OBSERVAL

Case Study from Finland

RPL for FE Qualification –Cleaning

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Observal case study – Finland

1. *Organisational background*

Sector: Adult VET

Organisation: Savo Vocational College / www.sakky.fi

Savo Vocational College is a regional vocational institute located in the heart of the beautiful lake district in Eastern Finland. Savo Vocational College arranges vocational and general upper secondary education and training for comprehensive school leavers and adults. It also provides apprenticeship training. In addition, the college is an active partner to local business life.

The focus in economic life emphasizes modern business, information, welfare and environment technologies. Wood and food production are the most important traditional industries. Tourism and service industries play an important role. The main export sectors include forest and metal industries as well as biotechnology.

Savo Vocational College is networking in partnerships and development projects with Kuopio University and Savonia University of Applied Sciences.

Savo Vocational College provides VET in:

- School-Based Education
- Competence-Based Education
- Sports Academy, VET for Athletes
- Adult Education and Re-training
- Apprenticeship Training
- Initial Vocational Qualifications
- Further Vocational Qualifications
- Specialist Vocational Qualifications

Priorities

- Life-long Learning
- Entrepreneurial Skills
- Sustainable Development
- VET for Immigrant Students
- VET for Students with Special Needs
- Employment and Rehabilitation of the Disabled
- National and International Partnerships to Develop Quality in VET

Key figures

- Full time students 5600
- Apprentices 1300
- Other adult students 1600

- Staff 1150
- Study Programmes 70
- Fields of study 7
    - Business and Administration
    - Culture
    - Health and Social Services
    - Natural Resources and Environment
    - Tourism, Catering and Home Economics
    - Technology and Transport
    - IT

In addition SVC provides training for immigrants, preparatory and rehabilitating training and provides counseling and guidance services.

Involvement in RPNF-IFL

Savo Vocational College has a long history of validation among adults. Validation of non-formal and informal learning has been taking place since 1994, i.e. for 14 years now. All the fields of study have special adult education units in which competence based training takes place and validation is being carried out.

Since the beginning of 2008 also the youth VET sector started a pilot phase with validation among the youth due to changes in legislation in Finland. The dimension of validation of non-formal and informal learning among the youth is a bit different than that of adults, but nevertheless, individuals are able to demonstrate their prior acquired competences and have them validated as part of their curriculum.

2. Background of the case

Further Qualification in Institutional Cleaning (see profile and composition of the qualification further on)

Ms X had work experience from the cleaning field for over 10 years from various employers. All her contracts had been temporary. Her aim was to carry out the Further Qualification in Institutional Cleaning. Together with a vocational teacher and a guidance counselor the recognition of non-formal and informal learning process started.

First Ms X was given the task to orientate herself to the requirements of the Further Qualification in Institutional Cleaning (documents available in the Internet in Finnish and in Swedish). The guidance and counseling needs were canvassed in one-to-one discussions, in learning ability tests and self-assessments. In the beginning of the process all the necessary documentation (work certificates, school certificates etc.) was collected and Ms X started to compile her competence portfolio. Ms X familiarized herself closely with the qualification requirements and carried out a self-assessment regarding the qualification related competences in the Internet (www.osaan.fi) and enclosed the self-assessment in her portfolio. At this point Ms X estimated that her competences were sufficient to take the competence tests directly without any further training.

In the next stage Ms X had a meeting with the VET teacher and they examined the qualification requirements together in more detail and compared her self-assessment and prior learning with the requirements. In addition to this discussion Ms X spent three days carrying out the tasks of an Institutional Cleaner in an authentic working environment. The authentic working environment is essential so that the

candidate can demonstrate her skills according to the qualification criteria and that there would be a qualified assessor available (i.e. a person who already has the qualification and is working as a professional). At this point it became clear that her professional competences were not quite sufficient from all perspectives to take the competence tests directly, but some further learning had to take place.

In the third stage Ms X carried out a two-week competence canvassing period in an authentic working environment (where the qualification criteria and requirements could be met) and where a qualified workplace assessor was also available during the two weeks. The aim of this two-week period was to recognize the competences and the possible competence gaps. In the process it became evident that there were some competence gaps that needed to be worked with before taking the actual competence tests. The strengths and developmental needs were compiled and an individual plan was drafted in order to gain the missing competences required in the qualification criteria.

All of the missing competences were of such nature that it was decided that Ms X would best learn and gain the competences by on-the-job-learning. She was allocated an on-the-job-learning position in a company for 6 months, where she was assigned a tutor, who made sure that she had the opportunity to learn and gain the missing competences. Actual schooling was not needed in this case at all. During this period she took the competence test according to the individualized plan and according to her own development. After the on-the-job-learning period in the company was over, she had taken all the required parts of the qualification in competence test and was a proud owner of a diploma for Further Qualification in Institutional Cleaning.

Note from author Anni Karttunen (17 03 09): "The competence test: it is a practical test carried out in the company, observed and assessed by the company assessor and the college tutor. It does not involve a written test, as written tests do not take place in the competence setting"

The VET school only provided for the counseling and the evaluation of the competences and acted as a mediator between Ms X and the company, where she was able to have her competences assessed and gain the missing competences!

The key of the recognition and validation process is to develop existing competences. The process was very motivating from the viewpoint of the student and it made the student very committed to the learning process AND it strengthened her own understanding of the requirements of the profession. The student also found it very rewarding to be able to talk about her skills and competences, make them visible and also to really observe her own learning process that occurred while working!

Ms X did not possess any prior qualifications hence her employment contracts were always temporary. Now, with learning by doing she gained a Further Qualification only in 6 months, whereas normally in the traditional school based education the basic vocational qualification would take three years of school studies! This can be considered a major advantage from the viewpoint of the student, but also of the society and in economic terms as well!

3. Further Qualification of Institutional Cleaning / Diamond assessment model example

Module 1: Provision of cleaning services

Grading: 1. Cannot 2. Can to some extent 3. Can very well / ready to take competence test

Student: Ms X

	Part 1	Part 2	Part 3	Part 4	Part 5	Part 6
Teacher's assessment	2,0	2,0	2,0	2,5	2,5	2,0
Self-assessment	2,8	3,0	2,7	3,0	2,8	2,7

Part 1 = Customer oriented cleaning services

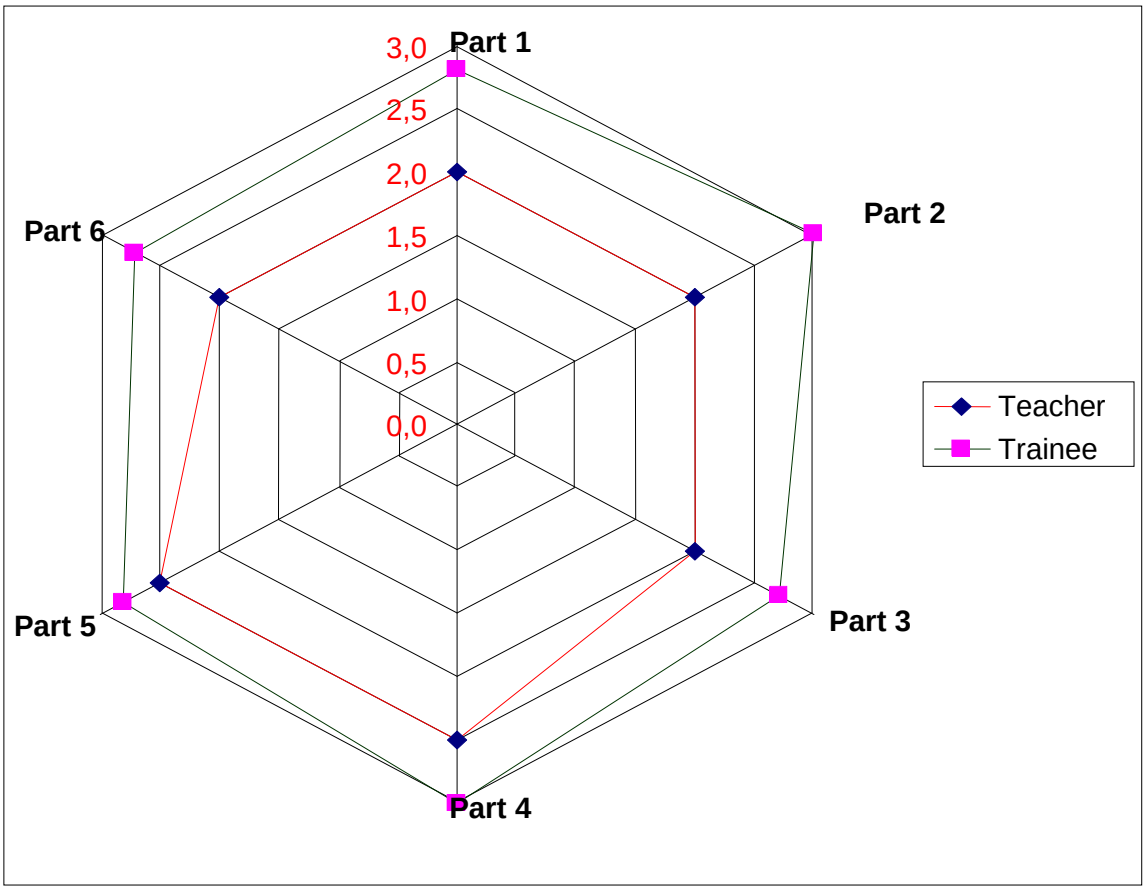
Part 2 = Maintanance cleaning

Part 3 = Ergonomic working habits

Part 4 = Safety at work

Part 5 = Sustainable development in cleaning profession

Part 6 = Self assessment of own work



3.1 Short description of the Further Qualification in Institutional Cleaning

Composition of the qualification

The common modules of the qualification are **provision of cleaning services** and **intensive cleaning services**. In addition, **three** of the following **modules must also be chosen**: **catering services, reception and conference services, cleaning services for special sites, care services, language skills in service situations, property maintenance services, textiles care services, pest control services, indoor plant care and attendance to the pleasantness of customer facilities, equipment maintenance services, environmental maintenance services, entrepreneurship in cleaning services.** One of the optional modules may be a module of some other further qualification that is closely related to work assignments.

Vocational skills and competences required for completion of the qualification

Those who have completed the qualification shall:

- be able to carry out their work in a competent, customer-focused, confidential, responsible and cost-effective manner and in co-operation;

- deal equally with different people and be capable of independent and empathetic interaction with customers;

- know how to plan and perform routine and intensive cleaning tasks in accordance with work instructions or the service description, customer needs and the functions of the site;

- command cleaning methods and cleaning agents, equipment and machinery used in such methods;

- know how to carry out cleaning services at special sites as required by customers;

- know how to plan and carry out cleaning work at their chosen special site in accordance with work orders, customer needs and the functions of the facilities;

- command the cleaning methods, agents, equipment and machinery used to clean special sites;

- be familiar with the significance of nutrition to human well-being and take customers' different diets and cultural differences into account;

- know how to perform various catering services at customer sites and portion and serve dishes and participate in dish care;

- be aware of the significance of hygiene and self-monitoring in catering services;

- know how to provide reception and conference services as required at the customer site and arrange catering for meetings;

- know how to assist customers in daily activities, such as personal hygiene, eating, moving about and recreational activities;

- be capable of working in co-operation with nursing staff or independently as required;

- also be able to manage customer service in a language other than their own mother tongue and know how to guide customers within the service chain;

- be capable of providing property maintenance and textiles care services needed at the customer site;

- be familiar with the different areas of property maintenance at the customer site and know how to monitor the condition of facilities and the property and report any possible repair issues as agreed;

- be able to identify pests and know how to control them from the first observation to drawing up a follow-up inspection report;

- know how to maintain green and silk plants and carry out other tasks relating to the pleasantness of customer facilities; - be aware of the significance of equipment maintenance as part of customer safety and attend to transportation, preservation and storage of equipment;

- know how to pre-treat, clean and disinfect the most common diagnostic and medical equipment used at a customer site;

- be aware of the classification of cleanliness required of the equipment and its maintenance cycle at the customer site;

- be aware of the basic concepts of business activities and different forms of enterprise and be able to assess their own potential and resources to function as entrepreneurs;

- apply ergonomic working methods, comply with occupational safety instructions and be aware of the environmental effects of their work;

- be aware of waste management guidelines and methods at individual customer sites as well as with relevant acts, other statutes and instructions.

Range of occupations accessible to the holder of the certificate

Those who have completed the qualification may work as skilled workers in the cleaning services sector with occupational titles such as cleaner, facilities or industrial cleaner, service supervisor, hotel housekeeper, school maintenance operative, institutional maintenance operative, hospital maintenance operative, institutional auxiliary, ward domestic, nursing auxiliary, day-care centre assistant, etc. They may also function as entrepreneurs or independent self-employed people.

(*) Explanatory note

This document is designed to provide additional information about the specified certificate and does not have any legal status in itself. The format of the description is based on the following texts: Council Resolution 93/C 49/01 of 3 December 1992 on the transparency of qualifications, Council Resolution 96/C 24/04 of 15 July 1996 on the transparency of vocational training certificates, and Recommendation 2001/613/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 July 2001 on mobility within the Community for students, persons undergoing training, volunteers, teachers and trainers.

More information on transparency is available by going to: www.cedefop.eu.int/transparency

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Official basis of the certificate

Name and status of the body awarding the certificate

The qualification certificate is awarded by the qualification committee appointed by the National Board of Education.

Name and status of the national/regional authority providing accreditation/recognition of the certificate

Ministry of Education

National Board of Education, a central administrative board operating under the auspices of the Ministry of Education

Level of the certificate (national or international)

EU classification level 3

Upper secondary level, ISCED 3

Grading scale/Pass requirements

Pass/fail

Access to the next level of education/training

Confers eligibility to continue in non-university higher education, i.e. polytechnic studies in a similar field.

Legal basis

Vocational Adult Education Act (631/1998); Vocational Adult Education Decree (812/1998)

Officially recognized ways of obtaining the certificate

The qualification is obtained by demonstrating vocational skills in competence tests. National qualification requirements have been defined in core curricula drawn up by the National Board of Education. Education and training leading to the qualification is arranged when necessary. This involves drawing up an individual study plan which includes a learning plan and a competence test plan.

Entry requirements

Qualifications may be completed irrespective of how the vocational skills and competences have been obtained.

Additional information

The organisation and supervision of competence tests is the responsibility of Qualification Committees. The Qualification Committees represent employers, employees, teachers and, when necessary, entrepreneurs in the field.

National Reference Point (NRP)

National Board of Education

P.O. Box 380

FI-00531 Helsinki, Finland

recognition@oph.fi

More information (including a description of the national qualifications system) is available by going to: www.oph.fi/info/recognition

4. Assessors in the Finnish competence based qualification system

The assessment process in adult VET qualifications always consists of three representatives: one representative from the sectoral employer, one from the sectoral employee, one qualified assessor from the VET training center (usually a VET teacher). Assessments can also be obtained from e.g. co-workers and customers and added in the competence portfolio as well as other documentation that serves as evidence of existing skills and prior learning. The documentation usually consists of diplomas and certificates from schools and working life, employers' testimonials, testimonials from associations or other leisure time activities and organizations, CV, self assessment, interview reports of the VET teacher, other documents or materials that demonstrate one's competences, individualization plan, personal study plan (immigrants: a language level certificate).

Note: the sectoral Qualification Committee defines the requirements of the assessors (they vary between qualifications, but normally, e.g. at least 5 years of work experience on the sector in question, qualifications etc... The schools are required to provide assessor training to the chosen assessors. The sectoral employee and employer assessors are professionals of their sector and usually are chosen from the network of companies that regularly co-operate with the schools. They can also be union reps, but often times the union reps are members of the Qualification Committees.)

The qualified assessor is called a ***Specialist in Competence Based Qualifications***. The training usually takes ca. one year and it comprises of the following modules: design and implementation of CBQs, assessment of CBQs, developing CBQs and CBQs in an international context.

The qualified assessor is responsible for overseeing that in the competence test situation the requirements of the qualification are met and that the candidate is being treated fairly. S/he is also responsible for guiding the test situation and explaining the legal framework and the rights of appeal etc. to the candidate. The sectoral employer / employee representatives are responsible for the assessment of the actual skills and competences as well as the working procedures. Together the three assessors then draw up conclusions whether the candidate has been successful in the competence tests or whether s/he needs to retake some parts of the test. Together the three assessors write a document that describes the candidate's strengths and also suggest areas of professional development if need occurs.

The assessment decision is then sent over to the Qualification Committee that assures the quality of the procedure and awards the qualification and the certificate if the process has been acceptable.

The threefold assessment procedure has been introduced in order to maintain the quality of the assessment: e.g. the VET teacher does not necessarily have the latest knowledge of the developments or work processes in a given industry, whereas the employer / employee assessors are true professionals of their sector. Again, the qualified assessor monitors the testing procedure and the legal aspects of it. This also ensures the objectivity and fairness of the assessment from the candidate's viewpoint.

5. E-tools for validation

http://www.osaan.fi (in Finnish) or http://www.jagkan.fi (in Swedish)

(National tool – National Board of Education)

With this tool you can assess your competences in a Competence Based Qualification of your choice. You may choose either browsing the competence requirements OR you may choose to make a self-assessment of your competences. The grading is from 1-3, i.e. 1=I have no skill or knowledge, 2= I have some skills or knowledge, 3= I have good skills and knowledge. According to your answers you can print out a listing of your answers and results and also graphs of your average level with regards to the competence requirements.

This tool is used by the potential candidates, guidance and counseling professionals as well as the APL professionals for assessment purposes. This site is also in the process of being written in clear Finnish to enable immigrants or other people with reading disabilities using the site, too.

http://www.nayttotutkinnot.fi

(National site – Alvar competence test quality assurance)

This is an interactive portal for Competence Based Qualifications. It has all the relevant information regarding CBQs, including a glossary, but it also has a service where you can ask an expert some questions regarding CBQs. There is also a general discussion forum regarding CBQs.

http://moodle.sakky.fi/moodle/course/view.php?id=562

This is an e-learning platform for guidance and validation that is used by many organizations. It is used also for e-portfolios in many different ways. There are videos of portfolio presentations, e-portfolio examples and templates for an e-portfolio in English and in Finnish. The e-portfolios can be filled out and saved on the system. Also they can be saved in word-format if need be. Also other elements, like pictures, other documents etc can be saved on the system. This system is easy to copy and create a new fresh course with all the same elements. This platform also contains plenty of material for guidance and counseling, e.g. internet based learning tests that may be used in the validation and guidance process. On this site you will also find templates of personal study plans and personal competence demonstration plans that are used in e-format in a similar manner as the portfolio.

http://www.oph.fi/europassi/cs/

In the following internet address anyone can see the Certificate Supplements of all VET Qualifications and their brief descriptions in English, Swedish and Finnish.

http://moodle.sakky.fi/moodle/mod/resource/view.php?inpopup=true&id=28930

Collection of videos about portfolio from different perspectives.

http://moodle.sakky.fi/moodle/mod/resource/view.php?inpopup=true&id=28932

Collection of different kinds of portfolios.