



# Journal of International Mobility

## Moving for education, training and research

Call for papers no. 4  
Mobility and skills: validation and recognition

Final date for submissions **4 March 2016**

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## Details

The Agence Erasmus + France / Education et Formation is the national agency responsible for the European Erasmus+ programme for education and training.

Its interdisciplinary scientific journal, the Journal of International Mobility, includes contributions relating to all dimensions of international mobility from people involved in the field of education and training in Europe and around the world. Its main aim is to provide additional insight into the conditions for mobility and the impact such an experience can have, so as to provide food for thought for the researchers and policy-makers whose mission it is to support it.

The agency is currently launching a call for papers for the fourth edition, which will focus on the theme of:

### **Mobility and skills: validation and recognition**

The increase in the number of international skills-oriented mobility projects necessitates the provision of schemes for validating and recognising skills acquired abroad.

If mobility for study, training or work purposes is to be facilitated, and the quality of these projects improved, then both national and supranational frameworks are required. In Europe, the Lisbon Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications (1997), and later the Bologna Process (1999), in the area of higher education, and the Copenhagen process (2002), in the area of vocational education and training, led to the creation of a common education and training area. These policy decisions were followed by the creation of practical tools: the introduction of the three-stage Bachelor's-Master's-Doctorate system in higher education and the use of ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System); the creation, at European level, of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) in 2008 to facilitate the interpretation and comparability of training courses through the use of this common reference tool; the creation of the Europass skills portfolio; and the creation of the ECVET (European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training). The ENIC NARIC network makes the interpretation of foreign courses easier by providing information about the procedure for recognising qualifications and by ratifying certificates of recognition. Quality assurance is guaranteed through European reference frameworks (ESG<sup>1</sup>, EQAVET<sup>2</sup>) and a network of national quality assurance agencies.

The higher education sector was the first to introduce this common training space. Outside Europe, an international cooperation space is now developing thanks to an alliance set up between different national qualifications networks (Ireland and New Zealand, for example), through the EQF (discussions between Europe, Australia, New Zealand and Hong Kong began in 2014), or as a result of the setting up of regional qualifications frameworks such as the one in the Asia-Pacific zone (ASEAN<sup>3</sup>).<sup>4</sup>

Right from its inception, the Erasmus programme has anticipated this requirement for the recognition of training experiences by providing tools to facilitate the transfer of learning achievements. Consequently, the ECTS system appeared in 1987. It subsequently developed and became more well-known thanks to the Bologna Process. The introduction of the three-stage study scheme facilitated mobility projects by enabling higher education institutions to set comparable curricula. On the ground, these developments required educators to restructure the courses they offered into learning units. Periods of mobility, thought as skills-oriented periods, therefore rely on the learning outcomes developed for each curriculum. If they are to validate and recognise a period of mobility, reference tools must be comparable, so that skills acquired in a foreign education system can be recognised on the student's return.

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<sup>1</sup> European Standard and Guidelines for Quality Assurance

<sup>2</sup> Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training

<sup>3</sup> Association of Southeast Asian Nations

<sup>4</sup> CEDEFOP. Qualifications frameworks: expanding influence, persisting obstacles. Briefing note, November 2014, No. 1

Issue number 4 of the Journal of International Mobility will focus particular attention on the recognition and validation of skills acquired during periods of mobility, in all education and training sectors, regardless of whether the skills are acquired in a formal, informal or non-formal context. We particularly welcome contributions which address the themes listed below.

### **1- Using cooperative frameworks to enable the recognition and validation of skills acquired during a period of mobility**

As shown earlier, the validation and recognition of skills acquired during periods of mobility necessitate the provision of supranational frameworks and tools for interpreting and comparing training courses in foreign countries. The different sectors involved in lifelong learning all have their own special characteristics. Consequently, progress in terms of strategic frameworks or validation and recognition tools is still variable and little permeability between sectors does happen. In the European vocational training sector, the validation and recognition of skills acquired during mobility projects is gradually becoming more standardised thanks to the creation of the ECVET (The European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training) and to experiments conducted on the ground. Nevertheless, an evaluation report covering the 2009-2013 period showed that the system had made little headway in certain countries which had not considered its usefulness. As a result, the implementation of the system remains very variable<sup>5</sup>.

And so we see how certain sectors are enjoying the benefits of frameworks and tools implemented at supranational level, some are exported well beyond Europe (the Bologna Process), others are being delivered to various degrees on the ground, and finally, in some sectors, particularly in the context of non-formal or informal learning, the validation and recognition of skills acquired during periods of mobility rely on agreements between institutions which organise mobility projects. From the development of systems to the experiences of those involved, what collaborative processes are necessitated by this requirement for the validation and recognition of periods of mobility? Which stakeholders are and should be involved (national authorities, certification bodies, teachers, experts...)? What experiences and experiments have there been in the different education, training and youth sectors, in Europe and worldwide, with respect to the recognition and validation of skills acquired during periods of mobility?

### **2- The evaluation and validation of skills - the tools implemented**

The evaluation of skills acquired in the context of a period of mobility requires, first and foremost, that these skills be identified. The identification of technical skills (hard skills) and their evaluation depends upon agreements and evaluation tools set out mainly in learning contracts drawn up prior to periods of mobility. Nevertheless, a growing interest in so-called transversal skills (or soft skills) is now being observed in working environments. Identifying these skills, specifically those deployed during periods of mobility, and subsequently validating them, remains more problematic for supervisors of mobility projects.

Validation is based on evaluation processes which vary from one country to another and from one sector to another. The use of standardised tools and processes should make it possible to share and coordinate them. Nevertheless, this means that education professionals must have the following tools at their disposal: learning contracts; skills reference charts; tools for evaluating formal, non-formal and informal learning; and common transparency tools for documenting skills acquired...

And so, on the ground, it is the teachers, trainers and tutors who are responsible for identifying, evaluating and validating skills acquired during a period of mobility, in collaboration with their foreign counterparts. Do the supervisors, themselves, have the tools and knowledge required to develop this process? How are learning

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<sup>5</sup> European Commission. External evaluation of the implementation of the recommendation of the European Parliament and Council of 18 June 2009 on the creation of a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET). Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2014. Available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education\\_culture/more\\_info/evaluations/docs/education/ecvet14\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/more_info/evaluations/docs/education/ecvet14_en.pdf) (consulted on 20.11.2015)

outcomes identified and then validated by the learner's home institution? Can the mobility experience be certified?

There is a significant need for support: on the one hand, the support work which supervisors do with beneficiaries after their periods of mobility in other countries is vital for identifying and formalising these outcomes but, on the other hand, these same supervisors, and particularly those in the non-formal or informal education sectors, may not have tools for evaluating or validating skills acquired during periods of mobility. So how do we provide effective support which takes into account the needs of all the people and sectors concerned, and which then results in a clear overview of the skills acquired beyond their institutional, sectorial and national boundaries?

### **3- Recognition by third parties**

The issue of recognition now relates specifically to employment and career development, at home or abroad. It depends on confidence in the learning outcomes achieved in a foreign country<sup>6</sup> and it requires an integrated approach to, and use of, the tools and initiatives from an international perspective.

How can we ensure that qualifications gained abroad are taken into consideration and recognised? Where do employers fit into this? How might we expect existing tools to be developed?

Similarly, as the validation of skills acquired in a non-formal and informal context has become a major concern, how, after identifying and evaluating them, can we then put them into words for use in the world of work?

Contributions will cover these areas and will focus on periods of mobility undertaken as part of education and training projects in which students, apprentices, secondary school pupils, trainees, teachers and non-teaching staff, and researchers are involved.

Scientists, educators and experts who have carried out research in these areas are invited to submit contributions.

These articles could take the form of:

- Completed or ongoing research, including an outline of the methods used and the tools which had to be developed for the study
- A presentation on an initiative or experiment which could be replicated elsewhere
- In-depth articles on the issues raised

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<sup>6</sup> Bohlinger Sandra. Competences as the core element of the European Qualifications Framework. European journal of vocational training, 2007-2008, vol.42/43, no2007/3-2008/1, pp 96-112

## How to submit your paper

### **Calendar**

Please submit your papers (full article) by email (in Word format)  
to [revue@agence-erasmus.fr](mailto:revue@agence-erasmus.fr) before **4 March 2016**.

Each article will be reviewed by two members of the editorial board and all authors will receive feedback. When an article has been assessed, there are four possible outcomes: article accepted, article accepted subject to minor changes, request for major changes, article rejected. The decisions of the editorial board are final and there are no provisions for appeal.

Papers will be accepted in the following languages: French, English, German, Spanish.

Deadline for submitting articles: 4 March 2016

Feedback to authors: 13 May 2016

Publication: October 2016

### **Format for submissions**

Font: Times New Roman 12

Submissions must include:

- the surname and forename of the author/s (only the initial letters of the surname and forename will be in capitals)
- an explicit title (centred),
- an abstract in the written language and in English (approximately 3,000 characters, including spaces)
- 3 to 5 key words,
- a short biography of the author,
- the author's bibliography
- bibliographic references for the article

The maximum number of characters (33,000) includes notes, spaces, the abstract, key words and the bibliographic references.

### **Bibliographic and digital references:**

These should be included at the end of the article and should be listed in alphabetical order.

### **Notes**

These should be placed at the bottom of the page and be indicated by a reference. They should be in Times New Roman 10 font.

### **Quotations:**

Quotations (from an author or an extract from an interview) should be enclosed in quotation marks.

### **Formatting**

Foreign words should be set in italics.

### **Iconographic documents**

Iconographic documents may be attached to articles. Images must be in JPEG format.

### **To reference a website**

**Author**, Forename (date page published). "Page title", on the *Name of website* site. Consulted "date".  
URL.