

Certification

of the European Training Antenna competences:
a proposal

version 1.0

April 2010

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Foreword

Along the project, the DOCTAE network identified tasks characterising the job profile of European Training Antennas and related competences, in terms of knowledge, skills, attitudes, pertaining to 7 main domains. Then, a comprehensive training pathway, composed by 9 training units was developed, in order to support teachers and trainers willing to upgrade their competences to those required for a EUTA. Some units were tested in peer-to-peer workshops by project partners, providing valuable feedback for fine tuning of the whole training curriculum. For those completing the training pathway, a certificate and supplement were devised, compliant with Europass and the EQF. During the project final meeting, 34 VET professional working for partner organisations received the EUTA certificate, witnessing their competences and expertise, awarded by two European organisations, the Ulixes EEIG (www.ulixesnet.eu) and the SPACE network (www.space-eu/info).

But the EUTA profile, curriculum and certificate are not intended for project partners only. Moreover, the concept of “competence” in a truly dynamic one. How can other VET professionals reach the EUTA certificate? Where should they apply in order to undergo the training pathway? What if they already gained experience in topics covered by the EUTA curriculum? What requisites are necessary in order to deliver EUTA courses? And, for the recently appointed EUTA, how can they prove that they are keeping their competences up-to-date, in the fast changing scenarios of education and training?

This document collects and summarises outcomes of the work performed by members of the DOCTAE network during the Networking Committee meeting held in Reggio Emilia (IT) on 8 April 2010, in order to answer the questions above. This is rather a proposal than a finalised product, as many issues still remain pending, being out of the scope of this project. Nevertheless, this document can set a baseline for further developments, possibly through new EU-funded projects.

Actors involved

Three main types of actors are involved in the EUTA certification process:

- applicants, that is individuals willing to achieve the EUTA certificate, i.e. teachers, trainers, VET professionals who want to open up to the European dimension of education and training and keep the pace with new challenges and opportunities offered by the society and the labour market;
- certification bodies, i.e. organisations able to deliver training units included in the EUTA curriculum and, most important, to assess achievement of corresponding learning outcomes; due to the work done along the DOCTAE project lifespan, members of the DOCTAE network possess this status at present;
- awarding bodies, i.e. external organisations, other than certification bodies, able to assess the capability of the latter to do their work (delivering training and assessing learning outcomes), against a set of indicators; at present, and for piloting purposes, two organisations active at a European level in VET and HE were chosen, with a view to ensure a European standing to the certificate (the above mentioned Ulixes EEIG and SPACE network).

Process description

Step 1 - Application

Description

Individuals willing to achieve the EUTA certificate apply to a certification body. They might also ask for preliminary information on contents, timing, costs, assessment of prior learning, methods of delivery and assessment of learning outcomes, etc..

The certification body is expected to be able to answer questions, provide required information (e.g. by the EUTA CD-ROM with all information on the EUTA curriculum, or equivalent tool) and perform a first eligibility check: for instance, if the applicant is not a teacher, trainer or VET professional, or has no previous experience in education and training topics, the certification body will provide her/him with a motivated denial and possible guidance to other training opportunities.

If this check is positive, the certification body asks the applicant to fill in a specific application form, including personal data, information on their treatment and privacy issues, the request for a European CV and for any evidence that could help assessing possible prior learning and competences. The applicant is also required to self-evaluate her/his competences against the domains listed in the EUTA job profile.

Supporting documents/tools

- the EUTA CD-ROM (or equivalent tool);
- application form template (to be developed);
- self-evaluation template (to be developed);
- list, type, format of evidences (to be developed);
- European CV template.

Other remarks

- The description of the full process, together with criteria for the first eligibility check, should be further detailed, and made public and available to applicants from the very beginning of the process;
- the applicant should be given reasonable time in order to prepare its application, self-evaluation and “portfolio” of previous experience/competences, gathering references, documents, evidences, etc..

Step 2 - Assessment

Description

The applicant submits her/his application to the certification body, who checks documents and evidences. In case this check is negative (e.g. information is missing or unclear), the certification body will ask for additional explanations/documents.

In case this check is positive, the certification body will proceed to an interview with the applicant, meant to deepen the results of self-evaluation and collect elements for guidance through the training phase.

Outcomes from analysis of evidences, self-evaluation and the interview will then be matched and assessed against competences required to the EUTA. In case the assessment is fully positive, then the applicant can be appointed as a EUTA without further training (go to step 4).

Otherwise (which is likely to be the more usual case), the certification body will provide her/him with written guidance on competences to be further developed and possible corresponding units (or parts of them) to be taken to that aim.

Supporting documents/tools

- criteria and check list for the assessment (to be developed);
- guidelines for the interview (to be developed);
- guidelines and template for communication of assessment results (to be developed);
- template for guidance on further training (to be developed).

Other remarks

- timing of operations (to be defined);
- composition of commission for the entrance test: check, interview, assessment (to be defined).

Step 3 - Training

Description

The applicant improves her/his competences to the level stated in guidance received by the certification body. This could happen by taking units (or parts of units) included in the EUTA training pathway, or in gaining experience through formal, informal, non-formal training, for example on-the-job. She/he will then update her/his “portfolio” with evidences coming from this further training, and go back to step 2, until the assessment is positive.

During this phase, the certification body should always be available to provide for support and guidance.

Supporting documents/tools

- the EUTA CD-ROM (or equivalent tool);
- information (periods, costs, etc.) on possible training delivered by the certification body or other providers;

Other remarks

- timing of operations (to be defined).

Step 4 - Appointment as a EUTA

Description

Once all requirements are fulfilled, the certification body sends a request for a EUTA certificate and supplement to the awarding body.

The awarding body checks formal compliance of documentation provided and issues the certificate and the supplement.

The certification body then delivers the certificate and the supplement to the new EUTA, together with information on their scope and validity.

Supporting documents/tools

- EUTA certificate and supplement;
- information on scope and validity of the above.

Other remarks

- timing of operations (to be defined).

Review and upgrade

Even if not directly part of the certification process, it is possible to envisage a procedure for review and upgrade of the EUTA certificate.

Description

At given deadlines (3 to 5 years, or when necessary, e.g. due to issue of relevant VET policies/documents at a national/EU level) the EUTA is required to review and upgrade its certificate.

The certification body will inform the EUTA about dates and terms for review (e.g. request for updating of one's "portfolio", upgrading sessions, further assessments, etc.).

The EUTA performs required tasks.

The certification body sends a request for a prolongation of validity for the EUTA certificate and supplement to the awarding body.

The awarding body checks documentation provided and issues the prolongation of validity.

The certification body delivers the document stating the prolongation to the EUTA.

Supporting documents/tools

- criteria and check list for the review (to be developed);
- possible training material for the review (to be developed);
- template of request for prolongation (to be developed);
- template of prolongation award (to be developed).

Other remarks

- timing of operations (to be defined).

General remarks

Connections with institutional qualifications and certificates should be carefully considered in further investigating the certification process, as national regulations and laws could obviously have a strong influence (i.e. requirements, constraints, opportunities, etc.).

The process described in previous chapter implies costs, both for staff and for materials. Budgeting and financial sustainability is therefore another matter that needs thorough attention.

Process flow



