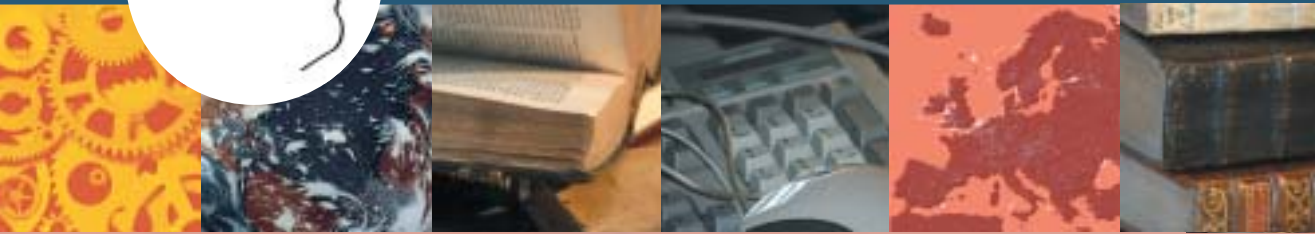# Accreditation
of **prior** learning

AEFP | EVTA

L'Association Européenne pour la Formation Professionnelle
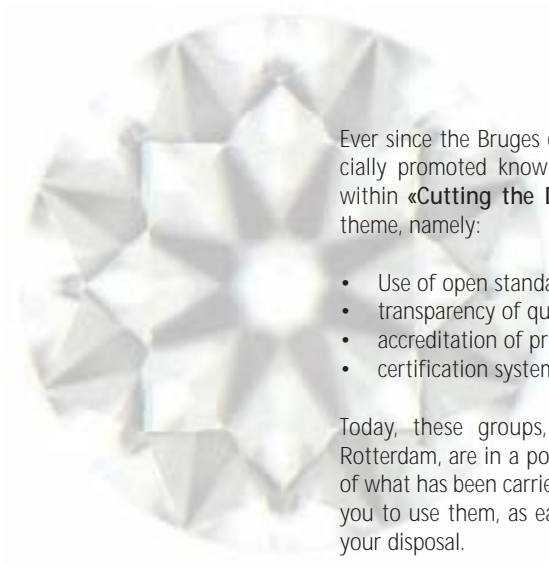*The European Vocational Training Association*

EN

Accreditation
of **prior** learning

Reference Guide
for APL assessors and assessment process

AEFP | EVTA

L'Association Européenne pour la Formation Professionnelle
The European Vocational Training Association

Ever since the Bruges conference in October 2002 at which we officially promoted knowledge sharing through EXEMPLO, the groups within **«Cutting the Diamond»** have worked on their own chosen theme, namely:

• Use of open standards in open and distant learning;
• transparency of qualifications;
• accreditation of prior knowledge;
• certification system for companies offering training courses.

Today, these groups, which already presented their results in Rotterdam, are in a position to supply you with the finished product of what has been carried out over a period of two years. I really advise you to use them, as each of them represents a concrete tool put at your disposal.

From now on, these groups are exploiting these products themselves for the reuse of E-learning products, the description of the profile of the seller in direct selling and for skill validation. The certification system for companies will first be used in the hotel and catering sector to enhance trainees' mobility in that field.

I warmly invite you to get to know these products and to contact the group managers for any further information.

Yvan Bostyn
EVTA's President

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Preface

Over recent years, the validation of prior learning has become a major focus in Europe's progress towards a knowledge society.

The threefold objective of this approach is to grant access to vocational training, to recognize qualifications, and increase career mobility, by improving the readability of learning outcomes.

The identification and validation of non-formal and informal prior learning are essential to the achievement of this objective.

At present, the variety of approaches and methods involved in the identification and validation of prior learning at national, regional or local level, along with the large number of stakeholders involved, are not conducive to the transparency of the different systems.

As a consequence, the European Council — in its conclusions of May 2004 (9600/04 Educ118 SOC 253) — has emphasised the need for common European principles for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning. These principles are necessary:

"to encourage and guide the development of high-quality, trustworthy approaches and systems for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning."
"to ensure the comparability and wide acceptance of different approaches and systems in the Member States."

These principles concern a person's rights within the scope of identification and validation, stakeholders' obligations with regard to the quality of the systems put in place, the reliability and trustworthiness of methods and procedures, and the professional competence of quality assessors.

In view of the similar nature of the challenges faced by stakeholders in their respective domains, the working group — consisting of expert members of bodies affiliated to the EVTA (European Vocational Training Association) — has identified several key issues to the process of identification and validation, including the drafting of a handbook for the attention of human resources departments and vocational training department (assessment and guidance) staff.

As the role of assessor is crucial, the first edition of the handbook will provide information establishing the profile and training necessary for assessors.

ROLES OF ASSESSOR
1. Assessor in the APL process

The recent developments in the recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning show a wide variety of regulations and practices.

New developments in the use of tools e.g." quick scans" and "self-assessment tools", delivered on paper, by computer, or online provide "assessees" with an initial overview of their competences, skills and knowledge in relation to a standard.

Existing paper-based portfolios will be more likely to be e-portfolios in the future. However not all organizations require portfolios in the APL-procedure; AFPA for example certifies assessees on the basis of a practical test situation.

The roles of the advisor and assessor are in general clearly divided; the work of the advisor stops when the portfolio is finalised and submitted for assessment. However, in some organisations the assessor plays a role in the initial information phase by assisting with the "quick scan" or "self assessment tool". This mixing of roles can create problems with the quality assurance of the process, and it is

therefore preferable that the two roles are kept separate.

In the early stage of guidance, the advisor may propose alternatives to the APL process, when it becomes obvious that the assessor's dossier is weak. In some instances the advisor will propose a more comprehensive career guidance path or a specific training plan. But the assessor will also be able to give concrete advice for training, after assessment.

In some organisations, new professional roles are emerging, e.g. a "verifier" (FAS) can be appointed as a control to standardise and to quality control the assessment of portfolios and exams or the "screener" (ECABO) that pinpoints the weaknesses or gaps in evidence to indicate to the assessors which elements they need to focus on when assessing the assessee.

The table below outlines the entire APL process. The role of the assessor is shown in phase 3 of the process. It should be clarified that the APL assessee plays an active role in all stages of the process.

Standard process flow APL		Activities	Professional Actors/Roles
Phase1	Information stage		
1.1.	Briefing	Individual or group session on APL-procedure	Advisor
1.2.	Quick scan, self-assessment tools	Tools which compare the evidence with an occupational standard to decide which process to enter (APL process, training process, etc.)	Advisor
1.3.	Intake/orientation	Individual interview: create support, identify objectives, planning.	Advisor

Phase2.	**Composition of portfolio**		
	Drawing up of portfolio	Inventory and translation of work-learning and other experiences into competencies. Gathering and inventory of evidence. First impression of portfolio: benchmarking with competency. (job) Profile1.	Advisor
Phase 3. 3.1.	**Assessment** Portfolio assessment[1]	Recognition: appraisal of portfolio and evidence. Preliminary final report (exemption from training, demand for extra proof of practical test, recommendations). Interview with assessee.	Assessor
3.2.	Assessment through practical knowledge test	Assessment of skills or knowledge by (practical) test + interview.	Assessor
3.3.	Final report	Complete synthesis of assessment.	Assessor
4.	**Certification**	Formal validation or certification.	Accreditation body/authority
5.	**Follow-up**	Possible appeal of assessee. Support assessee to draw up personal development plan.	Advisor Commission of Appeal Advisor

[1] Self-appraisal of portfolio by assessee is sometimes used at the end of phase 2.

2. Entry requirements for assessors

The Assessor in an APL-process is not a recognised profession in any country at the moment. Assessors' work is seen as part of an existing job; in some cases senior trainers or experts from sectoral organisations may be "appointed" as assessors, in the same way as members of juries are appointed on the basis of their merit or expertise. Except in some countries where a legal framework exists for APL, there is a policy rather than a strict legal framework. In practice, the entry requirements to become an assessor vary from country to country, or from organisation to organisation.

To ensure a high level of credibility and impartiality of the recognition and validation procedures, governments or public bodies, the validation providers themselves, will no doubt raise the standards and entry requirements. The following examples give an impression of the ongoing process in relation to the professional recognition of the role of the assessor.

In the final proposal from "Working Group H", "impartiality "(3.5) is considered a crucial feature of validation. The assessors should in particular operate according to **a code of conduct and be "professionally competent", and "have access to systematic initial and continuing training". Moreover, impartiality can be "strengthened through training and systematic networking, (....)"** It is also important to avoid "undue mixing of roles", and not combine incompatible roles.

In a draft version of a Code of Conduct for assessors and assessment in Flanders (Ministry of Labour), a profile of the assessor is outlined. The assessor performs the occupation in a professional and responsible way and is

expected **to keep his/her professional competences up-to date and to develop them.** Each assessor has thorough **initial qualifications, has successfully attended one or more professionally relevant training courses and can prove this with the diplomas or certificates, or by demonstrating comparable professional experience of equal value.** In this document it is suggested that the assessor has professional experience in the assessment of competences for certain certificates. Moreover, the assessor will be supervised by a "Mentor/coach" who has at least one full year experience in the competency assessment.

In France, the concept of APL is regulated by law. The texts are the result of the work of the ministries which are involved and of the awarding bodies. In the law of 17th of January 2002, there is an article that states that the validation in the context of obtaining a professional title or a professional finality is established by a team of assessors wherein the branch is well represented. In case of issuing diplomas by the Ministry of National Education, the team of assessors is composed of teachers and other qualified people who don't belong to the Ministry of Education. In case of issuing titles by the Ministry of Labour, only professionals of the concerned professional branch are part of the jury; vocational trainers are excluded. The Ministry of Labour (technical cell for validation) makes a selection of assessors, based on their CV. The assessors from industry also are selected out of related industries, by means of their CV. Both groups get a one-day induction training programme.

Required competences

The issue of the selection or entry requirements was raised at the Lisbon Workshop[2], and was treated in a practical manner. Assuming that HRM-management is mandated to select a team of assessors, which selection criteria would be crucial?

Two types of requirements were considered essential: pro-

fessional competence and "soft" skills. The "hard" evidence would be proven by diplomas, certificates, CVs or resumes, etc.; the soft skills would be proven by interview,or by assessment centre assignments.

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[2] Working seminar in Lisbon on 19th and 20th April 2004 hosted by IEFP with assessors coming from different EVTA member organisations with the aim of discussing standards for advisors and assessors.

Professional competences

- Basic qualifications for the context of the assessment;
- the qualification of the assessor is at least at the same level as that of the assessee;
- proof of continuing development of professional competences over the last x number of years;

- X number of years experience in the occupational area, sector, or branch of the occupation to be assessed (the number of years being dependent on the sector/occupation, considering the rapid developments in for instance the ICT-sector);
- broad experience in the occupation or sector; knowledge of the job standards in use is considered crucial and is preferred over specialisation.

Soft skills

- Basic communication skills (esp. listening, interviewing skills, giving feedback);
- supportive, caring, empathic attitudes;

- broad-minded, self-reflective personality;
- positive attitude towards recognition (APL);
- intrinsic motivation for being an assessor.

Human Resources Recruitment Checklist - example

Name candidate:

Organisation:

Date:

❏   Internal assessor
❏   External assessor

Entry requirements	Yes	No
• Job experience in the branch (sector)[3]		
• Broad view of the job/sector		
• Level of education (diploma)		
• Technical expertise (based on CV.)		
• Knowledge of standards/qualification framework		

[3] Number of years required in the sector concerned

Self Assessment Checklist– example

Name candidate:

Organisation:

Date:

❑   Internal assessor
❑   External assessor

Subject	Yes	No	+/- [4]
Communication skills			
• Can adapt to target group(s).			
• Listening skills.			
• Reporting skills.			
Reflection on personal reference framework			
• Can reflect on own behaviour.			
• Is conscious of own prejudices.			
• Attitude towards APL.			
Assessment skills			
• Is able to use the evaluation standards.			
• Can relate the competences to concrete behaviour on the job			
Cooperative skills			
• Is able to adapt to arrangements (time delay, tasks).			
• Is able to cooperate with others to make up an objective evaluation.			

[4] +/-: doubtful

3. Methodology and tools: attitude of the assessor

Methodology is one of the three main elements in the identification and validation of prior learning outcomes, along with acknowledging the principle of non-formal and informal learning and the ultimate aim of validating such outcomes.

The quality of the methodology depends on a number of factors. It is essential that prior learning outcomes be recognized and validated, in a manner that is both credible and readily accepted in whatever content by meeting these required validity and reliability criteria.

These validity criteria must reflect a balance between the validation of prior outcomes and existing reference standards, that is to say that the proof provided by the candidate and the evaluation thereof must lead to a result, which fits within the assessment system in place. This raises several issues. The reference standards define the knowledge and know-how by 'abstract' or 'general' terms, which can be described as "common denominators". Or the connection between the acquired knowledge, that reflects the individual nature of the specific professional experience, and the reference standards, depends on the understanding of the statements and activities of the person seeking validation of prior learning.

A detailed understanding of the applicant's experience is a necessary first step in the recognition of prior learning outcomes.

In addition, reliability, on the other hand, serves to confirm the validation procedure. By reliability, we understand that the approach used in determining the validity criteria can be applied elsewhere, regardless of the situation or assessor. At first, this may simply boil down to acceptance, since no two situations are the same. Thus, the question of reliability is fraught with practical problems. Indeed, who would make a successful applicant re-sit a standard exam in similar circumstances merely to confirm the initial result? In this instance, the outcome is verifiable and must be accepted.

Which methodology should we choose and which tools should we use?

Generally speaking, the choice of methodology in Europe can be said to be primarily influenced by the socio-economic factors of each country. However, despite this apparent diversity, there are similarities, structure (the analysis of experience) that differs only in terms of implementation and tools used.

This fundamental common methodological structure — which, in fact, is an analysis of activities — can take either a descriptive or a demonstrative form.

In the case of the former method, people describe their professional experience by reflecting upon their career; in the case of the latter, people show their experience by means of their actions.

These forms of evaluation are not mutually exclusive. By adopting too rigid an approach, one runs the risk of over-simplifying a complex case and stopping these tools from complementing each other. Indeed, it is impossible to imagine a demonstration that relies solely on activity, without the assistance of verbal explanations and clarifications. Similarly, the opposite is also true. Therefore, the majority of players favour a combination of both the descriptive and demonstrative approaches in order to maximise their understanding of the complexities involved in prior learning outcomes.

This point also applies to the tools used in this process: interviews, files, portfolios, simulations, self-evaluation, etc.

The most important factor, before any of these tools are used, is the ethical (outlook) position of the assessor, who must evaluate the individual and his uniqueness. On the basis of this, the assessor will be able to measure the relevance of the information-gathering tool to be used. Furthermore, the assessor will need to avoid lapsing into the standard grading practices of schools, or the skills assessment practices of companies. The assessor must ensure that the rules for assessing are clear for the individual using an APL process and that the inequalities are cut down to a strict minimum. He will have good knowledge of the reference standards.

As a general rule, the assessor has the task of using the relevant tools to compare the skill a candidate has in relation to a set of standards in order to determine his degree of skill.

By having good working knowledge of the tools at his disposal, and being capable of adapting them to individual situations, the assessor assumes responsibility for the quality of the procedure. His actions guarantee the reliability and validity of the identification and validation of prior learning outcomes.

4. Competency profile of the assessor

Roles of the assessor

As mentioned in the previous chapter the assessor performs different roles at different stages in the APL process, such as assigning the portfolio, the practical test, knowledge tests and development of assessment tools. Practice shows, however, that assessors are generally not the developers of the assessment tools. The following sections expand these roles and indicate the competences required of the assessor in order to perform these roles.

Generic competencies

- Observation and assessment skills, being objective: attempts to assess subjective experiences as objective as possible;
- interviewing skills: the assessor knows how to bring the best out of the assessee, asks a lot of questions, without judging immediately, interviewing assessees to establish authenticity of evidence;
- evaluation (assessment) skills: to give assessees feedback in a constructive and encouraging way, which meets their needs and is appropriate to their level of confidence. To clearly explain the assessment decisions on whether assessees' evidence of competence is good enough. To give assessees advice when they cannot prove their competence, and on how they can develop the necessary skills or provide more evidence. Identify and agree the next steps in the assessment process and how assessees will achieve these;
- writing skills: the assessor knows how to write a clear, detailed and structured report. He must ensure the assessment records are up to date, and can be followed by an audit. The report must be written in terms of competences, not in terms of features of the person. The report can be a combination of ticking pre-described competences and free text;
- technical competence: the assessor must show technical competence: he must have a substantial experience and qualifications in the appropriate discipline (occupational competence). Furthermore he must prove his willingness to keep abreast of developments in the sector. The technical level of the assessor must at minimum be as high as the level of the assessee. He/she must be, therefore, technically competent.

4.1 Assessor's competencies in portfolio assessment

- Assess the value of the portfolio and proofs of competence on the basis of several criteria: authenticity, topicality, relevance, quantity, variation of the evidence;
- the assessee is asked to provide further information in order that a balanced assessment be made. In advance of the interview, the assessor must have carefully studied the documents which describe the qualification. These documents describe the attained targets as well as the content and level of mastery. In this way, the assessor prepares the interview with the assessee;
- possible evidence: questioning, prior experience and achievement, formal testing (see further on), projects and assignments, simulations (see further on), assessee and peer reports, evidence from others;
- ensure that evidence comes from the assessees' own work;
- connect evidence to competences using tools e.g. matrix;
- make a relationship between evidence and underlying competences;
- weigh evidence against occupational or training standards;
- the result of the assessee is compared with a standard which is agreed by a professional organisation, the social partners, the Ministry of Education...;
- make consistent, fair, valid and reliable decisions about the competence of assessees, based only on the agreed standard;
- base the decision on all the relevant evidence from assessee's performance and knowledge;

- gather the evidence from as many situations as possible;
- conduct a criterion based interview;
- if an assessor uses a criterion- based interview (e.g. the STAR- method: Situation, Task of objective, Action, Result). a considerable volume of information is generated. It takes a highly structured interview to obtain information about previously displayed behaviour in specific situations;
- explain and resolve any inconsistencies in the evidence;
- use other interview techniques based on other theoretical approaches, for example probing interviews to assist people to make their competences more explicit;
- draw up a report;
- the results of the portfolio assessment are written down in a standardised way, which enables the accreditation jury or body to make a judgement.

Underpinning knowledge or expertise

- Subject area, job profile (standards) and labour market in relation to the portfolio assessment;
- mostly, the assessors assess within their own discipline. They know the professional practice, so they know what they want to ask, but it is more difficult to determine when proof is "up to scratch";
- educational or vocational programmes in the subject matter:
  - Overview of existing programmes;
  - target groups;
  - attained level after training;
  - relevance to the labour market.
- APL-procedures and aims:
  - What is APL?
  - Aims of APL;
  - target groups.
- Portfolio tool and methodology:
  - Quick scan: is the APL- procedure feasible and appropriate?
  - Written evidence about learning experience and working experience;

- other evidence about working experience;
- judgement by the assessor about the transferability of the (proven) competences.
- Code of conduct of assessor

In short:
- The assessee knows the procedure;
- the assessee knows his rights;
- the assessee knows he can lodge an appeal against the decision;
- the assessee gets feedback about the results of the APL;
- Report and results are sworn to secrecy;
- the assessee is the owner of the results and the report;
- the assessee knows which data are registered;
- the assessee has to give his permission if the organisation wants to use the results for other purposes;
- the assessee and the assessor sign the code of conduct.

4.2 Assessor's competencies in a practical test situation

- Organise and coordinate the practice (practical) test (infrastructure, tools,...):
  - Standardise test situation
- Observe behaviour and results (products, processes) during assessment:
  - Evaluation of process;
  - evaluation of product;
  - distinguish observation and interpretation (being objective);
- Register observations:
  - Use an observation form.
- Conduct an assessment interview:
  - To probe the assessee's reasoning;
  - to find out the "why" behind the behaviour;
  - to test the underlying knowledge.
- Interpret and evaluate activity related to required competence:

  - Evaluation of activities/ products: what meets the competence (quality).
- Make a relationship between competences and standard:
  - Use a structured assessment grid;
  - decide which criteria are attained and to what standard.
- Confer with other assessor(s):
  - Observe independently;
  - make a consensus afterwards.
- Draw up final report:
  - Provide clear information to the accreditation jury or body on the outcome of the assessment.
- Provide feedback to assessee or advisor.

Underpinning knowledge

- Job standards and performance (quality) criteria in given context for the assessor:
  - Which standards are used, what is their origin;
  - who uses these standards;
  - level of the judgement: beginner, experienced, professional...
- Objectives of training programme, assessment procedure and target group:
  - Formative evaluation;
  - complete evaluation;
  - description of target groups and the related objectives of APL.
- Code of conduct for assessors:
  - The assessor doesn't inform anyone about the content of the practical tests;
  - the assessor doesn't communicate the result of an APL test to outsiders;
  - the assessee is the owner of the result;
  - the assessor supports the final decision;
  - the assessor makes the assessee feel at ease during the test.
- Assessment and evaluation concepts:
  - Formative assessment target: exemption from training programme modules;
  - complete assessment target: certification.
- APL-procedures and aims:
  - Aims and target groups of APL in respective organisations.

4.3 Assessors' Competencies in the Development of Assessment tools

This section is included because it is recognised that in some cases the assessor is involved in the construction of assessment tools. Therefore an understanding of the assessment design process is required (validity, reliability).

- To be familiar with:
  - Occupational standards;
  - occupational profiles;
  - job descriptions.
- Describe related activities (observable behaviour):
  - Translation of chosen competences into concrete and observable activities;
  - each competency has to be observable several times.
- Construct an assessment scale:
  - Determine quality criteria;
  - determine observable indicators;
  - determine success norms;
  - analyse validity and reliability of the assessment tool.
- Describe material aspects of the practical test (infrastructure, materials, assignments,...):
  - Description of material and infrastructure (in relation to standardisation);
  - description of assignment;
  - description of evaluation process;
  - description of desired report.

4.4 Remarks on the Process

Remarks:

- The advisor is always a different person than the portfolio assessor, to avoid a conflict of interest;
- to evaluate a portfolio on paper implies that you have to read a lot of evidence material;
- an e-portfolio runs a higher risk of falsification: assessees falsify documents and scan them;
- the Netherlands, Sweden and France have examples of computer aided self- assessment tools;
- it is preferable to look if there is a synergy possible between the design of a portfolio and the evolutions in Europass;
- there is a risk that technical specialists get on their hobby horse in the interview with the assessees; it is therefore very important to make sure that the whole range of the occupational standard is taken into account in the interview. It is therefore useful to use a grid based upon the occupational standards.

4.5   Personal Attitudes

The following attitudes are common to all assessors in the fulfilment of their different roles. The assessors must possess, or learn these attitudes during the training.

Appreciation of whole	A holistic appreciation of the APL process and the placement of the assessee at the centre.
Attention to detail	Highly observant; ability to handle detail.
Cultural and linguistic sensitivity	The assessor shows empathy, and develops a multicultural attitude towards people with a different cultural or linguistic background.
Independency	The assessor makes his evaluation on his own, with respect to observations and evaluation forms.
Integrity	High level of honesty and truthfulness. Ability to maintain ethical norms in job related activities. Respect for the privacy of the assessee.
Interpersonal sensitivity	The assessor is attuned to interpersonal verbal and non-verbal communication and is able to put himself in the place of the assessee. Respects the feelings of the assessee.
Intrapersonal sensitivity	Awareness of own impact on other people by your own behaviour (especially. in test situations).
Readiness to listen	Asks relevant questions to clarify what is not clear. Listens attentively to the assessee.
Support	The assessee must feel himself at ease.
Tenacity	Perseverance and ability to stay with a problem.
Tolerance	Stability of performance under pressure and/or opposition.
Working with others	The assessor compares the result of his assessment with the result (in decision making) of the second assessor and they reach a common decision.

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5. Common Training Programme for Assessors

The aim of this programme is to provide trainees with the skills, knowledge and competence to become qualified assessors in the APL process. The trainee will be able to apply the methodological tools at his disposal, and be capable of adapting them to individual situations.

This three-day training programme is the suggested minimum training required for the assessors. For maximum effectiveness and quality it is recommended that ongoing training or mentoring be provided for assessors so that they can refine their skills and competences.

Throughout the training programme assessors should be encouraged to reflect on, and examine, their own attitudes to the APL process, the acquisition of knowledge and competence, standards, and observation biases...

Some parts of the training programme for assessors are strongly related to national standards, national educational frameworks, specific target groups etc. These aspects are not included in this training programme.

This is also the case for quality assurance: the quality assurance for APL is a part of the quality assurance system or total management quality system for the whole organisation.

We focus upon topics which can be developed irrespective of a national context. The working group identified four basic modules which are important for each assessor.

5.1. Introduction of APL: definition, targets

The overall objective is to give the new assessor an overview of the APL- procedure and his/her role as assessor.
- What is APL?
- Aims of APL;
- target groups;
- definitions of formal, non- formal and informal learning;
- what are competences and what are the tools used to measure them?

- Role of the assessor in the APL- process;
- code of conduct for assessors.

Possible duration: minimum 1/2 day

5.2. Interviewing/ communication techniques

The overall objective is to train the assessor in some techniques used in the APL- process, such as:

- Criterion- based interview (e.g. STAR method, Rogerian Method...);
- active listening:
  - Showing empathy;
  - giving emotional support.

- clarifying and structuring, paraphrasing and summarising:
  - Using open questions.
- giving feedback.

Possible duration: minimum 1 day

5.3. Portfolio assessment: Translation of evidence material into standards: hands- on analysis of cases (in a sectoral context)

The overall objective is to train the assessor in the assessment of a portfolio by assessing the evidence provided using agreed criteria.
- Tools:
  - Structured portfolio;
  - occupational standards;
  - checklist for portfolio evaluation;
  - interview grid.

- The quality of written or oral evidence: authenticity, topicality, relevance, quantity, variation of evidence.
- The relationship between evidence and competences.

Possible duration: minimum 1/2 day

5.4. Assessment in practical test situation

The overall objective is to train the assessor in the assessment of a practical test situation and in observation at the workplace. (It is recognised in some countries, that practical assessment takes place in the workplace. It is agreed that this is an acceptable practice.

- Methods: portfolio analysis, interview, practice test, observation in workplace.
- Process and product evaluation.
- Tools:
  - Occupational standards;
  - self assessment;
  - observation grid.

- The use of an observation grid.
- Deriving conclusions when using an observation grid.
- Information about the construction of practice tests:
  - Practical tests in a simulated situation;
  - observation in the workplace.

Possible duration: minimum 1 day

A. The APL procedure and the role of the assessor

Objectives	The assessor will be able to:
	- State the aim of APL;
	- explain the path/ process of APL in his/her country or organisation;
	- explain the value of APL for the individual and society;
	- explain the relation between experience and competences
	  acquired by formal, non-formal and informal learning in the context of the of APL;
	- explain the role and responsibilities of the assessor in the process;
	- explain the range of methods and tools used in APL in their country and
	  explain which ones relate to their specific context;
	- apply these concepts in relation to his/her role as assessor;
	- explain his duties in relation to the code of conduct.

Method	Presentation - Success stories: testimonials; - directed discussion; - case studies in group: interactive session; - self study of text material
Contents	• What is APL? • Aims of APL. • Target groups. • Formal and informal learning. • What are competences and what tools are used to measure them? • Role of the assessor. • Code of conduct for assessors.
Exercises	Reflective group work about the implementation of APL in the task of the assessor: what are the main changes in the way an assessor assesses and what are the consequences. Discussion and agreement on the definition of competence in the specific occupation.
Duration	1/2 day

B. Communication and interviewing skills

Objectives	The assessor will be able to: - Probe the assessee to elicit further evidence and link that evidence to competences; - effectively use communication techniques in evaluation of a portfolio and a practical test; - give feedback on the test results; - interview the candidate about his work method and the reasoning behind it; - reflect on their own interview techniques.
Method	- Presentation: communication is verbal and non-verbal, development of listening skills; - training: how to ask open questions, listening skills, follow-up; - interview in role play; - presentation: summary of common problems and pitfalls with suggested solutions ("DO'S AND DONT'S').

Content	Criterion- based interviewing techniques (STAR method, Rogerian Method, or other).
	• Active listening
	  - Showing empathy.
	  - giving emotional support.
	• Clarifying and structuring, paraphrasing and summarising:
	  - Using open questions
	• Giving feedback.

Exercises	- Role play: script for the trainer (design of a situation), script for assessor and APL- candidate, feedback upon interview: tips about good practice, second role play: are tips put into practice? - Using clarifying questions, in- depth questions. - Highlighting typical evaluation mistakes e.g. personal bias... - Brainstorming about how to avoid typical evaluation mistakes using case studies
Duration	1 day

C. Portfolio assessment

Objectives	The assessor will be able to: - Describe the content of a portfolio - explain the purpose of a portfolio in an APL process; - assess the evidence against given standards; - produce a report which describes the competences observed, indicate the gaps and suggest further action.
Method	- Directed teaching with examples - Working group: assess a portfolio and produce a short report.

Content	- The elements of a portfolio: different types of evidence;
	- The quality of written or oral evidence: authenticity, topicality, relevance, variation of evidence
	- The relationship between activities and competences
	- Tools:
	  • structured portfolio;
	  • checklist for portfolio judgement;
	  • occupational standards;
	  • self assessment;
	  • interview grid.

Exercises	- The use of existing sample portfolios (or creation of fictitious ones) for discussion and evaluation. - Weighing evidence against a standard: hands-on analysis sectorally specific examples. - Produce a short report. - Exercises in duo, use of a list of critical aspects, plenary discussion. - Exercises in duo with an evaluation grid, plenary discussion. - Comparison in duo of the evidence in a portfolio with an occupational standard. - Individual score by the assessors, compromise afterwards
Duration	1/2 day

D. Assessment in practical test situations

Objectives	The assessor will be able to:
	- explain the relationship between evaluation criteria, tasks and performance indicators (explain how the tool is built).
	- use an observation grid
	- organise the arrangement of a practical test
	- instruct the candidate on his/her assignment
	- use the tool (observation grid, behaviour indicators)
	- make conclusions out of an observation grid
	- interview the candidate about the gaps
	- give feedback to the candidate
	- confer with the colleague assessor
Method	- Application of an existing observation grid in the technical domain of the assessor.
	- Simulation of an assessment function as a co- assessor together with a more experienced assessor.
Content	- Process and product evaluation
	- Occupational standards
	- Observation grid:
	- the use of an observation grid
	- deriving conclusions
	- information about the construction of practice tests
	- Practice tests:
	• In a simulated situation;
	• in the workplace.
Exercises	- Analysis of video case-study.
	- Role play with four characters: assessee, assessor, co-assessor and observer.
	- Making a report in relation to observation material
	- Construction of a test when objectives are given.
	- To come to a conclusion by compromise, bases upon observation material.
Duration	1 day

Accreditation of prior learning