

**Good practice  
in validation of learning outcomes**

Italy

**Qualification "Administrative assistant"**



*Good practise in validation of learning outcomes. Italy. Qualification "Administrative assistant"*

Based on the expertise by Patrizia Martinelli

Editors:

Michał Rostworowski, Iwona Gmaj, dr Marcin Trepczyński, Barbara Przybylska

Instytut Badań Edukacyjnych

ul. Górczewska 8

01-180 Warszawa

tel. (22) 241 71 00; [www.ibe.edu.pl](http://www.ibe.edu.pl)

Citation template:

Educational Research Institute (2020). *Good practise in validation of learning outcomes. Italy. Qualification "Administrative assistant"*. Warsaw: Educational Research Institute.

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ISBN 978-83-66612-46-4

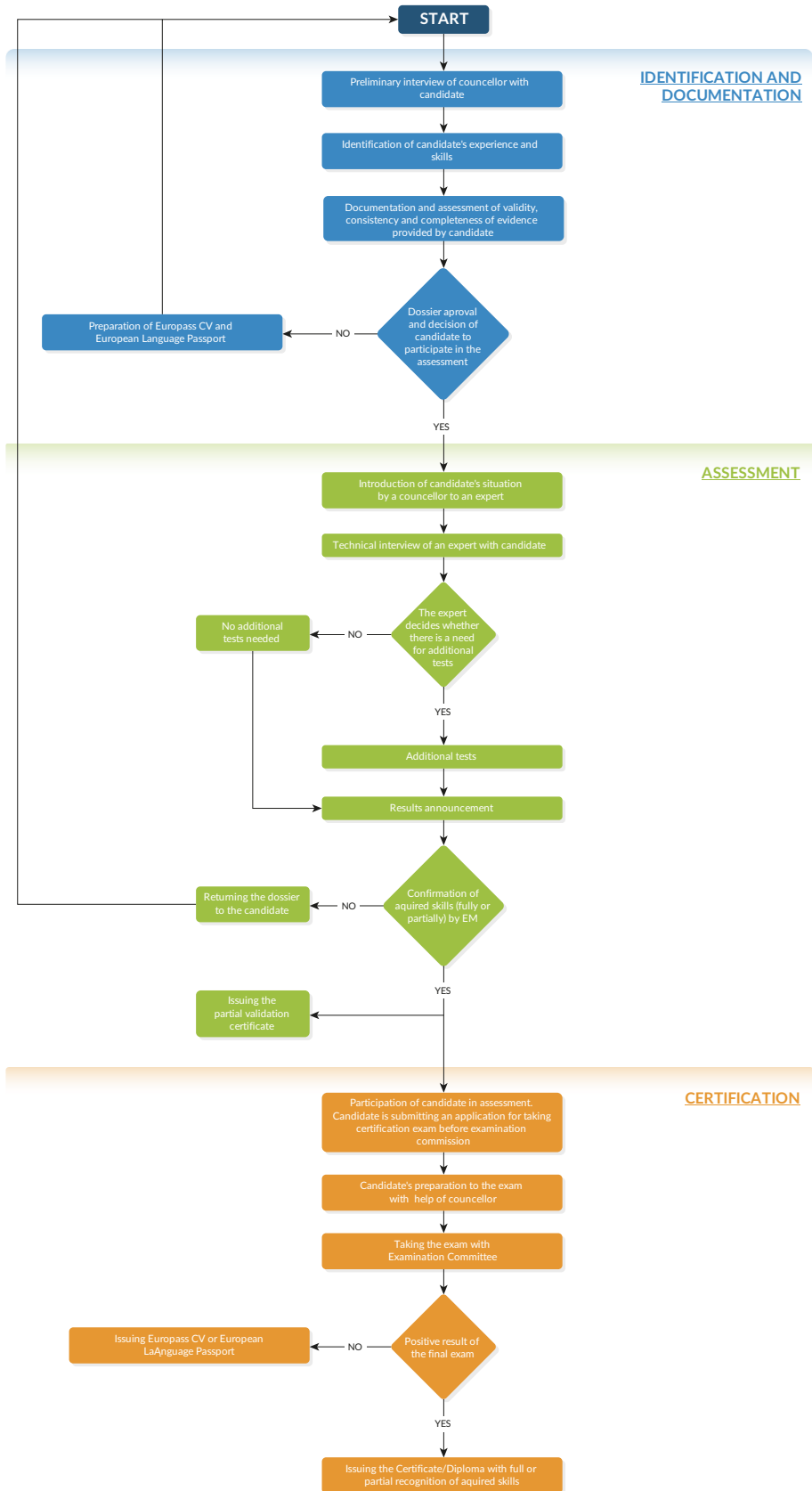
This publication is co-financed by the European Social Fund of the European Union as part of the project entitled *Support to central government administration, awarding bodies and quality assurance institutions in implementing stage II of the Integrated Qualifications System*.

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## Table of contents

1. Country, institution name. . . . .	6
2. Institution website. . . . .	6
3. Qualifications. . . . .	6
4. Short description of the validation process. . . . .	6
5. Detailed description of the validation process . . . . .	6
5.1. Identification and Documentation. . . . .	7
5.2. Assessment . . . . .	8
5.3. Certification . . . . .	9
6. Validation methods. . . . .	10
6.1. Unstructured interview . . . . .	10
6.2. Collecting Evidence . . . . .	10
6.3. Analysis of Evidence. . . . .	11
6.4. Technical Interview. . . . .	11
6.5. Tests . . . . .	12
7. Validation results. . . . .	14
8. Human resources . . . . .	14
8.1. Validation coordinator . . . . .	14
8.2. Counsellor. . . . .	14
8.3. Teaching and Training Expert . . . . .	14
8.4. Vocational Expert. . . . .	15
9. Organizational and material conditions. . . . .	15
9.1. Timeframe. . . . .	15
9.2. Technical and Logistic Requirements . . . . .	15
10. Quality assurance. . . . .	15
10.1. Certification Commission: External Quality Assurance. . . . .	16
10.2. Monitoring . . . . .	16
10.3. Development of Expert Skills. . . . .	16
Coordinators . . . . .	16
Counsellors . . . . .	16
Experts. . . . .	16
11. Financing. . . . .	16
12. Context of good practice . . . . .	17
12.1. Referencing the Italian System to the European Qualifications Framework. . . . .	17
12.2. National Qualifications Register. . . . .	17
12.3. Piedmont Region . . . . .	17





## 1. Country, institution name

- Italy
- Forcoop – regional training centre, Piedmont Region

## 2. Institution website

<http://inforcoop.coop/>

## 3. Qualifications

Administrative assistant (level 2 of the Italian Qualifications Framework, level 2 of the European Qualifications Framework)

Addetto amministrativo segretariale (IQF L2, EQF L2)

## 4. Short description of the validation process

Validation for the qualification of administrative assistant in the Piedmont Region enables the competences of this qualification to be confirmed. These competences are in the most general terms understood as the ability to undertake specific activities and perform tasks in a given context – the combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes that are used in a specific situation and acquired through non-formal education or informal learning. In accordance with the system adopted in the Piedmont Region, validation consists of three stages:

- **identification and documentation:** a mandatory initial stage, during which a candidate's competences are diagnosed and compared to the descriptions of qualifications contained in the Register of Qualifications and Teaching Standards of the Piedmont Region (hereinafter: "Qualifications Register"). The objective of this stage is to determine the scope of the competences required for a given qualification, which the candidate is able to confirm that he/she has acquired. Evidence of attained competences is also assembled in the form of a dossier;
- **assessment:** an optional stage, during which a candidate's competences are confirmed by an expert from the given field. This stage consists of a technical interview and, if needed, additional tests. After the end of the assessment stage, the candidate can obtain a certificate acknowledging that the confirmed competences have been attained or start the certification stage;
- **certification:** an optional stage, during which a candidate's competences are confirmed by an examination commission, resulting in having a certificate or diploma issued, i.e. having the qualification awarded. It is also possible to receive a certificate acknowledging that only some of the competences required for the qualification have been attained.

Even though the stages of the validation process correspond to the standard division in terms of the terminology used (which, as opposed to Poland, also frequently contains certification), the Piedmont system treats identification and documentation as a single stage. Even more so, the documentation stage analyses and sorts already collected evidence, rather than collecting it, whereas in the Polish Integrated Qualifications System, the collection of evidence is an important element of the documentation stage.

## 5. Detailed description of the validation process

In Italy, each region implements the qualifications system independently from the other regions. The Piedmont Region determined the principles pertaining to validation; they are contained in the consolidated uniform text introduced in circular No. 849 of 18 September 2017 (<http://www.regione.piemonte.it/governo/bollettino/abbonati/2017/38/suppo1/00000009.htm>).

In the Piedmont Region, the validation of competences acquired through non-formal education or informal learning begins with a meeting between the candidate and a counsellor, where information is provided about the possibilities of validation.

### 5.1. Identification and Documentation

The stage of identification and documentation consists of determining the candidate's experiences and describing them in the categories of knowledge (what the candidate knows), skills (what the candidate is able to do) and social competences (the candidate's attitude to work and responsibilities). Three parts of this stage are distinguished:

- **acceptance and information:** a person interested in validating his/her competences takes part in an interview with a counsellor about the purpose of validation, the course of the process, potential results and the time which the candidate will have to devote to the process. If the candidate is still interested in pursuing validation, he/she signs an agreement with a regional training centre – in this case Forcoop – consents to the processing of personal data and arranges the date of the next meeting to prepare a dossier. The counsellor asks the candidate to provide a current CV for the next meeting and evidence confirming the declared experiences and competences;
- **identification:** the counsellor and the candidate determine the purpose of validation and the candidate is provided support in identifying the experiences acquired in various life situations. Next, the counsellor collects information on these experiences from the candidate in a dossier and determines the evidence needed to document them. Then, taking into account the collected experiences and available documents confirming them, the counsellor initially aligns the candidate's experiences with the competences required for one or more qualifications included in the Qualifications Register. These competences are described in the candidate's dossier, in the section that in the future will include the evidence of having attained them. Finally, the counsellor determines the date of the next meeting with the candidate;
- **documentation:** the counsellor helps the candidate analyse the evidence. The analysis is performed on the basis of three criteria:
  - validity, i.e. the documents are formally correct;
  - consistency between the evidence and the specific competences;
  - completeness, i.e. the number of pieces of evidence in relation to the number of distinguished competences.

The user is then informed about the next steps.

If the candidate's dossier has been approved, the next stage begins.

Otherwise, the candidate takes back the dossier and the counsellor proposes assistance in preparing a Europass-CV and the European Language Passport.

#### “Administrative Assistant” qualification:

In the Piedmont region, a candidate interested in attaining the “Administrative Assistant” qualification applies to an authorised vocational training institution.

The candidate is a 26 year-old man who attended a master's course on mass communication theory and techniques in 2016 and simultaneously worked as a cashier in the gastronomy sector. During the interview with the counsellor, the candidate informed her that he would like to attain a qualification in order to improve his position in the company.

Taking this into account, the counsellor explains the conditions and the course of the validation process, after which the candidate signs a service contract and consents to the processing of his personal data.

Then the counsellor asks him to bring the documents needed to confirm his experiences and competences to the next meeting.

During the second meeting, the counsellor helps the candidate identify his acquired experiences in formal and informal contexts, determines the competences important for attaining the “Administrative Assistant” qualification and assists with selecting the needed documents. The candidate presents such evidence as: formal documentation, his own statements, video recordings or a list of passed university examinations. The analysis confirms that the competences acquired by the candidate correspond to the competences specified in the description of the qualification. During the meeting, the counsellor completes the candidate’s dossier. At the end of the meeting, the candidate confirms that he intends to continue to use the service and start the assessment.

This procedure differs slightly from the Polish practice, where the stages of identification and documentation are understood differently. In Italy, identification and documentation are part of the first stage, which is treated as a whole. The considerable difference consists of the fact that in Italy, the documents are taken into account when identifying acquired competences. On the basis of the documents provided by the candidate, the counsellor can help him determine the competence to which specific documents refer and thus specify the competence that the candidate is able to confirm.

In Poland, documentation is understood as the stage of collecting evidence, whereas in Italy, it consists of a substantive analysis of previously compiled evidence.

## 5.2. Assessment

The assessment stage aims to have the candidate’s competences confirmed by an expert from the given area by analysing the evidence, interviewing and potentially requiring additional tests to be taken. The following elements of assessment are distinguished, where various methods of validation are applied:

- **analysis of documents and determining the need to take additional tests:** the counsellor meets with the expert selected by the awarding body and presents the situation of the person commencing validation. The expert analyses the evidence and certificates and identifies those competences which could be potentially assessed based on the criteria of credibility, reliability and the degree to which the skills are certified in the relevant documents. The results of the evidence assessment are entered into an evidence assessment form and described in a validation report. The counsellor informs the candidate about the results and the eventual need to take additional tests apart from the technical interview;
- **technical interview:** the expert, relying on the analysis of the evidence, determines the key elements to assess during an interview with the candidate. a summary of the technical interview is included in the validation report;
- **additional tests:** based on the analysis of the evidence and results of the technical interview, the expert indicates which competences should be analysed in-depth by using one or more additional tests from the “Piedmont System” IT test database. The expert orders the tests to be taken, evaluates the results and records them in the validation report;
- **decision:** the expert issues a decision, taking into account the assessment of the evidence, results of the technical interview and results of the additional tests. The decision may entail:
  - recognition of all the competences within the scope of one or several qualifications;
  - recognition of one or several competences within the scope of one or several qualifications;
  - no recognised competences.
- **results and certification:** the counsellor informs the candidate about the results of the assessment and checks whether the candidate still intends to apply for the certificate or not. When either all or only some of the competences are recognised, the candidate receives a document acknowledging their validation. If no competences were confirmed, the candidate receives his/her dossier, or as part of a specific initiative of the Region, is assisted by the counsellor in preparing a Europass-CV and European Language Passport.

“Administrative Assistant” qualification:

The coordinator of the awarding body contacts the expert who performs the assessment. The counsellor then describes the situation of the candidate who wants to attain the “Administrative Assistant”



qualification to the expert. After having received the needed information, the expert conducts an initial assessment based on analysing the evidence included in the candidate's dossier.

In case of the candidate described above, the expert expresses her opinion: the expert believes that the extent to which the documents confirm the competences is high (from 80 to 85%), but because some competences have not been sufficiently documented, they must be assessed. The expert determines the aspects to be assessed and conducts a technical interview with the candidate. The expert asks open questions generating a discussion, sometimes using cases pertaining to such aspects as:

- a) limiting the transfer of funds due to anti-money laundering laws;
- b) the types of transactions exempted from VAT;
- c) the types of accounting regulations (asset management, purchase of company mobile telephones, management of special services, such as painting office premises, and depreciation). In the course of the interview, the expert also determines the content of the economics examination that the candidate passed while at university and the test items relating to accounting (balance sheet, double entry method).

The candidate clarifies that the examination was on tourism economics and that he had also learned about the concepts relating to budgets and the double entry method, etc.

At the end of the interview, the expert determines whether the above-described competences can be recognized in the case of the candidate. The result of the interview is recorded in the validation report. The counsellor is responsible for informing the candidate about the results of the technical interview.

The candidate confirms his/her readiness to initiate the certification stage.

### 5.3. Certification

The certification stage aims to verify the confirmed competences in the form of an examination before an examination commission. This stage significantly differs from the certification stage in Poland, where it is defined as "the process by which a learner, after having achieved a positive validation result, receives a formal document from an authorised awarding body stating that a qualification has been awarded" (IQS Act). The main difference is that in Italy, the certification stage includes an examination before an examination commission.

Certification is divided into the following steps:

- **submit an application to take the final examination:** the counsellor accepts the candidate's application to be admitted to take the final examination and enrolls the applicant in the selected examination session. The institution in which the candidate files the application for the examination provides the counsellor with general information about the examination (e.g. pertaining to the organisation, number and types of tests, duration, software used);
- **preparation for the examination:** during the interview, the counsellor explains to the candidate the general principles of the examination, assisting the candidate with the organisational issues and preparation for the tests;
- **the examination and assessment of the results:** the candidate participates in an examination session conducted by the examination committee designated in accordance with regional regulations, consisting of a chairperson, a professional expert and a training expert. The examination consists of a general test with several parts. The candidate passes the examination upon achieving the required threshold of points, which is equivalent to confirming that the person has all the competences required for the given qualification;
- **announcement of the results and issuance of the certificate:** the counsellor provides the candidate with information about the examination results. If the candidate passed the examination, all the competences are confirmed and a certificate (qualification, professional diploma, specialisation,

authorisation, skills) is issued. If the candidate failed the examination, he/she is given the dossier (if this had not been returned earlier) and, at the initiative of a region, the candidate is assisted by the counsellor in preparing a Europass-CV and the European Language Passport.

## 6. Validation methods

Key methods used in the validation process include:

- unstructured interview;
- collecting evidence;
- analysis of evidence;
- technical interview;
- test (various types).

### 6.1. Unstructured interview

The unstructured interview is a method used at the identification stage. It consists is an unstructured conversation between a counsellor and a candidate. The counsellor asks the candidate questions in order to reconstruct the candidate's experience and competences and enters them in a dossier. Two tools are used as part of this method: the dossier and qualifications register, which are described in detail in section 6.2.

### 6.2. Collecting Evidence

With this method, evidence is collected, confirming the candidate's statements and competences, in accordance with the adopted criteria and principles and using such tools as the electronic dossier and the Register of Qualifications and Training Standards of the Piedmont Region. The register is a point of reference for determining the competences. The dossier serves as the candidate's documentation of his/her relevant evidence.

The evidence that can be included in the dossier is selected as the result of analyses based on the following criteria:

- **validity of the evidence:** this is determined by ensuring that the documents meet all the formal requirements (e.g. presence of signatures, dates, addresses, logos and trademarks);
- **consistency of the evidence:** this means that there is a clear correlation between the experience and specific competence (e.g. the relation between the tasks foreseen in the employment agreement and the competence that a candidate wishes to confirm);
- **completeness of the evidence:** this is determined by comparing the evidence with the competence that is to be recognised in the validation process to determine the extent to which the competence is documented and to develop a worksheet of the confirmed competences.

The following principles are observed:

- **effectiveness:** the evidence should confirm competences considered important and in line with the given profile of the qualification that the candidate is able to effectively use and which relate to the professional activities of the qualification;
- **efficiency:** an excessive number of pieces of evidence should be avoided.

The dossier has a strictly-defined structure, specified by the authorities of the Piedmont Region. It is divided into: a) a section on the experiences acquired by the candidate in various ways (e.g. in professional work) and b) a section on the candidate's competences acquired through such experiences, as well as their confirmation in the form of evidence. The evidence includes:

- formal documents, such as employment certificates or volunteer work certificates, patents, licenses, employers' references, customers' declarations, work orders, letters of reference, etc.

- work (tangible or intangible) produced by the person as part of his/her professional experience, volunteer work or while pursuing his/her own interests, testifying that the candidate has the competences required for the given qualification. Examples include: samples of work, presentations, translations, reports, computer programs, photographs, etc.
- testimonies of activities confirming that the person adopted a specific attitude in a given situation. This category includes testimonies of persons who witnessed the candidate's actions, audio or video recordings.

The Register of Qualifications and Training Standards of the Piedmont Region consists of hierarchically ordered qualifications (in October 2017, there were 463 of them). It is categorized by:

- occupational categories (craft trades, construction, tourism, services, etc.);
- professions to which competences are assigned;
- cross-sectoral competences (the so-called transversal or general competences) consisting of sets of competences that can be shared by various profiles, persons or occupational areas.

### 6.3. Analysis of Evidence

This method consists of a qualitative analysis of the dossier and, on this basis, a technical interview and additional tests are planned and scheduled. The analysis uses such tools as the above-described dossier and the evidence assessment worksheet.

The evidence assessment worksheet is prepared by an expert on the basis of the following criteria: 1) reliability of and confidence in the evidence and 2) strength (the extent to which the evidence confirms possession of the competences). Reliability is judged to be:

- **low:** if the evidence is of marginal importance, e.g. it consists of the candidate's own statements or initial evidence, which the candidate is unable to directly relate to himself personally;
- **average:** if the evidence consists of, e.g., certificates without a final examination conducted by an external commission or letters of reference;
- **high:** if the evidence consists of, e.g., certificates of having qualifications awarded by bodies accredited by the Piedmont Region or issued after having passed an examination, on the basis of an employment agreement or analogous documents.

The strength of the evidence refers to the extent to which the evidence confirms that the candidate actually has the competences. It is expressed in percentage terms as the relation between the components of the competence [1] that can be confirmed as the result of the analysis of the presented evidence and the total number of competence components required for the given qualification.

After the analysis, the expert determines whether the candidate should take part in a technical interview or whether additional tests should also be conducted.

### 6.4. Technical Interview

Based on the results of the analysis of evidence, the expert determines which competences should be verified during the technical interview and determines the content of the questions, referring to the experiences of the candidate and the provided evidence.

As part of the technical interview, the following initial prodding questions are foreseen, such as:

*For three years, you worked as a volunteer in an adult day care centre, where you were responsible for servicing the canteen (reference to the experience and presented evidence). In reference to your experiences, can you indicate the similarities and differences that you observed with respect to hygiene at the centre and your former place of employment? (request for additional information).*

The expert can also ask questions configured as "brief case studies" – presenting a situation that is followed by a question, e.g.:

*Let us assume that you are an employee in “X” bar. It is summer and the place is very popular. The floor in the bar is dirty – there are pieces of paper and remnants of food lying around (presentation of context). Do you believe that the premises should be cleaned when customers are being served? (checking question).*

During the technical interview, the expert may use additional elements, such as photographs, product samples, diagrams and outlines in order to make his/her questions more specific/understandable and to facilitate answering.

The expert may also ask direct questions pertaining to specific knowledge or skills, if this is considered necessary. In this case, the questions do not refer to individual experience and are focused on principles, theories and practices relating to the sector/profession/work process, analytical skills, etc.

The expert records the course of the interview and its results in a report.

### 6.5. Tests

Various types of tests are used at the assessment and certification stages.

If during the assessment stage, the analysis of evidence confirmed only some of the competences or as a result of the technical interview, it was determined that additional tests are needed, the relevant tests can be commissioned. They are prepared by a training expert, who must be a teacher.

The expert can use general tests (PCV [2]) developed separately for each qualification listed in the qualifications register. The expert can then determine which parts of such tests will be used to assess the candidate exclusively within the required scope. The expert may, for example, determine that only the candidate's theoretical knowledge is to be assessed, omitting practical skills, and then selects a relevant test module to accomplish this. In order to verify:

- **knowledge of operating procedures** within the scope of compliance with occupational health and safety (OHS) principles, the best form is to conduct a theoretical test;
- **knowledge of operational procedures** within the scope of observing OHS principles, the best form is a case study: after being provided with a work context and specific information, the candidate is expected to describe how certain activities are to be managed and to complete specific documents;
- **practical aspects of the competences** – the best solution would be the use of a laboratory simulating the work environment to conduct a technical and practical test, requiring a series of basic activities to be performed in a bar or kitchen.

When there are no general tests available in the IT system, the expert designs a new test, determining: a) the type of tests needed – focused on verifying knowledge and/or practical skills; b) the assessment criteria.

At the certification stage, a comprehensive test is conducted. The aforementioned general test is used for this, consisting of a number of thematic tests. The possible types of tests are presented in the table below.

**Table 1. Types of tests used to validate the “Administrative Assistant” qualification**

Test type	Purpose
Technical-science test	

Theoretical test	Confirms technical and scientific knowledge by using one or two questionnaires.
Technical and programme test	Verifies familiarity with stages required to process a product or service. The candidate is asked to describe such stages and indicate the necessary materials and equipment which may be used. The test assumes the assessment of technical skills, but may also include linguistic and mathematical knowledge.
Technical and project test	
Case study	Verifies knowledge about various work aspects. The candidate has to describe in detail the solutions referring to a specific, simulated situation in the work place.
Technical and operational test	Assesses the performance of a specific technical/practical task.
Practical examination	
Technical report	Prepared after the technical and operational test; this test is a written report, in which the candidate describes the characteristics of the work in practice. The report may also contain a description of the candidate's choices made during the technical and operational test, their justification and description of the errors made.

The general test assessing the competences of an administrative assistant has four examination modules:

- technical and scientific test consisting of completing a questionnaire (the threshold for passing is 40/100; share of the overall result: 10%).
- practical test on the operation of a secretariat (the threshold for passing is 40/100; share of the overall result: 30%).
- practical test on administrative activities (the threshold for passing is 40/100; share of the overall result: 30%).
- interview (the threshold for passing is 40/100; share of the overall result: 10%).

In order to calculate the candidate's end result, an assessment credit is also added to the total points received from the general test, which, in the case of persons undergoing the validation process, amounts to 20 points.

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[1] The term “components of the competence” refers to the separate elements of knowledge and skills comprising a specific competence.

[2] In Italian: *Prove Complessive di Valutazione*. This is a comprehensive examination consisting of various test modules.

## 7. Validation results

The results of the process may be as follows:

- if at the assessment stage, all or some of the competences are confirmed, a document acknowledging their validation is issued and the candidate may begin the certification stage;
- if at the certification stage, all or some of the competences are confirmed, an “Administrative Assistant” certificate is issued;
- if no competences have been confirmed, the candidate receives his dossier and, as part of a specific initiative of the Region, is helped with preparing a Europass-CV or European Language Passport.

## 8. Human resources

Specialists involved in the validation process include:

- Validation coordinator;
- Counsellor;
- Teaching and training expert;
- Professional expert.

### 8.1. Validation coordinator

The coordinator is responsible for ensuring that the validation process in a given awarding body is conducted properly .

Among others, the coordinator supervises the technical and organisational conditions, ensures the consistency of the entire validation process and the flow of information/documents between the authorities participating in the individual stages of identification, assessment and certification.

Candidates for this position may be employees of accredited training institutions, occupational counselling centres, public and private services, who conducted activities in the area of teaching, mentoring, monitoring, evaluation, training or vocational counselling for a minimum of three years. Persons meeting such requirements may acquire the authorisation to be a validation coordinator after passing a regional examination. They receive the relevant certificate and their name is included in a special regional register.

### 8.2. Counsellor

The counsellor is the contact person for the candidate during the validation process. The candidate has direct contact with the counsellor from the very beginning. The counsellor helps the candidate gather accurate and reliable evidence, organises the course of the assessment and certification stages and prepares the documentation (dossier, Europass-CV and potentially the European Language Passport).

Candidates for this position may be employees for a minimum of three years of accredited training institutions, occupational counselling centres, public and private services who conducted activities in the area of teaching, mentoring, monitoring, assessment, training, vocational counselling, or supporting persons in entering the labour market. The validation coordinator is the person authorised to appoint counsellors. The coordinator trains them and enters their names on a list maintained by an authorised awarding body, which is subject to periodic regional oversight.

### 8.3. Teaching and Training Expert

This person is a teacher from a given field. He/she has specialist knowledge in the area of the given qualification, and is prepared in the methods of assessing competences. This function may be performed by employees of accredited training institutions who conducted activities in the area of teaching/training for a minimum of five years. The coordinator of a given awarding body chooses teaching and training experts, trains them and enters their names on a list maintained by an authorised awarding body, which is subject to periodic regional oversight.

#### **8.4. Vocational Expert**

This person has experience in the profession relating to the given qualification. He/she fulfils the following requirements: has the required vocational skills; for at least five years in the course of the last decade has performed technical or managerial functions in the economic and production sector relating to the competences being validated. Additional requirements include: higher education in the given qualification and skills/experience within the scope of the competences being assessed. As with the teaching and training experts, vocational experts are appointed by the coordinator, who trains them and enters their names on the list of awarding bodies.

## **9. Organizational and material conditions**

### **9.1. Timeframe**

The Piedmont Region, as part of the “Guarantee for Youth” Regional Plan, determined that the stages of identification and assessment can take a maximum of four and eight hours, respectively. These criteria subsequently became a point of reference, so today, identification and assessment services cannot last longer than 12 hours. The standard hourly rate recognized by the Piedmont Region is 35 €/hour.

### **9.2. Technical and Logistic Requirements**

Awarding bodies are accredited by the Piedmont Region, which ensures, by assumption, the fulfilment of specific logistic, financial, organisational and HR requirements. From the logistic point of view, such bodies must have appropriate premises to conduct individual interviews or the proper laboratories/structures to conduct practical tests. In order to facilitate the management of the qualifications system, the Piedmont Region requires awarding bodies to use the “Piedmont IT System” for entering data and information relating to the service.

The Piedmont Region also stipulated that awarding bodies for a given qualification are required to ensure professionals with the relevant competences as well as to provide special training on validation services.

Forcoop training institution is accredited by the Piedmont Region and fulfils the requirements described above.

## **10. Quality assurance**

Institutions authorised to conduct validation are accredited [3] by the Piedmont Region. The accreditation procedure verifies that the institutions meet the criteria for conducting validation in several areas (logistic, HR, financial, effectiveness and efficiency), and partly refer to the principles of the European EQAVET Recommendation, which are monitored and verified on an ongoing basis by the Region.

The level of the system’s formalisation gives institutions the possibility to determine how they may want to diverge from the process set forth by the Piedmont Region. If no new validation mechanisms are foreseen, the awarding body must verify to the Piedmont Region its ability to actually implement validation in accordance with the provisions of the uniform text of the act on the validation of competences. Any new validation mechanisms are submitted to a certification commission.

## 10.1. Certification Commission: External Quality Assurance

The Piedmont Region set up a special commission for certification and granting credit for training, made up of representatives from the Regional Office of the Ministry of Education, social partners, representatives of the city of Torino. It is managed by a representative of the Region. The commission is responsible for overseeing the certification system (conflict of interest, processing of appeals and complaints, problems emerging during assessment).

## 10.2. Monitoring

Requirements [4] for the awarding bodies are determined depending on the type of their educational offer. [5] (basic education, higher education, market training/not regulated by legal provisions).

In each case, awarding bodies are required to prepare a report on the scope of the provision of identification and assessment services, a summary of organisational aspects, the actual duration of service provision and any differences that occurred along with their justification. The report is submitted to the Region's Social Cohesion Department, responsible for the registration of awarding bodies.

## 10.3. Development of Expert Skills

In testing and launching the validation system, the Piedmont Region expected to train approx. 280 employees – coordinators and counsellors.

### Coordinators

Courses for coordinators lasted 45 or 90 hours, depending on the initial competences of participants. Participants had to pass a final test (case study) before a regional committee. Persons who passed the examination were entered in the Regional Register of Coordinators and attend regularly scheduled training provided by the Piedmont Region. The Piedmont Region may, at a request of a given awarding body, train new coordinators.

### Counsellors

In order to have personnel with the proper qualifications, the coordinator of an awarding body is required to develop training for counsellors using the materials provided by the Piedmont Region and maintain an internal list of trained counsellors. The list is updated on an ongoing basis and available for regional control purposes. Courses for counsellors last 24 hours.

### Experts

The same mechanism as in the case of counsellors pertains to training experts, irrespective of whether they are training experts or from the professional community.

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[3] More information about accrediting institutions may be found at the Piedmont Region website on accreditation: [http://www.regione.piemonte.it/formazione/accreditamento/man\\_form.htm](http://www.regione.piemonte.it/formazione/accreditamento/man_form.htm)

[4] Guidelines are contained in regularly updated special manuals available from the website: [http://www.regione.piemonte.it/formazione/accreditamento/man\\_form.htm](http://www.regione.piemonte.it/formazione/accreditamento/man_form.htm)

[5] Such guidelines are contained in regularly updated special manuals available from the website: [http://www.regione.piemonte.it/formazione/accreditamento/man\\_form.htm](http://www.regione.piemonte.it/formazione/accreditamento/man_form.htm)

## 11. Financing



The Piedmont Region anticipates that validation services can be financed in the following manner:

- by the European Social Fund (ESF); such financing was provided in:
  - the “Guarantee for Youth” Regional Plan, supporting the validation of competences acquired as part of national and regional social projects;
  - “Long-Term Directive of the ESF Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020 on the planning of services and active labour policies.” This financing allowed persons who received social welfare allowances (unemployed persons, those in particularly difficult situations) to participate in the validation process. The cost of validation is determined in reference to the standard cost of the process and is adjusted on a case to case basis (i.e. with respect to each person who uses the service);
- by non-governmental funds; in this situation, awarding bodies may receive a permit to provide validation services in specific projects not financed by the Piedmont Region. Such projects may be financed from inter-industry national funds for lifelong learning or other sources.

The Piedmont Region does not foresee payments from candidates.

## 12. Context of good practice

### 12.1. Referencing the Italian System to the European Qualifications Framework

Based on the provisions of Law No. 92 of 28 June 2012 *Reform of the Labour Market in a Growth Perspective*, Italy developed the foundation for the national certification system, which also includes the validation process. After the law was approved, an agreement was concluded to have the Italian Qualifications System [6] referenced to the European Qualifications Framework.

### 12.2. National Qualifications Register

The National Qualifications Register includes all qualifications awarded in Italy.

It was established on the basis of Decree 13/2013. The decree specifies the basic principles of the validation process, levels of the qualifications framework, and minimum standards of the services of the national validation system. Because every region in Italy has its own specific training system and awards different diplomas, a system enabling the comparison of credits was also needed. To accomplish this, the Regulation of the Ministries of 30 June 2015 established the operational framework for the recognition of regional qualifications at the national level.

The qualifications register [7] currently includes:

- university, post-secondary and vocational qualifications;
- qualifications available in individual regions.

### 12.3. Piedmont Region

The country entrusted the regions – including the Piedmont Region – with the function of regulating validation services. As part of this function, the regions ensure that the validation system complies with the following minimum standards:

- standard process with differences in the identification, assessment and certification stages of the competences acquired in a formal or non-formal context;
- standards pertaining to the documents awarded at individual stages of the validation process:
  - at the identification and documentation stage, the candidate receives his/her dossier;
  - at the assessment stage, the candidate receives a learning outcomes certificate;
  - at the certification stage, the candidate receives a certificate.

- requirements of monitoring and assessment, where it is expected that:
  - the authorised entity shall use one or several qualifications registers and a uniform set of regulations on providing validation services;
  - employees fulfil the relevant professional requirements;
  - an IT system for monitoring and archiving the issued documents is in place.

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[6] Agreement of 20 December 2012 on the Standing Conference for the relations between the State, the regions and the independent provinces of Trento and Bolzano on referencing the Italian Qualifications System to the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning, referred to in the Recommendation of the European Parliament and Council of 23 April 2008.

[7] The National Qualifications Register is available at: [http://atlantelavoro.inapp.org/atlante\\_repertori.php](http://atlantelavoro.inapp.org/atlante_repertori.php).