
Quality assurance arrangements

France - FRANCAS

What quality assurance arrangements are in place for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning in the organisations in your group? How is the quality of the process of recognition assured? If none yet, what plans do they have?

In France, the quality of the recognition of non-formal and informal learning largely depends on the public recognition of the organisation in which the individual is involved. Youth and popular education movements and networks such as Les Francas are a good example of this kind of recognised structures.

The following criteria (which were collectively defined in a group of civil society organisations together with the Youth, Sport and Associations Ministry – MJSVA-) contribute to the evaluation of the quality of learning attainments through voluntary activities:

- The aim and the date of creation of the organisation : this criteria gives the opportunity to appreciate the field of the voluntary activity
- Its level of involvement (local, national or international): *This criterion gives a more accurate idea of the activities and responsibilities of the person,*
- Its scope and volume of activities: The budget and financial capacity of the organisation is a good criterion to evaluate the responsibilities of the board and especially those of its treasurer.
- Member's affiliation to a Federation : This criterion gives a good reference to the general framework on which is based the action of the organisation in terms of goals, activities and organisation,
- The public recognition of the organisation: public funding, partners, agreements (« agréments »: recognised as a training organisation, agrément tourisme, ...)
- The number of workers, of volunteers, number of persons involved in the Board: This criterion gives information on the synergy between workers and volunteers and gives an idea of the level of autonomy of the volunteer,
- The number of members and the target group: it is a criterion to evaluate the the ability of the volunteer to adapt to a public, a context or given situations,
- The function of the volunteer (elected member or active member) : this criterion can help to define the link between know-how, competences with the targeted diploma if the volunteer is willing to obtain a diploma,
- The transferability of the competencies: For e.g. how to spot a treasurer's competencies and see how they could help to obtain an accountant diploma ?.

Quality assurance arrangements for the recognition of non-formal and informal education :

- Existence of the place where candidates can be received (In France, « point relais conseils »)
- Individual guidance for each candidate

Many training and learning centres offer an individual guidance for candidates. The State and regional governments give funding for this guidance. For unemployed candidates: the Conseil Régional will give subsidies, for working candidates, The OPCA «(Organismes Paritaires Collecteurs Agréés) will fund the guidance.

The quality of the process of the recognition is guaranteed by the State: National Education Ministry, Youth and Sports Ministry, Labour Ministry... each Ministry has its own criteria for its own diplomas. Concerning Youth and sports, the Ministry has just published a list of specifications to assure the quality of the process of guidance.

**What quality assurance arrangements are in place in relation to the specific tool(s) that you have tested?
How is the quality of the specific procedure assured?
If this is different in each organisation, please explain briefly**

In our organisation (Les Francas), a guidance process in 3 different steps has been established :

- First contact (Information, aims of the candidate) and partnership agreement (contractualisation),
- Work on the personal, social and professional story / path,
- Bridge between experience and competence

At this last stage, the guidance will focus on the appropriation of the certification benchmark description, the appropriation of the method to describe competencies, a methodological support to choose significant experiences and guidance to prepare the introduction to the jury.

A portfolio was created to support volunteers for the collection of their experiences and the analysis of their attainments.

In the light of your work in Refine, what do you think are the key features of a quality assurance arrangement for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning?

An effective recognition of non-formal and informal education by all the institutions and organisations hosting volunteers is a key element.

An important work is to be led with hosting organisations (associations, sport Clubs, cultural centres,...) so that they will guide and support themselves individuals for the recording and understanding of technical, social, pedagogical, etc. competencies.

What do you think is the **most effective kind of quality assurance arrangement** for recognition of non-formal and informal learning?

The appropriate method would be to gather organisations working in the field of formal, structures active in the field of non-formal and others in the field of informal education in order to have a common language and create the necessary bridges for the recognition.