

Abstract

In the context of the REFINE project – Recognizing Formal, Informal and Non-formal Education –, this report presents in detail the procedure developed by the Educational Sciences Section of the University of Geneva, which strongly resembles a procedure of recognition of informal and non-formal learning. Since 1977, under certain conditions, the University of Geneva has allowed non-holders of a “maturité” (the upper secondary diploma required for admittance to Swiss universities) to apply for admission to the first year of an undergraduate programme, in a given Faculty or Section.

In order to evaluate these applications, the Educational Sciences Section of the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences decided to establish an admission procedure based on the examination of each candidate’s dossier. This procedure (dossier, interview, mentoring, evaluation) will be analyzed and, insofar as possible, other tools for the recognition of informal and non-formal learning (as proposed by the REFINE project) will be introduced in a comparative perspective. The mentoring provided lays the stress on the different elements of the mentors’ task (administrative personnel, guidance counsellors and admission jury) and on the work accomplished by the candidate. A recognition of this procedure is proposed through the quantitative analysis of the academic progress (in terms of success, failure and drop-out rates) of students who fulfilled standard admission requirements and of non-holders of a “maturité”, over a period of 13 years.

Particular importance will be placed on the candidate’s study project in the admission process. In creating the dossier, and defining the study project, the candidate must identify and describe the skills she/he has acquired through professional, personal and other experience. This process highlights the relevance, coherence and feasibility of her/his academic project, and offers an interesting alternative to other tools that are proposed for the validation of informal and non-formal learning.