



Refugees and Recognition – Toolkit 2 (REACT)

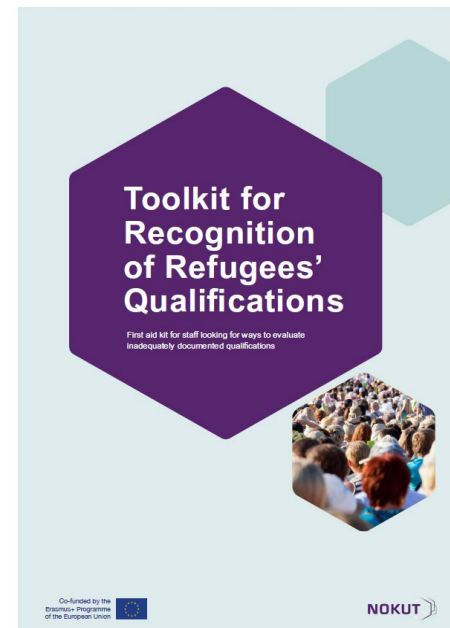
Enabling Access to Further Studies for Refugees: Presenting
Results of Testing at Higher Education Institutions





Goals and objectives

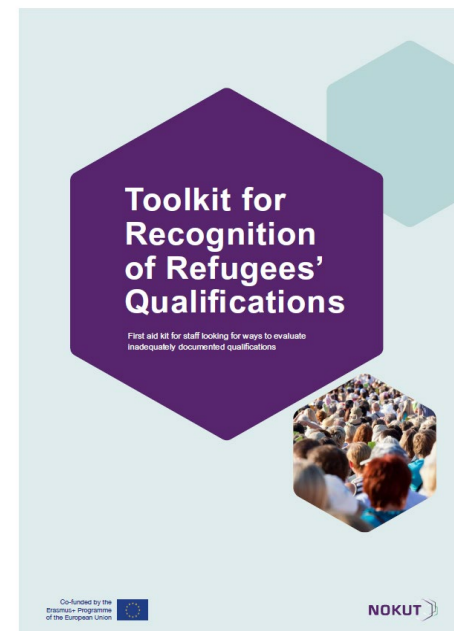
- Enhance mobility, employability and access to further studies for refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation in the EHEA
- Contribute towards the development of increasingly standardised processes for the recognition of refugees' qualifications at NARICs and HEIs
- Test and adapt the developed Toolkit to the needs of higher education institutions in Norway, the Netherlands, Germany, Italy and Ireland





Testing at higher education institutions

- Time period: January – July 2019
- Institutions: Oslo Metropolitan University (NO), University of Utrecht (NL), University of Bremen (DE), LUISS University (IT) and University of Limerick (IE)
- Objective: gain better understanding of how the Toolkit can be implemented and adapted to institutional needs
- Aim: identify possible pathways for admission of refugee students to further studies





Webinar: format and agenda

- Present the main outcomes of the testing process
- Roundtable discussion with representatives from the higher education institutions
- Discuss different parts of the process with assessing qualifications held by refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation
- Target group, challenges, tools, results, building sustainable procedures
- Q&A session at the end of the webinar





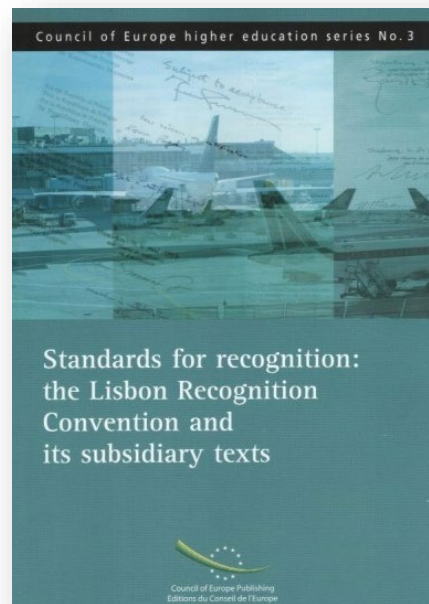
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Target Group



Legal Obligations – Lisbon Recognition Convention





Article VII – Lisbon Recognition Convention

Each Party shall take all feasible and reasonable steps within the framework of its education system and in conformity with its constitutional, legal, and regulatory provisions to develop procedures designed to assess fairly and expeditiously whether

refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation

fulfill the relevant requirements for access to higher education, to further higher education programmes or to employment activities,

even in cases in which the qualifications cannot be proven through documentary evidence.

- Refugees, displaced persons and persons in a **refugee-like** situation
- Not a question of legal status, but their de facto situation

- identify cases during the admission process
- identify possible programmes
- partly missing documents and/or non-verifiable documents
- value added



Conceptualizing 'refugees, displaced persons and persons in a refugee-like situation'

Residence Status:

- Verifiable
- Required for enrolment



Challenges



Forced migration: which challenges to recognition and access to higher education?

- The sheer numbers
 - 68,5 million according to UNHCR
- Undocumented qualifications
- Unfinished qualifications
- Institutions and archives no longer operating
- Notoriety of documents
- Challenging to develop recognition and admission schemes, targeting the specific aspects of forced migration
 - Fair
 - Transparent
 - Non-discriminatory
 - Demand for mobility and portability



Applications Accepted

University of Bremen
City University of Applied Sciences
University of Applied Sciences
Bremerhaven



- Refugee*like
- Pre-Check - University Access
- Missing Documents must be Necessary
- Bremen Region or Application at Bremen Universities

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Challenges

- Publicity Wanted vs. Not Wanted
- Responsibilities at Different Stages
- Application Procedure through Central Evaluation Service



The process of identifying and assessing the applications

Selecting applicants:

- Regular admissions procedure (AO)
- REACT email address (Student counselors)

Time challenge:

- Determining eligibility
- Communication and response
- Internal alignment



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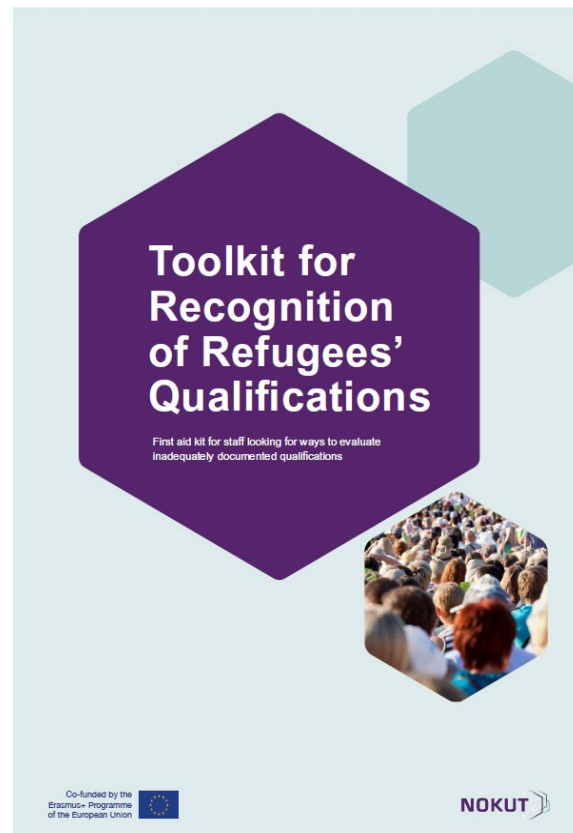


Tools



Toolkit

https://www.nokut.no/globalassets/nokut/artikkelbibliotek/utenlandsk_utdanning/veiledere/toolkit_for_recognition_of_refugees_qualifications.pdf





Principles, Tools and Approaches

1 TOOLKIT 4

The Toolkit consists of three parts:

Developed by ENIC-NARIC centres of Norway, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Italy, France, Armenia, Germany and Sweden

8 PRINCIPLES 7

Guiding the process

10 TOOLS 12

Identified, developed and tested to constitute the parts of the procedure

2 APPROACHES 16

Demonstrate two distinct ways of combining the tools in actual recognition procedures, depending on which type of final statement / background document is to be issued



Selecting and integrating the tools into the existing admissions procedure

Supplementing credential evaluation (Admissions Office):

- Refugee country briefings
- databases collection
- Self-evaluation questionnaire
- Level Placement (Nuffic ION: Indication Education Level)

Alternative verification for insufficient/lacking documentation:

- Self-evaluation Questionnaire
- Interview (Study Advisors)

Tools

- Anabin – Foreign Education Database
- (Test for Academic Studies - TestAS)
- Questionnaire
- Verification (KMK)
- Checklist (KMK)
- Interview
- Report (KMK)

Tools

Higher Secondary	Studies / Transcript	HEI Degree	Tool-Set
non provably	non applicable	non applicable	TestAS + Entrance Exam
non provably	non provably	non applicable	Interview or TestAS + E.E (new)
provably	non provably	non applicable	Interview or TestAS + E.E (new)
provably	provably	non provably	not defined
provably	non provably	non provably	Verification + Interview
non provably	non provably	non provably	Verification + Interview
non provably	non provably	provably	not defined
non provably	provably	provably	non applicable



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Results



Candidates



Institutions

- offer of admission/
admissible for admission
- Questionnaire: useful
supporting document
- Toolkit: use what is relevant
to each case

Results

	A	B	C
Questionnaire	-	+	+
General Interview	-	+ -	+
Expert Interview	-	-	-

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All candidates received indirect HEI access – not direct QPR by KMK and Decree by University of Bremen



Testing period at Utrecht University:

Respondents	9
Eligible candidates	6
Respondents	3
Interviews	2
Conditional admission	2

What were the results of the testing at your University, what impact does it have for the candidates involved?

Luiss International Selection is a qualification-based admission procedure; candidates were invited to present their application by completing the online form and submitting a curriculum vitae, a transcript of records, a reference letter and motivational letter.

In the case of missing documentation, application of the toolkit was always taken into account; however, all interested candidates have managed to provide us with the necessary documents for evaluation of their application.

Refugee candidates – as any other candidate – can present their application and they would receive all the support needed. We currently have a refugee student enrolled in the Corporate Finance Masters Degree, however in his case, REACT toolkit was not necessary because he presented a complete documentation about his academic background.

In what way has the Toolkit been integrated into the current admission procedures of the university?

- REACT toolkit is completely integrated in the current admission procedures, the Students Office team is informed and trained in order to apply the REACT toolkit. The webinar materials have been collected and shared with the staff of the Students Office as well and they represent an important tool in order to know the examined countries.
- Luiss admission is open and all the candidates are aware that the Luiss Students Office supports them giving info, answering their questions by email or organizing Skype info-meetings. All the candidates are encouraged to present their applications, even if they come from different or critical backgrounds.
- The Toolkit could be applied in the third step of the Luiss procedure (see first answer of the present template) when the international admission team of Luiss Students Office examines the documentation presented by the applicants.

Results

- **Toolkit tested as part of University of Sanctuary programme**
- **Tools selected to ensure accessibility, effectiveness and transparency in relation to postgraduate programme entry**
- **Collection of databases and questionnaire (self-evaluation template) used to assess applicants' eligibility**
- **Outcomes:**
 - **Applicant entry to appropriate programmes**
 - **Streamlining University of Sanctuary applications from people in a refugee-like situation**





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Building Sustainable Procedures



Commitments to principles in Article VII

Fair, professional and transparent

Ensuring sustainability of procedures

Building Procedures

- Central Responsibility for 3 Universities
- Cooperation with Examination Offices
- Cooperation with Examining Boards
- REACT Provided a Reliable Structure for Implementation

University of Bremen
City University of Applied Sciences
University of Applied Sciences
Bremerhaven



- Increased focus the last few years
- Maintain commitment
- Opportunity to test a new tool
- Collection of tools
- Fair assessment ≠ identical assessment tools



Project participation - impact and contributions

- Testing alternative methodology
- Raising awareness and dialogue
- Internal cooperation / infrastructure procedure

Building Sustainable Procedures

- **Breaking new ground for the institution**
- **Basis for the development of procedures and forms for evaluation, as well as reporting**
- **The importance of process**
- **Will form part of review of University of Sanctuary's three-year Action Plan at the end of the 2019/20 academic year**
- **Collaboration with NGOs**
- **Would like to see harmonization of processes across HEIs in Ireland**

How has your participation in the project contributed towards addressing the challenges that you face with inadequately documented qualifications?

- The Luiss call for applications included transcripts and/or academic documentation as a requirement, however Luiss admission officers accepted incomplete applications as well. All candidates with incomplete documentation were contacted personally and invited to explain the lack of documentation and offer assistance on how to proceed in case they were not able to retrieve it. As mentioned, they were all able to provide us with the required documentation.
- In the case of critical or inadequate documentation the Luiss Students Office can be supported by CIMEA or can apply the REACT Toolkit. In the case of missing documentation, we reach out to the candidate to assess his/her personal situation and background. In the case of irretrievable documentation, the Toolkit would be applied.

What kind of impact has the project had on your institutions' approach to building sustainable procedures?

- Luiss global engagement strategy implies efforts dedicated to the inclusion of refugees and REACT toolkit is presented as an instrument to guarantee the safety and the reliability of the selection through sustainable procedures.



Concluding remarks

- Testing of practical tools and procedures
- Experiences of higher education institutions
- Different mandates, institutional structures and challenges
- Mutual learning between stakeholders
- Impact:
 - Identifying possible pathways for admission
 - Building sustainable procedures at HEIs





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Questions?