

Skills valorisation and validation

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

REGULATION/LEGISLATION

 BELGIUM-FR

Timeline



ID number 28035

Background

In the French-speaking part of Belgium, workers and jobseekers have the possibility of obtaining official recognition of professional skills and acquired experience.

Three specific systems have been developed:

- (a) the Skills Validation Consortium with a skills validation system;
- (b) the recognition of prior experience and learning (valorisation des acquis de l'expérience, VAE) for higher education common to adult education, university colleges and the universities;
- (c) and the recognition of prior experience and learning specific to the secondary level of adult education.

Those systems aim at:

- (a) facilitating and promoting access to training or education;
- (b) certifying specific skills related to a trade (by obtaining a skills credential, *Titre de compétence*);
- (c) recognising technical qualifications.

At European level these three systems are considered as validation of non-formal and informal learning.

In recent years, new policies have been implemented in the French-speaking part of Belgium to frame valorisation and validation arrangements. The Valorisation of Acquired Experience (VAE) enables adults who are planning to return to education to gain access to Adult Education, e.g. by streamlining the learning process and where appropriate, reducing the length of studies. It is a process for assessing and recognising knowledge and skills acquired through experience (professional and personal) and/or training, for access to or completion of studies. The skills validation system enables skills to be recognised through a series of validation tests. When these are passed, they give access to skills qualifications that are a gateway to the world of work. This scheme is aimed at people who have learned a trade 'on the job' or who have skills but no formal qualifications.

Objectives

Official and social recognition of professional competences (ensuring visibility to all skills of both workers and jobseekers older than 18 through certification, access to adult education and higher education, access to job orientation, and access to recruitment).

Description

In Adult Education, since 2017, the procedure for valorisation of acquired skills is framed by the decree of the Government of the French Community of 29 November 2017 (with reference to Article 8 of the decree of 16 April 1991 organising Adult Education). Valorisation aims to give access to courses for which learners do not have official prerequisite, to obtain exemptions from a part of a course or to obtain the certificate of the course in which they master the learning outcomes. The study boards of the institutions are responsible for the procedure using the educational files (*dossiers pédagogiques*); these are the same for all the institutions and form the common educational reference for each programme. The decree also aims at allowing greater mobility for learners by delivering the certificate of a course gained by valorisation. This certificate is recognised by all the other institutions of adult education. This new decree has been implemented since 2018 and defines the procedures for the valorisation of acquired experience and the main stages for the valorisation procedure; it standardises the way the 150 colleges of adult education institutions valorise students' acquired experience.

In higher education (University colleges, adult education and universities), personalised admissions are foreseen by the legislation of 7 November 2013. For the purpose of admission to higher education studies, a jury may valorise credits acquired by students in the course (or parts) of higher education studies, which they have already successfully completed (*valorisation des acquis de l'expérience*, VAE). Students are exempted from the corresponding parts of the study programme. The government may also establish agreements with public training providers with a view to valorising the achievements of such training during the admission process for short-type studies. This process was improved in 2018, making it more transparent (implementation of the 2017 Decree). Finally, the juries in the institutions may also valorise the knowledge and skills acquired through their professional or personal experience (minimum five years of activity). The jury will then judge whether the student's skills and knowledge are sufficient to complete the studies. The French Community finances continuing education courses organised by HEIs, access to which must be guaranteed by the recognition of prior experience and learning.

In 2019, the cooperation agreement on Validation of non-formal and informal learning was concluded between the Walloon Region, the French Community and the French Community Commission. It organises procedures aimed at verifying the knowledge, skills and professional aptitudes of adults to obtain a skills credential recognised by the associated service providers.

2017 Implementation

2018 Implementation

2019 Implementation

On 21 March 2019, vocational training: a new cooperation agreement concluded between the Walloon Region, the French Community and the French Community Commission. The governments have chosen the option of proposing a new text for the sake of readability without questioning the philosophy of the 2003 cooperation agreement, establishing the skills validation system in vocational training. The modernisation of the agreement is also based on the momentum initiated by the European Recommendation of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning and supported by ESF resources. The modifications concern points such as: new definition of target audience (removal of the restrictive list, which could exclude certain audiences); stronger legal basis for innovations already initiated or to

come; and possibility of transmission of data to public employment services. More information can be found in the 2019 Skills Validation Consortium activity report.

2020 Implementation

In 2020, the Skills Validation Consortium completed the definition of a new Strategic orientation note (Nostra) framing the priority actions for 2020 to 2024. The four strategic axes for the coming years are:

- (a) improve the reactivity of the offer to meet better the skills needs of various publics (improve regulation, consultation and accessibility of the validation offer in the centres, diversify the methods of evaluating skills);
- (b) strengthen the validation public service (communication strategy, partnerships);
- (c) develop the value of use of qualifications (monitor the use of skills credentials, facilitate lifelong learning paths);
- (d) strengthen the governance of the validation of skills (implement the new 2019 cooperation agreement, staff support).

Each of these four axes includes general objectives that guide the priorities of the Skills Validation Consortium (CVDC). Each general objective is also broken down into operational objectives making it possible to achieve them.

2021 Implementation

In 2021, the Skills Validation Consortium continued the implementation of the priorities stated in the strategic orientation note (2020-24). Details can be found in the 2021 Skills Validation Consortium activity report.

2022 Design

In 2022, preparatory phase of legal changes: adult education is brainstorming about legal changes to improve the accessibility of the valorisation of prior learning on formal, non-formal and informal basis. Results are expected for the academic year 2023-24.

2023 Implementation

In 2023, the Skills Validation Consortium continued the implementation of the priorities outlined in the strategic orientation note (2020-24) while celebrating its 20 years of existence. The Walloon Recovery Plan boosted its activities in Wallonia, allowing the Consortium to achieve pre-Covid-19 performance levels. The activities have also increased in the Brussels Region.

Comprehensive descriptions of these activities, along with annual results and comparisons, can be found in the activity report.

2024 Implementation

The 2024-29 legislature positions the recognition, valorisation and validation of prior learning at the core of education and training policies, emphasising it as a key lever for skills development, training and employment.

In 2024, 6 759 skills certificates were awarded across 57 occupations, which is the highest activity level since the creation of the skills validation system. This increase in services to the public has been made possible thanks to the initiatives of the involved stakeholders.

On 13 December 2024, the Decree 'Procedures for the recognition of prior learning for admission, partial or full exemption in one or more course units in Adult education' of the Government of the French-speaking Community of Belgium was adopted. The decree simplifies and clarifies the procedures for recognising prior learning in adult education within the French Community of Belgium.

2025 Implementation

On 1st January 2025, the Decree 'Procedures for the Recognition of Prior Learning for admission, partial or full exemption in one or more course units in Adult education' came into force. Validated units grant official certificates, which can be accumulated and allow access to the final examination unit and a degree. This reform enhances transparency, reduces administrative burden, and ensures fair recognition of diverse learning paths. It aims to improve accessibility, lifelong learning, and employability by valuing all forms of prior learning. The decree also aims at allowing greater mobility for learners by delivering the certificate of a course gained by valorisation. This certificate is recognised by all the 150 institutions of adult education.

Further, in 2025 a decision-support tool was established to guide a multi-provider strategy, thereby enabling the Steering Committee and Consultative and Approval Commission to jointly shape the development of the offer in a spirit of shared responsibility [public institutions, Skills Validation Consortium (*Consortium de validation des compétences*, CVDC), partners etc.]. This tool provides the basis for prioritising and deciding on the:

- (a) production of new occupational standards;
- (b) accreditation of centres;
- (c) scheduling of assessments by providers and their centres.

This mechanism addresses societal needs and aligns with the systemic reform agenda that centres job seekers within the system. Recent restructuring announcements at Audi and Cora exemplify how economic shifts can abruptly disrupt employment, highlighting the relevance of orientations in the Common Policy Declaration, which calls for enhanced coordination among providers, and in the Regional Policy Declarations, which emphasise employability, training, and skills validation as key levers for resilience. By operationalising these orientations, the decision-support tool ensures coherent governance, translating policy commitments into timely, coordinated and forward-looking actions in skills validation and labour market integration.

On 11 September, the Consultative and Approval Commission (CODA) held an intersectoral meeting on validation of learning. The session addressed future developments of the French-speaking Belgian skills validation system in the context of reforms in education and training, with contributions from France and Cedefop.

In the beginning of 2025, the Government of the French Community formally launched the Contract, which outlines new guidelines for adult education. The contract seeks to reposition Adult Education as a key driver of employability, upskilling, and personal development. It aims to modernise adult education by making it more flexible, inclusive, aligned with socio-economic needs, ensuring quality, and lifelong learning opportunities. It promotes micro credentials that can be accumulated towards full diplomas, supporting initial qualification, reskilling, or upskilling. The model emphasises lifelong learning and the sustainable return to studies through flexible pathways, hybrid learning, and recognition of prior experience.

The general orientations of the 2035 Contract are:

- (a) structuring lifelong skills development via modular, capitalisable certifications (accumulated and gradually recognised to count toward obtaining a degree);
- (b) improving professional integration by adapting training offers to local socio-economic demands;
- (c) increasing flexibility and individualisation of learning paths, recognising previous training and work experience;
- (d) engaging institutions in continuous quality improvement, both in pedagogy and governance;
- (e) strengthening student support systems, particularly for under-qualified adults, to foster engagement and success.

Besides, since 25 August 2025, the French name for adult education has changed, from *enseignement de promotion sociale* to *enseignement pour adultes*.

Bodies responsible

- Skills Validation Consortium (CVDC)
- Ministry of Vocational Training in the Brussels Region
- Ministry of Vocational Training in the Walloon Region
- Ministry of the French Community

Target group

Learners

Young people (15-29 years old)
Adult learners
Older workers and employees (55 - 64 years old)
Unemployed and jobseekers

Thematic categories

Transparency and portability of VET skills and qualifications

Learners' possibilities of accumulation, validation and recognition of learning outcomes acquired non-formally and informally

Supporting lifelong learning culture and increasing participation

Permeability between IVET and CVET and general and vocational pathways, academic and professional higher education

Subsystem

CVET

Further reading

[Decree of the Government of the French Community of 29 November 2017 defining the procedures for the valorisation of acquired experience](#)

[Cooperation agreement of 2019 between the French Community, the Walloon Region and the French Community Commission](#)

[Decree 2024 on Procedures for the Recognition of Prior Learning \(RPL\) for admission, partial or full exemption in one or more course units in Adult education](#)

[Skills Validation Consortium activity reports](#)

[Cedefop information hub on validation of non-formal and informal learning](#)

“ ... ” Cite as

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<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/28035>