



REFINE - REcognising Formal, Informal & Non-formal Education

First draft of a final proposal to the European Commission

Validpass – a portfolio of tools for the validation of non-formal and informal learning

We propose 'Validpass' as a portfolio of tools to facilitate and promote the validation of non-formal and informal learning. This is intended to echo the Europass portfolio of tools to facilitate and promote mobility.

Validpass consists of a series of supplements to record learning in different contexts and situations. It is designed to be flexible and adaptable to different target groups; not all tools would be used in all situations (see para 4 below).

1. Advice and guidance – a pre-requisite in all sectors and countries

All the tools should be used in a framework of advice and guidance – this was seen as absolutely essential by all partners:

- Advice, guidance, 'accompagnement' was seen by all as essential – examples have been provided. The precise form and extent of guidance may vary according to the target group and the purpose (and the resources available).
- A short 'training programme' or group guidance sessions were seen as useful and cost effective – the group can become a source of mutual support. Several examples of 'courses' have been provided by partners
- Principles and/or a code of conduct is very useful and should be targeted at different actors in the process (candidates, organisation giving the validation, organisations awarding the diploma, employers, social partners).
- The instructions, suggestions and examples given in written advice about completing forms should be varied according to the target group, the level of skills, competence and experience of the candidates, the domain/subject they are applying for and the purpose of the validation. This was seen as very important – a common set of tools cannot suit everyone and if care is not taken they will exclude rather than include some target groups. The answer to this must be to have flexibility and differing examples suggestions etc – this can only be delivered by skilful advice and guidance professionals who have experience of working with the particular target group.
- Particular and specific help will be required for those who have difficulties with reading and writing and/or have special learning needs.

2. Existing Europass tools could be used:

2.1 EuroCV

Partners had a number of specific criticisms and suggestions but generally this tool was seen as a useful starting point for validation.

A number of new additional questions were suggested that should be incorporated if the CV is used for validation. Since it is unlikely that the EC will want to change the EuroCV, we have picked up most of these suggestions in other supplements (see below).

A key criticism was the need for help in completing the CV (among all target groups), the fact that further prompting was necessary in some of the open questions, and the need for clearer instructions with more examples. Again, since it is unlikely that the EC will want to change the EuroCV, we have picked up most of these suggestions in para 3.1 below.

2.2 European Language Portfolio

Partners see this as a useful tool but not in all situations.

In particular it lacks any specific vocational, professional language/vocabulary. This is an area where linguists and vocational training experts need to work together to produce a further dimension to the tool that would meet this specific competence.

2.3 Diploma supplement

Partners saw this as useful for a formal general qualification but not for validation. There is a problem in completing the Diploma Supplement for people who have been awarded part or all of a diploma on the basis of validation.

Work is going on in various universities on this issue trying to construct it on the basis of competences - do we have any concrete suggestions at this stage?

2.4 Certificate supplement

Partners saw this as useful for a formal vocational qualification but not for validation. There does not seem to be a problem completing the Certificate Supplement for people who have been awarded part or all of a certificate on the basis of validation; this seems to be because the assessment of candidates for vocational awards follows very closely the curriculum and competences in the certificate.

Any comments?

3. New Validpass tools

3.1 CV Supplement

The key element that is missing from the EuroCV when it is used in the context of validation is that it is only retrospective. In a job application situation the prospective element is usually put in the covering letter but in a validation context almost all partners suggested that a prospective element allowing the candidate to set the application for validation in a forward-looking perspective should be part of a new set of tools. Suggested questions:

- Why are you applying for validation?

- Which course are you applying for?
- Which Diploma are you aiming at?
- What is your personal and/or professional development plan for the next few years (3years? 5 years?)?
- How does the course or diploma fit into that plan?
- Do you have (do you need?) the support of your employer? (This was seen as irrelevant by some partners but important for others where the employer may be a key player in providing the candidate with opportunities to gain skills and competences to complete the diploma requirements)

3.2 Paid professional work supplement

The idea behind this supplement is to give the candidate an opportunity to analyse in some detail one or more key learning events or processes in a professional/work context. The questions suggested are:

- Basic information: name of employer, sector, size (SME/PME etc), type (service, manufacturing, primary, secondary tertiary etc), start/finish date of employment, grade, salary (?)
- Role and function
- Responsibility: for people, for budgets, for equipment?
- Changes over time employed?
- A important and relevant learning event: a problem or issued addressed, a policy developed, a policy implemented, a project/task undertaken
 - What was the nature of the problem/task?
 - How long did you have to deal with it?
 - Where or who did it come from (did you identify it yourself or were you given the task by someone else)?
 - How did you go about solving the problem or achieving the task set?
 - What resources did you use (people, money, books, equipment,)
 - Were there unintended consequences? How did you deal with them?
 - What knowledge skills and competences did you learn from the task/activity?

3.3 Voluntary activity supplement

The idea behind this supplement is to give the candidate an opportunity to analyse in some detail one or more key learning events or processes in a voluntary context. The questions suggested are:

- Basic information: name of organisation/NGO, sector, size (local, national, international), user group, type of activities offered, start/finish date of involvement, amount of time given (e.g. hours per week)
- Role and function, activities
- Responsibility: for people, for budgets, for equipment, for users?
- Changes over time involved?
- What are your dreams? (A question to try to get at the values of the individual)
- What was your motivation for getting involved with this organisation (e.g. the philosophy, education or social aim, the people....)?
- What intercultural experience do you have?
- An important and relevant learning event: a problem or issued addressed, a policy developed, a policy implemented, a project/task undertaken
 - What was the nature of the problem/task?

- How long did you have to deal with it?
- Where or who did it come from (did you identify it yourself or were you given the task by someone else)?
- How did you go about solving the problem or achieving the task set?
- What resources did you use (people, money, books, equipment,)
- Were there unintended consequences? How did you deal with them?
- What knowledge skills and competences did you learn from the task/activity

3.4 Non-formal education and training supplement

The idea behind this supplement is to give the candidate an opportunity to analyse in some detail one or more key learning events or processes in a non-formal education context (e.g. adult education course).

- Basic information: title of course, provider, start and finish date, number of hours,
- Content
- Mode of delivery (how did you learn):
 - Lecture, workshop, project, fieldwork, placement,
 - Individual independent work , group work
 - Face to face, distance or e-learning, blended
- What motivated you to take this course?
- What knowledge skills and competences did you learn through this course?
- An important and relevant learning event: a problem or issued addressed, a policy developed, a policy implemented, a project/task undertaken
 - What was the nature of the problem/task?
 - How long did you have to deal with it?
 - Where or who did it come from (did you identify it yourself or were you given the task by someone else)?
 - How did you go about solving the problem or achieving the task set?
 - What resources did you use (people, money, books, equipment,)
 - Were there unintended consequences? How did you deal with them?
 - What knowledge skills and competences did you learn from the task/activity
- Do you use your new skills and competences in your personal/social/civic life? Have they been useful?
- Did your new skills and competences improve your social status?
- Are you motivated to continue learning? In what way?

3.5 Informal learning supplement

Can you describe an event, incident, activity, or process where unintentionally you learned some important and relevant:

- What was the nature of the event of incident or activity?
- When was it? How long did it last?
- What knowledge skills and competences did you learn from the incident/activity/process?
- How is it relevant to your application for validation?

4. Using Validpass

Validpass is designed to be flexible and adaptable to suit target groups, different purposes, levels, institutions, types of course or diploma.

4.1 Flexibility

- Not all the supplements have to be used in any situations – those that are most relevant and appropriate should be selected for the particular purpose and target group
- Some supplements could be omitted
- Some could be replicated (e.g. several work supplements)
- Candidates could be asked to complete several supplements of the same kind focusing in different ways depending on the criteria for validation. For example: if range is important, the candidate could be asked to complete one work supplement that focuses on a small issue, and one on a big issue; or if progression is important, one that focuses on a problem 3 years ago and one very recent.
- If the candidate is looking for a professional diploma s/he might be asked just for work supplements; if the candidate is looking for a diploma related to the voluntary sector then s/he might be asked for several voluntary sector supplements etc

4.2 Adaptability

- Language of the supplement and the instructions should be changed to suit the particular target group
- The examples, prompts and suggestions given the instructions and in the forms themselves should be changed to suit the particular group

5. Questions for discussion:

5.1 Do you have any comments on the general idea?

5.2 Do you have any comments and suggestions on specific supplements or specific questions?

We really need your feedback on this proposal – it comes from your individual and collective work – and the proposal will be made on your behalf. So please be prepared to give some feedback at the meeting in Rome where we have set aside a whole morning to discuss it. And please consult your partners after the meeting and give more feedback by e-mail to Pat Davies (pat.davies@univ-lille1.fr) **by 7 December 2005 at the latest.**

Thank you all for your hard work.