

EU Validation Event session A:
"Validation in national skills strategies
(integrated approach)»
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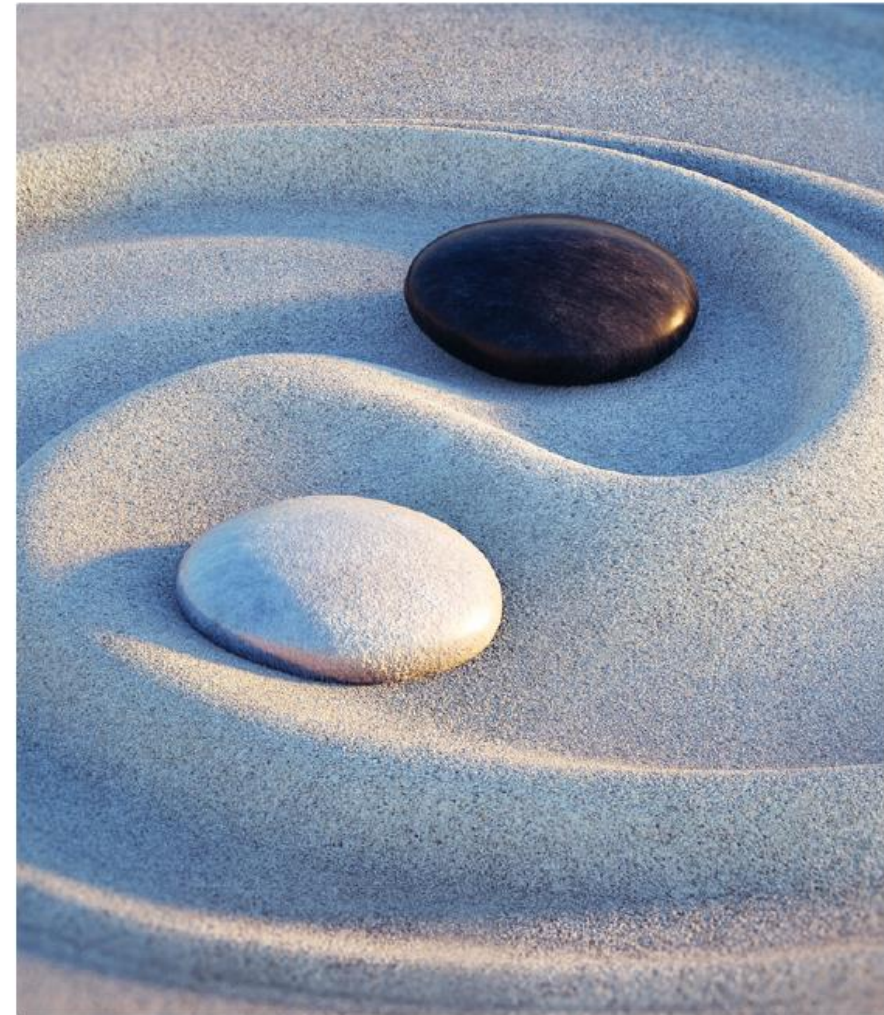
«Employer and trade union's involvement»

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A Balancing Act

Describing skills acquired in the workplace - how and why



Norwegian Policy for Skills Strategy 2017-2021

Better systems for documenting skills acquired in the workplace

In order to make better use of skills acquired in a learning-intensive labour market, it is important to further develop and improve the system for documentation of skills. The social partners are key actors in this work.

THE STRATEGY PARTNERS AGREE TO:

Make it easier to document skills acquired at work, so that they can be utilised more efficiently. Develop a method and model for evaluating skills acquired in the workplace as part of this work

The project was a cooperation between Employer Federations and Trade Union Federations, and funded by the Government



“A Balancing Act”

- a model and method to describe skills that are acquired in the workplace, in such a way that they can then be understood by other parts of the working life, and in the formal education system



STEP 01

THE BALANCE MODEL

Identify skills and use the balance model to demonstrate a comprehensive picture of these



STEP 02

KEY SKILLS

Define 10 – 15 key skills for the role/ function



STEP 03

LEARNING OUTCOME DESCRIPTIONS

Write the learning outcomes for the key skills



chain/industry level

STEP 04

QUALIFICATIONS

Fill out more information for the skills standards such as qualifications

The Balancing Act Model

- A common framework for identification and documentation of skills in all sectors of working life
- Retaining the dynamic element that exists in workplace skills development

Balance points

- building relationships
- team building
- personality types
- delegation

PEOPLE

- analytical skills
- determine the relevance of tools
- digital maturity

- using IT tools
- digital skills

TECHNOLOGY

resourcefulness

- development
- innovation
- collaboration

FLEXIBILITY

- independence
- training strategy
- responsibility

- expert knowledge
- precision
- understanding of culture and values

ROUTINES

productivity

- achieving results
- prioritising
- time management

PACE

- quality assessment
- mastering complexity

- focus
- communication
- attention

PRESENCE

effectivity

Example Skills standard

Nursing home
Department manager

Interpersonal relationships	Culture building	Guidance	ICT-literacy	
People and Technology <ul style="list-style-type: none">Has solid knowledge and skills related to relationship building, a good understanding of how relationships work and has the ability to withstand demanding relationships, to ensure the understanding of their own role, and to provide a sense of safety in the co-operative relationship between the employees, residents and relativesMust be able to build good relationships in a diversity of cultural traditionsHas the ability to create shared attitudes and has an understanding of the base values, priorities and forms of co-operation, and ensure a foundation of trust and safety through the entire organisationCan build a good team that functions well together in order to solve tasks in the best possible mannerBe a competent and versatile guide, with the ability to adapt that guidance to different situations and to specific requirementsBe confident in the purpose and area of use for all the relevant data programs in consideration of patients, staff, finance, quality and communications, ensuring the correct use of the programs and to be able to analyse the data as a base for decision-makingHas the ability and willingness to try out new computer programs and technological solutions, and create a sense of assurance in the use of these within the department				
Healthcare expertise	Ethics	Law and regulation	Improvement efforts	Shifts
Flexibility and Routines <ul style="list-style-type: none">Understand the connections between the quality of services and the way in which the work has been organised, and can make decisions that result in improvements for the organisationCan gain new and relevant knowledge, and can involve employees in order to ensure purposeful structures and routinesHave up-to-date knowledge and relevant healthcare expertise in order to ensure the quality of services and patient safety, as well as to provide strong, healthcare guidance to all the relevant occupational groupsHas a sufficient understanding of budgeting and accounting, in order to correctly prioritise within their own room for action, and to create a shared understanding among their employees, in the connection between activities in their average workday and the financial consequencesUnderstand the contents and consequences of all the laws and regulations that apply to their own area of responsibility, and can ensure that all employees carry out their roles in line with the relevant, legal decisions and applicable quality verificationsKnowledge of the staffing plans, shift work, planning for work hours and the skills of individual employeesCan ensure professional reliability in the staffing organised for work each dayHas a fundamental knowledge of ethics and ethical reflection, and can take responsibility for the services being provided, in respect to the individual's human dignity				
Process management	Communication	Meeting routines	Mastering great complexity	
Pace and Presence <ul style="list-style-type: none">Has the knowledge and understanding to manage processes in different areas, such as in ICT-use, skills development, improvement effortsand conflict handling, involving all the relevant participants in a suitable manner, and making the necessary decisions to achieve optimal resultsCan take responsibility for the planning and conducting of meetings, such that this becomes a result-oriented form of work that provides the necessary contributions to the quality of services and positive culture buildingHas a knowledge and understanding of different forms of communicating and receiving messages.Is aware of their own communication skills and abilities to listen, to be able to create a shared basis for further action and thinkingMust have a strong ability to analyse situations and plan ahead to be able to prioritise correctly and make decisions in one's daily work life, which are characterised by the pressure of high expectations and the responsibility for a diversity of people and tasks				

Documentation of experiences from the implementation of «A Balancing Act»

- 1. RETAIL** – development of the concept and the potential for establishing a new industry standard for retail; skills standard for the role «shop manager» and for the role «shop employee»
- 2. NURSING HOME/HEALTHCARE** – testing the concept in an industry that is closely connected to formal education; skills standard for the role «nursing home department manager»
- 3. FOLK HIGH SCHOOL/ EDUCATION** – testing the concept for development of a skills standard and documentation of individuals' skills set who work in the role. Additionally, this study considered whether it was possible to use the concept to formulate descriptions of the students' learning outcomes; skills standard for the role «folk high school teacher»
- 4. ADULT EDUCATION** – testing the concept for description of refugees' individual skills set and for the match to skills standards
- 5. TRADE UNION REPRESENTATIVE** – testing the concept to establish a description of skills acquired in a function within the workplace

«A Balancing Act» – contributions to lifelong learning and skills policy

In general the concept generates a better understanding, utilisation and development of skills

- **Validation of prior learning:** a comprehensive validation process can be achieved in the workplace, using the language of the workplace and skills standards as the reference point
- **Mobility:** the ability to communicate all skills that are acquired through work, in terms of key skills and learning outcomes, across economic sectors
- **Integration:** individuals are able to describe the skills they have attained through previous work, in the same terminology and using the same framework as the skills requirements for different roles in working life are described
- **Transference and cooperation between workplace and education:** the ability to make a bridge between skills standards in working life and education standards, using learning outcomes descriptions from academia as well as for roles in the workplace
- **Career counselling:** can use skills standards as a reference for guidance, and the balance model to describe the individuals' skill set

«A Balancing Act» in the Stage Production Sector; sound technician, light technician, stage technician, AV-technician

No existing education programme targeting the roles in this sector. Initiative from employers and employees within the sector.

Project launched in spring 2021; cooperation between Virke (employer federation) – Creo (trade union) – Oslo Vocational College – funded by the Ministry of Research and Higher Education

Step 1: Virke and Creo using the Balancing Act concept for documentation of a skills standard in the stage production sector; a report based on 25 interviews finalised October 2021; common key skills and learning outcomes for all 4 roles + additional role-specific learning outcomes for 8 key skills

Step 2: Oslo Vocational College transforming the working life skills standard into a curriculum for higher vocational education (EQF level 5), designed for a combination of work and study, and for validation of prior learning

Step 3: Accreditation of the education programme by NOKUT (the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education) and admission of students in 2022.

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[https://www.virke.no/Statistikk-
Rapporter/a-balancing-act/](https://www.virke.no/Statistikk-Rapporter/a-balancing-act/)



Thank you for your attention



Policy recommendations

- We recommend Governments and Social Partners to give more emphasis on the validation of skills in enterprises, and to set up a joint working group at national level.
- We believe a coherent validation process in the workplace for all four phases: identification – documentation – validation – certification, will give significant benefits for improving mobility, integration, career guidance and skills strategies in the working life.
- For most of us, it is much easier to document and make others understand our formal education than it is to explain and gain recognition for the skills we have acquired through work experience and internal training. A more standardised validation process in the working life based on a learning outcomes approach will increase the prospects for building bridges between formal education and learning that occurs in the workplace.
- We encourage a joint strategy between Governments and the Social Partners to establish skills standards for roles in working life to be a reference point for validation of prior learning, and for an increased Labour Market relevance in education.