

# Validation Assessment Centre Quality Assurance Policy September 2022

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS.....	3
1. INTRODUCTION.....	4
2. THE PURPOSE AND PROCESS OF VNFIL POLICY.....	5
3. DEFINITIONS FOR DIFFERENT LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT PROCESSES.....	7
4. VALIDATION ASSESSMENT CENTRE (VAC) APPLICATIONS.....	9
5. PRINCIPLES AND PROCESSES FOR VALIDATION IQA POLICIES.....	10
6. IQA POLICY: INCORPORATING A CANDIDATE’S CENTRE APPROACH.....	13
7. VALIDATION ASSESSMENTS AND PROCEDURES.....	16
8. PROVISIONING OF CERTIFICATION AND/OR SKILL CARDS.....	18
9. CANDIDATE RIGHT FOR APPEAL.....	18
10. PROVISIONING AND GATHERING OF DATA.....	19
11. VALIDATION ASSESSMENT TABLE OF FEES.....	20
12. RESPONSIBILITY AND INTEGRITY OF VALIDATION ASSESSORS.....	22
VALIDATION ASSESSMENT CENTRE APPLICATION FORM.....	23
INFORMATIONAL GUIDE.....	24
TEMPLATE.....	27

## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>MFHEA</b>	Malta Further and Higher Education Authority
<b>CEDEFOP</b>	European Centre for The Development of Vocational Training
<b>EQA</b>	External Quality Assurance
<b>GDPR</b>	The General Data Protection Regulation
<b>IQA</b>	Internal Quality Assurance
<b>MoU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>MQRIC</b>	Malta Qualifications Recognition Information Centre
<b>NOS</b>	National Occupational Standards
<b>NSO</b>	National Statistics Office
<b>QA</b>	Quality Assurance
<b>SSC</b>	Sectoral Skills Committee
<b>VAC</b>	Validation Assessment Centre
<b>VNFIL</b>	Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning

## 1. INTRODUCTION

VNFIL is a process which aims to recognise and validate skills, knowledge and competencies that individuals may have acquired through previous work experience, training, education, voluntary work or lifelong learning.

Learning takes place in different forms and contexts. As defined by CEDEFOP, 2014: *'Learning is a process by which an individual assimilates information, ideas and values and thus acquires knowledge, know-how, skills or competence. Learning occurs through personal reflection, reconstruction and social interaction. It may take place in formal, non-formal or in-formal settings.'*

VACs aim to validate the different learning processes, contexts and experiences of candidates. This document provides Quality Assurance guidelines that all potential and current VACs must meet. A Further Information section is included for additional context. A template of the application form is also attached to this document as Appendix 1.

More information on VNFIL may be found on the MFHEA's website [here](#).

Both candidates and employers enjoy vast benefits from VNFIL. The benefits for candidates include: (a) recognition of their achievements, transferable skills and competencies; (b) career development and progression at the workplaces; (c) meeting entry requirements for further study. The benefits for employers include: (a) safer working environments and practices; (b) better quality services and standards; (c) reliability and trustworthiness in relation to third parties; (d) more efficiency through competent employees; (e) care and maintenance of tools, equipment and machinery; (f) recognition of skill gaps and provision of training.

## 2. THE PROCESS AND PURPOSE OF VNFIL POLICY

VACs are obliged to prepare and present an IQA policy based on the principles and mechanisms of VNFIL. This IQA policy is to include details on how quality assurance is maintained throughout the validation process and all related procedures.

An IQA policy aims to ensure that validation assessments are carried out with transparency and fairness and that standard procedures are followed for all candidates.

The MFHEA is to ensure that the IQA policy presented by VACs satisfy the requirements of these Guidelines and shall also carry out external audits to ensure that the mechanisms and procedures listed and published in IQA policies are being properly applied, thus ensuring quality assessments in VNFIL.

MFHEA may at any time withdraw from the agreement (MoU) in case of non-compliance with these guidelines or any other legislation/regulations.

VACs shall follow the regulations set out in [S.L. 607.02 – Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning Regulations](#) and all related VNFIL policies and procedures must be in accordance with the same Regulations.

This VNFIL Quality Assurance Policy shall be construed in accordance with the provisions of S.L. 607.02, namely:

1. The validation process shall be undertaken on a voluntary basis, provide equal access and fair treatment for all individuals, respect the rights of individuals, be transparent and shall be underpinned by the principles of IQA and EQA in order to ensure that the validation process and its forms of assessments are sound and tenable. This also ensures quality and that the criteria regarding knowledge skills and competences are in line with the NOS published by the MFHEA.
2. VNFIL can enable a candidate to gain formal certification, including a skill card which is pegged to the Malta Qualification Framework (MQF). This formal certification may range from MQF Level 1 to MQF Level 5.
3. The Health and Safety Regulations Acts and/or other criteria established by the Sectoral Skills Units and endorsed by the MFHEA shall be observed at all times.

The Policy is aimed to guide VACs in understanding the obligations that are required to:

1. ensure quality in VNFIL;
2. successfully manage the process of validation based on a set of core principles intended to ensure that applicants receive proper guidance, fairness, transparency and validity;
3. minimise the risk of abuse or misconduct in assessments and issuing of certification and skill cards where appropriate;
4. apply and successfully become a functioning VAC.

### 3. DEFINITIONS FOR DIFFERENT LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT PROCESSES

Term	Explanation
<b>Formal Learning</b>	Learning that occurs in an organised and structured context and is explicitly designated as learning in terms of objectives and outcomes, time or learning support. Formal learning is intentional from the learner's point of view and leads to formal certification.
<b>Non-Formal Learning</b>	Learning embedded in a planned activity organised outside the formal educational system, which activity is not explicitly designed as learning but which contains an important learning component.
<b>Informal Learning</b>	Learning resulting from daily activities related to work, family or leisure and which is not organised or structured in terms of objectives, time or learning support. Informal learning is in most cases unintentional from the learner's perspective.
<b>Work Based Learning</b>	Learning resulting from activities related to work and which are organised and structures in terms of objectives, time or learning support. Learning is intentional from the learner's perspective.
<b>Life-long Learning</b>	Learning activities that an individual undertakes throughout life, with the aim of acquiring certification and improving attitudes, values, knowledge, skills and competences, and acquiring qualifications that enhance an individual's personal and social dimension as well as the prospects of a better career.
<b>Interviews/Debates</b>	Generally, a formal meeting during which the candidate or applicant is asked questions orally, sometimes discussing technical situations or different case scenarios. This can also include debates, where candidates demonstrate the depth of their knowledge and communication and social skills.
<b>National Occupational Standards (NOS)</b>	Standards which describe what an individual in a particular occupation should know and be able todo to be formally recognised as competent in a given occupation. A list of all published NOS may be found <a href="#">here</a> .

<b>Portfolio of Evidence/Logbook</b>	A portfolio is a collection of objects, items, and materials compiled by the applicant to substantiate/demonstrate that learning has been achieved through different learning processes. Portfolios (or proof of past experience) is where candidates demonstrate critical reflection while making evidence-based statements about the competences they possess.
<b>Sectoral Skills Unit</b>	An industry-focused unit established by the Authority that develops occupational standards and designs qualifications with the purpose of improving the skills of the workforce. Units are made up of stakeholders with technical expertise in a particular sector or area. These, in conjunction with experts, publish NOS and guide appropriate VACs.
<b>Staged Assessments</b>	Any form of organised assessment under supervision.
<b>Technical Experts/Validation Practitioners</b>	VNFIL Technical Experts/Validation Practitioners are experts in a particular subject or area and possess sound knowledge and competence. Technical experts possess a formally recognised qualification in their area of expertise.
<b>VNFIL Facilitator/Co-Ordinator</b>	The VNFIL facilitator/co-ordinator is the person or contact who facilitates the VNFIL procedures within the Validation Assessment Centre. This is the office or person/s indicated in the application which is the first point of contact of candidates seeking VNFIL. The VNFIL facilitator shall offer support to applicants throughout the whole process.
<b>Practical Test</b>	Where candidates' behaviour is observed and assessed, either through a simulated or a real-life work scenario.
<b>Written or Oral Test</b>	Where candidates demonstrate, orally or in writing, their competences on a specific subject for the purposes of assessment.



#### **4. VALIDATION ASSESSMENT CENTRE (VAC) APPLICATIONS**

Those applying to become recognised VACs shall properly submit the following to the MFHEA:

1. A duly completed Application Form, a template of which is included in this Document as Appendix 1;
2. A detailed description of the premises where all VNFIL assessments will take place;
3. A list of any alternative premises where VNFIL assessments may take place (further documentation or authorisations may be requested);
4. The registered address, email address and telephone number of the institution or entity applying to become a VAC;
5. VAT Registration Number and Company Registration Number as applicable;
6. MHFEA License Number and a list of any accredited programmes of study, where applicable;
7. Brief description of the entity's experience in the sector that the VAC will be issuing accreditation;
8. Detailed Curriculum Vitae (CV) of the Director and or Head/s of Institution including that of the person responsible for the Validation Assessment Centre (VAC);
9. Detailed CV of the assessors that will carry out the validation assessments. This shall include documentary evidence of assessor's qualifications indicating the MQF Level of the same. Photographs and other documentary evidence may also be presented. The proposed technical assessor/s shall have at least a full formal academic qualification in the sector at MQF Level 5 to be able to assess from MQF Level 2 up to MQF Level 4, and at least a full qualification at MQF Level 6 in the sector to assess MQF Level 5. Exceptions may be made on case-by-case basis if the need arises on the approval of the MFHEA;
10. Any other supporting documentation which may include certification from quality assurance companies and foreign certification bodies;
11. Applicants may include any other further information as an appendix at the end of the application form, provided that all information is clearly identifiable and indicates the field to which it relates; and
12. An IQA policy based on VNFIL principles.

The application fee to become a Validation Assessment Centre is €300.

The application process and vetting of the application will only be initialised once payment of the application fee is received by the MHFEA.

VACs approved by the MFHEA shall:

1. Provide candidates with guidance throughout the validation process as per Regulation 9 of SL 607.02;
2. Receive and process VNFIL applications from candidates seeking validation assessment;
3. Ensure applicants have at least 3 years of experience in the sector in respect of which they are seeking validation assessment;
4. Provide assistance to candidates in compiling a portfolio of evidence, which shall include personal details, work experience/s, resumes, references from present and/or previous employers, formal qualifications, videos, and other relevant evidence for the validation being sought;
5. Make use of the procedures, methods and tools of validation established by the Sector Skills Unit in accordance with SL 607.02 and comply with the requirements established by the Sector Skills Unit, with the approval of the MFHEA;
6. Clearly indicate and propose a table of fees that each candidate will have to pay for each of the validation assessment process as listed the Further Information section.

## **5. PRINCIPLES AND PROCESSES FOR VALIDATION IQA POLICY**

The basic features of validation can be identified as:

1. Identification and Documentation
2. Assessment
3. Certification

The IQA Policy for VACs must include detailed information on all three phases.

### **1. Identification and Documentation**

Identification of knowledge, skills and competence is the process whereby the candidate becomes increasingly aware of prior achievements. This stage is crucial as learning outcomes differ from person to person and will have been acquired in various contexts: at home, work or through voluntary activities.

Documentation follows the identification stage and involves the provision of evidence of the learning outcomes acquired. This can be carried out through the building of a portfolio that tends to include a CV and career history of the candidate, with documents and/or work samples that attest to the learning achievements. Validation needs to be open to various evidence types, ranging from written documents to work samples and demonstrations of practice. The evidence must provide sufficient insight into the learning acquired. Listing job-titles or a held position will not be enough.

Identification and documentation is the stage of collecting evidence to build the dossier that will be assessed and mapped to the National Occupational Standards (NOS) by the technical evaluators in the sector.

### **2. Assessment**

Assessment is the stage in which an individual's learning outcomes are compared against specific reference points and/or standards. This can imply evaluation of written and documented evidence but might also involve evaluation of other forms of evidence through various assessment methods. Assessment is crucial to the overall credibility of an institution's VNFIL processes.

Validation tools and processes must be presented in a transparent manner, ensuring that all phases of validation, including assessment, shall be open to critical scrutiny including external auditing. This shall be addressed through a robust IQA policy.

### **3. Certification**

The final phase of validation is the certification and final evaluation of the learning identified and documented after assessment. This can take different forms but is commonly the award of a formal qualification. In economic sectors, certification may also involve issuing a license/skill card allowing the individual to carry out specific tasks. Whatever the case, validation reaching the stage of certification requires a summative form of assessment officially confirming the achievement of skills, knowledge and competence against the specified standards listed and published in the NOS. This process will be supervised by the MFHEA.

## 6. IQA POLICY: INCORPORATING A CANDIDATE'S CENTRE APPROACH

In terms of **identification and documentation**, the IQA Policy for VACs shall include information on the following:

1. How will candidates access information and guidance before applying for VNFIL, and what would this include?
2. What steps are taken to ensure that all applicants are treated equally and with fairness, and that there is no discrimination between applicants?
3. How can candidates apply and how shall applications for validation be processed?
4. Who shall be responsible for processing validation applications and keeping records? In what form will records be kept?
5. How will validation applicants be informed of the status and result of their application?
6. Who shall be responsible to help validation candidates when further information is needed?
7. How will GDPR regulations and the privacy of candidates will be respected?
8. How will the IQA policy ensure that the documents required prior to validation are collected, processed and evaluated?

In terms of **assessment**, the IQA Policy for VACs shall answer the following questions:

1. How will the IQA for Validation Policy identify and maintain the required standards for prior assessment of the portfolio of evidence, employment history and other relevant documents?
2. How will the IQA policy for validation identify different forms of assessments, including detailed information for each method of assessment?
3. How, when and where shall different forms of validation assessment be carried out?
4. How shall fairness, transparency and quality be maintained throughout the validation process?
5. How will the IQA policy ensure that practical or on the job assessments pose no health and/or safety risk to candidates and third parties?
6. On what basis are technical experts selected to carry out validation assessments?
7. Are the assessment criteria and tools used for validation assessments in line with the National Occupational Standards?
8. How do the proposed assessment methods test all the knowledge, skills and competencies highlighted in the NOS?
9. How shall records of different forms of assessment be available for various purposes, including feedback?

10. How shall VNFIL candidates be notified about the outcome of their assessment?
11. How shall VNFIL candidates who failed their validation assessment be given the opportunity to carry out another re-assessment?
12. How will the VAC provide all assessment sheets, records and data of validation assessments when needed for data collection and auditing purposes?
13. What is the procedure for any appeal a candidate may wish to make?

In terms of **certification**, The IQA Policy for VACs shall answer the following questions:

1. Who shall be responsible to issue certification of attainment and communicate with MFHEA for signatures of both parties?
2. How shall candidates be notified upon their attainment of the certification and/ or skill card?

VACs should also include a reasonable time frame for issuing and distribution of certificate/s.

The IQA Policy for VNFIL must clearly state how the processing of applications is transparent and built around the needs of candidates applying for validation assessment. All necessary information, including how guidance to candidates shall be provided throughout the whole process, should be included and maintained.

The IQA must also detail what guidance and assistance candidates shall be given prior to their application, including any websites, marketing, or advertisements.

The IQA must make clear how the validation assessment process is based on the basic principles of validation that shall include quality, fairness and transparency. Discrimination on any basis will not be tolerated.

Candidates sitting for VNFIL assessments have the right to appeal against the assessment carried out by the validation assessment centre, against an agreed minimal fee, if the candidate/s feel that any form of discrimination has taken place. The IQA should detail the Institution's appeals policy, along with related policies on cancellation and withdrawal. These policies should not only focus on the rights of the Institution but also on the rights of candidates.

The MFHEA reserves the right to appoint external assessors at any time to verify if the assessment carried out was correct, fair and transparent.

# Further Information for Compiling an Internal Quality Assurance Policy

## **7. VALIDATION ASSESSMENTS AND PROCEDURES**

The NOS are published for the purpose of providing and promoting a common way of expressing knowledge, skills and competencies across different economic sectors. All VACs should ensure that any methods of assessment utilised are appropriately designed to test and recognise all the requirements set out in the NOS.

Assessment tools need to be specifically designed to capture and assess the learning achieved in different contexts. The individual specificity of learning outcomes concerned may require more than one tool, for example a combination of written tests, oral interviews, scenarios and practical challenges. Tools may include practical demonstrations, simulations or gathering of evidence from past practices and experience, among others.

Theoretical or staged assessments must be held in the presence of invigilators that will observe and ensure that candidates undergoing the assessment are doing so on their own merit. In the case of more than one candidate sitting for theoretical or staged assessments, the MFHEA must be notified of where and when these assessments are to take place. The MFHEA reserves the right to carry out inspections to verify that such assessments are in line with and according to the required standards.

Interviews or oral assessments should cover questions based on the knowledge listed and published in the NOS, using standard assessment sheets for all candidates that should be provided at the application stage. Candidates shall be offered the option to be assessed using either Maltese or English, with an exception where the knowledge to communicate in English or Maltese is imperative.

In the case of interviews/oral assessments that are to be carried out online, candidates are to be recorded and candidates must provide a written consent for this. The consent form to be issued and forwarded should be explained to the candidates and signed by them. Unless a consent form is signed, candidates must be present at the institution's physical premises to carry out interviews or oral assessments.

Practical assessments are to be held when assessing skills and competencies that may only be demonstrated in person. Practical assessment record sheets are to be used to ensure that the skills are in line with the published NOS and should be provided at the application stage.

On the job assessments may be carried out at the place of work or where a particular task can only be assessed on the job due to logistical problems that may arise in a particular sector where practical labs are not available. The MFHEA reserves the right to appoint external experts to carry out inspections to verify that such premises are meet the required standards.



A risk assessment should be carried out prior to practical or on the job assessments where the nature of the assessment poses any risk and danger to individuals, candidates and third parties. These may include operating heavy machinery, handling dangerous substances, use of chemicals, heights, excavation, demolition, electrical, handheld operating equipment and tools, weather conditions, fires, and more. It is solely the responsibility of the VAC that a risk assessment is carried out, therefore the MFHEA cannot be held responsible for any accidents that may occur during these assessments.

Case or Task Simulation Scenario assessments may only be used to complement knowledge and skill assessment in the eventuality of logistical facilities or situations. Simulation assessments are mainly used to support and complement practical and oral assessments. These assessment scenarios should not in any way be used to fully assess knowledge, skills and competence of candidates.

The Portfolio of Evidence is to be compiled by the candidate and support from VACs related to the required documentation prior to the validation assessment should be offered. The portfolio of evidence should include a detailed CV, job employment history and documentary evidence confirming that the candidate has at least three (3) years of working experience in the sector as listed in the subsidiary legislation for validation.

Assessments shall only be considered valid when an overarching method of assessment is used, and when the criteria listed and published in the NOS – which includes knowledge and skills – has been tested and met in conjunction with the submission of the portfolio of evidence.

Attainment of certificates or a skill card may only be obtained on the basis that candidates have obtained a 60% pass mark in their VNFIL assessment. Certification or a skill card may not be given even if the candidate or individual has obtained the required percentage, and this exception should be implemented when candidates have failed assessment aspects that test competence, as, in some cases, this can pose a critical risk or danger to own or third parties.

## **8. PROVISIONING OF CERTIFICATION AND/OR SKILL CARDS**

Certificates and/or Skill Cards are to be printed by the VAC using the standard template provided by MFHEA. While the results of assessment do not need to be forwarded to the MFHEA, certificates bearing the signature of the VAC Head or appropriate representative should be forwarded to the MFHEA to be signed by the CEO of the MFHEA. Certificates are then returned to the VAC and/or collected by a representative of the VAC.

VACs are responsible for the distribution of the certificates and/or skill cards. Certificates and/or Skill Cards may either be distributed by registered post to the address provided by the candidate or else candidates are to be informed from where and when certificates may be collected.

Candidates are bound to sign that the certificate and/or skill card has been collected and only the candidates themselves can collect their certificate and/or skill card. Third parties cannot collect certificates on behalf of other candidates.

## **9. CANDIDATE RIGHT FOR APPEAL**

Candidates who feel that their VNFIL assessment was not properly conducted, did not properly reflect their competence and/or that they have suffered discrimination or were not treated fairly have the right to appeal the VNFIL assessment final decision. This should be addressed internally and VACs are to appoint another technical expert to re-assess the first assessment.

If the candidate wishes to appeal the re-assessment on any ground, VACs are obliged to forward such complaints to MFHEA. MFHEA reserves the right to appoint other external technical experts to re-assess the outcome of VNFIL assessment. The feedback and outcome provided by appointed technical experts re-assessing the re-assessments shall be considered the final decision. Complaints may be forwarded to the MFHEA on [validation@mfhea.mt](mailto:validation@mfhea.mt) or by post to MFHEA, Triq J Abela Scolaro, Hamrun, Malta, HMR 1304.

In their IQA document, VACs should clearly state how appeals are to be handled, including plainly identifying the processes and mechanisms involved as well as any the fees to be paid by candidates making a compliant or appeal.

VACs are encouraged to refund candidates the processing fee charged for the appeal if the outcome of the appeal is found to be in favour of the candidate.

MFHEA reserves the right to withdraw the approval of VACs in the case of non-compliance, repeated misconduct, unfair assessments, lack of communication, or any breach of the MoU.

## 10. PROVISIONING AND GATHERING OF DATA

VACs are obliged to keep track of data of candidates who have applied for VNFIL. This shall include:

- Name of Candidate and ID Card number or Passport number, as applicable;
- Job Occupation being applied for, as per National Occupational Standards;
- Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF) Level of this job occupation;
- Certification and/or Skill Card attained;
- Number of candidates who have been assessed and have not attained certification

VACs should also retain all assessment details – including recordings, examination papers, examiner/s' feedback, interview notes and any other relevant information – until the end of their specified appeal or review period.

Collection of Data is to remain confidential and in accordance with GDPR and as stipulated by legal frameworks. Candidates are to be informed that such data shall remain confidential, and this shall only be used for statistical purposes which the National Statistics Office (NSO) may wish to publish from time to time. These statistics may also be shared at the European Level which may also from time to time publish statistical information about VNFIL in EU member states.

Collected Data is to be stored securely and safely for a period of stipulated time for provisioning of data to the MFHEA. MFHEA reserves the right to ask that such data is provided to the Authority for any purpose, including statistics and audits.

## 11. VALIDATION ASSESSMENT TABLE OF FEES

Validation assessment fees are to be indicated and included in the application prior to being recognised as a VAC and in line with the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that would be signed once these fees have been established and agreed upon by the VAC and the MFHEA.

Validation assessment fees are to clearly list and include details such as:

*Occupational Job Sector:* e.g. Hospitality

*Job Occupation as per published National Occupational Standards:* e.g. Chef de Partie

*Malta Qualification Framework Level:* e.g. MQF Level 3

*Type of Assessment 1:* e.g. Portfolio /Interview/ On the Job Assessment

*Type of Assessment 2:* e.g. Portfolio/ Staged Assessment/On the Job Assessment

*Type of Assessment 3:* e.g. Portfolio/Interview/Formal Qualification in the Sector

And the charging fee, e.g.:

Assessment 1 and the fee to be charged

Assessment 2 and the fee to be charged

Assessment 3 and the fee to be charged

Below is a template that may be followed by prospective VACs:

Occupational Job Sector	Job Occupation /NOS	MQF Level	Type of Assessment	Charging Fee
Hair & Beauty	Hairdresser	Level 3	Portfolio+ Interview + Practical / On the Job Assessment	€ ?
Hair & Beauty	Hairdresser	Level 3	Portfolio+ Staged Assessment + Practical/On the Job Assessment	€ ?

Hair & Beauty	Hairdresser	Level 3	Portfolio+ Interview + Formal Qualification	€ ?
Hospitality	Chef de Partie	Level 3	Portfolio+ Interview + Practical / On the Job Assessment	€ ?
		Level 3	Portfolio+ Staged Assessment + Practical/On the Job Assessment	€ ?
		Level 3	Portfolio+ Interview + Formal Qualification	€ ?
Construction	Assistant Concreter	Level 2	Portfolio+ Interview + Practical / On the Job Assessment	€ ?
		Level 2	Portfolio+ Staged Assessment + Practical/On the Job Assessment	€ ?
		Level 2	Portfolio+ Interview + Formal Qualification	€ ?
Childcare	Worker	Level 4	Portfolio+ Interview + Practical / On the Job Assessment	€ ?
		Level 4	Portfolio+ Staged Assessment + Practical/On the Job Assessment	€ ?
		Level 4	Portfolio+ Interview + Formal Qualification	€ ?

It is the responsibility of the VAC to work out each fee that will be charged. It is suggested that these fees are based on the cost of the validation assessment to take place, which includes the fee paid to technical experts to carry out these assessments and/or the cost of temporary premises, as per

table above. The cost of the assessment may differ based on the type of assessment, sector and MQF level, as allocated time and resources would be distributed accordingly.

Validation assessment fees cannot be changed from those that the Validation Assessment Centre and the MFHEA have agreed and signed on the MoU, unless proposed changes are approved by the MFHEA in light of valid reasons.

## **12. RESPONSABILITY AND INTEGRITY OF VALIDATION ASSESSORS**

Validation assessors are to provide their CV and a signed Declaration of No Conflict of Interest which shall provide enough evidence that they possess sufficient academic credentials to assess and validate knowledge, skills and competencies according to the respective NOS.

Validation assessors should at least have an academic qualification pegged at MQF Level 4, 5 or 6 in the sector and job occupation listed in the NOS to be able to be accepted as a technical expert and as an assessor. In the case where NOS in a specific sector are only pegged at MQF Level 2 and 3, assessors having an academic qualification at MQF 3 and supported by a number of years' experience in the sector/industry shall be accepted.

Assessors are obliged to carry out VNFIL assessments with responsibility and integrity to ensure that certificates and/or skills cards are attained by truly competent candidates. Validation technical experts must use assessment sheets that can provide informative feedback to the candidates, whether the outcome is positive or negative. Assessment Criteria Sheets should be filled or prepared in a way to provide feedback to candidates.

MFHEA reserves the right to exclude or bar assessors that may be in breach of assessment procedures, responsibilities and integrity in VNFIL assessments. Misconduct and breach of assessment rules and procedures may result in injury, accidents or even death to self and third parties.

Validation assessors are encouraged to report any misconduct or breach of validation assessment procedures by a VAC to the MFHEA, and the authority shall treat this confidentially.

# **Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning (VNFIL)**

## **Validation Assessment Centre Application Form**

## APPENDIX 1. Validation Assessment Centre – Informational Guide to the Application Form

### INTRODUCTION

The VNFIL is a process which identifies, assesses and formally certifies the knowledge, skills and competences which individuals may have gained and developed throughout their lives by means of participation in non-formal and informal learning. VNFIL falls under the remit of the MFHEA which is under the responsibility and part of the Ministry of Education.

### SERVICES REQUIRED

Co-ordinate and provide the individual validation process as per [S.L. 607.02 – Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning Regulations](#), regulation number 9. The validation process undertaken for the purpose of the validation of an individual's prior non-formal or informal learning experience shall be voluntary, provide equal access and equal and fair treatment to all individuals, respect the rights of individuals, be transparent, and be underpinned by the principle of IQA. Kindly refer to the Internal Quality Assurance Framework document above and on our website.

### INSTRUCTIONS AND CONDITIONS

#### Instructions

Interested VAC service providers must fill in the form below. Providing as much detail as possible is recommended. All relevant documents and materials forming part of the response in the application below should be attached, including:

- Detailed CVs of the Head/s of Institution;
- Detailed CVs of the proposed assessors;
- Photographs, documentation, and letters that provide further detail.

It is recommended that the applicant read the relevant subsidiary legislation, linked above. One should also consult the [European Guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning](#).

Should any of the blank fields provided below not provide sufficient space for the information you need to include, you may include the information as an appendix at the end of the application form, provided that all information is clearly identifiable according to which question number it relates to.



## Conditions

The following conditions are to be followed when filling in the below application:

- The VAC service providers shall be prepared to receive applications from persons who have undertaken non-formal or informal learning for at least three years in one or more related occupations for validation assessment. A formal employment history must be provided (Jobsplus);
- The VAC service provider must provide the applicants with all the necessary information and provide assistance and guidance to the prospective candidates who show interest in being assessed for VNFIL, as well as provide information to the candidate on how to compile a good portfolio of evidence for submission prior to the assessment. As per S.L 607.02 regulation 9, the portfolio shall document and provide evidence of all the relevant experiences of the candidate. The portfolio may include personal details, work experience, resumes, references from employers, documents related to formal qualifications, photographs and audio and video clips relevant to the applicant's validation being sought.
- The VAC service provider shall make use of the procedures, methods and tools of validation established by the Sector Skills Unit in accordance with S.L. 607.02 and comply with such requirements, conditions, limitations and exclusions as required by the Sector Skills Unit, with the approval of the MFHEA.
- The VAC service provider shall include the proposed fees that each applicant will have to pay for the validation assessment process.
- The VAC service provider shall include the proposed premises where they plan to receive applicants for the validation process.
- The VAC service provider shall also include the number of staff including the assessors or competent personnel available as well as their CVs and their qualifications. The proposed assessors shall have at least a full qualification in the sector at MQF Level 5 to assess occupations from MQF Level 2 up to MQF Level 4, and at least a full qualification at MQF Level 6 in the sector to assess MQF Level 5. An exception may be made on case-by-case basis if the need arises.
- The VAC service provider must also submit a description of the Internal Quality Assurance mechanisms and processes in place to ensure a provision of the validation of non-formal and informal learning which is fit-for-purpose.

## MFHEA'S ROLE

The MFHEA will go through all the documentation submitted and ask for amendments where necessary. MFHEA and the provider will then draft a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), agreeing on the provision of validation of non-formal and informal learning. MFHEA may ask to see the premises, or seek further information, before agreeing on the memorandum of understanding. Once this is signed, MFHEA can lead candidates to these entities for their validation of informal and non-formal learning. Further information on the MOU can be found on the MFHEA website, where VNFIL Policy and Procedures will be listed.

The Validation Assessment Centres (VACs) must inform MFHEA of each candidate that obtains the validation certificate and forward the certificates to MFHEA to be signed and issued from our end as per Article 11 of S.L. 607.02.

## VAC Application Form

### **SECTION A - Details**

#### **1. Name of Institution:**

e.g. AA ACADEMY

#### **2. Address of Institution:**

*Include the email address and contact telephone number of the Institution. Additionally, include the VAT Reg. No. and Company Reg. No., as applicable.*

*If you are renting or otherwise using alternative premises as the VNFIL assessment site, you might be asked to provide further documentation (e.g. proof of permission).*

e.g. 13, Triq il-Validazzjoni, Hamrun, Malta, HMR 1304  
e.g. [aaacademy@gmail.com](mailto:aaacademy@gmail.com), 21442121, Company Reg. No.: C 987654.

*Further documentation related to alternative premises for assessments may be provided as an appendix to this application.*

#### **3. Brief Overview of the Related Work Experience of the Entity:**

*You may include a mission statement. If you have a website and/or online presence, also provide links here.*

*Briefly describe the entity, its mission, and its relation to the VNFIL sector being applied for. Relevant websites and other links (e.g. to social media) should be provided. This information may also be provided as an appendix to this application should this space not be sufficient.*

**4. Name/s of Head/s of Institution:**

*Additionally, attach a detailed and updated CV of the Head/s of Institution.*

*e.g. Mr Abel Abela. The CV should be attached as an appendix to this application.*

**5. If applicable, provide your Malta Further and Higher Education Authority (MFHEA) licence number and list (or link to) any accredited programmes of study.**

*e.g. License Number (2011-001)*

*A link to the MFHEA database listing the Institution's accredited and recognised courses is sufficient.*

**SECTION B - Validation Assessment Process**

**6. Sector in which the Institution intends to offer VNFIL:**

*If you intend to offer VNFIL for more than one sector, fill in a separate form for each. Each application form can only relate to one Sector.*

*e.g. Automotive*

**7. Job Occupation for which the Institution/Entity intends to offer VNFIL:**

*If you intend to offer VNFIL for more than one job family, please specify all of them here.*

*VNFIL can only be offered for job families that are published on the MFHEA's website.*

*Occupations should include their MQF Level, listed as in the following examples:*

<i>Motor Vehicle Repairs</i>	<i>Panel Beater</i>	<i>MQF 3</i>
<i>Motor Vehicle Repairs</i>	<i>Vehicle Damage Assessor</i>	<i>MQF 4</i>

### **8. Types of Assessment Methods proposed:**

*Here, indicate and describe in some detail the types of assessment methods that will be used to validate the non-formal and informal learning of the job family named above. Assessment methods include written exams (e.g. theory-based assessment), practical exams (e.g. on-site assessment), technical interviews and/or discussions with a panel of experts, reviewing of portfolios and logbooks, and other methods.*

*If more than one occupation has been named in number seven (7), descriptions of each assessment method must be given for each one.*

*Please consult the Quality Assurance Guidelines on assessment methods. This information may also be provided as an appendix to this application should this space not be sufficient.*

## 9. Proposed Fees

*Here, indicate the fee that individuals applying for VNFIL will have to pay according to the occupation. Additionally, give a brief description of how the final amount was calculated and what the fee covers. Estimates are permissible in some situations.*

*If more than one occupation has been named in number seven (7), descriptions of each assessment method must be given for each.*

*Please consult the Quality Assurance Guidelines on proposed fee structures. This information may also be provided as an appendix to this application should this space not be sufficient.*

**10. Describe any guidance and assistance services for prospective applicants.**

*Indicate and describe what guidance prospective applicants will receive and provide the public information that is available on your website and/or elsewhere.*

*This information should already be present in your institution's IQA policy. Kindly replicate the relevant information here.*

*Please consult with the Quality Assurance Guidelines on prospective applicants and the guidance they shall receive. This information may also be provided as an appendix to this application should this space not be sufficient.*

**11. Describe the induction process that shall be provided to applicants.**

*Indicate and describe what guidance applicants will receive. Provide/Attach templates of the forms that individuals applying for VNFIL must fill (or links to online templates). List what documents will be required of applicants, including but not limited to: letters of support from peers or employers, ID, logbooks, medical certificates of good health, police conducts, etc.*

*This information should already be present in your institution's IQA policy. Kindly replicate the relevant information here.*

*Please consult with the Quality Assurance Guidelines on the induction process. This information may also be provided as an appendix to this application should this space not be sufficient.*

**12. Describe how the application will be processed from your end and any internal quality assurance procedures that cover this process.**

*Include as much detail as possible.*

*This information should already be present in your institution's IQA policy. Kindly replicate the relevant information here.*

*Please consult with the Quality Assurance Guidelines on the application process. This information may also be provided as an appendix to this application should this space not be sufficient.*



**13. After an application is accepted, how will the student be guided before the assessment? At what point will the student be provided a copy of the National Occupational Standards? What help is available to students who experience difficulty understanding said Standards?**

*This information should already be present in your institution's IQA policy. Kindly replicate the relevant information here.*

*Please consult with the Quality Assurance Guidelines on the topic of assessments, their design, and re-assessments. This information may also be provided as an appendix to this application should this space not be sufficient.*

**SECTION C – Premises**

**14. Include a detailed description of the premises where the proposed validation will take place.**

*This includes sites for on-the-job assessment, including all relevant and necessary Health and Safety reports if applicable. If alternative sites are being rented and/or otherwise used (e.g. construction sites), please provide details for each/details of your criteria when selecting one particular site over another, and how permissions will be obtained. Ensure compliance with KNDP.*

*If more than one occupation has been named in number seven (7), descriptions of each premise must be given for each.*

*This information should already be present in your institution's IQA policy. Kindly replicate the relevant information here.*

*Please consult with the Quality Assurance Guidelines on the topic of premises and required documentation/detail. This information may also be provided as an appendix to this application should this space not be sufficient.*

## **SECTION D – Assessors and Assessment**

### **15. Include a list of the proposed assessors.**

*Attach a copy of their updated CV, detailing their level of education and past experience in this sector and in education. Specify which roles they will be carrying out in terms of assessment (setting of papers, members of interview panel, on-site assessors, and so on).*

*If more than one occupation has been named in number seven (7), which assessors will assess which job family must be specified, along with their roles.*

*e.g.*

<i>Motor Vehicle Repairs</i>	<i>Panel Beater</i>	<i>MQF 3</i>
------------------------------	---------------------	--------------

*Mr Abel Abela (CV attached)*

*Level of Education: MQF 4*

*Years of Experience: 7 years*

*Role in Assessment: Member of Interview Panel + Observer of Practical Exam*

<i>Motor Vehicle Repairs</i>	<i>Vehicle Damage Assessor</i>	<i>MQF 4</i>
------------------------------	--------------------------------	--------------

*Mr Bernard Burn (CV attached)*

*Level of Education: MQF 5*

*Years of Experience: 10 years*

*Role in Assessment: Member of Interview Panel + On-Site Assessor*

**16. Indicate what feedback will be given to candidates after assessment is complete.**

*Include as much detail as necessary, and/or relevant templates and documentation. Include policies on data collection and retention. Ensure compliance with the GDPR.*

*This information should already be present in your institution's IQA policy. Kindly replicate the relevant information here.*

*Please consult with the Quality Assurance Guidelines on the topic of feedback after assessment and/or re-assessment, as well as policies on data collection and retention. This information may also be provided as an appendix to this application should this space not be sufficient.*

**17. Provide detail on the procedures regarding a candidate's failure to obtain the award.**

*Include details on reapplication and the candidates' right to appeal, and how they can do so.*

*This information should already be present in your institution's IQA policy. Kindly replicate the relevant information here.*

*Please consult with the Quality Assurance Guidelines on the right to appeal and re-assessment procedures. This information may also be provided as an appendix to this application should this space not be sufficient.*

**18. Provide templates of the proposed assessment methods, such as a questionnaire, a checklist of required abilities, on the job performance appraisal forms, descriptions of required photographs, and so on.**

*Attach your templates at the end of this application form.*

***The following four assessment templates are downloadable from our website (link forthcoming) and serve as guidance for VNFIL assessment procedures:***

- a) On The Job Assessment – Advanced Bar Bending and Fixing***
- b) On The Job Assessment - Concreter***
- c) Interview Assessment Sheet – Bartender***
- d) Interview Assessment Sheet – Demolition Operative Without A License***