V.O.L.C.A.N.O.

Vocational Language for Care and New Opportunities for Migrants

IO2

Skills and Language Benchmarking and Profiling tool

In the framework of the project

"Vocational Language for Care and New Opportunities for Migrants"

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Contents

1. Introduction

The mobility of the labour market and the resulting need to compare the skills, knowledges and competences acquired in different countries and diverse education systems requires tools for their assessment, recognition, and equal categorisation.

The purpose of developing a Skills and Language Benchmarking and Profiling Tool is to provide the methodology for recognition and assessment of the competences and support the counsellors, career advisors and employers with a practical tool to measure and validate the competences of the persons working or wishing to work in the field of care. The tool for skills/competencies recognition, assessment and benchmarking is designed for a specific profession: the care assistant. This occupation was selected on the basis of Research and Mapping Report including desktop research and interviews concerning the situation on the labour market in all partner countries.

The universal tool is developed for the job profile of care assistant in all partner countries. As the competence profile may differentiate greatly from country to country the partners will develop the country specific tool in its national language using a universal Skills and Language Benchmarking and Profiling Tool as a pattern. The universal tool in English can be used and further adapted by other, countries not participating in the V.O.L.C.A.N.O. project. The toolkit can be used as a foundation tool and customised according to the country specific features of the occupations in the field of care.

The Skills and Language Benchmarking and Profiling Tool can be used both as an evaluation and recruitment tool. The users of the tool are counsellors, career advisors, employers and VET providers. The tool can be used by guidance counsellors to identify and register the lack of, and requirements in, qualifications. Due to the clear structure of the tool employers can compare the competence profile of the candidate with the expected competence profile of the future employee. The skills and language benchmarking tool equips the VET providers and trainers with a   plan, and contents for, training courses in the field of care.

The Skills and Language Benchmarking and Profiling Tool is based on learning outcomes according to ECVET approach. The Skills and Benchmarking Tool comprises not only validation of the skills and competences acquired in formal education (vocational training or higher education) but also in non-formal (in-company training, online learning, visiting courses of interest for e.g. language courses and language vacations) and informal context (work experience, home activities for e.g. caring of the elderly relatives, experiences abroad).

This paper on the Skills and Benchmarking Tool consists of two parts: a theoretical and a practical one. The theoretical part comprises the explanation of the terms competence, knowledge and skills, describes some of the methodologies for competence recognition, assessment and benchmarking, procedures for conducting a skills audit and developing a personal action plan (PAP) as well as methodologies for engaging with employers and sector skills councils.

The practical part contains example templates for interviews, personal action plans and some practical guidelines on the use of the tools.

2. Methodologies for Skills/competencies recognition, assessment and benchmarking

The career services of the organisations, training institutions, public employment services use different methodologies to assess the competences in the process of recruitment, personnel management and developing of the training programmes.

Before describing the methodologies for competencies recognition the term competence has to be clarified as its extensive use has led to expanding the meanings of the concept "competence". According to the ECVET, competence means the proven ability to use knowledge, skills as well as social, personal and methodological abilities in work and study situations and in professional and personal development. Knowledge is collection of facts, principles, theories and practices relating to a field of work or study. Thereby knowledge can be described as theoretical and/or factual. The skills refer to applying knowledge in order to complete tasks and solve problems.[1]

Skills and competences can be acquired not only in the formal learning settings (schools, vocational schools, higher educational institutions) but also through work experience, online learning, volunteering, participation in the cultural events and activities at home (taking care of a child or elderly relatives). The validation of the informal and non-formal learning experiences can both support unemployed people to acquire a job and to reduce unemployment rates[2].

The following methodologies of the validation, assessment and recognition of the competences will be presented in this piece of paper:
- Check of competences
- Self-assessment test
- Interview
- Observation

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[1] http://www.eucen.eu/EQFpro/GeneralDocs/FilesFeb09/GLOSSARY.pdf

[2] Handbook with Tools for Recognition and Validation of Competences According to the Levels of National Qualifications Framework (KODE-NQF Handbook), p. 14

Check of competences

The assessment of competences is usually based on job profiles related to a specific position. The training curricula and certificates gained through formal education serve usually as a benchmark to measure the competences resulting from the fact that the specific educational or/and vocational qualification or/and degree is required to enter the occupation. Although the check of trainer competences allows categorising of the competences precisely, not all the occupations can be matched to the certain educational or vocational trainings. This approach doesn't consider knowledge, skills and competences acquired in informal and non-formal setting.

Self-assessment test

The self-assessment test is a tool which gives one a reflection of his/her skills, knowledge and competences. With the help of this tool the person can not only validate the competences gained in formal education but also through work experience. The self-assessment tool can serve people wishing to get a job or a new position but also the evaluators to state which job /profession could be taken up and what is the experience of the person in the specific field.

Interview

The interview can be used as an assessment tool to evaluate the competences of the person and to recognise both the areas of strength and of improvement. Interviews can also be used to clarify the issues mentioned in the documentary evidence, CVs, or indicated in the certificates.

Observation

Assigning tasks and extracting evidence of competences of the person while he/she is completing tasks is called observation.

The tasks should cover the fields of competences of the profession and correspond to the tasks that are usually carried out in the job.

These methodologies for the validation, assessment and recognition of competences can be used alone or in combination with other methodologies, so the interview can be carried after the self-assessment test. The Expertise Check-up can be a part of the interview. The observation tool and the interview

can be combined if the counsellor, career advisors and employers has the appropriate materials to enable the interviewee to conduct the tasks.

3. Methodologies for engaging with employers and sector skills councils

The role of the employers in the process of the assessment, benchmarking and recognition of the competences is very decisive. Through the interviews with employers we can learn which professions are required in the field of care in the specific region. The demands of employers concerning the language knowledge the applicants could also be clarified through the contact with employers.

The communication with the partners could be settled through the following activities:

- Walk rounds of care homes
- Employer Q&As
- Mock job interviews run by employers
- Practical training run by employers using authentic material

Walk rounds of care homes could supply personal connections between the employers and potential employees. In such a way the development and needs on the employment market can be monitored. Questionnaires can be an initial step to get in contact with the employers. These can show the needs of employers, the approximate number of vacancies and the satisfaction of the employees with their jobs. Through an online Question and Answer programme both employers and employees find the answers for questions concerning the documents (e.g. example the criminal records check requirements), ask others for their experience in some (standard) situations (e.g. how should one apply for apprenticeship; which language schools provide some language courses in the city). Due to this system the changes, problems and changes in the care fields can be monitored. The online systems can be led by experienced employees answering the questions of the persons wishing to work in the field of care. Such online systems can be a part of the care homes or counsellors websites.

Asking the employers to conduct the mock job interviews as part of training can positively influence the development of the contacts with the employers in the specific region and train the people wishing to work in the field care how to behave during the job interview.

The needs and gaps in the skills of the personnel from the point of view of the employers as well as the wishes of the persons to improve the skills (e.g. language knowledge through the courses) could be stated due to the meetings run by the employers or organised through the counsellors, career advisors or VET providers.

4. Procedures for conducting a skills audit

A skills audit is a test of the knowledge and skills which is usually conducted through examinations and practice in formal education and registered in educational documents. The certificates gained by the candidates in the formal education are part of the validation process. Besides the education certificates, diplomas and other education and research documents such evidences as reference letters, CV, homepages, examples of work, documents about a vocational or academic training, that has been cut short, module examinations in higher education as well as certificates of attendance or further education certificates should be taken into account[3].

The validation of the skills acquired in the informal and non-formal context can be a great challenge both for guidance counsellor and employer.

Assessor can verify the competences assigning to the candidate the activities that belong to profession profile.

5. Methodologies for careers advice to the group based on results of benchmarking/audit results

The recognition of competences with the help of the Benchmarking tool aims to state the level of the competences the persons wishing to work in the field

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[3] European Commission; Cedefop; ICF International (2014). *European inventory on validation of non-formal and informal learning 2014: country report Germany.* hppt://libserver.cedefop.europa.eu/vetelib/2014/87053_DE.pdf.

of care are on. The benchmarking tool is directed to match both the competences acquired though education and experience with those in the field of care required knowledges and skills.

Some caregivers having a lot of experience but lacking the appropriate education background need specialised language course or furthering education course in the field of care.

6. Procedures for developing a personal action plan (PAP) with learners in order to guide them into healthcare professions at an appropriate level

After the interview the person wishing to work in the field of care should fulfil the Personal Action Plan. The self-assessment plan provides an opportunity for reflection of important competencies needed for the profession of caregiver. With the help of the tool individual can identify both the areas of his/her expertise and areas of improvement. The PAP should be completed by the person him/herself in order to define the aims and plans for future. The filled PAP could be discussed with the professional counsellor.

7. Skills and Language Benchmarking and Profiling Tool (Profession: care assistant)

Through the desk research and face to face interviews with the social care sector conducted for the Research Report the partners worked out the job profiles and identified the skills, competencies and experiences required for these professions.

1. Care assistant (working in a residential unit)	
This is the most wide ranging role stretching from very basic nursing or medical knowledge to more advanced depending on each country. The soft skills are universal but the hard skills will vary depending on actual roles	
Competencies/Skills required as listed in person or job specifications	**Hard skills** Mobile Care Basic medical/nursing skills and first aid Dietetics Driving licence Basic computer skills Rehab care experience Hygiene and infection control

	Basic psychological knowledge Ethics training Patients' rights Occasional special knowledge and experience required of elderly, disabled, terminal care (particularly if based in a hospice), patients with learning difficulties or palliative care depending on the nature of the residential unit. **<u>Soft skills/Core skills and competencies</u>** Emotionally sensitive and supportive Strong interpersonal & communication skills with a wide range of people, patients/family/medical professionals/support agencies Reliability & Trustworthiness Organisational skills and record keeping Team work Friendly and enthusiastic Respectful and good with families Hand to eye co-ordination Good memory
Qualifications required	Most of the training and qualifications for this role are vocational and can be done on the job. Vocational training usually leads or to a social/health care assistant or clinical assistant qualification Italy requires a degree
Job Profile	Personal care which involves washing, dressing; Compiling and contributing to care plans; Providing functional ability to dependent people in residential care and helping make them more autonomous Administrating medicines such as creams etc. but not medical interventions such as injections or dispensing tablets Meal preparation and feeding assistance Support with mobility walking/standing Communication with patients' families Liaising with external agencies such as doctors and local authorities May hep with daily activities and outings.
Minimum Language level	Although there is a need to be able to communicate effectively, there is no basic minimum level of language stipulated although it is understood that an ability to communicate effectively in both spoken and written is required and that this would be set somewhere between A2 and B1 though B1 would be the preferred level
Criminal records checks required?	This varies across the partners there are some countries where all posts require a criminal records check such as the UK and others such as Croatia where there is no statutory requirements but depends on employers.

2. Home Care assistant (usually visiting a patients house to administer short interventions	
This role only exists in this format in Croatia, Scotland and Norway	
Competencies/Skills required as listed in person or job specifications	**Hard skills** Ability to drive and driving licence Understand Health and Hygiene Food Hygiene especially if food preparation is featured in the role **Soft skills** Adaptability Organisational skills Can deal with stress Able to communicate with various professionals and family members Report writing Empathy Good humour
Qualifications required	Nether Croatia or Scotland requires any formal qualification before working but staff in Scotland will be expected to train in health and Safety, Food Hygiene, safeguarding of Vulnerable adults, Medication and Manual Handling
Job Profile	Personal care including washing and dressing, getting people up in the mornings or putting people to bed In some situations it means preparing food or feeding. It may involve light domestic duties It is a role which supports more medical interventions from other professionals It can also be a role which is to assist people coming out of hospital so can be for short durations
Minimum Language level	Although there is a need to be able to communicate effectively, there is no basic minimum level of language stipulated
Criminal records checks required?	In Croatia Criminal Record checks are at the discretion of the employer. In Scotland all staff will go through an enhanced check.

7.1 Self-assessment test

The self-assessment test should be conducted before the interview. The person wishing to work in the field of care should complete the table below describing the personal experience.

Task:

Describe your experience which you consider important for each type of task. Please specify where, when and how you acquired the task-based experience. Try to write as much as possible though describing only the task related experience.

Table: Self-assessment test

	Tasks Have you ever had experience with…	For Yes	If yes please describe your experience	Regularity (how often and when did you fulfil these tasks)
Housekeeping/Shopping	shopping / making a shopping list	☐		
	planning a budget	☐		
	cleaning	☐		
	washing dishes	☐		
	ironing clothes	☐		
Nutrition / Feeding (Preparing food and feeding)	meal preparation /Cooking food (in some cases for many people)	☐		
	feeding the patients	☐		
	checking for dietary requirements	☐		
	visit to restaurants – help with ordering from the menu.	☐		
Daily Tasks (Assisting patients with basic care needs)	Giving a bath / washing, showering	☐		
	changing bandages	☐		
	dental care	☐		
	using the bathroom	☐		
	getting dressed	☐		
Mobility support (standing up, walking) / Accompanying patients	to accompany patients to the doctor or local authorities	☐		
	support with standing or walking	☐		
	organising short trips	☐		
Medication and health care (Following patient care plans)	Medicine intake, medication dosage	☐		
	Blood pressure control	☐		

	Insulin administration	☐		
	Wound care and cleaning	☐		
	Rehabilitation	☐		
	Hygiene	☐		
	Dealing with dangerous situations			
	Carrying out plans according to the doctor's orders	☐		
Communication	Writing reports after visiting the cared for persons, writing short notes for colleagues	☐		
	Talking to relatives of the cared for persons on phone, leaving messages for relatives,	☐		
	Dealing with people dying and their relatives	☐		
	Empathy	☐		
	Communication with other professionals	☐		
Intercultural competences	Experiences abroad			
	Cooking international dishes			
	Communication with people from abroad/migrants			
Free-time activities (Helping to organise leisure activities)	Arranging a local visit (cinema, theatre, museums)	☐		
	Co-organising of celebrations and festivals, group activities	☐		
	Exercises	☐		
	Craft activities	☐		
	Accompanied walk concerning weather condition, what clothes to wear, destination	☐		
Soft skills	Working in a team			
	Being sensitive to people			
	Being patient			

7.2 Language specific test

1. Please fill in the word. There is only one possible answer.

<u>Housekeeping/Shopping</u>

Could you please go shopping? We have run ……………….. bread and meat.

- a.) out by
- b.) out of
- c.) with

Don't forget to buy some washing …………………. .

- a.) liquid
- b.) water
- c.) grains

<u>Nutrition</u>

We are going to have ………….. at 6pm.

- a.) lunch
- b.) dinner
- c.) breakfast

…………………… means to fry lightly und stew in a closed container.

- a.) Grill
- b.) Braise
- c.) Baste

<u>Daily tasks</u>

Mrs. Jones needs ………………. in dressing.

- a.) support
- b.) assistance
- c.) mobility

Mrs. Jones ……………… only for a couple of hours last night.

- a.) asleep
- b.) sleep
- c.) slept

<u>Mobility</u>

The elderly people who are not able to walk have to use a ……………….. .

a.) wheelchair
b.) car chair
c.) bike

Free time

If a person doesn't ……. up properly he/she could hurt him/herself during the exercise class.

a.) heat
b.) warm
c.) pick

Arranging a day ………… you have to keep in mind that long distances could tiring for senior people.

a.) theatre
b.) trip
c.) excursion

Medication

A ………………. is a piece of material used to cover and protect a wound.

a.) Hip
b.) Dressing
c.) Cover

For some people, a slow heart …………..… does not cause any problems.

a.) speed
b.) rate
c.) quantity

Future caregivers should attend a specific first …………….. training workshop.

a.) assistance
b.) help
c.) aid

It is so important to arrange for medical assistance if you suspect that a person has had a heart …………. .

a.) violation
b.) attack
c.) rate

Communication

Visiting cared persons at home you have to keep a ………….. of the important information.

a.) list

b.) record

c.) report

If you want to visit the doctor you have to make ………… beforehand.

a.) an appointment

b.) an arrangement

c.) an apply

General questions

The ………………. system is resistant to particular infections or toxins.

a.) Bone

b.) Nutrition

c.) Immune

Mrs. Jones is a 70 year old lady who has recently moved into a residential care ………………….. .

a.) facility

b.) house

c.) hospital

2. Please fill in the following sentences.

temperature, consciousness, painkillers, weight

If Mrs Jones eats nothing she may lose ……...

If a patient is ill, you have to take his/her ……………….. .

To reduce the effects of pain a person can take medicine called …………….

If a person faints, he/she loses ………………

3. Please describe your visit to a patient who is a single elderly person and lives in his/her flat alone. Present the sequence of your actions, write down the questions you ask the person.

7.3 Theory test [4]

Housekeeping/Shopping

Please choose the order of washing the dishes

     a.) plates, pans and pots, glasses, very dirty items
     b.) very dirty items, pans and pots, plates, glasses
     c.) glasses, plates, pans and pots, very dirty items

Which temperature is suitable for ironing different types of clothes? Point the position of the iron.

Cotton	a.) o	b.) oo	c.) ooo
Polyester	a.) o	b.) oo	c.) ooo

Nutrition / Feeding

Where should you sit feeding an elderly person?

     a.) behind the person
     b.) in front of person
     c.) near the person

How should the care giver act if a diabetic person asks to eat a chocolate pudding as a snack?

     a.) allow as diabetic persons need sweets
     b.) to check for the sugar portion and compare it with the allowed one for the day
     c.) forbid, sweets are off-limits for persons suffering from diabetes

Daily tasks

Dressing the cared person you should choose the clothes

     a.) yourself
     b.) together with the cared person giving her/him 3 option to choose from
     c.) asking him/her what she/he would like to dress

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[4] The Materials for theory test were developed in the project ICare (http://www.icareproject.eu/)

What should be done before giving a bath to an elderly person?

b.) take some measures: blood pressure, check the temperature of the water, offer the person a chance to go to the toilet,

c.) prepare towels, soap and shampoo,

d.) having the meal, choosing the clothes to put on

e.) helping the person to reach the bathroom, undress the person, help the person to step in, wash the person

Mobility support

People suffering from ataxia, pain by walking, weakness should use

a.) walking frame

b.) walking stick

c.) wheel chair

How many persons should support a cared person after an operation?

a.) one person

b.) two persons

c.) three persons

Medication

2. How to assist a person in state of shock?

a.) get him/her up and make him/her walk

b.) give him to eat and to drink

c.) leave him/her lying and cover him with a blanket

3. What should be done if a person has an asthma attack

a.) a person needs to breath so he has to be taken for a walk

b.) the person should be seated in a comfortable position and take his/her medicine

c.) a person should lie on the floor and breathe deeply

4. What should you do if someone has a diabetic emergency?

a.) give him/her some sweets or sugary drink

b.) give him/her some salted water

c.) give him/her low-calorie drinks

Communication

Whom should you inform first of all inn case of death of the patient at home?

    a.) relatives

    b.) police

    c.) emergency

One of the tasks of the Care Operator is …

    a.) to ask the cared person about his/her life experiences

    b.) to encourage the cared persons to attend to recreational and cultural initiatives

    c.) to make a diagnoses and give the cared person medicine

7.4 People and intercultural skills test

Please answer the following questions

1. How important is to know the surnames und family name of the cared for persons?

Very important ☐   important ☐   not so important ☐ unimportant ☐

2. Should you as a caregiver keep in contact with the relatives of the cared persons?

Yes ☐   No ☐   Only if I have problems with the cared person ☐

3. As a care assistant you can cook for the elderly persons whatever you want.

Yes ☐   No ☐

4. All elderly people living in care facilities should celebrate the same holidays no matter what their religion is.

True ☐   False ☐

5. How would you address the cared for persons?

By the first name ☐   by their second name ☐   using Mr. Mrs. and surname ☐

8. Skills/Competences Assessment by evaluators

8.1 Evaluation Form

The evaluation form should be completed by the evaluator on the basis of self-assessment test, language specific test, theory test and people and intercultural skills test. The evaluator has to review the different tasks the care assistant should perform and give the score according to the evaluation form.

	no experience	little experience	intermediate	advanced	expert
Score	1	2	3	4	5

Table: Evaluation Form

	Score	Comments from the evaluator
Housekeeping/Shopping		
Nutrition / Feeding (Preparing food and feeding)		
Daily Tasks (Assisting patients with basic care needs)		
Mobility support (standing up, walking) / Accompanying patients		
Medication and health care (Following patient care plans)		
Communication Intercultural competences		
Intercultural competences		
Soft skills		

On the basis of the evaluation form the evaluator should point out both the areas of strength and areas of improvement of the care giver. The table should be filled in before the interview.

Table: Feedback on the self-assessment test

Key areas of strength
Key areas of improvement
Additional notes

During an interview, the evaluator should mention the competencies required to work in the healthcare sectors, point out both the areas of expertise and improvement of the interviewed person using the Table "Feedback on the self-assessment test" and the Evaluation form.

8.2 Interview

Table: Interview

Family name, First name(s)	
Gender	
Date of birth	
Nationality(ies)	
Marital status	
Native language(s)	
Address	
Certificates	**Title of certificate:** **Date:**
Jobs	**Recent Job(s):** **Experience:** **Current Job(s):**
Digital (computer) skills	
Driving licence	

As the next part of the interview the counsellor should give the person a feedback on the self-assessment test. During the interview the counsellor can clarify the points or ask additional question to be sure that the interviewee possesses the appropriate knowledge. The interview itself can serve as a speaking part of the language test.

9. Personal Action Plan

After the interview the person wishing to work in the field of care should complete the Personal Action Plan. The self-assessment plan provides an opportunity for reflection on the important competencies needed for the profession of caregiver. With the help of the tool individuals can identify both the areas of their expertise and areas of improvement. The personal action plan is a tool that provides a systematic way of identifying the needs and planning the future actions.

My professional objective(s):	

Table: Personal Action Plan

This is what I know and can do now	This is what I should improve	What I believe is required for me to progress (Classroom activities, self development activities, on the job training, coaching etc.)	Name of the activity	Date when the activity is planned

10. Summary

People coming to foreign countries bring with them not just qualifications but also work-experience and multicultural competences. The assessment, recognition of the competences acquired in non-formal and informal context should become a part of the validating and recognition process. As there are still no clear strategies for recognising the formal certificates and informal competences, the results of the recognition process are usually not transparent enough and depend to some extent on the subjective decisions of the counsellors. As a consequence some candidates cannot benefit from the opportunities offered by the process of the recognition and validation of competences acquired in non-formal and informal context

The development of the Skill and Language Benchmarking and Profiling Tool can become a useful tool to validate, assess and recognise the formal, informal and non-formal competences and contribute both to recognising and recruiting process.

Tools for validation of the skills and competences can support the mobility across European countries as well as between different labour sectors and separate companies.

Through a process of validation of competencies acquired in the workplace, employees and employers can gain a better insight into the competencies within the company, helping to focus on further developments.