

§1 Organisational arrangements

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Organisational arrangements are fundamental to the success of a VPL system. Key stakeholders' areas of responsibility need to be clearly demarcated, with extensive collaboration and cooperation across sectors.

1.1 VPL arrangements need clear entry points, which are widely advocated.

Why is it important?

VPL pathways need to be clear and well-known to the citizens so that the individuals can take full advantage of the VPL services. Ideally, there is a national co-ordination point for VPL, which provides unbiased and accurate information on the VPL providers, VPL procedures, (partial) qualifications available through validation, and entry requirements etc.

On a regional level, validation providers need to provide information widely on the VPL services, who to contact and how to apply. Key stakeholders (e.g., public employment services, trade unions, employers) should act as advocates for the VPL services in the region. Information on VPL should be available in various formats and on-line services need to be offered.

Where is it working well?

See how the Finnish National Agency for Education is operating as the national coordination point for VPL. They provide transparent information on the [qualification requirements](#), the validation procedures and the validation providers for each qualification.

1.2 Relevant stakeholders need to collaborate and cooperate so that VPL holds value in society and has a high level of recognition.

Why is it important?

VPL should never exist in a vacuum; instead, it should be a result of close collaboration of various stakeholders (such as social partners, education and training, civil society organisations, public employment services, companies etc.) in setting up the process of the VPL system, the standards and assessment criteria as well as guidance and assessment.

Ownership of the VPL system should be widely, yet systematically, spread among stakeholders as it promotes stakeholder engagement. Stakeholder co-operation in VPL

is the prerequisite for high market-value and trust towards the system and the outcomes of validation.

Where is it working well?

[See, how stakeholder cooperation in VPL is organised in France](#) (e.g. chapter 4.4.)

1.3 *There should be clearly demarcated spheres of responsibility for all stakeholders involved in the design, implementation and quality assurance of VPL.*

Why is it important?

To ensure clarity and high quality of the VPL system, the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders need to be nationally defined and agreed. Stakeholders participating in the design, implementation and/or quality assurance processes of the system must bear high relevance (e.g. in relation to a business sector and sector specific competence requirements) and it must be ensured that the stakeholders remain impartial and are void of self-interest.

Where is it working well?

[See, how the roles and responsibilities of different VPL actors have been defined in Kosovo](#)

1.4 *VPL arrangements, regardless of the learning pathway, should be linked to National Qualification Frameworks.*

Why is it important?

National Qualification Frameworks serve as a tool to determine the level of learning and the required learning outcomes to be gained through a qualification. Linking the learning outcomes gained through VPL arrangements to the National Qualification Frameworks ensures the validity of VPL and the equal status of the certification gained through VPL.

Where is it working well?

[See, how the Finnish National Qualifications Framework and VPL arrangements are linked](#)

“The legislation provides students the right to have their prior learning assessed and recognised at all levels and sectors of the education system. This right concerns both access to education and recognition of prior learning towards a qualification. In addition,

the Finnish National Agency for Education has issued regulations and guidelines to support recognition of life-long learning in vocational education.”¹

1.5 VPL arrangements need to broaden access to education, training and work.

Why is it important?

It must be ensured that the certification gained through VPL carries the same status as a certification gained through traditional education and training and that the results of the VPL process are nationally recognized both in the world of work and the world of education and training.

Where is it working well?

See a video of the [Finnish Competence-Based VET Qualifications](#), validation, certification and different pathways

1.6 VPL arrangements need to include guidance at every stage of the process

Why is it important?

Guidance in validation is an integral part of the VPL process. Guidance sets the VPL scene and helps the individual make appropriate choices before, during and after the VPL process. Guidance in VPL should be carried out by dedicated professionals, who are unbiased and understand the various possible outcomes of the VPL process. Guidance, in principle, should be voluntary to the candidate, but it must be ensured that guidance is available throughout the process.

Where is it working well?

Read here, how [guidance in validation](#) is perceived in the Nordic region and look at [summaries](#) from different Nordic regions.

1.7 VPL arrangements need to be accessible regardless of geography

Why is it important?

Citizens should have equal access to VPL services regardless of where they live, work and/or study. VPL provider networks should cover even the remote and sparsely

¹ Report on the referencing of the Finnish National Qualifications Framework to the European Qualifications Framework and the Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area

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inhabited areas. This requires taking advantage of existing modern technologies and calls for developing new, flexible technologies for VPL arrangements.

Where is it working well?

There are various existing self-assessment e-tools (e.g. www.my-professional-experience.org) and e-portfolios available in different languages. However, pictures and videos could be more widely used as evidence, smart and VR glasses could be better taken advantage of in e.g. guidance or assessment situations. Guidance discussions and candidate interviews can easily be carried out through various internet applications.