

Quality in validation (of non-formal and informal learning)

24.-25.5.2012, Turku

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Quality assurance 1

- Quality is a wide term and hard to define => I would rather discuss **quality assurance mechanisms** that steer the validation process
- Validation occurs in various very different contexts, therefore quality assurance mechanisms have to be varied in order to ensure fit for purpose validation process

Quality assurance 2

- Quality assurance is discussed relatively little with reference to validation
- Most policy documents stress the importance of quality assurance when developing, implementing or carrying out a validation process
- Quality assurance is sometimes regarded as a threat to the flexibility of the validation process OR it is seen as sufficient that the overall education system has a quality system.

Quality assurance 3

- The purpose of quality assurance is to ensure a validation process that guarantees the **individual** a fair, transparent, accessible, sustainable and accountable procedure
- **The individual is the most important stakeholder**
- The results of validation (cf. certification) should be widely accepted by the society (with special emphasis to working life). => Quality assurance procedure should include relevant stakeholders to increase trust and transparency of validation

Quality assurance 4

- ... however, there are certain principles that all validation systems **regardless of context** should take into consideration and systematically develop and implement them

Quality indicators 1

- Reliability of the system
 - Validation procedure is clearly described
 - Assessment process, results and methods are reliable and fit for purpose
 - Assessment procedures are constantly monitored, developed and improved
 - Assessment procedure is transparent to the individual (e.g. clear standards or learning outcomes and assessment criteria)

Quality indicators 2

- Sustainability of the system
 - Legislation and / or policies regarding validation
 - Financing mechanisms
 - Other resources (time, qualified staff etc.)
 - Trust in validation by all stakeholders

Quality indicators 3

- Validation standards
 - Are the expectations, obligations, norms or requirements expected in the validation process
=> prerequisite for trust and transparency of the system
 - Are the statements of learning outcomes to be assessed, the methodology used and level of performance reached
 - Must have the confidence of the stakeholders

Quality indicators 4

- Individual entitlements
 - Appeal procedures are in place
 - Guidance is available at any stage of the process
 - Validation procedure is easily accessible to individuals
 - Individuals are informed about validation and information is easily accessible

Quality indicators 5

- Involvement of stakeholders
 - **Relevant** stakeholders are involved in the process
 - Stakeholders are **motivated** and have a positive attitude towards validation
 - Stakeholders know the framework of the validation procedure
 - Stakeholders are **trained** for their roles (e.g. assessor, advisor, on-the-job learning tutor etc)
 - Stakeholders collaborate (e.g. Communities of practice, world of work and education...)

Quality indicators 6

- Monitoring procedures are in place
 - Internal audit
 - External audit
 - Statistics
 - Best practices
 - Case studies
 - Benchmarking

Misc. notions

- Describing qualifications or other learning units in terms of **learning outcomes** is a prerequisite for a transparent and fit for purpose validation
- Validation is not a qualification discount: at best validation motivates for further learning and provides more competent individuals

Misc. notions

- Question: Is it "safer" to accredit a person on the basis of a former diploma, certificate or any such formal document than to assess the person's competences gained in working life in a high-quality validation process?