

Cedefop workshop on analysing and comparing VET qualifications

Session 2: Analysing and comparing qualifications for transparency, recognition and progression



The Swedish Council for Higher Education

Government Agency with 330 staff responsible for:

- Recognising foreign qualifications – Sweden's ENIC-NARIC with 85 staff proficient in over 30 languages. National Coordinator for Professional Qualifications Directive and related assessment.
- Coordinating admission to HE and the HE entry test.
- Developing and managing *e-services* for the education sector.
- Internationalisation across the entire education spectrum.
- Cooperation with other government actors and social partners on integration, validation & qualifications.



Linking recognition to broader strategic goals such as labour market needs and integration of immigrants

- Sweden views credential evaluation and recognition as broad public services linked to national needs and challenges.
- We assess over 20 000 applicants per year in three tracks: 1) upper secondary; 2) PS VET; and 3) HE.
- A team in my unit also serves as the national Assistance Centre for the Professional Qualifications Directive (2005/36/EC) giving the right to practice a regulated profession within the EU/EEA.
- Some professions (e.g. nurses, doctors, dentists) benefit from automatic recognition on the basis of harmonised minimum training requirements under the Directive but it also applies in general to all other regulated professions.
- This is where the 3rd team in my unit come in: they assess regulated professions against Swedish licensing requirements after referral from responsible authorities in Sweden.

Improving the quality, relevance and transferability of VET qualifications and their learning outcomes

- Traditionally, our work focuses on certifying authenticity, accreditation and documentation. Transcripts and diplomas provide the information we need to recognise completed education and compare with Swedish qualifications, *but our goal is to further develop our recognition statements so that we provide more information on the learning outcomes associated with the recognised education and training.*
- Moreover, in employer surveys the need for more information on assessed education and qualifications is repeatedly expressed. Our recognition statements are viewed as useful (certificates of authenticity) but lack information about learning outcomes.

From one- to three-track recognition

Full Recognition in one track

- Before 2017, we evaluated all qualifications against Sweden's two higher vocational diplomas and duration was the decisive factor (and many went unrecognised).

Full Recognition and Alternative Recognition with Comparison

- Since 2018 we have recognised PS VET in three main tracks:
 - 1) against Swedish PS VET diplomas;
 - 2) vocational qualifications not part of the education system in the country of origin but compared to NQF/EQF levels can be recognised against an SeQF level; and
 - 3) other vocational qualifications can be recognised against an undefined Swedish post-secondary education.

Feedback on the WRL tool

- When assessing qualifications we lack information on the knowledge, skills and competencies of applicants. We get more information when applicants attach a Certificate Supplement but a tool such as the WRL would provide even more valuable information on LOs.
- We recognise foreign qualifications using five elements: level; quality; workload; profile and LO. The positioning of the foreign qualification within the NQF of the awarding country (and in overarching frameworks such as the EQF) give useful information for the recognition processes.
- ✓ The WRL tool is easy to use, and there is helpful information when assessing the qualification.
- ✓ The tool covers a wide range of expected knowledge, skills and competencies.
 - But . . . the wide coverage leads to too much information for credential evaluators to provide qualified information on. This forces us to make semi-subjective assessments.
 - Further rationalisation (i.e. reducing the number of questions/categories) of the tool would increase its usability. There is also a need to further “anchor” terminology to avoid confusion.

Who should complete the WRL?

- In order to do a *deep* and complete assessment we would need to develop a more individual competency-based approach, similar to the mapping some jobseekers receive at the public employment service.
- But we wonder if this information should be provided by the issuing authority? For example, when a diploma is accompanied by Europass Certificate Supplement we are better able to complete the WRL tool.
- Without supplementary information we are forced to research curricula, programme goals etc. from the issuing country (as we do with regulated professions under Directive 2005/36/EC) . . . and this can be very difficult for some countries and for qualifications issued decades ago.
- It would be useful to further consider the target groups for the WRL tool? Credential evaluators? Employers? Public Employment Service? Immigrant service organisations? Organisations involved in the validation of prior learning?

Benefits of moving to a LO approach (and SeQF) in Sweden

- A substantial part of education and training takes part outside the formal education system (e.g. sectors, continuous training at work, liberal adult education, labour market training). Including qualifications awarded outside the formal education system and bringing qualifications together in a national framework increases transparency **and transferability**. It also:
 - Facilitates for individuals, employers and education providers to evaluate levels.
 - Increases LM mobility and facilitate matching.
 - Facilitates validation and legitimise validation on the LM.
 - Increases interest among actors to work with LO and QA (we see this with applications for a level placement in the SeQF).
 - Stimulates lifelong learning.

Thanks for your time!