

Guide for the international tekcom certification examinations

1 Obtaining the tekcom-Certificate First Level

1.1 The tekcom-Certificate First Level at a glance

- The tekcom-Certificate First Level is the first of the three international tekcom training levels for technical communicators.
- The tekcom-Certificate First Level enables you to make a systematic, practical and grounded entry into the field of technical communication.
- This training is for working professionals and can be conducted in a short time, studying when and where you can, through online training with the TCTraining Platform.
- The final examination consists of the completion of practical tasks from real environments, and a short, oral group discussion.

1.2 elearning in preparation for the tekcom-Certificate First Level examination

- The TCTraining Platform offers online training leading to the certifying examination for tekcom-Certificate First Level.
- Throughout the entire training period, you will receive informative elearning units developed by experts.
- You will also be guided by online trainers and experts from the field of technical communication, and will have the opportunity to contact your peers.

1.3 Focal areas

- The participants will complete online training on the TCTraining Platform.
- Practical skills with real applications as well as methodological skills will be covered.
- Participants will acquire the technical expertise and foundational skills necessary for executing the tasks of a technical communicator.

1.4 Competency goals

- Basic textbook knowledge and grounded practical knowledge.
- Sufficient knowledge to complete tasks after instruction, and supervised by others, but not sufficient knowledge to work independently and to take full responsibility. Entry-level competencies are needed to operate as a technical communicator in a team, to perform standard tasks within the particular area.

1.5 Course contents

The training imparts practical skills in the following tekomp qualification modules in technical communication:

- Module: Information development
- Module: Creating multilingual documentation and localization
- Module: Professional writing
- Module: Design and visual appearance/layout
- Module: Structuring and standardization, XML and content management systems
- Module: Online documentation
- Module: DITA
- Module: Terminology
- Module: Legal requirements and international standards for technical documentation

Descriptions of modules and the course contents and learning goals of individual submodules can also be accessed from the  .

1.6 Requirements

- online learning for working professionals on the TCTraining Platform, guided by competent online trainers
- total duration: seven months
- time commitment: approximately seven hours per week
- total learning time: approximately 200 hours

1.7 Participants

There are no eligibility prerequisites. This course is particularly suitable for:

- lateral entrants to the field of technical communication
- persons working in the field of translation and localization
- people working in the field of technical communication

1.8 Examination for the First Level

The examination for the tekomp-Certificate First Level consists of two parts:

- completion of practical tasks in an online test
- brief oral examination: group discussion

① **First part of the examination**

In the first part of the examination, you will be required to carry out three or four typical tasks of a technical communicator, similar to those you have worked on during training on the TCTraining Platform. You will have 90 minutes for this section.

② **Second part of the examination**

In the second part of the examination, there will be a 40-minute oral group discussion with a maximum of four candidates in each group. All candidates will be tested on at least four modules including the submodules of the TCTraining Platform.

As in the discussion assignments in which you will already have participated during training on the TCTraining Platform, in the oral examination hypotheses will be presented, and you will be asked to express your opinion, or present possible courses of action.

③ **Requirements for admission to the examination for the tekomp-Certificate First Level**

- Successful participation in the online training on the TCTraining Platform.
- At least 80% of the practical assignments must be completed.
- All tests must be at least 80% complete.

④ **Proof of eligibility for the certifying examination for the tekomp-Certificate First Level**

The proof is furnished through the following:

- For the admission, the candidate should furnish to the Certification Committee proof that s/he fulfills the eligibility criteria for admission to the various tekomp certification exams.
- tekomp reserves the right to validate whether the required degree of fulfillment has been attained in the processing of tasks and tests, by using the log files of the TCTraining Platform and randomly inspecting the work done by the participant on the tasks and tests in the TCTraining Platform.

⑤ **Registration and admission**

Admission to the examination is given by the relevant TCTraining partner. Please note the following requirements for admittance to the examination:

Eligibility for the international tekomp certification examinations in general:

- The Certification Committee of the relevant TCCertification center is responsible for admission to the examinations. The application for admission and registration for the international tekomp certification exam should be sent by the participant through the relevant TCTraining partner to the Certification Committee.
- The Certification Committee will decide on admitting the participant to the tekomp certification exam after receiving the completed application for admission and registration.

- The participant will be notified in writing whether s/he has been admitted to the exam, along with the exam date and venue.
- The payment of the examination fees to the TC Certification Center is a prerequisite for participating in the exam.
- The participant must show proof of identity for entry to the tekcom certification exam.

2 Obtaining the tekcom-Certificate Advanced Level

2.1 The tekcom-Certificate Advanced Level at a glance

- The tekcom-Certificate Advanced Level is the second of the three international tekcom training levels for technical communicators.
- The Advanced Level Certificate will expand and deepen your expertise in technical communication.
- The training takes place in a self-determined manner, with the support of your training partner.
- You will establish personal contact with colleagues and have valuable opportunities to build your network.
- For the final examination, you will create a brief evaluation of a technical document of your choice, and participate in an oral examination interview.

2.2 Preparation for the examination

- You will prepare for the exam through further independent study, with the help of the recommended literature.
- In addition you will participate in an accompanying preparatory course.
- You will visit a relevant technical communication conference or a special event of tcworld, to get in touch with other technical communicators and get acquainted with other application scenarios relevant to practice.

2.3 Focal areas

- Knowledge from the First Level will be expanded and deepened to include theoretical aspects and professional skills.
- Extended special knowledge and professional skills will be imparted based on existing knowledge. Practical skills with real applications as well as methodological skills will be covered.
- Matters of technical communication will be analyzed and reflected upon in the light of current theories.
- You will acquire enough knowledge to work independently in the field of technical communication.

2.4 Competency goals

- Extended theoretical and practical knowledge linked with professional work experience.
- Sufficient knowledge to work independently and to achieve good results.
- Professional skills are needed to operate autonomously in the area, to work as a self-employed or freelance technical communicator and to function as a documentation project manager.

2.5 Course contents

For the Advanced Level Certificate, you will expand and deepen your expertise and knowledge in the following modules of technical communication:

- Module: Information development
- Module: Creating multilingual documentation and localization
- Module: Professional writing
- Module: Structuring and standardization, XML and content management systems
- Module: DITA
- Module: Terminology
- Module: Legal requirements and international standards for technical documentation
- Module: Management of technical documentation
- Module: Quality management of technical documentation

2.6 Requirements

- selfguided training for working professionals (indepth and extended study of technical literature and articles; a list with recommended literature for the Advanced Level Certificate will be given)
- five days onsite course attendance on average
or
taking part at the guided self study on the TCTrainingPlattform
- attending a conference for technical communication or a related area (a list with events which are admitted for the Advanced Level Certificate will be given)
- total duration: six months
- time commitment: approximately six hours per week
- total learning time: approximately 160 hours

2.7 Participants

This course is particularly suitable for:

- those who hold the tekcom-Certificate First Level
- professionals in the field of technical communication with comprehensive experience
- project managers and managers of technical communication
- independent professionals in technical communication

2.8 Examination for the Advanced Level

The examination consists of:

- a written evaluation of a selected piece of technical information and
- an individual oral exam.

① The written evaluation

The written evaluation is a brief evaluation (at least 20 pages) of a selected technical documentation. It should give an explanation for the choice of technical documentation followed by an evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses, with due consideration for various aspects and criteria of evaluation, and especially with reference to state-of-the-art knowledge and current theories, as well as methodological approaches.

At least four weeks before the examination date, you must submit your written evaluation online or in two printed hardcopies, along with the selected technical documentation, to the relevant Certification Committee.

The written evaluation must be accompanied by the following declaration with a handwritten signature: "I assure herewith that I have authored this work independently and have not used any help or sources other than those mentioned. All the sources that I have used are credited in the text and cited in the references. All quotations are introduced within quotation marks and all the required bibliographic details of the source have been provided. All information obtained from Internet sources has been clearly identified by URL and download/access date."

The completed written evaluation must reach the relevant Certification Committee on or before the submission deadline. If the written evaluation is not received by the Certification Committee by the date agreed upon in the confirmation of registration, the candidate will be considered to have failed the examination.

② The oral examination

The oral examination consists of a 60 minute individual oral exam with:

- a discussion of about 20 minutes on the brief written evaluation that has been submitted and
- an examination interview of about 20 minutes, during which the candidate will be examined on the topics of the modules (including the submodules) of the TCTraining Platform, especially with regard to the standard works in the technical literature pertaining to technical communication that have been selected by the candidate
- an examination interview of about 20 minutes, during which the candidate's knowledge of the specialization topic selected by him or her will be examined.

③ Requirements for admission to the examination

- Acquiring the tekcom-Certificate First Level
or
giving proof of comparable knowledge in technical communication
(in detail: an attestation of your previous professional experience as technical communicator have to be submitted and an assessment interview about your previous knowledge in technical communication has to be conducted)
plus the completion of at least 80% of the First Level online Training
- Attending a preparatory course (onsite seminar) organized by a TCTraining partner
or
taking part at the guided self study for the Advanced Level Training on the TCTraining Platform
- Attending a conference for technical communication or a related area admitted for the Advanced Level Certificate
- Knowledge of one of the standard works in the technical literature for technical communication that is recommended on the TCTraining Platform

④ Proof of eligibility for the certifying examination for the tekcom-Certificate Advanced Level

The proof is furnished through the following:

- A confirmation from the relevant TCTraining partner, that the required participation has taken place.
- By presenting the tekcom-Certificate First Level
or
an attestation of comparable knowledge from tekcom plus a confirmation of participation for the First Level Training (at least 80%).



In order to be eligible for the certification examination for the tekcom-Certificate Advanced Level, you must provide proof that you have fulfilled the requirements for eligibility.

⑤ Registration and admission

The registration will be handled through your training partner for you.

For admission to the examination, you must:

- Indicate in your application which of the standard works of technical literature you wish to refer to during the exam. The work must be chosen from those listed in the technical literature for technical communication mentioned on the TCTraining Platform.
- Select a topic from the field of technical communication for in-depth study.

Obtaining the tekcom-Certificate Trainer Level

3.1 The tekcom-Certificate Trainer Level at a glance

- The tekcom-Certificate Trainer Level is the third international tekcom training level for technical communication.
- The certificate attests to expert knowledge and the ability to conduct training in the field of technical communication.
- The training takes place mainly through independent study.
- Other topics and modules that go beyond the tekcom-Certificate First Level and the tekcom-Certificate Advanced Level will be handled.
- Upon completion, you may become a member of TCTrainNet.
- For the final examination, you will create an educational concept for training in technical documentation, and demonstrate your expertise in content and didactics in a brief sample training unit.

3.2 Preparation for the examination

- You will consolidate and deepen your understanding of the tekcom qualification modules of the First and Advanced Levels.
- With the help of the recommended literature, you will gain knowledge pertaining to other topics and modules, in addition to the tekcom qualification modules of the First and Advanced Levels.
- You will participate in online training on didactic methods in the TCTraining Platform.
- You will conceptualize a training program and prepare a sample course.

3.3 Focal areas

The main focus of the Trainer Certificate is to acquire extended knowledge of further topical areas and professional skills in technical communication. Material will be analyzed and considered in light of the most recent theoretical developments. In addition, the course provides the necessary trainer knowledge and methodological skills for organizing and conducting professional training and workshops for technical communication.

3.4 Competency goals

- Advanced skills in technical communication, understanding of related areas such as localization, publishing, and technology
- Extensive knowledge of and expertise in the subject matter, being an active member of a technical communication network (national or international). Sufficient knowledge to work independently and to achieve good results.
- Professional skills and knowledge to construct concepts for training in technical communication and methodological competence in teaching adults
- Expert competencies are needed to develop vocational training or to hold workshops in technical communication

3.5 Course contents

For the tekcom-Certificate Trainer Level, you will add to your expertise in didactic and methodological technical communication know-how for professional education:

- Module: Conceptualizing, organizing and conducting training
- Module: Imparting knowledge and didactic methods

In addition to this, you will expand your knowledge of TC through further topical areas that go beyond the scope of the modules in the First and Advanced Levels, such as:

- Module: Management
- Module: Graphic representation and digital image processing
- Module: Usability testing
- Module: Quality management in technical documentation
- Module: Production

3.6 Requirements

- self-guided training for working professionals
- extensive study of technical literature and articles related to other topics and modules
- knowledge of TCTrainNet and the tekcom certifications
- thorough trainer expertise

3.7 Participants

The Trainer Level is especially intended for:

- employees of educational institutions
- college lecturers
- independent professionals

3.8 Examination for the tekcom-Certificate Trainer Level

The examination consists of:

- creating a written educational concept for a course in technical communication and
- an individual oral examination.

① Course concept

The course concept consists of at least twenty written pages, describing an original educational training course in technical communication. The plan should include the relevant aspects of content, methodology, design and execution. It should identify a target audience and describe the learning goals and contents being communicated to that audience.

It should also identify the didactic methods used to impart the content, especially taking into account organizational and planning concerns such as the duration of the course and scheduling (and provide a script and schedule for the training course).

You must submit the course concept online or in two printed hardcopies to the Certification Committee, at least four weeks before the exam date.

Your submission must include the following declaration with a handwritten signature: "I assure herewith that I have authored this work independently and have not used any help or sources other than those mentioned. All the sources that I have used are credited in the text and cited in the references. All quotations are introduced within quotation marks and all the required bibliographic details of the source have been provided. All information obtained from internet sources has been clearly identified by URL and download/access date".

The course concept must be received by the Certification Committee by the submission deadline. If the course concept is not received by the Certification Committee by the date agreed upon at registration, the candidate will be considered to have failed the examination.

② The oral examination

The oral examination consists of a 60 minute individual oral exam with:

- a discussion of about 15 minutes on the educational concept that has been submitted and
- a training simulation of about 30 minutes, in which the candidate expounds on two selected tekomp qualification modules in technical communication and
- a discussion of about 15 minutes on the training simulation.

③ Requirements for admission to the examination for the tekomp-Certificate Trainer Level

The candidate should furnish the following proofs to be admitted to the tekomp certification examination for the tekomp-Certificate Trainer Level:

- tekomp Advanced Level Certificate
- Extensive knowledge of technical communication, going beyond the qualification modules of the TCTraining Platform and covering other modules of the tekomp qualification module
- Sound knowledge in the organization and execution of training courses as well as knowledge of didactic methods
- Knowledge of TCTrainNet and the tekomp certification program

④ Proof of eligibility for the certifying examination for the tekomp-Certificate Trainer Level

The proof is furnished through the following:

- A confirmation from the relevant TCTraining partner, that the required participation has taken place.
- Presentation of the tekomp-Certificate Advanced Level.

⑤ Registration and admission

The registration will be handled through your training partner for you.
For admission to the examination, you must specify in your application:

- high standard work in the technical literature pertaining to technical communication you would like to refer to in the certifying examination and
- the module topics for your training simulation.

4 About the tekcom certification examinations in general

4.1 Registration and admission

- The Certification Committee of the relevant TCCertification center is responsible for admission to the exams. The participant will submit the application for exam admission and registration through the TCTraining Partner to the Certification Committee.
- The Certification Committee will make admissions decisions for the tekcom certification examination upon presentation of the completed application for admission and registration
- The participant will receive from the Certification Committee written notice informing him or her about the admission to the examination, along with the examination date and venue
- Payment of the examination fees to the relevant TC Certification Center is a prerequisite for participation in the exam
- Upon entry to the certifying examination the candidate must establish his or her identity with the examination committee by presenting official proof of identity

4.2 Examination fees

A current list of examination fees is available from your training partner or directly from the TC Certification Center.

4.3 Examination venue

The examination will be conducted at a place determined by the Certification Committee. If conditions permit, the examination can also be taken online.

4.4 Examination dates

The examination dates will be defined by the relevant TC Certification Centers. Please consult your TCTraining partner or enquire with the TC Certification Center. The latest examination dates will also be published on the TCTraining Platform.

4.5 Examination evaluation

The evaluation of individual performances on the examination, the grades for the written and oral exams and the overall grade are based on the international grading system of the ECTS:

For each certificate, an examination is considered to have been passed if the total result of all sections of the exam attains the Grade E SUFFICIENT – "performance meets the minimum criteria" and the average performance lies within the range of 50 – 59 %.

ECTS grade	Performance in the examination in percent	Definition of performance
A	90 – 100 %	EXCELLENT – outstanding performance with only minor errors
B	80 – 89 %	VERY GOOD – above average but with some errors
C	70 – 79 %	GOOD – generally sound work with a number of notable errors
D	60 – 69 %	SATISFACTORY – fair but with significant shortcomings
E	50 – 59 %	SUFFICIENT – performance meets the minimum criteria
F	0 – 49 %	FAIL – considerable further work required

For all of the certificates, the examination is considered to have been passed if the total result of all the sections of the exam attains the Grade E SUFFICIENT – "performance meets the minimum criteria" and the average performance lies within the range of 50 – 59%.

The overall result of the examination, which will determine the final grade, will be the computed average of the performances in the individual parts of the examination. In case any part of the examination consists in processing several individual tasks, the mean value of all the performances is taken to determine the result of that part of the examination. There is no separate weightage for different parts of the examination.

The overall performance in the examination is rounded off to an integer, taking the first place after the decimal point into consideration. The result of the examination will be communicated orally to the participant on the day of the examination.

4.6 Certificates

Upon successful completion of the examination, you will receive the relevant certificate, as follows:

- tekcom-Certificate First Level
- tekcom-Certificate Advanced Level
- tekcom-Certificate Trainer Level

The ECTS-grade of the exam performance and the overall examination grades are printed as percentages on the certificate, along with the corresponding performance definition. The certificate contains notes on the qualification modules of the TC Training Platform and the learning goals and skill levels of the respective tekcom certifications. The certificate is given an allocation ID, under which the name of the certificate holder, the level of the tekcom certification examination that has been passed, the overall performance in percentage and the name of the examining TC Certification Center are printed at tekcom, along with the date and place of the examination. The certificate is signed by the members of the relevant examination committee.

4.7 Other documents

Further details are governed by the examination ordinance for International Certification, Version 1.1 dated 2011-06-01.