

European LEarning Syllabus for outdoor Animators

ELESA Project

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Good practice statement

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The English version of the ELESA Learning Syllabus is the original version and should be considered the official text.

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The present 'Good Practice Statement' not only represents a common statement of the ELESA partners, it also suggests routes and refers to examples and practical references issued from other sectors.

Although this 'Good Practice Statement' is not an in-depth study relating to the concerned matters, nor is it a juridical analysis of the various ways to set up a Register of Professionals or an Accreditation Body, it does contain sufficient information to draw the attention of the sector to the feasibility of such issues.

This statement has been designed to be disseminated towards professionals and stakeholders and is therefore detailed enough to bring 'motivation to do' rather than just 'awareness to think about it'.

It deals with four main issues:

- Register of Professionals;
- Professional Cards;
- Accreditation body;
- e-learning.

1. Register of Professionals

The concept of a **Register of Professionals** recording qualified students and following their professional evolution and potential to gain further competences through attending extra training modules in a Lifelong Learning process was debated amongst partners. A second 'mission' could be allocated to this structure, that is to say the delivery of **Professional Cards**, matching the database developed by the Register of Professionals.

Whereas a Register of Professionals is a sector driven database, Professional Cards serve as an individual register of obtained professional qualifications.

Parallel to the register of professionals it is also considered worthwhile to develop a **Register of Accredited Training Providers** in order to safeguard quality assurance on the 'input' side.

Within the Active Leisure sector, there are two main employers' organizations representing two types of activities: Europe Active on the one hand for Fitness and EC-OE for the

Outdoors. Europe Active and EC-OE have a history of collaboration and mutual support and the two organizations have even setup an ‘Active Leisure alliance’ and signed a joint statement on cooperation (2012).¹

Europe Active has a long and successful experience in the field of Register of Exercise Professionals (EREPS)² and Accreditation of Training Providers.³

The ELESA partners agreed that the proposed Outdoor Register of Professionals should seek inspiration from the experience of the Fitness sector and agreed that discussions should take place with Europe Active to further analyse this issue. These exchanges between the Fitness and the Outdoors sectors could involve such issues as:

- Intellectual Property Rights;
- Administration and management;
- Promotion;
- Etc.

Moreover, such a discussion with the Fitness sector might clarify the role of the register of accredited providers and professionals as a platform for job availability and work placement.

In this context not only should the development of a ‘Professional Card’ (cfr. infra) be considered, the scrutiny of other European initiatives such as the ‘European job mobility portal’ (EURES)⁴, the ‘European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations’ (ESCO) project should also take place.⁵

A useful tool for the registration and monitoring of ‘professionals’ could be the ‘Europass’ developed by the EU agency Cedefop⁶ and more precisely the supplements to Europass:

- Europass Mobility (a record of skills acquired during a learning experience in a European Country);
- Certificate Supplement (a description of skills acquired by holders of vocational training certificates).

¹ http://www.ec-oe.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/Active_Leisure/Statement_EHFA_ECOE_23_11_12.pdf

² <http://www.europeactive.eu/why-ereps>

³ <http://www.ehfa-standards.eu/?q=node/28>

⁴ <https://ec.europa.eu/eures/page/homepage?lang=en>

⁵ <https://ec.europa.eu/esco/home>

⁶ <http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/home>

*“The European Professional Card (EPC) is a key element of Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications, as amended by Directive 2013/55/EU. The amending directive took effect on 17 January 2014, and the EU countries are expected to implement it by 18 January 2016. The point of the EPC is to make it easier for professional qualifications to be recognised and for members of a regulated profession to practise elsewhere in the EU. This will be achieved by involving the relevant authorities in professionals’ home countries more, and through electronic procedures.”*⁷

It is in this context of the transfer and implementation of EU Directives that the ELESA partners have addressed the issue of European Professional Cards.

*“The European professional card (EPC) will further facilitate the free movement of professionals in the EU. The card will simplify the recognition of professional qualifications, enhance transparency for EU citizens and increase trust among authorities across the EU.”*⁸

As it has been stated by the various documents and deliverables issued by the ELESA consortium, the mobility of workers is of prime importance and a key feature of the ELESA project. The mobility of workers and mutual recognition of qualification as well as common minimum training standards are prime drivers of the various projects that have led to the results of the ELESA project.

In January 2016, the EPC will be available for nurses responsible for general care, pharmacists, physiotherapists, real estate agents and mountain guides. The experiences gathered from these first five EPC introductions, will certainly be beneficial for the Outdoor sector.

Due to both the mobility of workers within the Outdoor sector and the regulation of the profession or the training in a number of EU countries (as per articles 4a and 4e of Directive 2005/36/EC), the ELESA consortium - as a party with a legitimate interest in this sector - has expressed a clear interest in the issuing of professional cards.

⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/consultations/2014/european-professional-card/index_en.htm

⁸ http://ec.europa.eu/growth/single-market/services/free-movement-professionals/policy/european-professional-card/index_en.htm

The outcomes of the debate amongst the ELESA partners on the issuing of **Professional Cards** can be summarised as:

- Partners firstly agreed on the principle that, once qualified, students should be issued with a professional card;
- This Professional Card should be issued at national level by a competent body in each member state. For quality assurance purposes, cards should only be issued following assessment by higher education (HET) or vocational education (VET) training/assessing providers, provided they are accredited and registered by the competent authority of the home Member State;
- Professional cards should be uniform in design across Europe (cfr. e.g. the European Driving License).

3. Accreditation body

The ELESA consortium addressed the point of establishing an **Accreditation Body** and defining the best way for accrediting both the training providers who will implement the ELESA training program as well as the Outdoor companies offering ‘workplace learning’ opportunities for the training of Outdoor Animators.

It was agreed that, considering the VET specificity of the ELESA training programme, both training providers and employers must be taken into account.

From the employer point of view, the accreditation of providers offering ‘work placement’ could be entrusted to the European Confederation of Outdoor Employers (EC-OE). In this context, it would be worthwhile to take a closer look at the Dutch VeBON programme relating to the ‘supervision of workplace learning’.⁹ In principle this Dutch supervision system is very clear; workplace learning must be organised according to a set of standards and supervised by a trained supervisor. This system is based on the key role ‘Deliver the service’ (Functional map) that was developed during the EQFOA project.¹⁰

⁹ <http://www.vebonacademie.nl/items/info-opleidingsnormen>

¹⁰ http://www.ec-oe.eu/fileadmin/Projekte/EQFOA/EQFOA_C_Functional_Map_Outdoor_Sector_en.pdf

At this moment in time it is not clear how training providers can be accredited. It is believed, however, that the ‘Desk Research Format’ as developed during the ELESAs project can function as a useful tool for validation / accreditation of training programs for Outdoor Animators.¹¹

In addition to providing accreditation to the young new workforce, experienced outdoor professionals should also be encouraged to enter the system so as to strengthen the credibility of the training programme.

To manage all aspects of accreditation (including the ‘Professional Card’ and the ‘Register of Professionals’), an online system centralised by an accreditation body is probably the best option to solve these issues.

Alongside accreditation goes quality control. It remains an open question if quality control should be entrusted to the same ‘accreditation body’ or if – because of a possible conflict of interest – another ‘independent’ structure should be set up.

To ensure the appropriate standards and consistency for the ELESAs training and assessment process, quality standards will have to be set-up and monitored.

The ELESAs Quality Standards Framework (QSF) could e.g. operate to the principle of ‘**Provider Owned Quality Assurance**’ whereby it is the responsibility of the training provider to demonstrate that they are continuing to meet the appropriate ELESAs training and assessment standards. Providers can demonstrate this through their compliance to an existing appropriate education standards programme, or through their adherence to an ‘in house’ quality standards programme.

4. e-Learning

The uses of **Virtual Learning Environments** (VLE) are increasingly common in higher education and vocational education programmes in the 21st century. In meeting the needs of modern outdoor professionals the consortium explored the capacity of the ELESAs syllabus to

¹¹ http://www.elesa-project.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/documents/ELESAs_Desk_Research_Summary.pdf

pp.13-15

use E-Learning techniques to enhance the learning experiences of the students. This is responding to the increased information technology skills and habits of upcoming professionals in the Outdoor sector.

The consortium has examined a number of examples of training for outdoor professionals within EU countries that use E-Learning techniques in a VLE. The consortium has looked specifically at models of practice from The Netherlands ¹² and Ireland ¹³. Because of the nature of the sector, it is the opinion of the consortium that E-Learning can support uniformity in a pan-European syllabus such as ELESA. This is particularly the case where the learners are learning simultaneously in different locations with employers across member states and across the EU. The research would suggest that a blended learning approach would be the most responsive to the learning needs of professionals. This would support the learning needs of both ‘initial’ vocational education and training and ‘continuing’ vocational education and training

The consortium believes that there is a capacity in each module of the ELESA syllabus for some degree of E-Learning. This provides a great challenge as well as opportunities for the future collaboration of training providers to meet the needs of employers and professionals in the sector.

¹² <http://www.vetonacademie.nl>

¹³ <http://www.ittralee.ie/en/InformationAbout/Courses/ParttimeStudy/BachelorofArtsinOutdoorLearning/>