

Desk research about learning outcomes for prior learning recognition to see recent situation

Toolkit for RPL

Task A1 – IO1: Learning Outcomes Report in structured matrixes

Report – Greece

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Table of contents

Main characteristics of the adult education and training system	3
State-of-the-art of the recognition, validation and accreditation of prior learning.....	9
Description of the recognition, validation and accreditation of prior learning process	13
Conclusions	18

Main characteristics of the adult education and training system

According to definitions included in the Greek Law 3879/21/09/2010 (Article 2, paragraph 8), "*general adult education*" includes all organised learning activities addressing adults and aims to enrich knowledge, development and improvement of competences and skills, personality development of individual and active citizenship and mitigating the social and cultural inequalities ties. Provided by institutions of formal education or non-formal education. The informal self-directed learning is not included as it is regarded as informal learning. The vocational training is considered as aiming to carrier development. All forms of organized Adult Education are provided by public, municipal or private institutions.

Greece does not have a long-standing tradition in providing non-formal education for adults. The Greek accession to the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1981 helped the development of this form of provision. The goal was to improve the competences of the workforce beyond the formal stages of education. Until 1993, ESF financing was largely channeled to the "Popular Education" network of 300 Liberal Adult Education Centres operating throughout the country. However, between 1994 and 1999, adult education rigorously applied the European Social Fund (ESF) guidelines. The aim was to ensure public funding for the development of a system of Continuing Vocational Training (CVET). From 2000 onwards, the implementation of new policies and initiatives, within a lifelong learning policy framework, covers different forms of education and training. The latter enable adults to develop and reorient their education on the basis of varying individual needs. Based on this context, the holistic concept of General Adult Education was introduced. It includes all organised learning activities addressed to adults that seek to:

- Enrich their knowledge
- Develop abilities and skills
- Grow their personality
- Develop active citizenship.

According to Eurostat data, nowadays, in Greece, the level of participation in education is generally high during the last few years. In 2017, more than 70% of Greek population aged 15 to 64 has

received tertiary education (level 5-8). Moreover, participation in upper- and post- secondary non-tertiary education (level 3-4), on the other hand, has consistently been lower percentage (43%) at this age group.

The Greek system of education and training is divided into two basic categories. The first category is related to formal education, while the second one to activities that are included in lifelong education and training. The structure of the Greek Education System is presented in the **Figure 1**.

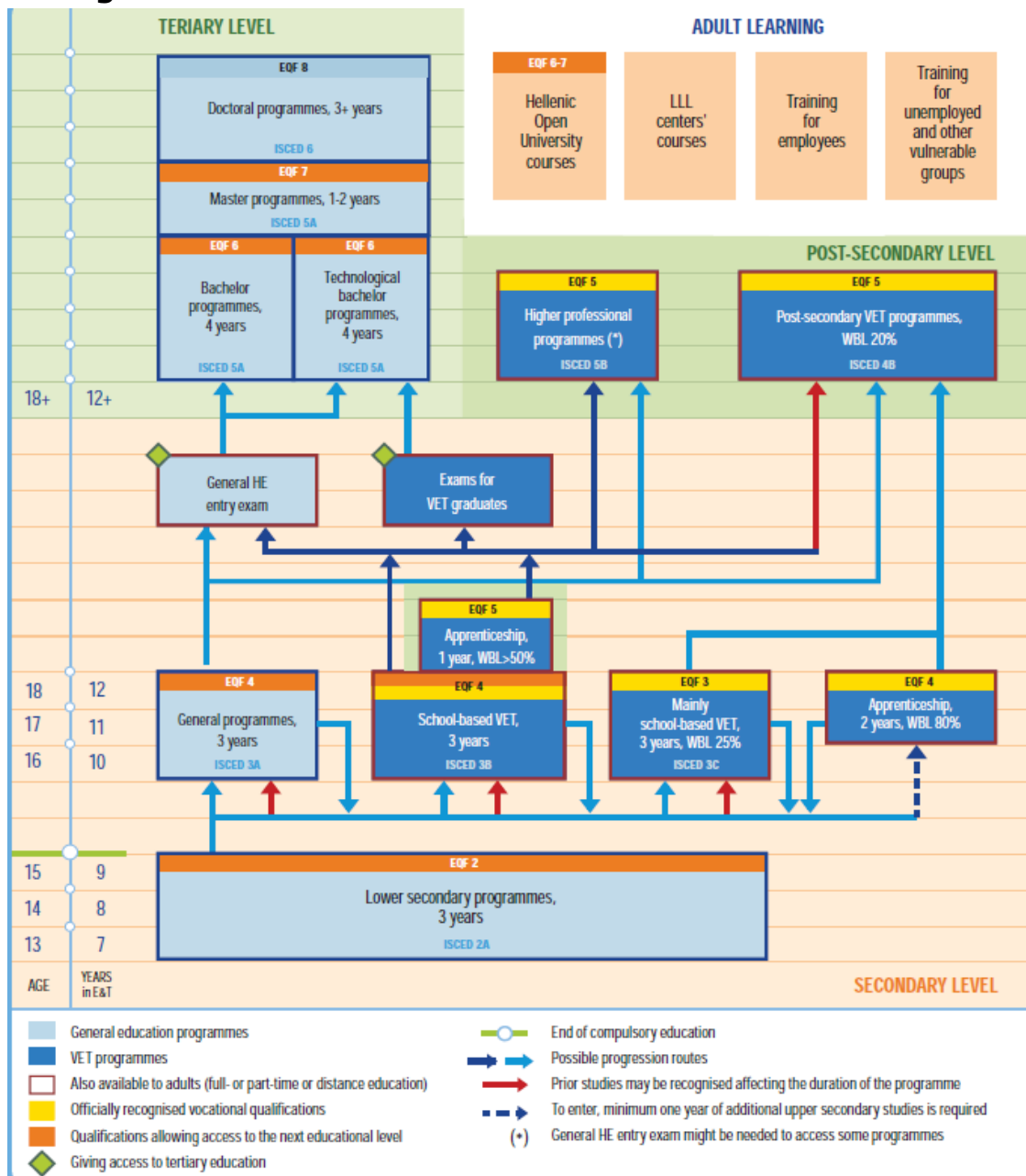


Figure 1. Greek education and training system (CEDEFOP, 2014)

Since 2000, four laws – on the national system linking vocational education and training with employment (Law 3191/2003), systematising lifelong learning (Law 3369/2005), developing lifelong learning (Law 3879/2010), and restructuring secondary education (Law 4186/2013) – and numerous amendments have been enacted in an attempt to regulate the domain of vocational education and training and lifelong learning. This legislative activity is mainly due to the EU's post-2000 emphasis on creating a competitive Europe that is capable of meeting the new challenges of the knowledge-based society.

But the Greek state also recognises the positive impact that developing lifelong learning would have on the country's economic life and on social cohesion. In Greece, a large number of Institutions, fully or partly subsidised by the state, provided General Adult Education. At post-secondary and tertiary levels, the following vocational education and training (VET) options are available:

- **Vocational training programmes offered by post-secondary VET schools IEK (EQF Level 5).** These public and private institutions provide initial vocational training mostly for graduates of upper secondary schools, and secondarily to those who have completed a formal vocational training school programme, with a view to integrating them into the labour market. IEK programmes last five semesters, four of theoretical and laboratory training and one of practical training or apprenticeship, which may be continuous or segmented. Students who successfully complete all the prescribed semesters are awarded a attestation of vocational training and lead to a post-secondary vocational training diploma allowing labour market access.
- **Higher professional programmes offered by higher schools (EQF Level 5).** These programmes are provided in tourism, maritime, army, arts etc. and have strong work-based elements and lead to a post-secondary VET qualification.
- **Adult learning courses**
 - *Continuing vocational education and training offered by LLCs and other bodies providing LLL.* The Ministry of Education, through National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP), is responsible for safeguarding quality of non-

formal education, evaluating these centres and monitoring their operation. Continuing VET programmes are also provided by most universities, including the Hellenic Open University, in a wide range of subjects. Qualifications that are acquired through continuing vocational training are not correlated to levels of the national qualifications framework, but this will eventually be done.

- *Other training for employees and/or unemployed and other vulnerable groups.* A fair number of enterprises provide systematic organised training programmes for their employees (in-house training), chiefly through seminars and accelerated programmes. In-house training is usually funded through the fund for employment and vocational training (LAEK), which is handled by OAED. LAEK programmes can include:
 - Training programmes in Greece (in-house and inter-company)
 - Postgraduate or other long-term educational programmes in Greece
 - Training programmes that take place outside Greece.

Moreover, Vocational Training Voucher are co-funded by resources of Greece and the European Union (European Social Fund), the Ministry of Labour, Social Insurance and Social Solidarity defines the Manpower Employment Organisation (OAED) as the Intermediate Management Body of the Vocational Training Voucher Programme. The Vocational Training Voucher Programme contains sub-programmes which target unemployed individuals of various professional fields, while the duration, content and the geographical distribution across the country varies from programme to programme. The purpose of this programme is to achieve a structured entry to the labour market for unemployed individuals, which will potentially lead to their placement in positions in the economy's private sector. There are criteria and procedures outlined in each programme. Therefore, every unemployed individual who is chosen and wishes, can be registered in a "Registry of Beneficiaries" and is entitled to a "Labour Market Voucher" which allows him/her the opportunity to receive continuous vocational training services (theory and practice).

A comprehensive scheme of Greek LLL system is given in **Figure 2**.

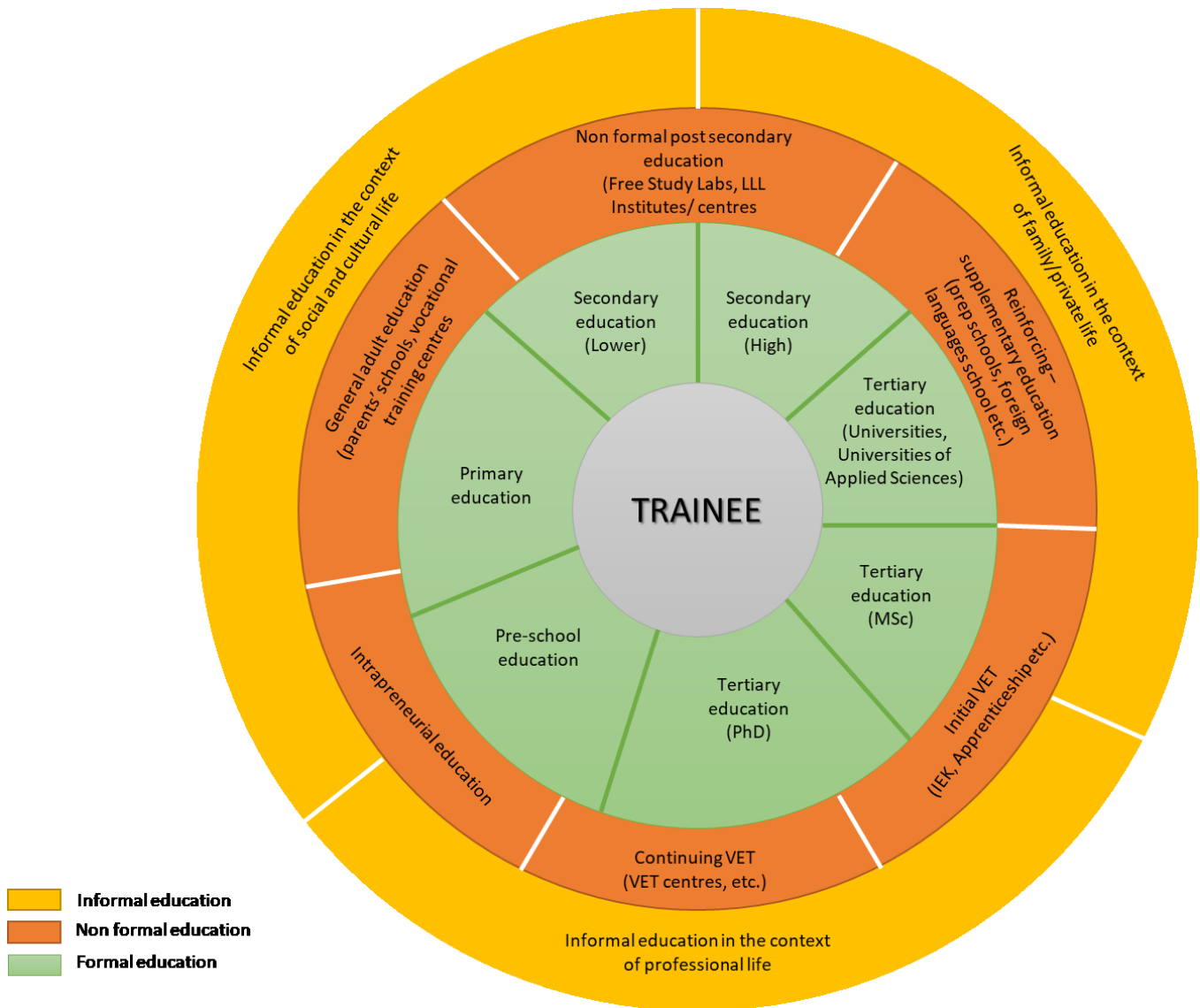


Figure 2. The position of LLL in the Greek education system

Concerning the administrative bodies of Lifelong Learning and, by extension, of Adult Education, according to Law 3879/2010 in force, these are:

1. At central level, the main body for Lifelong Learning is the General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning and Youth of the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs (Law 4386/2016). Its mission is to:
 - Plan the public policy for LLL
 - Form the relevant regulations
 - Prepare the corresponding national programme

- Monitor its implementation.
2. EOPPEP, which is supervised by the Minister of Education. It is responsible for certifying:
 - The input and output of non-formal and informal education
 - Bodies offering LLL services
 - Job profiles and programmes
 - The qualifications of adult education trainers
 - The development of the Hellenic Qualifications Framework and its correlation with the European Qualifications Framework (Law 4115/2013).
 3. The National Centre for Public Administration and Local Government (EKDDA) is the national strategic educational and training agent for public and local administration employees.

In Greece, there is currently no comprehensive national framework for the certification of non-formal education and informal learning. However, the EOPPEP (JMD 119959/H/20.10.2011 and Law 4115/2013) is the main administration body of the National Network for Lifelong Learning. Furthermore, the Law 4115/2013 defines the responsibilities for the inspection and certification of qualifications which might be assigned to licensed bodies (like Lifelong Learning Centres, Private Schools, Foreign Languages Schools), which receive an authorisation by EOPPEP and which, following their authorisation, are placed under the supervision of the organisation.

State-of-the-art of the recognition, validation and accreditation of prior learning

The main aim of recognition, validation and accreditation of prior learning is to analyse the prior learning of an individual and the knowledge, skills and competences that she/he already possesses prior to his/her entry in a specific course of study and/or qualification, and validate these against the requirements of the same qualification. In Greece, there is not any specific nationally implemented system for recognition, validation and accreditation of RPL. However, there are some approaches that support the assessment of qualifications and classify them in certain levels.

An approach is the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), which is a coherent and comprehensive system describing and assessing higher education qualifications for streaming students into all educational levels and is implemented in Greece for first time in 2010. In light of the Europe 2020 joint European strategy, the NQF, which is linked to the European Qualifications Framework, acts as a “translation” device that enables the comparison of different qualifications, serving, thus, the wider objective of enhancing lifelong learning and mobility.

The Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs is responsible for supervising and coordinating its implementation by the EOPPEP in line with the provisions of Law 3879/2010 and Law 4115/2013, currently in effect. In line with the Development of the NQF Action implemented through the Human Resource Development Operational Programme (OP), co-funded by the European Union (European Social Fund - ESF) and national resources and coordinated by the Education and Lifelong Learning Operational Programme of the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs (acting as intermediary Administration Body), EOPPEP has focused on:

- The definition of its structure
- The recording and analysis of “older” and current qualifications
- The planning and implementation of methodological tools for the classification of common education qualifications in the different levels of the National Qualifications Framework
- Its correspondence with the European Qualifications Framework.

During the planning of the NQF, the current needs of the country as well as the relevant European and international developments were taken into consideration. Its structure is defined by the following features:

- **Levels:** a key element of the National Qualifications Framework is a total of 8 levels which serve as a common and neutral reference point for education and training in a national and sectoral level. These 8 levels cover the entire breadth of qualifications, from those granted with the completion of compulsory education or training to those granted at the highest level of university education. Every level is identified by a set of knowledge, competencies and abilities which define the learning outcomes or the level. The learning outcomes constitute the qualifications of the corresponding level.
- **Learning outcomes:** these qualifications take the form of learning outcomes and are classified in levels. The learning outcomes are divided in categories; knowledge, competencies and abilities.
- **Descriptive indicators:** the learning outcomes which correspond to the qualifications of a specific level are defined by descriptive indicators, which are defined by the qualitative and quantitative classifications of knowledge, competencies and abilities.
- **Types of Qualifications:** apart from the Levels, the National Qualifications Framework adopts a set of Qualification Types. The Qualification Types represent a group of titles with common features which are classified in the same level.

On 10 September 2014, under the provisions of Law 4283/2014, the adult vocational education and training qualifications were specified along "Level 5 Vocational Training Diploma, awarded to Vocational Training Institute (IEK) graduates".

Another approach is the certification of qualifications that concerns the certification of output; that is, the results of non-formal education, as well as informal learning. In co-operation with the labour market as for the priorities which need to be set, and in connection with the certification of input, EOPPEP:

- shapes the regulatory framework for the recognition and certification of qualifications acquired through non-formal education and informal learning
- certifies specific qualifications and
- authorises independent bodies which certify qualifications identified on the basis of the needs and priorities of the labour market.

The following certifications are indicative of EOPPEP's responsibility:

- Initial Vocational Training, awarded following the Accreditation of Vocational Training & Certification of Vocational Training Institute (IEK) Graduates test. This certificate is equivalent to a Diploma or Degree.
- For professionals, who do not hold an accredited "Private Security Personnel" title. It links their vocational training with vocational training titles under Law 2009/1992. The regulatory framework for the Certification for Professionals outlines in detail the procedures relating to organising and administering tests, the bodies responsible for setting the tests, eligibility, documentation requirements and other necessary information.
- Accompanying Supporting Services (ASS) Officer Certification, awarded under Common Ministerial Decision (CMD) 113709/2015 Certification System for Accompanying Supporting Services (ASS) Officers.
- Certification of Attainment for non-formal Adult Education Trainers. Under relevant provisions, from 01.09.2017 onwards, certified education attainment is required for educators, who wish to participate in non-formal publicly funded programmes.
- Test for Licensing Technical Professions. Law 3982/2011 provides the institutional framework outlining details pertaining to the licensing of technical professions and manufacturing activities. Tests for awarding licenses to the interested parties will be administered by competent public or private bodies that have been themselves licensed by EOPPEP.

Finally, a third approach is the ECVET that is a system for the recognition, accumulation and transfer of credits in the field of

vocational education and training. With this system, knowledge, skills and competences (learning outcomes) acquired by an individual during his professional education and training both within the borders of his country as well as in other Member States of the European Union, can be assessed and certified. More specifically, through ECVET, learners who have acquired learning experience in other European countries, will have the possibility to recognize and include this experience in their vocational education and training in their country of origin.

The aim of ECVET is to enable the recognition of qualifications for learners of the secondary vocational education, initial and continuing vocational education and training during the mobility periods, by creating a common qualification framework, the use of common language, and the enhancement of exchanges and mutual trust between VET beneficiaries across Europe. In the context of facilitating the international mobility and the mobility of students and workers as well in EU member states, ECVET aims to support the recognition of learning outcomes acquired through formal, non-formal and even informal process learning. ECVET is based on concepts and processes that are used in a systematic way so as to create a commonly accepted and transparent way of credit transfer and recognition of learning outcomes in the field of Vocational Education and Training in Europe.

The ECTS option is not one that non-formal and informal education may be taken into account as this option is referred only to the Universities in Greece. The universities are highly regulated and it is not possible for external partners to develop ECTS providing courses. However, and even if a centre is cooperated with Universities' staff in order to develop a training course, the students that would follow this course should be current University students of graduate or post graduate level.

Description of the recognition, validation and accreditation of prior learning process

The RPL process concerning the Vocational training programmes offered by post-secondary VET schools IEK (EQF 5). Students who successfully complete all the semesters are awarded a attestation of vocational training. This attestation entitles them to take part in the (practical and theoretical) vocational training certification examinations conducted under the jurisdiction of EOPPEP, with which they acquire an upper secondary VET certificate. The process is described as given in **Figure 3**.

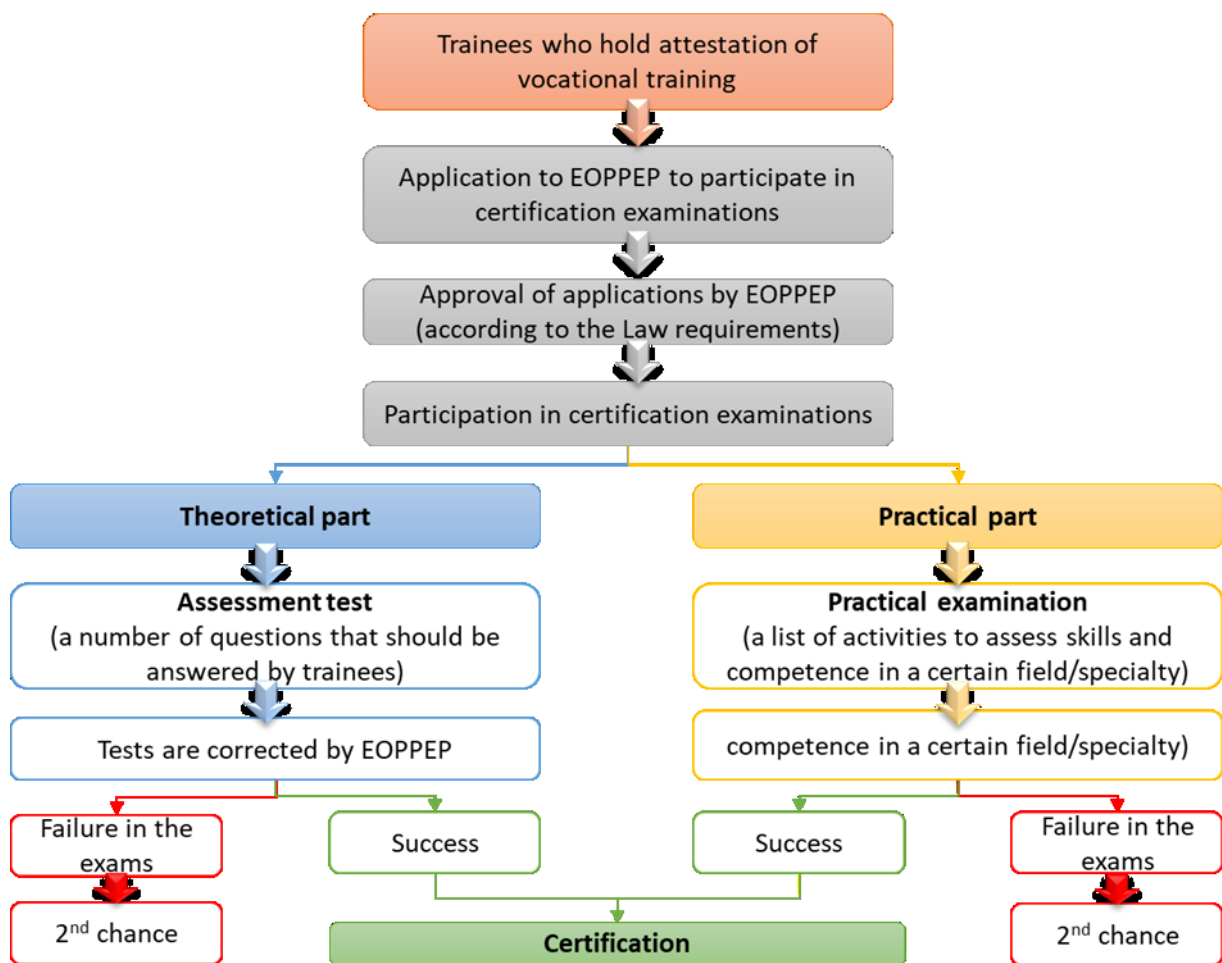


Figure 3. RPL process in VET Programmes provided by IEK

A candidate will pass theoretical part, if he/she concentrates a score equal or more than ten (10) points out of twenty (20). In practical part, there are two options "success" or "failure" based on certain criteria according to the specialty (e.g., for a cook: food hygiene, handling, implementation of specific process, cook temperatures etc.)

The certificates received through the above process are recognised at national level and also at international level only for countries, which have signed the Hague Convention.

The RPL process for training courses offered by LLL centres or other relevant bodies is differentiated from the previous one. These training courses provide certificates according to certification schemes developed according to ISO requirements. In this case, there are two options to accreditate a training course, either through certified bodies or through Hellenic Accreditation System (ESYD).

The ESYD has been appointed as the National Accreditation Body of Greece according to the requirements of Article 4 of the Regulation (EC) No 765/2008 according to which each Member State shall appoint a single national accreditation body. ESYD employs external assessors and experts. The assessors are selected and trained according to strictly defined criteria and procedures and they must comply with specific regulations concerning their independence, integrity and confidentiality.

One of the accreditations that ESYD is providing is for Person Certification Bodies. ESYD is responsible for accrediting bodies and training programs according to ISO 17024:2012, which contains principles and requirements for a body certifying persons against specific requirements, and includes the development and maintenance of a certification scheme for persons.

DIMITRA has close collaboration with a number of certification bodies in the context of European Projects implementation. These certification bodies are certified by EOPPEP Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and vocational Guidance and accredited by ESYD –and it provides Certification for competences and skills in several areas such as ICTs, Administration, Tourism and Hospitality, Marketing, E-commerce, Consultant Services, Costumer Services and many more. Their role is to develop new certification schemes. All the certification

schemes are developed according to the requirements of ISO 17024:2012. The steps followed by this process are presented in **Figure 4.**

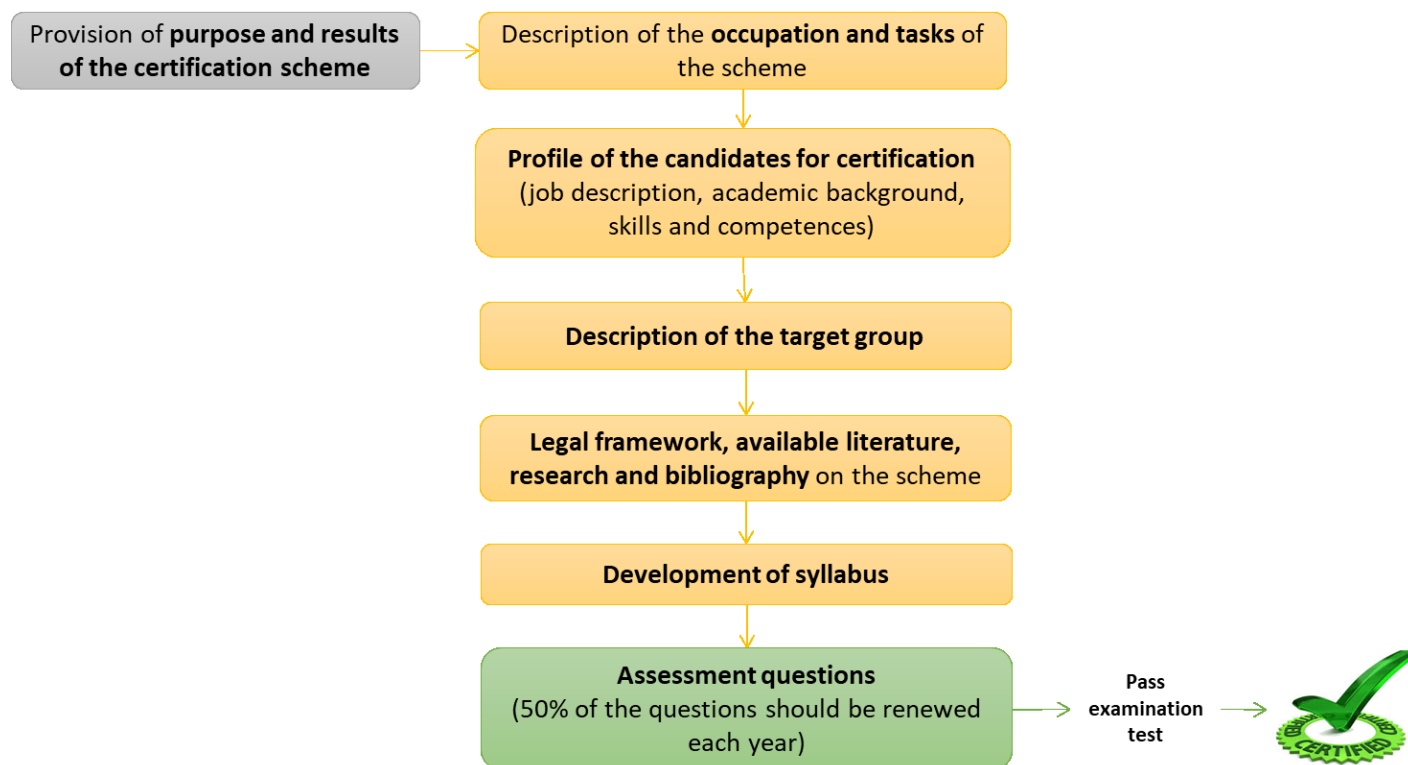


Figure 4. RPL process for training courses through certification bodies

In order to develop the certification scheme for the skills and competences of a profession by a certification body the following steps need to take place:

1. Provision of the purpose and the results that we are expecting of the certification scheme that will be developed
2. An extensive description of the occupation and tasks of the scheme
3. The profile of the candidates for certification. The Job description, academic Background, skills and competences that a candidate should have in order to take part at the certification process.
4. A description of the target group that the certification scheme will aim.
5. The current legal framework, available literature, research and bibliography on the scheme as well as available international schemes and standards.

6. Development and Provision of the Syllabus that the trainees have to study in order to develop their skill and competences and prepare for the certification procedure.
7. Assessment questions (multiple choice, true/false, matching etc.). The assessment questions should be matched to each module of the syllabus and be divided in three different teams.

The questions are grouped according to their difficulty:

- A: Low difficulty (25% of the total questions)
- B: Medium difficulty (50% of the total questions)
- C: High difficulty (25% of the total questions)

In case of open questions, the developer of the material has to correct those after each exam in order for the final grade to apply. An amount of 50% of the assessment questions should be renewed each year.

In the case the training centre decides that the best solution is to proceed with an accredited scheme, according to ISO 17024:2012, the certification body may proceed with that. However, since all the material and certification procedures should be reviewed and assessed by supervisors appointed by ESYD this procedure may take from 6 to 8 months, after all relevant documents are provided and the cost is very high in order to be accredited by ESYD.

A percentage system is applied to rate the candidates' performance. The percentage is required to pass assessments, for example a percentage of 60-70% usually is acceptable to pass a test.

By EOPPEP, the PRL of mainly technical staff and assistants is certified in 174 specialties summing up below:

- Food preparation, service and cooking (e.g., cook, baker)
- ICT and web-related job (e.g., web designer or developer)
- child care and nursery
- health-related jobs (e.g., dental technician, nursing assistant, physiotherapist, surgery assistant)
- pharmacy (e.g., assistant, responsible staff for medicine storage)
- fashion and beauty (e.g., nail technician, make-up artist, fashion designer)
- secretarial and administrative support
- agriculture and forestry

- security of person, buildings, areas
- management (e.g., stores, SMEs)
- creative industry (e.g., technician in art conservation, monteur, photographer)
- tourism (e.g., excursion organizer, receptionist, travel agency assistant)
- cooling and heating facilities
- electrician and plumber
- journalism (assistant journalist)
- building construction and design

According to ISO, either skills/competencies (e.g., ICT) or professionals (e.g., painters, food handlers etc.) are certified.

Conclusions

Recognition of Prior Learning is seen as a step towards lifelong learning in EU policy. Within the EU, two main problems have been identified regarding the validation of non-formal and informal learning. These are:

1. The limited opportunities for individuals to go through RPL practices
2. The lack of compatibility and coherence between RPL approaches in the Member States of the EU (European Commission, 2012b).

As mentioned before, in Greece, there is currently no comprehensive national framework for the certification of non-formal education and informal learning. However, the EOPPEP is the main administration body of the National Network for LLL.

In future, EOPPEP aims to develop a mechanism that records, sets priorities and prioritises skills. It will implement the matching of skills acquired through formal and non-formal education as well as informal learning and will create sectoral descriptive indicators, in the form of knowledge, skills and competencies. At the same time, it will develop a mechanism for the supervision of the implementation and the continuous specialisation of NQF through recognition of all training courses.

It is important to note that terms and conditions for evaluating, licensing and supervising all types of training programmes, are outlined by presidential decrees issued on the recommendation of the Minister of Education, Research and Religious Affairs.