

Certification Guidelines

Personal Certifications in the Area of Technical Communication

(Normative Document)

Personal Certification Center of the Gesellschaft für Technische Kommunikation
– tekom Deutschland e.V.

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Foreword	6
1. Area of Application	7
2. Competence Framework for Technical Communication	9
3. Educational Objectives	10
3.1. The Educational Objective “Knowledge”	10
3.2. The Educational Objective of “Skills”	11
3.3. The Educational Objective of “Competences”	11
3.4. Areas of Competence and Fields of Competence.....	12
4. Organization of the Personal Certification Center	13
4.1. Tasks of the Personal Certification Center.....	14
4.2. Tasks of the Examination Committee.....	14
4.3. Tasks of the Certification Committee.....	14
4.4. Tasks of the Expert Committee.....	15
4.5. Tasks of the Qualification Consultation Center.....	15
4.6. Tasks of the Auditing Center.....	16
4.7. Tasks of the Arbitration Center.....	17
4.8. Tasks of the DAkKS Representative.....	17
4.9. Tasks of the Operational Management Representative	18
4.10. Tasks of the tekomp Accreditation Center for Training Programs	18
5. The Certification Process	18
5.1. Persons Involved in the Certification Process	19
5.1.1 Qualification Counselors	19
5.1.2 Authorized Examiners and Examination Recorders.....	20
5.1.3 Certification Decision-Makers.....	22
5.1.4 Auditors.....	24
5.1.5 5.1.5. Arbitrators.....	26
5.1.6 Certification Candidates.....	27
5.1.7 Certified Persons.....	27
6. The Three Pillars of the tekomp Education and Training System	29
6.1. Qualification Consultation.....	29
6.1.1 Voluntary Participation in the Qualification Consultation	29
6.1.2 Consultation Participation as a Prerequisite for Certification	30
6.1.3 Recommendation of the Education Provider as a Prerequisite for Certification	30

6.2. Qualification and Training	30
6.2.1 Voluntary Participation in the Training Program	30
6.2.2 Obligatory Participation in a Training Program.....	30
6.2.3 Accreditation of Training Programs	31
6.3. Certification.....	31
7. Approval Procedure for Certification	32
7.1. Prerequisites for Certification and Proof of Competence Acquisition for the Professional Level Certificate	32
7.2. Prerequisites for Certification and Proof of Competence Acquisition for the Expert Level Certificate.....	32
8. The Certification Examination	34
8.1. Purpose of Certification	34
8.2. Scope of Application of the Certification Examinations and Level of the Certification.....	34
8.3. Language of the Examination	34
8.4. Openness to the Public	35
8.5. Confidentiality and Data Protection.....	35
8.6. Impartiality, Independence and Avoidance of Conflicts of Interest	35
8.7. Authorized Examiners	35
8.8. Information, Forms and Examination Dates	35
8.9. Place of Examination and Infrastructure	36
8.10. Attempted Fraud and Cheating	36
9. Requirements and Parts of the Certification Examinations.....	37
9.1. Professional Level Certification Examination.....	37
9.2. Expert Level Certification Examination	37
9.3. Technical Project.....	37
9.3.1 Requirements for the Technical Project	38
9.3.2 Information Product.....	38
9.3.3 Written Reflection.....	39
9.3.4 Creation and Submission of the Technical Project	40
9.4. Written Examination.....	41
9.4.1 Catalog of Examination Questions	41
9.4.2 Examination Tasks and Questions.....	42
9.4.3 Requirements for the Practical Tasks.....	42
9.4.4 Requirements of the Technical Examinations.....	43
9.4.5 Performance of the Written Examinations	44
9.5. Oral Certification Examination	44

9.6. Evaluation of the Examination Performance and Assessment Key	45
9.6.1 Professional Level Competence Profile.....	45
9.6.2 Expert Level Competence Profile	45
9.7. Performance Assessment	46
9.7.1 Assessment Key.....	46
9.7.2 Performance Assessment.....	47
9.8. Notification of Results and Other Information	47
10. Certification	48
10.1. Application and Approval Procedure	48
10.2. Fees for Approval, Certification and Cancellation	48
10.3. Certification Files	49
10.4. Terms and Conditions of Certification	50
10.4.1 Withdrawal.....	50
10.4.2 Non-Attendance.....	50
10.5. Certification.....	50
10.6. Certification Decision	50
10.6.1 Objection to the Certification Decision.....	51
10.6.2 Negative Certification Decision.....	51
10.6.3 Certification and Certificate	51
10.6.4 Validity of the Certificate	52
10.6.5 Monitoring and Withdrawal of Recognition for the Certification	52
11. Recertification	53
11.1. Maintenance of the Qualification	53
11.2. Recertification Procedure.....	53
11.2.1 Recertification in the Event That Application Is Timely Filed	53
11.3. Recertification in the Event of Failure to Meet the Deadline.....	54
12. Appendix A (Normative): Personal Certification.....	56
12.1. General Provision for Competence Profiles	56
13. Appendix (Normative) Certification as “Technical Communicator (tekomp) – Professional Level”	57
13.1. Target Groups.....	57
13.2. Participants	57
13.3. Competence Objectives	57
13.4. Prerequisite for Certification and Proof of Competence Acquisition for the Professional Level Certificate.....	57

13.5. Examination Requirements	58
13.6. Areas of Competence for the Examination for “Technical Communicator (tekomp) – Professional Level”	58
14. Appendix B (Normative) Certification as “Technical Communicator (tekomp) – Expert Level”	59
14.1. Target Groups	59
14.2. Participants	59
14.3. Competence Objectives	59
14.4. Prerequisites for Certification and Proof of Competence Acquisition for the Expert Level Certificate.....	59
14.5. Examination Requirements	60
14.6. Areas of Competence for the Examination for “Technical Communicator (tekomp) – Expert Level”	61

Foreword

The objective of these guidelines for personal certification in the area of technical communication is a uniform certification system. The objective is to create a standard for education and training in the area of technical communication and to establish the quality of education and training opportunities through an exact description of the required competences on a high level.

Furthermore, a high competence and qualification standard for those employed in the area of technical communication should be established and attested through certification. Through the certification guidelines, the high quality of acquired competences in certified persons will be ensured and the scope and depth of the acquired knowledge and skills made transparent through the examinations underlying certification.

Particularly in company interrelationships, informally acquired knowledge and competences are of great importance. The certification is intended to formalize the qualifications of those laterally entering the occupation with formally or informally acquired knowledge, skills and competencies in technical communication and, at completion, to make possible an objective proof of competence.

The tekomp certification as a technical communicator is primarily aimed at:

- Lateral entrants without formal training as a technical communicator who would like to further their education while working and become formally qualified.
- Graduates of education and training programs in the area of technical documentation who want to know their qualification is objectively certified.
- Career changers who would like to become qualified in technical communication.
- Technical communicators seeking a new work position, or who would like to increase their job prospects or make proper use of their time.
- Former employees in technical communication planning reentry into the occupation, e.g. parents after parental leave.
- Management and employees in technical communication, in order to develop their know-how in technical communication methods.
- Businesses that would like to certify their employees as technical communicators and to operate an active human resources development policy.

1. Area of Application

The guideline was prepared by the members of the tekomp Advisory Committee for education and training in cooperation with the expert committee responsible for the definition of competence and certification requirements and was approved for the first time by the tekomp board on June 1, 2015.

This guideline describes access requirements, competence profiles, qualification levels, examination requirements and certification conditions for personal certifications in the area of technical communication reflecting the requirements of DIN EN ISO/IEC 17024:2012 “General criteria for certification bodies operating certification of personnel”.

Further components of the normative document are Appendices A (normative) “Technical Communicator (tekomp) – Professional Level” certification and B (normative) “Technical Communicator (tekomp) – Expert Level” certification. These are available as attached or on the tekomp WebPortal.

In the guidelines and in the other applicable documents, though the masculine form is used throughout, female readers are also addressed. All documents and their changes will be published on the tekomp WebPortal.

The area of application of these certification guidelines encompasses personal certifications in the area of technical communication through the personal certification center of the Gesellschaft für Technische Kommunikation – tekomp Deutschland e.V.

The following qualification levels are distinguished for two **certificate groups**, which certify different competence profiles:

- Qualification Level 1: Technical Communicator (tekomp) – Professional Level
- Qualification Level 2: Technical Communicator (tekomp) – Expert Level

Certification attests to a fundamental qualification in the main contents and methods of the technical communication subject field. The competence profiles that contain detailed information about competence fields as well as educational objectives are each described for both certificate groups in the tekomp competence framework for technical communicators.

The competence requirements for both qualification levels are, reflecting the description of the European Qualifications Framework (“EQR”), described as follows:

On Qualification Level 1, a “Technical Communicator (tekomp) – Professional Level” is certified on EQR Level 3–4.

- Knowledge (EQR Level 4):
Broad spectrum of theoretical and factual knowledge within a field of work or study.
- Practical abilities (EQR Level 4):
A range of cognitive and practical skills required in order to find solutions for special problems within a field of work or study.
- Competence (EQR Level 3):
Assuming responsibility for the completion of work or educational tasks; when solving problems, adapting one’s own behavior to the respective circumstances.

The requirement for the general competences was set at only EQR Level 3 due to the fact that occupational experience is not a mandatory prerequisite for obtaining Qualification Level 1, “Technical Communicator (tekomp) – Professional Level”.

On Qualification Level 2, a “Technical Communicator (tekomp) – Expert Level” is certified on EQR Level 4–5.

- Knowledge/comprehension (EQR Level 5):
Comprehensive, specialized theoretical and factual knowledge within a field of work or study, as well as awareness of the boundaries of that knowledge.
- Practical abilities (EQR Level 5):
Comprehensive cognitive and practical skills required to develop creative solutions to abstract problems.
- Competence (EQR Level 4):
Exercise self-management within the guidelines of work or study contexts that are usually predictable, but are subject to change; supervise the routine work of others, taking some responsibility for the evaluation and improvement of work or study activities.

The requirement for the general competences was set at only EQR Level 4 due to the fact that occupational experience is not a mandatory prerequisite for obtaining Qualification Level 2, “Technical Communicator (tekomp) – Expert Level”.

The approval and certification prerequisites for the various competence profiles, as well as the detailed competence requirements of personal certifications are listed in Appendices (normative) A and B and are a component of the respective personal certification.

2. Competence Framework for Technical Communication

The certification examination has the objective of determining the competence of the certification candidate for his activity as a technical communicator.

Competence (Lat. *competentia*, “meeting together, agreement, symmetry”) stands for knowledge, abilities and personal characteristics and other task-related factors that help distinguish above-average services from average services under given circumstances. Competences can also be used to define the significant functions of the work.

Professional competence, specialist competence, professional knowledge, specialist knowledge, hard skills etc. can be understood as mastering the capability, tasks and issues typical of the profession and according to the theoretical requirements independently and autonomously. The skills and knowledge required for this consist mainly of experience, knowledge and comprehension of questions and contexts specific to the profession, as well as the ability to solve these problems in a technically faultless manner in keeping with the objectives. The prerequisite is normally an appropriate education.

Qualification as a rule stands for a title or an attribute obtained through a formal examination or certification. In practice, educational diplomas or training certificates serve as the most usual indicators of qualification.

Personal certification takes place based on defined competence profiles for various qualification levels. The foundation for the development and description of competence profiles in technical communication is the tekomp competence framework. The concept of competence used in the competence framework for technical communication is based on a cognitive approach: Competences are understood as all the mental resources of an individual that are necessary to fulfill certain tasks successfully or to be able to carry out activities. The cognitive concept of competence also means the ability and skill to solve problems in the fields named, as well as the readiness to do so. Thus, the understanding of competence simultaneously also addresses action orientation. The core meaning encompasses the necessary knowledge and ability, but also the readiness and responsibility.

The competence framework for technical communication was created based on the reference process for the development of information products: Based on all necessary tasks, actions and activities that can arise during the development of an information product, it was specified which competences, knowledge and skills are required. In the competence framework for technical communication, all phases and work steps required in the development of information products are illustrated. Based on the tasks and work steps involved, an action-oriented competence framework was developed that describes the required fields of competence and competences, i.e. the necessary knowledge and skills to perform those certain tasks and activities.

The competence and certification requirements of the certification of persons as technical communicators shown in these guidelines are based on this action-oriented competence framework for technical communication.

The competence framework for technical communication comprises four dimensions:

1. Areas of competence within the creation process for information products that contain areas of competence, groups of topics and learning contents
2. Competence and qualification profiles for the different qualification levels in line with the EQR, defined under consideration of various scopes of learning in accordance with the ECTS system
3. Educational objectives with a view to knowledge and skills, defined in line with Bloom's Taxonomy
4. Teaching perspectives specifying various perspectives and the focus in the transfer of knowledge

3. Educational Objectives

The certification system based on these guidelines is, beside its action orientation, focused on educational objectives and the learning outcomes connected with them. The certification examination tests whether the desired educational objectives have been achieved. These guidelines use the terms "educational objectives" and "learning outcomes" interchangeably. Learning outcomes are, as per the definition of the European Reference Framework for Qualification EQR, statements about what a learner knows, understands, and is able to do after the completion of a learning process.

Educational objectives are defined by the terms "knowledge", "proficiencies" and "competences". Educational objectives define what result should be achieved after completion of a learning process. The term "teaching perspective" refers to the teacher's perspective on what is to be taught, "educational objective of" the learner's perspective on the competences acquired.

3.1. The Educational Objective "Knowledge"

Knowledge is the result of gathering information through learning. Knowledge builds a body of facts, principles, theory and practice that are connected with a certain field of work or study. A characteristic of "knowledge" is that an elementary knowledge of facts has been developed and that the knowledge acquired can be reproduced: knowledge is demonstrated by the ability to reproduce information from memory on demand in keywords. The "comprehension" of information builds upon knowledge. Comprehension is demonstrated by the ability to explain the knowledge learned in one's own processing and structure, as well as by the ability to draw comparisons and point out differences.

In training for the area of technical communication, the educational objective of "knowledge" contains different contents for each qualification level. The required knowledge is described in Appendices (normative) A and B as well as in the competence framework for technical communication.

Modeled after Bloom's Taxonomy¹ of Educational Objectives, verbs indicating the acquisition of knowledge are: name, specify, enumerate, list, reproduce, recite, invoke, demonstrate, record, delineate.

¹ Anderson, L. W.; Krathwohl, D. R.: A Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching and Assessing. A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives. New York: Addison Wesley Longman 2001.

Modeled after Bloom's Taxonomy² of Educational Objectives, verbs indicating the acquisition of comprehension are: describe, clarify, formulate, illustrate, distinguish, classify, indicate, associate, outline, arrange, compare, contrast, depict, represent, explain, identify, define, quote, report.

3.2. The Educational Objective of "Skills"

The term "skills" comprises ability and skill. Ability is seen as the prerequisite for the realization of a skill. Skills thus means applying knowledge and using expertise for complex tasks and problem-solving.

Skills can be of a cognitive type or practical, including the application of methods and instruments or tools. A characteristic of the achievement of the educational objective of "skills" is the application of what has been learned to concrete tasks set. The newly learned skills can be implemented in practice. Rules or methods etc. can be applied in concrete situations.

In training for the area of technical communication, the educational objective of "skills" contains different contents for each qualification level. These are described in Appendices (normative) A and B as well as in the competence framework for technical communication.

Modeled after Bloom's Taxonomy³ of Educational Objectives, verbs indicating the acquisition of skills are: be able to apply, carry out, transmit, perform, produce, calculate, edit, evaluate, contribute, utilize, organize, create, deduce, interpret, solve, design.

3.3. The Educational Objective of "Competences"

The term "competence" describes a confirmed ability, knowledge, skills and personal, social and/or methodological skills in work or study situations, as well as being able to apply these for one's own professional and social development.

In the European Reference Framework for Qualification (EQR), competence is described using the terms "responsibility" and "autonomy". Competence in the sense used here includes the ability to "assess", "analyze", "synthesize", and "create". A characteristic of the achievement of the educational objective of "competences" in the sense used here is the ability to analyze, assess, and develop new things. Competence is additionally demonstrated in that contexts are shown, that ideas and problem definition are broken down to their elements and compared, and differences can be worked out. Competence further includes the ability to give assessments or to evaluate an issue using criteria. Competence is also expressed in the ability to synthesize and to create new things, e.g. through need-specific adaptations, proprietary developments or in innovations and enhancements.

In training for the area of technical communication, the educational objective of "competences" contains different contents for each qualification level. These are described in Appendices (normative) A and B as well as in the competence framework for technical communication.

² Anderson, L. W.; Krathwohl, D. R.: A Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching and Assessing. A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives. New York: Addison Wesley Longman 2001.

³ Anderson, L. W.; Krathwohl, D. R.: A Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching and Assessing. A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives. New York: Addison Wesley Longman 2001.

Modeled after Bloom's Taxonomy⁴ of Educational Objectives, verbs indicating the acquisition of competences are: assess, justify, evaluate, analyze, check, develop, create, decide, select, determine, summarize, find out, search, ascertain, conceive.

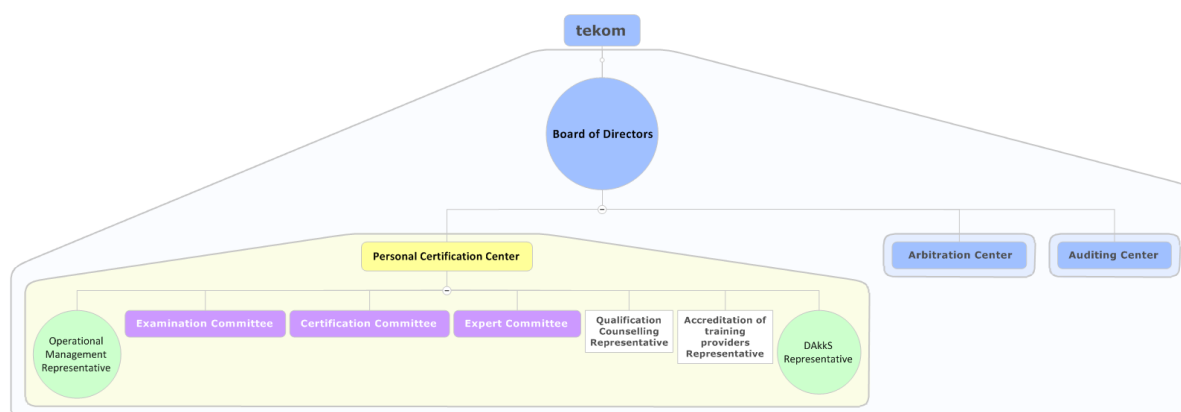
3.4. Areas of Competence and Fields of Competence

The tekomp competence framework is hierarchically arranged into areas of competence occurring within the creation process for information products. These contain different fields of competence, which are subdivided into groups of topics. The groups of topics contain different learning contents. Fields of competence are understood as different fields of topics and activities in connection with the competence framework for technical communication, which can arise during any phase of information production creation. In the competence framework, all necessary competences, knowledge and skills that accompany a certain field of competence are specified. A field of competence can also exhibit several groups of topics.

⁴ Anderson, L. W.; Krathwohl, D. R.: A Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching and Assessing. A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives. New York: Addison Wesley Longman 2001.

4. Organization of the Personal Certification Center

The personal certification center is a location within the Gesellschaft für Technische Kommunikation – tekomp Deutschland e.V. The personal certification center is subordinate to the tekomp Education and Training Committee. The personal certification center develops, organizes, carries out and inspects personal certification in the area of technical communication on behalf of tekomp, in conformity with the normative specifications of DIN EN ISO/IEC 17024:2012. The personal certification center certifies candidates, monitors and recertifies certified persons and performs all activities directly connected with personal certification. The following are part of the personal certification center: the examination committee, the certification committee and the expert committee. The operational management representative of the personal certification center, the qualification counselling representative, the accreditation of training providers representative as well as the representative for the Deutsche Akkreditierungsstelle (DAkkS; “German Accreditation Center”) are also subordinate. The auditing center and the arbitration center are also part of the overall tekomp personal certification system. These are subordinate to the tekomp Board of Directors, and are independent in their activity from the personal certification center.



Organizational chart of the personal certification center

4.1. Tasks of the Personal Certification Center

The tasks of the personal certification center are, in detail:

- Strategy development and delegation of strategy implementation
- Program development, expansion and maintenance of the overall certification system
- Management and supervision of certification activities in accordance with the requirements of DIN EN ISO/IEC 17024:2012
- Assurance of the performance capability of certification personnel
 - Designating, qualifying and monitoring the qualification counselors
 - Review of suitability of qualification counselors
 - Designating, qualifying and monitoring authorized examiners
 - Developing and conducting a qualification process for authorized examiners
- Delegation, coordination and supervision of management tasks
- Decisions about measures and continual improvement
- Management of personnel in the personal certification center
- Informing candidates about the requirements of the certification system
- Granting valid certificates with a time limitation for the respective competence profile
- Monitoring of certified persons

The personal certification center develops evaluation tools for carrying out the examination and criteria for evaluation of examination performances. The personal certification center tests and ensures compliance with the timeframe of the certification process and compliance with other applicable guidelines and processes for this. The personal certification center develops publicly accessible information about the tekomp certification system and the prerequisites for certification (e.g. documentation, rules and/or sets of guidelines) and makes these available to certification candidates or certified persons. It is involved in the reworking, expansion or restructuring of the certification system, in particular of competence profiles and competence levels in coordination with the expert committee.

4.2. Tasks of the Examination Committee

The examination committee is a committee of authorized examiners appointed by the tekomp Board of Advisors (professional experts), which is authorized by tekomp to carry out the certification examination.

The tasks of the examination committee are, in detail:

- Authorized examiners for certification exams
- Substantive and technical approval for certification
- Appraisal and creation of evaluation protocols for technical projects
- Appraisal and evaluation of performances in written portions of the examination
- Carrying out and evaluation of performances in oral portions of the examination

4.3. Tasks of the Certification Committee

The certification committee is a committee of professional experts appointed by the tekomp Board of Advisors that undertakes the formal certification of successful certification candidates.

The tasks of the certification committee are, in detail:

- Review of the fulfillment of prerequisites for approval and of the proof required of the applicants, and approval of the certification candidates
- Formal approval of certification candidates for certification for the respective qualification level
- Checking certification performances and examination evaluations using the protocol
- Determination of certification performance and of overall scores
- Review of the fulfillment of prerequisites for recertification and the proof of the applicant
- Proper certification, recertification of certification candidates and monitoring of certified persons
- Decision-making on certification, including the granting, maintenance, extension, restriction, suspension or withdrawal of the decision on the granting of certification or recertification (creation of the certificates)
- Arrangements for issuing the certificate and signature

4.4. Tasks of the Expert Committee

The expert committee is a committee of professional experts appointed by the tekomp Board of Advisors (managers, employees) that defines, verifies and validates the contents of the certification exams, as well as creates examination tasks. The expert committee is responsible for the development and maintenance of the certification program for every type of certification.

The expert committee has the right to review the competence profile of a certificate group (Professional Level and Expert Level), and is obliged to maintain the requirements and qualification levels for the certification of a competence profile belonging to a certificate group. The expert committee represents fairly and equitably the interests of all groups significantly involved in the certification program.

The tasks of the expert committee are, in detail:

- Development, expansion and upkeep of the competence framework for technical communication
- Definition of competence profiles and qualification levels for certification
- Definition of competence requirements for the different qualification levels
- Definition of areas of competence, learning contents and educational objectives
- Development and quality assurance of examination questions
- Development and upkeep of the examination question database
- Expansion of the tekomp certification system

4.5. Tasks of the Qualification Consultation Center

The qualification consultation center is a committee of professional experts appointed by the tekomp Board of Advisors (managers, employees; independent body from the other committees of the personal certification center), which is authorized to organize and carry out qualification consultations.

The qualification consultation center has the task of advising, in particular, persons with informally acquired competences, knowledge and skills with regard to their qualification for certification and to establish individual knowledge requirements for preparation for the certification examination.

Lateral entrants without professional experience in the area of technical communication can receive, as part of the qualification consultation, specific information about the competence requirements of the profession.

The task of qualification consultation is to support consultation participants in:

- Acquiring an overview of the professional field of technical communication in all of its facets
- Acquiring familiarity with competence requirements of the professional field of technical communication
- Being able to realistically estimate their own level of knowledge in the different topic areas and areas of technical communication
- Identifying contents in which a participant can improve or expand his knowledge, skills or skills
- Setting training goals
- Keeping informed about training options
- Keeping informed about the process of tekomp certification

4.6. Tasks of the Auditing Center

The auditing center is a committee of professional experts appointed by the tekomp Board of Advisors and an independent body from the other committees of the personal certification center, which prepares the accreditation of tekomp as a personal certification center in accordance with DIN EN ISO/IEC 17024:2012 for personal certification and conducts internal audits to review the fulfillment of the requirements of the standard. The chairperson of the auditing center is responsible for preparing and conducting internal audits.

The tasks of the auditing center are, in detail:

- Carrying out an internal audit as per the requirements of DIN EN 17024 and review of standards conformity; creation of an audit report
- Continual review of certification center policy (in particular with regard to examination rules, examination rooms, pricing, monitoring arrangements etc.)
- Check of central accreditation requirements according to independence, neutrality, objectivity and avoidance of conflicting objectives
- Review of impartiality, conflicts of interest, independence
- Check of compliance with and effectiveness of data protection and confidentiality
- Check of execution, suitability and implementation of risk analyses
- Observations on quality assurance measures
- Appraisal of examinations (examination monitoring, witness examination) in the respective certificate groups of competence profiles
- Appraisal of prerequisites for the appointment of personal certification center employees in various areas

4.7. Tasks of the Arbitration Center

The certification center has set up an arbitration center expressly for decisions on objections to certification decisions and complaints. The arbitration center is a body independent of the other committees. Arbitrators are appointed by the tekcom Board of Advisors. The employees of the arbitration center (arbitrators) are not involved in certification decisions or in other tasks in the certification center. Moreover, they hold no other offices in tekcom, nor do they work for any training providers preparing for certification. The arbitration center makes rulings in the event of general complaints or of objections to certification decisions according to the arbitration rules.

The tasks of the arbitration center are, in detail:

- Review of complaints and objections for formal and substantive authorization as per compliance with the valid rules; by reviewing documents; if necessary, requesting further supporting documents; if necessary, hearing and initiating further measures, e.g. second appraisals
- Decision on possible claims of the objector or complainant
- Execution of settlement negotiations and delivering results
- Arrangement of formal amendments to the certification center
- Rulings
- Documentation of the complaint and objection process (logging)
- Proposal of measures for the future reduction or elimination of grounds for complaints or objections

4.8. Tasks of the DAkKS Representative

The DAkKS representative is a tekcom employee and is responsible for compliance with all requirements for fulfillment of standards conformity, in particular ensuring and guaranteeing impartiality, independence, the avoidance of conflicts of interest and compliance with data protection. He is responsible for the preparation and execution of external auditing through DAkKS.

The tasks of the DAkKS representative are, in detail:

- Application for accreditation
- Ensuring standards conformity
- Ensuring the independence, neutrality, objectivity and avoidance of conflicting objectives in the central accreditation requirements
- Monitoring conflicts of interest and independence, and guaranteeing neutrality
- Guaranteeing data protection and confidentiality
- Determination of general risks in certification activities and, in particular, risks for impartiality, conflicts of interest, independence, data protection and confidentiality
- Risk management
- Legal examination of all necessary declarations
- Preparation of internal and external auditing
- Planning and initiation of the execution of internal audits
- Archival of audit reports
- Data protection supervisor of tekcom

4.9. Tasks of the Operational Management Representative

The operational management representative is a tekomp employee and responsible for the operative implementation of all management requirements and guidelines for certification activities as well as for ongoing controlling and input for management evaluation.

The tasks of the operational management representative are, in detail:

- Creation, distribution, monitoring and updating, and instruction in the management handbook and associated documents
- Process development and documentation
- Document management (creation, control, versioning, archival) in cooperation with the tekomp Education and Training Committee
- Development, upkeep and administration of the “SharePoint” cooperative platform of the certification center
- Management evaluation, metrics reporting and improvements to the management system
- Initiation and organization of training sessions and meetings
- Quality monitoring and feedback evaluation
- Gathering and evaluating all internal and external feedback on the certification system
- Processing proposals for continual improvement
- Preparation of reports to management on the status, development and possible improvements to the management and certification system
- Examination evaluation
- Derivation of improvements to the certification process
- Project management for expansion of the tekomp certification system
- Implementation of measures, implementation controlling and effectiveness evaluation
- Establishment, monitoring and expansion of the management system
- Creation, distribution, monitoring and updating of the management handbook
- Ongoing training sessions on the contents of the management system
- Promotion of awareness of standards conformity and quality among all employees and representatives of the personal certification center and interested parties

4.10. Tasks of the tekomp Accreditation Center for Training Programs

tekomp accreditation for training programs in the area of technical communication is undertaken by tekomp, attesting to the conformity of education providers’ education programs in the area of technical communication with the competence requirements of the competence framework for technical communicators and accrediting the suitability of the education program preparing certification candidates for the tekomp certification examination for the respective accredited qualification level. Accreditation takes place on the basis of tekomp’s accreditation rules for training providers.

5. The Certification Process

In the following, the participants and their tasks within the certification process are described.

5.1. Persons Involved in the Certification Process

The groups of persons described in the following are involved in carrying out certification or in the certification process.

5.1.1 Qualification Counselors

5.1.1.1 Definition

The qualification counselor advises potential certification candidates (consultation participants) with respect to their personal training and qualification needs. The objective of the qualification consultation is to discover gaps in knowledge. Together with the consultation participant, the qualification counselor identifies gaps in knowledge through the qualification consultation and advises on a sensible personal training strategy and possible qualification training.

5.1.1.2 Tasks

- Determination of the initial situation of the consultation participant and overview of the professional career up to this point as well as previous education and training
- Discussion of the self-evaluation of the consultation participant using a questionnaire
- Feedback on the self-evaluation with regard to competence and qualification
- Discussion of options, competences, knowledge and skills to expand, deepen, or specialize in
- Explanation of the necessary competences in the area of technical communication as well as the different competence profiles and qualification levels
- Explanation of key qualifications of technical communicators
- Information on different options for qualification and training
- Information on the process of certification

5.1.1.3 Conditions of Appointment

Verification of the required competences of a counselor, perhaps with:

- A university degree or applied science university diploma in technical communication, the natural sciences, engineering or economics, or proof of a comparable professional qualification
- Professional experience (> 5 years), with at least 35 hours a week in one or several fields of activity in technical communication
- Qualification and professional competence in technical communication
- Leadership experience (helpful, but not a prerequisite)
- Active cooperation in a tekomp regional group (helpful, but not a prerequisite)
- Membership in tekomp Deutschland (or a country organization of tekomp Europe)

5.1.1.4 Necessary Competences of a Qualification Counselor

A qualification counselor must provide proof of the following competences for appointment:

- Professional competence in the area of technical communication

- Knowledge of the certification system of the tekomp personal certification center, including the management system
- Knowledge of the competence framework for technical communication
- Knowledge of the competence and qualification requirements of the tekomp certification system as well as of the different competence profiles and qualification levels
- Techniques of interviewing and communication skills
- Capability for reflection and personal capacity to act
- Language skills (English)

5.1.1.5 Appointment and Management

Qualification counselors are appointed by the tekomp Board of Directors upon the proposal of the chairperson for qualification consultation for a period of three years. Activities as part of qualification consultation are managed, reviewed and steered by the chairperson for the area of qualification consultation. They report functionally to the chairperson for qualification consultation.

5.1.2 Authorized Examiners and Examination Recorders

5.1.2.1 Definition

Authorized examiners (examiners) are persons who conduct certification examinations and undertake performance evaluations as part of the certification process. In addition, they create protocols and reports. An authorized examiner can be responsible for several competence profiles. Authorized examiners are responsible for conducting certification examinations and the performance evaluation in the individual parts of the examination. In the oral part of the examination, they work together with a neutral recorder not involved in the examination. The recorder does not undertake tasks involving content or structure and is not involved in the examination process. For this reason, this position is not appointed, but only commissioned.

5.1.2.2 Tasks

One examiner is commissioned for every performance of a certification examination and performance evaluation in the different parts of the examination. The authorized examiner is responsible for conducting an oral certification examination, for the performance evaluation in the written part of the examination or for the appraisal of the practical work or the technical project. In the process, different authorized examiners can be commissioned for the performance evaluation of different parts of the examination. The examination is to be conducted within the time allocated and the applicable protocol templates are to be used for the performance evaluation. The oral certification examination also includes an independent recorder commissioned by tekomp. This person is not involved in the performance evaluation.

The tasks of the authorized examiner are:

- Appraisal and creation of the appraisal protocol on the technical project (information product and reflection) for Expert Level or evaluation of the practical tasks for Professional Level

- Evaluation of performance in the written parts of the examination using evaluation comments and a scoring system
- Conducting the examination and the performance evaluation in the oral part of the examination

The tasks of the recorder are:

- Creation of protocols on the examination process and the performance evaluation in the oral parts of the examination

5.1.2.3 Prerequisites for Appointment (Only for Authorized Examiners)

- A university degree or applied science university diploma in technical communication, the natural sciences, engineering or economics, or proof of a comparable professional qualification
- Professional experience (> 5 years) in technical communication, with at least 35 hours a week in one or several fields of activity in technical communication
- Qualification and professional competence in technical communication, for example with:
 - Speaking activities at professional conferences
 - Author of professional articles or professional publications
- Examination experience or experience in teaching and/or well-grounded knowledge of examination methods and procedures
- Knowledge and skills in interviewing, in particular conducting an oral examination
- Fluent mastery of the language in which the examination is being conducted

5.1.2.4 Special Requirements (Only for Authorized Examiners)

It is a mandatory requirement of authorized examiners to be independent and impartial.

1. They must not perform any teaching or training activities at the educational institutes at which the certification candidates to be certified were educated.
2. They must not perform any tasks within tekompert or hold any office due to which conflicts of interest or objective with their activity as examiner could arise, or that represent risks for independence or impartiality.
3. They must not occupy any positions in other businesses or organizations or perform any tasks that conflict with their activity as examiner and due to which conflicts of interest or objective with their activity as examiner could arise, or that represent risks for independence or impartiality.
4. Certification examiners are obliged to continually extend their training in order to keep their knowledge up to the latest standards. This can, for example, consist of participation at professional conferences or meetings. They are obliged to present proof of this every three years.
5. Examiners must notify the tekompert personal certification center without delay upon infringement of the requirements to be fulfilled by them or upon restrictions regarding their prerequisites for appointment.

It is a mandatory requirement for authorized examiners to comply with the rules defined in the guidelines for examiners for conducting certification examinations. In addition, conducting certification examinations is subject to the regulations in the management handbook for personal certifications in the area of technical communication as well as to the applicable process handbook.

For every examination commission and for every performance of parts of examinations, an examiner must decide whether he has the necessary competence for conducting it and the performance evaluation. If not, he must communicate this directly and promptly to the chairperson of the examination committee. In this case, a different examiner is commissioned to conduct an examination or part of an examination.

If, during activity as an examiner, significant prerequisites for approval no longer apply or requirements are not fulfilled, the approval and appointment as an examiner will be withdrawn.

5.1.2.5 Necessary Competences of an Authorized Examiner

An authorized examiner must provide proof of the following competences for appointment:

- Professional competence in the area of technical communication
- Knowledge of the certification system of the tekomp personal certification center, including the management system
- Knowledge of the competence framework for technical communication
- Knowledge of the competence and qualification requirements of the tekomp certification system as well as of the different competence profiles and qualification levels
- Knowledge in dealing with the examination management system used
- Competences in examination and assessment, decision-making
- Communication and interpersonal skills
- Social skills and ability to cooperate
- Knowledge of data protection
- Language skills (German/English)

5.1.2.6 Appointment and Management

Authorized examiners are appointed by the tekomp Board of Directors upon the proposal of the certification center for a period of three years.

Activities as part of certification examinations are managed, reviewed and steered by the chairperson for the examination committee. They report functionally to the chairperson for the certification committee.

5.1.3 Certification Decision-Makers

5.1.3.1 Definition

Certification decision-makers are persons that review the prerequisites for approval for certification as well as the performance or scores on the certification examination, check the

conditions for recertification, make certification or recertification decisions and grant certifications and recertifications.

5.1.3.2 Tasks

The general task of the certification decision-maker consists of the appraisal of all documents and proof with reference to the fulfillment of conditions for certification and recertification, in conformity with the normative competence and qualification requirements of the certification system of tekomp.

- Review of the prerequisites for approval of the applicant and formal approval of certification candidates for the respective qualification level
- Checking the certification performance and examination evaluation based on the protocols and the overall score
- Determination of the certification performance and overall score
- Review of the fulfillment of the certification examination prerequisites in the application (proof) and certification examination scores
- Review of applicants' prerequisites for recertification
- Making certification and recertification decisions
- Granting certifications and recertifications

5.1.3.3 Prerequisites for Appointment

The following prerequisites must be fulfilled for appointment as a certification decision-maker:

- A university degree or applied science university diploma in technical communication, the natural sciences, engineering or economics, or proof of a comparable professional qualification
- Professional experience (> 5 years) in technical communication, with at least 35 hours a week in one or several fields of activity in technical communication
- Qualification and professional competence in technical communication
- Leadership experience (helpful, but not a prerequisite)
- Experience with education and training systems (helpful, but not a prerequisite)
- Experience with accreditation according to standards (helpful, but not a prerequisite)

Certification decision-makers must:

- Be familiar with the certification system of the tekomp personal certification center
- Declare their readiness to participate regularly in the sessions of the committees relevant for them and tekomp training events, as per the requirements of DIN EN ISO/IEC 17024:2012 for personal certification centers

5.1.3.4 Necessary Competences of a Certification Decision-Maker

A certification decision-maker must provide proof of the following competences for appointment:

- Professional competence in the area of technical communication

- Knowledge of the certification system of the tekompersonal certification center, including the management system
- Knowledge of the competence framework for technical communication
- Knowledge of the competence and qualification requirements of the tekompersonal certification system as well as of the different competence profiles and qualification levels
- Professional competence in education and training systems
- Knowledge of DIN EN ISO/IEC 17024:2012
- Competences in planning and management
- Decision-making ability
- Interpersonal and communication skills, ability to cooperate
- Knowledge of data protection
- Language skills (German/English)

5.1.3.5 Appointment and Management

Certification decision-makers are appointed by the tekompersonal Board of Directors upon the proposal of the certification center for a period of three years. Activities as part of the certification center are managed, reviewed and steered by the chairperson for the education and training committee. They report functionally to the chairperson for the education and training committee.

5.1.4 Auditors

5.1.4.1 Definition

Auditors are persons who, in the appraisal of the certification center (certification center audit), are responsible for the professional compliance and conformity of the certification activities with DIN EN ISO/IEC 17024:2012.

5.1.4.2 Tasks

The general task of an auditor consists of appraising the functional capability of the certification center incl. their positions and committees as well as associated positions, with regard to the requirements of DIN EN ISO/IEC 17024:2012, in particular by:

- Conducting an internal audit as per the requirements of DIN EN 17024 and review of standards conformity; creation of an audit report
- Continual review of certification center policy (in particular with regard to examination rules, examination rooms, pricing, monitoring arrangements etc.)
- Checking central accreditation requirements according to independence, neutrality, objectivity and avoidance of conflicting objectives
- Review of impartiality, conflicts of interest, independence
- Checking compliance with and effectiveness of data protection and confidentiality
- Checking execution, suitability and implementation of risk analyses
- Observations on quality assurance measures
- Appraisal of examinations (examination monitoring, witness examination) in the respective certificate groups of competence profiles

- Appraisal of prerequisites for the appointment of employees of the personal certification center in various areas

5.1.4.3 Prerequisites for Appointment

The following prerequisites must be fulfilled for appointment as an auditor:

- A university degree or applied science university diploma in technical communication, the natural sciences, engineering or economics, or proof of a comparable professional qualification
- Professional experience (> 4 years) in technical communication, with at least 35 hours a week in one or several fields of activity in technical communication
- Leadership experience (helpful, but not a prerequisite)
- Experience with education and training systems (helpful, but not a prerequisite)
- Experience with auditing or accreditation in accordance with DIN EN ISO/IEC 17024:2012

5.1.4.4 Necessary Competences of an Auditor

An auditor must provide proof of the following competences to be appointed:

- Professional competence in education and training systems
- Knowledge of DIN EN ISO/IEC 17024:2012
- Knowledge of the certification system of the tekompersonal certification center, including the management system
- Knowledge of the competence framework for technical communication
- Knowledge of the competence and qualification requirements of the tekompersonal certification system as well as of the different competence profiles and qualification levels
- Experience with auditing or accreditation in accordance with DIN EN ISO/IEC 17024:2012
- Competences in planning and management, quality management
- Competence in conducting a risk analysis and decision-making ability
- Integration capability: ability to work successfully with different persons
- Interpersonal skills, ability to cooperate, and communication skills

5.1.4.5 Appointment and Management

Auditors are appointed by the tekompersonal Board of Directors upon the proposal of the certification center for a period of three years. An auditor works independently as per the requirements of DIN EN ISO/IEC 17024. Auditors must:

- Know the certification system of the tekompersonal certification center
- Be familiar with the tekompersonal competence framework for technical communicators and the resulting competence profiles and qualification levels
- Conclude a contract with tekompersonal about their activity as auditor
- Declare their readiness to participate regularly in the sessions of the committees relevant for them and tekompersonal training events, as per the requirements of DIN EN ISO/IEC 17024:2012 for personal certification centers

5.1.5 5.1.5. Arbitrators

5.1.5.1 Definition

Arbitrators are persons who review and assess issues and obtain agreements or make arbitration awards in the event of objections to certification decisions or complaints. They are responsible for the arbitration proceedings of the tekomp personal certification center as an out-of-court process for dispute resolution.

5.1.5.2 Tasks

The general task of an arbitrator consists of obtaining agreements in the event of objections or complaints, in particular through:

- Review of complaints and objections for formal and substantive authorization as per compliance with the valid rules; by reviewing documents; if necessary, requesting further supporting documents; if necessary, hearing and initiating further measures, e.g. second appraisals
- Execution of settlement negotiations and delivering results
- Decision on rejection or acceptance of the complaint or objection
- Decision on possible claims of the objector or complainant
- Rulings
- Documentation of the complaint and objection process (logging)
- Proposal of measures for the future reduction or elimination of grounds for complaints or objections

5.1.5.3 Prerequisites for Appointment

The following prerequisites must be fulfilled for appointment as an arbitrator:

- A university degree or applied science university diploma in technical communication, the natural sciences, engineering or economics, or proof of a comparable professional qualification
- Professional experience (> 4 years) in technical communication, with at least 35 hours a week in one or several fields of activity in technical communication
- Leadership experience (helpful, but not a prerequisite)

5.1.5.4 Necessary Competences of an Arbitrator

An arbitrator must provide proof of the following competences to be appointed:

- Professional competence in education and training systems
- Knowledge of the certification system of the tekomp personal certification center, including the management system
- Knowledge of the competence framework for technical communication
- Knowledge of the competence and qualification requirements of the tekomp certification system as well as of the different competence profiles and qualification levels
- Knowledge of DIN EN ISO/IEC 17024:2012
- Decision-making ability

- Integration capability: ability to work successfully with different persons
- Interpersonal skills, ability to cooperate, and communication skills

5.1.5.5 Appointment and Management

Arbitrators of the arbitration center are appointed for a term of three years by the tekomp Board of Directors upon proposal by the certification center. Activities within the framework of the arbitration center are independent of all other centers and committees of the tekomp personal certification center and are managed by the tekomp Board of Directors.

Arbitrators must:

- Know the certification system of the tekomp personal certification center
- Be familiar with the tekomp competence framework for technical communicators and the resulting competence profiles and qualification levels
- Declare their readiness to participate regularly in the sessions of the committees relevant for them and tekomp training events, as per the requirements of DIN EN ISO/IEC 17024:2012 for personal certification centers

5.1.6 Certification Candidates

5.1.6.1 Definition

A certification candidate is a person whose application for certification has been accepted by the tekomp personal certification center.

5.1.6.2 Requirements

A certification candidate must provide the personal certification center with proof that he fulfills the defined prerequisites for approval. This is done by presenting the appropriate proof.

5.1.7 Certified Persons

5.1.7.1 Definition

A certified person is a person in possession of a valid certificate.

5.1.7.2 Rights and Obligations

A certified person has the right:

- To reference their certification and the personal certification center that conducted it as part of their activity in the area of technical communication, in particular on letterhead and other printed materials, as well as online
- To use the document issued (the certificate) that attests successful certification at a certain qualification level

The certified person must observe the following principles in practicing his professional tasks in the area of technical communication:

- He must complete the tasks appropriate to his certified competence profile in consideration of the acknowledged professional rules

- He must personally perform the services required of him in the area of technical communication
- He must not use the certification document in a fraudulent or misleading way
- The certified person is obliged to report the following issues to the tekomp personal certification center without delay:
 - A change of work position within a business or change of employer (if any)
 - An interruption of two or more years in professional activity
 - A change in residence
 - The misplacement of the certificate or loss of the certificate document
 - The initiation of a criminal investigation procedure as well as a legally binding conviction of a crime or misdemeanor in the certified area

The certified person must, upon request of the tekomp personal certification center, give any (oral/written) information necessary for the monitoring of their activity and compliance with their obligations within the set deadlines free of charge, as well as provide any documents requested. He may refuse to provide information on questions that, if answered, would expose himself or one of his family members to the risk of prosecution or proceedings under the Act on Administrative Offenses.

A violation of the obligations listed above will lead to the immediate withdrawal of certification. The certified person is then prohibited from continuing to reference his certification.

6. The Three Pillars of the tekomp Education and Training System

An essential feature of objectivity assurance, and thus quality assurance, is the separation between the institutions that qualify persons and the neutral, independent consultation and certification of the participants by tekomp.

tekomp certification is divided into three pillars independent of one another:

1. Qualification consultation by tekomp
2. Qualification and training
3. Certification by tekomp

6.1. Qualification Consultation

The tekomp qualification consultation is directed toward persons who already have professional experience in the area of technical documentation and would like to have their competences and their level of knowledge reflected, as well as those interested in the profession and career entrants who would like to obtain an overview of the occupational profile and in particular the competence requirements and competence profiles. The qualification consultation offers consultation participants the opportunity to discuss their current qualification status with a professional expert, particularly with respect to the requirements for a technical communicator on the basis of the competence framework for technical communication and the competence profiles and qualification levels derived from it.

Counselors support consultation participants in:

- Acquiring an overview of the professional field of technical communication in all of its facets
- Acquiring familiarity with competence requirements of the professional field of technical communication
- Being able to realistically estimate their own level of knowledge in the different topic areas and areas of technical communication
- Identifying contents in which a participant can improve or expand his knowledge, practical ability or skills
- Setting training goals

The results of qualification consultation serve only as information and recommendations. No binding obligations arise from it.

The qualification consultation is non-binding. It does not result in any obligation on the part of consultation participants to commit to subsequent training or participation in the certification examination.

In certain cases, participation in a qualification consultation is a prerequisite for approval for tekomp certification.

6.1.1 Voluntary Participation in the Qualification Consultation

Certification candidates who would like to become certified with the prerequisite for approval “without professional experience and with participation in an accredited training program”, can voluntarily participate in the qualification consultation.

6.1.2 Consultation Participation as a Prerequisite for Certification

For certification candidates who would like to become certified with the prerequisite for approval “with professional experience”, participation in the qualification consultation is a mandatory prerequisite for approval for the certification examination, in order to determine the individual need for training for successful certification. This also applies to certification candidates who do not fulfill the prerequisite for certification “with professional experience”, who are attending a training program at one of the education providers accredited by tekomp that does not cover the number of hours required for Expert Level.

6.1.3 Recommendation of the Education Provider as a Prerequisite for Certification

Certification candidates that do not have two years of professional experience in technical communication, or are not attending a Expert Level education program of at least 600 hours including an internship can, however, be approved as part of an exemption to the Expert Level certification, if the certification candidates participate in a qualification consultation and have a recommendation from the training provider for Expert Level certification.

6.2. Qualification and Training

The tekomp education and training system is based on an individualized qualification strategy according to need, i.e., the scope of the training as well as the training contents are aimed at the respective requirements of the certification candidates. The individual need for qualification can be determined through, *inter alia*, a qualification consultation.

The training contents for preparation for certification in the area of technical communication are determined according to the competence profile and qualification level to be certified. The training contents are defined for the different competence profiles in the competence framework for technical communication, see references in Appendices A (normative) and B (normative). The acquisition of the certificate is generally independent from participation in a certain training program, education program or a specific product training program.

6.2.1 Voluntary Participation in the Training Program

In the case of appropriately informally acquired knowledge, proven through more than two years of professional experience in the area of technical documentation, certification is not contingent upon participation in certain courses of study.

6.2.2 Obligatory Participation in a Training Program

For certification participants without professional experience in the area of technical communication or related areas, participation in one of the training programs accredited by tekomp will be required in order to ensure that certification candidates have acquired the competences, knowledge and skills required for certification of a competence profile.

6.2.3 Accreditation of Training Programs

Through tekomp accreditation of training programs in the area of technical communication, it is guaranteed that the training contents cover the competence requirements for the respective competence profile to be certified.

The list of the training programs accredited by tekomp is published on the tekomp WebPortal.

6.3. Certification

Using set competence profiles that define the qualification level, areas of competence, and requirements for educational objectives, a person's fulfillment of the specified competence requirements with regard to a certain competence profile and qualification level is tested through different specific certification procedures.

Through certification, proof of competence is produced and attested for a certain competence profile.

The certification examinations are conducted on two qualification levels for the competence profiles, Professional Level and Expert Level.

The qualification, professional knowledge, skills and competence achieved by the certified person are attested by the personal certification center through a certificate for the respective qualification level achieved.

The certification procedure consists of the following parts:

- a) Approval procedure
- b) Certification examination
- c) Certification

7. Approval Procedure for Certification

The prerequisites for approval correspond to the qualification level to be certified.

7.1. Prerequisites for Certification and Proof of Competence Acquisition for the Professional Level Certificate

1. Participation in a qualification consultation and proof of at least one year (based on a minimum 35-hour work week, if part-time, accordingly longer) of professional experience in the area of technical communication or related areas (e.g. engineering, linguistics, media, communication)

or

2. Proof of participation in a training program accredited by tekompert for Professional Level certification (also while working, recommended: 300 hours)

7.2. Prerequisites for Certification and Proof of Competence Acquisition for the Expert Level Certificate

1. Participation in a qualification consultation and proof of at least two years (based on a minimum 35-hour work week, if part-time, accordingly longer) professional experience in the area of technical communication or related areas

or

2. Proof of participation in a training program accredited by tekompert of least 600 hours including internship

or

3. Proof of participation in the tekompert traineeship (participation in an accredited training program plus proof of activity of at least 24 months (based on a minimum 35-hour work week)

or

4. Successful certification on the Professional Level plus participation in a qualification consultation and one year (based on a minimum 35-hour work week, if part-time, accordingly longer) professional experience in the area of technical communication

Prerequisite for Certification and Approval in Exceptional Cases

Certification candidates who do not have two years of professional experience in technical communication and who are participating in a training program accredited by tekompert that does not cover the min. 600 hours including internship can be approved for the Expert Level certification examination as part of an exemption if the certification candidates participate in a qualification consultation and have a recommendation from the training provider for Expert Level certification.

1. Proof of participation in a training program accredited by tekompert, plus a written recommendation from the accredited training provider for Expert Level certification upon registration of the certification candidate, plus participation in a qualification consultation

As part of approval, in the exceptional cases named, it will be individually and substantively reviewed whether the applicant for Expert Level certification can be approved. A claim for approval for Expert Level certification does not rest solely upon fulfillment of the formal prerequisites for certification. Certification candidates approved for Expert Level certification as part of this exemption must

declare themselves ready to independently acquire the certification contents not taught by the accredited education program.

		Professional Level		Expert Level				
		1	2	1	2		3	4
		Further Education	Informal Learning	Informal Learning	Further Education		Traineeship	Consecutive
Approval Prerequisites for Certification & Proof of Competence Acquisition	Qualification Consulting	Voluntary	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Voluntary	Voluntary	Mandatory
	Training Scope	Recommendation: 300 hours	Freely selectable	Freely selectable	< 600 hours	Min. 600 hours incl. Internship	Contractually regulated	Freely selectable
	Path of qualification	Proof of participation in a training program for Professional Level certification accredited by tekem (also part-time)	Freely selectable	Freely selectable	Written recommendation of the accredited training providers for Expert Level certification	Proof of participation in a training program for certification accredited by tekem	Proof of participation in a tekem traineeship in an accredited training program	Successful certification at Professional Level
	Work experience	None	Proof of at least 1 year (based on a minimum 35-hour work week, if part-time, accordingly longer) of professional experience in the area of technical communication or related areas (for example, technology, linguistics, media, communications)	Proof of at least 2 years (based on a minimum 35-hour work week, if part-time, accordingly longer) of professional experience in the area of technical communication	None			

Overview of the prerequisites for access to the different qualification levels

8. The Certification Examination

8.1. Purpose of Certification

The certification examination as technical communicator should serve to determine the professional capacity to act of the certification candidate. This means the ability to plan, conduct and check professional actions independently as well as according to time and results. The certification examination takes into consideration all elements of a complete action: planning – carrying out – checking.

Professional capacity to act is expressed in the interplay of:

- Professional competence (expertise, knowledge, skills)
- Methodical competence (implementation, approach, performance in transferring knowledge)
- Social competence (communication, presentation, self-regulation)

The certification examination is divided into different parts of the examination through which, by means of different examination methods, the professional capacity to act and the professional competence of a certification candidate are determined.

The requirements in the certification examination differ depending on the competence profile or qualification level to be tested.

8.2. Scope of Application of the Certification Examinations and Level of the Certification

The certification examination serves as proof that the certified person has acquired the skills and knowledge required for the performance of the duties of a technical communicator for the respective qualification level. These are described in the competence framework for technical communication.

The current version of the competence framework for technical communication is made available by tekomp on the WebPortal. The version published at the time of registration for the examination is the one relevant for the examination.

By successfully passing the certification examination and being awarded certification, the certified person becomes entitled to use the title awarded by the Gesellschaft für Technische Kommunikation – tekomp Deutschland e.V., depending on the qualification level of certification,

“Technical Communicator (tekomp) – Professional Level”

or

“Technical Communicator (tekomp) – Expert Level”.

8.3. Language of the Examination

The language in which documentation and the examination are conducted will be established as part of the approval for the certification examination. Generally, the certification examination can be taken in German and in English.

8.4. Openness to the Public

Examinations are not public. tekomp representatives (e.g. auditors) may be present for the purpose of evaluating the examination (examination monitoring) or as part of the observation of the certification examination. However, these persons have no voting rights.

8.5. Confidentiality and Data Protection

All documents and processes relevant to the examination are to be handled with strict confidentiality by the members of the tekomp education and training committee, the professional centers, committees and commissions and other representatives of the personal certification center or of tekomp Deutschland. All persons involved are obliged to sign an appropriate declaration. The applicable conditions for data protection must be complied with.

8.6. Impartiality, Independence and Avoidance of Conflicts of Interest

The foremost rule of the certification activities of the tekomp personal certification center is the guarantee of impartiality, independence and avoidance of conflicts of interest. All members of the tekomp education and training committee, the professional centers, committees and commissions and other representatives of the personal certification center or of tekomp must observe these rules in their certification activities and, in the event that these cannot be guaranteed or if there are violations, must notify the top-level management of the tekomp personal certification center. All persons involved are obliged to sign an appropriate declaration.

8.7. Authorized Examiners

The examination is conducted by authorized examiners. The authorized examiners make decisions on the evaluation of the performances given by certification candidates.

The authorized examiners are employed for each examination by the chairperson of the examination committee. The chairperson of the examination committee also appoints replacement persons for the authorized examiners.

For purposes of evaluating the examination, tekomp reserves the right to employ representatives to be present at the examination. However, these representatives have no voting rights.

8.8. Information, Forms and Examination Dates

The tekomp personal certification center makes information and registration forms for certification available at no cost on their WebPortal.

Examination periods are set by the examination committee. For each person, accessible certification examinations prospectively take place twice annually in predetermined examination times or places. Examination dates and registration deadlines are announced six months beforehand on the tekomp WebPortal.

After registration and approval, the examination date will be announced to certification candidates three months before the beginning of the examination at the latest.

If an examination date cannot be observed by tekomp, tekomp will arrange a replacement date or, if this is not possible, will issue a 100% refund of approval and examination fees.

8.9. Place of Examination and Infrastructure

The written parts of the examination are completed online on computers but, like the oral parts of the examination, also in set locations and premises. The place of examination is normally the tekomp head office in Stuttgart.

Different examination premises must be approved by the tekomp personal certification center. The premises must fulfill the requirements of the examination conditions defined in advance: The necessary infrastructure (equipped with, *inter alia*, computers, common room and restrooms) for conducting the written online examination, compliance with minimum distances between the workspaces of the certification candidates and the identity check, monitoring for impermissible aids and supervision of the certification candidates during the carrying out of the examination must be ensured.

For online examinations, a system selected by the tekomp personal certification center and tested by the auditing center must be used that guarantees compliance with the principles of DIN EN ISO/IEC 17024:2012 for security and with respect to the prevention of attempted fraud.

8.10. Attempted Fraud and Cheating

In the event that attempted fraud or cheating is proven, the certification examination will be evaluated as "not passed". After attempting to cheat, the certification candidate is barred from further examinations for five years.

9. Requirements and Parts of the Certification Examinations

9.1. Professional Level Certification Examination

For certification of the Professional Level competence profile, a certification examination on the Professional Level must be successfully passed.

The certification examination for technical communicators on the Professional Level is composed of:

1. A written practical task (90 minutes)
2. A technical examination (no elective areas; mode of performance, depending on the framework conditions, a written examination of 30 minutes or as an oral group examination with approx. 15 minutes per examinee)

The examination process is as follows:

- a) Day of the examination:
 1. Work on a written practical task
 2. Technical examination

9.2. Expert Level Certification Examination

For certification of the Expert Level competence profile, a certification examination on the Expert Level must be successfully passed.

The certification examination for technical communicators on the Expert Level is composed of:

1. Relevant **technical project (reflection on an independently developed or reworked information product (technical documentation) and complete information product). The reflection and information product can be drafted in German or English.**
2. A **theoretical examination** in the mandatory areas of the competence profile and in the individual elective areas of the certification candidate (60 minutes written, on the mandatory areas, 20 minutes oral, on the elective areas).
3. An **oral technical interview (defense)**. The defense of the technical project created previously takes place as part of the oral examination (20 minutes).

The examination process is as follows:

1. Creation and submission of the technical project (reflection and information product) to tekomp by the announced submission date
2. Day of the examination:
3. Written theoretical examination on the mandatory modules (60 minutes)
4. Individual oral examination: defense of the project work in the technical interview and oral examination on the elective modules (20 minutes each)

9.3. Technical Project

The submission of a technical project is required for the Expert Level competence profile.

9.3.1 Requirements for the Technical Project

By creating a technical project and reflection, the certification candidate should demonstrate and display that he has the competence to:

1. Become independently active within the action parameters of work or study contexts that are as a rule known, but may however change.
2. Be able to take responsibility for the evaluation and improvement of work activities.
3. Be able to use and transfer theoretical and technical knowledge, as well as methodical knowledge, on concrete work tasks.

As the technical project for the Expert Level, the certification candidate must:

1. Develop or rework an information product (technical documentation) and submit it.
2. Create and submit a reflection on the information product.

9.3.2 Information Product

The technical project is permitted as examination work if the submitted information fulfills the criteria of the following definition:

An information product is a document that contains a mostly technical and use-oriented description of a product. It transfers technical expertise and makes available information about the history of the product for subsequent users of the information (whether developers or users, patent lawyers or state lawyers with a focus on product liability).

An information product:

- Transports goal-oriented information to a special target group
- Contains product-related data and/or technical or use-related information that is used for various purposes and stored
- Can be used within or outside the company

All documents created during the overall product life cycle are information products in this sense.

The different purposes of the information products are, for example:

- Information about the product: Product definition and product specification, product presentation, technical and detailed concepts as well as specifications, quality and production guidelines
- Information on design, manufacture, quality assurance and product liability
- Description of functions and interfaces
- Technical sales information: Technical image brochures or films, marketing materials
- Instructional texts and practical and user manuals for intended, safe and correct use
- Maintenance instructions: Service and maintenance handbooks
- Product training: Training documents, tutorials or web-based training, operational handbooks, safety guidelines
- Instructions on servicing and repair of a technical product as well as on safe disposal

The information product can be created in various media:

- Paper/PDF
- Web pages

- Instructional films
- Apps
- ...

As an information product for the written part of the tekomp certification examination, certification candidates can submit with it all technical documents for which the named definition applies.

In the case of a reworked information product, the personal contributions of the certification candidate must be marked clearly.

For submission, it must be ensured that, particularly if a digital information product is involved, such as, e.g. a website, an instructional film, an app, ..., the examiners can open and read the information product without trouble. No minimum or maximum length is defined for the information product. The length of the information product should, however, make it possible to evaluate the practical performance of the certification candidates. The information product must be delivered in paper form as well as in duplicate in electronic form (PDF) for archival.

9.3.3 Written Reflection

A written reflection on the information product according to the following definition must be submitted as an accompanying document. By justifying, explaining, critically reviewing and disputing the information product in the reflection, the certification candidate should show that he is capable of using technical knowledge and methodical expertise in a specific case on an information product. Reflection means a probing and comparative thought process and contains the justification of the matter.

The written reflection must specify, truthfully and comprehensibly with regard to task and scope, what proportion of the creation of the information product was performed independently by the certification candidate.

To be able to appraise a technical project, it is important that the creation and framework conditions, as well as the underlying concepts and methods used, are illustrated in the reflection.

In the written reflection on the information product, reference is made to the background of the creation of the information product: It explains and justifies why the present information product is designed as it is, e.g.:

- Target group of the information product / target group analyses conducted
- Methodological approaches used / procedures, e.g. structuring methods
- Quality criteria
- External framework conditions, e.g. sales channels
- Internal framework conditions, e.g. business guidelines, corporate identity guidelines
- Product-related conditions, e.g. product packaging, product sizes
- Project-related conditions, e.g. time, systems, resources
- Advantages and disadvantages of the approach selected

Additionally, the reflection can critically question and evaluate, with justification:

- Good practices: What is good about the information product?
- Weaknesses: What can be improved, why and how, for example?

The certification candidate can also use the reflection to demonstrate what he would have done differently in technical or organizational terms if he had had the opportunity, or why a remarkable solution is, in this particular case, reasonable.

A reflection may not, in any case, be or contain a:

- Progress report
- Substantive summary of technical documentation
- Project or construction report in the form of a journal
- Mere regurgitation of basic technical communication knowledge

The written reflection must be at least 15 pages and at most 20 pages (with 2,000 characters, no spaces) in length (=30,000 to 40,000 characters).

9.3.4 Creation and Submission of the Technical Project

Certification candidates will submit proposals for the topic of the technical project, as well as a short description of the work along with their application for approval for certification.

Information products already created by the certification candidates can be approved. In this case, a note is to be made at the time of application when the information product was created. Work that the certification candidate was only partly involved in can also be approved. In this case, the length, content and tasks that the certification candidate had in creating must be explicitly, specifically and comprehensibly shown in the application and in the reflection. In addition, notes on the conditions of creation are recommended.

The topic will be reviewed and approved by the chairperson of the examination committee upon application for approval.

The technical project (information product and reflection) must be submitted in paper form as well as a duplicate for archiving in electronic form. If the medium for the information product is digital, excerpts from this in paper form are to be submitted. For an electronic form, it is also required that the work can be appraised by the authorized examiners with a reasonable amount of effort.

Certification candidates will be informed in writing of permission and approval of the topic submitted for the technical project by, at the latest, 3.75 months before the date of the oral examination.

Certification candidates will be informed in writing of the submission date upon registration confirmation. This date is, depending on the examination date, approx. three weeks before the date of the oral interview (taking weekends and holidays into account).

The completed technical project must be received at tekomp by the stated submission date. The receipt stamp applies. If the technical project has not been received at tekomp by the date stated upon registration confirmation, the certification examination is deemed not passed.

The reflection is provided with a cover sheet that contains the following details:

- Topic of the work
- Specification of the examination framework: Reflection as part of the tekomp certification examination, Technical Communicator, Expert Level
- Name, address and email of the author
- Date of submission

The reflection must be delivered in paper form as well as in duplicate in electronic form (PDF) for archival.

The information product is provided with a cover sheet that contains the following details:

- Topic of the work
- Specification of the examination framework: Information product as part of the tekomp certification examination, Technical Communicator, Expert Level
- Name, address and email of the author
- Date of submission

The following written declaration of independence must be signed and delivered with the reflection:

“I affirm that I have independently drafted this written reflection and have not used any other aids or sources other than those specified. All sources that I have used are identified in the text and listed in the bibliography. I have provided all literal citations with quotation marks and all required bibliographical source details. I have truthfully shown in the written reflection what proportion of the development or reworking of the information product I myself carried out. I have not submitted the reflection as part of another examination procedure.”

If this declaration is omitted, the certification examination is deemed not passed.

The information product will be appraised under consideration of the background information in the reflection by means of evaluation criteria defined in advance. The evaluation is done according to specified guidelines and an evaluation criteria catalogue. The reflection is likewise evaluated according to specified guidelines and an evaluation criteria catalogue.

For any specific certification candidate, the authorized examiners for the evaluation of the technical project are identical with the authorized examiners for the conducting of the oral examination.

9.4. Written Examination

A written examination must be taken for the Professional Level competence profile as well as for the Expert Level competence profile.

9.4.1 Catalog of Examination Questions

The examination questions for the written parts of the examination are taken from the catalog of examination questions. The catalog of examination questions contains the practical examination tasks defined by the expert committee for the respective qualification level and technical examination questions.

The catalog of examination questions contains:

1. Practical tasks for the Professional Level competence profile
2. Technical questions for the Professional Level competence profile
3. Technical questions for the Expert Level competence profile from the mandatory area

The examination tasks and questions are derived from the competence framework for technical communication and refer to the qualification levels, areas of competence and educational objectives formulated therein. The guidelines for the development of examination questions for the tekomp certification examination regulate the development of examination tasks and questions.

The practical tasks require the concrete performance of typical work tasks in the area of technical communication and form the practical part of the examination for Professional Level certification.

The technical questions check knowledge and skills and form the theoretical and technical part of the examination for the written part of the examination for Professional Level or Expert Level certification.

Individual technical examination questions are categorized clearly under the respective competence profiles, qualification levels, and areas of competence and indexed with degree of difficulty, estimated work time and classification of question type, in line with Bloom's Taxonomy.

As, according to the scientific evidence on tests, the development of valid, accurate and reliable closed examination questions and tasks (as single choice, multiple choice or drag-and-drop) places immense demands, essentially open questions will be posed in the technical part of the examination that additionally contain instructions on the required length and content of the answers.

9.4.2 Examination Tasks and Questions

The written technical questions are distinguished depending on qualification level (Professional Level / Expert Level) with regard to the areas of competence to be tested as well as in the number, length, difficulty and type of questions per area of competence to be tested. Each certification candidate may receive only questions and tasks that are appropriate for the competence profile and qualification level to be certified.

Competence is also measured as to whether the certification candidate has the capability to give answers and develop solutions quickly. Thus, in measuring competence, quick work on tasks and answering questions is required: The time specified for working on the practical tasks and technical questions is short, but for very good certification candidates under the conditions of examination, however, sufficient.

The number and the average work time for the technical questions must be reasonable for the respective examination time set and for the competence requirement set.

Upon drawing up the examination tasks and questions, it will be checked how much time, on average, work on the tasks takes. In addition, in terms of content, the examination questions cover different mandatory areas of the respective competence profile. The theoretical examination for the Expert Level competence profile contains technical questions for a defined average work time.

Along with the questions posed, the certification candidate receives instructions on what is expected of him in answering the question.

9.4.3 Requirements for the Practical Tasks

Work on the practical tasks is required and accepted in writing for the Professional Level competence profile. Through the practical part of the examination, profession-related competences and practical skills are tested. Through the work on typical work tasks in the area of technical communication, the certification candidate should demonstrate and display his competence to act in that he:

- Can plan a professional task assignment by independently applying his knowledge, skills and abilities appropriately for a target group and implement it according to methodological and technical aspects
- Has the capability to assume responsibility for the completion of work tasks
- Can adapt his own behavior to the respective circumstances in solving problems
- Can independently and competently work on certain task assignments following instructions

The practical tasks are taken from the catalog of examination questions. Work on the practical tasks is done online. Generally, no aids are permitted.

Evaluation takes place according to specified guidelines. Depending on task assignment, the solution of the practical tasks is evaluated, *inter alia*, based on the following aspects:

- Completeness
- General comprehension
- Logic and plausibility
- Comprehensibility
- Methodology
- Systematology
- Structure
- Order
- Application of methods and elements (e.g. instructions for action, notes, references, stylistic elements)

For any specific certification candidate, the authorized examiners for the evaluation of the practical tasks are identical to the authorized examiners for the evaluation of the written technical examination questions for the Professional Level competence profile.

Results are evaluated according to the point system to be applied and performance assessment scheme. Points are awarded according to a point scale from 0 to 100 and are recorded and commented on by the authorized examiners in the examination system.

9.4.4 Requirements of the Technical Examinations

9.4.4.1 Professional Level Competence Profile

Certification candidates for the Professional Level competence profile must pass a written part of the examination in which answers to various technical questions are required. Certification candidates for the Professional Level competence profile should thus demonstrate that they have a broad spectrum of theoretical and factual knowledge in technical communication at their disposal and possess the cognitive and practical skills required to find solutions to special problems.

9.4.4.2 Expert Level Competence Profile

Certification candidates for the Expert Level competence profile must likewise take the theoretical part of the examination. The questions posed pertain to mandatory areas

(mandatory areas) from this competence profile. In addition, questions will be asked from areas of competence that cover areas of specialization (elective areas).

Certification candidates for the Expert Level competence profile should demonstrate that they have a comprehensive and specialized theoretical and factual knowledge in technical communication at their disposal as well as awareness of the limitations of this knowledge and that they possess the comprehensive cognitive and practical skills to develop creative solutions for abstract problems. The certification candidate will be questioned with regard to his technical and methodological knowledge on the state of the art in technology as well as tested on his applied expertise and knowledge.

9.4.5 Performance of the Written Examinations

Examination tasks or examination questions are always newly compiled for each respective certification examination. It is thus ensured that there is time available to answer the questions on the technical examination according to the competence requirements and that the selection of questions is balanced with respect to the average work time, difficulty, type of question and areas of competence. The characteristics of the questions (average work time, difficulty, type of question and area of knowledge) are defined upon drawing up the questions and checked by means of examination scores.

The written examination questions must be made available shortly before the examination. The examination questions must be compiled at least 24 hours before the examination date and made available so that the examination can be conducted on the date set. The examination questions are made available protected from unauthorized access.

Prior to the examination, certification candidates must identify themselves with an ID card or comparable certificate and will be checked for impermissible aids.

The examination tasks and questions will be made available to the certification candidates in writing on an online examination system on which all work is done. Work on the written technical questions is done online at approved computers; Internet access must be ensured. Generally, no aids are permitted. Through a secured browser, the online examination system precludes the simultaneous use of other systems or functions so that attempted fraud is prevented. The order of the questions varies for each certification candidate so that attempted fraud is prevented.

The answers to the technical examination questions are evaluated by authorized examiners. Different authorized examiners can be employed for the evaluation of the technical examination questions than for the evaluation of the technical project and the oral examination for the same certification candidate.

Points are awarded according to a point scale from 0–100 and are recorded and commented on by the authorized examiners in the examination system.

9.5. Oral Certification Examination

The oral certification examination for the Expert Level competence profile consists of a technical interview, in which the certification candidate is allowed to present the background to the development of his technical project in an individual interview. In the technical interview, the

certification candidate is asked to answer in-depth questions on the technical project, as well as explain how he uses his abilities and knowledge under different conditions and how he handles any difficulties that arise.

Through their behavior, authorized examiners exert significant influence on the performance of the certification candidate in the examination situation. They can use this influence and contribute in a positive way towards the certification candidate showing his best possible performance and the evaluation of this performance being as objective as possible.

Participants in the oral certification examination include the certification candidate, the authorized examiners decided upon for performance by the chairperson of the examination committee, and a recorder. Certification candidates are tested by an authorized examiner orally as part of the technical interview. The technical interview lasts 20 minutes. The authorized examiner, who also evaluates the technical project submitted, leads the technical interview. The standardized protocol is prepared by the recorder and signed by the authorized examiner as well as the recorder. Evaluation is done by the authorized examiner. Points are awarded according to a point scale from 0–100 and are recorded and commented on by the authorized examiners in the examination system.

9.6. Evaluation of the Examination Performance and Assessment Key

9.6.1 Professional Level Competence Profile

The authorized examiner who appraises the work on the practical tasks also evaluates the performances in the written part of the examination.

The parts of the certification examination are weighted as follows:

- Score and performance assessment for “Practical tasks”: 50%
- Score and performance assessment for “Technical examination”: 50%

The parts of the examination are evaluated separately and combined into an overall score.

9.6.2 Expert Level Competence Profile

The authorized examiner who evaluates the technical project also evaluates the performances in the technical interview. The performances in the written part of the examination may also be evaluated by other authorized examiners.

The parts of the certification examination are weighted as follows:

- Score and performance assessment for “Technical project and oral technical interview”: 50%. This performance assessment consists of:
 - 60% evaluation of the technical project
 - 40% oral technical interview
- Score and performance assessment for the theoretical part of the examination: 50% This performance assessment consists of:
 - 80% scores from the mandatory areas
 - 20% scores from both elective areas (elective area 1: one of three areas must be selected, elective area 2: one of five areas must be selected)

9.7. Performance Assessment

9.7.1 Assessment Key

Individual criteria or examination questions are evaluated using a point scale from 0–100. The overall score for a section of the examination is determined by adding the points earned and subsequently dividing them by the number of individual criteria evaluated or examination questions. The average thus determined is the overall score for a section of the examination, again using the point scale from 0–100.

The points earned in a section of the examination are converted into a grade according to the applicable assessment key.

Here, the following assessment scale applies:

Grade	Points	Performance Evaluation	
A	A+	97-100	Very good: A performance particularly corresponding to the requirements.
	A	93-96	
	A–	89-92	
B	B+	85-88	Good: A performance fully corresponding to the requirements.
	B	82-84	
	B–	77-81	
C	C+	72-76	Satisfactory: A performance generally corresponding to the requirements.
	C	68-71	
	C–	62-67	
D	D+	57-61	Sufficient: A performance that shows defects, but as a whole still corresponds to the requirements.
Not passing			
	D	52-56	Insufficient: A performance that shows defects and does not correspond to the requirements.
E	E+	45-51	Defective: A performance that does not correspond to the requirements but, however, shows basic knowledge.
	E	38-44	
	E–	32-37	
F	F+	17-31	Inadequate: A performance that does not correspond to the requirements and in which basic knowledge is missing.
	F	0-17	

The examination is deemed passed if:

1. The overall score of each individual part of the examination (Professional Level with both parts of the examination, “Practical Tasks” and “Technical Examination”: or Expert Level with both parts of the examination, “Technical Project and Oral Technical Interview” and “Grade of the Theoretical Part of the Examination”) and
2. The overall result of all parts of the examination

have obtained a performance assessment of D SUFFICIENT up to D+ (57-61 out of 100 points).

If a part of the examination consists of several partial examinations, the individual scores obtained in these can be balanced out in the overall score calculated for the part of the examination.

9.7.2 Performance Assessment

The different sections of the examination are evaluated separately and summarized in an overall score.

The examination is passed if the overall score of all parts of the examination up to the score 57 out of 100 points comes to a performance assessment of “sufficient” (D+) and if the technical project including the discussion of the technical project has been evaluated at least at “sufficient” (D+: 57-61 out of 100 points).

Example of an Assessment Table

Parts of the Examination	Weighting		Score		Weighting Factor	Overall Score
50%: Technical Project	50%					
Appraisal of technical project	60%	30%	Score	0	* Factor 0.3	0.0
Defense of technical project	40%	20%	Score	0	* Factor 0.2	0.0
50%: Theoretical Examination	50%					
Examination on mandatory areas	80%	40%	Score	0	* Factor 0.4	0.0
Examination on elective areas	20%	10%	Score	0	* Factor 0.1	0.0
Overall Assessment of the Certification		100%	Total Score:			0.0

9.8. Notification of Results and Other Information

After a maximum of 10 workdays after completion of the certification examination, certification candidates will be informed via email from the certification center of the result of their certification examination, the overall assessment, and the scores obtained in the individual parts of the examination.

The certification candidate will be informed about the reasons for the scores given only at his request. Further explanations are not given.

The certification candidate is additionally to be informed about the procedure for inspection of records and for filing an objection. The certification candidate will receive the score of the written certification examination as well as the overall score and performance assessment on the certification after evaluation of his written examination.

10. Certification

10.1. Application and Approval Procedure

Applicants for certification file a written application for application and approval for the certification examination with the tekomp personal certification center.

This application must contain the following details of the applicant:

1. Name, date of birth and private mailing address
2. Workplace with address (if any)
3. Work activities performed
4. Qualification level to be certified
5. Specification as to whether a first certification, retaking the examination, or recertification is involved.

In accordance with the prerequisites for approval, proof as well as the necessary declarations of the certification candidate are to be enclosed with the application (data protection declaration / declaration of the certification candidate for certification).

In the subsequent approval procedure, the fulfillment of the prerequisites for approval are reviewed by the chairperson of the certification committee. For certification, all prerequisites for approval for the respective competence profile to be certified must be proven by the certification candidate. If the prerequisites for approval are not fulfilled, the certification candidate receives a written notification with the request to submit any missing documents or papers.

The approval review should, from the time of application of the certification candidate to the notification of the certification candidate, last no longer than three weeks.

If all prerequisites for approval are fulfilled, candidates receive approval for the certification examination for the targeted profile with their registration confirmation. Approval is effective only after payment of the approval fee by the candidate.

The personal certification center notifies the certification candidate of the submission date for the technical project (at Expert Level only) as well as the time and place of the certification examination. The time span from approval for the certification procedure to the Professional Level certification examination or to the submission of the technical project (Expert Level) may be neither longer nor shorter than a period of four months.

10.2. Fees for Approval, Certification and Cancellation

Fees are charged for approval for certification and for examinations, the amounts of which are set in the fee schedule. In the event of a withdrawal from the examination, the terms and conditions of cancellation apply. The terms and conditions of cancellation are regulated in the fee schedule. A prerequisite for certification is the payment of certification fees.

10.3. Certification Files

Certification files are the basis for the certification decision.

Certification files include the following documents:

- Application for certification and approval for the certification examination
- Signed data protection clause
- Signed declarations of the certification candidate
- If applicable, registration for qualification consultation
- If applicable, questionnaire on the qualification consultation
- Proof of training programs
- Proof of professional experience
- Checklist for review of prerequisites for approval
- Approval/registration confirmation
- Date confirmation
- Proof of receipt of examination fee
- Overall examination score with protocol

Certification files specific to the Professional Level competence profile include the following documents:

- Evaluation protocol of the practical tasks
- Evaluation protocol of the technical examination part (oral or written)

Certification files specific to the Expert Level competence profile include the following documents:

- Affidavit for the technical project
- Duplicate of the technical project
- Appraisal of the technical project and of the reflection
- Evaluation protocol of the written part of the examination
- Examination protocol of the technical interview

After the certification decision, the certification files are supplemented with the:

- Notification of certification decision
- Certificate
- Report

After conclusion of the certification procedure, all data are entered into an appropriate database and archived relating to the certified person.

10.4. Terms and Conditions of Certification

10.4.1 Withdrawal

Withdrawal from the examination is possible up until the date (date/time) of the written examination. In the case of repeated participation in the examination, all examination work must be performed again. The cancellation conditions of the current fee schedule apply. If the certification candidate withdraws after the beginning of the written or oral examination, the examination is deemed not passed.

Withdrawal is to be declared by letter or fax and cannot be revoked for the examination concerned.

10.4.2 Non-Attendance

In the following cases, the certification examination is deemed not taken:

1. Illness: In the event of illness, the certification candidate must send, within three days of becoming aware of the illness, a medical certificate to the tekomp personal certification center.
2. Unexcused absence or tardiness on the agreed-upon examination date.
3. Postponement of an examination date to a make-up date at short notice.

The certification examination can be made up at another point in time. For a make-up date, an application for approval and registration for the examination must be filed again at tekomp. The cancellation conditions apply in all cases for the refund of the approval and examination fees.

10.5. Certification

Following successful completion of the certification examination, the examination committee forwards the certification files of the certification candidate to the certification center. After review of the forwarded documents, the certification center decides if the prerequisites for approval for certification are present in full.

Certification candidates can be certified who:

1. Were approved for the certification examination in accordance with the prerequisites for approval
2. Have completely taken and passed the certification examination
3. Were given a certification recommendation by the examiner

The certificate can generally only be granted if all prerequisites for certification have been fulfilled. Generally, the personal certification center can also accept divergent forms of proof in exceptional cases. The proof and the decision of the personal certification center are to be documented.

In justified exceptional cases, which must already have been approved as part of the approval procedure, the certification candidate has the option of subsequently submitting prerequisites for approval (such as, e.g. missing professional experience) not yet present, within a year of taking the certification examination.

10.6. Certification Decision

The chairperson of the certification committee of the personal certification center will decide on the granting of the certificate within two weeks.

If the prerequisites for certification are not present, the personal certification center will notify the applicant of this without delay, within two weeks at the latest.

10.6.1 Objection to the Certification Decision

Certification candidates and persons already certified can file an objection to the decisions of the certification center on the status of certification (certified/not certified). The objection must be addressed in writing, with a justification, to tekom for forwarding to the chairperson of the arbitration center of the tekompcc personal certification center.

The deadline for objection is one month after receipt of the certificate, after the written notification of not passing the examination, or after the receipt of a negative certification decision.

The chairperson of the arbitration center reviews the objection and hears the authorized examiners affected. The arbitration rules regulate this in closer detail.

The outcome of the procedure is communicated to the certification candidate in writing without delay by tekompcc.

10.6.2 Negative Certification Decision

If certification is not granted, it can be reapplied for at the next possible certification examination date. If the certification could not be granted due to not passing the certification examination, it can be reapplied for at the next possible certification examination date and the certification examination retaken. Certification examinations not passed can be retaken once within a year. If a certification examination is not passed twice, the certification candidate is barred from all further examinations that have the same certificate as a goal for the duration of three years. A second attempt at retaking is possible after a period of three years. All provisions for retaking apply as for a first certification.

10.6.3 Certification and Certificate

If all prerequisites for certification as per the certification files are present and the certification examinations were successfully passed, the personal certification center prepares the certificate provided for the respective qualification level for the certification candidate.

With the certificate, the certified person is officially allowed to use the following title: “technical communicator (tekompcc)”.

The certificate is issued stating the title, first name, and last name of the certified person. In the certificate, the certified competence profile, the qualification level and the area of validity are recorded. The certificate contains a reference to the competence framework for technical communication.

The overall points and the partial scores, as well as the performance assessment, with which the certified person passed the certification examination are listed on the certificate.

The certificate is issued with the current date and a date of validity, as well as an individual identity number.

The certificate refers to the issuing personal certification center and is signed by the manager of the personal certification center and the chairperson of the certification committee.

The certificate document is delivered by post to the certified person.

All certified persons are added to the list of tekomp certificate holders. The person's certification body of tekomp may, upon written request from persons or entities with a legitimate interest (for example from potential clients of a certified person) provide information on whether the person is legally carrying the certificate. The tekomp personal certification center may, upon written request from persons or entities with a legitimate interest (for example from potential clients of a certified person) provide information on whether the person legally holds the certificate. To identify the certificate holder, name, date of birth, private address, place of birth and work place of the certificate holder are stored. By his signature on the application for certification and registration for the certification examination, the participant declares his intention to accept these regulations in the event the certificate is granted. The provisions of the data protection law are to be complied with by the tekomp personal certification center.

10.6.4 Validity of the Certificate

The duration of validity for all personal certifications is five years, calculated from the date of issue of the certificate. The certified person can apply for recertification after five years to maintain the certificate.

10.6.5 Monitoring and Withdrawal of Recognition for the Certification

The tekomp personal certification center monitors the proper use by certified persons of the certificates issued. Checking can take place through telephonic or written requests, through on-site inspections of documents, or by obtaining references. If defects are identified within the framework of monitoring or recertification, the certificate can be suspended for the period of rectification. If the defects identified are not remedied by the expiration of the rectification deadline, the certificate will be withdrawn. The certificate holder will be notified of this in writing. In addition, the personal certification center will pursue indications of non-compliance with the rights and obligations of a certified person.

Incorrect references to certification systems or misleading use of certificates, *inter alia*, will be regarded as misuse. If the certification center determines that the certificate is being misused, the certificate holder will be requested, under threat of withdrawal of the certificate to respond in writing immediately. The certificate holder will receive a time limit of 30 calendar days to do so.

After the response is received, or at the latest, after expiration of the deadline, the certification center will decide on the withdrawal of the certificate. The determination on the withdrawal of the certificate will be communicated to the certificate holder in writing and the certificate withdrawn. Withdrawal takes place by being struck from the list of certificate holders and, if necessary, through deletion of the entry on the website. Falsified certificates will be declared invalid by the tekomp personal certification center. The same applies for mistakenly issued certificates not returned to the tekomp personal certification center.

11. Recertification

11.1. Maintenance of the Qualification

After receiving the tekomp certificate, the certified person ensures through suitable measures of his own that he maintains their professional competence during its period of validity. He documents these measures in a suitable way.

tekomp ensures through suitable measures that certified persons are notified continuously and in good time about changes in the competence framework for technical communication or about significant changes in the state of the art in technology, in particular of the legal framework conditions or of the public policy on standardization in technical communication.

11.2. Recertification Procedure

The objectives of recertification are:

- Proof of maintenance of the knowledge and level of knowledge required (state of the art of rules of technology) and
- Proof of maintenance and further development of competences by the certified person.

A prerequisite for recertification is the participation of the certified person in the recertification procedure. The certified person initiates the recertification procedure with an application to the personal certification center. In the application, the certified person must provide the required proof for the fulfillment of the prerequisites for recertification.

11.2.1 Recertification in the Event That Application Is Timely Filed

The prerequisites for recertification are identical for both levels (Professional Level and Expert Level). Recertification is only required for the certificate of the highest qualification levels obtained. If several certificates in the area of technical communication have been obtained, recertification must take place on the highest qualification level (Expert Level).

In order to extend the validity of a certificate, a written application for extension, including all forms of proof described in the following, is to be submitted two months before expiration at the earliest and up to a maximum of six months after expiration of the certificate.

Recertification takes place through:

- The formal check of the prerequisites for recertification
- The check of incidents during the process of monitoring the certification
- The proof of professional practice and of successful participation in further training

For recertification, the certified person must have been active in technical communication during the five-year validity of the certificate. Within this period, interruption of professional activity must not exceed a maximum of six months and the volume of employment must not fall short of 50%. In addition, he must provide proof of maintenance of competence.

In the event of an interruption in professional activity of more than six months or a shortfall of 50% in the volume of employment, proof must be provided of an additional 16 hours training (average) per year of interruption in professional activity.

After the personal certification center has established that the prerequisites for recertification are present, it transmits the renewed certificate provided for the respective qualification level to the certified person.

If the formal prerequisites are not fulfilled, and/or there is a negative check of the proof provided, or sufficient proof is missing, the respective certificate is not extended. The personal certification center notifies the applicant without delay. In the case of missing proof, the applicant must provide this without delay.

Recertification must be concluded by six months after expiration of the period of validity. The administrative fees for recertification are regulated in the fee schedule. Payment of the recertification fees is a prerequisite for the renewed granting of the certificate.

The duration of validity is in turn five years, calculated from the date of expiration of the original validity of the certificate to be extended.

11.2.1.1 Proof of Professional Practice

An appropriate professional practice is to be proven in the area of validity of the competence profile commensurate with the duration of validity of the certificate. For example, confirmation by an employer or an interim report etc. are valid as proof of practice. The certificate holder himself must be responsible for the necessary confirmations and required documentation of his activities within the framework of his certificate.

11.2.1.2 Proof of Maintenance of Competence (Refreshing)

During the term of the certificate, the certificate holder must attend training events appropriate for the competence profile (at least 40 hours within five years) and thus prove his maintenance of competence. This helps to refresh and deepen the competence profile described in the area of validity of the certificate.

For example, attending pertinent professional conferences (confirmation of participation in workshops or overall 4 hours per event day), seminars or workshops, professionally relevant internal company training events, training programs with trainers, and professionally relevant workshops at tekomp Regional Group events with confirmation of participation are valid as acknowledged training programs.

Confirmation of participation (signature of the lecturer on the appropriate form) in connection with a copy of the event program is valid as proof. The tekomp certification center reserves the right to decide on the equivalence.

11.3. Recertification in the Event of Failure to Meet the Deadline

In the event of failure to meet the deadline, recertification can take place, conditional upon the provision of proof of training for an additional 16 hours per year (average), calculated from the date of expiration of the deadline to the filing of an application for recertification plus proof of 50% professional activity during the period between the date the certificate was issued and the date the application for recertification was filed.

In the event of failure to file a timely application for recertification, or if there is an interruption in professional activity of more than two years on the qualification level obtained, a valid certificate can be recovered only on the condition of re-examination (first certification). The duration of validity is in turn five years (in line with first certification).

12. Appendix A (Normative): Personal Certification

12.1. General Provision for Competence Profiles

The different competence profiles of a technical communicator arise from the characteristics and description of his field of activity. The differentiation of competence profiles and thus of qualification levels in tekomp personal certifications arises from the different possible professional roles and competences of technical communicators.

For the tekomp personal certification, two competence profiles were derived from the competence framework for technical communication and, for certification, two different qualification levels were defined.

The tekomp competence framework is based on the creation process for information products that is divided into different phases. With the concept of competence applied, it is assumed that, within the different phases that in turn contain different areas, certain competences, skills and knowledge are necessary for each activity and task.

The competence framework for technical communication includes four dimensions:

1. Areas of competence within the creation process for information products that contain areas of competence, groups of topics and learning contents
2. Competence and qualification profiles for the different qualification levels in line with the EQR, defined under consideration of different scopes of learning as per the ECTS system
3. Educational objectives with a view to knowledge and skills, defined in line with Bloom's Taxonomy
4. Teaching perspectives that specify different perspectives and the focus in imparting knowledge

A competence profile arises from the four dimensions and, with it, the requirements for knowledge and skills in different areas of competence relevant to certification.

For the three pillars of the tekomp certification system, qualification consultation, training and certification examination, the teaching- and examination-oriented perspective of the tekomp competence framework is the basis for technical communication.

13. Appendix (Normative) Certification as “Technical Communicator (tekomp) – Professional Level”

13.1. Target Groups

- Persons without previous knowledge in technical communication
- Persons with previous knowledge in technical communication

13.2. Participants

- Lateral entrants in technical communication without professional experience
- Employees in technical communication with little professional experience
- Employees in related areas (e.g. technology, linguistics, media, communication)

13.3. Competence Objectives

On Qualification Level 1, the competence profile of a “Technical Communicator (tekomp) – Professional Level” is certified on EQR Level 3–4.

- Knowledge (EQR Level 4):
Broad spectrum of theoretical and factual knowledge in a field of work or study
- Practical abilities (EQR Level 4):
A range of cognitive and practical skills required in order to find solutions for special problems within a field of work or study
- Competences (EQR Level 3):
Assuming responsibility for the completion of work or educational tasks; when solving problems, adapting one’s own behavior to the respective circumstances

The requirement for the general competences was set at only EQR Level 3 due to the fact that occupational experience is not a mandatory prerequisite for obtaining Qualification Level 1, “Technical Communicator (tekomp) – Professional Level”.

13.4. Prerequisite for Certification and Proof of Competence Acquisition for the Professional Level Certificate

The prerequisites for approval are oriented towards the qualification level to be certified. For certification on the Professional Level competence profile, the following are prerequisites:

- a) Participation in a qualification consultation and proof of at least one year of professional experience in the area of technical communication or related areas (e.g. technology, linguistics, media, communication) (at least 35 hours a week)
or
- b) Proof of participation in a training program accredited by tekomp for Professional Level certification (while working, approx. 300 hours)

13.5. Examination Requirements

For certification, a certification examination on the Professional Level must be successfully passed. The certification examination for technical communicators on the Professional Level is composed of:

1. A written practical task (90 minutes)
2. A technical examination (no elective areas; mode of performance dependent on the framework conditions, a written examination of 30 minutes or as oral group examination with approx. 15 minutes per examinee)

13.6. Areas of Competence for the Examination for “Technical Communicator (tekomp) – Professional Level”

The basis for the examination for “Technical Communicator (tekomp) – Professional Level” is the following mandatory areas.

Other applicable documents:

1. ***Website and Profiling Tool: Competence Framework for Technical Communication: Professional Level Competence Profile***
2. ***Teaching and Examination-Oriented Perspective of the tekomp Competence Framework***

14. Appendix B (Normative) Certification as “Technical Communicator (tekom) – Expert Level”

14.1. Target Groups

- Persons with previous knowledge in technical communication and more than two years of pertinent professional experience in this area
- Certified persons on the Professional Level qualification level

14.2. Participants

- Certified persons on the Professional Level qualification level
- Employees in technical communication
- Management and project managers in technical communication
- Self-employed persons in the area of technical communication

14.3. Competence Objectives

On Qualification Level 2, the competence profile of a “Technical Communicator (tekom) – Expert Level” is certified on EQR Level 4–5.

- Knowledge/comprehension (EQR Level 5):
Comprehensive, specialized theoretical and factual knowledge within a field of work or study, as well as awareness of the boundaries of that knowledge
- Practical abilities (EQR Level 5):
Comprehensive cognitive and practical skills required to develop creative solutions to abstract problems.
- Competences (EQR Level 4):
Exercise self-management within the guidelines of work or study contexts that are usually predictable, but are subject to change; supervise the routine work of others, taking some responsibility for the evaluation and improvement of work or study activities.

The requirement for the general competences was set at only EQR Level 4 due to the fact that occupational experience is not a mandatory prerequisite for obtaining Qualification Level 2, “Technical Communicator (tekom) – Expert Level”.

The approval and certification prerequisites for the various competence profiles, as well as the detailed competence requirements of personal certifications are listed in Appendices (normative) A and B and are a component of the respective personal certification.

14.4. Prerequisites for Certification and Proof of Competence Acquisition for the Expert Level Certificate

The prerequisites for approval are oriented towards the qualification level to be certified. For certification on the Expert Level competence profile, the following are prerequisites:

Certification as “Technical Communicator (tekomp) – Expert Level”

1. Participation in a qualification consultation and proof of at least two years (based on a minimum 35-hour work week, if part-time, accordingly longer) of professional experience in the area of technical communication
or
2. Proof of participation in one of the training programs accredited by tekomp, of at least 600 hours incl. internship
or
3. Proof of participation in the tekomp traineeship (participation in an accredited training program plus proof of activity of at least 24 months (based on a minimum 35-hour work week)
or
4. Successful certification on the Professional Level plus participation in a qualification consultation and one year (based on a minimum 35-hour work week, if part-time, accordingly longer) of professional experience in the area of technical communication

Prerequisites for Certification and Approval in Exceptional Cases

Certification candidates who do not have two years of professional experience in technical communication and who are participating in a training program accredited by tekomp that does not cover the min. 600 hours including internship can be approved for the Expert Level certification examination as part of an exemption if the certification candidates participate in a qualification consultation and and have a recommendation from the training provider for Expert Level certification.

1. Proof of participation in a training program accredited by tekomp, plus a written recommendation from the accredited training provider for Expert Level certification upon registration of the certification candidate, plus participation in a qualification consultation

As part of approval, in the exceptional cases named, it will be individually and substantively reviewed whether the applicant for Expert Level certification can be approved. A claim for approval for Expert Level certification does not rest solely upon fulfillment of the formal prerequisites for certification. Certification candidates approved for Expert Level certification as part of this exemption must declare themselves ready to independently acquire the certification contents not taught by the accredited education program.

14.5. Examination Requirements

The certification examination for technical communicators on the Expert Level is composed of:

- A relevant **technical project (information product and reflection)** (timeframe: three months after approval notice)
- A **theoretical examination** in the mandatory areas of the competence profile and in the individual elective areas of the certification candidate (90 minutes: 60 minutes written, on mandatory areas, and approx. 20 minutes oral, on elective areas)
- An **oral technical interview (defense)**. The defense of the technical project created previously takes place as part of the oral examination (20 minutes).

14.6. Areas of Competence for the Examination for “Technical Communicator (tekomp) – Expert Level”

The basis for the examination for “Technical Communicator (tekomp) – Expert Level” is the following mandatory and elective areas.

Other applicable documents:

- 1. Website and Profiling Tool: Competence Framework for Technical Communication: Expert Level Competence Profile***
- 2. Teaching and Examination-Oriented Perspective of the tekomp Competence Framework***