



CEDEFOP EXPERT WORKSHOP ON SUSTAINING PERMEABILITY, IMPLEMENTING MECHANISMS, TESTING CREDITS

Brussels, 23-24 January 2012

OUTLINE AND AGENDA ⁽¹⁾

Background to the workshop

Permeability is high on the policy agenda and discussion. The Bruges Communiqué in its third strategic objective states 'enabling flexible access to training and qualifications, promoting flexible pathways between VET, general education and higher education, and enhancing permeability by strengthening the links between them'. The objectives are quantified in terms of European benchmarks for 2020, namely: the share of the young adult population holding tertiary or equivalent degrees should reach 40%; and the share of early leavers from education and training should be less than 10%. The Education Ministers identified in the Leuven Communiqué of 2009 the social dimension as one of the priorities for the coming decade: "Access to higher education should be widened by fostering the potential of students from underrepresented groups and providing adequate conditions for the completion of their studies".

However a review of existing mechanisms and even evidence of their efficiency are missing. Cedefop has since 2008 dedicated resources for expert workshops and studies on permeability in education and training. Its analysis indicates that the learning outcomes approach to qualifications, the development of validation and the establishment of national qualifications frameworks are part of the sustainable basis for permeability. Permeability can be viewed from VET to HE, within VET and from HE to VET, at institutional and individual levels. Credit systems, qualifications frameworks, partnerships, and qualifications linkages, or articulations as well as exemptions and waivers are some of the existing arrangements for securing permeability, relying in a wider sense upon validation and recognition of acquired learning outcomes.

This workshop focuses on mechanisms for permeability whereby mechanisms are understood as arrangements facilitating permeability. Those might include norms and standards, curricula, assessment methods. It is important to note that the reference to the systemic and institutional context is part of the definition of permeability so that the arrangement can be viewed as an integrated whole (Cedefop forthcoming). This view should lead us to assess the sustainability and the transferability of the mechanisms discussed during the workshop.

⁽¹⁾ as of 23.01.2012

The workshop

Cedefop is organising this expert workshop to better understand how permeability functions and to support peer learning towards developing innovative models. It also aims at identifying research needs at European and national level. It is based upon Cedefop research on permeability, credit systems and validation. More specifically this workshop provides the opportunity to discuss on the results of the current Cedefop study 'From credits to permeability' as well as of the forthcoming reference publication on permeability in education and training. This workshop is organised in cooperation with the European Commission.

Part 1: Permeability in education and training

The complexity of qualifications systems and the diversity of interests make it difficult to achieve the desired flexibility of learning pathways only through single, isolated efforts like the implementation of credit systems. Reforms need to be envisaged that take into account the perspectives of target groups and stakeholders and also consider the functioning of the education system as a whole (Cedefop 2010)⁽²⁾. In their search for flexibility, education and training systems are developing an array of permeability mechanisms in education and training, eleven different types have been identified and analysed in the Cedefop study 'From credit systems to permeability in education and training'. Against the background of the study results, the discussion during the expert workshop will be developed along parallel working groups focussing on the following core questions:

- 1) What are the prerequisites for permeability (success factors, constraints)?
- 2) Can we achieve a common understanding of permeability? (common definition)
- 3) Which could be the intended and collateral follow-ups of increased permeability?

Part 2: Permeability and credit systems

The second issue focuses on credit systems and opens up to the debate on ECVET and ECTS. Usually, permeability is associated with portability of learning outcomes, of units of learning outcomes and partial qualifications from VET to HE. Recently permeability is set in the context of opening or widening access to HE; this leads to setting up credit systems and arrangements for progression within education and training systems. The forthcoming Cedefop ECVET monitoring highlights that the current approaches to ECVET are shifting in many countries from the issue of (pure) implementation of ECVET for VET qualifications (at all levels of qualifications) to establishing equivalence and achieving conversion between ECVET and other existing credit systems (such as ECTS in HE).

⁽²⁾ http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/5505_en.pdf

The workshop participants are invited to reflect on the use of ECVET in education and training but also to exchange views on different approaches to credit systems. This session will be opened by a recent research work by Mr Jim Gallacher, considering permeability and the role of credit systems in a Scottish / English comparative perspective. The debate shall also benefit from insights into reforms of European higher education towards opening access to and the involvement of higher education into lifelong learning. All contributors to the brainstorming session are engaged into new ECVET initiatives and will present results respectively their choices for taking forward the issue of credit systems. The parallel working groups linked to this part of the expert workshop shall deal with the following core questions:

- 4) What are the main questions/issues/challenges when it comes to establishing conversion/compatibility between ECVET and ECTS?
- 5) To what extent could encompassing credit systems across all qualifications levels emerge in national contexts? (why?)

COMMENTED AGENDA**Monday, 23 January 2012**

09:30 - 10:00	<i>Registration</i>
Permeability	
10:00 - 10:30	Welcome to the workshop and introductory statement "Sustaining permeability" Isabelle Le Mouillour, Cedefop
10:30 - 11:45	Determinants and features of permeability in European education and training. Andreas Saniter (ITB), Karin Luomi-Messerer (3s), Wolfgang Wittig (ITB) including 20 minutes for discussion Critical review Torsten Dunkel, Cedefop
11:45 - 13:30	Lunch break
13:30 - 15:00	Cases on permeability mechanisms - Permeability and the Polish Qualifications Framework (Horacy Dębowski, Education Research Institute, Poland) - Implementation and development of the key competence based IVET curriculum leading to improvement of permeability between IVET and higher vocational education (Vidmantas Tütlys, Centre for Vocational Education and Research, Lithuania) - The Car Service Mechanic: an example for General Exemption in the German car service sector (Frank Musekamp, ITB, Germany) Facilitators: Andreas Saniter(ITB), Wolfgang Wittig (ITB), Karin Luomi-Messerer (3s)
15:00 - 15:30	Coffee break
15:30 - 17:00	2 Parallel working groups Questions: - What are the prerequisites for permeability (success factors, constraints)? - Can we achieve a common understanding of permeability? (common definition) - Which could be the intended and collateral follow-ups of increased permeability?
From permeability to credits	
17:00 - 17:45	Keynote: Linking VET and HE: Issues and Challenges. The Scottish and English Experience Jim Gallacher (Centre for Research in Lifelong Learning, Glasgow Caledonian University, Scotland)
17:45 - 18:15	Meeting of rapporteurs of the working groups (Briefing for résumé on Tuesday)

Tuesday, 24 January 2012

09:30 - 10:15	Convincing arguments for permeability? Lorenz Lassnigg (IHS, Austria)
10:15 - 11:15	How do credit systems fit into the educational landscapes? Andreas Saniter (ITB)
	How do credit systems fit into the Dutch educational landscape? Rico Vervoorn (MBO Raad, The Netherlands)
11:15 - 11:30	Tea/coffee break
11:30 - 12:15	Keynote: Permeability and transition towards higher education Michel Feutrie (Université Sciences et Technologies Lille 1, France)
12:15 - 13:30	Merging or converging: the choices of credit systems for permeability - Be-Twin: Testing a joint ECVET-ECTS Implementation (Enrico Bressan, Centro Produttività Veneto, Italy) - Slovenian credit system in vocational education (Špela Lenič, Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for VET, Slovenia)
13:30 - 14:30	Lunch
14:30 - 16:00	3 Parallel Working groups Discussion moderated by Wilfried Boomgaert, Flemish Ministry of Education and Training, Belgium 2 main questions: - What are the main questions when it comes to establishing equivalence and conversion between ECVET and ECTS? - To what extent could encompassing credit system across all qualifications levels emerge in national contexts (why?)?
16:00 - 16:30	Closing session (and way forward) Isabelle Le Mouillour, Cedefop
