



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

## Country report Hungary

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## 1 Introduction

Despite the fact that the validation of non-formal and informal learning outcomes emerges in some policy documents as an important tool for lifelong learning, no explicit national strategy has been elaborated until now. Hungary does not have a nationwide validation system based on uniform principles and procedures.

Sectoral development projects have been launched in the framework of the New Hungary Development Plan (2007-2013). The validation development activity takes place within these projects. The projects are initiated by the government and are funded by the European Social Fund.

The term, 'validation', and the procedure of recognition are not yet widely known. The development projects described above relate only to the education sectors.

The government's Lifelong Learning Strategy (2005), which formulated the goals for the First and the Second National Development Plan, has been the stimulus for launching projects on validation but this document is not in force anymore. The new strategy is under preparation and will be agreed by the government at the end of 2013, early 2014.

The first development project on validation (running between July 2009 and March 2011) addressed higher education (HE) (without explicit declaration of this sector to be a priority). The project (in the framework of SoROP 4.1.3) aimed at developing a validation model for higher education. It was organised and managed together with the national qualifications framework (NQF) levels development for HE. Both development initiatives were taken forward under a common project management. Basic principles and the main elements of the validation procedure have been elaborated. The second phase of this same project was launched in the middle of 2012 and will finish in September 2014. In the second project phase the goal is to formulate recommendations for HE institutions (HEIs) taking account of the specificities of different branches and study fields. In addition to the formulation of recommendations, another goal is to raise awareness concerning validation issues among the staff in higher education institutions.

According to observations, the most typical form of validation in HE is granting exemption for prior work experience (based on the HE Act of 2005) and/or awarding credit for programme units leading towards a qualification. The idea of recognition of knowledge acquired outside of the institution providing the education is present in HE due to the existence of the credit transfer and accumulation system (ECTS). The regulated institutional level validation practice is limited to only a few fields or subjects and depends on some enthusiastic innovators (teachers or managers). Teachers in HE have great autonomy to accept or refuse prior learning (to recommend exemption from some administrative requirements). It is also possible to award credit for a programme unit; such recommendations based on evaluation of prior learning by a teacher is officially approved by a formal credit awarding body in the institution).

In the adult training sector a prior learning assessment scheme has been included in the Adult Education Acts (2001, 2013) since 2001 but not widely used. The term of validation is not used in this sector. The Hungarian term "*előzetes tudás beszámítása*" comes from the English Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). The scheme has been introduced in order to customise the training provision but the practice is very small-scale and limited due to the contradictory interests of different stakeholders, and also the lack of an adequate measurement and assessment system.

It is difficult to identify a clear model of validation in Hungary. Although some elements of the validation are present in the legal arrangements (in VET and HE and in the adult training sector), these elements are without any declaration of explicit policy goals. The focus of development is still the formal education sectors but relationships between these sectors are missing. Stakeholders in the labour market and business sector are very far from the validation development process.

One of the main obstacles to validation development is the 'congestion symptom'. The introduction of the learning outcomes approach is an indispensable condition to elaborate NQF and validation procedures. This approach is fairly new to Hungarian education sectors so it is difficult to build on. The other problem is the lack of clear overall policy goals of application. Moreover, it is particularly difficult to identify actors bearing responsibility for validation development at the level of the Hungarian government. The lack of financial resources at institutional level is also a significant obstacle.

## 2 National perspective on validation

### 2.1 National legal framework, system or policy on validation

There is no independent comprehensive law specifically on validation which applies to all sectors. Nor do we have any information that there are any plans to change the current sectoral development approach. However, there have been legal regulations in existence for a number of years in adult education (AE) and HE that allow the application of certain validation techniques. These legal regulations are not applicable to all citizens, i.e. they only allow validation of prior informal and non-formal learning outcomes in a given context (in the case of HE students, and participants on the point of entry to adult education programmes).

There are no limitations in relation to nationals of other EU member states belonging to the same group in terms of validation (at least we are not aware of such cases).

In higher education, the legislators linked the recognition of informal learning to the already operating European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). The 11. article of Act 2007 on Higher Education (complementing the Act on HE of 2005) provides that 'The Credit Transfer Committee [in the HE institution] shall be authorised to recognise prior learning outcomes and work experience as the performance of academic requirements. The number of credits recognised on the basis of work experience shall be no more than 30.' HEIs' practice of recognition is based on this statutory provision.

The most recent HE Act (Act CXXIII of 2012) reformulated the rules of recognition: 'The Credit Transfer Committee shall be authorised to recognise prior non-formal and informal learning outcomes as well as work experience – in accordance with specifications stipulated within the scope of the present Act and the Government Decree – as the performance of a course requisite. Matters pertaining to the execution of specifications set out under Paragraphs (3) to (6) of Section 49 shall be regulated in the examination regulation by stipulating that the credit defined in the Academic and Examination Rules, however, at least one-third of the credits required for the student to obtain their degree (diploma) – even in the case of the recognition of credits taken in the given institution or in courses taken earlier, as well as prior learning – shall be obtained in their home institution.'

So the possibility to earn credits by validation is explicitly declared, but the 30 credits limitation has been changed. According to the new rule, at least one-third of the credits should be earned in the institution issuing the diploma. The two-thirds that can be earned outside the institution may consist of credits earned by validation. While this provision may potentially increase the number of credits that can be earned by validation, the underlying motivation was essentially the intent to curb a specific unintended trend. Although there are no accurate data available as evidence, there has been a growing number of students who start their studies at an institution where admission seems to be easier, then in their final year transfer to another HE institution in order to acquire a more prestigious degree.

In the adult training sector, legal regulations have allowed assessment and recognition of the prior learning of entrants to training programmes since 2001. The purpose of introducing this provision was to allow for the customisation of training. Enacted in 2013, the new Adult Education Act retained this scheme and furthermore made the assessment of prior learning an obligation in vocational education and language training but did nothing to eliminate the circumstances which make its application difficult or impossible in the case of state subsidised programmes. Supported adults (mostly jobseekers) receive social assistance benefits based on their attendance at classes. If their prior learning is recognised and thus

they are exempted from attendance, their benefit is reduced, which jeopardises their subsistence. In the experience of adult training providers, recognition of prior learning works well in self-financed programmes (where participants pay a tuition fee), and in the case of programmes ordered by companies, in other words, where there is no subsidy. Also in this example, assessment of prior learning outcomes serves primarily for differentiation of the participants. The assessment is a kind of placement test, which enables teachers to set up more homogeneous groups based on prior learning, and in this sense, it is a tool promoting teachers' work and the efficiency of training. The teacher routinely gives individual tasks to those who possess prior learning while he or she works with the rest of the group.<sup>1</sup>

Training providers have no interest in shortening the training programme if it reduces their income (the price of training). Training generally takes place in groups (usually a minimum of 12). If validation of prior learning applied to many of the applicants, i.e. many customised training plans had to be designed, it would upset the rules of organisation of the training programmes. Due to fact that most of the training institutions have no relevant experience in the assessment of competencies, managing a grounded recognition process for most of them is still complicated.

There is no information on any validation procedures being implemented or developed by enterprises.<sup>2</sup>

## 2.2 Skills audits

The 1991 Employment Act provides for the possibility of career guidance to be extended to all citizens. The purpose of this provision was to help the persons concerned make decisions, with the assistance of a professional, about whether or not they needed training or reorientation. Jobseekers' previous career pathways were reviewed, and the qualifications and learning acquired through work experience were identified. This provision is still in force but there is no precise information on the staff employed by Public Employment Service (PES) guidance services. In any case, the employment service provision system has limited capacities to provide this particular service.

In the 2008-2011 period, development of a lifelong guidance (LLG) network was started in the context of the Social Renewal Operational Programme (SoROP) 2.2.2 of the New Hungary Development Plan. The project included training of professionals offering career guidance. Eventually the nationwide network was never developed; instead, career guidance is offered by the National Employment Service, although with minimal capacities. However, a number of relevant tools were developed as part of the above mentioned project. These tools were designed to help young people as well as adults to think about the competencies they have, the competencies they lack, any additional training they would need, and the career that would be best suited to them. The electronic questionnaires identifying competencies are available for anybody through the national career orientation portal.<sup>3</sup> The second phase of this project (2012-2015) highlights the advertising and matching function of guidance concerning skills shortages and early engagement in VET.

Career guidance (including the identification of competencies) is also available on the market as a private service. It is offered by consultants who charge fees. A new regulation (ministerial edict) came into force in 2014 based on the outcomes of another ESF-funded project, SoROP 2.6.1.<sup>4</sup> 54 partly new services were identified and developed within the project, validation was not among them.

In the 1990s, regional training centres were established in Hungary. In some of them, foreign consultants were involved in staff development, and the training professionals working in the

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<sup>1</sup> Based on interviews made in the framework of OECD RNFIL project. See in Recognition of Non-Formal and Informal Learning OECD RNFIL Project Country Background Report–Hungary.

<sup>2</sup> This fact was verified by one of the representatives of the National Association of Entrepreneurs and Employers (VOSZ).

<sup>3</sup> <http://eletpalya.munka.hu/kerdoivek>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.tamop261.hu/>

centres were trained to use the French model of *bilan de compétence*. However, this experimental project came to an end and the model has not been incorporated into the Hungarian system of employment services.

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

### ***Qualifications and qualifications frameworks***

The Hungarian National Qualifications Framework is under development in the framework of three separate development projects. To date no rules have been elaborated on the link between validation and the NQF<sup>5</sup>.

The problem is that NQF is based on learning outcomes while education programmes and qualifications are still formulated on the basis of inputs. This is the case primarily in general education and less so in the VET system. Higher education practice is changing but relatively slowly. In addition, in HE there are major differences between teachers and leaders in terms of the structural, content and methodological change and its perception, and also the awareness of the concept of learning outcomes<sup>6</sup>.

According to the Higher Education Act (2012), it is not possible to acquire a complete qualification through a validation procedure. In the text of the law the number of credits available by recognition of prior learning are limited (max. two-thirds of all credits).

Experts working in the development project on HE validation model (SoROP 4.1.3 - 2009-2011) did agree with this limitation (because they consider that opening an alternative route for public HE via validation is too difficult to put on the political agenda currently). Such an initiative would make the introduction of the validation approach in most of the HEIs more difficult. VET provision is modularised and the qualifications and requirements are described in competences, and therefore VET is closer to the learning outcomes based approach. The VET examination system regulation has been 'open' to validation since 1993 (Law on VET), so it is possible for applicants to take an examination without entering a formal VET programme (but actually this option is not used).

As the learning outcomes based approach is fairly new in Hungarian HE one of the main functions of the NQF is to introduce this new idea into practice.

There are some very successful validation procedures in the field of single competence certification.

The European Computer Driving Licence examination scheme provides certification for ICT skills obtained by any means and is based on international standards. It has been applied in Hungary since 1997 as the certification of digital literacy.<sup>7</sup> The ECDL examination system co-ordination is carried out by a non-governmental organisation, the John von Neumann Computer Society (NJSZT). The ECDL programme is also accredited by the Adult Education Accreditation Board. Since the 2006/2007 school year, the ECDL has been recognised as a proper examination and has been integrated into training within various vocational programmes and a growing number of HEIs.

The foreign language proficiency examinations have traditionally been open to learners coming from any learning environment. This means that applicants can acquire a certification

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<sup>5</sup> Experts participating in the HE validation development project (SoROP 4.1.3) recommend the use of the same standards.

<sup>6</sup> Ágnes VÁMOS (2010) The Application of Learning Outcomes in Higher Education and Assessment in Hungary. The research was supported by the Tempus Public Foundation 2009-2010.

[http://www.tpf.hu/document.php?doc\\_name=konyvtar/bologna/leo\\_eng.pdf](http://www.tpf.hu/document.php?doc_name=konyvtar/bologna/leo_eng.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> <http://njszt.hu/en>

(of the level in accordance with their actual language proficiency) without participating in any language training course (that is, they can learn on their own in an informal way). Language proficiency examinations are organised by accredited language centres, which issue accredited language certificates to candidates passing the examination.<sup>8</sup>

These two procedures represent successful implementation of validation of non-formal learning outcomes, even if such procedures are somewhat isolated cases these procedures relate only to certifying a single competency.

### **Credit systems**

A credit system was introduced in Hungary firstly in the HE sector at the beginning of the 1990s. In 1998, the Hungarian Government issued a decree on the introduction of an HE credit system from 2002. The ECTS has been provided for by law since November 2000 and has been applied in practice since the 2003/04 academic year. It is mandatory and is used in terms of both transfer and accumulation. Today almost every higher educational institution applies the credit system in their academic programmes, which are further regulated by the Higher Education Act and its Government Decrees. The Decree provided for the establishment of the National Credit Council to give professional help to the institutions to develop the credit system nationwide and to enhance student mobility through the credit system.

The validation issue is closely connected to the existing credit transfer system in HE. The current practice of credit transfer reflects the reluctance of teachers in HEIs to recognise knowledge gained outside their own programme (sometimes the rejection concerns also the recognition of knowledge acquired in another programme of the same institution). This is mostly an attitudinal barrier. There are also operational problems with the credit transfer system. It is difficult to compare the learning outcomes of prior learning and the requirements of the HE programme if the requirements are not described in a standard form or (what is often the case) not described in the form of learning outcomes. It was one of the conclusions of the development project on validation in the frame of SROP 4.1.3 programme.<sup>9</sup>

A modularised structure of VET qualifications has been operating in Hungary since 2006 but the credit system has not been applied in the VET sector. Due to the openness of vocational education to labour market requirements, the output based orientation of programme description is relatively closer to the learning outcomes approach than in HE or public education.

A development project is in preparation at the moment to adapt the validation procedure to VET (SoROP 2.2.1). The development planned in the project is focused on the NQF (levels concerning the vocational education system). Part of this project will be dedicated to the analysis of validation possibilities in the VET system.

As the Hungarian VET system does not operate on a credit basis, the ECVET is implemented mostly through EU funded mobility projects (especially Leonardo).

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8 <http://www.nyak.hu/default-eng.asp>

9 Derényi, A.–Tót, É. Validáció – a hozott tudás elismerése a felsőoktatásban. /Validation – recognition of prior learning in Higher Education/Results of the development work organized in the frame of SoROP 4.1.3 project 2009-2011.  
<http://tamop413.ofi.hu/fejlesztes-eredmenyei>



## **Standards**

One of the main obstacles for the validation procedure is that the requirements are described in an input oriented fashion (not in terms of learning outcomes). Even if the standards are the same, the references for assessment are not described in terms of learning outcomes. This makes it very difficult to match the outcomes of non-formal and informal learning with the requirements of study programmes during the validation process. So the problem is the way requirements/standards are described. The typically input oriented descriptions of HE programmes contain the number of lectures and contact hours, the amount of set reading, the different topics teachers will cover, the types of questions for examination etc. Therefore, they are not commensurable with the competences acquired by the students as a result of the former education.

## **2.4 National institutional framework**

There is no national institution with responsibility for validation.

The validation model development project for HE (SoROP 4.1.3) recommended the establishment a national Knowledge centre (in order to support and coordinate local developments, to train the future validation providers, to develop methods, to initiate research and to collect information and data on practice).

It is difficult to identify the specific actors responsible for the decision on this issue because of the involvement of different sectoral bodies.

## **2.5 Governance and allocation of responsibilities**

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

In the absence of an overarching validation policy there is no government actor that would have exclusive competence in developing the validation system. The current framework of development is provided by EU supported projects, each of which is relevant to a particular sector of education and training.

Three of the projects partially handle the issue of validation. Each examines the options for the simultaneous development of the NQF and validation. The issue of validation is taken up to the largest extent in HE related development projects, while it plays a relatively unimportant part in public education and VET projects.

Besides project based development relevant to the whole sector, certain HEIs have experimental validation procedures. Both known experiments are related to SoROP 4.1.3. (See 2.6)

College of Dunaújváros which operates in the northern region of Hungary participated in the first phase of the project as a pilot institution.

The other pilot development project is conducted in Eastern Hungary by the HR Consultant MA programme in the Debrecen University's Faculty of Child and Adult Education. The teacher who initiated the project attended a SoROP 4.1.3 dissemination event, where she was inspired to start a validation project in her own institution. In this respect the Debrecen pilot is a result and direct effect of the dissemination activity related to SoROP 4.1.3.

### **2.5.2 Explain more specifically the role of different stakeholders**

#### **1. Education and training providers:**

In the absence of an overall policy on validation, education institutions tend to operate validation autonomously in the framework of the given legal environment.

Social partners are not actively involved in validation.

According to the HE actors, there are many disadvantages. Besides the prevailing attitude of refusing the acceptance of knowledge from outside, teachers' typical arguments emphasise quality assurance. For example, it may be argued that if an institution is responsible for the

diplomas issued and prestige is to be maintained, then involvement in the whole process of education provision is needed. Most of the teachers are not really interested in the operation of a regulated validation procedure (the actual 'ad hoc one-man decision' practice is a time saving solution and fits well with traditions in HE).<sup>10</sup> An open validation procedure is much more time consuming and expensive.

## **2. Private sector actors (including social partners)**

According to one of the interviewees at the National Association of Entrepreneurs and Employers (VOSZ by its Hungarian acronym), there are no initiatives, developments, or pilot projects concerning validation in the sector.

Some representatives of private sector and social partners have been invited to participate in the HE validation model development project (SoROP 4.1.3). They stated that they had learned a lot.

## **3. Third sector organisations**

The main actors of voluntary organisations are open to the validation approach and they are relatively well informed on the issue. They are familiar with the practices of the voluntary sector in Europe, including the portfolio method. They give advice and publish methodological guidelines.

The educational administration formulated a new idea about the link between the voluntary sector and public education, although this is not really about validation. According to the National Public Education Act, the issue of the secondary school leaving certificate shall be subject to proving the performance of fifty hours of community service; students applying to take the secondary school leaving examinations after 1 January 2016 will have to serve proof of community service. HE students will also be required to perform a certain amount of voluntary work in the course of their studies. Although not directly related to validation procedures, these measures are the expression of the fact that educational decision makers consider voluntary work as a learning opportunity, which may lay the foundations for future recognition of voluntary work in the framework of validation. In the Hungarian context this is an important measure for changing attitudes.

The Voluntary Centre Foundation (ÖKA by its Hungarian acronym) is an organisation established ten years ago by five non-profit organisations. The aim of the ÖKA is to support the Hungarian voluntary sector with information, training, counselling and development of different methodological tools. One of these tools is the volunteer portfolio as a method to enable the documentation of competencies acquired in voluntary work. No statistical data on its use are available, but according to the executive manager of ÖKA, it is spreading. This is part of the development of the voluntary culture and at the same time it is a way to raise awareness of the learning content of voluntary work. The brochure on the competence portfolio is available on the website of the organisation.<sup>11</sup>

### **2.5.3 Coordination between stakeholders**

Intersectoral coordination is a weakness of Hungarian policy-making and implementation.

Despite the fact that developments are deployed separately, at the level of sectors, a certain degree of coordination still takes place. As the development of the NQF features prominently in all three projects mentioned above (see 2.5.1) dealing with validation development to a lesser or greater extent, a coordination forum for the implementation of Government-level tasks (e.g. referencing) has been set-up (SoROP 3.1.8, 4.1.3 and 2.2.1).

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<sup>10</sup> 86 interviews made in the frame of the second phase of SoROP 4.1.3 project responsible for the development validation model for HE.

<sup>11</sup> <http://oka.hu/cikkek/kompetencia-portfolio-0>

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

In the absence of national or sectoral policy goals, one possible direction of current development efforts is towards institutional development.

We know of two cases in HE that can be considered remarkable in the Hungarian context, although by international standards they are rather modest local attempts.

One is a pilot project conducted at the College of Dunaújváros, a college of technology in Northern Hungary. In the 2010-2011 academic year the College was involved in the first phase of SoROP 4.1.3 as a practical case study of development work. The senior management of the institution, as well as the head of the Office of Academic Affairs and Student Information (i.e. the Registrar's Office) were actively involved in developing institutional solutions. The College offers multi-faceted training (liberal arts, information technology, technology, business, and social sciences), the student population is highly heterogeneous, and many of the students enrolling already have some work experience. The College was aware of the need to and was open to validate work experience, and has been successful in the development of the procedure, awareness raising, preparing stakeholders, and getting the solution accepted within the College. Since 2006, several hundred credit transfer procedures have been conducted annually and a routine system has been established. They identify validation at input level, at the point of starting the training as part of admission, and when validation/transfer is requested in the course of training. In masters and special professional training, documented work experience obtained at a workplace in line with the given profession is validated (it is recognised as a contribution towards the academic requirements). Validation requested in the course of training may refer to prior knowledge acquired in HE (but before the introduction of the credit system), learning acquired at training courses subject to proof, work experience, and individual learning outcomes (such as, for instance, participation in college research projects or at student competitions with good results).

The other example of institutional level development is the pilot project conducted by the Faculty of Child and Adult Education of Debrecen University, a major university in Eastern Hungary. At the beginning of their training, students are informed about the validation options and can have recourse to guidance. Guidance is currently offered by the teacher initiating the pilot project (and an assistant). The entire development relies on her voluntary work. Faculty leaders have recently set up a validation committee, which is in charge of, inter alia, developing Faculty level validation rules. Typically, validation is aimed at exemption from field practice and certain courses. Out of a total of 317 students at the Faculty so far field practice was waived for 114 students (on the basis of prior work experience) and another 24 procedures resulted in granting exemption from specific courses.

If validation solutions were to be developed for target groups, it would require clearly delineated policy goals and concomitant funding (as operating validation as a service would be impossible without funding).

The number of users of Europass documents is around the European average in Hungary, sometimes slightly higher. The most popular is the Europass CV, this document is well known and accepted among employers. It is also widely used in job application procedures.

The Voluntary Centre Foundation (<http://www.oka.hu>) published a methodological guide for the use of the voluntary portfolio (see under 2.1). This guide proposes to use Europass documents in combination with the voluntary portfolio. The executive manager of the Foundation reported that a large number of young volunteers take part in different activities in order to get work experience and they list these activities in their CV when they apply for a job.

Under Section 63 (2) of Act CXXXIX of 2005 on Higher Education, since 1 March 2006, HEIs have been required to issue a Europass diploma supplement together with the diploma. Students graduating after 1 March 2006 receive a Hungarian and an English diploma supplement free of charge.

Application of Youthpass documents is in its pilot phase. The use of these documents is limited to some European youth projects.

SoROP 3.1.8 addressed the four lowest levels of the NQF, which were linked to public education levels. Validation had a relatively modest part in the project beside the tasks related to the framework system. An overview of the Hungarian and foreign literature was prepared, and interviews were conducted in 22 schools to map the knowledge of public education professionals about validation solutions and about their attitudes about the recognition of learning acquired elsewhere. The findings show that some of the schools are open to the principles of this approach but public education actors tend to know very little about the procedure and its application. In the current phase of the project no recommendation is planned regarding the possible application of validation in public education. The project focused on students' mobility between public education institutions (student transfer), and school principals were asked a few questions about the possibility to integrate migrant children into Hungarian public education.

There was a Migrant Project in the Hungarian Institute for Educational Research and Development in 2012. The target group of the project was adults. The project dealt with recognition of the prior learning of migrants, conditions to support learning and options for information and guidance for migrants. The project established a Migrant Education Centre where 31 people received certificates.

The Baranya County Employment Office run a PHARE project before the EU accession (2002-2004) and developed a regional toolkit for validation within the local labour market. During the pilot period, about 100 registered unemployed were assessed.

## **2.7 Inputs, outputs and outcomes**

### **2.7.1 Funding**

As there is no overall system of validation there is no national framework for funding of validation activities.

The national investment in a validation system for the time being is the organisation of sectoral development projects (organised in EU funded projects where one-third of the budget is financed by the government).

### **2.7.2 Distribution of costs**

The costs of prior learning outcomes assessment in the adult training sector are borne by training providers. Training providers themselves are funded by the state, by employers, by participants, or by a mix of these. The procedure itself is free for adult students entering training, regardless of how the training provider is financed. Costs are basically 'hidden' as there are no calculations regarding the cost items of guidance, assessment or any other related services as such. Providers consider prior learning assessment as part of the training. Providers usually count the hours spent on assessment (test writing and evaluation of the tests) by the trainers in the time frame of the given training programme. So the cost of the assessment procedure is absorbed in the programme fees (paid by the adult learner, the employer or by the government).

The costs of credit transfer in HE are completely borne by the HEIs concerned. The practice is the same in the case of validation. There are no calculations on effective costs.

As for the ECDL, participants have to pay the fees of the training modules (the cost varies between EUR 15 and 40). Students are given significant discounts and some employers choose to cover the training costs of their employees. Since 2002, the ECDL examination is part of civil servants' training, with funding coming from the national budget. The ECDL is also part of the nationwide (obligatory) education and training of teachers and the cultural professionals programme financed from the national budget.

### 2.7.3 Data on flows of beneficiaries

There is no data collection system on validation. According to experience, there is a high occurrence of a kind of validation in a non-open procedure, i.e. when at the end of non-open bargaining between the teacher and the student, the teacher makes his decision and grants the student exemption from certain requirements (attendance, papers, and examination).

In the pilot initiative described in chapter 1.6, approximately a few hundred students were involved in the open validation procedure (most of them part-time students).

Data on flows are only available for the ECDL examination system. In more than 400 examination centres nearly 100 000 persons apply for certification per year.

### 2.7.4 Evidence of benefits to individuals

There is no data on the benefits to individuals.

## 3 Information, advice and guidance

### 3.1 Awareness-raising and recruitment

Availability of validation of non-formal and informal learning outcomes is relatively limited.

Validation is closely linked to the educational sector and concern those involved in particular programmes (HE or adult training). Validation in higher education is available for students already enrolled. In the context of various events providing study related information on their studies, they are advised that under the Higher Education Act it is possible to have their work experience validated. Awareness amongst teachers and HE leaders is raised mainly by participation in development projects (SoROP 4.1.3) and through dissemination activities related to the projects. At the end of the first phase of the project (2011), developers staged intensive consultations about the topic for over 400 participants. Furthermore, the closing publication of the project found its way to thousands of interested persons (apart from the printed copies it could be downloaded from the project website)<sup>12</sup>. The website remained available after the closure of the project and is currently the richest collection of Hungarian language literature on the topic. The Knowledge Bank menu of the website contains analyses prepared in the course of the project and, inter alia, the translation of some country reports from the 2010 inventory<sup>13</sup>.

In the adult training sector, recognition of prior learning is possible upon entry in training. Many adult training providers have some information about the recognition on their website.

Professional journals publish interviews and articles about Hungarian developments, the topic in general, and some examples in international practice.

The periodical *Felnőttképzés* (Adult Education and Training) has regularly published articles about the validation of prior learning outcomes over the past few years. In the late 2011 issue, a special feature introduced validation in general and there were articles about the French and the Portuguese national validation systems.

Tempus Public Foundation (the organisation in charge of managing international cooperation programmes and special projects in the field of education, training and EU-related issues) launched several publications to introduce the system of tools of Lifelong Learning. They

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12 <http://tamop413.ofi.hu/fejlesztes-eredmenyei>

13 <http://tamop413.ofi.hu/tudastar/nemzetkozi-kitekintes>

published a volume of papers on the application of learning outcomes<sup>14</sup> in 2009), and their most recent publication has a special chapter on validation as an LLL tool<sup>15</sup>.

### 3.2 Role of information, advice and guidance networks/institutions

Guidance is an integral part of the two institutional level pilot developments described in chapter 2.6.

In one case, guidance is offered by the teacher who first developed the validation procedure on a voluntary basis; in the other case it is offered by the staff of the Registrar's Office. They primarily acquaint students with their options under the law, and if there is a need they help compile the portfolio.

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

There are no practitioners specifically dedicated to, or specialised in, validation. Validation is done by teachers or administrative staff working in the field of study.

## 4 Quality assurance and evaluation

### 4.1 Quality Assurance Framework

There is no specific quality assurance framework (or even document) specifically for validation.

Under SoROP 4.1.3 (validation development for HE) recommendations have been formulated regarding adherence to the European principles and integrating validation in the institution's overall quality assurance system.

### 4.2 Quality assurance systems/procedures

Currently there is no such a system in place.

### 4.3 Evaluation framework

There is no such a framework.

## 5 Validation methods

### 5.1 Methods used and the validation process

The table below contains the validation methods used in the pilot activities (see chapter 2.6)

	Identification	Documentation	Assessment
Debate	X		
Declarative methods	X (CV)		

14 Eszter SZEGEDI (ed.) (2009) Kompetencia, tanulási eredmények, képesítési keretrendszerek (Competences, learning outcomes and National Qualifications Frameworks). Tempus Public Foundation

15 Éva TÓT–Tibor BORBELY–Eszter SZEGEDI (2012): Az egész életen át tartó tanulás eszköztárája. (The supporting tools of lifelong learning). Tempus Public Foundation The text is available on line: [http://www.tpf.hu/document.php?doc\\_name=konyvtar/egyeb/LLL\\_2012\\_konyv.pdf](http://www.tpf.hu/document.php?doc_name=konyvtar/egyeb/LLL_2012_konyv.pdf)



	Identification	Documentation	Assessment
Observation			
Portfolio method	X – In two pilot projects at institutional level		
Presentation			X – Presentation of work experiences and acquired competencies
Simulation and evidence extracted from work			
Tests and examinations	X – In the adult education sector, in the language proficiency examination system and in ECDL tests they are used for assessment of learning outcomes acquired in informal and/or non-formal learning		
Other (e.g. e-learning methods) – please specify		X – Justification in a written form by the relevant employer(s) to document the work experience	

As the numbers of validation procedures are very limited there is no sufficient experience to evaluate which combinations of methods are the most effective ones. But the presentation (normally focused on declarations or on evidence collected from work) followed by an interview/debate is the most common combination used up to now. This practice is related to two pilot activities in two HE institutions (see 2.6).

## 6 Validation practitioners

### 6.1 Profile of validation practitioners

As there is no well-established validation system, the profile of validation practitioners cannot be clearly identified.

Based on empirical research carried out in the HE development project started in 2009, in most HEIs validation of learning acquired outside formal education takes place outside the framework of official procedures, in a 'grey zone', and is subject to informal bargaining between teachers and students. The student approaches the teacher and requests validation, and the teacher makes a decision, at his or her discretion, to, for instance, exempt the student from attending classes.

It is teachers that students seek out directly with validation requests. Teachers rely on their experience in making their decisions (as they are generally well versed with the credit transfer system as this is often a starting point for their decision).

The most typical request is to validate work experience (which is permitted by the relevant statutory provisions). This type of validation is generally the competence of the staff of the Registrar's Department whose job is to assess exemption requests. In the pilot project launched in the first and second phases of SoROP 4.1.3, the registrar of the Dunaújváros College took an active part in developing the validation procedure. The other case involved the largest university of Eastern Hungary, where the local experiment was headed by a qualified teacher of the Faculty of Child and Adult Education. In an attempt to create an

appropriate background for the acceptance of the project within the university, this teacher wrote her post-doctoral habilitation dissertation on validation.

## 6.2 Provision of training and support to validation practitioners

In HEIs it is mostly teachers and members of administrative staff that are involved in the practice of validation. The SoROP 4.1.3 project, which aimed at developing a validation model for HE, has been operating as a development project and at the same time a collective learning/training programme for a small group of HE actors (participants in development). Nearly 50 persons (HE teachers and members of the management) have been involved in the first phase of the project, and more than 60 in the second phase.

Experience shows that there is a need for an extensive preparation programme for stakeholders in all sectors in order to understand the validation approach and to be able to operate the procedure (including guidance).

## 6.3 Qualifications requirements

There are no mandatory qualification requirements for validation practitioners.

# 7 References

86 interviews with higher education actors (interviews have been made by the author in the frame of the SoROP 4.1.3 project 2. phase between 2013 July–2014 January).

Derényi, A.; Tót, É. (2011). *Validáció – a hozott tudás elismerése a felsőoktatásban. Oktatókutató és Fejlesztő Intézet, Budapest* [Validation-recognition of prior learning in higher education – results of the development work organized in the frame of SoROP 4.1.3 project 2009-2011 published by OFI, National Institute for Educational research and Development].

<http://tamop413.ofi.hu/fejlesztes-eredmenyei>.

*Nemzeti Munkaügyi Hivatal Nemzeti Pályaorientációs Portál Kérdőívek* [National Employment Service Career Guidance portal – questionnaires for pupils, students and adults helping explore their interest].

<http://eletpalya.munka.hu/kerdoivek>.

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## 7.1 Organisations consulted

- Oktatási Hivatal Nyelvvizsgáztatási Akkreditációs Központ  
Educational Authority Accreditation Centre for Foreign Language Examinations  
(description of the legal regulation)  
<http://www.nyak.hu/default-eng.asp>



- National Association of Entrepreneurs and Employers (Vállalkozók Országos Szövetsége, VOSZ). <http://www.vosz.hu>
- Neumann János számítógép-tudományi Társaság - John Neumann Computer Society <http://njszt.hu/en>
- Voluntary Centre Foundation. <http://www.oka.hu>