



Validation and Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL)

What is APL?

Prior Learning can be defined as “formal and non-formal learning” acquired by adults (Education Act Regulations §§ 4-13 and 6-46). Prior learning includes knowledge, experience and skills individuals have acquired via other arenas than the official education system, which include working life, family life, unofficial educational measures and society in general. Assessment and validation of competence takes place in accordance with the curricula of the Norwegian education system.

All subjects can be submitted for prior learning validation and accreditation, both common core subjects, programme subjects and in-depth study projects, and the assessment is carried out in accordance with the Curriculum for Knowledge Promotion in Primary and Secondary Education and Training. Validation of prior learning involves assessment of **theoretical** knowledge and skills and/or **practical** knowledge and skills in a vocational subject (testing of work-related competence). Validation of prior learning may shorten the adult’s period of education or he/she can be issued documentation.

Who has the right to Validation and Accreditation of Prior Learning?

Adults who have the right to upper secondary education and training have also the right to validation of their prior learning (Education Act §4A-3). This constitutes the basis for the education offer. Validation of prior learning can be used not only for future academic endeavours, but also for documentation of vocational qualification, with the purpose of getting work. The applicant for APL has the right to Certificate of Competence for validated subjects or parts of the subjects. Adults with the right to upper secondary education get their validation of prior learning for free from the county authority. Those who do not have the right to upper secondary education, also have the right to validation of prior learning, provided they are referred to by the municipality, NAV or a company. Those who are not referred to by any municipal authority have to pay for the validation of prior learning themselves.

Different tools used for validation of prior knowledge

Validation of prior knowledge is meant to assess the adult’s competence, and different tools are used to make prior learning visible. The tools underneath are generally used in combination with others.

Assessment of documentation. Candidate’s documentation of prior achieved education, working experience and possibly voluntary work is assessed in accordance with the Curriculum for Knowledge Promotion in Primary and Secondary Education and Training.

Dialogue-based assessment. The dialogue-based assessment consists of a talk through the course curriculum. The conversation can be combined with a written test and the use of ICT tools to uncover candidate’s basic skills. Norwegian and English subjects also include a written task.

Vocational testing. Vocational testing is a tool used to assess candidate’s actual competence in a recognized trade. This tool is especially used for candidates who cannot document their



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working experience in the respective subject. This could apply, for instance, for immigrants with working experience in other countries. Vocational testing usually starts with a skill interview between an assessor and the candidate in order to chart the candidate's competence (dialogue-based assessment). The basis for vocational testing is the curricula for upper secondary level 3, in-service training. The result of vocational training may shorten the required period of education on the basis of accredited competence aims.

The procedure of Validation and Accreditation of Prior Learning

Application

The basis of APL is an application sent to Oslo VO Service Centre. Advisors at SeSe will guide the candidates who apply at the Service Centre. Together with the application form, one has to submit a confirmation of residence in Oslo, documentation (if existent) of previous education, working experience, etc., plus information about the competence one wishes to get validation of prior learning for. A clear and informative CV is a big advantage. If training is needed, it has to be checked off on the application form.

Adults' right according to Education Act § 4A-3

When the application is received at Oslo VO Service Centre, it gets registered in a database. Based on the information provided in the documentation, it is decided whether there is basis for adults' right or not.

Adults' right means that the applicant has the right to APL and free education from the county authority. Adults with no right have to pay for validation of prior learning themselves, unless other authorities, such as NAV, etc. cover it.

Information and guidance meeting

All applicants for validation of prior learning are summoned to an information/guidance meeting with an advisor at Oslo VO Sinsen. At this meeting, one gets information about the method, procedure and right to register complaints. At the same time, one takes a closer look at the curricula, and together, one discusses which subjects are appropriate to include in the application for APL.

Appointment with a professional

Oslo VO Sinsen sends the assignment of APL to a professional, who within four weeks will contact the candidate to make an appointment regarding his/her validation of prior learning.

Assessment of prior learning

The assessment can take between 1 and 10 hours, depending on the tool, number of subjects and the candidate's knowledge. Vocational testing can take several days. The professional logs everything during the assessment.

Feedback

The result of the assessment and log is submitted to Oslo VO Sinsen, and also to the candidate in the form of a feedback letter/individual decision, but also during a new meeting, if applicable. The candidate receives a Certificate of Competence if one or several subjects have been validated.