

**Good practice
in validation of learning outcomes**

Germany

**Qualification "Warehouse Logistics
Specialist"**



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of Poland

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Good practise in validation of learning outcomes. Germany. Qualification "Warehouse Logistics Specialist"

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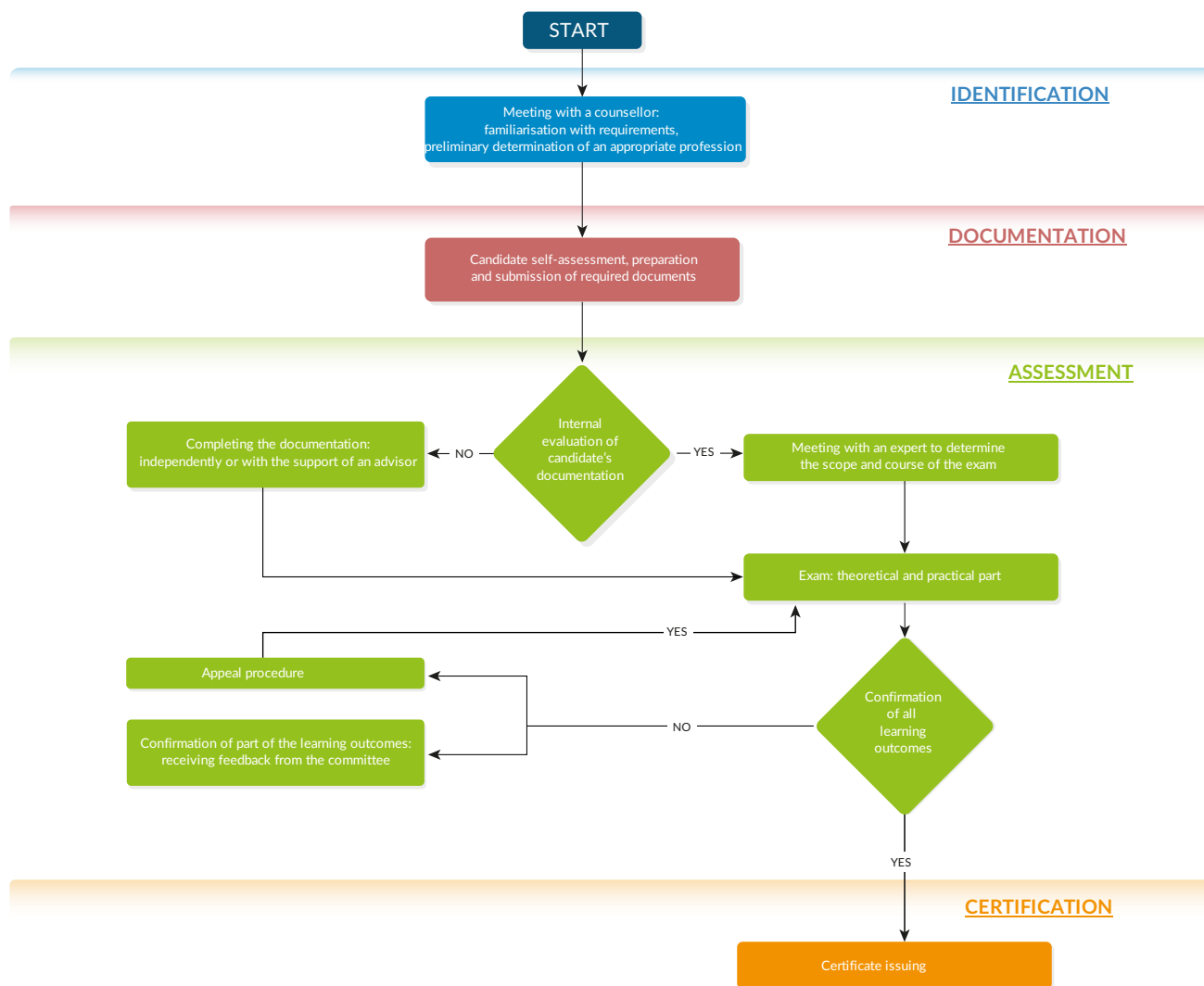
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1. Country, institution name

- Germany
- Germany, Chamber of Industry and Commerce (IHK)

2. Institution website

<https://www.ihk.de>; <https://www.validierungsverfahren.de/inhalt/verfahren/teilnahme>

3. Qualifications

Warehouse Logistics Specialist (German Qualification Framework – Level 4, European Qualification Framework – Level 4)

4. Short description of the validation process

Good practice from Germany presents the **possibility of recognising knowledge, skills and social competences acquired** as a result of performing a specific range of activities in a given position of a **Warehouse Logistics Specialist with Lidl**.

The validation process **covers people over 25 years of age who have not received formal vocational education in a relevant profession**. In Germany, the validation process in this area took place within the **ValiKom project**. This project is an initiative aimed at recognising and certifying professional competences acquired outside the formal education system. It was aimed at people who acquired skills through work experience, volunteering or other informal paths, but do not have official documents confirming these competences. As part of the project, **participants undergo a verification process during which their skills are assessed by industry experts**. After successfully **completing the validation**, they receive **a certificate confirming their qualifications, which increases their chances on the labour market and enables further career development**. The ValiKom project is carried out by various institutions in Germany, such as the Chamber of Industry and Commerce (IHK Rhein-Neckar), which cooperate with social and educational partners to ensure a high-quality validation and certification process.

Validation procedures include:

Identification: Information and advice before starting the **validation process** takes place at the request of the interested person. The candidate receives comprehensive consultations, information on the procedure, documents required to carry it out and support in choosing an appropriate profession. An appropriate profession corresponds to recognised professional qualifications in accordance with the Vocational Education Act of the relevant Chamber of Industry and Commerce or Chamber of Crafts. The interested person compares their competences with the skills specified for the appropriate profession.

Documentation: The candidate completes a self-assessment form, indicating the scope of his/her skills in comparison with the skills defined for the relevant profession. In this task, the candidate is supported by advisors from the Chamber of Industry and Commerce. The candidate submits an application in order to start the validation procedure.

Assessment: The application documents are checked by the competent body responsible for the profession (i.e. Chamber of Commerce and Industry or Chamber of Crafts) and then the experts who will carry out the assessment are designated. Validation may take the form of: observation, assessment of a work sample and technical discussion.

Certification: Depending on the result of the assessment, the body responsible for a given profession confirms the full or partial equivalence of the candidate's competences to the relevant profession, or

confirms the lack of such equivalence.

5. Detailed description of the validation process

The preparation, implementation and validation process consists of 10 consecutive steps:

1. Advisory meeting (ultimately at least two meetings with the Chamber's career advisor);
2. Creation of a CV by the candidate themselves with the assistance of an advisor depending on the needs of the person concerned;
3. Specification of candidate's competences based on the scope of activities performed in his/her workplace and on the self-assessment sheet;
4. Comparison of the candidate's competencies to competency requirements for the adequate profession (warehouse logistics specialist);
5. Submission of required documents to the Chamber of Commerce and Industry;
6. Assessment of submitted documentation by specialists from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry;
7. Decision whether the candidate can start the assessment procedure;
8. Specification of the scope to be verified during assessment, defining types of tasks;
9. Assessment process;
10. Receiving a certificate (partial or full recognition, lack of recognition).

Warehouse logistics specialists are responsible for optimal warehouse management, they take care of the entire logistics process from the moment the customer places an order, starting from receiving and checking the goods, through professional storage, to completing the order and shipping the goods. Therefore, a warehouse logistics specialist **should be characterised by very good work organisation and planning skills**. They must also ensure that the transport of raw materials and products is smooth and trouble-free, and that the warehouses are always adequately stocked. This requires them **to be able to react quickly to changing circumstances**. Another important skill that a warehouse logistics specialist **should have is the ability to work in a team**. In logistics work, it is often necessary **to cooperate with other employees**, such as drivers, warehousemen or sales employees - a logistics specialist should therefore **be able to communicate effectively**. In addition to the skills listed above, a logistics specialist should **also have experience in the field of logistics and knowledge of the transport market**. Thanks to this, they will have a better understanding of which transport companies are trustworthy, what the transport prices are, and what the trends on the logistics market are.

Meeting with a counsellor

A person interested in the validation process sets a meeting date at the **West German Chamber of Crafts IHK Rhein-Neckar** and during the meeting with the advisor from the Chamber, they **jointly identify the candidate's competences**. The advisor explains how the validation process can proceed. Together, they **analyse and determine the areas and scope of activities** performed in the workplace and determine an appropriate profession (the learning of which in formal education in the dual system lasts 3-3.5 years). The meeting with the advisor usually takes place at the Chamber's headquarters, but a telephone conversation or communication by e-mail is acceptable. On the basis of this meeting, an appropriate profession is selected.

6. Validation methods

The first stage of the process is crucial in the validation process. The IHK career advisor identifies in detail the areas of the candidate's professional experience based on the description of their activities at the workplace. During the first meeting, the further procedure is also determined. The person interested in validation receives instructions and documents that will allow them to determine their scope of competences. The length of the meeting depends on the candidate's needs and the level of knowledge they have when preparing for the validation process.

Documentation:

The second, third, fourth and fifth stages of preparation concern documenting the learning outcomes and consist of:

- **development of the candidate's CV**, including a description of the daily tasks and activities within their scope of duties; what training and further education they undertook (which he/she has completed and which are in progress), what he/she has learned for the needs of his/her job through informal learning (e.g. from instructional videos or from other people);
- **specifying** the appropriate profession based on the self-assessment sheet;
- **comparing** and specifying the candidate's competences in relation to the selected profession;
- **submitting application documents** to the Chamber of Commerce and Industry: application form - the candidate receives it in the Chamber during a meeting with the advisor, resume, self-assessment sheet, if necessary - a photocopy of the ID card. The candidate should include any other documents confirming their competences, e.g. references, certificates of completed training and courses, credentials of membership in associations, chambers, etc., Diploma Supplements, various certificates, etc. Documents must be certified copies.

Internal evaluation of candidate's documentation and the decision on allowing the candidate to undergo assessment

The documentation collected by the candidate is subject to evaluation. Professional experts from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry verify the application form and other application documents.

- **After positive verification**, a date is set for the candidate to meet with an expert in a given profession (it is acceptable for the expert to also act as an examiner) to discuss the types of tasks during assessment and the course of the exam. The type of tasks in the exam is adapted to each candidate individually, based on the documents they have submitted.
- **In the event of a negative evaluation of the application documents**, it is possible to supplement the documentation within the specified time. The candidate receives detailed feedback along with instructions on what to improve or supplement. There is also the possibility of an additional meeting with the advisor.

Outlining the scope of external evaluation

In step 8, the candidate receives sample task areas from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry (or Chamber of Crafts), from which he or she selects those that will be implemented during assessment. In the case of a warehouse logistics specialist, the scope includes both practice and theory.

Assessment

The purpose of the verification is to analyse the skills and check whether the candidate has sufficient **knowledge, skills and social competences** required in specific areas of a given professional activity. **In the case of the Warehouse Logistics Specialist qualification the validation process is carried out in real conditions** at the Lidl GewerbePark Braisgau logistics centre of LIDL Vertriebs-GmbH & Co.KG. The candidate performs tasks within the scope of their duties in real conditions, sometimes simulation is also used, e.g. in the matter of improper arrangement and planning of the transport of goods using smaller packages and risk assessment during transport.

In the case of a warehouse logistics specialist, examples of learning outcomes checked during the assessment are the following:

- participation in logistics planning and organisational processes;
- receiving of goods and verification of delivery on the basis of accompanying documents;
- transport and delivery of goods to the operational destination;
- unpacking, sorting and storing goods in accordance with requirements and rules;
- conducting inventory checks and stock maintenance activities;

- picking and packing goods for shipment and assembling them into loading units;
- marking, labelling and securing shipments in accordance with legal requirements;
- creating loading lists and loading plans in accordance with the regulations;
- loading and allocation of shipments in various means of transport on the basis of accompanying documents, application of sealing regulations;
- preparation of shipping and accompanying documents as well as the creation of delivery records;
- participation in the preparation of transport route plans;
- planning, organising and monitoring the use of work and conveyor equipment;
- use of company ICT and communication systems, standard software and workplace software;
- communication and cooperation with other departments;
- knowledge of foreign languages in the field of trade terminology (if required);
- participation in quality assurance activities.

At the assessment stage, experts verify the candidate's theoretical knowledge and practical skills. This process most often consists of the following elements:

- **Practical task** - observation in simulated conditions: the candidate performs a typical professional activity that he or she is familiar with from the workplace.
- **Conversation** - free-form interview: supports the assessment of the practical task, allowing for checking their theoretical knowledge of technical matters, procedures, order of performing tasks or possible problems.
- **Work sample** - observation in real conditions: the candidate performs tasks while working in the above mentioned location, for one day.
- **Practical task** - observation in simulated conditions: the candidate plays a role (job-related task) together with an expert.
- **Presentation**: the candidate is asked to present a typical professional situation with its theoretical background, then answers the expert's questions; the presentation takes place in the oral form and is related to the previous tasks.
- **Case study**: the candidate's task is to find a solution to a potential problem and discuss it. The case study allows for the presentation of learning outcomes at work because it relates to real problems, situations, challenges and applied solutions; the candidate's action strategy is also assessed.

The selection of methods depends on **the specific nature of the profession** and **the learning outcomes** indicated for assessment; they can also be used in combination.

7. Validation results

The results of the validation process may be as follows:

- **full equivalence**: confirmation of all learning outcomes required for the indicated profession;
- **partial equivalence**: confirmation of some of the learning outcomes intended for the indicated profession;
- **lack of equivalence**: no learning outcomes specified for the indicated profession have been confirmed.

Recognition of full equivalence means issuing **a certificate to the candidate that formally confirms professional competence**. Thanks to the ValiKom and ValiKom Transfer projects, employers were able to invest in employee development and motivate them to self-improvement through the validation process. The Chamber of Commerce and Industry certificate can **be used in the application process and will increase the chances of finding new employment**. It can also be important for self-employed people who want to return to full-time employment and need objective proof of their competences, which is much more valuable than, for example, references. In the case of Lidl, the validation process has increased employees' self-esteem, self-satisfaction and recognition by superiors. The process is therefore an instrument for staff development, but also makes a significant contribution to securing qualified employees.

If the candidate does not obtain formal confirmation of his/her skills (certificate) and only part of

his/her learning outcomes have been confirmed, examiners from the Chamber of Industry and Commerce (IHK) provide them with feedback on their competences. The candidate has the opportunity to re-apply and prepare for assessment.

The candidate may appeal against a negative assessment result. The appeal is reviewed by representatives of the Chamber of Industry and Commerce from the logistics sector within the statutory deadline. It should be emphasised that in the case of people working for many years in a given position, knowledge, skills and social competences are at a very high level and failure affected only about 3% of candidates.

The validation procedure often motivates participants to continue their education. Usually, if only some of the learning outcomes are confirmed, candidates try to retake the validation in order to confirm all of the learning outcomes. It also happens that after obtaining one certificate, they decide to undergo validation in order to obtain confirmation of their competences in another profession. This increases their chances on the labour market, helps them return to employment or supports promotion in the workplace.

8. Human resources

A career advisor at the Chamber of Industry and Commerce in Germany (IHK) is a person who has the appropriate qualifications and professional experience in a given field. They can be a specialist in the industry and an advisor in legal, tax, commercial matters as well as in the field of vocational training and innovation.

Competence requirements for persons preparing the candidate for the validation process include:

- **experience** in career counselling;
- **knowledge** of the educational and institutional structures of the educational system;
- **vocational training** competences;
- **knowledge** of validation procedures.

The advisor's task is to accompany the candidate in the preparation process, support them in case of doubts and accompany them in the preparation of documentation, reliably and clearly prepare them for assessment.

Vocational examiners are prepared for this role during seminars for new examiners at the Chambers of Industry and Commerce (IHK). The seminars are held according to needs, usually two to three times a year, last a whole day and are free of charge. Those carrying out the assessment of learning outcomes must ensure that quality standards are met, reliably check the learning outcomes subject to verification and ensure that the process complies with applicable law.

The requirements for an examiner include, among others, technical competence, social competence, substantive assessment, empathy, maturity and pedagogical talent. Only people who meet these criteria and are appropriately trained are appointed to conduct assessment for a given industry.

Examiners should:

- have 5 years of professional experience based on activity in the industry;
- demonstrate the ability to make informed judgments and show empathy;
- demonstrate responsibility and objectivity;
- maintain confidentiality;
- be characterised by maturity and pedagogical talent;
- have communication skills;
- constantly improve and develop competences.

The examiner's task is **to guide the candidate through the assessment process**, based on his/her professional experience and assessing him/her in accordance with the assessment sheet.

Under the Vocational Education Act, examiners are appointed to the committee for a maximum of five years. The examination committee may also include representatives of employers and employees, as well as at least one teacher from a vocational school. The examination committee consists of at least three members, two of whom are examiners. One of them is responsible for the documentation during the assessment, while the other conducts the examination. The assessment dates are set taking into account the dates of the examiners' availability. The examiners determine and evaluate the exam results and make binding decisions.

The examiner's duties include in particular:

- making decisions allowing candidates to undergo assessment;
- creating examination tasks;
- correcting and marking examination papers;
- assessing work samples, tests, presentations, documentation and discussions;
- conducting examination interviews.

Qualified examiners ensure the quality of the next generation of qualified employees according to the principle "Experts test experts". With their **knowledge and experience, they ensure that qualifications in vocational education and training are highly valued and recognised throughout Germany**. Around 2,500 examiners in the IHK district work on a voluntary basis, being compensated by tax breaks regulated by the Income Tax Act (Einkommensteuergesetz, <https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/estg/>).

9. Organizational and material conditions

The organisational and material conditions depend on the type and level of qualification. In the case of a warehouse logistics specialist, the necessary conditions include the availability of:

- a warehouse;
- warehouse stacking truck with a lift;
- equipment needed for locating and inventorying materials;
- a computer set;
- QR code reader.

During the assessment process, the candidate receives appropriately marked clothing, safety glasses, reflective vests, and safety shoes, etc.

10. Quality assurance

The quality assurance level is regulated by: The Federal Ministry of Education and Research together with the Association of German Chambers of Industry and Commerce (DIHK) and the German Confederation of Crafts (ZDH). This was done as part of the initiative "Validation of informally acquired professional skills ValiKom and ValiKom Transfer (from November 1, 2018 to October 31, 2024), a project that has been the basis for developing statutory regulations in Germany. a standardised procedure for recording, preparing, assessing and certifying the competences relevant to a given job position for people without professional qualifications enables them to receive a state certificate from the competent authorities. Thanks to the transfer initiative "Establishment of competence centers for the implementation of validation procedures for dual professions within the competent authorities", the validation procedure has been expanded to 32 competence centers. By October 2024, 13 chambers of crafts, 17 chambers of industry and commerce and two chambers of agriculture will offer validation procedures for around 46 professions.

Since 01.01.2025, a legal regulation has been in force in Germany **specifying the procedures for assessing professional skills as part of the validation process**. Information on this is provided by the relevant

chambers of crafts, chambers of industry and commerce or chambers of agriculture. The work on the new regulations was financed by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research. By the end of February 2024, 2,853 validation procedures had been carried out within the ValiKom project.

Thanks to the new regulations, the validation procedure has gained legal force and constitutes a decisive **added value for employees and employers in the form of benefits in terms of formal recognition of professional competences.**

11. Financing

As part of the implemented project, the validation process was completely free for the candidate - its cost was covered by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, however, since the introduction of legal regulations, this cost is specified in the law. It should be noted that the costs of translating documents for foreigners are usually borne by the candidates themselves.

12. Context of good practice

The above example of **validation presents the path from the decision to proceed with validation to the moment of certification.** Such possibilities result directly from the recommendations of the EU Council of December 2012 regarding the introduction of procedures for validating learning outcomes acquired informally. The recommendations of the EU Council concerned the Member States and allowed them to adjust their internal regulations on validation. In order to implement these procedures into the German vocational education system, the project was supervised by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF). Coordination was carried out by the West German Chamber of Crafts (WHKT). The educational policy in the pilot initiative was managed by the Central Association of German Crafts (ZDH) and the German Chamber of Industry and Commerce (DIHK). These institutions prepared the ValiKom project, within which standardised validation procedures were developed in selected vocational education fields, which served as a model for the nationwide introduction of validation structures for the confirmation of learning outcomes acquired informally. The ValiKom Transfer project was continued from 01.11.2018 to 31.10.2024. In all offices responsible for the project, a total of 3,072 validation procedures were carried out over the six years' period (including 843 procedures in the Chambers of Crafts). Since October 2024, current information on the possibilities of validation within the framework of subsequent projects has been published on the website of the Rhein-Neckar Chamber of Industry and Commerce (IHK Rhein-Neckar). **The ultimate goal is to include forty professions from industry, trade, crafts and agriculture in the validation process as part of non-formal learning.**

According to analyses by the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (Bundesinstitut für Bildung BIBB, [download the BIBB 2023 Report \(PDF\)](#) based on microcensus data, the percentage of young adults aged 20 to 34 in Germany without vocational education increased from 15.5% in 2020 (2.33 million people) to 17.8% in 2021 (2.64 million people). The largest groups were young people without school education (73.8%) and migrants (38.1%). However, a large proportion of these people acquired skills in the workplace over time that were not documented or certified according to uniform standards. This made it difficult to advance in their careers and participate in society. On the other hand, 60% of low-skilled people in Germany work as skilled workers or in positions with even higher requirements without a clear and transparent definition of their competences. The target group of the ValiKom and ValiKom Transfer projects were people who, regardless of their previous employment status, in the country or abroad, acquired appropriate professional skills, but could not prove them with certificates, diplomas or other types of confirmation. This concerned both people without professional qualifications and people with professional qualifications who were employed in another profession, were over 25 years old (were outside the formal education system) and had appropriate professional experience without formal confirmation. The tools of the ValiKom and ValiKom Transfer projects meet the needs of the labour market, but beyond the purely professional dimension, they have a large impact on the increase in social competences.

People who have gone through **the validation process gain recognition among their colleagues and their value in the eyes of employers increases**. In many cases, a successfully completed validation process was also associated with an increase in the salary rate. Going beyond the formal education system becomes a valuable opportunity to acquire qualified staff.

The report on vocational education and training in 2023 (Datenreport zum Berufsbildungsbericht 2023 Information and analysis of vocational qualifications) of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung – BMBF) shows that the rates of employment appropriate to the profession and their income have increased among people taking up validation.

The IHK, or Chamber of Industry and Commerce, represents the interests of all companies in Germany and sets standards for teaching, deal with examinations, which are highly valued in Germany and recognised throughout the country. There are a total of 79 Chambers of Industry and Commerce.

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