

ENHANCING  
DIGITAL SKILLS  
ACROSS EUROPE

A L L  
D I G I T A L

# MANI FES TO

2021

for enhancing  
digital competences  
across Europe

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# Introduction

Digital competences are essential to how we live, learn and work. The confident and critical use of digital technology is key to supporting lifelong learning, active citizenship, employability, and inclusion. Citizens can wield their digital competences to access information and support, access new learning and employment opportunities, be creative and entrepreneurial, find new opportunities and to help others.

To deliver on this potential **ALL DIGITAL**<sup>1</sup> has worked with our network of digital competence centres and stakeholders on a new version of the **'Manifesto for enhancing digital competences in Europe'**.

The Manifesto sets out key principles and recommendations on how to maximise the impact of education and training in digital competences for all European citizens.

Digital skills and jobs are a key action area in the EU's digital strategy (2019 – 2024)<sup>2</sup> and the 2030 Digital Compass<sup>3 4</sup> supported by a variety of initiatives announced as part of the European Skills Agenda<sup>5</sup>, European Education Area<sup>6</sup> and Digital Education Action Plan<sup>7</sup>. **The Manifesto seeks to contribute to dialogue, implementation, and co-operation on these and other actions to deliver Europe's digital future; its realisation is a strategic priority of ALL DIGITAL.**

At the core of the Manifesto is the belief that education and training in digital competences in Europe must become more consistent and cohesive.

The Manifesto calls on EU institutions, Member States, and stakeholder organisations, as well as ALL DIGITAL and its members, to take action and find new ways to co-operate at EU, national, regional and local level to deliver on the ambition of this Manifesto.

This manifesto includes key principles and recommendations under 5 main areas:



1 [ALL DIGITAL](#)

2 [EU's Digital Strategy](#)

3 [2030 EU Digital Compass](#)

4 [ALL DIGITAL's statement on European Commission's Communication '2030 Digital Compass'](#)

5 [European Skills Agenda](#)

6 [European Education Area](#)

7 [Digital Education Action Plan](#)

## 1 The education and training offer

### RELEVANT

Education and training in digital competences **should be designed to reflect the needs of people, the labour market and society**. Course content must be underpinned by instructional design and skills intelligence on new and emerging trends in jobs and sectors that deliver relevant, personalised learning opportunities.

### HOLISTIC

**Digital competences must be understood and developed in combination with other key competences**, such as entrepreneurial and 'green' competences, that are essential for 'personal fulfilment, a healthy and sustainable lifestyle, employability, active citizenship, and social inclusion'<sup>8</sup>.

**Digital competence courses must provide a holistic training experience, including competences to support employability and career progression as well as key skills for life such as communication and collaboration**. Courses should also promote the importance of ethics, sustainability and safety as key aspects of digital competence.

8 Text taken from [Council Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning](#)

### TRANSFORMING

**Digital competence education and training must continually evolve in line with the digital transformation of our society and economy**. This evolution will enable more inclusive education and training systems and labour markets as well as innovation and competitiveness.

### LIFELONG

Digital competence development should be recognised as part of lifelong learning pathways across formal, non-formal and informal learning settings.

ALL DIGITAL welcomes the action announced by the EU Commission to explore use of **Individual Learning Accounts**<sup>9</sup>. Such accounts could offer a viable way to support the adult workforce to access financial support and accumulate training rights. **It is essential that Individual Learning Accounts support development of non-formal learning, including digital competences.**

9 [ALL DIGITAL's publication on Individual Learning Accounts in the 2020s](#)

# 2 Access to education and training

## AVAILABLE

**Citizens must be afforded every opportunity, support, and encouragement to improve their digital competences.**

There should be sufficient provision of education and training in the market to meet demand, including through access to open digital platforms, courses or resources. In addition, citizens must be able to shape the pace and form of their learning pathways to ensure they can complete and benefit from the learning.



## FLEXIBLE

Differing learning approaches (blended, on-line, in-person), learning styles (visual, interactive), and learning settings (classrooms, workplace) must be accommodated in the design and delivery of education and training to reflect how people live, learn and work.

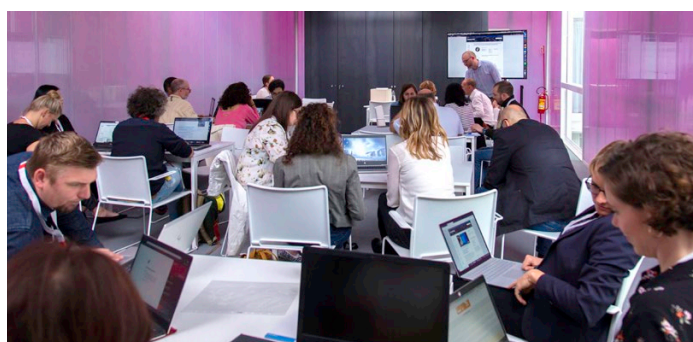
ALL DIGITAL welcomes the action announced by the EU Commission to develop a **European approach to micro-credentials**<sup>10</sup>. A single European approach would greatly enable the recognition and portability of digital competence certificates issued after shorter duration courses. For this reason, **the European approach to micro-credentials must consider the role of digital competence centres and certification organisations.**

<sup>10</sup> [ALL DIGITAL's statement on European Commission's roadmap to develop a European approach to micro-credentials](#)

## INCLUSIVE

**Design and delivery of education and training in digital competences must respect cultural diversity and expression, demonstrate ethical behaviour and not discriminate on any basis (e.g. age, race, gender, financial condition, disability).**

Such education and training must ensure equality of opportunity for both women and men and address under-representation of women in STEM. Policy makers and providers must consider the specific needs of disadvantaged groups (including migrants, NEET, older persons, the low-skilled, disabled people, detainees, and LGBTQ+) and those in disadvantaged urban or rural territories.



# 3 Quality of education and training

## SYSTEMATIC

Digital competences are fundamental to delivering on the European Pillar of Social Rights, including the first principle which states the right of everyone to 'quality and inclusive education, training and life-long learning'<sup>11</sup>. Education and training in digital competences must be underpinned by quality assurance. **Providers should adhere to quality standards, guidelines, and reference frameworks to ensure quality of content, processes and learner experience.** European digital competence frameworks (such as DigComp<sup>12</sup>, DigCompEdu<sup>13</sup>, e-CF<sup>14</sup> etc.) can be used in conjunction with quality assurance tools to design courses and services without limiting experimentation and innovation, when needed.

- <sup>11</sup> [European Pillar of Social Rights in 20 principles](#)
- <sup>12</sup> [DigComp: The European Digital Competence Framework](#)
- <sup>13</sup> [Digital Competence Framework for Educators](#)
- <sup>14</sup> [European e-Competence Framework, a common European framework for ICT Professionals in all sectors](#)

## MEASURED

**Learning outcomes should underpin design and delivery of digital competence education and training.** Learning outcomes can support understanding and ownership by learners; quality of assessment and results; and easier recognition of the course by employers and institutions.

## QUALIFIED

**Education and training should be offered by recognised educational and training organisations and delivered by qualified trainers / educators.** Educational and training organisations should employ and support suitably qualified staff and put in place sufficient resources to ensure the ongoing professional development and upskilling of staff.

# 4 A European approach to digital competence

## DIGICOMP

**DigComp: the European Digital Competence Framework** should be further established as the EU-wide framework for developing and understanding digital competences. The European Commission should support systematic use of DigComp across EU activities as an integral part of responding to the impact of the 'digital transition', including through funding programmes and outreach to policymakers and practitioners.

## CERTIFICATION

**ALL DIGITAL welcomes the action announced by the EU Commission to explore the feasibility of a 'European Digital Skills Certificate'.** The eventual 'certificate' should support quality, common approaches and recognition of digital competence certifications in the EU. The model should be based on DigComp and support assessment of learning outcomes from formal, non-formal and informal learning.

ALL DIGITAL will leverage its position as an EU-wide network to play a role in the governance and support of the model, and continue to manage a multi-stakeholder **Digital Competence Certification Community of Practice** (CoP).<sup>15</sup>

15 [Join the Digital Competence Certification Community of Practice](#)

## COMMUNICATION

A coherent approach to digital competences can only be achieved by establishing shared ways to describe and share data on digital competences.

**ALL DIGITAL calls on the European Commission to develop a 'Digital Competences Profile' which will act as a EU standard for describing digital competences.** The profile would set out minimum information that should be included in course descriptions, assessments and certificates to give a clear understanding of the digital competences in a given course.

The profile could be used in Europass<sup>16</sup>, Individual Learning Accounts, ESCO<sup>17</sup> and the EU approach to micro-credentials and be used by digital competence training providers, certification organisations and other stakeholders across the EU.

16 [Europass](#)

17 [ESCO](#)

## RECOGNITION AND MOBILITY

Technology should be leveraged to support the recognition and mobility of digital competence certificates. **Certification providers should use trustworthy mechanisms (such as Europass Digital Credentials<sup>18</sup>) to issue digitally signed certificates to learners as evidence of their achievements.** Such digitally signed certificates can be easily verified by employers, education and training institutions, and stakeholders in different countries. This will reduce paper-based administration and delays in the recognition of digital competences.

18 [Europass Digital Credentials](#)

# 5 Sustainability and development

## COLLABORATION

**Stakeholders from industry, society and education and training must collaborate on the design and delivery of courses and services and build processes to ensure timely development of relevant, holistic digital competences.** ALL DIGITAL members and digital competence stakeholders should participate in EU co-operation mechanisms, including the Pact for Skills<sup>19</sup>, to represent and contribute to skills development activities across the EU.

19 [Pact for Skills](#)

## INFRASTRUCTURE

Digital competence development requires an 'all-government' approach that includes digital competence development within employment, labour market, education and training, social services and economic development.

**Digital competences must be recognised as an integral part of education, training and lifelong learning systems at local, regional, national and EU level.** Coherent approaches to digital competences (including design and delivery of education and training, assessment, certification, and validation of previous learning) must be incorporated within national learning and skills strategies.

National tools and services, such as employment services, e-Government services and Learner Management Systems, should be designed to support easier exchange of information on digital competences and to support citizens.

## INVESTMENT

**Appropriate investment is necessary to ensure that every European citizen has easy and affordable access to education and training in digital competences and the necessary digital infrastructure and broadband connectivity.** The overall percentage of EU funding dedicated to developing digital competences must be increased in line with the priority given to digital competences in policy documents and the urgent need to develop digital skills across Member States. The European Commission and Member States must similarly work on roll-out of the EU's digital strategy to deliver on infrastructure, support innovation and ensure sustainability<sup>20</sup>.

20 [Shaping Europe's Digital Future](#)

## GOVERNANCE

The topic of digital competence is a broad ranging area that involves many areas of government, types of practitioner and policy. ALL DIGITAL will work to support greater co-operation among digital competence stakeholders in the EU to create greater synergies and better represent the voice of digital competence centres. **ALL DIGITAL will propose governance mechanisms for DigComp and will continue to manage of a multi-stakeholder DigComp Community of Practice (CoP)<sup>21</sup> for communication among stakeholders, and will seek to act as a representative voice in co-development of tools and policymaking.**

21 [Join the DigComp Community of Practice](#)