MaxiPAC

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Guidelines for assessors in higher education





MaxiPAC

MaxiPAC - acronym for 'Maximizing Previously Acquired Competences' - started as an AMIF project that aims to valorize competencies and qualifications acquired elsewhere by non-EU citizens in higher education.

The MaxiPAC procedure was developed as an extension of the existing procedure for previously acquired competencies so that third-country nationals can start an EVC procedure that matches their specific situation.

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Step 1: European Qualification Scan 1
Intake 2
1. Explain the MaxiPAC procedure 2
2. EQS sections 3
3. Issuing EQS 3

Step 2: Multiple Short Cases 4

Step 3: Portfolio and Assessment 5
1. Portfolio evaluation 6
2. The assessment 6
3. Go / No-go 6

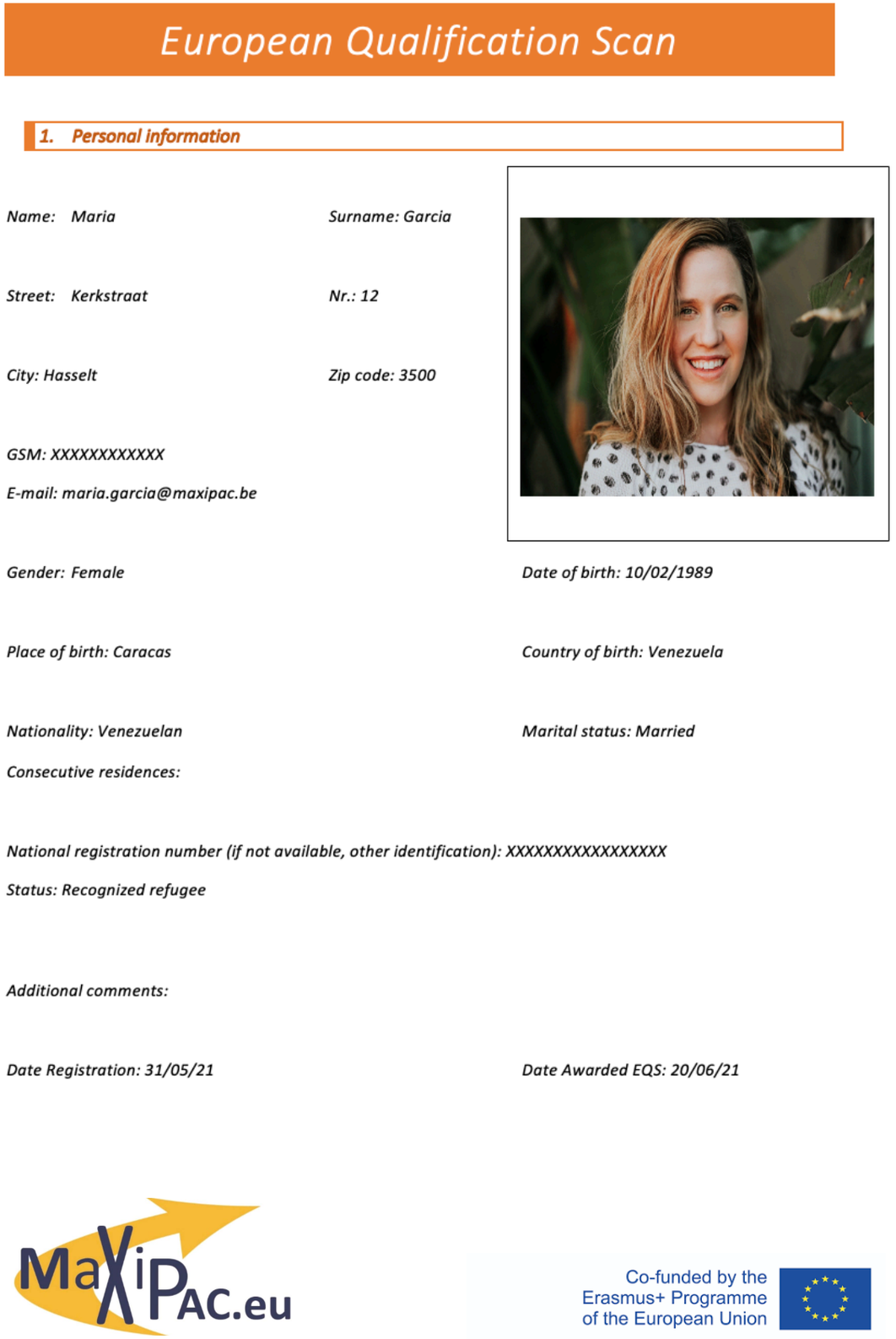
Step 4: Follow-up of broad economic and psycho-social situation 7

Step 1: European Qualification Scan

The 'European Qualification Scan' (EQS) is the first step in the MaxiPAC procedure. In this step, we make an overview of who the third-country national is and what qualifications, competencies and experiences he/she has.

For this purpose, we invite the third-country national for an intake interview. Using the European Qualification Scan we ask questions about the third-country national's life history, qualifications, competencies and experiences, which gives us a holistic view of the third-country national and his/her background.

After the intake interview , the European Qualification Scan is made and given to the third-country national. If, for any reason, the third-country national chooses to start the MaxiPAC procedure at another higher education institution, he or she only has to submit the scan. This way, the third-country national does not have to repeat his/her story every time.



European Qualification Scan

1. Personal information

Name: Maria *Surname: Garcia*

Street: Kerkstraat *Nr.: 12*

City: Hasselt *Zip code: 3500*

GSM: XXXXXXXXXXX

E-mail: maria.garcia@maxipac.be

Gender: Female *Date of birth: 10/02/1989*

Place of birth: Caracas *Country of birth: Venezuela*

Nationality: Venezuelan *Marital status: Married*

Consecutive residences:

National registration number (if not available, other identification): XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Status: Recognized refugee

Additional comments:

Date Registration: 31/05/21 *Date Awarded EQS: 20/06/21*

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Intake

At the start of the MaxiPAC procedure, the third-country national is invited for an intake interview. Based on this interview, the European Qualification Scan (EQS) is drawn up and sent digitally to the third-country national at a later stage. The aim of the European Qualification Scan (EQS) is to effectively get a first impression of the competences, experiences and identity of the third-country national. It is the assessor's responsibility to map out this overview during the intake interview. The European Qualification Scan (EQS) is a guideline for this.

1. Explain the MaxiPAC procedure

In the first part of the intake interview, you as the assessor will need to explain the procedure in its entirety. Third-country nationals will probably have made enquiries about MaxiPAC, but this will often not be sufficient to understand the procedure fully. Moreover, third-country nationals get information first from their own networks, which is often unreliable or incomplete. The procedure is a new one that will not be known in these first networks.

As the assessor, you explain the four steps that the third-country national will have to go through:

1. European Qualification Scan
2. Multiple Short Cases
3. Portfolio and Assessment
4. Follow-up of broad psychosocial situation

Use simple language when explaining, translate into English if necessary and check from time to time wether the third-country national has understood the explanation. This is necessary because there will be third-country nationals who have little or no command of the national language. Try to be clear in your explanation and use a translation app or tool if necessary.

2. EQS sections

De European Qualification Scan consists of five sections.:

1. Personal information
2. Language skills
3. Summary of qualifications
4. Overview of experience
5. Computer skills

As an assessor, you question each section thoroughly. Third-country nationals have often travelled a very arduous journey before arriving in your country. This journey will be taken into account into the European Qualification Scan (EQS). It is important that the assessor notes everything as much in detail as possible in the scan. When doing so, ask questions in order to understand the experiences properly.

Third-country nationals also come from different cultural backgrounds and have grown up in a society that might be completely different from the one of the host country. As an assessor, be aware of these differences. Competencies will be obtained in experiences that cannot always be understood. Be sure to ask for more details of the cultural background to get a correct picture of the competencies.

3. Issuing EQS

After the intake, the assessor prepares the official European Qualification Scan. This document is also provided digitally to the third-country national.



Step 2: Multiple Short Cases

The second step of the procedure consists of submitting some short, written cases to the third-country national who is interested in a particular degree programme and would like to start the MaxiPAC procedure.

The cases are developed by the higher education institution departement or faculty; these can be cases that are already used in the programme. There are some concrete questions attached to the cases, which the third-country national must answer. Depending on the programme, the third-country national may or may not be able to see the cases in advance and prepare for them. It may also concern an exam (e.g. mathematics, for an engineering course), in which case preparation cannot take place at home.

As an assessor you should assess after this step whether the third-country national has a chance of obtaining an exemption in the next step. After all, the start of step 3 (portfolio and assessment) should be avoided if it turns out that the third-country national does not have the necessary (basic) knowledge required for the programme.

Be thorough in your research. This way you can estimate the level of knowledge and give advice based on this. Make sure that you evaluate the knowledge of the training in a targeted way. Insufficient command of the national language can give a distorted perception of the knowledge level of the third-country national. Be conscious of this pitfall to avoid a wrong assessment.

As an assessor, you can provide the following advice:

- You can create a portfolio (step 3); we assume that there is a good chance that you will receive exemptions.
- It is better not to create a portfolio; we assume that there is a high chance that you will not receive any exemptions after completing Step 3.
- We recommend that you take another course.
- We recommend that you take the course in its entirety.

Step 3: Portfolio and Assessment

The third step of the procedure is the preparation of a portfolio and the assessment. This step largely corresponds to the existing procedure. The main difference is that in this step previously acquired competences and qualifications are combined.



The programme must provide the third-country national with an overview of the competencies to be obtained as a result of the programme. The portfolio is a file compiled by the third-country national with evidence from his/her own competencies acquired.

For each learning outcome, the third-country national must provide an overview of his/her learning and work experience. To support this, he/she will have to submit a portfolio of supporting documents proving that he/she has sufficient relevant experience with regard to the different learning outcomes and corresponding behavioural indicators. Possible pieces of evidence are: evaluation reports, work experience, papers, reports of practical experience, reflections on cases, publications, final products or presentations, reports from the professional field in which he/she is mentioned, training certificates, etc.

Previously acquired qualifications can also be included in the portfolio, such as diplomas, course units taken in the country of origin or in another country, etc.

1. Portfolio evaluation

The Portfolio will be assessed every time by at least two members of the jury who will evaluate the acquired competencies independently. A jury consisting of teachers/ professors connected to the programme, determine the value of the evidence submitted with a view to the learning outcomes of the programme.

During the assessment of the portfolio, the jury members do not exchange information. The jury members each make a report of the examination which they draw up independently from each other. This report is brought together on the assessment day, when the jury members jointly come to a final decision.

Evidence is evaluated on the following criteria:

- Authentic: there is evidence of the candidate's own performance;
- Current: the evidence reflects the candidate's current level of competence;
- Relevant: the evidence sufficiently covers relevant elements of a competency/learning outcome;
- Quantity: the evidence refers to a sufficiently long period of activity;
- Variation in contexts: the evidence covers sufficient variation in action or training contexts.

2. The assessment

The assessment is used to add to and/or deepen the portfolio. During the interview, the judges question the competencies in a structured way. Based on the portfolio and the assessment, the jury members decide which competences will be further researched in an interview. Often competences will have been acquired in situations that are not daily occurrences in your own country. Members of the jury take this into account and ask further questions to understand any cultural differences.

Furthermore, the jury asks for reflections and concrete examples showing that the third-country national has mastered the competence or learning outcome. As a judge, you want to get an accurate perception of the degree to which the third-country national has mastered the competency. In doing so, the judges are critical and at the same time realistic.

The interview is conducted by a jury consisting of at least two jury members connected to the programme, possibly supplemented by an external person from the field.

3. Go / No-go

After completing Step 3, the third-country national receives a Go or No-go with advice. If a Go is granted, the third-country national receives a document with the course units and the number of credits that need to be taken to obtain a diploma.

Step 4: Follow-up of broad economic and psycho-social situation

The final step of the MaxiPAC procedure is the exploration of the broad economic, medical, psychological and social situation of the third-country national.

If the third-country national has successfully completed step 3 - portfolio and assessment - he/she is generally able to start the course with exemptions. In order to give the third-country national the maximum chance to succeed in his study programme, we want to get a view on the broad social context to assess the applicant's ability to deal with the work load.

The situation in which third-country nationals find themselves often makes it difficult to follow a full-time study programme. In step 4, you look at the contextual situation together with the third-country national: is he/she financially capable of starting a study programme; does he/she work full time/part time; does he/she receive benefits and does the institution agree to a full-time study programme?

In addition, you should also consider what additional support the third-country national might need. For example, is it possible to take an exam in English? Is there a possibility of spreading the study programme? In this step, map out not only the difficulties, but also the possibilities.

The exploration of this step consists of 5 sections:

1. Economic situation
2. Home situation
3. Medical situation
4. Language skills
5. Other situational concerns

In an interview with the third-country national, you will use a template to question the various components. Be thorough. It is recommended that the assessor makes the necessary contacts with important institutions, the employer, ...

The aim of this step is to increase the chances of success for the third-country national. You can evaluate the situation of the third-country national and give advice on the basis of the entire procedure before the third-country national starts his/her study path.