

Validation of non-formally acquired skills

POLICY DEVELOPMENT**PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE** GERMANY

Timeline

2019 Implementation	2020 Implementation	2021 Implementation
2022 Implementation	2023 Implementation	2024 Implementation
2025 Implementation		

ID number 50231

Background

In 2014, there was no systematic and standardised approach for validation in place, though elements of a national strategy were under development. Therefore, a working group was established by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) on validation of non-formal and informal competences.

Objectives

The objectives of a standardised approach for validation of non-formally acquired skills are:

- (a) to promote the validation of non-formally and informally acquired skills for people without (recognised) vocational qualification and expand any necessary adaptation qualifications, thus increasing skills visibility and opportunities for applicants on the job market
- (b) ultimately, to set up a nationwide uniform validation system.

Description

The ValiKom project aimed to promote the validation of non-formally and informally acquired skills in Germany and was initiated by the German Confederation of Skilled Crafts (DHK) and the German Chambers of Commerce and Industry (DIHK), together with the Federal Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF). ValiKom was considered a reference project for setting up a validation system in Germany. It addressed adults who acquired skills and competences through work but lacked a formal qualification, including those who wished to access further training. The approach referred to the prevailing training regulations and occupational profiles and led to certificates (*Gleichwertigkeitsfeststellung*) expressing the extent to which the skills demonstrated were equivalent to those gained under the Vocational Training Act.

The participating chambers of industry, commerce and trade started trials in April 2017. Interim results were presented to the broad public at a conference in Berlin in December

2017. The final results of the Valikom project were published in a report that described the process, admission criteria, instruments, certificate of validation and recommendations at the end of 2018. The follow-up project, ValiKom Transfer (2018-21), extended the validation procedure developed to more chambers. Procedures to credit non-formal and informal learning had been developed and tested in the past in the *Transitions from VET to higher education* initiative (*Übergänge von der beruflichen in die hochschulische Bildung – ANKOM*).

2019 Implementation

In 2019, the project *ValiKom Transfer* (2018-21), continued its implementation, extending the validation procedure to 30 chambers throughout Germany: 11 chambers of skilled crafts, 17 chambers of industry and commerce and 2 chambers of agriculture.

2020 Implementation

In January 2020, a new video on Valikom transfer was produced by the West German Association of Chambers of Skilled Crafts (WHKT), explaining the validation procedure to potential beneficiaries.

The measure 'Establishment of competence centres for the implementation of validation procedures for dual occupations' (ValiKom-Transfer; budget: ca. 10 million EUR) aimed to expand and broadly transfer the standardised procedure for recording, reviewing, assessing and certifying informally and non-formally acquired vocational competences developed and tested in ValiKom for selected occupations for people without vocational qualifications and for qualified career changers.

By the end of November 2020, 702 validation procedures had been carried out by the 30 chambers participating in Valikom transfer.

2021 Implementation

In 2021, a summary of the results of the accompanying scientific research in the *ValiKom Transfer* project was published. It provides a comprehensive insight into the information collected on the individual procedural steps of the validation, as well as the knowledge gained about the participants in the validation procedure. Based on this, an assessment of the benefits of the validation from the perspective of the participants and the company was provided.

The validation process under the *ValiKom Transfer* projects was open to all adults, nationals and migrants, over the age of 25, who had relevant work experience. It provided the possibility of having competences acquired outside formal education validated in the course of an external assessment by the competent bodies, i.e. the chambers. Missing competences could be acquired in a targeted manner to finally obtain full equivalence referenced through the issuing of a validation certificate.

2022 Implementation

The follow-up project *ValiKom Transfer* was extended until October 2024: further chamber locations were set up at which validation procedures were carried out. In addition to 13 chambers of skilled trades (including 2 new chambers) and 17 chambers of industry and commerce, 2 chambers of agriculture were also involved in the project. Thus, a nationwide offer was established so that people who were interested in the validation of their professional competences in dual professions could find a chamber as a responsible validation centre within a reasonable distance. The aim was to prepare and offer validation procedures for a total of 40 occupations in industry, trade, crafts and agriculture.

In the form of a pilot project, closer cooperation between employment agencies, job centres and *ValiKom* project chambers was tested at six selected locations from April 2022. The aim of the project was to gather findings on how a targeted cooperation

between chambers and employment agencies or job centres could be established in order to increase the labour market opportunities of unemployed people and enable more targeted further development. The pilot project was accompanied scientifically.

Information events to increase the awareness of *ValiKom Transfer* were carried out. For example, on 4 May 2022, the Stuttgart Region Chamber of Skilled Crafts (HWK) and the Stuttgart Region Chamber of Industry and Commerce (IHK) jointly held an online multiplier event on the topic of *Making professional skills visible - with the ValiKom transfer certificate*. To increase visibility, three short films accompanied protagonists on their way through the validation process. The three series on the occupations of warehouse logistics specialist, electronics technician and gardener and landscaper are available on Youtube.

2023 Implementation

The project *ValiKom Transfer* continued to implement validations procedures in further chamber locations (chambers of skilled crafts, chambers of industry and commerce, chambers of agriculture). Valikom Transfer cooperated in 2023 with the nationwide project 'TalentPASS - identifying, validating and upskilling' aimed at people with a recognised severe disability who were employed and had no formal recognition for their job. Among other things, the TalentPASS project offered this target group the opportunity to have their professional skills assessed and certified by a chamber using the Valikom validation procedure.

2024 Implementation

The ValiKom Transfer project ended on 31 October 2024. In July 2024, the Act on vocational training validation and digitisation (BVaDiG) was passed. For the first time, people (25 and older) without a formal vocational qualification are entitled to have their vocational skills assessed and certified against the standards of a dual training occupation.

However, the Bertelsmann Foundation criticised the law as insufficient: It shall only provide for 1150 validations per year, while there are 4.4 million low-skilled workers and 1.7 million job vacancies. Despite minor progress and planned evaluations, the effectiveness of the law in securing skilled workers remains questionable.

To support the implementation of the BVaDiG Act, the BMBF established a Validation Service Centre. This BMBF-funded project (EUR 2.8 million), which shall run from 1 November 2024 to 31 October 2026, shall ensure the transfer of expertise from the preliminary projects Valikom and Valikom Transfer. The Validation Service Centre shall promote the new validation service, further develop expertise among chambers that are willing and able to implement the system, as well as further standardise structures and processes.

2025 Implementation

From 1 January 2025, professional skills can be assessed by the competent chamber using the new legally regulated assessment procedure: the Vocational training validation and digitisation act (BVaDiG). The Validation Service Centre started its work.

Bodies responsible

- Federal Ministry for Education, Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMBFSFJ) (since 2025)
- Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) (until 2025)
- Association of German Chambers of Industry and Commerce (DIHK)
- Central Office for Further Education in Skilled Crafts (ZWH e.V.)
- German Confederation of Chambers of Skilled Crafts (DHKT)
- West German Association of Chambers of Skilled Crafts (WHKT)

Target group

Learners

Learners with migrant background, including refugees
Learners with disabilities
Adult learners
Unemployed and jobseekers
Low-skilled/qualified persons

Entities providing VET

Companies

Other stakeholders

Social partners (employer organisations and trade unions)
National, regional and local authorities

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

Promotion strategies and campaigns for VET and lifelong learning
Providing for individuals' re- and upskilling needs
Ensuring equal opportunities and inclusiveness in education and training

European priorities in VET

VET Recommendation

Flexibility and progression opportunities at the core of VET

VET as an attractive choice based on modern and digitalised provision of training and skills

Osnabrück Declaration

Establishing a new lifelong learning culture - relevance of continuing VET and digitalisation

Subsystem

IVET CVET

Further reading

[Vocational training validation and digitisation act \(BVaDiG, 2024\)](#)

[Validation Service Centre](#)

Related policy developments

2025 Implementation

Recognition of foreign professional qualifications

The procedure for the assessment and the recognition of foreign professional and vocational qualifications is regulated and standardised through the Federal Recognition Act (including the federal states recognition acts for professions regulated at this level), which was adopted in 2012.

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Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2023 Completed

First Skilled Immigration Act (2020)

The Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI) has drafted the Skills Immigration Act in December 2018, in the context of the government's Strategy to secure skilled labour. The Act features the following:

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Type of development

Regulation/Legislation

Subsystem

IVET CVET

2025 Implementation

Partial qualifications to support the low-qualified and unskilled

Partial qualifications (*Teilqualifikationen, TQ*) are educational offers, which allow learners to gain vocational qualifications through systematic, successive qualifications based on the dual training regulations.

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Type of development

Practical
measure/Initiative

Subsystem

IVET

National Skills Strategy

In November 2018, the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (BMAS) and the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) launched a committee to develop a National continuing education strategy (*Nationale Weiterbildungsstrategie*).

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Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

CVET

“ ... ” Cite as

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<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/50231>