**KEY COMPETENCES FOR LIFELONG LEARNING**

**(from *COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION of 22 May 2018 on key competences for lifelong learning*** )

The Reference Framework sets out eight key competences:

— Literacy competence

— Multilingual competence

— Mathematical competence and competence in science, technology and engineering

— Digital competence

— Personal, social and learning to learn competence

— Citizenship competence

— Entrepreneurship competence

— Cultural awareness and expression competence.

**1. Literacy competence**

Literacy is the ability to identify, understand, express, create, and interpret concepts, feelings, facts and opinions in both oral and written forms, using visual, sound/audio and digital materials across disciplines and contexts. It implies the ability to communicate and connect effectively with others, in an appropriate and creative way.

Development of literacy forms the basis for further learning and further linguistic interaction. Depending on the context, literacy competence can be developed in the mother tongue, the language of schooling and/or the official language in a country or region.

*Essential knowledge, skills and attitudes related to this competence*

This competence involves the knowledge of reading and writing and a sound understanding of written information and thus requires an individual to have knowledge of vocabulary, functional grammar and the functions of language. It includes an awareness of the main types of verbal interaction, a range of literary and non-literary texts, and the main features of different styles and registers of language.

Individuals should have the skills to communicate both orally and in writing in a variety of situations and to monitor and adapt their own communication to the requirements of the situation. This competence also includes the abilities to distinguish and use different types of sources, to search for, collect and process information, to use aids, and to formulate and express one’s oral and written arguments in a convincing way appropriate to the context. It encompasses critical thinking and ability to assess and work with information.

A positive attitude towards literacy involves a disposition to critical and constructive dialogue, an appreciation of aesthetic qualities and an interest in interaction with others. This implies an awareness of the impact of language on others and a need to understand and use language in a positive and socially responsible manner.

**2. Multilingual competence**

This competence defines the ability to use different languages appropriately and effectively for communication. It broadly shares the main skill dimensions of literacy: it is based on the ability to understand, express and interpret concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts and opinions in both oral and written form (listening, speaking, reading and writing) in an appropriate range of societal and cultural contexts according to one’s wants or needs. Languages competences integrate a historical dimension and intercultural competences. It relies on the ability to mediate between different languages and media, as outlined in the Common European Framework of Reference. As appropriate, it can include maintaining and further developing mother tongue competences, as well as the acquisition of a country’s official language(s)

*Essential knowledge, skills and attitudes related to this competence*

This competence requires knowledge of vocabulary and functional grammar of different languages and an awareness of the main types of verbal interaction and registers of languages. Knowledge of societal conventions, and the cultural aspect and variability of languages is important.

Essential skills for this competence consist of the ability to understand spoken messages, to initiate, sustain and conclude conversations and to read, understand and draft texts, with different levels of proficiency in different languages, according to the individual’s needs. Individuals should be able to use tools appropriately and learn languages formally, nonformally and informally throughout life.

A positive attitude involves the appreciation of cultural diversity, an interest and curiosity about different languages and intercultural communication. It also involves respect for each person’s individual linguistic profile, including both respect for the mother tongue of persons belonging to minorities and/or with a migrant background and appreciation for a country’s official language(s) as a common framework for interaction.

**3. Mathematical competence and competence in science, technology, engineering**

A. Mathematical competence is the ability to develop and apply mathematical thinking and insight in order to solve a range of problems in everyday situations. Building on a sound mastery of numeracy, the emphasis is on process and activity, as well as knowledge. Mathematical competence involves, to different degrees, the ability and willingness to use mathematical modes of thought and presentation (formulas, models, constructs, graphs, charts).

B. Competence in science refers to the ability and willingness to explain the natural world by making use of the body of knowledge and methodology employed, including observation and experimentation, in order to identify questions and to draw evidence-based conclusions. Competences in technology and engineering are applications of that knowledge and methodology in response to perceived human wants or needs. Competence in science, technology and engineering involves an understanding of the changes caused by human activity and responsibility as an individual citizen.

*Essential knowledge, skills and attitudes related to this competence*

A. Necessary knowledge in mathematics includes a sound knowledge of numbers, measures and structures, basic operations and basic mathematical presentations, an understanding of mathematical terms and concepts, and an awareness of the questions to which mathematics can offer answers.

An individual should have the skills to apply basic mathematical principles and processes in everyday contexts at home and work (e.g. financial skills), and to follow and assess chains of arguments. An individual should be able to reason mathematically, understand mathematical proof and communicate in mathematical language, and to use appropriate aids including statistical data and graphs and to understand the mathematical aspects of digitalisation.

A positive attitude in mathematics is based on the respect for truth and a willingness to look for reasons and to assess their validity.

B. For science, technology and engineering, essential knowledge comprises the basic principles of the natural world, fundamental scientific concepts, theories, principles and methods, technology and technological products and processes, as well as an understanding of the impact of science, technology, engineering and human activity in general on the natural world. These competences should enable individuals to better understand the advances, limitations and risks of scientific theories, applications and technology in societies at large (in relation to decision-making, values, moral questions, culture, etc.).

Skills include the understanding of science as a process for the investigation through specific methodologies, including observations and controlled experiments, the ability to use logical and rational thought to verify a hypothesis and the readiness to discard one’s own convictions when they contradict new experimental findings. It includes the ability to use and handle technological tools and machines as well as scientific data to achieve a goal or to reach an evidence-based decision or conclusion. Individuals should also be able to recognise the essential features of scientific inquiry and have the ability to communicate the conclusions and reasoning that led to them.

Competence includes an attitude of critical appreciation and curiosity, a concern for ethical issues and support for both safety and environmental sustainability, in particular as regards scientific and technological progress in relation to oneself, family, community, and global issues.

**4. Digital competence**

Digital competence involves the confident, critical and responsible use of, and engagement with, digital technologies for learning, at work, and for participation in society. It includes information and data literacy, communication and collaboration, media literacy, digital content creation (including programming), safety (including digital well-being and competences related to cybersecurity), intellectual property related questions, problem solving and critical thinking.

*Essential knowledge, skills and attitudes related to this competence*

Individuals should understand how digital technologies can support communication, creativity and innovation, and be aware of their opportunities, limitations, effects and risks. They should understand the general principles, mechanisms and logic underlying evolving digital technologies and know the basic function and use of different devices, software, and networks. Individuals should take a critical approach to the validity, reliability and impact of information and data made available by digital means and be aware of the legal and ethical principles involved in engaging with digital technologies.

Individuals should be able to use digital technologies to support their active citizenship and social inclusion, collaboration with others, and creativity towards personal, social or commercial goals. Skills include the ability to use, access, filter, evaluate, create, program and share digital content. Individuals should be able to manage and protect information, content, data, and digital identities, as well as recognise and effectively engage with software, devices, artificial intelligence or robots.

Engagement with digital technologies and content requires a reflective and critical, yet curious, open-minded and forward-looking attitude to their evolution. It also requires an ethical, safe and responsible approach to the use of these tools.

**5. Personal, social and learning to learn competence**

Personal, social and learning to learn competence is the ability to reflect upon oneself, effectively manage time and information, work with others in a constructive way, remain resilient and manage one’s own learning and career. It includes the ability to cope with uncertainty and complexity, learn to learn, support one’s physical and emotional wellbeing, to maintain physical and mental health, and to be able to lead a health-conscious, future-oriented life, empathize and manage conflict in an inclusive and supportive context.

*Essential knowledge, skills and attitudes related to this competence*

For successful interpersonal relations and social participation it is essential to understand the codes of conduct and rules of communication generally accepted in different societies and environments. Personal, social and learning to learn competence requires also knowledge of the components of a healthy mind, body and lifestyle. It involves knowing one’s preferred learning strategies, knowing one’s competence development needs and various ways to develop competences and search for the education, training and career opportunities and guidance or support available.

Skills include the ability to identify one’s capacities, focus, deal with complexity, critically reflect and make decisions. This includes the ability to learn and work both collaboratively and autonomously and to organise and persevere with one’s learning, evaluate and share it, seek support when appropriate and effectively manage one’s career and social interactions. Individuals should be resilient and able to cope with uncertainty and stress. They should be able to communicate constructively in different environments, collaborate in teams and negotiate. This includes showing tolerance, expressing and understanding different viewpoints, as well as the ability to create confidence and feel empathy.

The competence is based on a positive attitude toward one’s personal, social and physical well-being and learning throughout one’s life. It is based on an attitude of collaboration, assertiveness and integrity. This includes respecting diversity of others and their needs and being prepared both to overcome prejudices and to compromise. Individuals should be able to identify and set goals, motivate themselves, and develop resilience and confidence to pursue and succeed at learning throughout their lives. A problem-solving attitude supports both the learning process and the individual’s ability to handle obstacles and change. It includes the desire to apply prior learning and life experiences and the curiosity to look for opportunities to learn and develop in a variety of life contexts.

**6. Citizenship competence**

Citizenship competence is the ability to act as responsible citizens and to fully participate in civic and social life, based on understanding of social, economic, legal and political concepts and structures, as well as global developments and sustainability.

*Essential knowledge, skills and attitudes related to this competence*

Citizenship competence is based on knowledge of basic concepts and phenomena relating to individuals, groups, work organisations, society, economy and culture. This involves an understanding of the European common values, as expressed in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. It includes knowledge of contemporary events, as well as a critical understanding of the main developments in national, European and world history. In addition, it includes an awareness of the aims, values and policies of social and political movements, as well as of sustainable systems, in particular climate and demographic change at the global level and their underlying causes. Knowledge of European integration as well as an awareness of diversity and cultural identities in Europe and the world is essential. This includes an understanding of the multi-cultural and socioeconomic dimensions of European societies, and how national cultural identity contributes to the European identity.

Skills for citizenship competence relate to the ability to engage effectively with others in common or public interest, including the sustainable development of society. This involves critical thinking and integrated problem solving skills, as well as skills to develop arguments and constructive participation in community activities, as well as in decision-making at all levels, from local and national to the European and international level. This also involves the ability to access, have a critical understanding of, and interact with both traditional and new forms of media and understand the role and functions of media in democratic societies.

Respect for human rights as a basis for democracy lays the foundations for a responsible and constructive attitude. Constructive participation involves willingness to participate in democratic decision-making at all levels and civic activities. It includes support for social and cultural diversity, gender equality and social cohesion, sustainable lifestyles, promotion of culture of peace and non-violence, a readiness to respect the privacy of others, and to take responsibility for the environment. Interest in political and socioeconomic developments, humanities and intercultural communication is needed to be prepared both to overcome prejudices and to compromise where necessary and to ensure social justice and fairness.

**7. Entrepreneurship competence**

Entrepreneurship competence refers to the capacity to act upon opportunities and ideas, and to transform them into values for others. It is founded upon creativity, critical thinking and problem solving, taking initiative and perseverance and the ability to work collaboratively in order to plan and manage projects that are of cultural, social or financial value.

*Essential knowledge, skills and attitudes related to this competence*

Entrepreneurship competence requires knowing that there are different contexts and opportunities for turning ideas into action in personal, social and professional activities, and an understanding of how these arise. Individuals should know and understand approaches to planning and management of projects, which include both processes and resources. They should have an understanding of economics and the social and economic opportunities and challenges facing an employer, organisation or society. They should also be aware of ethical principles and challenges of sustainable development and have self-awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses.

Entrepreneurial skills are founded on creativity which includes imagination, strategic thinking and problem-solving, and critical and constructive reflection within evolving creative processes and innovation. They include the ability to work both as an individual and collaboratively in teams, to mobilize resources (people and things) and to sustain activity. This includes the ability to make financial decisions relating to cost and value. The ability to effectively communicate and negotiate with others, and to cope with uncertainty, ambiguity and risk as part of making informed decisions is essential.

An entrepreneurial attitude is characterised by a sense of initiative and agency, pro-activity, being forward-looking, courage and perseverance in achieving objectives. It includes a desire to motivate others and value their ideas, empathy and taking care of people and the world, and accepting responsibility taking ethical approaches throughout the process.

**8. Cultural awareness and expression competence**

Competence in cultural awareness and expression involves having an understanding of and respect for how ideas and meaning are creatively expressed and communicated in different cultures and through a range of arts and other cultural forms. It involves being engaged in understanding, developing and expressing one’s own ideas and sense of place or role in society in a variety of ways and contexts.

*Essential knowledge, skills and attitudes related to this competence*

This competence requires knowledge of local, national, regional, European and global cultures and expressions, including their languages, heritage and traditions, and cultural products, and an understanding of how these expressions can influence each other as well as the ideas of the individual. It includes understanding the different ways of communicating ideas between creator, participant and audience within written, printed and digital texts, theatre, film, dance, games, art and design, music, rituals, and architecture, as well as hybrid forms. It requires an understanding of one’s own developing identity and cultural heritage within a world of cultural diversity and how arts and other cultural forms can be a way to both view and shape the world.

Skills include the ability to express and interpret figurative and abstract ideas, experiences and emotions with empathy, and the ability to do so in a range of arts and other cultural forms. Skills also include the ability to identify and realise opportunities for personal, social or commercial value through the arts and other cultural forms and the ability to engage in creative processes, both as an individual and collectively.

It is important to have an open attitude towards, and respect for, diversity of cultural expression together with an ethical and responsible approach to intellectual and cultural ownership. A positive attitude also includes a curiosity about the world, an openness to imagine new possibilities, and a willingness to participate in cultural experiences.