

A. General basic requirements – Central paradigms of the adult education institute

1) Basic philosophy of education

Education has its own value in any stages of life: It affects political involvement, social life, professional efficiency and personal identity in a positive way. Education can be considered more than instrumental learning qualifications and further training.

2) Lifelong learning

Lifelong learning embraces all formal, non-formal and informal acquisition of knowledge in various educational centres reaching from childhood up to the stage of retirement. Lifelong learning can be defined as any act of learning with a definite goal, which serves the purpose of continuous improvement of knowledge, abilities and competences. Here "learning" is viewed as a processing of information and experiences into knowledge, insight and competences.

3) Adult education/Continuing education and training

Adult education (synonymous with continuing education and training) includes all forms of formal, non-formal and informal goal-orientated learning by adults after completion of a first stage of education varying in length and irrespective of the level that has been reached during this process.

Adult education/Continuing education and training involves all vocational, political and cultural teaching and learning processes or those, which offer basic education for adults and are controlled within a public, private and economic context by others or oneself.

Adult education-orientated action is based on political strategies in education, social responsibility, organisational structures as well as legal and financial requirements.

4) Definition of providers

Any type of organisation (associations, businesses, institutes, coordinating organisations of networks and co-operations), which offers adult education/continuing education and training according to the definitions set out above, can be termed providers.

B. Basic requirements with regard to organisation

- 1) The organisation* requires at least one educational offer in Austria, which is characterised by regularity, plans and systematisation and must be communicated in public; transparency of provision is prevalent.
- 2) Adult education/Continuing education and training is the core task of the organisation.
- 3) At the time of application the organisation is required to have provided measures in adult education/continuing education and training for at least 3 economic or calendar years.
- 4) The head of the organisation or at least one employee must have undertaken thorough pedagogical education or further training and have appropriate work experience of two years.
- 5) Terms of business of the organisation need to be publicly transparent and made available to the public.

*The term organisation also refers to organisational units, which demonstrate autonomy, financial responsibility, responsibility relevant to quality as well as authority to a great extent. The organisational units must show fundamental elements of an independent organisation.

C. Basic requirements with regard to provision

- 1) In general the organisation's provision of education is made available publicly or if the need arises is aimed at target groups (such as women, the elderly, migrants, trainings for librarians, trade unions).
- 2) Offers of formal education at schools and universities are accepted, if they are aimed at adults with the purpose of gaining further qualifications within the framework of continuing education and training. Undergraduate courses of study at public and private universities, universities for applied science and pedagogical universities do not fall into this category.
- 3) Organisations with their offers feel under an obligation to the set out democratic values of the responsible bodies and sponsors of Ö-Cert (federal states and federal government).
- 4) The public libraries are key representatives in adult education/ continuing education and training. In accordance with Ö-Cert only organisations are acknowledged, which provide offers (such as courses, readings) with a focus on active impartation of knowledge.
- 5) Organisations, which primarily offer trainings with a focus on particular products and/or events, which are primarily tailored to customers and attract new members, are excluded by Ö-Cert. Trainings in the field of users' programmes such as Microsoft Office do not fall into the category "trainings with a focus on particular products".
- 6) Organisations, which provide individual guidance and counselling in the field of education and trainings as an applied method within the framework of an educational process, are acknowledged in accordance with Ö-Cert. Organisations, whose offers are exclusively aimed at individuals on a one-to-one basis, are not taken into consideration.
- 7) Organisations, which primarily provide activities that solely encourage the individual to engage in sports and exercise and offer leisure time activities, are not taken into consideration in accordance with Ö-Cert.
- 8) Organisations, which provide cultural offers, are taken into consideration in accordance with Ö-Cert, if the events serve the purpose of imparting cultural knowledge. Performances of any kind and exhibitions are not included.
- 9) In a religious, ideological context the organisation's intent of impartation must exceed the practical application in accordance with Ö-Cert, such as events, where propagation of faith is prevalent, are not taken into consideration.

D. Basic requirements with regard to ethical and democratic principles

- 1) The organisation acknowledges the current Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This ensures that all persons irrespective of their gender and age, their education, their social and professional status, their political and ideological beliefs and their nationality have access to education. During the educational process freedom of speech is guaranteed and encouraged.
- 2) The organisation is under an obligation to democracy. According to this self-explanatory term no antidemocratic, racist, antisemitic and sexist materials and behaviours are accepted, neither are such materials and behaviours, which discriminate against other individuals. These materials, tendencies and behaviours are counteracted in the educational sessions. In addition the organisation does not provide any space for the propaganda of antidemocratic ideologies, it does not offer any possibility for other forms of propaganda, agitation or advertisement of products or the recruitment of "clientele" for political, religious and other ideological groups.

E. Basic requirements with regard to quality

The organisation must hold an external certificate of quality according to enclosure 1, which has been approved of by Ö-Cert.