

Recognition of international ICT certification standards in the profile part of the Maturita examination

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

PRACTICAL MEASURE/INITIATIVE

 CZECHIA

Timeline

2021 Implementation

2022 Implementation

2023 Implementation

2024 Implementation

ID number 41970

Background

There are activities to support Czech education through digital technologies, but only a few of them are globally standardised. Schools do not prepare all their students for the ICT certification as part of regular ICT education. Students can obtain the ICT certificate on a voluntary basis, usually at a more favourable price or even free of charge, where the school itself is a provider/authority entitled to issue the certification.

Objectives

The primary objective of the pilot testing is to verify the effectiveness of the recognition of international ICT certification standards. The pilot also aims to identify the opportunities and conditions under which it would be possible - by means of an Amendment to the School Act and the relevant implementing Decree on Detailed Conditions on Completing Education by the *Maturita* Examination in Upper Secondary Schools - to replace part of the exam in the education field Informatics and information and communication technologies (framework educational programme for upper-secondary general schools, *Gymnázia*) and in the education field Education in information and communication technologies (framework educational programme for upper-secondary VET schools) with the result(s) of successfully completed exam(s) in this field of education certified by internationally recognised certificate(s).

Description

On 1 October 2020, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports launched a pilot aimed at recognising international ICT certificates, that prove students' knowledge and skills not only in informatics and information and communication technologies (in upper-secondary general schools, *Gymnázia*) and in education in information and communication technologies (in secondary VET schools) but also in digital competences in the profile part of the *Maturita* examination: *Maturita* in 4-year programmes consists of the standardised State part common for all programmes and profile (school) part. The draft of the pilot was drawn up in consultation with the representatives of selected Czech national authorities

that offer the possibility of obtaining such certificates and who can participate in the process. School representatives who had either expressed interest in recognising certificates or had the results of relevant verification tests already included in their criteria for one of the profile *Maturita* examinations participated and contributed to the procedure.

Every year, new schools can apply to participate. The pilot is implemented by schools in cooperation with the National Pedagogical Institute of the Czech Republic by 30 September 2023.

Following application to participate, the school administration decides which internationally valid ICT certificates acquired by the students in the field of digital technologies will be recognised, and to what extent. The school observes the consistency between the school curriculum and the syllabus (educational content) of the relevant international certificate. During the *Maturita* examination, the relevant certificate is recognised as a completed part of the profile *Maturita* examination in the vocational subject.

Unlike the situation in languages, in the field of digital competences it is possible to recognise only a part of the *Maturita* examination. It cannot be fully replaced, although it is possible to use several different ICT certificates at the same time.

Students of the graduation year can submit certificates that they obtained before the start of their final year of education. These certificates must be valid at the time of the *Maturita* examination: the validity of each certificate is governed by the provisions of the competent certification authorities. The school verifies validity of the certificate when submitted by the student.

In the pilot, the eligible ICT certification standards (exams) are Oracle Academy, Cisco Networking Academy, Microsoft Certifications, ECDL/ICDL and Autodesk Academia. The ECDL group certificates were the most common type in the first year of pilot testing.

2021 Implementation

A total of 18 schools originally applied to participate, but six decided (due to the COVID-19 pandemic) to commence the pilot testing no sooner than in the school year 2020/21. In that year, the pilot included 32 upper-secondary schools.

2022 Implementation

During the 2021/2022 school year, seven schools for various reasons withdrew from the pilot, which resulted in a total of 22 schools that did participate. The schools piloted the use of certificates in 12 fields of education, including Information Technology, Electrical Engineering, Telecommunication, Tourism, Economics and business, etc. Even in the second school year of the pilot, no schools signed up to pilot-test certificates from the Autodesk Academia group. Most schools again piloted ECDL/ICDL, followed by Cisco Academy and Microsoft Certifications.

The students really appreciated the recognition of certificates also in the second year of the pilot. It spares them a chunk of preparation otherwise needed for the *Maturita* exam. The schools view the opportunity to provide certificates as an added value for students, which enhances their applicability in the labour market; it constitutes also an important factor in terms of attracting new students to the schools. The *Maturita* success rate in students who used the certificate when taking the exam is 22 percentage points higher than the success rate of students without such certificate. However, we cannot disregard the fact that the certificates are successfully obtained by students with better academic results and therefore they also stand higher chances of successful passing the *Maturita* exam.

So far, the pilot has shown that the individual certificates of all providers are very well aligned with the framework educational programmes and their content accurately overlaps with the curriculum. Thus, the schools do not have to use a large number of additional available teaching hours for preparation and the curriculum is covered within the basic timetable. From this point of view, certificates can be used in the *Maturita* exams, where they can fully substitute the learning content needed to pass

the exam.

For the final year of the pilot, the MŠMT has allowed the substitution of a whole part of the Maturita exam. Within the pilot testing in the school year 2022/2023, some participating schools intent to use the option to recognise (substitute with certificates) the whole ICT part of the Maturita exam. The decision is left entirely to the discretion of the individual school headmasters. Currently, 16 of 22 participating schools are convinced that substituting the full exam is the right way to go.

The findings of the pilot are expected to be evaluated in 2023 and taken into account in the legislative process.

2023 Implementation

During the 2022/23 school year, the vast majority of schools used the option to recognise certificates in the profile part of the Maturita exam in the form of practical exams. Some schools did so during the oral exams in the presence of the Maturita exam board. The number of schools participating in the pilot more than doubled to 44 for the 2023/2024 school year, with 33 of them being VET schools.

For the 2023/24 school year, the range of acceptable ICT certification standards expanded to include the certificates by Autodesk, Cisco, Microsoft, ECDL/ICDL and Oracle, with the addition of the Solidworks certificate. This range will remain unchanged until the end of piloting. It is allowed to use multiple different certificates at a time. The most common type of certificate was any certificate from the ECDL group.

Schools were piloting certificates in a total of 13 fields of study (including VET), for example, Information Technology, Transport Equipment, Electrical Engineering, Telecommunications, Tourism and Public Administration.

In 2023, 60% of students (557 of a total of 933 students) in the final year of study in participating schools submitted a certificate. The full profile part of the Maturita exam was recognised for 336 students (25% of the total number), while a part of the Maturita exam was recognised for 191 students (13% of the total number). Based on a decision by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MŠMT), the pilot testing has been extended to the end of September 2025.

2024 Implementation

In the 2023/2024 school year, four of the participating schools reported that their students did not opt for any certificates this year. However, approximately 800 students sought recognition for their certificates across 14 different VET fields of education. Schools utilised certifications from the SOLIDWORKS group alongside other recognised certifications.

The draft amendment to the Education Act from July includes provisions to recognise all international ICT certificates obtained during the course of studies, rather than just shortly before the Maturita exam. At the moment, this option is available only to schools involved in the pilot validation.

Schools involved in this pilot reported a continuous increase in student interest in obtaining international ICT certificates. Furthermore, the number of schools that recognise ICT certificates as a full profile examination is gradually rising.

Most pilot schools also function as official certification sites for their respective certificates, such as ECDL/ICDL and Cisco Networking Academy. They can therefore conduct individual examinations and issue official certifications of completion. While students typically cover at least part of the certification exam costs, about half of the schools cover the cost of the first attempt at the exam for their students. Certifications from the Oracle Academy and, in many cases, Cisco Networking Academy are provided free of charge.

Bodies responsible

- Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports
- National Pedagogical Institute of the Czech Republic

Target group

Learners

Learners in upper secondary, including apprentices

Thematic categories

Modernising VET offer and delivery

Acquiring key competences

Integrating digital skills and competences in VET curricula and programmes

Transparency and portability of VET skills and qualifications

Learners' possibilities of accumulation, validation and recognition of learning outcomes acquired non-formally and informally

European and international dimensions of VET

International qualifications

Subsystem

IVET

Further reading

[Website of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport with announcement of the pilot](#)

Related policy developments

2024 Implementation

Key competences in the education strategy

The 2014 Education strategy for 2015-20 supports upper secondary VET learners acquiring skills and knowledge (including basic skills) at a level allowing them to pursue a career and to continue learning.

 CZECHIA

Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET

“ ... ” **Cite as**

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<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/41970>