PR 5 - Implementation

5.1 – Assessor Training

PACE VET
Digital Credential

Project Leader

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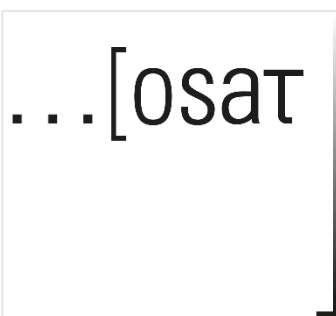**Steunpunt voor de productionele, ontwerpende, en technische krachten van de brede culturele sector**
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Content

1. Training Plan

1.1 Preparation

The partners agreed on a course of learning, procedures and learning methods for the assessor training. Self-learning and online courses were a prerequisite, as neither the candidates nor the tutors were able to attend training exclusively in a face-to-face setting. It was agreed that all of the assessment methods and their interplay in assessment should be a part of the training, although both the "Lighting" and "Sound" units were to be assessed using only three methods(POR/OSE/CBI). Validation as proposed in PACE-VET should have a higher degree of validity than a typical examination. Assessments based on triangulation (combining results from different assessment methods), can be considered the "gold standard"[1] in validation of learning outcomes. Special care was taken in training of the assessors to ensure an openminded, competent and non-discriminatory approach to the process and candidates.

1.2 Preliminary test training and assessment

In February of 2023, the project partners performed a preliminary test of the assessor training and the assessments procedures in Bergen op Zoom. Two experienced professionals from the sector provided important feedback for the entire process. The competence matrices were re-evaluated and several aspects of the assessor training were discussed.

In general, the complexity of the process proved to be a major obstacle for the participants. As with any "new" approach to assessment and validation, time for understanding the elements in the process and discourse are of utmost importance. Nonetheless, important recommendations were made for improvement and the project partners modified the procedures accordingly.

1.3 Selection of candidates for the final training and assessment

Assessors in PACE-VET must have the following knowledge and skills:

- Be familiar with the validation process (validity and reliability)
- Have professional experience in the sector

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[1] Cedefop. European Commission. ICF. 2017. Page 74

- Have no personal interest in the validation outcome (to guarantee impartiality and avoid conflicts of interest)
- Be familiar with different assessment methodologies
- Be able to inspire trust and to create a proper psychological setting for the candidates
- Be committed to provide feedback on the match between learning outcomes and validation standards/references (via support systems)
- Be trained in the assessment and validation processes in PACE-VET and knowledgeable about quality assurance mechanisms
- Operate according to an appropriate code of conduct[2]

For an overview of the skills, knowledge blocks and transversal competences see: PACE-VET_ASSESSOR_Overview.xls

1.4 Selection of candidates

Assessors needed to be acknowledged as professionals in the sector for live-performance and event technology. This is vital to trust and credibility in the assessment process itself. The authenticity of the assessment situation is only guaranteed when sectoral experts can direct the use of an assessment instrument or judge the outcomes of its use. It was also clear that the assessor trainees should not be linked to the candidates in the "Lighting" and "Sound" units or their work or social life in any way.

The project partners were able to secure six assessor candidates from Germany, The Netherlands, and Belgium. Including the preliminary test in 2023, there were eight candidates in the process. All had teaching and examination board experience and are currently working in the sector. The limited resources for the assessor training and participation in the face-to-face course in Bergen op Zoom proved to be a challenge.

1.5 Course of learning outcomes

The following learning modules were selected for the assessor training:

- Understanding the TeBeVAT and PACE-VET processes and goals.
- Understanding the use of the PACE-VET application
- Understanding the PACE-VET asement methods and their implementation
- Impartiality and bias in assessment
- Special Needs
- Quality assurance and ethics
- The assessment process
  Preparation
  Documentation

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[2] Cedefop. 2023. Page 32

Deliberation

- Understanding validation of learning outcomes

  Competences

  Knowledge

  Attitude/Autonomy

- Special focus on the assessment methods:

  Criterion-Based Interview

  Observation in a Simulated Environment

  Structured Portfolio

1.6 Procedures

A training plan divided into 6 Blocks was deliberated and finalized.

- Blocks 1 and 2 were self-learning courses supported through online-videos on demand and an assessor handbook.
- Blocks 3 and 4 were online courses that were also documented as a video file for further study and reference.
- Blocks 5 and 6 were carried out at the assessment centre and involved practice and evaluation of the assessment methods needed.

1.7 Training plan

1.7.1 Blocks 1 + 2 – Online/Self-Learning

BLOCK 1	Time	Title	Theory	Exercise	Practice	Setting	Competences
1A	Self-Learning 18:51	Introduction TeBeVAT & PACE-VET	0,32	0	0	Learning Video	A1+A7+A8
1A-1	09:24	Intro Basic Principles / Goals The Process					
1A-2	09:27	The App					
1B	9 Videos Self-Learning 86:47	Understanding Assessment Methods PACE-VET	1,44	0	0	Learning Videos	A1+A2+A7+B4+C1+C2
1B-1	13:25	Structured Portfolio					A7
1B-2	10:16	Observation in a Simulated Environment					A7
1B-3	09:24	Observation on Site					A7
1B-4	08:11	Post Box Exercise					A7
1B-5	11:29	Role Play					A7
1B-6	09:09	Criterion Based Interview					A7
1B-7	09:01	Written Test – Multiple Choice					A7
IB-8	07:39	Written Test – Open Answers					A7
IB-9	08:13	Oral Test					A7
1C	Self-Learning 18:08	Impartiality & Learners with Special Needs	0,30	0	0	Learning Videos	A4+A5+C1+C2
IC-1	10:25	Impartiality/Bias					A4+C1+C2

IC-2	07:43	Special Needs				A5
BLOCK 1	**1:23:46**		2,06	0	0	

BLOCK 2	Time	Title	Theory	Exercise	Practice	Setting	Competences
2	Self-Learning 10:38	Assessment Preparation, Documentation and Deliberation	0,17	0	0		A1+A7+E1+E2+E3+E4
2A	10:38	Preparation Documentation and Deliberation	0,17	0	0	Learning Video	A1+A7+E1+E2+E3+E4
BLOCK 2	**10:38**		0,34	0	0		

Handbook	Self-Learning	Assessor Handbook (PDF)	3	0	0	Online	ALL

Online Videos: https://pace-vet.eu/assessor-training/

Assessor Handbook: PACE-VET_Assessor_Handbook_en.pdf

1.7.2 Blocks 3 + 4 – Online

14.05 18:00-19:45 BLOCK 3	Time	Title	Theory	Exercise	Practice	Setting	Competences
3A	00:20	Meet & Greet	0	0	0,33	Online	B1
3B	00:30	Competences Knowledge Attitude/Autonomy	0,5	0	0	Online	A1+A2
	00:05	Break	0	0	0	Online	
3C	00:20	TeBeVAT + PACE-VET processes explained by participants	0	0	0,33	Online	A1+A7+B4
3D	00:15	Quality & Ethics	0,25	0	0	Online	C1+C2
3E	00:05	Wrap-Up	0	0	0,08	Online	B1+B3
BLOCK 3	**01:35**		0,75	0	0,74		

16.05 18:00-19:45 BLOCK 4	Time	Title	Theory	Exercise	Practice	Setting	Competences
4A	00:15	Meet & Greet Reflection 3A	0	0	0,33	Online	B1
4B	00:35	Simulation Criterion-Based Interview	0	0	0,58	Online	A1+A2
	00:05	Break	0	0	0	Online	
4C	00:35	Focus Observation Simulated Environment Videos & Discussions	0	0	0,58	Online	A1+A7+B4
4D	00:05	Wrap-Up	0	0	0,08	Online	B1+B3
BLOCK 4	**01:35**		0	0	1,57		

1.7.3 Blocks 5 + 6 – Training in Bergen op Zoom

OSAT was responsible for the organisation, preparation, and use of the educational and work-sharing institution "Curio" in Bergen op Zoom. The facility was an excellent choice for the assessor training and the partners are extremely grateful to Mr. Koen Jansen, "Podium" Instructor for Stage and Event Technology and AV specialist, who provided the needed space, equipment and infrastructure.

DAY 1 – 22.05. 09:00-17:00 BLOCK 5	Time	Title	Theory	Exercise	Practice	Setting	Competences
5A	09:00–09:30 00:30	Meet & Greet Schedule	0	0,5	0	face-to-face	B1+D1+D4
5B	09:30–10:15 00:45	Introduction to PACE-VET + ETTEC Intake Interview Units / ESCO / Competences	0,25	0	0,5	face-to-face	D4
5B	10:15–10:30 00:15	Break	0	0	0,25	face-to-face	B1+B2
5C	10:30–11:30 01:00	Assessment What / How / Who	1	0	0	face-to-face	A7+A8
5D	11:30–12:00 00:30	Assessment Bias / Rules of Evidence Introduction: PACE-VET App	0,25	0	0,25	face-to-face	A1+A2+A3+A6+E3
5E	12:00–12:15 00:15	Break	0	0	0,25	face-to-face	B1+B2
5F	12:15–12:45 00:30	Assessment Preparation	0	0	0,5	face-to-face	
5G	12:45–13:30 00:45	Lunch break	0	0	0,75	face-to-face	B1+B2
5H	13:30–15:00 01:30	Assessment Collecting Evidence Each group alternately Simulated Environment (STEPP) Criterion Based Interview (OSAT)	0	0	1,5	face-to-face	A1+A2+A3+A6+E3
5I	15:00–15:15 00:15	Break	0	0	0,25	face-to-face	B1+B2
5J	15:15–16:45 01:30	Assessment Collecting Evidence Each group alternately Simulated Environment (STEPP) Criterion Based Interview (OSAT)	0	0	1,5	face-to-face	A1+A2+A3+A6+E3+ B4
5K	16:45–17:00 00:15	Analysis and review	0	0,25	0	face-to-face	B1+B3+D1+D4
DAY 1 BLOCK 5	08:00		1,5	0,75	5,75		

DAY 2 – 23.05. 09:00-16:00 BLOCK 6	Time	Title	Theory	Exercise	Practice	Setting	Competences
6A	09:00–10:15 01:15	Preparation + Simulated Environment Assessment Procedure	0	0,25	1,00	face-to-face	A1+A7
6B	10:15–10:30 00:15	Break	0	0,25	0	face-to-face	B1+B2
6C	10:30–11:30 01:00	Simulated Environment Assessment Procedure	0	1	1,00	face-to-face	A7+A8
6D	11:45–12:45 01:00	Discussion+Review OSE	0	0	1,00	face-to-face	A1+A2+A3+A6+E3
6E	12:45–13:30 00:45	Lunch break	0	0,75	0	face-to-face	B1+B2
6F	13:30–14:15 00:45	Discussion+Review CBI / Portfolio	0	0	1,5	face-to-face	A1+A2+A3+A6+E3 +E4
6G	14:15–14:30 00:15	Break	0	0,25	0	face-to-face	B1+B2
6H	15:15–16:00 00:45	Reflection Analysis and review	0	1,5	0	face-to-face	B1+B3+D1+D4
DAY 2 BLOCK 6	07:00		0,0	4	4,5		

2. Esco Competences

2.1 Corresponding ESCO competences

The following ESCO competences were selected by the partners to define the learning outcomes for the assessors. Their relationships to the Training Plan can be seen in the last column of each Block. For more detailed information see: WP 4.2 Preparation of the Assessment Process.

Module	Title	Description
	ASSESSMENT	
A1	Prepare the assessment of prior learning	Familiarise the candidate with the assessment situation and guide them through the process of assessment of their prior learning.
A2	Assess candidates	Evaluate the candidates' vocational competences, skills and knowledge through tests, interviews, simulations, and evidence of prior learning according to a pre-defined standard or procedure. Formulate summative statements of the displayed competences in comparison to set expectations.
A3	Monitor assessment	Monitor the assessment process in the workplace, educational context or in validation situation. NOTE: derived from monitor assessment
A4	Show impartiality in an assessment situation	Assess candidates based on objective criteria and methods according to a pre-defined standard or procedure, taking into account prejudice or bias, to make or facilitate objective and transparent decisions.
A5	Assist clients with special needs	Aid clients with special needs following relevant guidelines and special standards. Recognise their needs and accurately respond to them if needed.
A6	Deliberate prior learning assessment results	Interchange observations and negotiate a final rating with other assessors. Align different views and reach consensus on the performance of the candidate.
A7	Assessment processes	Various evaluation techniques, theories, and tools applicable in the assessment of students, participants in a programme, and employees. Different assessment strategies such as initial, formative, summative and self- assessment are used for varying purposes.
A8	Assess prior learning	Evaluate the candidates' vocational competences, skills and knowledge through tests, interviews, simulations, and evidence of prior learning according to a pre-defined standard or procedure. Formulate summative statements of the displayed competences in comparison to set expectations.
	COMMUNICATION and FEEDBACK	
B1	Listen actively	Give attention to what other people say, patiently understand points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times; able to listen carefully the needs of customers, clients, passengers, service users or others, and provide solutions accordingly.
B2	Have emotional intelligence	Recognize ones own and other people`s emotions, distinguish correctly between them and observing how they can influence one`s environment and social interaction and what can be done about it.

	B3	Give constructive feedback	Provide founded feedback through both criticism and praise in a respectful, clear, and consistent manner. Highlight achievements as well as mistakes and set up methods of formative assessment to evaluate work.
	B4	Use questioning techniques for assessment	Use different questioning techniques such as semi-structured interviews, open and closed questions, or STARR interviews, adapted to the type of information to be gathered.

Module	Title	Description
	QUALITY and ETHICS	
C1	Follow ethical code of conduct in assessment situations	Carry out interviews, tests, simulations and assessment of evidence of prior learning according to accepted principles of right or wrong, including fairness, transparency, objectivity, safety, privacy and impartiality in assessment practices and conduct towards candidates
C2	Apply quality standards to the interaction with candidates	Follow established procedures which prevent errors in the conception and implementation of an assessment
	PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	
D1	Exercise self-reflection	Effectively, regularly and systematically reflect on own actions, performance, and attitudes, and make necessary adjustments, seeking professional development opportunities to plug knowledge and practice gaps in identified areas.
D2	Manage personal professional development	Take responsibility for lifelong learning and continuous professional development. Engage in learning to support and update professional competence. Identify priority areas for professional development based on reflection about your practice and through contact with peers and stakeholders.
D3	Monitor developments in field of expertise	Keep up with new research, regulations, and other significant changes, labour market related or otherwise, occurring within the field of specialisation.
D4	Develop professional network	Reach out to and meet up with people in a professional context. Find common ground and use your contacts for mutual benefit. Keep track of the people in your personal professional network and stay up to date on their activities.
	ADMINISTRATION	
E1	Keep personal administration	File and organise personal administration documents comprehensively.
E2	Maintain professional administration	File and organise professional administration documents comprehensively, keep customer records, fill in forms or log books and prepare documents about company-related matter.
E3	Document prior learning assessments	Observe a performance and use existing templates to protocol answers and information collected during tests, interviews, or simulations. Adhere to a pre-defined frame of reference and structure the protocol comprehensible for others. Ensure that pre-defined templates and procedures are clear, comprehensible, and unambiguous.
E4	Manage documentation of prior learning assessments	Agree upon competencies that are to be assessed. Establish the assessment protocol and develop templates to record the assessment decisions. Establish a communication plan. Distribute relevant assessment documents to authorities, clients, or colleagues according to this plan.

3. Conclusions

3.1 Assessor Training: Feedback and Reflection

3.1.1 Challenges

For a majority of the assessor trainees, although familiar with Member State validation and certification processes, the PACE-VET process, encompassing many European educational and occupational elements, was a new vocational educational validation ecosystem that first had to be comprehended and understood. Grasping the European perspective, which the project partners have more or less "assimilated", including EQF, ESCO, and emphasis on the validation of "learning outcomes" instead of "course curricula", was a challenge and sometimes confusing for the trainees. At the same time, all of them expressed their appreciation of the process and its goal to provide a European solution for the sector.

The focus on the individual needs and circumstances of candidates, that was considered in the development and implementation of the validation arrangements as well as their "ownership" of the process", were new approaches in VET for the assessor trainees. This "strategic vision"[3], placing the individual at the centre, has few examples in traditional vocational programmes in Member States.

3.1.2 Learning course and Training Material

As there is no "one-size-fits-all" approach to validation processes, the project partners included all of the assessment methods chosen in TeBeVAT to be able to illustrate opportunities to capture and assess learning outcomes specific to each individual candidate. The project partners were not only focussed on the two assessment processes that were to be carried out in the PACE-VET project. Their goal was also to create a process, guidelines, documentation and an application that could be used in the future to facilitate individual, lifelong and life-wide learning[4] in the sector. This goal led to quite an extensive amount of new ideas and processes in the learning material for the trainees to cover and comprehend.

Some of the ESCO competence descriptions were criticized by the trainees in the learning process. Suggestions for corrections were noted and taken into account. The formulation and creation of ESCO competences is a long and consensus-based process. While sectoral layer profiles can be altered somewhat more efficiently, it is an important result from the project that ESCO must evolve and be updated in the future as quickly as labour market skills need change.

3.1.3 Assessment Training in Bergen op Zoom

The assessor trainees split up into two groups that alternately practiced the Observation in a Simulated Environment and the Criterion-Based Interview assessment methods.

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[3] Cedefop (2023). Page 13
[4] Cedefop (2023). Page 20

Observation in a Simulated Environment

The trainees were trained in this assessment method by carrying out an OSE assessment of the Lighting Unit A.

For an overview of the assessment procedure see:

WP_5_1_Annex_4_PACE-VET_LIGHTING_A_Procedure_Manual

As with the Assessor Handbook, the trainees were somewhat overwhelmed by the provided documentation and the detail of the setup and process. This is a difficult issue since these are all essential parts of the quality management. Had there been more time to walk the trainees through the process and allow them to review the documentation, this issue would not have come up. This assessment method certainly requires the most resources and mirrors Cedefop findings: *Elaboration of adequate methodologies for validation might also be costly to ensure their reliability and validity, especially as they need to be adaptive to diverse needs and learning experiences and the combination of methods might prove challenging.[5]*

The trainees' English language skills, although certainly good and a prerequisite for participation, proved, regarding detailed terminology in the sector, to be a matter of discussion. In general, English terminology is predominately used for technical applications and equipment, but that is not always the case. Especially stage technicians working only in the market segment "theatre" may use terms that are very specific to their venues and the institution and country where they work. Even differences in British and American English can be a challenge (luminaire / lighting instrument). It must be noted that such assessments would normally take place in the language of the country of the accredited assessment centre and therefore fewer misunderstandings in terminology would take place. However, care should be taken before assessment that technologies and terminologies are understood as such by all in the process.

A "digital" scoring application (e.g for a tablet) would certainly be a good idea. Assessors should not be dealing with bundles of paper during the assessment.

After the training for OSE, trainees expressed that they did not feel "secure" about their assessment decisions. This is a "normal" reaction, since the procedure was new for them. Assessors need assessment experience in order to feel comfortable about the process and their decisions. Once the accreditation of assessment centres has been established through a European entity, assessor trainees should be able to work as assistants aside qualified and experience assessors to acquire and develop these skills.

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[5] Cedefop (2023). Page 29

Trainees also spoke of "intense" days. For them, the training meant taking vacation time, traveling to and from the assessment centre, communicating in English, and concentrating on a demanding amount of learning materials and skills in quite a short period of time. They also could not work exclusively on the training, but they had to combine it with other functions, for example in teaching and training and/or work. Despite these constraints, all of the trainees gave good and positive feedback. They found the training interesting and exemplary for a future European validation process for the sector.

Criterion-Based Interview

For an overview of the assessment procedure see: Criterion-Based Interview Procedure Manual

The training for the Criterion-Based-Interviews went quite well, as this form of assessment is well known in human resource and in vocational education validation processes. The following improvements were suggested:

- The preparation time for the interview should not be too short – at least fifteen minutes. Assessors need time to organize and structure the interview process.
- In the introduction, the active assessor should make "dos" and "don'ts" in the interview process clear.
- The assignment (what competences need to be assessed) needs to be documented in advance. This will be very focused on the individual candidate and his/her/their needs and other assessment results (portfolio).
- The list of prepared questions mut be more detailed to be able to properly assess the learning outcomes.
- The ESCO definitions are not precise enough. The sectoral layer needs work.

Again, language played a role in the interviews. To have a fluid discussion, it makes sense that assessors and candidates are either communicating with each other in their first language or, if the interview is carried out in another language, all have a Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFL) level of at least "C = Proficient User" in that language. This would also apply to any of the oral assessment methods in the process.

PACE-VET App

As the application was still in development, the assessment of a candidate portfolio could only be discussed and explored through an early web-based developer platform (GitHub) version of the app. The possibilities available were well received. All trainees expressed the need for a digital lifelong learning tool for the sector.

For the assessor training, it was suggested that an "assessment" portfolio for review, that contains documents that should and should not be validated, should be prepared. The trainees would be expected to determine which evidence provided in the documents is not sufficient. They should also be able to determine which other assessment methods, documents or procedures could lead to a successful validation – if the candidate agrees to continue the assessment process.

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5. Annexes

Annex 1 – PACE-VET ASSESSOR Overview

Annex 2 – PACE-VET Assessor Handbook

Annex 3 – PACE-VET Criterion-Based Interview Procedure Manual

Annex 4 – PACE-VET Lighting A Procedure Manual

Annex 5 – PACE-VET Sound A Procedure Manual

Strategic Report

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