Transnational Peer Review for quality assurance in Validation of Non Formal and Informal Learning (VNFIL)

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Erasmus +“Peer Review VNFIL Extended”

Quality assurance for VNFIL

an instrument to promote permeability, flexible pathways and recognition of prior learning in continuous higher education.
Erasmus + “Peer Review VNFIL Extended”

What was the general aim?

• To promote permeability, flexible pathways and recognition of prior learning in continuous higher education

Who worked together?

• Partners from the VET and PHE worked together to set up a Quality assessment tool to enhance the quality and visibility of VNFIL-provision.

Which method was used?

• QS of Validation procedures throughout Peer reviews
General goals of Peer Review VNFIL Extended

Higher quality of VNFIL provision for clients of VNFIL providers:

**Practice:**
Set up, test & implement a Peer Review method for VNFIL providers

**Policies:**
Underpinned advice and plans for the use of Peer Review in quality policies on National and European level
Specific goals of Peer Review VNFIL

Libereaux: enlarge added value of VNFIL for candidates
WBA: learn about quality assurance in VNFIL
Vilniaus VTC: professionalise VNFIL provision
CIBC: standardize current VNFIL practices
Citeforma: improve professional competences of practitioners
BOKU: further development of validation process
Frauenstiftung: improve identification process and portfolio
ISLA: improve performance concerning ‘certification’
AK Salzburg: attract people who could benefit from VNFIL
Vigor: professionalization of assessors
NUCZV: integration of validation in guidance
One particularly promising instrument of quality assurance and development is Peer Review – the external evaluation of VNFIL institutions/providers by Peers.

Peer Review can build on quality activities already in place at a VNFIL institution/provider, it is cost-effective and it fosters networking and exchange between providers of validation of non-formal and informal learning.

It can also help providers of VET and PHE to work together which will offer permeability and flexible pathways.

The use of Peer Reviews in VNFIL for VET and PHE could become a possible European standard procedure.
Erasmus +“Peer Review VNFIL Extended”

A tool box will be introduced for interested Institutions of PHE and VET to complement and enhance the usual quality assurance systems in Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning (VNFIL).
“It's time for the executive performance reviews, Fenwick. I'll do you if you'll do me.”
What to expect...

- Rationale and „Making of“
- Quality standards
- Peer Review and European policies
- Aims, principles and basic characteristics

Elements

- What is the procedure?
- What is evaluated?
- Who are the Peers?
- How can Peer Reviews be organised?
Rationale and „Making of“ Quality Standards
European Peer Review Introduction

European policies
National policies

External evaluation

European Peer Review

Networking
Mutual learning

Provider needs

Improvement
European policy development in VET and Peer Review

Primeval Times

- Before Lisbon presidency conclusions
- Copenhagen Declaration
- Cedefop Quality Group VET 2000-2002

Peer Review in initial VET
- 2004-2007
- CQAF
- TWG on Quality in VET 2003-2004

Peer Review Extended
- 2007
- Tool-box

Peer Review Extended II
- 2007 - 2009
- Thematic WG Peer Review 2008-2009

EQAVET Recommendation
- 2009

EQAVET 2010 cont.
Development and quality standards

Research of good practice in Peer Review

Evaluation Standards

European Peer Review

Providers

QA systems

Needs and Requirements
Project Partners

Implementation on national/regional level

Austria, Finland, Hungary, Portugal, Latvia
What is the European Peer Review?
Definition and main characteristics

The European Peer Review is a voluntary, formative, external evaluation procedure within the profession and in a network.
European Peer Review

Aim ➔

Peer Review supports quality improvement and development

“improve not prove”
Peer Review as formative evaluation

Outward-looking Accountability

Control

Growth

Professionalism
Inward-looking

Responsibility

Power

Responsiveness

Trust

Map adapted from Nisbet 1990
How is a European Peer Review conducted?

The procedure

Peer Review combines self-evaluation with external evaluation.

- Follows a systematic procedure (4 phases).
- Relies on qualitative methods, makes use of quantitative data.
Phases of a European Peer Review

Phase 1
Preparation (min. 3 months)
- Getting started
- Inviting Peers
- Self-Evaluation and Self-Report
- Preparing the Peer Visit

Phase 2
Peer Visit (2 to 3 days)
- Collecting data
- Analysing data
- Oral feedback

Phase 3
Peer Report (4 weeks)
- Draft report
- Comments of the VET Provider
- Final report

Phase 4
Implementation (6 to 12 months)
- Formulating targets
- Clarifying resources
- Action plan and putting into action
- Planning next Review
Who evaluates?

Peers

- Independent colleagues from other providers who are on an equal standing with those whose performance is reviewed.

- Additionally, a Stakeholder-Peer can be included and a transnational Peer (from another country).
Project Partners

Implementation on national/regional level

→ Austria, Finland, Hungary, Portugal, Latvia

Background peers
Who is a Peer?

A Peer is a person,

- who is an equal of or is on equal standing with the person(s) whose performance is reviewed
- who works in a similar environment (and/or in a similar institution)
- who is external (i.e. from a different institution) and independent (has no personal/institutional "stakes" in the evaluation process)

and

- has specific professional expertise and knowledge in the field (shares values, professional competence and attitudes, language…)
- thus bringing to some extent “inside” knowledge of the object of review into the process and combining it with the external view of somebody coming from a different organisation (“external insider”).
What is being evaluated?

Quality Areas

Institutional evaluation, not individual people

- Professional process (VNFIL process) at the centre of each Peer Review (core QA)
- Transnational Peer Reviews: European Quality Areas
- Can also be used with any other suitable quality framework.
- Provider decides on QA & evaluation questions.
European Quality Areas: Validation (RVC)

- Quality Area 1: Attracting
- Quality Area 2: Guidance
- Quality Area 3: Recognition
- Quality Area 4: Validation
- Quality Area 5: Outcomes & impact of RVC
- Quality Area 6: Organisation
- Quality Area 7: Staff
- Quality Area 8: Partnerships
- Quality Area 9: Resources
- Quality Area 10: Evaluation

Core Quality Areas (QA 1,2,3,4,5), 2 Quality Areas, at least 1 from core QA.
Chosen QA's

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Definition of evaluation

Definition:

_evaluation is the systematic investigation of an evaluand's *worth* or *merit*.

*Evaluands include programmes, studies, products, schemes, services, organisations, policies, technologies, and research projects.*

*The results, conclusions and recommendations shall derive from comprehensible, empirical qualitative and/or quantitative data.*

Selected Comments to the Standards for Evaluation of the German Evaluation Society.
Peer Review as external evaluation

- External formative evaluation

  ➔ Aim: support the provider in its endeavour to improve the quality of its provision ("improve not prove")

  ➔ Within the profession (in vocational guidance and counselling of adults) through “critical friends”: colleagues from similar institutions

  ➔ Voluntary decision of Provider to participate;

  ➔ Ownership: findings are reported to Provider who decides upon further use

  ➔ Evaluation on the level of the Provider (institutional level)

  ➔ Qualitative procedure:
    - qualitative evaluation methods,
    - use of existing quantitative data

  ➔ Evaluation in a network
Organisation of Peer Reviews
Organisation of Peer Reviews

- Single Peer Review
- Mutual Peer Reviews
- Peer Reviews in “small network" (up to 5)
- Peer Reviews in “big network" (6+) – coordination ambitious

Increase in:
- Complexity
- Structure
- Standardisation
Single Peer Review

Other institution
Peer
Peer
Peer
reviewed institution
Peer
Other institution
Peer
Other institution; Stakeholder
Other institution
Other institution
Mutual Peer Reviews
Peer Reviews „in a circle“
Common Peer Team

Institution A

Institution C

Institution B

Peer Team

Institution sends Peer

Peers evaluate Institution
Organisation in European Network

Common teams

In a circle

Peer Pool

mutual

Peer applications

Selection Peers, Matching, Training

Network Coordination

Support & Monitoring

Peer Review
European Network