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Language learning services outside formal education — Requirements

Services d'apprentissage de langues en dehors de l'éducation formelle — Exigences

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Foreword

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The committee responsible for this document is Technical Committee ISO/TC 232, *Learning services outside formal education*.

Introduction

The objective of this International Standard is to specify requirements for language learning services outside formal education. This International Standard uses the term "learning services", rather than "training", in order to encourage a focus on the learner and the results of the learning process, and to emphasize the full range of options available for language learning.

This International Standard is intended to set minimum requirements for language learning services. The aims of this International Standard are:

a)   to improve transparency and enhance the credibility of the language learning services market;

b)   to protect consumers by preventing prejudicial practices;

c)   to improve the quality of language learning for all interested parties.

This International Standard is necessary because, while in some countries the quality control of language learning services is well established, the standards applied vary greatly, and in many other countries there is limited or no regulation.

This International Standard incorporates the broad interdisciplinary expertise of various organizations involved in standardization: quality assurance, educational technology, programme evaluation, second language acquisition and applied linguistics, at both national and international levels.

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Language learning services outside formal education — Requirements

1 Scope

This International Standard specifies requirements for language learning services outside formal education. These include any language learning services that are addressed to language learners themselves, as well as to interested parties that are acquiring the services for the benefit of learners. The key features of any such service are that the goals of learning are defined and evaluated, and that it involves interaction with the learner. The instruction can be delivered face-to-face or mediated by technology, or it can be a blend of both.

Entities interested in using this International Standard will include language learning service providers of all kinds and sizes, as well as associations or consortia of language learning service providers.

In cases where the language learning services are provided by an organization that delivers products (goods and services) or other learning services in addition to language learning services, this International Standard only applies to language learning services.

This International Standard is not specifically aimed at schools, colleges and universities which provide language learning as part of a formal educational system but may be useful to them as a tool for reflection and self-evaluation.

2 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

2.1
assessment
<language learning services> gathering of language data to determine the language ability of an individual language *learner* (2.12) or group of learners

2.2
authentic material
<language learning services> material not originally produced for language *learning* (2.13) purposes, but for purposes of real communication

2.3
award
<language learning services> designation given by a *language learning service provider* (2.11) to a *learner* (2.12), in order to indicate a level of performance or attainment, or the completion of a *learning* (2.13) programme

2.4
blended learning
combination of face-to-face *learning* (2.13) with *e-learning* (2.8)

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC 2382-36:2008, 36.01.05, modified]

2.5
competence
<language learning services> ability to apply knowledge and skills to achieve intended outcomes

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC 17024:2012, 3.6, modified]

2.6
continuous professional development
ongoing intentional enhancement of professional knowledge or of professional *competence* (2.5)

2.7
curriculum
<language learning services> plan of study prepared by the *language learning service provider* (2.11), which describes the aims, content, *learning* (2.13) outcomes, learning and teaching methods, and *assessment* (2.1) processes

2.8
e-learning
learning (2.13) facilitated by information and communications technology

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC 24751-1:2008, 2.18]

2.9
evaluation
<language learning services> systematic gathering of information in order to make decisions about possible adjustments to the *language learning service* (2.10)

2.10
language learning service
processes or sequence of activities designed to enable language *learning* (2.13)

2.11
language learning service provider
LLSP
organization or individual providing *language learning services* (2.10) outside formal education, including any personnel involved in the provision of the language *learning* (2.13) service

2.12
learner
<language learning services> person engaged in language *learning* (2.13)

2.13
learning
<language learning services> acquiring knowledge, behaviour, skills, values, preferences or understanding in the language domain

2.14
learning environment
classrooms, multimedia rooms and other physical spaces used for language *learning* (2.13), as well as the furniture and equipment they contain

2.15
sponsor
<language learning services> organization or individual that acquires *language learning services* (2.10) on behalf of *learners* (2.12), that provides financial or other support for them, or that has a vested interest in the outcome of the language *learning* (2.13)

Note 1 to entry: Sponsors include corporations, government agencies and persons.

2.16
teacher
<language learning services> person whose job is to provide instruction and facilitate *learning* (2.13)

3 Determining language learning needs

3.1 Designated and qualified LLSP personnel shall determine the language learning needs of the learner or the sponsor.

3.2 Where relevant and available, national or international frameworks for proficiency in language learning shall be referred to when determining the needs of the learner and the sponsor.

NOTE   Annex A provides examples of national and international frameworks.

3.3 The needs analysis shall include:

a) an assessment and analysis of the learner's language learning needs, including:

   i) the desired language skills (e.g. reading, writing, listening, speaking), the desired level of competence in the language, and the time frame, i.e. the goal of the language learning;

   ii) the purposes for which, and the contexts in which, the learner needs to use language outside the course (e.g. socially, in the domain of work or study);

b) an assessment of the learner's existing level of competence in the language being taught, using techniques such as internal tests, third party tests or self-assessment;

c) reference to the LLSP's definition of language competence levels (see 3.4 below);

d) identification of other aspects of the learner's background and situation which may influence the learner's language learning needs (e.g. age, first language, cultural, educational and professional background, language learning history, literacy level, cognitive and physical abilities).

3.4 Information shall be provided showing the equivalence of the LLSP's definitions of language competence levels with a widely known national or international scale, and indicate how these competence levels relate to the goals of instruction.

NOTE   Annex A provides examples of scales of proficiency for language learners.

3.5 Information about the relevant education, training history and prior learning of learners, including language qualifications and credentials awarded to them, shall be obtained and used with the legitimate consent of the learners.

3.6 The specific aims, wishes, goals and requirements of sponsors commissioning the language learning service shall be determined.

3.7 Where relevant and feasible, learners shall be provided with the support they need in understanding their own language learning needs and goals.

3.8 Where relevant and feasible, learners or sponsors should be consulted as to how they expect the language skills, competences and awareness developed as a result of the language learning service to transfer to the work-related tasks and responsibilities of the learners, and also as to what the sponsor will consider to be indicators of success.

3.9 An agreement shall be reached between the LLSP and the learner or the sponsor on the findings of the needs analysis, and on the nature and intended goals of the language learning service that would best meet the needs of the learner or the sponsor.

3.10 Learners or sponsors shall be given information about the available learning services that correspond to their needs, including about aspects such as outcomes, scheduling, teacher selection, class size, curriculum, method and cost.

3.11 Teachers shall be fully informed about the findings of the needs analyses relating to the learners placed in their courses.

4 Design of the language learning services

4.1   The language learning and teaching methods and learning materials used, and the modes of learning (e.g. classroom, blended learning, e-learning), shall correspond to the aims and requirements of the curriculum, and shall meet the agreed goals (see 3.9), as well as the needs, background and situation of the learners. The materials shall be accurate in terms of content.

4.2   The specific aims and planned outcomes of the language learning service selected to meet the needs of learners and, where applicable, of sponsors shall be clearly specified and communicated to the learners or their sponsors, and to teachers.

4.3   The principles, learning and teaching methods and the modes of learning to be used shall also be specified and made known to the learners and, where applicable, their sponsors.

4.4   The roles and responsibilities of the LLSP, the learners and their sponsors, relating to the delivery of the language learning services and to the monitoring and assessment of learning, shall be clearly specified.

4.5   A curriculum and means of assessment reflecting the intended goals of the language learning service (see 3.9 and 3.10) shall be designed and developed.

4.6   Curriculum design and development shall be carried out by professionals who are experienced or trained in the design and development of curricula for language learning services.

4.7   In the design of language courses, the following shall be taken into account:

a)   the background and situation of the learners [see 3.3, bullet d)];

b)   the language learning needs and language learning goals of the learners or sponsors;

c)   the language(s) that learners have previously acquired or studied;

d)   the characteristics of the target language and, where necessary, the characteristics of the learners' first language;

e)   the proposed intensity and duration of the course, and the mode and context in which it is to be delivered (e.g. classroom learning, blended learning, e-learning);

f)   best practice and latest research in language learning and teaching.

4.8   The learning goals and curriculum documents shall be made available to learners and, where applicable, to their sponsors prior to and during delivery of the language learning services.

4.9   The teachers, including those not permanently or exclusively employed by the LLSP, shall implement in their teaching the language teaching principles and methods specified by the LLSP.

4.10   The LLSP shall ensure that the curriculum and learning materials are reviewed, internally or otherwise, at least annually and, if necessary, are updated.

5 Teachers appointed by the language learning service provider

5.1   LLSP teachers shall either:

a)   be experienced and have a qualification/training in teaching a language that is recognized within the country where the LLSP offers its services, or

b)   be experienced and have a tertiary degree combined with a recognized professional qualification to teach the target language that was awarded in another country, or

c)   be novices without the type of qualification/training specified above: novice teachers shall have necessary language teaching capabilities, shall undergo training and shall work under the supervision of experienced language teachers with recognized qualifications/training.

NOTE   Professional qualifications can be recognized by, for example, a governmental authority, an industry-created self-regulatory body, or an accredited university or college. In the absence of such recognition bodies, professional qualification can be deemed acceptable by those LLSPs in the country which provide courses in the language in question.

5.2   All teachers, including novice teachers, shall have the necessary competence in the target language to undertake the language teaching and related duties assigned to them.

5.3   All teachers shall engage in continuous professional development covering at least the following:

a)   pedagogic principles, best practice and current research in language teaching methodology and language learning relevant to the curriculum;

b)   cultural and intercultural competences relevant to the target language and teaching context;

c)   learning and teaching competences, and use of aids and resources relevant to the curriculum, including instructional and informational technologies;

d)   competence in classroom management;

e)   assessment procedures for language learning;

f)   the maintenance and enhancement of their competence in the target language.

NOTE   See Annex B for details of a sample competence grid for language teaching.

5.4   The continuous professional development plans shall take into account the results of the evaluation of the language learning service (see Clause 9) and the teachers' own views about their continuous professional development needs.

5.5   If substitution is required, arrangements shall be made to ensure that qualified teachers (see 5.1) are available, and that such teachers are guided in the preparation and delivery of the lessons they are asked to teach.

6 Availability and accessibility of language learning materials

6.1   Language learning materials that are compatible with the learning and teaching principles and methods and with the course objectives shall be selected or developed by the LLSP, as required.

6.2   These language learning materials shall be available to learners in sufficient quantity, and learners or their sponsors shall be guided in the purchase of those that are needed.

6.3   The language learning resources shall include, but not be limited to, authentic materials that are up-to-date and reflect current usage of the language being learned.

6.4   The language learning resources shall include materials that are adapted to the needs of the learners and that are compatible with the language learning and teaching principles and methods specified by the LLSP.

6.5   The social and cultural needs, as well as the background and situation of the learners, shall be considered when selecting, designing and using language learning materials.

6.6   In addition to language learning resources, access or guidance shall be provided concerning other relevant language learning materials, such as, but not limited to, dictionaries, reference tools and computer-assisted language learning resources.

6.7   The learning resources and information relevant to the language learning service shall be made available to the teachers before delivery of the language learning service.