



Case Study 5, Estonia, Vocational Education sector, 2009

VÕRUMAA VOCATIONAL EDUCATIONAL CENTRE

Case Study, vocational training	
The case study, the story	Evidence, material – content
<p>The context</p> <p>Võrumaa Vocational Education Centre</p> <p>A purpose of Accreditation of Prior Learning and Work Experience (APEL) is to develop links between different levels of education and to recognise knowledge acquired at previous level of education. Implementation of APEL for this purpose improves the flexibility of education, saves the resources of both the student and the education provider, and opens a quicker access to the labour market for the student.</p>	<p>Võrumaa Vocational Education Centre (www.vkhk.ee) has over than 800 students and 6 departments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tourism, • wood technology, • mecatronics, • metal proceeding, • business administration and • IT systems <p>Two levels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vocational education after secondary school - Professional higher education.
<p>Steps of APEL:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information and counselling • Submission of application • Assessment • Decision and feedback • Appellation <p>Tools for APEL:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of Estonian educational system • Regulations • Regulations of Admission • Study Regulations • Procedure and conditions for accreditation of prior and experiential learning • Application forms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • for fulfilment of the curriculum • accreditation of prior certified learning • appellation 	<p>APEL system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APEL counsellors in departments • APEL assessors in departments • Director of Studies is responsible for APEL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tools for APEL • Regulations • Application forms <p>Support system for APEL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APEL counsellors in every department • Support materials for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – students – APEL counsellors – APEL assessors
<p>Example</p> <p>During the studies at upper secondary school, the students have an opportunity, in accordance with the curriculum, to choose elective subjects associated with the training of professional skills. At the request of the general education school, the vocational education institution prepares a curriculum for teaching professional skills for the selected economic sector. This curriculum is based on the so-called 'base curriculum' of the vocational education institution. This combination of general education and professional</p>	

skills training is categorised as 'vocational training in upper secondary schools'. After general education school, the student applies for admission to studies according to the curriculum of 'Tourism Administration' on the basis of secondary education (volume of the curriculum: 80 credit points). In the course of general education, she had also completed the curriculum of 'Tourism Administration' for vocational training in upper secondary schools (volume of the curriculum: 21 credit points). The student passed the admission tests in accordance with the Admission Rules of the school and was enrolled as a 1-st year student. She then submitted an application for accreditation of the content and results of the prior vocational training as part of completion of the current curriculum. In her application, she requested transfer of 21 credit points.

Background

If a student, having acquired general secondary education, is admitted to a vocational education institution, he or she may submit an application for the accreditation of vocational subjects passed at upper secondary school as part of the current study programme.

Transfer between the levels of education is facilitated by legal basis, which enables the school to develop respective internal regulations. The school regulations should comply with the statutory requirements for both levels of education.

This possibility is also regulated in the annex to the regulation of studies of the school, which sets out the principles for accreditation of prior learning and work experience.

Pursuant to:

- Vocational Education Standard
- Regulation of Studies of Võrumaa Vocational Education Centre

The APEL process in the example case consisted of the following stages:

1. Advising the applicant – advisory service provided by the specialist in the organisation of studies
2. Completion and submission of the APEL application form – advisory service provided by the head of the study field
3. Review and assessment of the application and additional documents (school certificate, study results report) by the APEL committee appointed by a directive of the head of the school. The applicant adds to the application the general education school certificate, the results report and the certificate of completion of vocational training courses. The school already had the curriculum, which described the content and learning outcomes of her vocational training.
4. Adoption of decision and provision of feedback After comparing the goals and learning outcomes described in the two curricula, the committee concluded that the application should be granted to the extent of all subjects and learning outcomes achieved in the course of prior learning. As a result, it was considered that the student has completed 80 % of the curriculum for the 1st year, i.e., the theoretical part. The uncompleted part, 20 %, of the 1-st year curriculum was a work experience placement, which was not included in the curriculum at the previous level of education. As prior work experience may be also taken into account as part of the studies, the committee asked the applicant to submit additional information on her work experience in the tourism field, if any. The applicant did not have such work experience.
5. Contestation of the decision. According to the Regulation of Studies of the school, a student has the right to contest the decision pursuant to the procedure provided in the Regulation of Studies. The student did not contest the decision.