




How to Assess, Validate and Recognise Learning Outcomes





This guide was created in connection with fulfilling activities aimed at supporting the ECVET tool in the period from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2016.

The guide was prepared by members of the National Team of ECVET Experts working under the auspices of the Centre for International Cooperation in Education.

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1

Introduction

The aim of this guide is to make it easier for those who implement mobility projects and who – as part of their projects – create and use units of learning outcomes, to carry out the procedure for assessing, validating and recognising learning outcomes that were acquired by project participants during a placement in another organisation. The guide can also help to unify the procedures used in the assessment, validation and recognition of learning outcomes.

The procedures presented in this guide are recommended procedures. While existing materials on units of learning outcomes mainly dealt with the creating of these units as key documents in applying the principles of the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET)¹ and were thus related to the period of **preparing a mobility project**, this guide also addresses the period when **learning within the project has already been finished** and the results of that learning need to be assessed, validated and recognised.

The content of this guide is divided into three parts, which deal with assessing learning outcomes, then validating these outcomes and finally recognising them. This arrangement corresponds both with the logical succession of these procedures and the time sequence in which they are carried out.

¹ Kašparová, Jana (editor): Jednotky výsledků učení a vzdělávací moduly na podporu mobility v rámci ECVET. National Institute for Education, Education Counselling Centre and Centre for Continuing Education of Teachers, Prague, 2012. ISBN 978-80-87652-55-8.

ECVET, Evropský systém pro zvýšení kvality mobility v odborném vzdělávání, Otázky a odpovědi. Centre for International Cooperation in Education, Prague 2013. ISBN 978-80-87335-52-9.

Čičvácová, Michala, Crouchley, Lenka: Jak vytvořit jednotku výsledků učení. Praktický průvodce pro realizátory projektů v rámci programu Erasmus+. Centre for International Cooperation in Education, Prague 2014.



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Assessment of learning outcomes

In the terminology of vocational education, the assessment of learning outcomes refers to the process of appraising knowledge, skills and/or competences of an individual against predefined criteria.² In order to do a proper assessment of learning outcomes, it is necessary both **to specify the expected learning outcomes and to set the methods for verifying them and the criteria for assessing them**. Both of the above have to be specified in the unit of learning outcomes, namely:

- a) in the section containing the specification of the expected learning outcomes,
- b) in the section that sets the methods for verifying these learning outcomes and the assessment criteria.



An example taken from a unit of learning outcomes in a technical study programme for apprentices:

Name of unit of learning outcomes: Repairs of passenger car accessories

Qualification: 23-103-H Car mechanic – accessories

EQF level: 3

Expected learning outcomes:

- Knows basic terms of electrical engineering
- Is able to look up a specified spare part in the catalogue
- Knows the functionalities of the diagnostic device for starting systems in passenger cars
- Works with a diagnostic device for starting systems in passenger cars
- Repairs faults in starting systems in passenger cars
- Knows the functionalities of a diagnostic device for lighting appliances in passenger cars
- Does diagnostics of exterior lighting appliances in passenger cars
- Adjusts car headlights using a headlight beam tester (regloscope)

² CEDEFOP: Terminology of European education and training policy: a selection of 130 terms, 2nd edition. Publications Office, Luxembourg 2014. ISBN 978-92-896-1165-7.

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Assessment of learning outcomes

In the section containing the specification of the expected learning outcomes, the learning outcomes can either be divided into knowledge, skills and/or competences, or they can be listed (without further breakdown) as professional activities. For different units, the number of items of expected learning outcomes usually varies, because it is influenced by the age and the abilities of the mobility participants, as well as by the length of the period during which they are supposed to acquire the expected learn-

ing outcomes. In most projects of international mobility within the European Erasmus+ programme, the length of this period is two or three weeks and – for a period of this length – the number of learning outcomes that are listed in the units is mostly about ten. This number is not a strict requirement, but rather a recommendation. Below are examples of sections of units of learning outcomes with specifications of these learning outcomes.

An example taken from a unit of learning outcomes in a services study programme for apprentices:

Name of unit of learning outcomes: Basic activities of a shop assistant

Qualification: 66-003-H Shop assistant

EQF level: 3

Expected learning outcomes:

- Knows the principles of warehousing
- Assesses the type and quality of goods using his/her senses
- Weighs and measures goods
- Packages goods using appropriate packaging materials
- Prepares goods for display and sale
- Operates the cash register
- Handles customers' credit card payments
- Knows the principles of handling complaints about goods
- Takes stock according to specified criteria and procedures



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Assessment of learning outcomes

According to the principles of the ECVET system, learning outcomes are to be assessed **at the end of the mobility period** and the assessment of learning outcomes is to be carried out by a **predetermined person** from the **receiving organisation**. Entrusting the assessment process to a person from the receiving organisation is in line with a key objective of ECVET, namely to **simplify** the procedure for assessing and recognising learning outcomes.

The simplification consists in the fact that the assessment of learning outcomes is only carried out in the receiving organisation, while the sending organisation does not assess the participants again, but rather accepts the results of the assessment made by the foreign receiving organisation. This is an application of the principle of mutual trust between both participating organisations.

An example taken from a unit of learning outcomes in an economic study programme ending with a Maturita examination:

Name of unit of learning outcomes: Processing of economic information

Qualification or education field: 63-41-M/02 Business Academy

EQF level: 4

Expected learning outcomes:

- Knows the main functions of organisational units of an enterprise
- Keeps a record of incoming and outgoing post
- Processes (collects, summarises, classifies, checks) information about payments
- Processes information about stocks
- Processes information about costs
- Processes information about wages
- Processes information about sales
- Works with accounting software
- Uses a printer and a copier



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Assessment of learning outcomes



The methods for verifying the learning outcomes and the assessment criteria are specified in the second main section of the unit of learning outcomes, as shown in the following examples taken from the units referenced below.

The above examples show the most common methods (verbal, practical) to be used for verifying the expected learning outcomes. Above all, it is necessary to be clear on whether the assessment task should be explained or described (this mainly applies to theoretical knowledge), or whether the verification process should include a practical demonstration of a certain skill. The purpose of the criteria is to provide assessors with viewpoints from which they are supposed to assess the degree to which the expected learning outcomes were acquired.

The task of the assessor from the receiving organisation is to assess – at the end of the mobility – for each participant whether, or possibly to what extent, they have acquired the learning outcomes specified in the unit. In doing so, the assessor should first assess each learning outcome of the mobility participant and then use

An example taken from a unit of learning outcomes in a technical study programme for apprentices:

Verification method	Assessment criteria
– Verbal explanation of basic electrical engineering terms	– Factual correctness according to electrical engineering theory
– Looking up spare parts in a catalogue – practical demonstration	– Correctness of identification of specified parts in a catalogue
– Verbal description of the diagnostic device for starting systems in passenger cars	– Factual correctness of the description of the diagnostic device
– Working with a diagnostic device for starting systems in passenger cars – practical demonstration	– Handiness, precision and speed in working with the diagnostic device
– Repair of a fault in a car starting system – practical demonstration	– Correctness, quality and speed in repairing a fault
– Verbal description of the diagnostic device for car lighting	– Factual correctness of the description of the diagnostic device
– Working with a diagnostic device for car lighting – practical demonstration	– Correctness, quality and speed of work and the identification of the parameters of lighting
– Adjustment of car headlights using a headlight tester (regloscope) – practical demonstration	– Correct parameters setting for the headlights being adjusted

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Assessment of learning outcomes

An example taken from a unit of learning outcomes in a services study programme for apprentices:

Verification method	Assessment criteria
– Verbal explanation of the principles of warehousing	– Factual correctness and completeness of explanation
– Practical demonstration of the assessment of goods quality using the senses	– Correctness and truthfulness of the result of assessment of goods quality using the senses
– Practical demonstration of weighing and measuring goods	– Accuracy of the determined weight and measurement of goods
– Practical demonstration of packaging goods	– Correct choice of packaging material, strength and economy of packaging
– Practical demonstration of preparing goods for display and sale	– Correctness, completeness and efficiency in preparing goods
– Practical demonstration of work with a cash register	– Correct choice of cash register functionalities, speed of service
– Practical demonstration of cash and cashless payment for goods	– Correct procedure for effecting the payment
– Practical application of the principles of handling complaints about goods	– Correctness and completeness of the application of principles of handling complaints about goods
– Practical demonstration of stock taking of goods	– Correctness, completeness and speed in stock taking

An example taken from a unit of learning outcomes in an economic study programme ending with a Maturita examination:

Methods of verification of assessment tasks	Assessment criteria
– Verbal description of the main functions of the organisational units of an enterprise	– Factual correctness and completeness in naming the main functions of specified units
– Practical demonstration of record keeping of incoming post	– Completeness of the record prepared
– Practical demonstration of classifying information on payments	– Correct classification of information
– Practical demonstration of summarising financial information on the development of stocks	– Accuracy of the calculated summary value of the stocks of specified goods
– Practical demonstration of classifying costs	– Correct classification of cost items
– Practical demonstration of checking information on wages	– Correctness, completeness and speed of inspection
– Practical demonstration of organising information on sales	– Clarity and completeness of organised information
– Practical demonstration of the use of accounting software	– Correctness of the records of accounting transactions entered
– Practical demonstration of work with a printer and a copier	– Speed and accuracy in operating a copier

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Assessment of learning outcomes



assess all the expected learning outcomes (e.g. because some technical activities that are listed in the unit of learning outcomes could not be carried out due to the receiving organisation’s specialisation or equipment/facilities), always at least a vast majority of them should be assessed.

The sending organisation should prepare the assessment procedure in the receiving organisation well and make it easier for the assessor to carry out the procedure, which

the specified assessment criteria to formulate an assessment opinion. Taking into account the diversity of both the receiving organisations and the conditions in which the trainees work, it is possible that the assessment will not cover all learning outcomes. If it is not possible to

is why it is recommended to develop not only the unit of learning outcomes but also – as an annex to the unit – an additional document, namely an assessment record or assessment form. The assessor from the receiving organisation then records the results in the document.

An example of the assessment record in a technical study programme for apprentices:

Assessment task	Passed	Passed with reservations	Failed
Verbally explains three basic terms in electrical engineering			
Practically demonstrates looking up three specified spare parts in a catalogue			
Verbally describes the diagnostic device for starting systems in passenger cars			
Practically demonstrates work with a diagnostic device for starting systems in passenger cars			
Practically demonstrates repairing a fault in the starting system in a passenger cars			
Verbally describes the functionalities of a diagnostic device for lighting appliances in passenger cars			
Practically demonstrates diagnostics of exterior lighting appliances in passenger cars			
Practically demonstrate adjusting car headlights using a headlight tester (regloscope)			

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Assessment of learning outcomes



The results can be communicated in several ways: **Selecting the assessment result from a two-grade scale** (for example passed – failed), a **three-grade scale** (for example passed – passed with reservations – failed), or **awarding a certain number of points within a predefined scale or a percentage**. It is recommended not to use scales of classification grades or marks, because different countries differ in terms of the classification

scales they use and the way they use them, so using grades or marks could distort the assessment.

Where a score or a percentage is used, the person making the assessment record should take into account the

An example of the assessment record in a services study programme for apprentices:

Assessment task	Passed	Passed with reservations	Failed
Verbally explains the principles of warehousing			
Practically demonstrates assessing the quality of two specified types of goods using the senses			
Practically demonstrates weighing and measuring two specified types of goods			
Practically demonstrates packaging two specified types of goods			
Practically demonstrates the preparation of two types of goods for display and sale			
Practically demonstrates work with a cash register			
Practically demonstrates payment in cash, by credit card or a gift voucher			
Practically demonstrates handling a customer complaint about goods			
Practically demonstrates stock taking of two types of goods			

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Assessment of learning outcomes

difficulty of each task and adjust the score/percentage accordingly (e.g. a verbal explanation of a technological procedure should have less weight than a practical demon-

stration of a professional activity that involves applying the knowledge of the procedure used in accordance with the correct technological procedure). Possible forms of asse-



ssment records (except for the items concerning the trainee's identification information, the assessment date, the name of the assessor etc.) are shown in the following examples, in which the three-grade scale of results is used. The assessment record is an individualised document, i.e. it is issued separately for each trainee. To a foreign assessor, the text appearing in the assessment record must be provided in a language he or she understands.

An example of the assessment record in an economic study programme ending with the Maturita examination:

Assessment task	Passed	Passed with reservations	Failed
Verbally enumerates the main functions of three specified organisational units of an enterprise			
Makes a record of the receipt of three specified incoming letters			
Classifies information about five specified payments by date and by bank			
Summarises information about the value of the movement of stocks of three specified types of goods			
Classifies five specified cost items according to a specified viewpoint			
Checks information on the wage components for three employees			
Proposes the arrangement of a table to record information about invoices issued			
Uses the accounting software to record two accounting transactions in the analytical accounts			
Prints a specified document on letterhead, uses the copier to make a colour scan and a copy of the document			

As shown in the above examples, the items in an assessment record are based on both the expected learning outcomes and the verification methods, and they are characterised by the highest degree of specificity. The information indicated in the assessment record is intended to be used in the Europass Mobility document. In the future, the trainee may present this document as a list of the professional knowledge and skills he/she has acquired (e.g. in a future job interview). If the assessment does not cover all the expected learning outcomes, the personal record form can be modified to include only those learning outcomes that were assessed.

The **Europass Mobility** document is used in all EU countries. In the Czech Republic (as in other EU countries), there is the National Europass Centre, which is housed at the National Institute for Education. Information on the procedure for issuing the Europass Mobility document (including instructions for sending organisations) is available at www.europass.cz.

The **Europass Mobility** documents is prepared jointly by the sending and the receiving organisation (therefore, it is usually prepared in a language that is understood by both participating organisations) and it is issued by the sending organisation after the completion of the mobility. The information that is recorded in the Europass Mobility document includes (in addition to identification information about the holder and the mobility completed) the assessment results, i.e. the acquired knowledge, skills and competences or professional activities from the assessment record are entered in section 5.a of Europass Mobility. The contents of the records in Europass Mobility should be in line with any previously developed documents that are used with the ECVET system, i.e. the Memorandum of Understanding, the Learning Agreement

and the unit of learning outcomes. An example of completed Section 5.a of Europass Mobility (from a mobility project) is shown on the next page.

As shown in the example, the information that is recorded in Europass Mobility includes not only the knowledge, skills and competences acquired by the trainee that are listed in the assessment record, but also any additional knowledge, skills and competences such as language skills and social competences.

In addition to the record in Europass Mobility, it is recommended that – while preparing the project – the sending organisation and the receiving organisation should agree that the receiving organisation will issue a certificate confirming the completion of the placement and hand it over to each participant at the end of the placement. The certificate should primarily include the following information:

- Name of the trainee,
- Title and address of the organisation at which the placement took place,
- Information about the date and duration of the placement,
- Focus of the content of the placement (the title of the unit of learning outcomes),
- Name and signature of a representative of the receiving organisation.

The certificate may include additional information such as the logo of the receiving organisation, the title of the sending organisation, project title and number etc. From the placement, each participant thus also brings back a certificate that can be presented in the future during interviews or negotiations with potential employers.

SUMMARY:

For the assessment of mobility participants, it is necessary to specify – before the start of the mobility – the expected learning outcomes and the methods for verifying the learning outcomes and the assessment criteria. When using the ECVET system, both the above pieces of information are specified in the unit of learning outcomes. It is further recommended that the sending organisation should prepare an assessment record for trainee assessment purposes as an attachment to the unit of learning outcomes, and that it should agree with the receiving organisation that the assessment

of each mobility participant will be carried out by a specifically designated representative of the receiving organisation at the end of the mobility. For each trainee, the assessment results will be recorded in the assessment record by the assessor from the receiving organisation.

The knowledge, skills and competences acquired will be recorded in each trainee's Europass Mobility. It is advisable that the receiving organisation should award each trainee the company's own certificate of completion at the end of the mobility.

5.a DESCRIPTION OF SKILLS AND COMPETENCES ACQUIRED DURING THE EUROPASS MOBILITY EXPERIENCE (No 2014-1-CZ01-KA102-██████████)		
Activities/tasks carried out		
(29a) (*)	A job as a floral designer in the first -class florist shop in the German city of Bremen, learning new working environment, gaining working habits and responsibilities and new work techniques. Increasing the level of existing knowledge and skills and expanding their knowledge about a new experience in the field of floral design.	
Job-related skills and competences acquired		
(30a)	Skills and techniques of working with floral and non-floral material, design and creating of interior decorations, bouquets, making pot and stabbed floral decorations, price creation, communication in a foreign language with other employees and customers	
Language skills and competences acquired (if not included under 'Job-related skills and competences')		
(31a)	Development of linguistic competence in the English language, vocabulary, accent development, improving speech fluency, level B2: Extension of special and general vocabulary, improving communication, pronunciation and fluency of speech, communication with colleagues and customers, contract realization.	
Computer skills and competences acquired (if not included under 'Job-related skills and competences')		
(32a)	User knowledge of office software.	
Organisational skills and competences acquired (if not included under 'Job-related skills and competences')		
(33a)	Organisation of work in the shop, efficient material management, with a lot of work done and time	
Social skills and competences acquired (if not included under 'Job-related skills and competences')		
(34a)	Deal with the manager of flower shop, colleagues and customers.	
Other skills and competences acquired		
(35a)	Adaptation to a foreign environment, become independent, the emphasis on responsibility for their work and working efficiency.	
(36a) (*)	Date	(37a) (*)
	04 10 2014 dd mm yyyy	██████████
	Signature of the reference person/mentor	Signature of the holder
	██████████	██████████
<p>NB : This table is not valid without the signatures of the mentor and of the holder of the Europass Mobility. Headings marked with an asterisk are mandatory.</p>		

3

Validation of learning outcomes

The principles of the ECVET system include mutual trust between the sending and the receiving organisations. This trust is reflected in the fact that the sending organisation trusts the partner receiving organisation as regards trainee assessment and, in turn, accepts and validates the results of the assessment.

In the terminology of vocational education and training, the validation of learning outcomes means confirmation by a competent body that learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and/or competences) acquired by an individual in a formal, non-formal or informal setting have been assessed against predefined criteria and are compliant with the requirements of the validation standard.³

If learning takes place within a mobility, the **sending organisation** is considered the competent body that confirms the learning outcomes for mobility participants. However, no binding form has been specified for such confirmation. In order to simplify the validation process, the sending organisation is not required to issue a separate written document on validation. It is considered sufficient that the sending organisation issues each mobility participant a personal assessment record and confirms in the participant's Europass Mobility document – through the signature of the sending organisation's statutory representative – that the list and the assessment of the knowledge, skills and competences acquired are correct. At the same time, this signature confirms the results of the

trainee's assessment by the receiving organisation. The signature of the sending organisation's statutory representative in Europass Mobility then confirms that the sending organisation accepts and validates the assessment results. In the case of a mobility, the requirements of the validation standard referred to in the definition of validation are considered to be the learning outcomes and the methods for verifying these learning outcomes and the assessment criteria as specified in the unit of learning outcomes.

The validation of the learning outcomes of mobility participants should take place after the completion of the mobility but before the completion of the project. This is thus a period when the mobility participants have already returned to their sending organisation. The validation is considered complete on the day when the mobility participants officially receive their Europass Mobility.

SUMMARY:

It is not necessary to prepare a separate document confirming validation. Validation is confirmed by the representatives of the statutory bodies of the sending and the receiving organisations by signing the Europass Mobility.

³ CEDEFOP: Terminology of European education and training policy: a selection of 130 terms, 2nd edition. Publications Office, Luxembourg 2014. ISBN 978-92-896-1165-7.

4

Recognition of learning outcomes

In the terminology of vocational education, social recognition of learning outcomes means acknowledgement of value of knowledge, skills and/or competences by economic and social stakeholders⁴. In the case of recognition of learning outcomes acquired by mobility participants, the social stakeholders are the **sending organisations**. At the beginning of the procedure for recognising learning outcomes, the mobility participants' validated documents – i.e. assessment records and completed and signed Europass Mobility documents – are available to the sending organisation.

The acknowledgement of value of knowledge, skills and/or competences acquired by mobility participants takes place in the sending organisation as follows: the sending organisation **includes the knowledge, skills and competences acquired** by each mobility participant in its usually used learner assessment methods, i.e. **in assigning grades or marks**. It is up to the sending organisation to decide in which subjects the value of the knowledge, skills and competences acquired will be graded or marked. The description of the learning outcomes in the unit of learning outcomes that the learner completed during the mobility – i.e. the description of the knowledge and skills acquired as indicated in the assessment record and the Europass Mobility document – may serve as a guideline.

During mobility, learners mostly perform practical professional activities in workplaces in enterprises and, in doing



so, they mainly acquire **professional (and also language) skills**. Acquisition of knowledge through learning that usually takes place in a classroom is not typically included in the content of mobilities. That is why the recognition of knowledge, skills or competences is mostly included **in subjects with a significant share of practical skills acquisition**. For learners, whose educational programmes include vocational training, the acknowledgement of the value of their learning outcomes should be done through inclusion in the grading or marking of practical vocational training. In addition, it may also be included in the grading or marking of some other vocational subjects. Similar procedure may be used for learners of tertiary vocational schools (Vyssi odborné školy, VOŠ) whose

⁴ CEDEFOP: Terminology of European education and training policy: a selection of 130 terms, 2nd edition. Publications Office, Luxembourg 2013. ISBN 978-92-896-1165-7.

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Recognition of learning outcomes

educational programmes include extensive practical training. For learners whose educational programmes are completed with the Maturita examination, the acknowledgement of the value of the learning outcomes acquired during mobility could take place through the recognition of the period of practical training, or also through inclusion in grading or marking those vocational subjects whose content covers or is related to the learning outcomes specified in the unit of learning outcomes. Improved foreign language skills can be recognised through grades or marks in the relevant language subject.

Another issue relating to the recognition of the learning outcomes acquired is the question of the **extent to which the learning outcomes acquired within the mobility should be reflected in the grading or marking of a specific subject**. In this case, too, it is impossible to establish a clear rule, because this depends not only on the length of the mobility completed, but also on the type of the knowledge and skills acquired, as well as on the diversity of the content of the fields of vocational education. As a guideline, it is possible for example to compare the time required to acquire the knowledge and skills, which are being recognised, during the mobility and the total time for teaching the given subject. In addition, it should also be taken into account that the acquisition of knowledge and skills during mobility is generally more individualised than in ordinary classes, and can thus be recognised to a reasonably large extent.

Decisions as to the subjects in which the learning outcomes acquired during mobility will be recognised for the participants and the extent to which they will be recognised should be based on an **agreement among stakeholders** – teachers of the relevant subjects and members of the team that implemented the project. Proposals may be made for example by the author or authors of the units of learning outcomes that were used in the mobility. The planning of the specific content and scope of the units of learning outcomes is therefore very important also with respect to the subsequent recognition of the validated learning outcomes, and the implementers of mobility projects should give it adequate attention. A well planned unit of learning outcomes and its subsequent

recognition without further testing of the mobility participants helps fulfil one of the principles of ECVET, namely to prevent lengthening the educational path of the learner.

The recognition of acquired knowledge, skills and competences through grading or marking in the sending organisation is de facto only one part of the procedure for recognising learning outcomes. The second part of this procedure may occur after the completion of the mobility participants' initial vocational education, at a time when these participants – as vocational school graduates – **apply for a job**. If – as part of the job application process – they present not only their certificate from the school they completed but also the Europass Mobility document and the certificate received at the end of mobility, these are also usually recognised by the employer (at the employer's discretion). This is because it acts as an economic stakeholder mentioned in the above definition of recognition of learning outcomes. This is true despite the fact that, in recognising learning outcomes, employers usually have different viewpoints than schools as vocational education providers.

SUMMARY:

The procedure of recognising learning outcomes acquired by trainees can start by bringing together a group of relevant persons that determine the recognition process. The group should include teachers of the subjects in which the knowledge and skills that are included in the respective unit of learning outcomes are acquired, including teachers responsible for vocational training or practical training, as well as the teachers of the foreign language that is used during the placement. This group should decide in which subjects the grading or marking of the trainees' learning outcomes will be included and to what extent.



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