

ETM TF – Questionnaire Lifelong Learning and Accreditation of Prior Learning

GENERAL

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|--|------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1a. Is widening and increasing participation at university level an issue in your country? | | Yes (13) | No (2) |
| 1b. And at your institution? | | Yes (12) | No (2) |
| - It is increasing both in the country and at the University (Coimbra) | | | (I*) |
| - (*) We are busy in the process of changing our programmes to a BA/MA structure. Most of our students are under 25 and from regular education (95%). The other 5 % are doctoral students, students in Master programmes, and students in continuous education programmes (Jena) | | | |
| 2. Does your university recognise certificated learning for the purpose of exemption from parts of a programme of study? | | Yes (11) | No (2) + It depends |
| 3. What is the legislative context regarding APL and APEL: Are they obligatory or optional? | APL | Obligation (6) | Option (10) |
| - Whether it is obligatory or optional depends on the character of APL (Aarhus) | | | |
| - Comment: APEL is obligatory for all Masters (new legislative context): this APEL process will start within universities in September 2007. The legal context specificities: APEL could lead to admission (for second degree) and partial dispensation (for 1st and 2nd degrees). But in the previous legislative context, few programs (2nd cycle) were allowed to apply APEL for admission, and used to do so since many years. (Louvain-la-Neuve) | APEL | Obligation (3) | Option (8) |

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4. How does your institution inform about APL and APEL? (Please describe briefly)

- **In every curriculum it is possible to describe certain activities that can be accredited into the programme. Furthermore standardised accreditations of documented academic activities can be described in the curriculum (Aarhus)**
- **It is up to the single institution as now, but in the beginning of 2007 there will be given recommendations making all HET institutions having to build systems that are open and clear to everyone that will be part of ordinary procedures in all universities in Finland (Abo)**
- **Entrance: Each year Universities and Colleges Admission Service in Norway publish a catalogue on study offers/provisions within higher education in Norway. This catalogue provides information about possibilities for applicants who do not hold higher education entrance qualification and who are at least 25 years old during the year of applying. These can apply for admission based on APL/APEL (“realkompetansevurdering”). Exemption: Each faculty at UoB informs about the possibility of exemption from part of a programme of study based on APL/APEL on our “Student portal” web-sites. Foreign applicants: Own website in English. Applicants are also informed about the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT) which is generally in charge of accreditation of foreign fulfilled qualifications. In all our student services offices there are student advisors available who are experienced in the steps regarding how to apply. (Bergen)**
- **There is no central information (Coimbra)**
- **Via the admissions section of the University website. Applicants who do not have qualifications which meet the General University Requirement and specific entry requirements are advised to contact a member of admissions staff for individual advice (Edinburgh)**
- **In the official programmes and guides (Granada)**
- **Internet, printed material (Jena)**
- **Information available at the country level (<http://www.cfwb.be/ciuf/index.htm>). Our institution plans to communicate during the next coming months, using different media: Information sessions, Web Site, Flyers, Letters, ... with the following targets: individuals, employers, insertion operators, employment organisation, ... (Louvain)**
- **The information is organized at the national and regional level (it is a right for the workers). All the information is available on the University website. And special sessions for the interested persons are organized at “Planète Info” the service of information, guidance and career of the university (I am the director of this service!). (Poitiers)**
- **The use of APEL is not yet implemented. There is a website for students from higher vocational education institutes. They can follow extra courses in their last year at the “hogeschool” (Fachhochschule) to make it easier to start their master-course at the University. Some preparatory courses are needed in most cases. (Groningen)**
- **The University of Geneva does not yet use APEL. However, APL exists since the 70s and allows admission to university without the necessary degree, for adults over 25 with specific criteria. Part of the programmes can also be given by equivalences. Information is given in newspapers, is posted on the university website and on each faculty’s webpages. Written documentation is also available. (Geneva)**
- **The system is based on the student’s right to apply for the recognition of their prior learning. Applying for recognition is voluntary for students and the process is initiated by an individual student. The description of the system is available in study guides and in the net, and to the use of this system is paid attention to while making individual study plans with every new student. (Turku)**
- **Not applicable – this University does not recognise prior learning for the purpose of exemption from elements of study programmes, except in the case of applicants seeking admission on the basis of specific academic credit from a recognised university of other 3rd level institution. Widening participation is approached on the basis of liberalising admissions policy, particularly focussed on encouraging applications from mature students and students from disadvantaged backgrounds and ethnic minorities. Details of activities can be accessed at http://www.tcd.ie/Trinity_Access/ (Dublin – Trinity)**

ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR LEARNING – APL

5. What sources of learning are taken into account as formal learning? :

- **Comments: That is not APEL, but credit transfer; it means credit recognition or assessment !!!! (Louvain)**
- **This section not applicable (Dublin –Trinity)**

5a. Credit transfer from other accredited higher education institutions? Yes (12) No (2)

5b. From the home country? Yes (11) No (2)

5c. From abroad? Yes (11) No (2)

5d. Successfully completed courses of a certain length from non-academic providers? Yes (5) No (9)

- **That is APEL ! (Louvain)**

6. If applicable, what are the procedures in place for validation (recognition) of prior learning at your institutions?

- **Students need to forward documentation for passed courses or modules including fairly detailed descriptions of the courses, including description of level, ECTS credit, literature etc. The board of study for the programme decides if to meet the application (Aarhus)**
- **Right now not very clear but will be organised during the next 2 years. Today the applicants are mainly from Europe. Students being abroad for a while – either own students working or studying abroad or visiting students staying to make their exams and take degrees at our universities (Abo)**
- **The following applies: the holder of certified prior education has to apply for recognition or accreditation. Foreign qualifications: International agreements: 1) Norway has ratified the Lisbon Recognition Convention: Convention on the recognition of qualifications concerning higher education in the European region 1997 and 2) The Reykjavik declaration (9. June 2004) a Nordic agreement concerning mutual recognition of higher education carried out in another Nordic country. In addition the relevant EU directives are important.
The Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education (NOKUT) is responsible for the general recognition of foreign qualifications. This may result in recognition of foreign higher education qualification as being equivalent to a Norwegian degree. Specific recognition is granted by individual accredited higher education institutions. They recognise foreign qualifications in relation to subject specific degrees awarded at the institution with the result of exemption from part of the programme of study. They decide whether a foreign qualification matches the specific scope and depth requirements of the degree which they award themselves.
Studies at Norwegian institutions: Many Norwegian students wish for many reasons to study at more than one university in Norway when they study for a degree. Actually they may also be encouraged to do so. It is called mobility within our own country, or flexible learning paths. It means that APL happens frequently at Norwegian higher education institutions. The student takes his/her credits with him/her from one institution and applies for recognition of these credits at the new institution. Under certain conditions and when certain requirements are met a specified amount of credits can be included in more than one qualification (Bergen)**
- **To continue studies the candidates has to apply directly to the faculty for recognition of a prior degree (Coimbra)**

- **Individual discussion with admission staff (Edinburgh)**
- **Academic Commissions for each degree (Granada)**
- **Proof of educational training / prior credits (Jena)**
- **For few programs, since many years, validation (recognition) of prior learning is very important for admission (previous legislation). Explicit procedures have been defined. The validation was performed at the program level (academics & administrative people). In the context of the new legislation, for the new masters, a harmonized procedure has been proposed, information is proposed at the central and local level, but validation and decision concerning the validation is managed at the program level: the program jury is legally in charge of APEL. (Louvain)**
- **There is a pedagogical commission in each Faculty/ department + a specialized board of examiners at the University level (Poitiers)**
- **Prior formal learning is recognised by assessing the (degree) certificates of applicants (Würzburg)**
- **The examination committee decides by case (Groningen)**
- **Written proof of prior learning must be presented; recognition depends on the decision of the Faculty (Budapest)**
- **The admission procedure is based on examination of a dossier which contains 2 parts: an administrative part and an academic part based on the candidate's abilities to be admitted into a university programme. Equivalences for part of the programme can only be given once the candidate is "admissible"(Geneva).**
- **Applicants to degree: When applying to a degree, application criteria and quotas might be different for specific groups of applicants, e.g. for those having a lower degree or university level courses in relevant fields. Degree Students: Procedures of the faculties differ a little concerning recognition of prior studies / studies accomplished elsewhere as a part of degree, but usually separate accredited courses are recognised at the departments, and larger modules or units at the faculty level. The other alternative is that the decisions are always made at faculty level. Students should contact their own tutoring teacher/Study Advisor / head of Study Affairs of the Faculty. Other than own degree students: Medical field: the National Authority for Medicolegal Affairs, www.teo.fi Professional competence needed for teachers: Head of Study Affairs, Faculty of Education (Turku)**

Very important? Important? Fairly important? Not important? (Please select the most appropriate answer)

- **It is very important to forward sufficient documentation in order for the board of study to decide whether or not to accredit a course (Aarhus)**
- **Important / Fairly important (Louvain)**
- **Fairly important : Coimbra; Edinburgh; Poitiers; Budapest; Geneva**
- **Recognition of prior learning at accredited higher education institutions is important, because many students come to the university with quite an amount of prior courses and/or during their studies spend a semester or two abroad (Turku)**

7. Who is in charge of it within the institution?

- **Due to the size of University of Aarhus neither a single office nor person is in charge of the recognition of APL. Instead the administration is based at the relevant board of studies (Aarhus)**
- **Dean of the different faculties (Coimbra)**
- **Vice-Principal for learning and teaching (Edinburgh)**

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- **Student Affairs (Jena)**
- **The decision concerning APEL is local (program jury): process is decentralised. Nevertheless, the University Continuing Education Centre has defined with faculties and other institutes an harmonised procedure and developed support tools (Louvain).**
- **Academic Affairs and International Relations (Groningen)**
- **No central office; each faculty (8) has its own staff within the dean's office (Budapest)**
- **Academic advisors of each faculty (Geneva).**

8. What are the steps and criteria to reach accreditation for the applicants? (Please describe briefly)
- **Normally the student will apply for APL after admission at the bachelor's or master's programme. But it happens that the student during the phase of applying for admission seeks to have prior learning being recognised in order to know in advance which parts of the programme he/she will have to follow after admission (Aarhus).**
 - **It is the responsibility of the applicant to submit verified documentation of his/her prior learning, it means not only documentation on qualifications or certificates it means also documents on curricula (Bergen)**
 - **It depends on the faculties (Coimbra)**
 - **Individual discussion, as above (Edinburgh)**
 - **Application to the academic responsible of the program. Criteria based on programs-similarity (usually when >75%) (Granada)**
 - **Different for different programmes (Jena)**
 - **Choice of a diploma or a kind of training, then presentation of a dossier with all the relevant documentation and information, then interview, then decision of the board of examiners (possibly: appeal against a negative decision) (Poitiers)**
 - **They have to prepare a file with copies of accredited diplomas. Sometimes an interview is part of the procedure. (Groningen)**
 - **Accreditation may be automatic but the applicant may also be asked to pass a short exam (Budapest)**
 - **The candidate must submit a dossier, specifying the chosen programme and Faculty. First, examination is based on administrative criteria (e.g. age – must be over 25). Then, dossier is sent to the academic advisor of the faculty concerned and the candidate is invited to either take an exam or prove his competences and abilities acquired through prior work experiences and studies in a dossier. Total length of this process: 5 months (Geneva)**
 - **The enrolled degree student makes an application with relevant documents to the department/faculty. In principle all credits from another accredited higher education institution can be taken into account. They can be transferred to field-specific studies or form a major subject in the degree (a certain amount of studies in one field required) or form a part of elective studies. The decision should be made in two weeks after the application (Turku)**
9. Are the applicants mainly from your own country? from Europe? or from other parts of the world? (Please select the most appropriate answer)
- **Applicants are mainly from own country: Aarhus; Budapest**
 - **Own country: Granada, Edinburgh, Poitiers, Groningen, Geneva, Turku**
 - **The applicants are 1) mostly from Norway, 2) then from Europe, 3) and some from other parts of the world (Bergen)**
 - **Different for different programmes (Jena)**

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10. If applicable, how successful is it?

Very successful? Successful? Fairly successful? Not successful? (Please select the most appropriate answer)

- **Successful: Edinburgh, Granada, Poitiers, Groningen, Budapest, Geneva.**
- **As most students prior to applying for APL have had contact with the study board most applications are successful, but we do not have figures, that can confirm this (Aarhus).**
- **It depends on the documentation, but in many cases it is successful (Bergen).**
- **Fairly successful : Coimbra**

ACCREDITATION OF PRIOR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING – APEL

11. What sources are taken into account as non-formal learning (work-based)? (Please describe briefly)

- **APEL is not generally accredited into programmes. Some programmes do however give students the possibility of trainee periods for i.e. 1 semester. These trainee periods are normally concluded by a minor paper (Aarhus)**
- **Right now very little and based on single discussions in each single institution. Plans are to make an organised university-based system (Abo)**
- **In Norway we speak about “realkompetansevurdering”. It is all the experience/learning that a person has acquired through paid and unpaid work, education, organisational experience or in others ways. Each higher education institution decides itself what meets the criteria as prior experiential learning. Same kind of programme of study can therefore have different criteria for accreditation. Therefore an assessment from one institution is not valid for another. Our problem is that we do not have experience enough regarding what we shall approve as work-based learning or what we shall approve as life experience. Today when we assess an applicant’s PEL we have to do that individually. We do not have general criteria. But the biggest problem is to decide what kind of PEL has the quality to be recognised/approved as a part of a study programme (Bergen)**
- **No accreditation (Coimbra)**
- **None (Edinburgh)**
- **Work in enterprises and institutions (Granada)**
- **Certificate of formal apprenticeship; Master level exam in occupational training (Jena)**
- **CV, description and elicitation of acquired knowledge and know-how, explanation of their pertinence in the program context , employers attestation, interviews, tests, ...The candidate has to prove its capabilities/capacities to study at a level Master (Louvain)**
- **Professional experience (e.g. in associations, NGOs ...), experiences and skills acquired in politics and in union responsibilities (Poitiers)**
- **N/a (Groningen)**
- **N/a (Geneva)**
- **At most departments the students can include in their degree some amount of work-based learning. It should have relevance from the point of view of the future speciality, and the student has to write a report in which he/she discusses the work practice as a learning process (Turku).**
- **This section not applicable (Dublin –Trinity).**

12. What sources are taken into account as informal learning (life experience)? (Please describe briefly)

- **Informal learning is normally not accredited into programmes (Aarhus)**
- **It is only considered to apply to some Master and PhD Programmes when the candidate doesn't have the minimum requested grade (Coimbra)**
- **CV, description and elicitation of acquired knowledge and know-how, explanation of their pertinence in the program context, interviews, tests, ... (Louvain)**
- **Voluntary experience (e.g in associations, NGO...), experiences and skills acquired in politics and in union responsibilities (Poitiers)**
- **Informal learning has so far not been taken into account at our institution (Turku)**
- **None, n/a :Edinburgh, Granada, Jena, Groningen, Geneva**

FLEXIBLE LEARNING PATHS

13. How large is the portion of the student population over 25 years old in **regular education** (vs. continuing/continuous education)?

- **Out of almost 20.000 students approx. 9200 are more the 25 of age (Aarhus)**
- **6000 adult students yearly (Abo)**
- **Autum 2006: 47% (Bergen)**
- **It is increasing (Coimbra)**
- **“Question not clear” (Edinburgh)**
- **10-15% (Granada)**
- **1% (Jena)**
- **11% (Louvain)**
- **Less than 10% (medicine and doctoral studies excluded) (Poitiers)**
- **Not available (Groningen)**
- **5% (Budapest)**
- **7’742 (2/3 of all students) (Geneva)**
- **1&2cycles: 49,4%; 3.cycle: 97,8%; Non-degree 52,5%; All:57,5% (Turku)**

14. Do you have a centre for **continuing/continuous education**?

Yes (12)

No (2)

- **E.g. one Centre for Teacher Education (Würzburg)**

15. If so, how are the programmes offered different from regular education (e.g. fees/higher fees, part-time, evening classes etc.)?

- **Students registered for continuing education have to pay fees to be enrolled for degree programmes or part of programmes. Continuing/continuous education is normally offered as part time programmes with evening or weekend classes (Aarhus)**
- **There are a multi variation of courses and programmes. There are programmes in the Open University field, meaning courses that are equivalent to those in ordinary university courses but distributed in remote places or over virtual learning environments. Then there are courses for Professional development, for enterprises, for teachers for public sector, 3rd sector, regional development etc. Most of those are tailor made programs and courses for special target groups. Courses and programmes are also very different in time used for study and learning some are in the shape of seminars, others are build up as modules with some local meetings and rest on distance and some are long programmes up to 2 years with blended learning techniques and methods used (Abo).**
- **Most courses of continuing education are equal to regular courses with regard to content. Some courses are offered for free, financed through the general grant from the government to the institution. But most courses within continuing education charge a fee, the size of the fee varying between €100 and €200 per credit point. Courses are normally run at half speed. Delivery modes vary, but the most common course delivery modes are: Distance education with or without on-campus study sessions. On campus teaching in blocks lasting 1-5 days at a time. Decentralised teaching, mostly commissioned by a large buyer, e.g. the Army (Bergen)**
- **Fees, part-time, evening classes. Classes do not lead to similar to those awarded by the University at degree level (Edinburgh)**

- **Courses are offered at higher fees (not government support and reduced group size), many of them part time, evening and weekend classes, Summer courses are developed in different cities. (Granada)**
- **Yes. Fees, part-time classes, evening classes (Jena)**
- **Four types of programmes are offered in continuing education: diploma, certificates, attestations and in-company. All continuing education programmes are offered by faculties and are accredited by university; faculties have the support of the University Continuing Education Centre in charge to listen to and to anticipate society's training needs and to assist faculties to develop new programmes or to adapt existing programmes to adult audience. Regular programmes are opened to adult students. Some programmes are fully dedicated to adults (pedagogy and organisation are completely adapted), some have mixed audience (partial adaptation of pedagogy and organisation). Fees for regular programmes are identical. Certificates and attestations are dedicated to adult students (pedagogy, organisation ...) and have to be financially self-supported. The fees vary from a programme to another (fees depend on different factors: programme volume, public category, sponsoring ...). Certificates include evaluation and carry ECTS credits, credits that could be transferred within regular programs (jury decision). (Louvain)**
- **Higher fees / part-time. No specific programmes, except some specific professional university diplomas and training (e.g for GPs and physicians or for some kind of technicians). Higher fees when paid by the companies (Poitiers).**
- **International symposia, Conferences – not learning of the kind of studying (Würzburg)**
- **Most programmes are for executives and there are commercial fees (www.aog.nl) (Groningen)**
- **Public of professionals; objectives based on professional issues, mixes teaching staff (regular university teachers/researchers and professional experts; professionals included in managing the programme (curriculum development); part-time studies; evening and weekend classes; (much) higher taxes to auto-finance the programmes (Geneva)**
- **In the regular education in Finland students do not pay fees. In the continuing education there are fees, it is part-time and mostly organised in the evenings. Some departments have integrated classes for regular and continuous education (Turku)**

16. If applicable, what are the measures taken to attract non-traditional learners in **regular education**? (e.g. part-time programmes, wider choice of optional classes, internships, e-learning, better access to electronic sources, grants/loans)? (Please describe briefly)

- **Evening classes, grants and loans, support to cover for parts transports expenditure are examples of measures taken to attract non-traditional learners in regular education (Aarhus)**
- **No particular measures are taken in this respect on behalf of the institution. The general admission criteria stipulated in the Act regarding universities and colleges, however, opens both for admissions and exemptions based on “Realkompetanse” (=non-formal and informal learning), although such alternative background should be equal to the General Admissions Certificate with regard to real competence to allow for admission. The above mentioned alternative delivery modes also create better opportunities for people who are unable to attend ordinary courses for reasons of work, geographical position etc. (Bergen)**
- **Optional course units in some faculties (Coimbra).**
- **Please see Widening Participation webpages at http://www.sra.ed.ac.uk/w_participation.html (Edinburgh)**
- **Cooperation's agreement with enterprises and institutions. Publicity. (Granada)**

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- **Part-time programmes, wide choice programmes and optional classes, e-learning (Jena)**
- **Part-time programmes, adapted programmes, e-learning, electronic sources, ... exist within our university (Louvain)**
- **Part-time programmes; with the Bologna Process all is easier with the validation of credits (Poitiers)**
- **With no formal qualification, non-traditional learners can only attain “guest status” and take individual classes of their choice but not obtain a formal degree.**
- **N/a (Groningen)**
- **It depends on the faculty and the programme. Part-time studies may be possible. E-learning courses may also be offered (Geneva)**
- **Virtual courses (University of Turku is a member of the Finnish virtual university consortium); flexible learning paths with optional forms of learning (e.g. e-learning, guided individual studies); organisation of evening classes; co-operation between the centre for continuing education/open university and the faculties (Turku)**