Frequently Asked Questions on tekom Certification

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1. Importance and Use of the FAQs for Certification

- The following list of frequently asked questions serves to supplement the applicable examination rules as rules for implementation.
- It is a binding component of the tekom certification guideline.
- The frequently asked questions have been conceptualized to provide all those interested in tekom certification as well as certification candidates with the necessary information on formal and organizational questions.

2. Notes on tekom Certification as per DIN EN ISO/IEC 17024

- Personal certification recognized across Europe based on DIN EN ISO/IEC 17024 is one of the best criteria today to enable testing the competence of a technical communicator. Therefore, tekom has transitioned the tekom certification system for technical communicators to the requirements of the standard.
- The tekom competence framework for technical communication is the basis for the tekom certification system.
- The learning- and examination-oriented view of the tekom competence framework for technical communication should be used for qualification consultation, further training, and the certification examination.

3. General Information on the Training Program

3.1. Objectives and Target Groups of tekom Certification

3.1.1 What are the objectives of the tekom certification?

- Professional lateral entrants can obtain a formal certification - Technical Communicator (tekom).
- Technical communicators reflect on and analyze their professional qualifications and develop a strategy for their training.
- Qualification offerings are better coordinated and quality is assured.
- A qualifications standard is established for technical communicators.

3.1.2 For whom is the tekom certification suitable?

- Lateral entrants without formal education and training as technical communicators, who wish to attend part-time training programs and qualify formally.
- People changing their career who are completing their education and training as technical communicators.
- Technical communicators looking for a new position who would like to increase their chances in the job market or use their time meaningfully.
- People who have worked in the field of technical communication earlier and are now planning to reenter their profession, e.g. parents after parental leave.

- Managers who wish to develop their know-how in methods of technical communication.
- Companies wishing to get their employees certified as technical communicators and practice active personnel development.
- Graduates of educational and training programs in the field of technical documentation who wish to have their qualification certified objectively.

3.2. Conceptualization and Structure of tekom Certification

3.2.1 What concept was followed to develop the tekom certification?

- The tekom certification is based on an individualized, demand-oriented qualification strategy, i.e. the scope as well as the content of training are directed by the respective needs of the participants.
- Obtaining a certificate is independent of education facilities or specific product training and is also not linked to participating in specific courses if the candidate has over two years of professional experience in the field of technical documentation.
- The tekom certification is organized into three independent columns:
  - Qualification consultation by tekom
  - Qualification training
  - Certification by tekom
- A significant characteristic assuring objectivity and thus also quality is the separation between the institutions that qualify the candidates and the neutral, independent consultation and certification of the candidates by tekom.

3.3. Duration of Certification

3.3.1 How long does it take to achieve tekom certification?

- As the tekom certification is a training program completely individualized as per your needs and dependent on your initial requirements, it is not possible to make any standard statements in this regard.
- However, the following is definite:
  - The qualification consultation takes an hour. This is only relevant for approval for certification candidates who already have professional experience. The qualification consultation offers those interested who have no professional experience the opportunity to obtain comprehensive information about the professional requirements and to be able to determine the level of their own prior knowledge.
  - You have three months to complete the technical project (Expert Level only).
  - Your certification examination takes place approx. three weeks after the submission of your technical project (Expert Level only).
- In principle, you can obtain the certificate “Technical Communicator (tekom)” on the Expert Level in six months.

3.4. Costs for Certification

3.4.1 What are the costs for certification?

- The qualification consultation is free of charge for members paying full subscription, if they have been tekom members for longer than 3 months.
- Non-members and those who have been members for less than 3 months pay a fee of 75.00 Euro plus VAT for the consultation, while for unemployed members the fee is 25.00 Euro plus VAT.
- The costs of the qualification training vary individually.
- The certification examination by tekom is subject to fees: Fees are regulated in the tekom schedule of fees for the certification examination.

3.4.2 Are the training costs tax-deductible?

Yes.

- However, there is a distinction between education and training for tax purposes.
- Expenses for your own professional education are to be declared as special expenses. These expenses include costs for external accommodation.
- All costs for training programs after this graduation can be offset as professional expenses (costs of continuing education), and these include fees for the course and the certification examination, travel costs, boarding costs, etc.

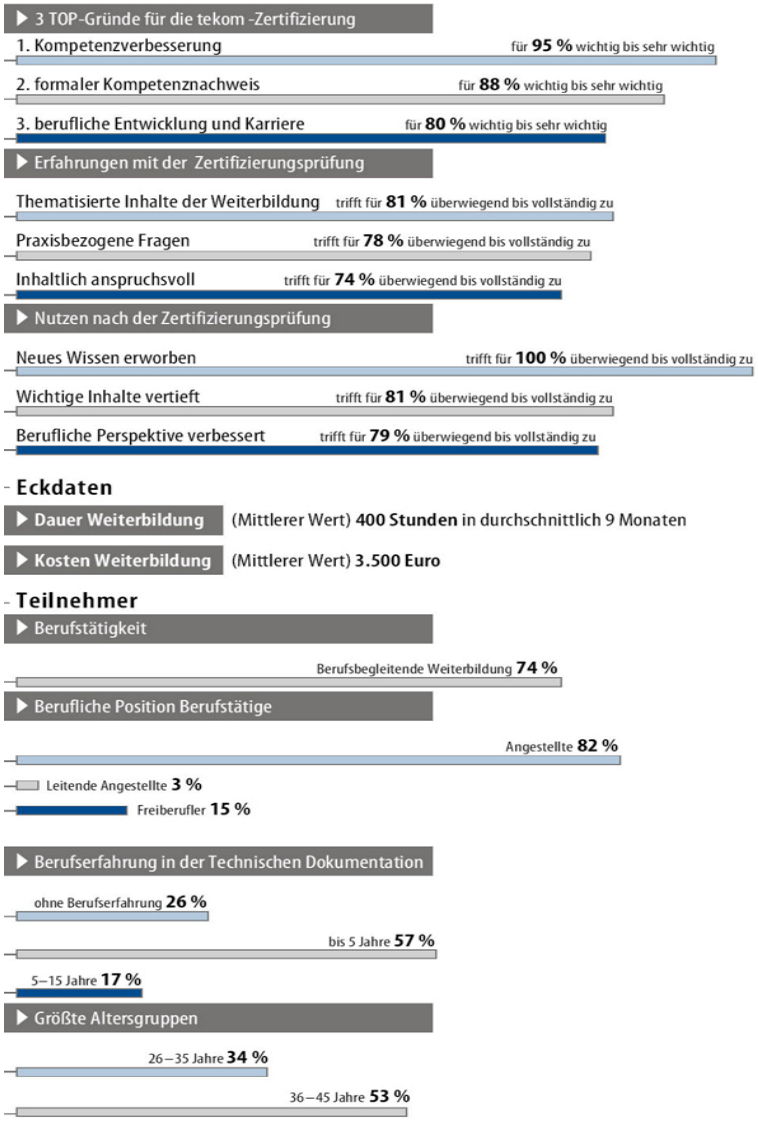
3.4.3 Are there empirical values for the duration and costs of the certification based on experience?

Yes.

Values based on experience can be determined for the duration and costs of the certification as part of the accompanying evaluation. The duration of the training on the Expert Level is about 688 hours (about 8 to 9 months part time; in the case of education and training an average of 1,264 hours (about 8 to 9 months full time). For 67% of the survey respondents the cost of training was up to 4,000 Euro, whereas for education and training, 70% have paid from 2,000 Euro to 8,000 Euro.

The duration of the training programs on the Professional Level is about 350 hours. In the case of training programs, the costs for 67% of the survey respondents were between 3,500 Euro and 4,000 Euro.

The following empirical values are available:



3.4.4 Are there sponsorship options for the tekom certification?

In principle, yes.

- In Germany, education vouchers can be obtained from the Federal Employment Agency. However, the sponsorship for professional training is linked with certain prerequisites. More information can be obtained from the unemployment office.
  The training must be a requirement as follows:
  - For professional integration in case of unemployment or
  - To prevent possible unemployment or
  - To obtain a professional qualification that was lacking.
- Furthermore, expenses for education and training can be deducted for tax purposes in Germany.
- An alternative that is equally attractive for the employer and employee is the replacement of salary or wages with the provision of opportunities for further development.

- Advantages for the employer: He can offset the costs as business expenses, and the productivity and quality of performance are increased by employees who are better qualified. Advantages for the employee: He foregoes net salary payment, but receives a qualification in return with which he can move to higher wage groups, possibly be promoted more quickly and increase his “market value” when looking for a job.

3.5. Approval for tekom Certification

3.5.1 Under what conditions am I approved for the tekom certification?

- In principle, everyone can be approved. However, the prerequisites for approval differ based on individual conditions.
- A crucial criterion is whether or not you have professional experience in technical communication. The various prerequisites for approval depend on this criterion.
- **You can obtain more information on approvals as per the tekom certification system according to DIN EN ISO/IEC 17024 from the tekom certification guideline.**

3.5.2 Are all advanced training programs recognized for approval for certification examination?

This depends on your prerequisite for approval.

- If you seek certification as a technical communicator, but you have no professional experience in the field, an advanced training program will be recognized for approval for the certification examination only if it is conducted by a training provider who is recognized by tekom and has been granted the tekom seal “accredited educational program”. The accreditation rules of tekom define how training providers are accredited.
- The details are regulated in the tekom certification guideline.

3.5.3 Where can we find the tekom-accredited educational programs?

All accredited educational programs and the training providers conducting them are listed on the tekom WebPortal.

4. Qualification Consultation

4.1. Target Groups and Objectives of Qualification Consultation

4.1.1 Is it a prerequisite to participate in a qualification consultation to be approved for the certification examination?

- The prerequisites of approval decide whether participation in a qualification consultation is necessary to be approved for the certification examination.
- You can obtain more information on the approvals as per the tekom certification system according to DIN EN ISO/IEC 17024 from the tekom certification guideline.

4.1.2 What is the objective of the qualification consultation?

- You obtain detailed and specific information about the requirements for technical communicators and the necessary competences for the profession through the qualification consultation.
- You define your personal need for training during the qualification consultation together with the tekom qualification advisers.
- You receive individual recommendations for training content.
- You obtain detailed information about the contents and process of the tekom certification.

4.1.3 Why is it important to participate in the qualification consultation?

- The consulting gives you the opportunity to discuss your current qualification status with the adviser, also considering the aspect of competence requirements for a technical communicator.
- You can also determine your qualification in a non-binding manner.

4.1.4 Can I also participate in a qualification consultation as an entrant and prospective candidate for the profession of a technical communicator?

Yes.

The qualification consultation is also of interest to entrants and prospective candidates for the profession of a technical communicator,

- to learn specifically about the typical tasks and requirements for a technical communicator.
- to learn what knowledge, skills and competences are required to become a technical communicator.
- to determine the qualifications that you already possess from your current profession.

4.1.5 Under what terms and conditions can corporate members participate in the qualification consultation?

- Corporate members can send the respective number of members nominated by them under member terms and conditions.
- Please talk with the tekom contact person of your organization in advance to participate in the tekom training program, as your registration reduces the corporate allocation for possible participants by one person.
- tekom does not inform the tekom contact persons of the organizations about who has registered for the qualification consultation as corporate member.

4.2. Participation and Registration for the Qualification Consultation

4.2.1 How do I participate in the qualification consultation?

- The current list of advisers can be ordered from info@tekom.de.
- Agree on a consultation date with an adviser near you.

- Fill out the questionnaire carefully for the qualification consultation as a basis for the consultation. You can download it from our WebPortal, www.tekom.de, from the section “Career and Education” under “Downloads”.

  The tekom competence framework in the learning- and examination-oriented view applies for qualification consultations according to the new certification system as per DIN EN ISO/IEC 17024.

- Return the questionnaire by email to your adviser by, at the latest, two weeks before the date of consultation.
- Register using the registration form for qualification consultation and send it by post to tekom.
- Sign the declaration of consent for data protection and send it by post to tekom.
- Attend your consultation appointment and determine your individual needs for training.

4.2.2 Is it necessary to register for the qualification consultation with tekom as well?

Yes.

- You will find the registration form and the declaration of consent for data protection for the qualification consultation on the WebPortal.
- Please send the filled-out registration form to tekom by post.
- Also send your signed declaration of consent for data protection to tekom. This consent is a prerequisite for participation in the qualification consultation.

4.2.3 When and where do qualification consultations take place?

- The dates are agreed upon individually.
- tekom qualification advisers are available across Germany, in Austria, in Switzerland and internationally.
- The consultations can take place either online or at the office of your consultation adviser.
- The current list of advisers can be ordered from info@tekom.de.

4.2.4 Are international qualification consultations offered for international prospective candidates?

Yes.

- International qualification consultations are conducted in English.
- International consultations are conducted via WebMeeting.

4.2.5 Is it necessary to prepare for the qualification consultation?

Yes.

- Study the substantive competence requirements for technical communicators carefully.
- The following applies to substantive competence requirements for technical communicators:
  - The tekom competence framework for consultations according to the new certification system as per DIN EN ISO/IEC 17024.

- Fill out the questionnaire online completely and carefully for the qualification consultation as a basis for the consultation. You can download it from our WebPortal www.tekom.de from the section “Career and Education” under “Downloads”.
- Return the questionnaire by email to your adviser by, at the latest, two weeks before the date of consultation.
- Remember to register with tekom and sign and send the declaration for consent for data protection to tekom. This consent is a prerequisite for participation in the qualification consultation.

4.3. Connection between Qualification Consultation and Certification Examination

4.3.1 Does registration for the qualification consultation mean that I have a binding registration for the certification examination?

No.

- Participation in the qualification consultation is non-binding for you.
- You do not have to decide at this time whether you want to take the certification examination.

4.3.2 What is the correlation of the certification examination with the qualification consultation, which is conducted first?

- The qualification consultation and the certification examination are conducted by different tekom representatives.
- The qualification consultation helps you to discover the topics in which you require further training to pass the certification examination.
- The questionnaire you fill out, along with the comments of the adviser, is available to the authorized certification examiner and is referred to in order to design and evaluate the certification examination substantively.
- Moreover, the questionnaire is part of the certification examination record.

4.3.3 Is there a requirement regarding the time that is permitted between the qualification consultation and the registration for the certification examination?

No.

There is no time restriction regarding the time permitted between the qualification consultation and registration for the certification examination.

4.4. Duration and Costs for the Qualification Consultation

- The qualification consultation takes an hour.
- The qualification consultation is free of charge if you have been a tekom member for longer than three months and are a member paying full subscription.
- Non-members and those who have been members for less than 3 months pay a fee of 75.00 Euro plus VAT, while for unemployed members the fee is 25.00 Euro plus VAT.

- Waiver of the consultation fee is possible only if you have been a member for longer than three months and are a member paying full subscription.
- All participants of the qualification consultation who are required to pay fees, i.e. non-members and those who have been members for less than 3 months receive an invoice from tekom for 75.00 Euro plus VAT, while unemployed members receive an invoice for 25.00 Euro plus VAT.
- Please pay the amount to the account of tekom before the date of the qualification consultation, stating the purpose of use as “Qualification consultation” with the name of the adviser as well as the invoice number.

4.5. Result of the Qualification Consultation

- Your self-assessment of your knowledge in the various qualification modules is supplemented with the external assessment by your qualification advisor.
- You receive a recommendation from your adviser on the topics of technical communication in which you should acquire further training to successfully pass the certification examination.

4.5.1 What happens with the filled-out questionnaire after the qualification consultation?

- You receive the filled-out questionnaire together with the comments of your adviser.
- You have seven days after the consultation to appeal the comments of the adviser.
- The questionnaire is also sent to the tekom office after the consultation, and saved and archived there by tekom for at least ten years.
- With your consent, the data available on you is analyzed statistically in anonymized form.
- In the event that you register and take the certification examination, your information as well as the comments of your adviser shall be referred to for the substantive design and evaluation of the oral certification examination.

5. Qualification and Training Programs

5.1. Training Options

5.1.1 How are the individual training requirements covered?

- The individual approval prerequisites decide how the individual training requirements must be covered to be approved for the certification examination. Further information can be found in the tekom certification guideline.
- **You can obtain more information on the approvals as per the tekom certification system according to DIN EN ISO/IEC 17024 from the tekom certification guideline.**

5.1.2 What are the options for training?

In principle, there are various options to obtain training:

- Participate in a tekom-accredited training event spread over several months (full-time or part-time)
- Read applicable literature and periodicals: A list of literature is available on the tekom WebPortal under the section “Career and Education”
- You can search for the relevant articles on the tekom WebPortal
- Participate in events by the tekom regional groups
- Attend a tekom symposium
- Attend seminars by training providers
- Participate in part-time training
- Attend lectures at a university as guest student or take a certificate course at a university

The form of training that is right for you depends on the individual prerequisites for approval. Further information can be found in the tekom certification guideline.

5.1.3 Where can I find information on education and training?

There are numerous references to options for education and training on the tekom WebPortal.

- Offers from private training institutions, including from tekom-accredited training providers
- Seminars by private training providers
- Regional group programs
- tekom Europe webinars
- Courses and training offerings at universities
- Information on the tekom internship **in Germany: on the website of the Federal Employment Agency**
- KursNet database: http://www.arbeitsagentur.de/

5.2. Training and the Certification Examination

5.2.1 What content should I obtain training in to prepare for the certification examination?

- The tekom competence framework in the learning- and examination-oriented view applies as substantive competence requirements for technical communicators for training programs according to the new certification system as per DIN EN ISO/IEC 17024.

More information can be obtained from the certification guideline.

5.2.2 How do I compile content for a certification examination?

Compilation of learning content for tekom certification examinations on the Expert Level:

You can obtain more information on the compilation of mandatory and elective modules in the tekom competence framework, especially in the learning- and examination-oriented view, as well as in the tekom certification guideline.

5.2.3 Do I have to prove which training I have participated in?

Training proof for certification examinations as per the tekom certification system

You can obtain more information on the proof to be provided for approval for the tekom certification examinations in the tekom certification guideline.

- The basis for the tekom certification system is the tekom competence framework for technical communication.
- For the qualification consultation, training and for the certification examination, the learning- and examination-oriented view of the tekom competence framework for technical communication is to be used.

The technical project (information product and reflection) must be submitted in electronic form.

Send your technical project in electronic form (PDF) via email to the tekom head office to the attention of Mrs. Heike Keller (h.keller@tekom.de) or, with a file size of over 15 MB, via WeTransfer.

5.2.4 How do I compile content for a certification examination?

For certification examinations according to the tekom certification system as per DIN EN ISO/IEC 17024:

More information on the compilation of mandatory and elective modules can be found in the tekom competence framework, especially in the learning- and examination-oriented view as well as in the tekom certification guideline.

5.2.5 Is it necessary to provide evidence of the training I have participated in?

For certification examinations according to the tekom certification system as per DIN EN ISO/IEC 17024, you will find:

- More information on the evidence to be provided for approval in the tekom certification guideline.

5.2.6 Where can I find the examination rules and the certification guideline?

- The tekom certification guideline is available on the tekom WebPortal in the section “Career and Education” under “Downloads”.
- The tekom certification guideline applicable at the respective time of your registration is binding for you.

5.3. Costs for the Certification Examination

5.3.1 What does the certification examination cost?

- The costs for certification are regulated in the tekom schedule of fees.

5.3.2 Can I claim the discounted certification examination fee if I become a tekom member?

You can claim the discounted certification examination fee if you have been a member for longer than three months.

5.3.3 Where are the amounts of approval and certification examination fees recorded and by when must these be paid?

- An approval fee upon registering for the certification examination on the Expert Level is due at registration.
- The amounts of the approval and certification examination fees are specified by tekom in the schedule of fees.
- The schedule of fees applicable at the time of your registration is binding for you.
- The approval and certification examination fees are payable on receiving the invoice respectively.
- The receipt of the approval fee (Expert Level only) is a prerequisite for your approval for the certification examination. If the approval fee is not paid in time, you will not be approved for the certification examination.
- The same applies to the certification examination fee: The receipt of the certification examination fee as per the schedule of fees is a prerequisite for issuance of the certificate after the completion of the certification examination.

5.4. Dates and Registration for the Certification

5.4.1 When and where are the regular certification examinations conducted and where can I find the dates?

- Certification examinations take place at least twice a year.
- The dates are published approx. six months in advance on the tekom WebPortal.
- Public examinations in person usually take place in Stuttgart at the tekom head office. In the case of in-person examinations given by training providers, the certification examination centers are fixed flexibly depending on the registered candidates and are announced to the candidates with confirmation of registration.

5.4.2 Are there other certification dates apart from the regular certification examinations?

Yes.

- tekom offers special examination dates for groups with more than 6 certification candidates.
- Please contact tekom if you are interested.
- Even if you are not part of a group for a special examination date, you can also take the certification examination on the date of this special examination, within the organizational framework if possible.
- Please contact tekom if you are interested in knowing whether and for when these special examination dates are planned.

5.4.3 How do I register for the certification examination?

- The registration form is available on the tekom WebPortal in the section "Career and Education" under "Downloads".
- Fill out this form completely and send it to tekom, for the Expert Level examination at least four months, for Professional Level examinations one month at the latest before the desired certification examination date by post.

- Remember to include your evidence for the fulfillment of the approval prerequisites along with your registration documents. Which documents you must provide depends on your prerequisites for approval. Information on this can be taken from the certification guidelines. E.g.:
    - Proof of your participation in a tekom qualification consultation
    - Also, the proof of your work or professional experience in the field of technical communication for at least two years (e.g. confirmation from your employer, copies of employer references/work certificates or the job description in your employment contract)
    - Or the confirmation participation in a training program of several months that is recognized by tekom
- It is recommended that you include a copy of your continuing education passport along with your registration documents.

5.4.4 What happens after registration?

- After receiving your registration for the certification examination, you will receive an invoice for payment of the approval fee (Expert Level examinations) or the invoice for the examination fee (Professional Level examinations) directly along with the confirmation of registration. For Expert Level examinations, you will then receive an invoice from tekom for the certification examination fee approx. 3 to 4 weeks before the examination date.
- Have your bank transfer the fees on receiving the invoice stating the purpose of use as “Approval fee, tekom certification” or “Examination fee, tekom certification” with the date of the certification examination and invoice number.
- Pay the approval fee within 14 days of receiving the invoice. Otherwise, your approval for the certification examination will lapse.
- You will receive your confirmation of registration in writing, for Expert Level examinations, 3.75 months at the latest before the date of your certification examination, for Professional Level examinations 1 week before same.
- In the event that you are not approved for the certification, the approval fees will be refunded to you.
- The payment of the certification examination fee in full is a prerequisite for the issuance of your certificate.

5.4.5 What are the payment modalities for the approval fee?

- You must pay the approval fee within 14 days of receiving the invoice.
- Otherwise, your approval for the certification examination will lapse.

5.4.6 Will I receive confirmation of registration?

Yes.

- You will receive notification by, at the latest, 3.75 months before the oral certification examination.
- If you have been approved for the certification examination, you will receive the confirmation of the topic of your technical project, the elective topics, and the

prospective location of the certification examination along with confirmation of registration.

5.4.7 What are the payment modalities for the certification examination fee?

- The certification examination fee must be received by tekom before the oral certification examination starts.
- The payment of the certification examination fee in full is a prerequisite for the issuance of your certificate.

5.4.8 Can I change my certification examination date after registration and approval for certification examination?

No.

- Changing the date of the certification examination without a charge is not possible.
- If you want to take the certification examination on a date other than the one you have registered for, you must withdraw from the certification examination in writing.
- Withdrawal is possible up to the beginning of the oral certification examination and must be announced by letter. The withdrawal cannot be revoked for the certification examination concerned.
- The costs refunded to you in this case depend on the date of withdrawal. The cancellation terms and conditions stated in the schedule of fees apply.
- Please contact Ms. Heike Keller at h.keller@tekom.de in such a case.

6. Taking the Certification Examination

6.1. Withdrawal from the Certification Examination

6.1.1 Can I still withdraw from the certification examination after registration? What must I do to withdraw?

Yes.

- You can withdraw from the certification examination until the beginning of the certification examination. You cannot revoke this withdrawal for this certification examination date. In this case, the certification examination is considered not taken.
- It is best that you submit your request for withdrawal as soon as possible to tekom.
- If you withdraw without a justifiable reason after the certification examination begins, the certification examination will be considered not passed.
- The cancellation terms and conditions apply to the refund of the certification examination fees in the case of withdrawal.

6.1.2 What are the cancellation terms and conditions in the case of withdrawal from the certification examination?

- The cancellation terms and conditions are regulated in the applicable schedule of fees.

- 100% of the approval fee is refunded if a withdrawal is submitted in writing to tekom within 14 days of sending the application for approval and registration for the certification examination.
- If you submit your withdrawal to tekom in writing up to six weeks before the agreed date of certification examination, 100% of the paid certification examination fee will be refunded. The date of the post stamp applies.
- If the request for withdrawal is submitted to tekom in writing less than six weeks before the certification examination, 50% of the paid certification examination fee will be due as cancellation fees, i.e. 50% of the certification examination fee will be refunded.
- In the case of withdrawal on the day of the certification examination or after the certification examination starts, the cancellation fees shall be 100%, i.e. the certification examination fee will not be refunded.

6.2. Inability to Attend or Change in Date of Certification Examination

6.2.1 What happens if a candidate is unwell on the date of the certification examination?

- In case of illness, please send the doctor's certificate to tekom within three days of becoming aware of the illness.
- This will be considered withdrawal from the certification examination.
- The certification examination will be considered not taken.
- You can make up the certification examination at another time.
- The cancellation terms and conditions apply for the refund of the certification examination fees.

6.2.2 What happens when a candidate is unable to be present at short notice or arrives late for the certification examination?

- If you are absent without an excuse or come late on the agreed date of the certification examination, it will be considered a withdrawal.
- The certification examination will be considered not taken.
- The current cancellation terms and conditions apply for the refund of the certification examination fees.

6.2.3 Can I change the date for a certification examination to take the examination at a later date instead of on the registered certification examination date?

- If you want to postpone the date of a certification examination, this will be managed the same way as a withdrawal.
- You must inform tekom of your withdrawal in writing.
- Moreover, you must again send an application for approval and registration for the certification examination to tekom.
- The cancellation terms and conditions apply for the refund of the approval and certification examination fees.

6.2.4 How is it handled if the certification examination cannot be conducted by tekom on the stated date?

In this case, tekom agrees on an alternate date. If this is not possible, 100% of the approval and certification examination fees will be refunded.

6.2.5 Can I submit a technical project with which I had already registered before?

It depends.

- If you have not yet taken the certification examinations for which you created the technical project and have not yet received a notification of results, you can submit a technical project again on a new date.

6.3. Retaking the Certification Examination

6.3.1 If I do not pass, can I repeat the certification examination, and what are the terms and conditions?

Yes.

- If you have not passed a certification examination, you can retake it on the next possible date.
- A certification examination that a candidate does not pass can be repeated once within a year.
- If a candidate does not pass a certification examination twice, he shall be barred from appearing for all further certification examinations having the same certification as objective for a period of three years. Another attempt is possible after three years.
- All requirements of an initial certification examination apply for retaking the examination.
- You must again submit an application for approval and registration for the certification examination to tekom.
- The entire certification examination (technical project plus certification examination) must be repeated.
- Retaking the certification examination is not linked to specific conditions, e.g. participating again in a training program.
- The fees for retaking the certification examination are regulated in the schedule of fees.

6.3.2 Can I retake the certification examination even if I have already passed the certification examination?

Yes.

- Certification examinations can be retaken as many times as one wishes.
- A barring period only applies if you have not passed the certification examination twice.
- All requirements of an initial certification examination apply for retaking the examination.

6.4. Attempted Cheating and Appeals

6.4.1 How are cheating attempts disciplined?

- Cheating attempts are evaluated as “not passed”.
- The candidate is barred from further certification examinations for five years after a cheating attempt.

6.4.2 Can the candidate appeal the evaluation of the certification examination?

- Certification candidates and persons already certified can submit an appeal of decisions of the certification center on the status of certification (certified/not certified). The appeal must be written, with a justification, directed to tekom to forward to the Chairman of the Arbitration Board of the Personal Certification Center of tekom.
- The appeal can be filed within a month of receiving the certificate or after the written notification about the candidate not passing the examination or after receiving a negative certification decision.
- The Chairman of the Arbitration Board reviews the appeal and hears the authorized examiner of the certification examination concerned. Further particulars are regulated by the arbitration rules.
- The result of the process is announced to the certification candidate in writing without delay by tekom.

6.5. Results of the Certification Examination and Certificates

6.5.1 What happens with the certification examination data?

- tekom creates a certification examination folder.
- On request, the certification examination candidate is allowed to view the certification examination folder.
- The certification examination folder is preserved for a period of ten years.
- All documents and processes relevant to the examination are handled as strictly confidential by the members of the committees and commissions as well as other tekom representatives.

6.5.2 What am I entitled to on passing the certification examination?

Successfully completing the certification examination entitles the candidate to carry the qualification “Technical Communicator (tekom)” recognized by the Gesellschaft für Technische Kommunikation – tekom Deutschland e.V.

For certifications according to the tekom certification system as per DIN EN ISO/IEC 17024:

- The certification level is noted on the certificate.
- The certificate is valid for five years.
- Recertification is required to maintain the certification.
- Recertification does not require retaking the examination, only providing proof of maintenance of expertise.

More information about recertification is provided in the tekom certification guideline.

6.5.3 What is recorded on the certificate?

For certifications as per the previous tekom certification system:

- The certificate is issued with mention of the title, first name, last name of the certified person.
- The certificate officially permits the candidate to carry the title “Technical Communicator (tekom)”.
- The overall score and the performance assessment based on it with which the certified person has passed the certification examination, as well as the points scored in the test sections, are stated on the certificate.

For certifications according to the tekom certification system as per DIN EN ISO/IEC 17024:

- The certified competence profile, qualification level and validity period are recorded on the certificate. The certificate contains a reference to the tekom competence framework for technical communication.
- The certificate is issued with the current date and provides a validity date as well as an individual identification number.
- The certificate refers to the issuing personal certification center and is signed by the head of the personal certification center as well as the chairman of the certification commission.

7. Technical Project (Expert Level)

7.1. Objective of the Technical Project

7.1.1 What is the objective of the technical project?

- You must create a technical project for certification examinations as per the tekom certification system according to DIN EN ISO/IEC 17024 at the Expert Level.
- The technical project includes two parts, which the certification candidate must create and submit:
  - Part 1: A reflection on an independently developed or reworked information product (technical documentation) as well as
  - Part 2: The complete information product
- The reflection and the information product can be drafted in either German or English.
- You should show with the technical project that you are capable of creating an information product that fulfills quality and customer requirements.
- With your written reflection you should also demonstrate based on your conceptual thoughts that you are able to apply and implement theoretical aspects in practice. Furthermore, you should enable the examiner to understand the conditions under which this project was developed.

7.2. Topics and Type of the Technical Project

7.2.1 What does the technical project include?

- The technical project consists of
  - an information product created by the candidate,
  - about which a written reflection on the information product is additionally prepared.

7.2.2 What are the requirements for the information product that is submitted as a technical project?

- The submitted information product must fulfill the criteria of the following definition:
  - An information product is a document that contains a usually technical and application-oriented description of a product. It conveys technical know-how and makes historical information of the product available to the following users of the information (whether they are developers or users, or patent attorneys with a focus on product liability).
- An information product:
  - Transports information aligned to the purpose to a special target group
  - Contains product-related data and/or technical or application-related information, which is used and saved for various purposes
  - Can be used within the organization or beyond the organization
- All documents emerging during the entire product lifecycle are an information product in this sense. The various purposes of the information products are, for example:
  - Information about the product: Product definition and product specification, product representation, functional and technical specifications, quality and production guidelines
  - Information on design, production, quality assurance, product liability
  - Description of functions and interfaces
  - Technical sales information: technical image brochures or films, marketing material
  - Instruction texts, standard operating procedures, and user manuals for safe and correct application as intended
  - Maintenance instructions: Service and maintenance manuals
  - Product training: Training documents, tutorials or web-based training programs, operating manuals, safety guidelines
  - Instructions for maintenance and repair of a technical product as well as safe disposal
- The information product can be created in various media (paper/PDF, web pages, instructional films, apps, ...)
- The certification candidates can thus submit all technical documents that fulfill the said definition as information product for the written section of the tekom certification examination on the Expert Level. It is necessary to ensure for the submission, particularly when using a technical medium for representation, that the examiners can

open and read the information product without problems. No minimum or maximum scope is defined for the information product. The scope of the submitted information product should, however, enable the evaluation of the practical performance of the certification candidate.

7.2.3 What are the requirements for the written reflection for a technical project?

- A written reflection must be submitted for the information product as an accompanying document that corresponds to the following definition: By substantiating, explaining, and critically reviewing and debating the information product in the reflection, the certification candidate should show that he is able to apply technical knowledge and methodological know-how to an information product in a specific case. Reflection signifies a scrutinizing and comparative contemplation and includes the justification of subject matter.
- For the examiners to be able to examine a project, the reflection must present the general conditions and developmental conditions as well as the concepts on which the project is based and the applied methodology.
- The written reflection should refer to the background for creating the information product: It explains and justifies why this information product is so designed, e.g.:
  - Target group of the information product/target group analysis conducted
  - Applied methodological approaches/processes, e.g. structuring methods
  - Quality criteria
  - External general conditions, e.g. sales channels
  - Internal general conditions, e.g. company specifications, specifications of the corporate identity
  - Product-related conditions, e.g. product packaging, product sizes
  - Project-related conditions, e.g. time, systems, resources
  - Advantages and disadvantages of the selected approach
- In addition, the reflection can critically question and evaluate, with justification:
  - Good practices: What is good about the information product?
  - Vulnerabilities: What can be improved; why and how, for example?
- The certification candidate can also use the reflection to show what he would have done differently technically or organizationally, if he had had the opportunity, or why a conspicuous solution is appropriate in this particular case.
- A reflection must never be or contain an:
  - Experience report
  - Substantive summary of the technical documentation
  - Project or development report in the form of a diary
  - Just a replay of basic knowledge from the field of technical communication
- The written reflection must be at least 15 pages in length and contain a maximum of 20 pages (@2000 characters without spaces = 30,000 to 40,000 characters).

7.2.4 By what criteria is a technical project evaluated?

There is a checklist with evaluation criteria that the examiner refers to for assessing the technical project. How do I decide on a topic for the technical project?

- You submit your suggestions for topics while registering for the certification examination and state the medium in which the information product is created.
- In principle, you can apply for any topic in the field of technical documentation. You can submit all topics that correspond to the requirements for the information product.
- The certification candidates submit suggestions for the topic of the technical project, as well as a short description of the work along with your application for approval for certification.
- Information products that have already been created by the certification candidates can be permitted. In this case, it is necessary to note in the application that the information product has already been created.
- Work on which the certification candidate has only partly collaborated can also be permitted. However, the scope, contents and tasks that the certification candidate had during the creation must be represented explicitly, specifically and in a verifiable manner in the request and reflection in this case. Moreover, references to the conditions of development are recommended.
- The topic shall be reviewed and approved by the authorized examiner.
- The technical project (information product and reflection) must be submitted in electronic form.
- Your suggestion is reviewed by the authorized certification examiner or the chairman of the certification commission.
- Acceptance or refusal is decided in individual cases by the authorized certification examiner or the chairman of the certification commission.

7.2.5 What is the exact difference between an information product and a reflection?

- An information product is not necessarily composed for the purpose of the certification examination, but is often available as operating instructions in an organization.
- The subject of such an information product is not a reflection of the technical communicator on his actions, i.e. the instructions contain no statements about the technical documentation or the appropriate preparation of such a document. Often, the technical communicator must follow rules that he criticizes where possible.
- It is therefore necessary to compose a reflection for an information product as well, from which the considerations of the information product and of the basic conditions of its development emerge.

7.2.6 Am I permitted to submit an already completed information product as topic of the technical project?

Yes.

- Please mention this while submitting your suggestion for the topic.
- Please state when you created the information product.

- Please explain the scope of your own contribution in the creation of the information product and the tasks that you fulfilled during the process.
- The acceptance is decided in individual cases by the chairman of the certification commission.

7.2.7 Am I permitted to submit a technical project that was created in teamwork?

Yes.

In this case, please mention specific information in your written reflection on the work about the scope of your own contribution in the collaboration for creating the information product.

7.2.8 What do I do if the topic I suggested for the technical project is refused?

- In this case, the authorized certification examiner or the chairman of the certification committee will contact you directly.
- It is possible that your topic is then accepted with modifications.
- You will receive the definitive confirmation of the topic of your technical project with your confirmation of registration.

7.2.9 Can I see examples of written reflections that were evaluated as good?

Yes.

- tekom can provide you with examples of written reflections that were evaluated as good.
- The authors of these works have explicitly consented to their publication.
- You can request these from the tekom office from d.straub@tekom.de.

7.3. Preparation Period and Submission of the Technical Project

7.3.1 What are the deadlines for the technical project?

- The topic of the information product is confirmed to the candidate by, at the latest, 3.75 months before the oral certification examination.
- The candidate has a preparation period of at least three months. The submission deadline will be announced to the candidate in writing with confirmation of registration. Depending on the date of the certification examination (considering weekends and holidays), this would be approx. three weeks before the date of the oral certification examination.
- The submission date for the technical project is fixed by tekom and announced to you with confirmation of approval.
- The completed technical project should reach tekom on the date of submission given. The stamp of receipt applies.
- If the technical project is not received by tekom on the date mentioned in the registration confirmation for the certification, the certification examination is considered not passed.

7.3.2 What happens if I am unable to comply with the date of submission for my technical project?

- If you cannot comply with the date of submission for the technical project as stated in the confirmation of registration, it shall be considered withdrawal from the certification examination.
- The certification examination is considered not taken.
- The cancellation terms and conditions apply for the refund of the fees.
- It is best to contact tekom as soon as you realize that you cannot comply with the date of submission.

7.3.3 In what form must the technical project be submitted?

- Create a cover sheet for the reflection that contains the following details:
    - Topic of the work
    - Specification of the examination framework: Reflection as part of the tekom certification examination, Technical Writer, Expert Level
    - Name, address and email of the author
    - Date of submission
- Create a cover sheet for the information product that contains the following details:
    - Topic of the work
    - Specification of the examination framework: Information product as part of the tekom certification examination, Technical Writer, Expert Level
    - Name, address and email of the author
    - Date of submission
- Submit your technical project (information product and written reflection plus declaration) in electronic form.
- If online documentation has been created, either a demo version must be created on a CD, or online access must be provided.

7.3.4 Must the technical project include a declaration of independent composition?

Yes.

The technical project must include the following declaration signed by hand and with the date: "I confirm that I have composed this reflection independently and have not used any other tools or sources apart from those that have been mentioned. All sources that I have used, I have disclosed in the text and listed in the bibliography. I have provided all quotes with quotation marks and all necessary bibliographical source details. I have truthfully represented in the reflection the proportion of development or reworking of the information product I carried out myself. I have not submitted the reflection in any other examination procedure."

7.3.5 To whom should I submit the project work?

Please send your technical project printed out to the tekom head office; the safest way is by registered post.

Please send your technical project in electronic form (PDF) by email to the tekom head office to the attention of Mrs. Heike Keller (h.keller@tekom.de) or, with a file size of over 15 MB, via WeTransfer.

7.4. Confidentiality and Access to Technical Projects

7.4.1 Is the technical project handled confidentially?

- The technical project is confidential in principle. It may be accessed only by the examiners and the members of the certification commission.
- In the event of disputes, if the rights of third parties are not violated, the work can also be viewed by the advisory body or an expert authorized by the board. However, he too must maintain confidentiality as regards the work.
- The technical project may be viewed by other groups of persons only with the explicit consent of the author.
- In Germany the copyright has no relation to “trade secrets”. If this question were in this area of responsibility, it would be applicable in Germany even if no copyright has been marked separately.

7.4.2 Is it possible to view the final dissertations of other certification candidates?

Yes.

- On request, individual dissertations of authors who have explicitly consented to same can be viewed.
- Please contact Mrs. Daniela Straub, d.straub@tekom.de, if required.

7.5. Evaluation of the Technical Project

7.5.1 By what criteria is the technical project evaluated?

- The technical project is evaluated using evaluation criteria.
- The evaluation criteria are available in the download area in the document “Technical Project – Formal Conditions, Grading and Evaluation Criteria”.

7.5.2 When and how will I be informed of the evaluation of the technical project?

Your performance assessment for the technical project will be announced to you by, at the latest, ten working days after your certification examination.

7.5.3 What is the weight of the evaluation of the technical project in the overall assessment?

- The technical project (information product and reflection), plus the discussion in the oral certification, carries a weight of 40% for the overall assessment.

- The certification examination is passed when the overall result of all sections of the certification examination has resulted in the overall assessment of “Sufficient” (D+, 57-61 out of 100 points) and when the technical project including the discussion on the technical project has been evaluated at least at “Sufficient” (D+, 57-61 out of 100 points).

8. Certification Examination

8.1. Objective of the Certification Examination

8.1.1 What is the learning objective for the certification examination, i.e. what is valued in the certification examination?

Candidates of the certification examination should prove that they possess the know-how and skills of a technical communicator.

8.1.2 What kinds of questions are asked?

- You should have basic theoretical knowledge for the certification examination.
- The key aspect is, however, to examine whether you are capable of applying and implementing your technical knowledge in practice.

8.2. Approval for the Certification Examination

8.2.1 Do I have to fulfill certain conditions to take the certification examination?

- Yes, you must have created a technical project and submitted it to tekom on time on the specified date.
- Otherwise, the certification examination is considered not passed.

8.3. Correlation between Certification Examination and Technical Project

8.3.1 Does approval for the certification examination depend on the result of the technical project?

No.

- The evaluation of the technical project is as follows: 60% of the score is based on the evaluation of the work, 40% on the discussion of the work in the oral certification examination.
- This means that even if you achieve a “Poor” grade as the result of the technical project, you can attain an overall score of “Sufficient (D+, 57-61 out of 100 points)” through a good discussion of this work, earning a score of “Good”and thus pass the certification examination.
- You can compensate for your performance in the technical project with your performance in the oral discussion on the technical project.

- The overall performance assessment from the technical project and the discussion on the technical project must, however, come to at least “Sufficient (D+, 57-61 out of 100 points)” so that you may pass the certification examination.
- The date of your certification examination is usually two to three weeks after the submission of your technical project.

8.4. Contents and Framework of the Certification Examination

8.4.1 How is the certification examination conducted?

- The learning- and examination-oriented view of the tekom certification guideline and the tekom competence framework apply to all certification examinations and approvals for certification examinations according to the tekom certification system as per DIN EN ISO/IEC 17024**.**

9. Recertification

Why Recertification?

The tekom certification system, as per DIN EN ISO/IEC 17024, requires formal recertification every five years for the Professional and Expert Levels. This recertification serves as proof of maintenance of professional knowledge without having to repeat the certification examination process.

9.1.1 What are the requirements for recertification?

For recertification, it is not necessary to undergo a new certification examination. It is only necessary to provide proof of maintenance of the required knowledge and skill levels through professional practice, as well as proof that the certificate holder has maintained and developed competences by receiving training.

9.1.2 In what subjects must training be obtained?

Training may be obtained in any subject that has to do with technical communication in the broadest sense of the area. The competence framework, in which relevant content is listed, likewise offers orientation on this topic.

9.1.3 What are the advantages of recertification?

Certificate holders benefit from recertification: The formal requirement of maintaining professional knowledge serves as justification to supervisors, for example, for participation in training events such as seminars, attendance at tekom conferences, purchase of professional literature etc. This provides watertight arguments for staying up to date.

9.1.4 On what level does recertification take place?

Recertification takes place on whichever qualification level was attained on the certificate. Thus, recertification takes place on either the Professional Level or the Expert Level.

9.1.5 How much time must I invest in maintaining my professional knowledge?

To maintain their professional knowledge, and for recertification during the term of the certificate, certificate holders must attend training events appropriate for the competence profile for a minimum of 40 hours within five years.

9.1.6 How do I provide the required proof for recertification?

To keep time and effort low for our certificate holders, this is done extensively via self-reporting, though available proof such as participation confirmations should also be submitted. Forms for the provision of proof are available in the downloads area of tekom.de.

9.1.7 What must I prove for recertification?

Professional practice, e.g. with employer confirmation, interim report etc.

Maintenance of competence by attending training events (a minimum of 40 hours within five years, an average of eight hours a year)

9.1.8 How exactly do I prove my training hours for recertification?

Training programs considered “acknowledged” include:

- tekom conferences: 50% of overall conference hours (4 hours) a day or the sum of hours with confirmed participation in workshops
- Regional group events: 1.5 hours overall per event, with participation confirmations if possible
- Professional literature, tekom publications, professional journal ‘technische kommunikation’, professional magazine “tcworld magazine”, Intelligent Information Blog on Intelligent Information: a maximum of 5 hours of self-study of literature or professional periodicals can be counted overall towards the 40 training hours required for recertification
- tekom webinars: 1 hour overall per event
- Company seminars, seminars and workshops, programs of training providers: The absolute duration of the seminar (a maximum of 8 hours per seminar day), or 3 hours overall per program, can be counted
- Self-reporting on the tekom form as proof of training hours counts as proof, if possible with participation confirmations (signature of the lecturer on the appropriate form) also combined with a copy of the event program.

9.1.9 When must I begin the recertification process?

It is best to start training immediately after certification. After five years, you can apply for recertification to maintain your certificate.

9.1.10 How do I apply for recertification?

To extend the validity of a certificate, a written application for extension, including all forms of proof described above, should be submitted, at the earliest two months before expiration and up to a maximum of six months after expiration of the certificate. A form for this is available in the downloads area of tekom.de.

9.1.11 How high are the costs of recertification?

For recertification, no fee is charged. The certificate is issued for a small administrative fee. More details are given in the fee schedule. This is available in the downloads area of tekom.de.

Do Holders of Certificates as per the Previous Certification System Also Have to Be Recertified?

The certificate according to the old examination system as per the qualification modules is valid without time limitations. Thus, certified technical communicators who obtained their certificate according to the previous examination rules do not have to be recertified. In the spirit of lifelong learning, however, encountering topics current in the industry and related areas contributes to staying up to date professionally.

Where Can I Find the Official Rules for Recertification?

The official rules for recertification can be taken from the current certification guideline. This is available in the downloads area of tekom.de.

10. Organizational Information for Certification

10.1. Contact Person and Addresses

10.1.1 What role does tcworld GmbH play in tekom certification?

- tcworld GmbH is assigned by tekom to take care of organizational matters of certification.
- This is based on a contractual relationship.
- In case of questions related to certification, please contact tcworld GmbH:
  Your contact person for **general questions related to training for, the contents of and the process of the tekom certification** is:

  Dr. Daniela Straub
  d.straub@tekom.de
  +49 711 65704-40

- Your contact person for **organizational queries** about the tekom certification exam is:
  Heike Keller
  h.keller@tekom.de
  +49 711 65704-50

10.1.2 What is the exact address of Gesellschaft für Technische Kommunikation – tekom Deutschland e.V.?

Gesellschaft für Technische Kommunikation – tekom Deutschland e.V. /
tcworld GmbH
Heilbronner Straße 86
70191 Stuttgart
GERMANY

Tel. +49 711 65704-0
www.tekom.de

10.1.3 What are the bank details for payment of the qualification consultation fee?

Gesellschaft für Technische Kommunikation – tekom Deutschland e.V.

Commerzbank Stuttgart

IBAN: DE95 6004 0071 0563 7079 00

BIC: COBADEFFXXX

10.1.4 What are the bank details for payment of the approval fee and certification examination fee?

tcworld GmbH

Commerzbank Stuttgart

IBAN: DE95 6004 0071 0556 9793 01

BIC: COBADEFFXXX

10.2. Forms and Information

- You can find these on the tekom WebPortal under the section “Career and Education” under “Downloads”. You can refer to all documents related to the tekom certification in this section.
- The current certification dates are published on the tekom WebPortal.

10.3. Information in the FAQs

- The current versions of the examination rules or the tekom certification guideline as well as the schedule of fees apply.