Certification Guideines

Personal Certifications in the Area of Technical Communication

(Normative Document)

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

Valid from: January 10, 2018

Revision 4.1 (July 11, 2022)

Foreword

The objective of these guidelines for personal certification in the area of technical communication is to provide 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. These certification guidelines shall ensure a high quality of acquired competences of certified persons and make transparent the scope and depth of the acquired knowledge and skills through the examinations underlying certification.

Informally acquired knowledge and competences are of great importance in intra-company processes and procedures. The certification is intended to formalize the qualifications of persons laterally entering the occupation with formally or informally acquired knowledge, skills and competencies in technical communication and, at completion, to enable an objective proof of competence.

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

- Lateral entrants without formal training as a technical communicator who seek to advance their education and become formally qualified while working.
- Graduates of education and training programs in the area of technical documentation who seek objective certification of their qualifications.
- Career changers who seek to become qualified in technical communication.
- Technical communicators seeking a new work position, who would like to increase their job prospects, or to make proper use of their time.
- Former employees in technical communication who plan to re-enter the field, e.g., after parental leave.
- Managers and employees in technical communication who seek to develop their know-how in technical communication methods.
- Businesses which want to certify their employees as technical communicators and ensure active professional development of their staff.

1. Area of Application

The guideline was prepared by the members of the tekom Advisory Committee for education and training in cooperation with the expert committee responsible for the definition of competences and certification requirements. It was approved for the first time by the tekom 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 which reflect 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 (tekom) – Professional Level" certification and B (normative) "Technical Communicator (tekom) – Expert Level" certification. These are available in the appendix or on the tekom WebPortal.

All documents and their changes will be published on the tekom 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 – tekom Deutschland e.V.

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

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

Certification attests to a fundamental qualification in the main concepts and methods in the area of technical communication. The competence profiles that contain detailed information about competence fields and educational objectives are described for both certificate groups in the tekom 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 (tekom) – 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 (tekom) – Professional Level".

On Qualification Level 2, 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.
- 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 (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 part 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 their activities as a technical communicator.

Competence (lat. *competentia*, "meeting together, agreement, symmetry") represents 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. mean mastering the capabilities, tasks, and issues typical of the profession independently, autonomously, and according to the theoretical requirements. The required skills and expertise are based mainly on 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 is based on defined competence profiles for various qualification levels. The foundation for the development and description of competence profiles in technical communication is the tekom competence framework. Competences in the competence framework for technical communication use a cognitive approach: Competences are all mental resources necessary to fulfill certain tasks successfully or to carry out activities. The cognitive concept of competence also means the ability and skill to solve problems in the corresponding fieldsCompetence also reflects action orientation. The core meaning encompasses the necessary knowledge and ability, but also the readiness and responsibility to act.

The competence framework for technical communication was created based on the reference process for the development of information products: taking into account all necessary tasks, actions, and activities during the development of an information product, it specifies the required competences, knowledge, and skills. The competence framework for technical communication describes all processes and steps required in the development of information products. Based on the tasks and steps, the action-oriented competence framework describes the required areas of competence and competences, i.e., the necessary knowledge and skills to perform those tasks and activities.

The competence and certification requirements for 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 fields of competence, groups of topics, and learning contents

2. Competence and qualification profiles for the different qualification levels in line with the EQR, based on 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 corresponding learning outcomes. The certification examination verifies whether the 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 capable of 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 of "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" comprises 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 Taxonomy[1] 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 Taxonomy[2] 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 the prerequisite for realizing a skill. Skills thus means applying knowledge and using expertise for complex tasks and problem-solving.

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

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 Taxonomy[3] 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, as well as personal, social, and/or methodological skills in work or study situations, as well as the ability 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 also 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 assess or to evaluate an issue based on criteria. Competence is also expressed in the ability to synthesize and to create new things, e.g., through need-based adaptations, proprietary developments, or in innovations and enhancements.

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 Taxonomy[4] 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 tekom competence framework is hierarchically arranged into areas of competence in the creation process for information products. These areas 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 occur during any phase of information product creation process. The competence framework specifies all necessary competences, knowledge, and skills that accompany a certain field of competence. A field of competence can also contain several groups of topics.

4. Organization of the Personal Certification Center

The personal certification center is a unit within the Gesellschaft für Technische Kommunikation – tekom Deutschland e.V. The personal certification center reports to the tekom 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 tekom, in conformity with the normative specifications of DIN EN ISO/IEC 17024:2012. The personal certification center certifies candidates, monitors and re-certifies certified persons, and performs all activities directly connected with personal certification. The personal certification center includes the examination committee, the certification committee, and the expert committee. The operational management representative reports to the personal certification center.   The entire personal certification system of tekom also includes the auditing center the representative for the Deutsche Akkreditierungsstelle (DAkkS; "German Accreditation Center"), and the arbitration center. They report to the tekom Board of Directors, and are independent in their activities from the personal certification center.

Organizational chart of the personal certification center

---

[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.
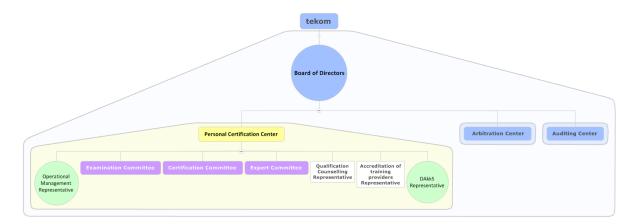
4.1. Tasks of the Personal Certification Center

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 for a limited time for the respective competence profile
- Monitoring of certified persons

The personal certification center develops evaluation tools to carry out examinations and criteria to evaluate examination performances. The personal certification center monitors and ensures compliance with the time frame of the certification process and compliance with other applicable guidelines and processes. The personal certification center develops publicly accessible information about the tekom 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 tekom Board of Advisors (professional experts), which is authorized by tekom to carry out the certification examination.

The tasks of the examination committee are, in detail:

- Authorized examiners for certification exams
- Approval of candidates for the certification exam, based on contents and professional expertise
- Appraisal and documentation of the evaluation of project reports or work samples
- Appraisal and evaluation of written tasks of the certification exam
- Carrying out and evaluation of oral parts of the certification exam

4.3. Tasks of the Certification Committee

The certification committee is a committee of professional experts appointed by the tekom 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 proof required of 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 based on the minutes
- Determining certification performance and overall scores
- Review of the fulfillment of prerequisites for recertification and of proof of applicants
- 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)
- Ordering the issue of the certificate and signature

4.4. Tasks of the Expert Committee

The expert committee is a committee of professional experts appointed by the tekom 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 involved in the certification program.

The tasks of the expert committee are, in detail:

- Development, expansion, and maintenance 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 maintenance of the examination question database
- Expansion of the tekom certification system

4.5. Tasks of the Qualification Consultation Center

The qualification consultation center is a committee of professional experts appointed by the tekom 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
- Abilty 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 their knowledge and skills
- Setting training goals
- Keeping informed about training options
- Keeping informed about the process of tekom certification

4.6. Tasks of the Auditing Center

The auditing center is a committee of professional experts appointed by the tekom Board of Advisors and an independent body from the other committees of the personal certification center, which prepares the accreditation of tekom 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.)
- Review central accreditation requirements according to independence, neutrality, objectivity, and avoidance of conflicting objectives
- Review of impartiality, conflicts of interest, independence
- Rerview compliance with and effectiveness of data protection and confidentiality
- Review 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 to address and decide on objections to certification decisions and complaints. The arbitration center is a body independent of the other committees. Arbitrators are appointed by the tekom 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 tekom, nor do they work for any training providers involved in the certification. The arbitration center rules on general complaints and 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 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 tekom 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. They are 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, ensuring independence and neutrality
- Ensuring 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 tekom

4.9. Tasks of the Operational Management Representative

The operational management representative is a tekom 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, updating, and instruction in the management handbook and associated documents
- Process development and documentation
- Document management (creation, control, versioning, archival) in cooperation with the tekom Education and Training Committee
- Development, maintenance, and administration of the "SharePoint" collaborative 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
- Collection and evaluation of internal and external feedback on the certification system
- Processing proposals for continual improvement
- Reporting to management on the status, development, and possible improvements to the management and certification system
- Examination evaluation
- Deriving improvements to the certification process
- Project management for expansion of the tekom certification system
- Implementation of measures, controlling the implementation controlling, and evaluatiing effectiveness
- 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
- Promoting awareness of standards conformity and quality among all employees and representatives of the personal certification center and interested parties

4.10.   Tasks of the tekom Accreditation Center for Training Programs

tekom accreditation for training programs in the area of technical communication is undertaken by tekom, attesting to the conformity of education providers' education programs with the requirements of the competence framework for technical communicators and accrediting the

suitability of the education program preparing certification candidates for the tekom certification examination for the respective accredited qualification level. Accreditation takes place on the basis of tekom'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 the certification or in the certification process.

5.1.1 Qualification Counselors

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.

Tasks

- Assess the initial situation of the consultation participant and overview of the professional career up to this point as well as previous education and training
- Discuss 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

Conditions of Appointment

Verification of the required competences of a counselor, for example, based on qualifications such as:

- 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 tekom regional group (helpful, but not a prerequisite)
- Membership in tekom Deutschland (or a country organization of tekom Europe)

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

Appointment and Management

Qualification counselors are appointed by the tekom 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

Definition

Authorized examiners conduct certification examinations and evaluate the candidates' performance as part of the certification process. In addition, they create minutes 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 who is 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.

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 evaluating the performance in the written part of the examination or for the appraising 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 minutes templates are to be used for the performance evaluation. The oral certification examination also includes an independent recorder commissioned by tekom. This person is not involved in the performance evaluation.

The tasks of the authorized examiner are:

- Appraisal and creation of the appraisal minutes on the technical project (information product and reflection) for Expert Level or evaluation of the practical tasks for Professional Level
- Conducting the examination and the performance evaluation in the oral part of the examination

The tasks of the recorder are:

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

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, through:
    - 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

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 tekom 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. Certification examiners are obliged to continually extend their training to keep their knowledge up to the latest standards. This can, for example, consist of participation in professional conferences or meetings.
4. Examiners must notify the tekom 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 they have the necessary competence for conducting it and the performance evaluation. If not, they 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.

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

Appointment and Management

Authorized examiners are appointed by the tekom 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

Definition

Certification decision-makers are persons who review the prerequisites for approval for certification as well as the performance or scores of the certification examination, check the conditions for recertification, make certification or recertification decisions, and grant certifications and recertifications.

Tasks

The general task of the certification decision-maker consists of the appraisal of all documents and proof regarding fulfillment of conditions for certification and recertification and complying with the normative competence and qualification requirements of the certification system of tekom.

- 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 minutes 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

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

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 tekom personal certification center, including the management system
- Knowledge of the competence framework for technical communication
- Knowledge of the competence and qualification requirements of the tekom 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 collaborate
- Knowledge of data protection
- Language skills (German/English)

Appointment and Management

Certification decision-makers are appointed by the tekom 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

Definition

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

Tasks

The general task of an auditor consists of appraising the functional capability of the certification center, incl. its 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 ISO/IEC 17024:2012 and review of standards conformity; creation of an audit report
- Continual review of certification center policy (particularly regarding 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

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

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 tekom personal certification center, including the management system
- Knowledge of the competence framework for technical communication
- Knowledge of the competence and qualification requirements of the tekom 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 collaborate, and communication skills

Appointment and Management

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

5.1.5 Arbitrators

Definition

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

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 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

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)

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 tekom personal certification center, including the management system
- Knowledge of the competence framework for technical communication
- Knowledge of the competence and qualification requirements of the tekom 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 collaborate, and communication skills

Appointment and Management

Arbitrators of the arbitration center are appointed for a term of three years by the tekom 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 tekom personal certification center and are managed by the tekom Board of Directors.

Arbitrators must:

- Know the certification system of the tekom personal certification center
- Be familiar with the tekom 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 tekom training events, as per the requirements of DIN EN ISO/IEC 17024:2012 for personal certification centers

5.1.6 Certification Candidates

Definition

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

Requirements

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

5.1.7 Certified Persons

Definition

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

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 their professional tasks in the area of technical communication:

- They must complete the tasks appropriate to their certified competence profile in consideration of the acknowledged professional rules
- They must personally perform the services required of them in the area of technical communication
- They must not use the certification document in a fraudulent or misleading way

The certified person is obliged to report the following issues to the tekom 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 tekom 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. They may refuse to provide information on questions that, if answered, would expose them or one of their 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 their certification.

6. The Three Pillars of the tekom 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 tekom.

tekom certification is divided into three pillars which are independent of one another:

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

6.1. Qualification Consultation

The tekom 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 participants the opportunity to discuss their current qualification 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
- Ability 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 their 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 tekom certification.

6.1.1 Voluntary Participation in the Qualification Consultation

Certification candidates who seek certification 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 seek certification with the prerequisite for approval "with professional experience", participation in the qualification consultation is mandatory for approval for the certification examination 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 tekom 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 tekom 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, a qualification consultation or other means.

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 informally acquired knowledge that has been 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 tekom is required 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

tekom accreditation of training programs in the area of technical communication ensures that the training contents cover the competence requirements for the respective competence profile to be certified.

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

6.3. Certification

Specific certification procedures determine whether a person's fulfils the competence requirements with regard to a certain competence profile, qualification level, areas of competence, and requirements for educational objectives.

Certification shows proof of competence and attests to 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, longer if part-time) 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 tekom 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, longer if part-time) professional experience in the area of technical communication or related areas

or

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

or

3.   Proof of participation in the tekom 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, longer if part-time) 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 tekom that does not cover the minimum of 600 hours, including internship, can be approved for the Expert Level certification examination as part of an exemption if the certification candidate participates in a qualification consultation and has a recommendation from the training provider for Expert Level certification.

- Proof of participation in a training program accredited by tekom, 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
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 tekom (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 tekom		Proof of participation in a tekom 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		Proof of activity of at least 24 months (based on a minimum 35-hour work week)	1 year (based on a minimum 35-hour work week, if part-time, accordingly longer) professional experience in the area of technical communication

(Left margin label: Approval Prerequisites for Certification & Proof of Competence Acquisition)

Overview of the prerequisites for admission to the different qualification levels

8. The Certification Examination

8.1. Purpose of Certification

The certification examination as technical communicator shall determine the candidate's professional capacity to act as a technical communicator. This means the ability to plan, conduct, and verify 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 – verification.

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

Passing 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 available on the tekom 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 is entitled to use the title awarded by the Gesellschaft für Technische Kommunikation – tekom Deutschland e.V., depending on the qualification level of certification,
"Technical Communicator (tekom) – Professional Level"
or
"Technical Communicator (tekom) – Expert Level".

8.3. Language of the Examination

The language in which documentation and the examination are conducted are 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. tekom 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 must be handled with strict confidentiality by the members of the tekom education and training committee, the professional centers, committees and commissions, and other representatives of the personal certification center or of tekom Deutschland. All persons involved must sign a declaration of compliance. 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 tekom personal certification center is the guarantee of impartiality, independence, and avoidance of conflicts of interest. All members of the tekom education and training committee, the professional centers, committees and commissions and other representatives of the personal certification center or of tekom 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 tekom personal certification center. All persons involved are obliged to sign a declaration of compliance.

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, tekom 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 tekom personal certification center makes information and registration forms for certification available at no cost on its WebPortal.

Examination periods are set by the examination committee. Certification examinations are generally accessible to all eligible persons. They generally take place twice a year at a time and place which is announced well in advance. Examination dates and registration deadlines are announced six months beforehand on the tekom 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 tekom, tekom will arrange a replacement date or, if this is not possible, will issue a 100% refund of approval and examination fees.

8.9. 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 for the Professional Level must be successfully passed.

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

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

The examination process is as follows:

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 for the Expert Level must be successfully passed.

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

1. Relevant technical project (reflection on an independently developed or reworked information product of 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 (30 minutes oral on the mandatory areas, 15 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 (15 minutes).

The examination process is as follows:

Creation and submission of the technical project (reflection and information product) to tekom by the announced submission date

Day of the examination:

Individual oral examination: defense of the technical project in the technical interview, oral examination on the mandatory modules and oral examination on the elective modules (60 minutes total)

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 shall demonstrate and display that they have 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. Take responsibility for the evaluation and improvement of work activities.
3. Apply and transfer theoretical and technical knowledge, as well as methodical knowledge, in concrete work tasks.

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

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

9.3.2 Information Product

The technical project is eligible as part of 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, for example:

- Paper/PDF
- Web pages
- Instructional films
- Apps

As an information product for the written part of the tekom certification examination, certification candidates can submit with it all technical documents for which the given 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, a website, an instructional film, an app, and so on), that 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 electronic form (PDF) only.

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 shall show that they are capable of using technical knowledge and methodical expertise in a specific case on an information product. Reflection means a probing and comparative thought process that includes a justification of the matter at hand.

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.

The written reflection on the information product shall describe 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 they would have done differently in technical or organizational terms if they had had the opportunity, or why an unusual solution is, in this particular case, reasonable.

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

- A progress report
- A substantive summary of technical documentation
- A project or construction report in the form of a journal
- A 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 (for a total of 30,000 to 40,000 characters).

9.3.4 Creation and Submission of the Technical Project

Certification candidates shall 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, the time when the information product was created is noted when the certification application is received. 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 was responsible for 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 (that is, information product and reflection) must be submitted in 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 calendar weeks before the date of the oral interview.

The completed technical project must be received by tekom by the stated submission date. If the technical project has not been received at tekom 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 tekom certification examination, Technical Communicator, Expert Level
- Name, address, and email of the author
- Date of submission

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 tekom 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 have personally carried out. I have not submitted the reflection as part of another examination procedure."

The written declaration of independence can be digitally signed. 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 who evaluate the technical project are identical with the authorized examiners who conduct the oral examination.

9.4. Practical Examination

The completion of practical tasks is required and accepted in writing for the Professional Level competence profile. The practical part of the examination tests professional competences and practical skills.

The practical tasks entail the specific performance of typical work tasks in the field of technical communication and make up the practical part of the examination for Professional Level certification.

By completing typical work tasks in the area of technical communication, the certification candidate should demonstrate their competence in action and show that they:

- Can plan a professional assignment appropriate for the target audience by applying their knowledge, skills, and capabilities independently and can perform it according to methodical and technical standards
- Is capable of assuming responsibility for the completion of work tasks
- Can adapt their own behavior to the respective circumstances when solving problems
- Can independently and competently complete specific tasks according to instructions

Practical tasks are completed online. Aids are generally not permitted.

Evaluation is carried out according to set guidelines. The solution for the practical tasks is, depending on the task set, assessed using criteria such as:

- Completeness
- General understanding
- Logic and plausibility
- Transparency
- Methodology
- System
- Structure
- Order

- Application of methods and elements (e.g., instructions for action, notes, references, style elements)

The authorized examiners who evaluate the practical tasks are, for a specific certification candidate, identical with the authorized examiners who evaluate the oral technical examination questions for the Professional Level competence profile.

The results are judged according to the point system and the performance evaluation scheme. Points are awarded on a scale of 0 to 100 and recorded with comments by the authorized examiners.

9.5. Catalog of Examination Questions

Certification candidates must take an oral examination for the certification examination on both the Professional Level and the Expert Level.

The oral examination questions are taken from the catalog of examination questions. The catalog of examination questions is defined by the expert committee for the technical examination questions.

The catalog of examination questions contains:

1. Technical questions for the Professional Level competence profile
2. Technical questions for the Expert Level competence profile from the mandatory areas

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

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

The technical examinations differ depending on qualification level (Professional Level/Expert Level) with regard to the fields of competence to be examined, as well as in the number, scope, difficulty, and type of questions for each field of competence. Every certification candidate may only be given questions corresponding to the competence profile and qualification level they are being certified for.

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.

According to scientific evidence on tests, the development of valid, accurate, and reliable closed examination questions and tasks (such as single choice, multiple choice, or drag-and-drop) places immense demands. For this reason, the technical part of the examination generally uses open questions.

9.6. Oral Certification Examination

Professional Level Competence Profile

Certification candidates for the Professional Level competence profile must pass an oral 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 broad theoretical and factual knowledge in technical communication and possess cognitive and practical skills to find solutions to special problems.

Expert Level Competence Profile

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 their technical project in an individual interview. In the technical interview, the certification candidate answers questions in greater depth about the technical project and elaborates how they apply their capabilities and knowledge under various conditions and how they handle any difficulties that can occur. The technical interview lasts for 15 minutes. The authorized examiner, who also evaluates the technical project submitted, leads the technical interview.

Certification candidates for the Expert Level competence profile must also take the theoretical part of the examination. The questions posed pertain to 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 shall demonstrate that they have comprehensive and specialized theoretical and factual knowledge in technical communication, are aware of the limitations of this knowledge, and possess the comprehensive cognitive and practical skills to develop creative solutions for abstract problems. The certification candidate will be tested on their technical and methodological knowledge on the state of the art in technology and on their applied expertise and knowledge.

9.6.1 Performance of the Oral Certification Examination

Authorized examiners have a significant influence on the performance of the certification candidate in the examination situation. They can use this influence to contribute in a positive sense to the certification candidate showing their best possible performance and this performance being evaluated as objectively as possible.

The participants in an oral certification examination are: the certification candidate, the authorized examiner entrusted by the chairperson of the examination committee with its performance, and a recorder. Certification candidates are orally examined by an authorized examiner. The standardized record is prepared by the recorder and signed by the authorized examiner and the recorder. Evaluation is carried out by the authorized examiner. Points are awarded on a scale of 0 to 100 and recorded with comments in the examination record by the authorized examiner.

9.7. Evaluation of the Examination Performance and Assessment Key

9.7.1 Professional Level Competence Profile

The authorized examiner who appraises the work on the practical tasks also evaluates the performances in the oral 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.

9.7.2 Expert Level Competence Profile

The authorized examiner who evaluates the technical project also evaluates the performance in the technical interview and in the mandatory and elective areas.

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

9.8. Performance Assessment

9.8.1 Assessment Key

Individual criteria or examination questions are evaluated on a scale from 0–100 points. 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.

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

The following assessment scale applies:

Grade		Points	Performance Evaluation
A	A+	97-100	**Very good:** A performance corresponding to the requirements on a particularly high level or exceeding 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.
			Failing
	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

are assessed with a grade of at least 57 points D+ SUFFICIENT.

If a part of the examination consists of several partial examinations, the individual scores obtained in these will balance out in the overall score ofthe part of the examination.

9.8.2 Performance Assessment for Expert Level

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 is at least 57 out of 100 points for a performance assessment of "sufficient" (D+) and if the technical project including the discussion of the technical project has been evaluated at least at 57 points as "sufficient" (D+).

Assessment Table Template

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**

9.9. 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 by 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 their request. Further explanations are not given.

The certification candidate is 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 approval for the certification examination with the tekom 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 they apply for a first certification, for retaking the examination, or for recertification.

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

In the approval procedure, the fulfillment of the prerequisites for approval are reviewed by the chairperson of the certification committee. For approval, all prerequisites for approval for the desired level 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 shall, 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 desired 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 (for Expert Level only) as well as the time and place of the certification examination. The time from approval for the certification procedure until the Professional Level certification examination or until the submission of the technical project (for Expert Level) shall not be longer or shorter than 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 for approval for the certification examination
- Signed data protection clause
- Signed declarations of the certification candidate
- If applicable, registration for qualification consultation
- If applicable, questionnaire of 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 minutes

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

- Evaluation minutes of the practical tasks
- Evaluation minutes of the technical examination part

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
- Examination minutes of the oral examination

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 start of the written examination. If a certification candidate seeks to repeat 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 examination, the examination is deemed not passed.

Withdrawal must be declared in writing (e.g, 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 tekom personal certification center.
2. Unexcused absence or tardiness on the 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 tekom. 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 certification are fulfilled.

Certification candidates are certified if they:

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 (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 decides 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 in writing, with a justification, to tekom for forwarding to the chairperson of the arbitration center of the tekom 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 involved. The arbitration rules regulate this in closer detail.

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

10.6.2 Negative Certification Decision

If certification is not granted, the certification candidate can apply again for the next possible certification examination date. If the certification candidate did not pass the certification

examination, they can reapply for the next possible certification examination date and retake the certification examination. 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 the certification candidate fulfills all prerequisites for certification as per the certification files and has successful passed the certification examinations, 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 (tekom)".

The certificate states 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 tekom certificate holders. The person's certification body of tekom may, upon written request from persons or entities with a legitimate interest (e.g., from potential clients of a certified person) provide information on whether the person is legally carrying the certificate. The tekom 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, their name, private address, date of birth, place of birth, and work place of the certificate holder are stored. By their signature on the application for certification and registration for the certification examination, the participant declares their acceptance of these regulations in the event the certificate is granted. The tekom personal certification center complies with the provisions of applicable data protection laws.

10.6.4 Validity of the Certificate

Personal certificates are valid for five years from the day the certificate is issued. 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 tekom personal certification center monitors the proper use of the certificates issued by certified persons. Verification can take place through telephone 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.

Misuse includes incorrect references to certification systems or misleading use of certificates. If the certification center determines that a 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 applicable, through deletion of the entry on the website. Falsified certificates will be declared invalid by the tekom personal certification center. The same applies for mistakenly issued certificates not returned to the tekom personal certification center.

11. Recertification

11.1. Maintenance of the Qualification

After receiving the tekom certificate, the certified person ensures through suitable measures of their own that they maintain their professional competence as long as the certificate is valid. They document these measures in a suitable way.

tekom 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 level obtained. If several certificates in the area of technical communication have been obtained, recertification must take place on the highest qualification level (Expert Level).

To extend the validity of a certificate, a written application for extension, including all forms of proof described in the following, must 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 review of incidents, if any, 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 period 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, they 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 (on average) per year of interruption in professional activity.

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

If the formal prerequisites are not fulfilled, and/or the proof provided is insiufficient or missing, the certificate is not extended. Ini this case, 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 expiration date of the original validity of the certificate to be extended.

Proof of Professional Practice

Appropriate professional practice must be proven in the area of the competence profile for the duration of validity of the certificate. For example, confirmation by an employer or an interim report are valid as proof of practice. The certificate holder is responsible for the necessary confirmations and required documentation of their activities within the scope of their certificate.

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 their 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 tekom Regional Group events with confirmation of participation are valid as acknowledged training programs.

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

Among others, the following are considered acknowledged training programs:

- tekom conferences: a flat 50% of conference time (4 hours) per day or the sum of time spent in confirmed participation in workshops.
- Regional group events: a flat 1.5 hours per event, if possible with confirmation of participation
- Professional literature, tekom publications, the professional journal 'technische kommunikation', the professional magazine 'tcworld magazine', Intelligent Information blog: the maximum number of hours for self-study of literature or professional journals is a flat 5 hours in total counting towards the required training time of 40 hours for recertification.
- tekom webinars: a flat 1 hour per event
- Company seminars, seminars and workshops, offers from training providers: the absolute duration of the seminar (maximum of 8 hours per seminar day) or a flat 3 hours per program are counted

The tekom certification center reserves the right to decide on the equal value of other training programs.

A self-declaration in the tekom form of proof of training time is valid as proof, if possible with a confirmation of participation (e.g., through the signature of the lecturer on the appropriate form), also combined with a copy of the event program.

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

If a certificate holder fails to meet the deadline to apply for recertification, recertification can take place if they provide proof of training for an additional 16 hours per year (on average), calculated from the date of expiration 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 the application for recertification was filed.

Failure to apply for recertification in time or an interruption in professional activity of more than two years on the qualification level obtained, means a valid certificate can be recovered only by re-

examination (first certification). The duration of validity is in turn five years (in line with the 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 their fields of activity. The differentiation of competence profiles and thus of qualification levels in tekom personal certifications arises from the different possible professional roles and competences of technical communicators.

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

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

The competence framework for technical communication includes four dimensions:

1. Areas of competence within the process for creating information products that contain areas of competence, groups of topics, and learning contents
2. Profiles of competence and qualification for the different qualification levels in line with the EQR, defined under consideration of different scopes of learning content 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 that are relevant to certification.

For the three pillars of the tekom certification system, which are the qualification consultation, training, and the certification examination, the the tekom competence framework with its perspective oriented towards teaching and examining is the basis for technical communication.

13. Appendix (Normative) Certification as "Technical Communicator (tekom) – 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 (tekom) – 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 (tekom) – 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 tekom 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 oral examination of 15 minutes or as oral group examination with approx. 15 minutes per examinee)

13.6.   Areas of Competence for the Examination for "Technical Communicator (tekom) – Professional Level"

The basis for the examination for "Technical Communicator (tekom) – Professional Level" is the following mandatory areas.

Other applicable documents:

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

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

or

2.   Proof of participation in one of the training programs accredited by tekom, of at least 600 hours including internship

or

3.   Proof of participation in the tekom 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, longer if part-time) 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 tekom that does not cover the minimum of 600 hours, including internship, can be approved for the Expert Level certification examination as part of an exemption if the certification candidate participates in a qualification consultation and and has a recommendation from the training provider for Expert Level certification.

* Proof of participation in a training program accredited by tekom, 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 for the Expert Level consists of:

1. A relevant technical project (information product and reflection) (timeframe: three months after approval notice)

2. A theoretical examination in the mandatory areas of the competence profile and in the individual elective areas of the certification candidate
   (60 minutes: 30 minutes oral, on mandatory areas, and 15 minutes oral, on elective areas)

3. An oral technical interview (defense). The defense of the technical project created previously takes place as part of the oral examination (10 minutes).

14.6. Areas of Competence for the Examination for "Technical Communicator (tekom) – Expert Level"

The basis for the examination for "Technical Communicator (tekom) – Expert Level" is the following mandatory and elective areas.

Other applicable documents:

1. *Website: Competence Framework for Technical Communication: Expert Level Competence Profile*

2. *Teaching and Examination-Oriented Perspective of the tekom Competence Framework*