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Language learning services — Requirements

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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives).

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This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 232, Education and learning services.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at www.iso.org/members.html.

Introduction

The objective of this International Standard is to specify requirements for language learning services . 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.

ISO 29991 is intended to set minimum requirements for language learning services. The aims of the standard are (a) to improve transparency and enhance the credibility of the language learning services market; (b) to protect consumers by preventing prejudicial practices, and (c) to improve the quality of language learning for all interested parties.

Such a 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.

ISO 29991 incorporates the broad interdisciplinary expertise of various organisations involved in standardisation – 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 — Requirements

1 Scope

This International Standard specifies requirements for language learning services. These include any language learning services that are addressed to language learners themselves as well as to interested parties who 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 may be delivered face-to-face, be mediated by technology, or be a blend of both.

Entities interested in using this standard will include language learning service providers of all kinds and any size, 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.

2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

3 Terms and definitions

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

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <http://www.iso.org/obp>
- IEC Electropedia: available at <http://www.electropedia.org/>

3.1

assessment

<language learning services> gathering of language data to determine the language ability of an individual language learner or group of learners

3.2

authentic material

<language learning service> material not originally produced for language learning purposes but for purposes of real communication

3.3

award

<language learning service> designation given by a language learning service provider to a learner, in order to indicate a level of performance or attainment, or the completion of a learning programme

3.4

blended learning

combination of face-to-face learning with e-learning

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

3.5

competence

<language learning service> ability to apply knowledge and skills to achieve intended outcomes

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

3.6

continuous professional development

ongoing intentional enhancement of professional knowledge or of professional competence

3.7

curriculum

<language learning service> plan of study prepared by the language learning service provider which describes the aims, content, learning outcomes, learning and teaching methods, and assessment processes.

3.8

e-learning

learning facilitated by information and communications technology

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

3.9

evaluation

<language learning services> systematic gathering of information in order to make decisions about possible adjustments to the language learning service

3.10

language learning service

processes or sequence of activities designed to enable language learning

3.11

language learning service provider

LLSP

organization or an individual providing language learning services, including any personnel involved in the provision of the language learning service

3.12

learner

<language learning service> person engaged in language learning

3.13

learning

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

3.14

learning environment

classrooms, multimedia rooms and other physical spaces used for language learning, as well as furniture and equipment they contain

3.15

sponsor

<language learning service> organization or individual that acquires language learning services on behalf of learners, provides financial or other support for them, or has a vested interest in the outcome of the language learning

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

3.16 teacher

person whose job is to provide instruction and facilitate learning, whether in an educational institution or professional training environment.

4 Determining language learning needs

4.1 Designated and qualified LLSP personnel shall determine the learner's or sponsor's language learning needs.

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

NOTE See [Annex A](#) for examples of national and international frameworks.

4.3 The needs analysis shall include:

- a) the assessment and analysis of the learner's language learning needs, including:
 - i) the desired language skills (for example, 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 contexts in which the learner needs to use language outside the course (for example, socially, in the domain of work or study, etc.);
- b) 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 bear on the learner's language learning needs (for example, age, first language, cultural, educational and professional background, language learning history, literacy level, cognitive and physical abilities).

4.4 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 See [Annex A](#) for examples of scales of proficiency for language learners.

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

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

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

4.8 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 learners' work-related tasks and responsibilities, and also about what the sponsor will consider to be indicators of success.

4.9 An agreement shall be reached between the LLSP and the learner or 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 learner's or sponsor's needs.

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

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

5 Design of the language learning services

5.1 The language learning and teaching methods and learning materials used and the modes of learning (for example, classroom, blended learning, e-learning, autonomous or AI-enabled platforms) shall correspond to the aims and requirements of the curriculum, and shall meet the agreed goals (see [4.10](#)), as well as the needs, background and situation of the learners. The materials shall be accurate in terms of content.

5.2 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

5.3 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.

5.4 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.

5.5 A curriculum and means of assessment reflecting the intended goals of the language learning service (see [4.9](#) and [4.10](#)) shall be designed and developed.

5.6 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;

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

- a) the background and situation of the learners (see 4.3d);
- 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 (for example, classroom learning, blended learning, e-learning, or autonomous and AI-enabled platforms);
- f) best practice and latest research in language learning and teaching.

5.8 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.