



# STRANDS

*Transforming schools in the digital era*

## Schools in Transformation with Readiness, Adaptations and Nurturing Digital Skills

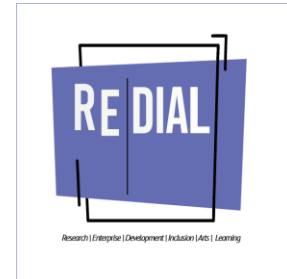
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# Protocol for the certifications of competences

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## Introduction

The STRANDS project ‘Schools in Transformation with Readiness, Adaptations and Nurturing Digital Skills’, co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme (Project Number: 2021-1-IT02-KA220-SCH-000032589) aims to ease the transition of educators and learners into blended learning and distance learning by supporting them in embracing digital methodologies into learning practices, while building emotional bonds.

The Protocol for the certifications of competences is a procedural document containing the guidelines to validate and certify the competences of professionals, acquired via the innovative learning methods and contents of the training tools developed in the project. All the final versions of the previous project outputs are gathered and harmonised to highlight all the crucial aspects of each, thus rendering the document exhaustive and practical. The Protocol is based on the EQF (European Qualifications Framework). Within this framework, the partners developed a scheme for the validation of the above-mentioned competences through the methodology adopted in ICEP for the certification of skills acquired in non-formal contexts. ICEP leads the partnership in identifying the most suitable competences and forms of certification, to be issued to persons who have acquired such skills within the project activities.

The Protocol contains the procedures for the certification of the competences acquired through the use of the project learning materials. For this reason, even after the project lifetime, any trainer or professional who acquires the identified competences through the use of the project tools is able to ask for the certification of their newly gained competences, to be issued by an external certification institution, which will access the Protocol via the project channels. Therefore, the Protocol has to be implemented in the perspective of its use as "validation/certification guidelines".

Expected impact of the Protocol for the certifications of competences is to raise awareness of the competences acquired through the implementation of the project activities, increased self-esteem of participants and improved career pathways potentiality of participants.

## Rules, institutional approaches, and good practices in the frame of the Validation of non-formal competences

Validation of non-formal and informal competences plays an important role in promoting lifelong learning, enhancing social inclusion, and boosting the employability of individuals. The process allows individuals to identify, document, assess, and certify their full range of abilities, competences, and knowledge acquired throughout life. This learning may have been gained from non-formal, informal settings, or work experience.

### EUROPEAN UNION

- **COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning** (2012/C 398/01) - this Recommendation provides important indications and guidelines for EU Member States to promote and facilitate the validation of non-formal and informal learning.

The Recommendation is based on the recognition that non-formal and informal learning plays a significant role in the development of skills and the training of individuals, including outside the formal context of vocational education and training. Non-formal learning refers to those intentional learning processes that take place in structured contexts, such as courses, workshops or training programmes organised by organisations or institutions. Informal learning, on the other hand, refers to those learning processes that occur spontaneously and unstructured through everyday life experiences, social interactions or work experiences. The Recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning contains a number of indications aimed at promoting the validation of competences acquired through these processes. Among the main indications contained in the Recommendation are the following:

- a. Establishment of validation systems: Member States are invited to develop and promote systems of validation of competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning. These systems should be based on clear, transparent and consistent procedures for the assessment and recognition of competences.
- b. Involvement of all actors: Member States are encouraged to actively involve all relevant actors, such as training institutions, public authorities, private sector organisations, trade unions and civil society organisations, in the competence validation process. This involvement fosters the integration and harmonisation of validation approaches and practices.

- c. Clear assessment criteria: Member States are invited to define clear and valid assessment criteria for the validation of competences. These criteria should be established to reflect the quality standards required in the labour market and in different areas of activity.
- d. Creation of tools and procedures: Member States are encouraged to develop specific tools and procedures to facilitate the validation of competences. These tools may include competence portfolios, documentation of non-formal and informal learning experiences, and evaluation procedures suitable for assessing acquired competences.
- e. Formal recognition of competences: Member States are encouraged to recognise validated competences through appropriate certificates or attestations. This formal recognition of competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning provides individuals with an opportunity to improve access to employment, lifelong learning and professional mobility.
- f. Promotion of awareness and information: Member States are encouraged to promote awareness and information about the importance of validating non-formal and informal learning among individuals, organisations and the general public. This helps to value non-formal and informal learning as an integral part of the lifelong learning pathway.

The Recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning is therefore an important guidance tool for EU Member States to promote the validation of competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning processes.

The European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning developed by the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) are significant.

[https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/Council\\_Recommendation\\_on\\_the\\_validation\\_20\\_December\\_2012.pdf](https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/Council_Recommendation_on_the_validation_20_December_2012.pdf)

- **Digital Competence Framework for Educators** (DigCompEdu) - is a scientifically sound framework describing what it means for educators to be digitally competent. It provides a general reference frame to support the development of educator-specific digital competences in Europe. DigCompEdu is directed towards educators at all levels of education, from early childhood to higher and adult education, including general and vocational education and training,

special needs education, and non-formal learning contexts.  
<https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC107466>

## ITALY

### Rules and institutional approaches

Designing and awarding qualifications in Italy is governed by a combination of regional and national authorities, as well as multiple legislative acts. That said, most of the work is done on a regional level.

In this sense, Emilia-Romagna is considered one of Italy's regions with the most advanced system for recognition of non-formal and informal competencies.

The following two regional systems stand out - The Regional System of Qualifications (SRQ) and The Regional System of Formalization and Certification of Competencies (SRFC).

### THE REGIONAL SYSTEM OF QUALIFICATIONS

The Regional System of Qualifications is a constantly updated collection of professional standards representing the professional skills that characterise the economic-productive system of Emilia-Romagna.

The qualifications are divided into professional areas, which represent families of figures that are homogeneous in terms of work processes and skills, such as "business administration and control," "development and management of information systems," "mechanical and electromechanical design and production," etc.

Each qualification consists of several units of competence, i.e., sets of skills and knowledge that are required to perform certain sets of activities.

For each regional qualification, a correlation has been established with the European Qualification Framework (EQF), which makes it possible to make understandable and comparable the qualifications awarded at the conclusion of training courses in different EU countries.

Emilia-Romagna's vocational qualifications start at the third EQF level, attributed to three-year Vocational Education and Training qualifications and vocational access qualifications, and go up to the seventh level. In-depth and specialised qualifications are ranked between the fourth to seventh EQF level, according to the increasing degree of complexity.



## Qualifications directory

The qualifications of the Emilia-Romagna regional system are collected and available for research online. The way that the qualifications are organised is accordance to 3 principal criteria:

- 1) Professional Areas
- 2) Professional Qualifications
- 3) EQF Level.

## Standards for professional training and qualification

This section represents the tools provided by the region to ensure the homogeneity and quality of pathways to acquire vocational qualifications.

In order to ensure the homogeneity and quality of the training offered on the regional territory, the Emilia-Romagna Region defines the structural aspects and modes of intervention of training courses aimed at the issuance of a regional qualification.

The regulatory tools for courses aimed at qualification, whether funded or unfunded, are:

the professional standards of the Regional System of Qualifications (SRQ), expressed by the units of competence, which represent the essential elements that connote the professional figure and the minimum skills necessary to carry out the relevant activities. The units of competence of each qualification can be consulted in the SRQ repertory:

- The certification standards of the Regional System of Formalization and Certification of Competencies (SRFC)
- The training standards, which are the set of rules that training providers must follow in designing and implementing courses.

The training standards for courses issuing regional qualifications are specified in the general provisions of GR Resolution No. 1298 of 2015 for the planning, management and control of training activities and active labour policies - EIS Programming 2014/2020.

With regard to training paths to achieve regional qualifications subject to national regulation, specific training standards are provided, as the courses must have durations defined according to the specific regulation and the types of users to whom they are addressed. These standards are specified by GR Resolution No. 1298 of 2015, as

amended by GR Resolution No. 185 of 2021 regarding the qualification of Hairdresser and GR Resolution No. 186 of 2021 regarding the qualification of Aesthetician.

## **Application for new qualifications**

Emilia-Romagna's Directory of Professional Qualifications was created with the ambition of being a dynamic tool that evolves according to the needs and stresses arising from the region's labour reality.

To enable this continuous updating, the region has set up a 'source procedure' by which different subjects (public and private bodies that provide employment services, trade unions, employers' and professional organisations, equal opportunity counsellors, subjects of the training system, etc.), by filling out a special form, can request the inclusion of a new qualification in the regional directory.

## **THE REGIONAL SYSTEM OF FORMALISATION AND CERTIFICATION OF COMPETENCIES (SRFC)**

The Regional System of Formalization and Certification of Competencies defines and regulates the formal recognition of the competencies acquired through formal, non-formal and informal learning. The system allows to formalise and certify the skills acquired by people, not only as a result of training but also through work experience, in relation to the professional standards of the SRQ.

The SRFC applies to:

- All training courses in which technical and professional skills are developed
- Internships and community service Apprenticeships Employment, as a supplement to active policy measures provided by employment centres and accredited private entities of the Active Employment Network.

It is aimed at recognizing competencies for people who:

- Participate in a training programs
- Intend to have skills acquired in formal (education and training),
- Non-formal (work and professional) contexts
- Informal (social and individual) learning contexts

## **Training and Certification Procedure**

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The process of formalising and certifying skills takes place through several stages:

- individual counselling
- assessment through evidence
- assessment through evaluative interview
- ascertainment through examination.

Validation of the results of the assessments takes place with the issuance of formalisation and certification documents, which may be:

- Skills and knowledge sheet, a document in which knowledge and skills corresponding to parts or the entirety of a qualification are formalised on the basis of evidence.
- Skills certificate, a document in which skills and knowledge corresponding to one or more units of competence are certified after passing an evaluative interview or examination.
- Certificate of professional qualification, a document in which skills and knowledge of a qualification are certified, after passing an examination.

During the procedure, specific professional representatives are expected to intervene.

There are two roles within the training institutions authorised to provide the formalisation and certification service:

- The competency formalisation and certification officer, the organisational reference for the delivery of the entire process, ensures that the prescribed procedures are followed.
- The expert in evaluation processes, technical-methodological reference, carries out the consulting and formalisation activities.

To these is added a third figure, from the world of work:

- The vocational/qualification area expert, a specialist called to assess whether the skills possessed by people meet the standards of the Regional Qualifications System.
- Evaluative interviews, aimed at ascertaining the possession of individual competencies of a qualification, are conducted by an examination board

composed of the evaluative process expert and a professional/qualification area expert.

- Examination boards certifying competencies referring to the entire vocational qualification are composed of the evaluative processes expert and two vocational area/qualification experts.

### **Certificate-Related Requests**

The Region cannot issue copies of the original certifications but can provide a substitute statement.

To initiate the procedure, it is necessary to fill out and sign the specific application form and send it, with a copy of your valid ID attached.

### **Application for Examination Boards**

In order to apply for a position as part of the examination committee related to the formalisation and certification of competencies it is necessary to apply for the public procedures opened by the Region. This includes roles like:

- Competency formalisation
- Certification manager
- Evaluation Process expert
- Professional area/qualification expert

The Region proceeds to review and validate the applications. Those who are found to be eligible are placed on special regional lists, from which, whenever the need arises, names are identified to form commissions for the examinations, which are held at accredited training institutions.

### **“CITIZEN’S BOOKLET” / “ELECTRONIC DOSSIER”**

Another useful tool that is used for collecting information, data and attestations regarding education/training and work experiences, also carried out in the social, recreational or family sphere by each individual.

Responsible for issuing the Booklet are again the regional institutions, which may delegate further the task to other entities. Responsible for updating the Booklet is essentially the individual, who is also its holder.

The purpose of the Booklet is to present acquired skills in a transparent way, thus making them easier to be recognized, especially in "situations of transit" and change in the work or training context.

The booklet represents, therefore, a collector of aggregated and "evolving" information on the person's skills and, as such, differs from other more "static" and fragmented data collection tools. Finally, it should be borne in mind that this tool, resulting from a comparison between all institutional and non-institutional actors, proposes a format that is homogeneous at the national level and transversal to the different systems that govern education, training and labour in Italy.

## **Who it is useful to**

The Booklet is useful and usable for the labour market and the education and training system, but it is primarily a tool for the enhancement of the person, recognizable by institutions for the guarantee and protection of the subjects.

Specifically:

1) It is useful for the person.

The Booklet represents, for the person, a communication tool that meets three main objectives:

- To provide information about the person and his or her formal and nonformal learning record for job search, professional mobility and transition from one training system to another.
- To make skills however acquired and vocational potential recognizable and transparent.
- Orient individuals in life choices and professional projects.

2) It is useful for the labour market.

For the labour market and the business system, the Libretto formativo, represents an information tool, aimed at:

- Facilitate the recognition of individual professionalism and skills within a process of insertion (e.g., in apprenticeship contracts) and job mobility (e.g., in various forms of flexible contracts)
- Highlight the individual's educational and professional background, with particular attention to potential, aspirations and levels of excellence obtained.

(c) It is useful for institutions.

For local institutions and for the vocational education and training system, the Booklet, represents a guarantee and formalisation tool, aimed at:

- Enhance the certification and recognition systems, in place in the vocational education and training systems.
- Guaranteeing the transparency and legibility of a subject's training and vocational information and data also in a European dimension, facilitating the flexibility and personalization of pathways.
- Ensure the visibility of the skills and experiences gained by individuals in a logic of geographic and professional mobility and lifelong learning.

Source: Ministry of Labor and Social Policy

## Good Practices

**NAME: KODE-KoDE NQF Recognition and validation of non-formal and informal competences within National Qualification Frameworks**

### THE PURPOSE OF THE KØDE-NQF

The primary objective of KODE-KoDE NQF is to bring together the competencies acquired in non-formal and informal ways with those gained through formal education and training.

This project aims to equip career guidance practitioners with effective tools to measure, assess, and validate competencies and skills obtained outside traditional education systems. These competences are then aligned with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and National Qualification Frameworks (NQFs).

In other words, the developed KØDE-NQF tools are used to measure and validate non-formal and informal competencies in accordance with the EQF and NQF levels.

In addition, the project provides a comprehensive manual that offers clear guidelines for implementing these tools during the career guidance process.

### HOW DOES IT WORK?

At the heart of KODE-KoDE NQF's approach lies SkillPass, a method inspired by video games where the learner/player builds their hero's portfolio and gradually masters the fundamental concepts in their chosen field.

In doing so, learners can better understand real-life experiences, nurturing valuable skills such as problem-solving, communication, information processing, teamwork, and more.

## TARGET GROUPS

The project aims to accommodate for the professional needs of a wide audience, including:

- People seeking new challenges in their profession and/or seeking new goals,
- People seeking guidance starting a new job or a new career
- People seeking a (new) place in society
- Persons with low levels of self-esteem due to physical, cultural, or social limitations and who are looking for looking for new perspectives,
- People who feel "cut off", especially people who are in the second half of their life of their lives,
- People who are unemployed or whose jobs are at risk, or who are looking for a new business or job.
- People who have to take on great new responsibility in a business succession

## CYPRUS

### Rules and institutional approaches

Despite several scattered efforts, a comprehensive national system for validation of non-formal and informal learning is not yet in place. However, the formation of a national system has been stressed as a priority in the Cyprus LifeLong Learning Strategy for 2021-2027.

Cyprus decided to develop a comprehensive NQF, the Cyprus qualifications framework (CyQF) ([http://archeia.moec.gov.cy/mc/182/cygf\\_level\\_descriptors.pdf](http://archeia.moec.gov.cy/mc/182/cygf_level_descriptors.pdf)), in 2008 (Decision No 67445 of 9 July 2008) to improve permeability, both horizontal and vertical, within its education and training systems. The Council of Ministers approved the establishment of the framework based on the eight levels of the EQF in 2012 and the first framework design was presented in 2017. The system of vocational qualifications (SVQ) being developed by the Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus (HRDA) is an integral, but distinct, part of CyQF.

For the development of a national framework for validating non-formal and informal learning a project partly funded by the European Social Fund has supported a mapping study of the current situation in Cyprus and a national action plan setting up a mechanism for the validation of non-formal and informal learning (*epikirosi mathisis*) was developed at the beginning of 2018. This plan was put to public consultation during the first half of 2018 and was completed in May 2018. It entered pilot implementation in 2019, focusing on adult education, youth and volunteering. The pilot implementation will be completed on 31/12/2023, during which date the co-funded project "Establishment of Non-Formal / Informal Learning Validation Mechanisms and Pilot Implementation" will be completed.

The validation process entailed four stages:

- information-individualised counselling;
- identification; recognition of learning outcomes;
- assessment of learning outcomes;
- certification.

Within the context of the ongoing reformation of the National Qualifications Authority, the governing body of the CyQF will evaluate the results from the pilot implementation and will integrate them into the plan for establishing a national framework for validating non-formal and informal learning. Future plans for Cyprus include strengthening the legal basis of the CyQF. Once the reformation process relating to the National Qualifications Authority is completed, and following approval by the Council of Ministers, the CyQF will be regulated by law by the House of Representatives. Developing a national register as well as the criteria and procedures for the inclusion of qualifications in this register is needed for the future. The development of guidelines on validation of non-formal and informal learning, analysing and implementing learning outcomes in different subsystems, are expected to be completed in order to ensure continuity and consistency between levels and services.

## Good Practices

### **“Horizontal Recognition and Validation of Learning Outcomes” Conference**

The Foundation for the Management of European Lifelong Learning Programmes (IDEP), as part of the National VET Teams network and the consultations for the establishment of a robust national system for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning,



organised a conference titled “Horizontal Recognition and Validation of Learning Outcomes”.

The main objective of the Conference was to examine best practices from other countries and develop links of cooperation among national stakeholders for the establishment of a comprehensive framework for the recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning in Cyprus. As part of the exchange of experience and best practices, the Conference hosted six experts from Malta, Ireland, Estonia, Belgium, Finland, and Greece.

### **Erasmus+ KA2 Adult Project ‘Competences before Diplomas’**

This project's general goal is to explore and develop possible means of recognizing and validating competencies acquired in non-formal and informal contexts, particularly for left-behind adult learners and other disadvantaged target groups, using a Validation Portfolio as the primary tool. More information can be found here: <https://compb4d.eu/>

## **SLOVAKIA**

### **Rules and institutional approaches**

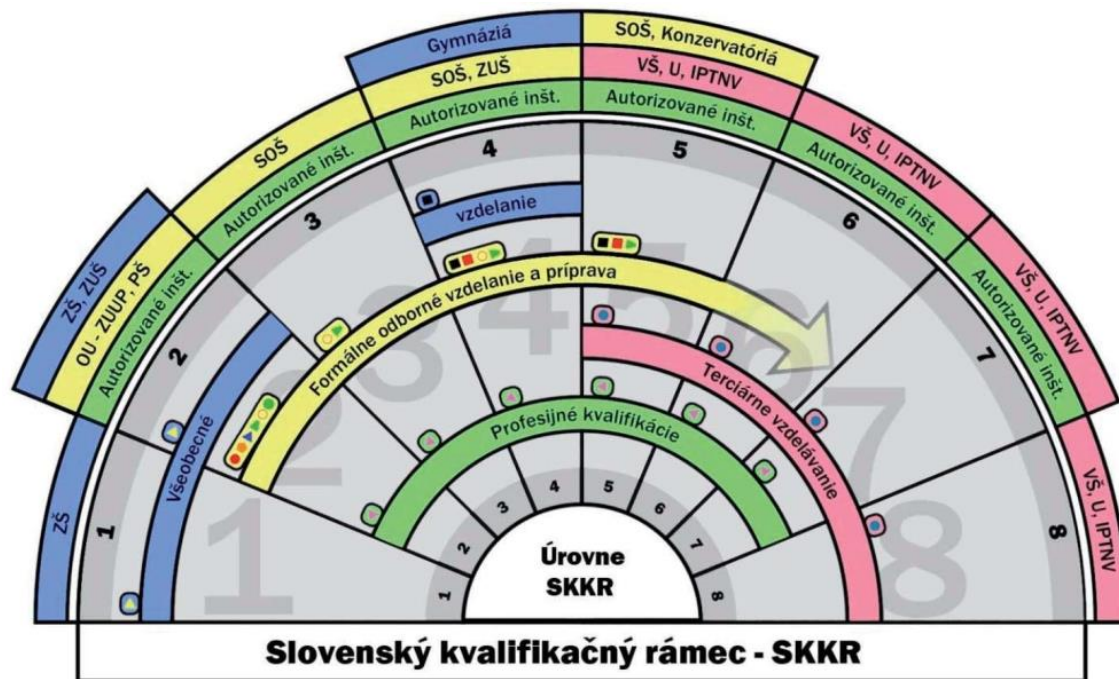
In Slovakia, validation of non-formal and informal competences is guided by a combination of European Union policies and national legislation. We distinguish the **Slovak Qualifications Framework (SQF)** - a comprehensive framework that includes all qualifications awarded in the system of general education, vocational education, higher education and further education in Slovakia that can be acquired through formal (school) education, non-formal (further) education and informal learning.

SQF is a tool for:

- classifying qualifications according to a set of criteria that are described as required knowledge, skills and competences (so-called learning outcomes),
- ensuring transparency and clarity of qualifications in Slovakia,
- easier transfer of labour market needs into the education system,
- guaranteeing the quality of qualifications.

- The most important tasks of the SQF are to promote lifelong learning and to enable the verification and recognition of qualifications (validation).

The Slovak Qualifications Framework has 8 levels, which are linked to the levels of the European Qualifications Framework. The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) is a common reference framework that helps to understand, compare and recognise qualifications acquired in the European Union. This interconnectedness enables Slovak qualifications to be understood anywhere in the European Union.



## Overview of qualifications within the Slovak qualification framework

SKKR level	Educational journey	Proof of qualification
1	formal education	Certificate with clause
	formal education	Certificate with clause
2	formal education	Certificate of the final exam and teaching letter

3	non-formal education and informal learning	Certificate of qualification
	formal education	Certificate with clause
4	non-formal education and informal learning	Certificate of qualification
	formal education	Certificate of matriculation examination and teaching certificate
5	formal education	Matriculation certificate
	non-formal education and informal learning	Certificate of qualification
5	formal education	Certificate of matriculation examination + teaching certificate
	formal education	Matriculation certificate
	formal education	Certificate of graduation examination + graduation diploma
	non-formal education and informal learning	Certificate of qualification

6	formal education	University diploma (1st degree) + certificate of state examination + supplement to the diploma
	non-formal education and informal learning	Certificate of qualification
7	formal education	University diploma (2nd degree) + certificate of state examination + diploma supplement
	non-formal education and informal learning	Certificate of qualification
8	formal education	University diploma (3rd degree) + certificate of state examination + diploma supplement

<https://siov.sk/en/medzinarodna-spolupraca/slovensky-kvalifikacny-ramec-a-europsky-kvalifikacny-ramec/>

The specific institutions involved in validation in Slovakia include:

- **Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport** (Ministerstvo školstva, výskumu, vedy a športu): It is the central body responsible for educational policy, including the validation of non-formal and informal learning. <https://www.minedu.sk/about-the-ministry/>
- **National Institute for Education** (Štátny pedagogický ústav): It is responsible for the development and administration of the validation process in adult education. The National Institute for Education is responsible for providing the leadership, design and development of curricula, providing the methodological and Professional service for schools, initiating and monitoring changes via research and innovation, and promoting innovative practices into the education system. The main mission is to design the school environment to be a place respecting the human rights and principles of democracy, assist in the education process to form pupils' cognitive, interpersonal and social skills for their future life and follow-up education. <https://www.statpedu.sk/en/>

- **Slovak Accreditation Agency for Higher Education** (Slovenská akreditačná agentúra pre vysoké školstvo): It is responsible for the validation process in higher education. It is a newly established public institution whose task is to perform external quality assurance activities in higher education in the Slovak Republic. It was established by Act no. 269/2018 Coll. (the Quality Act) as a legal entity based in Bratislava. The mission of the Agency is to contribute to improving the quality of higher education through modern tools following the European Standards for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ESG 2015). The Agency is intended to provide a mirror of quality to higher education institutions and to decide on the granting of appropriate accreditations following the law. The Agency replaces the activities of the current Accreditation Commission, an advisory body of the Government of the Slovak Republic in assessing applications of higher education institutions, and also takes over the decision-making authority of the Minister of Education, Science, Research and Sports of the Slovak Republic. The syllabus for the accreditation activities of the Agency will be the standards, the Proposal of Accreditation Standards with the evaluation of public comments will be submitted shortly for comment to the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports of the Slovak Republic. The Agency is expected to start receiving the first university applications for accreditation in the second quarter of 2020. <https://saavs.sk/en/agency/>
- **National Institute for Certified Educational Measurements** (Národný ústav certifikovaných meraní vzdelávania). National Institute for Certified Educational Measurements is a state budget organisation with a legal personality, founded by the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic. It was established on 1st September 2008 as a part of changes in the educational system introduced by the new Education Act in the Slovak Republic. The main aim of our work is:
  - implementation of certified educational measurements at national level,
  - preparation of international measurements in accordance with programmes where the Slovak Republic participates and fully complies with the rules of individual programmes,
  - research and development in the area of measurements and evaluation of the quality of education,
  - continuous monitoring of the results of education, conditions and development of education at national level as well as their international comparison,
  - evaluation of the quality of education at primary and secondary schools at the level of national educational programmes. <https://www2.nucem.sk/en>
- **The Slovak National Accreditation Service** (SNAS) ( Slovenská národná akreditačná služba) is the only national accreditation body. One of the accreditations is accreditation of certification bodies certifying persons SNAS assesses and confirms competence of the body to perform certification of persons

according to the requirements defined in certification schemes. The certification itself consists in verifying the conformity of the professional competence of the persons with the specified requirements. During the accreditation of certification bodies certifying persons SNAS assesses the fulfilment of the requirements of ISO/IEC 17024 Standard. Certification bodies seeking confirmation of competence to perform certification of persons must meet the requirements of the requirements of ISO/IEC 17024 as set out in further relevant standards, relevant mandatory IAF, EA documents, or generally established documents of international organisations as well as in policies and methodological guidelines for accreditation issued by SNAS. SNAS grants accreditation only for the scope for which the applicant has demonstrated compliance with the requirements set out for accreditation. The scope of accreditation takes into account international standards and regulations applicable to person certification. SNAS does not grant accreditation for a flexible scope in this area of accreditation. SNAS requires the person certification body to have specified in the accreditation scope in addition to the certification field, type/category of activity, standards and regulation to which the conformity of persons is assessed, also certification schemes and certification procedures. For the accreditation of bodies certifying persons in regulated fields SNAS requires that the certification schemes applied for the certification of persons consistently meet the requirements of the relevant Directive EC or the relevant regulation requirements.

<https://www.snas.sk/en/certification-bodies-certifying-persons>

- **Slovak Centre OF Scientific and Technical Information** (Centrum vedecko-technických informácií Slovenskej republiky - CVTI SR) is a subsidiary organisation (public body) of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic. The institution was established in 1938 as the Slovak technical library and since its establishment has belonged to pioneers in new library and information services implementation.

The SCSTI is the national information centre for science, technology, innovation and education and a specialised scientific library of the Slovak Republic. It coordinates activities and ensures the operation of interdisciplinary R&D centres and national infrastructures for research, development, innovation and education. <https://www.cvtisr.sk/en>

In terms of the validation process, this usually includes four stages: identification, documentation, assessment, and certification. Different methodologies can be used depending on the specific context, but often include portfolio methods, simulations, observation, interviews, tests, and self-assessments.

As for good practices, it's important to make sure that the validation process is transparent, fair, and reliable. Stakeholder involvement is key, as is ensuring that

individuals are well-informed about the process and that the validation outcomes are recognized and trusted.

[https://rozvojkariery.sk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/analyza\\_validacia\\_vysledkov\\_neformalneho\\_vzdelavania\\_a\\_informalneho\\_ucenia.pdf](https://rozvojkariery.sk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/analyza_validacia_vysledkov_neformalneho_vzdelavania_a_informalneho_ucenia.pdf)

## Good Practices

In Slovakia, there are limited possibilities for direct adaptation of the competence framework for continuing education of educational managers, citing the reason for these limitations as they saw in the legislative requirements related to continuing professional education defined by the Act on pedagogical and professional staff (ZÁKON o pedagogických zamestnancoch a odborných zamestnancoch <https://www.slov-lex.sk/pravne-predpisy/SK/ZZ/2019/138/>). Programmes must be approved by **the Accreditation Commission** and cannot be changed.

- **The National Project Professional Development of Teachers (TEACHERS)**. The main objective is to support the professional development of pedagogical and professional staff in implementing changes in schools and educational institutions, including the management of crisis, post-crisis situations and the impacts related to the interruption of teaching in schools and educational institutions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The target group of the project is pedagogical and professional staff of schools and school establishments within the meaning of Act No. 138/2019 Coll.

The project has one main activity, which includes three professional sub-activities:

Sub-activity 1.1 Revision and innovation of professional standards.

Sub-activity 1.2 Supporting the introduction and implementation of changes in schools and educational institutions based on the transfer of innovations and best international and domestic experiences.

Sub-activity 1.3 Comprehensive support for pedagogical and professional staff during crisis and post-crisis situations related to school disruption

- **The national project IT Academy** - education for the 21st century, where Slovak teachers, educators and students can obtain ECDL (European Computer Driving Licence) certificates free of charge.

## IRELAND

### Rules and institutional approaches

The **rules and processes** for the Validation of Non-Formal competences in Ireland were governed by the "Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)" and "Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI)" guidelines. Here are some of the key rules and principles that are involved in the Validation of Non-Formal competences in Ireland:

1. Central to the validation process is the Recognition of Prior Learning, which empowers individuals to have their previous learning and experiential knowledge assessed and officially acknowledged. Through RPL, individuals can receive credit for the competences they have acquired outside the formal education system, contributing to their continuous development and formal qualification attainment. QQI plays an essential role in promoting and facilitating the Recognition of Prior Learning, aligning it with programme standards and learning outcomes.

[www.qqi.ie/what-we-do/qqi-awards/recognition-of-prior-learning-provider#:~:text=Recognition%20of%20Prior%20Learning%20\(Recognition of Prior Learning,to%20programme%20standards%20and%20outcomes.](http://www.qqi.ie/what-we-do/qqi-awards/recognition-of-prior-learning-provider#:~:text=Recognition%20of%20Prior%20Learning%20(Recognition of Prior Learning,to%20programme%20standards%20and%20outcomes.)

2. National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ): The NFQ serves as a comprehensive framework that categorises all qualifications in Ireland based on their levels of learning outcomes. During the validation process, non-formal competences are meticulously mapped to appropriate NFQ levels. This mapping process determines the equivalency of these competences to formal qualifications, ensuring their recognition and transferability within the national qualifications system.

[www.qqi.ie/what-we-do/the-qualifications-system/national-framework-of-qualifications](http://www.qqi.ie/what-we-do/the-qualifications-system/national-framework-of-qualifications)

3. Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI): As the statutory body responsible for maintaining the quality and standards of education and training in Ireland, QQI holds a central role in the validation of non-formal competences. They provide valuable guidance to institutions and organisations involved in the validation process, fostering a consistent and credible approach throughout the country.

[www.qqi.ie/](http://www.qqi.ie/)

4. Assessment and Evidence: The validation process typically requires individuals to compile an evidence portfolio showcasing the skills and knowledge they have acquired



through non-formal means. This portfolio may include work samples, certificates, references, and other relevant documentation.

5. Sectoral Validation: The validation process typically requires individuals to compile an evidence portfolio showcasing the skills and knowledge they have acquired through non-formal means. This portfolio may include work samples, certificates, references, and other relevant documentation.

6. Education and Training Providers: Institutions specialising in education and training, such as Education and Training Boards (ETBs), play a crucial role in delivering validation services. They provide support and guidance to individuals undergoing the validation process, assisting them in navigating through the requirements and compiling their evidence portfolios.

[www.etbi.ie/](http://www.etbi.ie/)

7. Recognition and Certification: Successful validation of non-formal competences results in the formal acknowledgement of an individual's skills and knowledge. Depending on the level of recognition achieved, individuals may be awarded credits, exemptions, or even full qualifications, enhancing their access to further educational and professional opportunities.

8. Adult Education Guidance Services: To ensure a smooth and informed validation process, adult education guidance services offer valuable support and guidance to individuals seeking to validate their non-formal competences. These services help applicants understand the process, gather appropriate evidence, and navigate through the necessary steps effectively.

Since policies and guidelines can change over time, it's essential to check with the official websites of QQI and other relevant Irish authorities to obtain the most current and accurate information regarding the Validation of Non-Formal competences in Ireland.

The **institutional approaches** for the Validation of Non-Formal Competencies in Ireland involve several key stakeholders and organisations. These institutions played a vital role in implementing and overseeing the validation process to ensure its effectiveness and alignment with national qualifications frameworks. Keep in mind that institutional approaches may evolve over time, so it's essential to refer to the latest information from official sources for the most up-to-date details. As of 2023, some of the key institutional approaches included:

1. Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI): Serving as the pivotal statutory body, QQI takes on the responsibility of maintaining the overall quality and standards of education and training in Ireland. In the realm of non-formal competency validation, QQI assumes a central role in providing guidance and direction to ensure alignment with national qualifications frameworks. Through their expertise, they foster an environment that values and acknowledges the diverse learning experiences of individuals across various sectors and industries.

[www.qqi.ie/](http://www.qqi.ie/)

2. National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ): The NFQ is a comprehensive framework that classifies all qualifications in Ireland, including those obtained through the validation of non-formal competencies. The NFQ ensures that these competencies are recognised and mapped to the appropriate level in the qualifications framework.

[www.qqi.ie/what-we-do/the-qualifications-system/national-framework-of-qualifications](http://www.qqi.ie/what-we-do/the-qualifications-system/national-framework-of-qualifications)

3. Further Education and Training (FET) Providers: Institutions specialising in further education and training, such as Education and Training Boards (ETBs) and private training centres, actively participate in the delivery of the validation process. Their involvement is critical as they assess the evidence portfolios submitted by individuals seeking validation. Moreover, these providers play a supportive role in guiding applicants through the process and assisting them in gathering relevant evidence.

[www.etbi.ie/about-etbi/further-education-and-training/](http://www.etbi.ie/about-etbi/further-education-and-training/)

4. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs): In recognition of the significance of higher education in validating more advanced or specialised qualifications, universities and other HEIs in Ireland also contribute to the validation of non-formal competencies. Their involvement ensures that individuals can receive recognition for their skills and knowledge across a broader range of fields and disciplines.

<https://hea.ie/higher-education-institutions/>

5. Sectoral Bodies: Acknowledging the value of specialised expertise, industry-specific sectoral bodies or professional organisations often participate in the validation process. They play a pivotal role in assessing competencies related to particular sectors or professions, ensuring that the recognition is relevant and tailored to the needs of those industries.

6. **Adult Education Guidance Services:** Recognising the importance of comprehensive guidance, adult education guidance services offer valuable support and assistance to individuals seeking to validate their non-formal competencies. Through these services, applicants gain a clear understanding of the process, receive guidance on assembling their evidence portfolios, and adequately prepare for assessment.

7. **Assessment Panels:** To ensure fair and impartial evaluations, assessment panels or committees are established to review the evidence portfolios submitted by applicants seeking validation. These panels consist of experts from relevant fields who possess the expertise necessary to assess and evaluate the skills and knowledge demonstrated by the applicants accurately.

8. **Quality Assurance:** As with any crucial process, quality assurance mechanisms are implemented to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness, consistency, and fairness of the validation process. These quality assurance practices help to continually enhance the overall reliability and credibility of the validation system.

9. **National and Regional Networks:** In pursuit of synergy and knowledge exchange, collaborative networks are established at both national and regional levels. These networks facilitate the sharing of best practices, promote consistency, and maximise the overall effectiveness of the validation of non-formal competencies.

These institutional approaches aim to provide a robust and reliable validation process that recognises and values the skills and knowledge acquired through non-formal learning experiences, ultimately facilitating individuals' access to education, training, and employment opportunities. To obtain the most current and accurate information on institutional approaches for the Validation of Non-Formal Competencies in Ireland, it's essential to refer to official websites and guidelines from relevant authorities such as QQI ([www.qqi.ie/](http://www.qqi.ie/)) and the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation, and Science ([www.gov.ie/en/organisation/departments-of-higher-education-innovation-and-science/](http://www.gov.ie/en/organisation/departments-of-higher-education-innovation-and-science/)).

## Good Practices

In Ireland, the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) plays a significant role in promoting the recognition of non-formal and informal learning. To achieve this, ECVET organises various events, including conferences tailored for practitioners and policymakers. These gatherings serve as platforms to highlight the value of non-formal and informal learning and facilitate the exchange of best practices related to Recognition of Prior Learning.

Moreover, ECVET Ireland takes proactive steps to enhance the expertise of practitioners and policymakers in the field. They nominate these professionals to participate in international training ECVET conferences and peer learning activities centred around Recognition of Prior Learning. By engaging in such international forums, these individuals gain exposure to global perspectives and cutting-edge approaches to validating competencies acquired outside formal education.

Within Ireland, ECVET Experts play a pivotal role as they are recognised for their extensive knowledge and proficiency in vocational education and training. These Experts actively advocate for the implementation of Recognition of Prior Learning across their professional networks, creating awareness and fostering the culture of recognising prior learning experiences.

To support the efforts of ECVET in Ireland, co-funding is provided by both the European Commission and SOLAS, the national Further Education and Training Authority. This collaborative financing approach ensures the sustainability and effectiveness of ECVET initiatives.

Managing ECVET in Ireland is the responsibility of Léargas, which serves as the National Agency for Erasmus+ in the fields of School Education, Vocational Education and Training, Adult Education, and Youth. As a capable and experienced agency, Léargas oversees the coordination, implementation, and evaluation of ECVET activities in Ireland, ensuring that they align with European standards and objectives.

In summary, ECVET in Ireland takes a comprehensive approach to promote the recognition of non-formal and informal learning. By hosting conferences, facilitating international engagements, and involving ECVET Experts, they are actively fostering a culture of acknowledging and valuing diverse learning experiences. This collaborative effort between European and national authorities, managed by Léargas, strengthens the vocational education and training landscape and encourages continuous professional development within Ireland and beyond.

## Identifying of the competences - Readiness, Adaptations and Nurturing Digital Skills

### Identifying of the competences from STRANDS:

#### R1 - Teachers-led ITC Online Community Platform

1. Information and communication technologies
2. Online community manager
3. Educational Development in a community

#### R2 - Technical Handbook for Inclusive Digital Learning

1. Online Communication and Collaboration for Inclusive Digital Learning
2. Managing an Inclusive Digital Class
3. Assessment and Inclusive Digital Learning

#### R3 - Non-Formal Education Toolbox for Online Teaching

1. Online moderation techniques
2. Develop non-formal educational activities
3. Conduct educational activities

#### R4 - E-Safety Manual for families and students

1. Empathy and Emotional Intelligence
2. Conflict Resolution
3. Digital Literacy

## Certification Process

The **Certification of Competence** attests that the certified professional or individual has proved to be in possession of the *knowledge, skills, personal attributes and qualifications* required for certification.

Certification **requirements** are included in a tailored **Certification Scheme**, designed and produced to adhere to International Standards defining a specific professional profile or competence area.

The **verification** is carried out through **assessment** and **examination**, implemented by the Certification Institute as an *Independent Third Party*, either in person or online on our dedicated platform [competenceinstitute.com](https://competenceinstitute.com)

### Protocol for Certification of Competences:

PROTOCOL	CERTIFICATION	COMPETENCE
A descriptive procedural document containing the guidelines to validate and certify the competences acquired via the tools developed in the project.	The action or process of providing someone with an official document attesting to a status or level of achievement.	A skill or ability in a specific field or subject, or being able to do something well. An example of competence is when a chess player knows how to play chess.

## Certification Process

### 1. Identification of Competences

Identification of the specific competences of the Profile to be certified, identified in national and international official taxonomies: ISO, ESCO, ISCO, EQF.

Competence [ISO 19011:2011]

This International Standard does not state requirements, but provides guidance on the management of an audit programme, on the planning and conducting of an audit of the management system, as well as on the competence and evaluation of an auditor and an audit team.

The application of this International Standard to other types of audits is possible, provided that special consideration is given to the specific competence needed.

Competence is defined as “the ability to apply knowledge and skills to achieve intended results”.

Ability implies the appropriate application of personal behaviour during the audit process.

-> <https://www.iso.org/obp/ui/#iso:std:iso:19011:ed-2:v1:en>

Competence [ESCO]

ESCO applies the same definition of "competence" as the [European Qualification Framework \(EQF\)](#). According to this "competence means the proven ability to use knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological abilities, in work or study situations and in professional and personal development." They are described in terms of responsibility and autonomy.

While sometimes used as synonyms, the terms skill and competence can be distinguished according to their scope. The term skill refers typically to the use of methods or instruments in a particular setting and in relation to defined tasks. The term competence is broader and refers typically to the ability of a person - facing new situations and unforeseen challenges - to use and apply knowledge and skills in an independent and self-directed way.

-> <https://esco.ec.europa.eu/en/about-esco>

Competence [EQF - European Qualifications Framework]

The EQF level descriptions are based on learning outcomes. These are defined in terms of knowledge, skills, and wider competences – personal and professional, such as: autonomy and responsibility, learning competences, communication and social competences.

-> <https://europa.eu/europass/en/europass-tools/european-qualifications-framework>

The following eight qualifications have been identified as key competences:

- Communication in mother tongue;
- Communication in foreign languages;
- Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology;
- Digital competence;
- Learning to learn;
- Interpersonal, intercultural and social competences, civic competence;
- Entrepreneurship;
- Cultural expression.

The Council has adopted a [Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning](#) based on a Commission proposal. The Recommendation identifies eight key

competences needed for personal fulfilment, a healthy and sustainable lifestyle, employability, active citizenship and social inclusion:

- Literacy
- Multilingualism
- Numerical, scientific and engineering skills
- Digital and technology-based competences
- Interpersonal skills, and the ability to adopt new competences
- Active citizenship
- Entrepreneurship
- Cultural awareness and expression

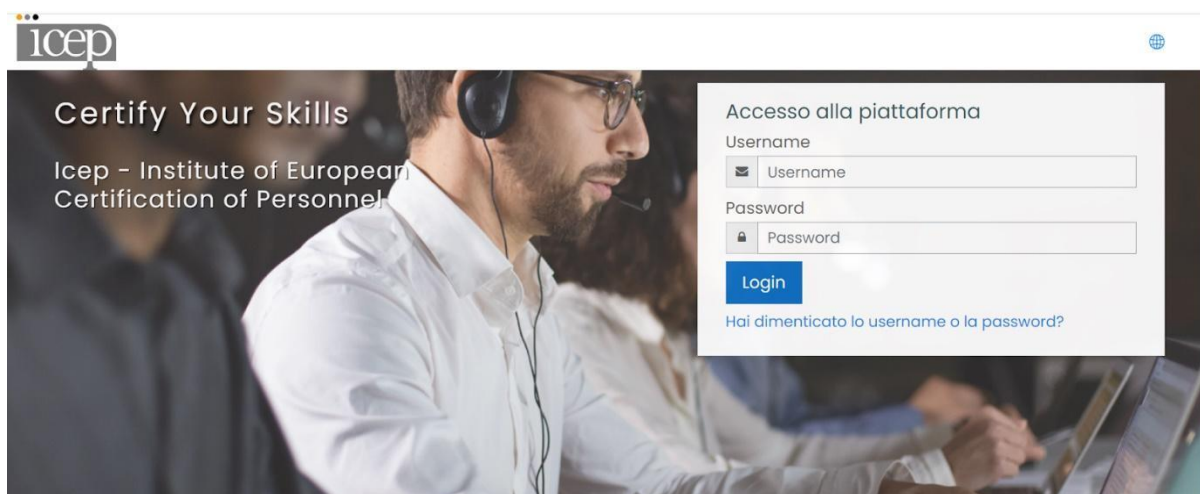
-> <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/297a33c8-a1f3-11e9-9d01-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>

## 2. Preparation of a specific Certification Protocol and Scheme

Protocol - descriptive procedural document containing the guidelines to validate and certify the competences in accordance to international standard ISO 17024, acquired via the learning methods and contents of the training tools developed in the project. Scheme - document for identification and validation of the specific competences of the profile to be certified using the methodology described in the protocol.

## 3. Submission of application documents

Examination, either in person or online on our dedicated platform [competenceinstitute.com](https://www.competenceinstitute.com): Multiple - choice questionnaire: Questions will be created as part of the development process and will focus on the topics covered in the project content.



## 4. Information about certification program

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The basic IT certification program focuses on training knowledgeable and effective PC and Internet users. It represents a new, comprehensive learning and certification pathway based on the latest and most innovative IT technologies. This type of certification has international validity. The program assesses knowledge in specific areas relating to basic computer skills, Internet concepts and behaviour, and basic use of certain application software such as Office, together with the ability to use the Windows operating system.

## 5. Certification exam

The certification exam usually takes 45 minutes and contains 40 questions to be answered in a virtual environment that simulates the use of the software and in which you are asked to perform specific tasks. The exam is conducted online, with a contact person monitoring the entire exam and activation process via a remote session.

When does the exam take place?

The exam takes place entirely online, usually Monday to Friday. By mutual agreement, it is possible to book the day and time you wish to take it. A computer/MAC is required to take the exam

-> <https://www.iceponline.com/categoria-prodotto/certificazione-di-competenza/>



## 6. Issue of digital certificate

Monitoring the continued fulfilment of requirements of the certified person over time.

## 7. The validation of Competences

**Identification and Document Verification.** Identifying non-formal and informal learning is a process that "... records and makes the individual's learning outcomes visible. This learning process does not result in a formal certificate or diploma, but it may provide the basis for such formal recognition."

**Assessment and Validation Assessment of learning outcomes** is defined as "... appraising knowledge, skills and competences of an individual against predefined criteria, specifying learning methods and expectations."

### **Certification**

The certification of learning outcomes is the process "... of formally attesting that knowledge, skills and competences acquired by an individual have been assessed and

validated by a competent body against a predefined standard. Certification results in the issue of a certificate, diploma or title".

## How to request Certification of Competences from Primary School Teachers in Inclusive Education

Teacher, who wants to obtain the Certification of Competences, must make a specific written request to CERTIFICATION BODY (Certification of Competences Request – Annex 1), which must be dated, signed and transmitted to CERTIFICATION BODY, with all the attachments.

The signing of the Request implies acceptance of the procedures for the use of certificates and / or logos and / or certification marks and the deontological code.

Once the Request has been received, CERTIFICATION BODY proceeds to carry out a preliminary examination, informing the Teacher of the acceptance or refusal of the Request. The Certification Body can request additional documentation, in order to gain more useful information to the assessment.

It is also possible to request CERTIFICATION BODY support for the correct completion of the Certification of Competences Request.

### Phase 1: Document verification

Once received the Request with all the required documentation, CERTIFICATION BODY starts the verification procedure.

In the case of lack of documentation, a formal request is sent by mail or fax to the Teacher, who has 10 working days to provide for the integration.

CERTIFICATION BODY, after receiving all the complete documentation, provides the rejection or the acceptance of the request by giving an official communication by mail or fax to the Teacher with the related reasons.

In the case of rejection, the Teacher may ask to re-examine the decision by giving detailed explanations of the re-examination request. If the reasons are deemed acceptable, CERTIFICATION BODY can re-evaluate the Certification of Competences Request by confirming or modifying the decision taken. In the latter case, the decision is final.

### Phase 2: Assessment and verification of skills

Phase 2 of verification is carried out under the direct responsibility of the Examiner, delegated by the Certification Body.

This phase consists in the verification, by the Examiner, of the truthfulness of all the information contained in the Certification of Competences Request and in the enclosed documents, through telephone interviews or "face-to-face" with Institutes, Universities,

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organisations, companies, bodies and / or organisms, etc. or even through research and / or by directly interviewing the Teacher.

The Teacher must accept and authorise CERTIFICATION BODY to contact organisations and / or persons mentioned in the documentation provided.

The purpose of this phase is to ascertain the truthfulness of information and to assess the Teacher's competences.

At the end of this evaluation process, the Examiner can either express a positive opinion or carry out additional surveys.

### **Exam and Competences assessment**

The Exam and Competences assessment are parts of the second Phase of the certification process. It is carried on by the identified Examiner and monitored by CERTIFICATION BODY staff (Witness).

The exam has the aim to evaluate the Competences of the candidate related to the use of his specific knowledge, skills and tools in the Inclusive Education, as explained in the Certification Scheme and in the Competences List (Annex III).

The exam is conducted by the Examiner assigned by CERTIFICATION BODY.

The exam is divided into two parts: one written and one oral. The written test consists of some questions (usually 20), related to the Inclusive Education Certification Scheme.

The oral examination, after the written test, consists of an interview with the Examiner in order to ascertain the real Competences of the Teacher. The exam can be carried out either in the classroom or remotely with video mode (e.g. skype video) and always in the presence of CERTIFICATION BODY (Witness) supervisory staff.

During the exam, it will ensure the independence and impartiality of the Examiner and the Witness. Each part of the exam (written and oral) provides a score, it is possible to access the oral part only if the Teacher passes, in the written exam (each Certification Body applies a specific evaluation method).

The examination is considered to be passed if the Teacher obtains a minimum score, established by each Certification Body, both in written and in oral exam.

The Examiner and CERTIFICATION BODY staff will guarantee the correct management of the exam, such as:

ensures compliance with all health and safety requirements;

verify that any need for special assistance beforehand request is met;

illustrates the methods of conducting the exam (written and oral) and the criteria for passing them.

### **Independent Evaluation of the Certification Re-Examiner**

The evaluation and ratification activity is carried out by a Re-Examiner that - after having examined the entire documentation of the first evaluation - who ratifies or not the Examiner's assessment.

## Findings

The results of all the phases of verification and evaluation (Phase 1 and Phase 2) conducted by the Examiner and the Re-Examiner are kept in electronic form for a period of at least 5 years. Security backups are systematically carried out.

## Grant of certification of Competences

The achievement of the certification is communicated by CERTIFICATION BODY to the Teacher. Granted the certification, the Teacher will be included in the Register of CERTIFICATION BODY- Register of Certified Primary School Teachers specialised in Inclusive Education. This information becomes public.

Together with the Certificate of Competences, the CERTIFICATION BODY logo and / or mark is sent to the certified teacher in electronic format.

The issued Certification of the Competences is valid for THREE years from the date of issue and is subject to annual surveillance activities in correspondence with the interim annual deadlines.

At the end of the three-year period of validity it is necessary to fill in and send again the Certification of Competences Request only for the necessary parts (personal data, registration of activities related only to the last three years), before the expiration of the Certificate of Competences validity.

The process of evaluation and granting of renewal is exactly the one described up to now with the only difference that the written and / or oral examination is re - carried out only in the case of a new edition of the reference standards.

## Maintenance and monitoring

During the entire period of validity of the Certificate of Competences issued, CERTIFICATION BODY will conduct control and monitoring activities in order to verify the maintenance of compliance with all the requirements of the Inclusive Education Certification Scheme. If, during the period of validity, discrepancies emerge from the requirements defined by the Inclusive Education Certification Scheme, the CERTIFICATION BODY certified teacher must comply with the instructions to keep the certification.

Failure to comply with the commitments will cause the temporary suspension, reduction or revocation of the issued Certificate of Competences.

### **Modification, extension and/or reduction of the granted certification of the competences**

At any time the Teacher can request to modify the certification of the Competences. For this purpose, it is necessary to complete the Certification of Competences Request in the necessary parts and send it to CERTIFICATION BODY enclosing the additional documentation aimed at objectifying the possession of the requisites.

Once the request has been received, CERTIFICATION BODY carries out the verification activities according to the previously described procedures and communicates whether the modification and / or the extension and / or the requested reduction can be granted.

Due to the reduction of a certification, the Teacher is required to:

return the original of the certificate of Competences, ie in the case of temporary reduction, do not use the certification and / or logo and / or certification mark during the reduction period;

delete documents that refer to the certification currently in force with the specific area before the reduction;

do not use the certification outside the scope specified in the certificate following the reduction.

### **Modification of rules, guidelines, regulations and laws in the context of Inclusive Education Certification Scheme**

The CERTIFICATION BODY will implement the appropriate actions to ensure the validity of certification, if the Certification Scheme and the Regulations are modified by:

changes in the professional and / or legal status of the CERTIFICATION BODY;

directives, regulations and laws in the framework of Inclusive Education.

The Teacher, for the aforementioned changes, must adapt and acknowledge all the requirements modified in the times and methods deemed appropriate and / or envisaged.

### **Validity and renewal of the certification contract**

The Certification Contract and the Certification of Competences are valid for three years and run from the date of submission of the Request.

After this period the Teacher has to send a new Request, completed in the necessary parts, and send it to CERTIFICATION BODY, following the instruction above mentioned.

Once the request has been received by CERTIFICATION BODY, the staff and the Examiner carry out the verification and evaluation activities.

The obtainment of the renewal of the certification is communicated by CERTIFICATION BODY to the Teacher.

## Waiver, suspension and revocation of the certification

### Waiver

Certified Teacher may waive the Certification of Competences in the following cases:

- if the teacher does not accept any changes to these Rules;
- if the teacher does not accept any changes introduced by CERTIFICATION BODY in the Inclusive Education Certification Scheme;
- at any time depending on teacher' needs.

The Teacher must communicate in writing (mail or fax) his own decision within three months from the date of notification of the changes by CERTIFICATION BODY.

The teacher until that moment will:

- give back the Certificate;
- no longer declare the possession of the certification of Competences and delete from all documents any reference or symbol relating to this;
- immediately cease the use of the certificate and / or logo and / or certification mark and the distribution of any material.

Upon receipt of the waiver, CERTIFICATION BODY provides immediately to:

- delete the Certificate of Competences;
- delete the teacher from the Register of Certified.

### Suspension

The validity of the Certification can be suspended by the CERTIFICATION BODY in the following cases:

- if the certified teacher has misused the certificate and / or logo and / or certification mark;
- if the certified teacher has not put in place suitable corrective actions, required by CERTIFICATION BODY;
- if the certified teacher does not send, during the annual assessment phases, the documentations required or send incorrect documentation.

The suspension is communicated to the certified teacher in writing by mail or fax, specifying the conditions and the deadline for the restoration of the certification.

During the suspension period, the certified teacher cannot use the certificate and / or the logo and / or mark on the documentation, nor use the Certificate of Competences in any form. The suspension can also be the consequence of an agreement between a

certified teacher and CERTIFICATION BODY; in any case it is formally notified by CERTIFICATION BODY by mail or fax.

The suspension does not change the validity period of the certification.

## **Revocation**

The revocation is decided and communicated in writing, by mail or fax, to the certified teacher, in the following cases:

- when the causes that led to the suspension of the Certificate of Competences are not removed within six months;
- in the presence of violation of the deontological code (Annex 4);
- ascertained non-compliance with the provisions of this document and the annexes;
- for sending false and / or counterfeit documentation;
- for misusing the certification and / or the logo and / or the trademark.

Following the revocation, the teacher undertakes to:

- give back the original of the Certificate of Competences;
- do not use the Certificate of Competences and immediately cease using the logo and/ or certification mark by removing them from all documents.

Withdrawal means that CERTIFICATION BODY must delete the certified teacher by the Register of Certified Primary School Teachers specialised in Inclusive Education.

Notifications of revocation are formalised by mail or fax to the Teacher by CERTIFICATION BODY.

## **Claims, complaints, appeals and disputes**

### **Claims**

Certified teacher may file a claim with CERTIFICATION BODY in writing if he believes that the quality of the offered certification, maintenance or renewal services do not comply with the provisions of this regulation.

The claim must be presented to CERTIFICATION BODY always in writing (e-mail or fax or by post), reporting exactly the subject of the complaint and documents that support the complaint itself.

The Certification Body, by verifying the completeness of the information, decides on the validity of the claim, in a constructive, impartial and timely way (max 5 working days).

CERTIFICATION BODY communicates in writing (e-mail, fax, mail) the decision of the treatment process.



### Complaints and appeals

Certified teachers may complain/appeal against CERTIFICATION BODY decisions, explaining the reasons for dissent, within 5 working days from the date of notification of the decision. In that way, the certified Teacher does not accept the decision taken by CERTIFICATION BODY.

CERTIFICATION BODY, received the complaint / appeal, starts to examine it within 10 working days of its presentation, even hearing the certified teacher and/or other people involved.

CERTIFICATION BODY always provides to notify the applicant in written form (e-mail, fax or mail) of the receipt, progress and outcome of the appeal itself.

### Processing of personal data and authorization for use

In terms of processing personal data and authorization for use, CERTIFICATION BODY will apply the provisions of the REGULATION (EU) 2016/679 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL, of 27 April 2016 "on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation)".

Before completing this Certification of Competences Request, the teacher declares that he / she has read and understood in all its parts the Inclusive Education Certification Regulation, thus accepting the entire content without any exclusion by also committing to sending an updated curriculum vitae and copy document identity.

The parts "by Certification Body" are indicated and should not be completed. If the teacher has special needs for assistance, the Certification Body must be informed in advance by any means (telephone, fax, e-mail).

In any case, the Certification Body guarantees full compliance with the laws on health and safety.

#### SEC. 0 – TEACHER

Surname	<b>Qualification</b>
First Name	<b>Request date</b>
Birthday	<b>Date</b>

Residence <small>(full address)</small>	<b>Company</b> <small>(full address)</small>
Fiscal Code	<b>VAT number</b>
Telephone	<b>Telephone</b>
Fax	<b>Fax</b>
Personal E-mail	<b>Company E-mail</b>
Mobile phone	<b>Skype contact</b>

Request	First Certification Estention Renewal	Certification Scheme	o Inclusive Education
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Accepted by Certification Body <small>(gg/mm/aa)</small>		Assigned Examiner	
Teacher Language	(By Certification Body)	Interpreter Translator	/(By Certification Body)

**SEC. 1 – LEVEL OF EDUCATION/TRAINING (attach copy of all the qualifications)**

Note: it is important to indicate the full references of the Institute / University in order to allow the Certification Body to verify the veracity of the information given in the following section. The Year to be indicated is that of the conclusion of the course of study and the duration should be expressed in years. The educational qualification must be reported as required by the legislation of the teacher's country. For each Study title indicated, a copy of the same must be Attachment.

Attachment number	Institute/University	Year and duration	Level of education	of Certification Verification Notes (by the Certification Body Examiner)	Body

1.1				
1.2				
1.3				

**SEC. 2 - BASIC TRAINING (attach a copy of all documents / certificates / training reports)**

Note: it is important to indicate the full references of the Institute / University / Organization in order to allow the Certification Body to verify the veracity of the given information in the following section. The Year to be indicated is that in which the course was attended and the duration should be expressed in hours. The Title of the course and / or training should be indicated as reported on the certificate that provides evidence with the short description of the contents of the course itself. For each course indicated, a copy of the course must be Attachment.

Attachment Number	Institute/University/ Organization	Year and Duration	Title and contents	Certification Body Verification Notes (by the Certification Body Examiner)
2.1				
2.2				
2.3				
2.4				
2.5				

Table of Requirements for the First Certification

Requirements	Primary school teachers specialised in Inclusive Education
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Instruction	Degree with evidence of the title or self-declaration
Qualified training	Regional course or qualification acquired by professional experience
Specific training	Specific training course of 200h (or equivalent) in case of lack of experience in the role
Working experience	Experience in the role of at least 6 months

#### Table of Requirements for Maintenance and Annual Renewal

Requirements	Primary school teachers specialised in Inclusive Education
Professional deontology	No negative reporting regarding compliance with the Inclusive Education Certification Regulation
Proper use of certification and trademarks	No negative reporting regarding compliance with the Inclusive Education Certification Regulation
Complaints	Absence
Annual fee	Fulfilled
Audit experience in one's role	Documented and appropriate work experience in the sector for at least 1/3 of the annual working hours, for each year of validity of the attestation
Professional updating and continuous improvement *	At least 4 hours of annual update

Criteria and Methods for evaluation, certification, surveillance, renewal, extension, suspension and revocation

The description of all the criteria and methods adopted by Certification Body (including the code of conduct) are clearly described in the applicable Inclusive Education Certification Regulation, to which reference should be made. Therefore this Regulation is an integral part of this Certification Scheme.

## Conclusions

There is an important need to strengthen a multi-stakeholder approach when we speak about Certification/Validation of competences. Maintaining links between public employment services and private employment agencies (including experts and representatives from national and international entrepreneurship industry, vocational training centres, training organisations, social partners, and other institutions) serves as a platform to exchange views on initiatives and good practices in socio-economic inclusion activities. The core of “Protocol for the certification of competences” in The STRANDS project “Schools in Transformation with Readiness, Adaptations and Nurturing Digital Skills” is promoting multi-stakeholder cooperation with relevant key actors in each National context and in line with the European Qualifications Framework.

The project aims to ease the transition of educators and learners into blended learning and distance learning by supporting them in embracing digital methodologies into learning practices, while building emotional bonds. Validation and certification of the competencies and skills is particularly important to adult education and training and to support lifelong learning. They play an important role in aiding transitions from employment to education for people. Firstly, we prioritised the role of the Guidance and counselling activities in the recognition and certification of competences process. Specifically, the Validation and certification of the competencies should be designed according to the needs and interests of individual learners, not only according to the needs and interests of institutions and systems. Also, through the results and the activities developed during the STRANDS project “Schools in Transformation with Readiness, Adaptations and Nurturing Digital Skills”, it’s clear the importance of pursuing distance learning at the workplace as a key learning arena, and to foster participation in this process of the employers, educators and learners.

## Standards and Guidelines

Standards and Guidelines	Contents	Notes
Guide CEN 14	Guidelines for standardisation activities on the qualifications of professions and personnel of professions and personnel	(latest edition)
UNI Framework	Outline for the development of standards in the field of unregulated professional activities	(latest edition)
ESCO	European Classification of Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations	
EQF	European Qualifications Framework	
Project documentation	Project 2021-1-IT02-KA220-SCH-000032589 Project results R1 – R4 STRANDS Schools in Transformation with Readiness, Adaptations and Nurturing Digital Skills	

## Resources

We gathered existing material related to International certification of competences schemes. We list the sources and materials that we used for the Protocol for the Certification of Competences below:

Council of Europe, website: [www.coe.int](http://www.coe.int)

Council of Europe, Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on youth work (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 31 May 2017 at the 1287th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies), website: [www.coe.int](http://www.coe.int).

Youth Work Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)4, p. 9.

Youth Goals, website: <https://youth-goals.eu/>

CEDEFOP 2009, BBT 2009, <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/it>

European Commission, "Get to know ESCO", website: <https://ec.europa.eu/>, article link: <https://ec.europa.eu/esco/portal/home?resetLanguage=true&newLanguage=en>

Cedefop (2015). European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning. Luxembourg: Publications Office. Cedefop reference series; No 104. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2801/008370>

Manifesto of Adult Learning in the 21st century: The Power and Joy of Learning Publisher: European Association for the Education of Adults – EAEA.2019

European Training Strategy A Competence Model for Youth Workers to Work Internationally. The European Training Strategy (ETS) in the field of youth.

Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI): [www.qqi.ie/](http://www.qqi.ie/)

Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI): [www.etbi.ie/](http://www.etbi.ie/)

Higher Education Authority (HEA) - Higher Education Institutions: <https://hea.ie/higher-education-institutions/>

Department of Higher Education, Innovation, and Science (Government of Ireland): [www.gov.ie/en/organisation/department-of-higher-education-innovation-and-science/](http://www.gov.ie/en/organisation/department-of-higher-education-innovation-and-science/)

## Glossary

**Certification** - The action or process of providing someone with an official document attesting to a status or level of achievement.

**Competency** - A skill or ability in a specific field or subject, or being able to do something well. An example of competence is when a chess player knows how to play chess.

**Protocol** - A descriptive procedural document containing the guidelines to validate and certify the competences acquired via the tools developed in the project.

**Skill** - the ability to do something well.

**Certification of Competence** - attests that the certified professional or individual has proved to be in possession of the knowledge, skills, personal attributes and qualifications required for certification.

**Scheme** - document for identification and validation of the specific competences of the profile to be certified using the methodology described in the protocol.

**Evidence Portfolio** - A compilation of relevant materials, work samples, certificates, references, and documentation provided by individuals seeking validation of their non-formal competencies. This portfolio serves as evidence of their skills and knowledge acquired through non-formal learning.

**Sectoral Validation** - A specific validation process tailored to the needs of different sectors or industries, ensuring that the recognition of competencies aligns with the specific requirements of each sector.

**Adult Education Guidance Services** - Services offering guidance and support to individuals seeking to validate their non-formal competencies, assisting them in understanding the process, gathering relevant evidence, and navigating the validation steps effectively.

**CyQF** - The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) of Cyprus includes the development and implementation of institutional arrangements and procedures related to quality assurance, evaluation and awarding of qualifications. It is also the "tool" for the categorization of qualifications according to a set of criteria for achieving defined levels of learning.



**Informal learning:** Informal education can be described as a lifelong learning process. Informal education also takes place outside of the formal learning classroom setting. But informal education does not involve rigid and structured rules. The learners may get hands-on experience through informal education. Although learners learn theories in the classroom setting, they are provided with the opportunity to get hands-on experience through informal education.

**Non-formal learning:** Non-formal education is the education that occurs outside of a formal learning classroom setting. Although non-formal education takes place outside of formal classroom settings, learners receive a well-structured and well-planned educational program. Non-formal education provides learners with the opportunity to develop different skills and abilities.

**Lifelong Learning:** Lifelong learning is the "ongoing, voluntary, and self-motivated" pursuit of knowledge for either personal or professional reasons.