

Accreditation

of organisations entitled to deliver
the European Training Antenna Certificate:
a proposal

version 1.0

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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. What requisites are necessary in order to deliver EUTA courses? Who should be enabled, besides partners, to award the EUTA certificate?

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

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

- Applicants to become 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

Organisations willing to become certification bodies apply to an awarding body. They might also ask for preliminary information on contents, timing, costs, assessment of prior experience, etc..

The awarding body answers questions, provides required information (e.g. by the EUTA CD-ROM with all information on the EUTA curriculum, or equivalent tools) and performs a first eligibility check: for instance, if the applicant is not a HE or VET organisation, or has no previous experience in education and training, the awarding body will provide her/him with a motivated denial.

If this check is positive, the awarding body asks the applicant to fill in a specific application form, including reference data, information on their treatment and privacy issues and the request for a set of evidences that could help assessing its expertise, technical and financial capacities, etc.. These could include details on staff (number, qualifications, expertise, CVs, etc.), premises, equipment, qualifications, accreditations, quality standards, curricula delivered, etc..

The applicant is also required to self-evaluate against the same criteria.

Supporting documents/tools

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

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 awarding body, who checks documents and evidences. In case this check is negative (e.g. information is missing or unclear), the awarding body will ask for additional explanations/documents.

In case this check is positive, the certification body will proceed to an on-site interview at the applicant’s premises’, meant to assess *de-visu* coherence and consistency of evidences and self-assessment provided. This on-site interview could last two-three days, and should give the awarding body the possibility to meet the applicants’ management, trainers, etc., to visit classrooms and/or laboratories, and so on.

Outcomes from analysis of evidences, self-evaluation and the on-site interview will then be matched and assessed against awarding criteria for EUTA certification bodies. In case the assessment is fully positive, then the applicant can be appointed as a EUTA certification body without further adjustments (go to step 3).

Otherwise, the awarding body will ask for required further explanation, documents, or whatever needed in order to fulfil awarding criteria.

Supporting documents/tools

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

Other remarks

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

Step 3 - Accreditation as EUTA certification body

Description

Once all requirements are fulfilled, the awarding body issues and delivers the certificate of accreditation, together with information on its scope and validity.

Certification bodies are required to send a yearly report to the awarding body, stating activities performed, forecasts for the subsequent year, and providing all information deemed necessary.

Supporting documents/tools

- certificate of accreditation (to be developed);
- information on scope and validity of the above;
- template for yearly report (to be developed).

Other remarks

- timing of operations (to be defined).

Review and upgrade

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

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 certification body is required to review and upgrade its certificate of accreditation.

The awarding body will inform the certification body about dates and terms for review (e.g. request for updating of one's "portfolio", a new on-site visit, etc.).

The certification body performs required tasks.

The awarding body checks documentation provided, carries out the on-site visit, issues and delivers the prolongation of validity.

Supporting documents/tools

- criteria and check list 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 accreditation 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 (for example, travel, subsistence and staff costs related to the on-site visit). Budgeting and financial sustainability is therefore another matter that needs thorough attention.

Process flow

