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Learning services for non-formal education and training — Basic requirements for service providers

Services d'apprentissage pour éducation non formelle et formation — Exigences de base pour fournisseurs de service

ICS 03.180

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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.

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ISO 29990 was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 232, *Learning services for non-formal education and training*, Working Group 1, *Learning services providers*.

Introduction

The objective of this Standard is to provide a generic model for quality professional practice and performance, and a common reference for learning service providers and their clients in the design, development and delivery of non-formal education, training and development. The Standard uses the term 'learning services' rather than 'training', to encourage a focus on the learner and the results of the process, and to emphasise the full range of options available for delivering learning services.

This Standard focuses on the competency of Learning Services Providers (LSPs), and is intended to assist organisations to select a learning services provider who will meet the organization's needs and expectations for competency and capability development.

Learning services for non-formal education and training — Basic requirements for service providers

1 Scope

This standard specifies basic requirements for learning services and for providers of learning services in non-formal education and training.

2 Terms and definitions

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

2.1

associate

entity or person working under the auspices of the LSP to provide learning services

EXAMPLE Organizations or independent contractors, such as instructors, instructional designers, evaluators, or project managers.

2.2

business plan

plan of action designed to achieve business goals

2.3

certification

designation awarded by an LSP to a learner to indicate a level of performance or attainment, or the completion of a learning programme

2.4

competency

demonstrable knowledge, skill, attitude or know-how applied and mastered in a given work situation and in professional and/or personal development

2.5

continuous professional development

CPD

conscious updating of professional knowledge or the improvement of professional competency

2.6

curriculum

plan of study prepared by the LSP describing the aims, content, learning outcomes, methodology, assessment processes etc relating to a learning service

2.7

evaluation of learning

normative approach to analyzing the learning process or learning outcomes measured against the learning goals

2.8

facilitator

<learning service provider> person who works with learners to assist them with learning

NOTE Other names often used include teacher, trainer, coach, tutor, mentor.

2.9

key processes

<learning service provider> those processes essential to the learning service and the management of it

2.10

learner

person engaged in learning

2.11

learning

acquiring knowledge, behaviours, skills, values, preferences, or understanding

2.12

learning service

sequence of activities or processes designed to provide learning

2.13

learning service provider

LSP

organization of any size or an individual providing learning services in the field of non-formal education and training, including all associates/ involved in the provision of the learning service

2.14

non-formal education

<learning service provider> organized educational activity outside established recognized formal systems of elementary, secondary or higher education

2.15

quality policy

overall intentions and direction of an organization related to quality as formally expressed by top management

NOTE 1 Generally the quality policy is consistent with the overall policy of the organization and provides a framework for the setting of quality objectives.

NOTE 2 Quality management principles presented in ISO 9000 can form a basis for the establishment of a quality policy.

[ISO 9000:2005, 3.2.4]

2.16

sponsor

<learning service provider> organization or individual who provides financial or other support for the learner or has a vested interest in the outcome of the learning

NOTE This includes corporations, government agencies, relatives etc.

2.17

stakeholder

<learning service provider> group or individual with a direct or indirect interest in the learning service including its management and outcomes, and/or the processes involved

2.18

transfer of learning

ability to apply learning outside the original learning situation

3 Learning programs and processes

3.1 Determining learning needs

3.1.1 General

Prior to offering learning services, and in order to orientate these effectively, the LSP shall ensure that a learning needs analysis is conducted.

3.1.2 Stakeholder needs

Before providing the learning service, the LSP shall ensure that:

- a) information is obtained about learners' relevant education and training history and prior learning, including qualifications and certificates awarded to them, and that this information is obtained and used with legitimate consent;
- b) stakeholders' specific aims, wishes, goals and requirements in undertaking or commissioning the learning services are determined;
- c) where relevant and feasible, learners are provided with the support they need in assessing their own learning needs and goals;
- d) any needs relating to language, culture, literacy, or other special needs relating to learning or physical disability, are identified (see for example WCAG);
- e) stakeholders are consulted to determine how they expect the skills, competencies and awareness developed as a result of the learning service to transfer to the learners' work-related tasks and responsibilities, and about what the sponsor will consider to be indicators of success;
- f) an agreement is reached and recorded with the sponsor on all relevant aspects of the learning services to be provided.

3.1.3 Learning content and process

The LSP shall ensure that:

- a) the content of learning and the learning process take into account the stakeholder needs;
- b) available means and information are used to effectively analyse needs arising from the specific content and process of learning (e.g. prerequisite skills, specific requirements for the learner)
- c) the learning methods and materials to be used are up-to-date, accurate in terms of their content, and sufficient to meet the stated goals;

3.2 Design of the learning services

3.2.1 Specification of the aims and scope of the learning services

The LSP shall ensure that the scope, specific aims, and planned outcomes of the learning services selected to meet stakeholders' needs, as well as the learning methods to be used, are clearly specified and communicated to all stakeholders.

3.2.2 Specification of means of supporting and monitoring the transfer of learning

The LSP shall consider all the relevant stakeholders when determining and planning the ways in which learning will be facilitated and supported so as to ensure that the transfer of learning is monitored, evaluated and documented appropriately.

3.2.3 Curriculum planning

The LSP shall:

- a) develop and document a curriculum and means of evaluation that reflect and are appropriate to the aims and learning outcomes specified;
- b) select methods of learning, including autonomous learning, which
 - 1) respond to the aims and requirements of the, curriculum,
 - 2) are appropriate for the learners,
 - 3) take into account the needs and (dis)abilities of individual learners within the group, and
 - 4) take advantage as appropriate of the group's potential to provide resources and support for individual and collective learning;
- c) clearly specify the role and responsibilities of the stakeholders, including the LSP itself, when delivering the learning services, and when monitoring and evaluating transfer of learning.

3.3 Provision of learning services

3.3.1 Information and orientation

Commencing with or prior to delivery of the learning services, the LSP shall notify the learners and the sponsors, and when appropriate, check their understanding of:

- a) the purpose(s), format and content of the learning services being provided, including the instruments and criteria to be used for evaluation ;
- b) the commitments, responsibilities and expectations of learners;
- c) the nature of the certification and/or report to be issued on completion;
- d) the procedures to be used in case of stakeholder dissatisfaction or disagreement between any stakeholder and the LSP;
- e) who will support learning and evaluation, and how it will be supported;
- f) any costs involved such as tuition fees, examination fees, and the purchase of learning materials;
- g) any prerequisites, such as required skills, qualifications and professional experience.

3.3.2 Ensuring availability and accessibility of learning resources

The LSP shall ensure that:

- a) all required resources, as defined in the curriculum , are available;
- b) all facilitators responsible for delivering the learning services have these learning resources available and are trained in their use;

- c) all required resources, as defined in the curriculum can be accessed by the learners.

3.3.3 The learning environment

In cases where the LSP is responsible for providing or selecting the learning environment, the LSP shall ensure that it is conducive to learning. If the LSP does not have control over the learning environment, the LSP shall specify minimum requirements for it.

3.4 Monitoring the delivery of the learning services

The LSP shall ensure that feedback is obtained from learners on the methods and resources used, as well as their effectiveness in delivering the agreed outcomes;

3.5 Evaluation carried out by Learning Service Providers

3.5.1 Evaluation of learning

This clause addresses the requirement of the LSP relative to measuring and analyzing the extent to which the individual learners are achieving or have achieved the learning goals of the learning service provided.

The LSP shall ensure that:

- a) access to results of LSP evaluation of the learner is given only to those with established legitimate consent to view the information, and that these results are in a format that facilitates the transportability of the evaluation;
- b) the information collected for LSP evaluations of the learner is carefully focused, and sufficiently comprehensive to enable evaluation questions to be fully answered and the needs of learners properly addressed.
- c) evaluations of the learner are developed and implemented in such a way that interpretations made about the performance of a learner are valid and not open to misinterpretation;
- d) the expectations of learners' performance are clearly defined, so that evaluation results are valid and meaningful;
- e) evaluation procedures are chosen or developed and implemented in such a manner that they provide valid and reliable information for decisions about the performance of each learner;
- f) evaluations of learners are free from bias;
- g) the information collected in order to evaluate learning is systematically and accurately analyzed;
- h) where necessary, individual learners with difficulties, and those who require specific assistance with learning in order to achieve the agreed learning aims, are referred to experts in the relevant field.

3.5.2 Evaluation of the learning service

3.5.2.1 General

These clauses address the requirements of the LSP relative to measuring the effectiveness and quality of the learning service itself.

3.5.2.2 Evaluation needs

The LSP shall ensure that:

- a) the persons involved in or affected by the evaluation are identified;
- b) the persons conducting the evaluation are competent and have no conflict of interest that might compromise the evaluation;
- c) evaluation reports clearly describe the learning service, the learning service objectives, the findings, and also the perspectives, procedures, and rationale used to interpret the findings;
- d) significant interim findings and evaluation reports are disseminated to relevant stakeholders within an agreed timeframe.

3.5.2.3 Evaluation feasibility

The LSP shall ensure that:

- a) the evaluation procedures selected meet the intended objectives and can be implemented;
- b) the evaluation is planned and conducted in such a way as to take account of the needs of the different stakeholders;
- c) the evaluation is efficient and produces information of sufficient value to justify the resource allocation.

3.5.2.4 Evaluation propriety

The LSP shall ensure that:

- a) the evaluation is conducted legally, ethically, and with due regard for the welfare of those involved in the evaluation, as well as of those affected by its results.
- b) the obligations of stakeholders with respect to a given evaluation (that is, what is to be done, how, by whom, and when) are agreed to in writing;
- c) the evaluation fully examines and records the strengths and weaknesses of the learning service being evaluated, so as to enable the LSP to build on strengths and address problem areas.

3.5.2.5 Evaluation accuracy

The LSP shall ensure that:

- a) the context (e.g. learning environment) in which the learning services are provided is examined in enough detail to enable likely influences on the learning service to be identified;
- b) the sources of the information used in evaluating learning services, and the processes used to gather it, are described in detail, so that the adequacy and accuracy of the information can be assessed;
- c) qualitative and/or quantitative information derived from an evaluation is appropriately and systematically analyzed, so that the evaluation questions are effectively answered;
- d) reporting procedures are transparent, justified, and unbiased.

4 Management of the LSP

4.1 General management requirements

A commitment to this International Standard shall be demonstrated at the highest level of leadership within the LSP.

The LSP shall establish and document a management system and ensure that it is understood, implemented, maintained and reviewed. The LSP shall designate a member of the management team to be responsible for the management system.

The LSP's application of and compliance with the requirements of this International Standard shall be documented. These documents shall be accessible to all relevant personnel. Procedures shall be established to ensure the transparency, accuracy, relevance, circulation and security of the documentation.

The LSP shall establish procedures for retaining records for a period consistent with its contractual and legal obligations (see for example ISO 15489). Access to these records shall be consistent with the confidentiality arrangements established by the LSP.

4.2 Strategy and business management

In implementing this International Standard, the LSP shall draw up and document a business plan according to generally accepted business planning practices as indicated in Annex A (informative). The business plan shall include a strategy and business objectives, and a description of management structures, key processes, and the LSP's quality policy.

4.3 Management review

The LSP shall establish procedures to review its management system at planned intervals to ensure its continuing suitability, adequacy and effectiveness, including the stated policies and objectives related to the fulfillment of this International Standard. These reviews shall be conducted at intervals appropriate to the context.

The inputs to the management review shall include information as indicated in Annex B (informative).

4.4 Preventive actions and corrective actions

The LSP shall establish procedures for identifying and managing nonconformities in the management system. The LSP shall also, where necessary, take actions to eliminate the causes of nonconformities in order to prevent recurrence. Preventive actions shall be sufficient to eliminate the causes of potential nonconformities. Corrective actions shall be appropriate to the impact of the problems encountered. In both cases, the procedures shall be as indicated in ANNEX C (informative).

4.5 Financial management and risk management

The LSP shall have in place and document:

- a) an appropriate financial management system;
- b) a system for identifying, assessing and managing risk.

4.6 Human resources management

4.6.1 Competencies and skills

The LSP shall ensure that its staff and associates have the core competencies needed to carry out the processes outlined in Clauses 3 and 4, and that these competencies are maintained.

The LSP should provide job descriptions that refer to the core competencies required.

NOTE See Table 1 in Annex D (informative).

4.6.2 Evaluation of LSP competencies, performance management, and professional development

This Clause addresses the requirements relative to measuring the degree to which members of staff or associates of the LSP have the competencies required to effectively carry out the activities they are charged with, and managing the performance of staff and associates.

The LSP shall ensure that:

- a) the competencies of each member of staff or associate providing learning services under its auspices are assessed or reviewed in relation to their job description, and that the assessments or reviews are documented;
- b) systems are developed and implemented for managing, appraising and providing feedback on the competence and performance of staff;

NOTE This can be done by various means, including regular observation of teaching and training sessions, and feedback to instructors on these observations.

- c) feedback is obtained from staff and associates on their motivation and job satisfaction;
- d) staff and associates undertake continuous professional development, and the impact of this is evaluated and documented;
- e) the evaluation procedures that are chosen or developed and implemented provide valid and reliable information about the competencies of the team providing learning services;
- f) all aspects of these processes are consistent with relevant legislation and with the basic principles of fairness and human rights, and are regularly reviewed.

4.7 Communication management (internal/external)

The LSP shall, where appropriate, implement procedures to inform and consult with staff and associates on issues which may have a direct impact on them, and shall facilitate two-way communication.

The LSP should provide opportunities for informal communication amongst staff and associates.

4.8 Resources

The LSP shall ensure that the necessary staff and learning resources are selected and deployed, taking into account any specific needs, and that the learning resources are maintained.

NOTE See also 3.1.3.3 and 3.3.2.

EXAMPLES Resources are: Personnel; learning materials; equipment, including information technology infrastructure (for special needs, see for example WCAG); working and learning environments, equipment for learning services provided away from the LSP's premises; catalogues of educational technologies and of special needs; career counselling services.

4.9 Internal Audits

The LSP shall establish procedures for internal audits in order to verify that it is complying with this International Standard, and that the management system is being effectively implemented and maintained.

An audit program shall be planned, that takes into account the relative importance of the processes and areas to be audited, as well as the results of previous audits.

Internal audits shall be performed at least once every 12 months.

NOTE The frequency of internal audits can be reduced if the LSP demonstrates that its management system continues to be effectively implemented according to this International Standard and has proven stability.

The LSP shall ensure that:

- a) internal audits are conducted by suitably qualified staff with knowledge of auditing and the requirements of this International Standard;
- b) auditors do not audit their own work;
- c) the staff responsible for each area audited are informed of the outcome of the audit;
- d) any opportunities for improvement are identified; and
- e) any actions resulting from internal audits are taken in a timely and appropriate manner

4.10 Stakeholder feedback

The LSP shall have in place and utilise systems for gathering feedback from stakeholders on the learning services provided, and for analysing, responding to, and, where appropriate, acting upon it.

The LSP shall have in place a system for handling complaints and appeals, and make this known to its stakeholders.

Annex A **(informative)**

Business plan content

A business plan usually covers the following areas:

- a) vision and mission: the LSP documents its vision and mission, and how it supports the value of learning and the fair treatment of its stakeholders.
- b) development and regular assessment of strategy: the LSP specifies its strategy and the revision period, and demonstrates that these periodic reviews are conducted.
- c) quality policy: the LSP documents its quality and quality control policy.
- d) business and quality objectives: the LSP
 - 1) document its business objectives
 - 2) records actual implementation of improvement projects within the organization including timeframes.
 - 3) specifies measurable and verifiable objectives for improvement projects within the organization, linking them to its quality policy.
- e) market analysis: the LSP periodically reviews and documents the demand for learning services
- f) organizational and operational structure, including business areas and co-operations: the LSP documents its organizational structure and ensures that this structure is communicated to all staff members and associates.
- g) identification and design of key processes: The LSP provides evidence of the design of key processes including needs analyses, design, delivery and evaluation.
- h) associates: The LSP plans and documents how the LSP integrates the associates into their work.

Annex B **(informative)**

Information for management system reviews

The information required for management system reviews should include:

- a) the results of internal and external audits;
- b) feedback from stakeholders related to compliance with this International Standard;
- c) the status of preventive and corrective actions;
- d) follow-up actions from previous management reviews;
- e) the fulfillment of objectives;
- f) any changes that could affect the management system,
- g) any appeals and complaints, and the handling of them;
- h) identification and resolution of any nonconformities in its management system.

The management review should lead to decisions and actions about:

- i) improving the effectiveness of the management system and its processes;
- j) improving the certification of compliance with this International Standard; and
- k) resource needs.

Annex C (informative)

Preventive and corrective actions

Preventive and corrective actions include:

- a) identifying nonconformities in the management system;
- b) determining the causes of nonconformity;
- c) preventing and/or correcting nonconformities;
- d) evaluating the need for actions to ensure that nonconformities do not recur;
- e) determining and implementing in a timely manner, the actions needed;
- f) recording the results of actions taken, and
- g) reviewing the effectiveness of corrective actions taken.

Annex D (informative)

Set of competencies

The competency set in Table 1 is structured around three main headings that list basic competencies under each of the headings as follows:

- personal competencies, which concern the individual's personal qualities as a facilitator and include, for example, communication skills;
- technical competencies, which include specific training skills such as assessing training needs; and
- business competencies, which concern the ability of the facilitator to link training to clients' business objectives such as innovation and emerging technologies

Table D.1 — Core Competencies

Personal competencies	Technical competencies	Business competencies
Listening and communication skills	Understanding of learning theory	Innovation, and use of emerging technologies
Presentation skills	Understanding of learning methodology	Commercial acumen (planning, budgeting)
Motivational skills	Selecting and using learning support materials	Stakeholder management
Facilitation skills	Learning administration	Formulating and regulating learning policy
Conflict management	Dealing with special needs and diversity	Networking with stakeholders
Continuing professional development	Evaluation of learning	Improving business performance
Computer skills (ability to use information technology effectively)	Being a subject matter expert	Understanding the changing nature of work
Sensitivity to equality and diversity issues	Learning design	Use of technology to manage stakeholders
Adherence to a code of conduct or statement of values	Designing learning objectives	Leading and managing the learning function
Intercultural competencies	Identification of learning needs	Working on organizational development and effectiveness

Table D.1 — Core Competencies (fortgesetzt)

Personal competencies	Technical competencies	Business competencies
Guidance, counselling and mentoring skills	Applying learning technology	Talent management

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