULLL as “Research and Development area”, with pilot projects and services
- “Cash cows” - sales oriented adult education offer (thereby not neglecting the societal role of ULLL!).

ULLL can build upon different kinds of knowledge, such as:

- Scientific knowledge/studies
- Professional knowledge (peer learning, also at European level, practitioner research)
- Knowledge from day-to-day business practice.

3.1. Specifics NQF level 5 qualifications

As level 5 courses have been prioritized by the new KESP, this Chapter explains some specifics of and provides an overview of related recent developments in Kosovo³:

In the Kosovo’s NQF which is referenced with the EQF, level 5 courses are described as “Bologna short cycle and / or postsecondary VET education / training programmes”.

Level 5 foresees both academic and vocational qualifications (formal and no-formal) that fall between upper secondary and higher education. Successful graduates are either awarded diploma of formal providers or certificates of non-formal providers.

The EQF level descriptors for this level of knowledge include (EQF Referencing Report, p. 42-43):

- Comprehensive, specialist, factual and theoretical knowledge with a field of work of study and an awareness of boundaries of that knowledge
- A comprehensive range of cognitive and practical skills required to develop creative solutions to abstract problems,
- Exercise management and supervision in contexts of work or study activities where there is unpredictable change,
- Review and develop performance of self and others.

³ see (EQF Referencing Report of the Kosovo NQF, 2016)

Kosovo's level 5 NQF descriptors have been referenced with the EQF and are more extensive.

In the field of **formal qualifications** (EQF Referencing Report of the Kosovo NQF, p. 20),

- Qualifications at level 5 are to be achieved for over one or two years (or less than one year). The qualifications can include a post-secondary vocational course which will qualify individuals as senior technicians or specialists, a member of a team of associate professionals or a junior manager. Students of this level are assessed by internal examinations which lead to diploma. These qualifications can lead to university programmes.
- There are currently two level 5 qualifications in the field of ICT that were validated, approved and registered in the NQF as qualifications, and one provider accredited to offer this qualification.
- According to the information received from the NQA in February 2017, there are currently seven further pending applications of private HEIs in Kosovo which wish to offer LLL courses. So far, public universities or their academic units did not apply as LLL providers.

In the field of **non-formal qualifications** (EQF Referencing Report of the Kosovo NQF, p. 21),

- Non-formal courses/programmes at this level can lead to qualifications for those who are employed and need to learn new knowledge, skills and / or wider competences - for example, to use new technologies or working methods or to take on new responsibilities at the same level as their current jobs, or to progress to higher level jobs. Learners taking these qualifications will usually have to have qualifications or experience in the occupation or occupational area at level 4 or 5, whereby these may come from qualifications or experience.
- There are currently three level 5 qualifications approved, validated and registered in the NQF and two providers accredited to offer these qualifications.

An example of a validated level 5 qualification is provided as Annex 5 of the EQF Referencing Report.

4. The LLL Centre of the University of Pristina (LLC UP)

The LLL Centre of the University of Pristina was founded through an EC financed Tempus project several years ago. Even though it has been formally adopted as an integral part of the UP by the UP Senate, since the end of the mentioned Tempus project it exists on paper only and it has never become operative.

Recognising the potentials and importance of a sustainable University LLL in Kosovo, the Austrian Project Higher KOS⁴ (Promoting Institutional Development in Higher Education and Research in Kosovo), financed by the Austrian Development Agency, in strong cooperation with the former UP Rectorate, made efforts to support the revitalisation of the Centre. However, due to budget constraints, the Ministry of Finance of Kosovo could not approve the UP Rectorate's request for financial means for hiring one person as the Centre's director. Without proper staffing and an adequate operational budget, the Centre cannot be revitalised.

⁴ <http://www.wus-austria.org/project/0/95.html>



Furthermore, even with staff and budget in place, the LLC of the UP cannot function without a sustainable and well thought through strategic approach which should be an integral part of the UP strategy. Clearly, both is necessary for a sustainable operability of the Centre: staff/budget and a strategy. Thereby, the University LLL strategy shows a sustainable approach and commitment towards LLL and can facilitate obtaining financial means both from the government and from international community.

The chapter below thus gives a suggestion for a strategizing process for the LLC of the UP. The draft is based on European and especially Austrian approach towards the university LLL. It does not start from scratch as it builds upon results of a three day study visit and strategizing workshop of the UP management to the University of Graz (Austria) Centre for Continuous Education held in June 2015⁵.

4.1. A suggestion of a strategizing process for the LLC UP

However, the almost total lack of structures and expertise in the field of adult learning in Kosovo, combined with the pressing need to improve the quality of statutory provision, means that it is not feasible to prioritise developments in LLL in Kosovo in the short and medium term. Nonetheless, there will be some attempts via KESP 2017 - 2021 to begin to tackle this area. (KESP, p. 27)

As LLL in Kosovo in general, and university LLL in particular are still in their early beginnings, as also noted above and in KESP, it is recommended to start with small and realistic steps. As the first step, it is recommended that a UP LLL strategy is developed. A draft for this strategy is provided below.

This draft of the UP ULLL strategy focuses on **seven main strategizing areas**:

1. The identity of the Centre
2. Strategy of the Centre
3. Structures of the Centre
4. People at the Centre
5. Functions in and around the Centre
6. Processes and procedures of the Centre
7. Resources of the Centre

1. The Identity

⁵ The study visit was hosted by the Director of the University of Graz Centre for Continuing Education, Ms. Andrea Waxenegger and attended by Mrs. Lindita Tahiri, Vice Rector for International Relations and Quality, and Mrs. Eda Vula, Vice Rector for Teaching Issues, University "Hasan Prishtina", Pristina, Kosovo. It was held on June 23 and 24, 2015

The strategizing process starts with the question of identity of the LLLC, with the aim to answer the following questions (some of them being more explicitly addressed in other strategizing areas below):

- Why does the centre exist as ULLL organisation? What for / for whom does it work? What are its motivations, its guiding principles and major pillars? Why does the university want to offer LLL? To which questions does the ULLL answer? What does it offer (e.g. high quality)? Who are the participants and what is the ultimate benefit of ULLL offer for them? In what respect is the Centre “unique” for its participants and stakeholders? What is the “added value” it offers? What are its quality procedures? How does it cooperate with external stakeholders?

Below, some probable or possible answers to these core questions are given based on European ULLL principles.

The general university commitment to LLL is strongly connected with the following (uniko, 2014):

- Understanding continuous education as core task of the university, alongside with teaching and research
- Understanding university LLL is an integral part of the general university strategy, its profile, development plan and quality assurance arrangements
- Understanding university LLL target groups primarily as persons with an existing university degree, persons eligible for university studies, and persons with documented relevant work experience.
- Anchoring university LLL the general principles of teaching and research that are significantly characterised through job and practice relevant elements.

Thereby, the core elements of the ULLL of the UP need to be distinct from other LLL forms offered throughout the country (such as, for example, short courses for unemployed offered by vocational centres under the Ministry of Labour and Social policy).

The main elements of this distinction are:

- The UP LLLC offers unique value - its courses are high quality, research based, and at university level (as opposed to “everything / anything” offered through **non**-university providers)
- The UP LLLC education offer plays a role in the public life, and contributes to positive changes in people’s lives
- The UP LLLC should follow the strategic priorities of KESP (see above) and put an initial focus at NQF level 5 (short) professional courses, based on the above principles. The level 5 professional courses can but must not be derived from accredited university programmes (as a selection of courses/modules offered for the non-student target group as further professional education).

The identity of the Centre has to build upon the HE policy framework and other important regulations for LLL / adult / continuing education, other LLL providers, the market reality (topics and



structures of interest for potential participants/employers). Having in mind its social role, it needs to consider developments at national level influencing the development of university continuing education - such as societal change, demography and technological development.

2. The strategy

In line with the above described general framework and identity principles, the key elements of the UP LLLC strategy should include concepts, strategies and long term goals to encompass visions and ideas about the future. These concepts can include principles and approaches such as life-span of the projects and the Centre, learner centred approaches, didactical challenges, guidance and counselling, competence-orientation - learning outcomes, access to learning programmes / flexibility / eLearning.

It is to be noted that the strategy is usually university-specific, meaning that there are as many strategies as there are universities.

The strategizing process at the UP could include the following steps:

- Setting up a small core working group at the Rectorate for the strategizing process. The core group should be supported by advisors (experts, stakeholders from e.g. MEST, faculties, companies, etc.), and coordinated with one person appointed by core group members. One of the key elements of the strategizing process is a clear decision that ULLL is seen as a priority in the UP context.
- After the core group has drafted the Strategy, it should be discussed in public at a round table with further stakeholders. Once developed final version should be presented at a public event involving all key stakeholders.

The strategizing process should provide answers to the following nine questions:

1. **“The why”** - clear references to relevant European and international documents, to the LLL context in Kosovo and to the related situation at UP in particular should be provided
2. **“The what for”** - clear statement of the vision and mission of the UP LLL and its LLLC in Kosovar and European context
3. **“The what”** - in line with underlying principles, definition of the contents of the work of the centre (for example, this could contain the initial focus on NQF level 5 short professional courses in line with KESP, in cooperation with UP faculties and companies and/or “courses on demand” - e.g. courses suggested by employers)
4. **“The how”** - description of the approach towards the key principles of Centre’s work (for example, this could contain a clear commitment towards close cooperation with academic units of the UP in designing and offering the education offer)

5. **Who are the main stakeholders** - list and roles of main policy and decision makers, and other stakeholders (for example, MEST the UP Rectorate, LLLC, academic units, projects, other LLL providers and NGOs)
6. **Where does the money come from** - description of the financing modalities of the Centre in line with valid legal documents (for example, share and purpose of public financing, income generation principles, goals related to external / project financing and income generation)
7. **Who are the people involved** - description of own staff of the Centre and of other involved staff (for example, persons from other faculties)
8. **Quality issues** - description of quality management mechanisms (for example institutional accreditation and course validation, internal quality procedures such as course evaluation, student centred learning, labour market relevance etc.)⁶,
9. **What is the foreseen action** - description of short- and mid-term action plan related to the LLLC goals.

The ULLL strategy of the UP and its LLLC should in mid- and long-term perspective lead to or support the development of:

- the ULLL strategy at other Kosovar HEIs
- National LLL Strategy.

3. The structure

Within the strategizing process, it is necessary to define the organisational structure for ULLL including its formal and informal elements. A clear structure enables continuity and helps reduce potential complexity, and it should / can include:

- An overview of related requirements (legal and others) related to the formal establishment of the centre
- The incorporation of the Centre in general UP structures (position in the University Organigram)
- The relation of the Centre with the UP academic units
- Resources of the Centre:
 - Premises and equipment
 - Income generation and the distribution of income (for example, to answer the following questions: is the Centre allowed to generate income? If yes, how is this income distributed between the internal/external trainers, the Centre itself and the university structures)
 - Staff requirements including Terms of Reference for every position (for example Director of the Centre, and administrative staff). It is to be noted here that managerial, sales and marketing experience as well as the knowledge of foreign languages are among the necessary requirements for all staff members.

⁶ Please note that the current quality management procedures are described in Chapter 5 and can be used for the strategizing process



4. The people

The strategizing process should answer the question who are/should be the main staff in the Centre, how the staff is developed and how can its work be professionalised, carrying in mind that change can only work via people in connection with the organisation.

The status quo and some suggestions are described above.

5. Functions

The strategizing process should also clearly decide on functions of different persons / bodies and the decision making process. The question is to be answered: Which persons / bodies / committees etc. have which roles, tasks, responsibilities and competences on what issues (for example, this could include the UP Senate, MEST, KAA and NQA).

6. Processes and Procedures

The strategizing process needs to take into consideration and clearly define processes and procedures related to the work of the Centre. To this end, framework conditions in Kosovo need to be screened that regulate related processes and procedures (legal framework, UP Statutes, accreditation/validation procedures, further quality arrangements, etc.).

7. Resources

The strategizing process should answer the question which minimal and which optimal resources are needed for the work of the Centre, including basic funding, rooms, equipment and financing (see above under 3).

5. Procedures and regulations on adult education in Kosovo

This section describes procedures and regulations for adult education / LLL programmes, with focus on qualifications at the NQF level 5, as suggested by the new KESP. The procedures described below are universal for any adult education provider, both public and private, and not specific (but also applicable to) the LLLC of the UP, as well as UP faculties and institutes.

A methodological note on designing education programmes to suit specific needs of adults can be found in the Chapter 6 below.

When designing LLL qualification / module at level 5, please also use the **resource pack provided by the NQA**, in particular the Guideline on using occupational standards in development of learning modules. Full resource pack can be found here: <http://akk-ks.net/en/resource-pack/qualifications-and-credits>.

In the text below, and in accordance with the NQA procedures, the word “applicant institution” is used to denote an adult education / LLL education providing institution. Adult education and LLL are further referred to as “qualification / module”.

The approval procedure consists of two main parts:

1. **institutional accreditation** (= approval of the institution as adult education / LLL provider)
2. **validation of qualification** (programme/module/course) (=approval of the specific content and details of the training)

The basic framework

The authority responsible for the National Qualification Framework and procedures related to the approval of the adult education offer is the **National Qualifications Authority of Kosovo (NQA)**. The NQA is an independent public body in accordance with National Qualifications Law in Kosovo, established by the MEST (see akk-ks.net)

The main documents regulating provision of adult education qualifications are:

- The Law on National Qualifications (Law on National Qualifications 03/L-060)
- The Law on Adult Education and Training (143)
- The MEST Administrative Instruction No 35/2014 on Criteria and Procedures for the validation and approval of national qualifications and accreditation of institutions providing qualifications in Kosovo
- The National Qualification Framework of Kosovo and
- Application documents/templates and guidelines.

The procedure

The accreditation / validation procedure consists of five main steps that are described below⁷.

The full procedure since the submission of the first request until the final validation of the qualification usually lasts between three and six months. According to the Administrative Instruction, the foreseen procedure for validation of qualification should not exceed six months starting from the date of qualification application. The approximate costs of the full procedure are between 600 and 1300 EUR.

Please note that the precondition of validation of the qualification is previous approval of the related occupational standards (OS). The procedure related to the approval of occupational standards is described in detail at the NQA web site under <http://akk-ks.net/en/resource-pack/occupational-standards>.

Below, the core five steps of the procedure are described, followed by a short outlook on further requirements (credits and teaching staff).

⁷ Procedure is described in accordance with instructions from the NQA management, and the above mentioned Administrative Instruction No 35/2014



STEP 1: THE REQUEST LETTER OF THE PROVIDER TO THE NQA GOVERNING BOARD

The applicant institution sends a request letter for the approval of qualification / module to the NQA Governing Board. This request should be formulated as a simple letter (there is no template) and contain the description of the AE modules. As stated above, the precondition for this request is the approval of the previous occupational standards.

STEP 2: PRELIMINARY DECISION OF THE NQA GOVERNING BOARD

Based on the received request, and the argumentation elaborated therein, the NQA can give or not give a green light for the submission of the full application. Apart of formal requirements (such as previous approval of the OS), sustainability is seen as one of the main criteria guiding the preliminary NQA decision, but also the full programme validation.

It is recommended to start preparing full application during waiting on the green light of the NQA Governing Board.

STEP 3: PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION OF THE FULL APPLICATION

The full application should be submitted by the applicant institution and include a detailed reasoning for qualification / module and other required data by the NQA. The full application consists of four main documents listed below. It can contain other documents as annexes (such as certificates etc.):

1. Application for Accreditation and/or Assessment and Awarding Institution (or institutional accreditation application) - using the NQA template
2. Self-assessment report (template for an internal quality assurance report containing information on institutional objectives, quality framework, and improvement plan) - using the NQA template
3. Application form for Validation of Qualification / Module - using the NQA template
4. The Format of the Learning Module (detailed contents description - using the NQA template)

STEP 4: EVALUATION OF THE APPLICATION

The evaluation of the application is made by the expert team / panel, selected by the NQA. The work of the expert team is supported by an NQA officer. The expert team carefully reviews the application documents and pays a site visit to the applicant institution.

It comprises a draft report on the evaluation results, which possibly also contains recommendations for improvement. Draft report and recommendations are forwarded to the applicant by the NQA. The applicant is given a deadline to provide additional explanations or comments related to experts' improvement recommendations.

STEP 5: DECISION OF THE NQA BOARD

The report and recommendations of the expert team along with applicants' explanations or comments is reviewed by the NQA Steering Board, which decides on validation with the majority of votes. The Board can approve, conditionally approve (provided that further requirements are fulfilled) or reject an application.

Once provided, the validation remains valid for three consecutive years.

FURTHER REQUIREMENTS

Teaching staff

According to the information provided by the NQA management to the ALLED team, 50% of the teaching staff of the qualification can be practitioners/professionals, thus providing practice relevant education contents. Further 50% of the teaching staff has to be academic teaching staff (for ULLL).

All teaching staff needs to have contracts with the applicant institutions. For the sake of sustainability, it is expected that academic staff has at least three year contracts.

It is be noted here that this requirement needs to be examined against university contracting procedures (annual contracts). Furthermore, having in mind that level 5 professional/specialist courses might respond to short-term labour market or employers' needs, it needs to be examined if individual qualification/module needs to be offered for the period of three years.

Credit regulations

Level 5 professional courses are awarded with ECVET (1 credit = 10 hours). According to the AI on Qualifications and Postsecondary Education Modules - their appointment and function No. 16/2015, for candidates who are transferred from postsecondary VET to higher education, earned credit should be converted in ECTS as HE credits (1 credit = 25h) in the proportion 2 to 1. However, since there is neither specific guideline nor policy on this, this is mainly under the autonomy of each institution.

The ECVET credit workload is not regulated strictly for adult education / LLL qualifications / modules and can be adapted to the individual programme requirements.



6. A methodological note: How adult learners differ from “traditional learners”?

This Chapter is dedicated to the specific needs of adult learners, and to choosing adequate teaching and learning methods when working with adults.

It provides kind of a checklist⁸ to be considered when preparing adult education programmes. In particular, the focus is on answering the following questions:

- How adult learners differ from “traditional learners” and how these differences influence teaching and learning?
- What does it mean for the teaching and learning environment?
- What is the role of student/learner centred learning in adult education?
- What teaching and learning methods are suitable for adult learners?

How do the differences between adult learning and learning of „traditional student“ influence teaching and learning⁹?

- **Adult learning is selective.** Adults want to learn only what is meaningful to them.
- **Adult learning is self-directed.** Adults want to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Adult learners bring years of **previous knowledge and experience** to the classroom, as well as an established system of values and beliefs governing their thought.
- Adults often have a **problem-centred approach to learning**, and are interested in content that has a direct application to their lives.
- Adult learners have been **away from formal schooling** for many years, and may have had different/negative experiences with school.

What does this mean for the teaching and learning environment?

- More **heterogeneous groups** of learners (juggling different life roles) - more flexibility in the learning environment

⁸ The checklist is taken from World University Service (WUS) Austria training materials within the Erasmus+ project MLS4ENG - management leadership skills for engineers.

⁹ http://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/lt/resources/handouts/adult-education-methods_handout.pdf

- More **blended learning and assessment** that allow independent learning to allow teaching and learning from home (depending on computer literacy of target group)
- Different **teacher-student relationship**: from „expert“ to „expert“ as a facilitator of learning
- More **decision making in learning processes** by learner (self-directed learning)

What is the role of student/learner centred learning (SCL) in adult education?

The concept of SCL encompasses:

- Reliance on active rather than passive learning,
- An emphasis on deep learning and understanding,
- Increased responsibility and accountability on the part of the student,
- An increased sense of autonomy in the learner,
- An interdependence between teacher and learner,
- Mutual respect within the learner-teacher relationship, and
- A reflexive approach to the teaching and learning process on the part of both the teacher and learner.

SCL is based on the following principles:

- SCL is about „enabling“ not „telling“
- SCL does not have a „one-size-fits-all“ solution
- Students have different learning styles
- Students have different needs and interests
- Students have different experiences and background knowledge
- Choice is central to effective learning in SCL
- Students should have control over their learning
- Learning needs cooperation between students and staff
- SCL requires an ongoing reflective process

Student/Learner Centred Learning is defined as:

Student-Centered Learning represents both a mindset and a culture within a given higher education institution and is a learning approach which is broadly related to, and supported by, constructivist theories of learning. It is characterized by innovative methods of teaching which aim to promote learning in communication with teachers and other learners and which take students seriously as active participants in their own learning, fostering transferable skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking and reflective thinking¹⁰.

¹⁰ from <http://pascl.eu/what-is-scl/>



Five selected examples of teaching and learning methods for adult learners

1. Prior learning assessment

Adult learners have gained additional knowledge and skills through their jobs. The assessment of their prior knowledge and skill base has the following functions:

- It allows learners to become aware of their knowledge and skill gaps,
- It creates more awareness of their abilities and gaps enables learners to learn in a more self-directed way (demand-driven and selective learning),
- It enables trainers/teachers to prepare/adapt training content as well teaching/learning material and methods to fit a particular group of learners,
- If prepared adequately it allows an insight into what is expected of the learner throughout the course/study programme (by using questions and methods for the assessment that reflect the content and methods of the course/programme).

2. Peer review

Peer review allows learners to work eye-to-eye and learn from each other by reviewing each other learning outputs (e.g. papers, project work, oral presentations etc.). The benefits and challenges of peer learning are:

- Adult peers bring in experience, examples and judgement from their (real) working environment
- Taking in feedback from a peer: the feedback from peers may be easier to take in (feedback to each other is known from the work place)
- Giving feedback to a peer: fosters the learning process and encourages learning on the subject (learner perceives himself/herself as competent expert)
- Encourages independent thinking and discussion (there is no „truth“ owned by the teacher)
- Can be „dangerous“ if not all learners have a minimum level of knowledge on the subject
- Peers must be guided in the review process (standards and principles of the review)

3. Problem-based learning

Problem-based learning is a pedagogical methodology by which learning is initiated with a posed problem. Students assume a role in the problem scenario and are led through a process in which they:

- Pose questions, „learning issues“, identifying what they need to know in order to address the problem
- Rank the learning issues in terms of importance and decide who will investigate which issue
- Identify needed resources and where they might be found
- Gather needed information through individual and group questions.

The benefits and challenges of problem-based learning are:

- Meaningful activity based on situated learning
- Open-ended generative tasks

- Collaborative decision-making and problem-solving and changed role of the instructor
- The method needs lots of time and resources to prepare
- The facilitator must be competent to lead discussion and learning process; challenging to stir the learning outcome.

4. Mentoring

A mentor guides a learner through his/her individual learning (can be on a particular topic). The method is very tailored to the learner's needs.

The method is characterised by the following benefits and challenges:

- It allows for individual feedback and reflection on the progress of a particular learner
- It allows for tailor-made solutions to individual learning gaps
- It can be highly motivating for learning because of a more personalised contact and feedback
- The mentor needs to be competent to provide personal feedback (needs to be more detailed, individualised) and be apt for a different „teaching“-role (personal character and attitude)
- Job-shadowing
- Job shadowing is learning by following a person on their job/assignment. The benefits and challenges of this method are:
 - Learning happens in a real/realistic working environment
 - Knowledge gained can be instantly transferred to real examples
 - Experience gained is more likely to be relevant for the learner's own work place
 - Needs adequate placement („shadowing“ the right position and person)
 - Learning happens only based on skills and competences that are required at the work place at the moment in line with the state of the art. Transfer of knowledge and skills needed for future assignments does not take place.



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Links

- ¹ http://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/lt/resources/handouts/adult-education-methods_handout.pdf
<http://akk-ks.net/en/resource-pack/occupational-standards>.
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