# Berlin Declaration on Validation of Prior Learning

<u>Preamble</u>

Validation of Prior Learning is the process of identifying, documenting, assessing and certifying the learning outcomes of individuals acquired within and outside formal education and training. It gives visibility and value to all forms of learning and seeks to uncover and unlock latent talent in the workforce and in society. Globalization, digitalization and migration are changing the way we work and learn. Where it is already established, we can see that VPL performs an invaluable bridging function between the individual and society, between learning and working. To empower VPL further, we, the VPL community, set out the following overarching principles for achieving a robust and effective VPL-system:

<u>§1 Organisational arrangements</u>

1.1 VPL should have clear entry points for the individual, which are widely advocated and accessible for all.

1.2 There should be clearly defined roles and responsibilities for all stakeholders involved in the design, implementation, development and quality assurance of VPL.

1.3 Relevant stakeholders should cooperate so that VPL and its results hold value and are highly recognised in society.

1.4 VPL should be linked to qualification systems (EQF, NQF or transnational systems).

1.5 VPL should include guidance and support at every stage of the process.

<u>§2 Financing</u>

2.1 A sustainable and transparent financing model needs to be in place to cover the full costs of validation including guidance, personnel, infrastructure, instruments and support mechanisms.

2.2 VPL should be accessible to all individuals regardless of financial status.

2.3 Systems for funding the validation of learning outcomes should build on existing infrastructure, regardless of pathway and validation service provider.

2.4 The costs and benefits of VPL, including its social and economic impact, should be monitored, analysed and shared with stakeholders.

2.5 Initial investment should be in place for establishing VPL systems and arrangements.

<u>§ 3 Procedures and instruments</u>

3.1 Quality assurance mechanisms need to be in place to ensure that assessment tools and instruments are valid, reliable, fair and sustainable.

3.2 Trusted, recognised and updatable instruments should enable flexible, individualised pathways and accommodate the diversity of candidates and learning paths.

3.3 Validation procedures need to refer to agreed standards, such as NQFs and/or sector specific standards, expressed in terms of learning outcomes.

3.4 Validation pathways need to be modular, transparent, and comprehensible at all stages of the process, in order to allow for flexible work and education pathways.

3.5 The outcome of the validation procedure should either grant credits, which allow for exemptions to shorten study time, lead to a full or partial qualification, or open up new routes to education and work.

3.6 Specialist training and certification of assessors is needed in order to ensure an open-minded, competent and non-discriminatory approach.

3.7 VPL should be accessible without any pre-requisite level of formal qualification.


§ 4 Support structures

4.1 Information provision and awareness raising of the value of people's informal and non-formal learning experiences should be embedded in learning, career guidance and work.

4.2 Accessible guidance and support needs to be provided before, during and after all phases of validation.

4.3 There should be visible entry points to the validation scheme, which are available both online and offline.

4.4 Specialist training and certification/validation for VPL practitioners is necessary.

4.5 Assessors should ensure an objective, fair and transparent process during the assessment and certification phases.


§ 5 Post-validation pathways

5.1 VPL should facilitate an individual's personal development and mobility horizontally, vertically and diagonally within and between organisations, sectors and/or countries.

5.2 VPL results should be transparent, reliable and trustworthy for all stakeholders.

5.3 Where relevant, validation certificates need to be equivalent to formal learning certificates so that they hold the same value on the job market and education system and ensure that they form the solid building blocks of further learning and work pathways.

5.4 Further learning options need to be offered, based on the results of the VPL process. They need to be adaptable to the individual's learning preferences.

5.5 The individual learner should be empowered in being an active agent in the creation of functional learning and working pathways, alongside the responsibilities of the education system, employers and social partners.

5.6 Guidance should also be available in the post-validation process.


§ 6 Legal foundations

6.1 VPL arrangements should be embedded in the relevant legal frameworks and relevant policy areas need to be coordinated.

6.2 VPL legal frameworks should establish an individual's right to access validation and guidance processes and the right to appeal.

6.3 VPL legal frameworks should establish a sustainable funding system.

6.4 VPL legal frameworks should establish regulating body/bodies, which at a minimum oversee provision, uptake and quality assurance of VPL and coordinate the VPL system(s).

6.5 Regardless of the learning pathways, to avoid discrimination, (partial) qualifications and certificates should be the same.

6.6 Laws and regulations need to be reviewed on a regular basis to allow the evolution of the VPL system.