

ENHANCING
DIGITAL SKILLS
ACROSS EUROPE

A L L
D I G I T A L

MANI FES TO 20 23

for enhancing
digital competences
across Europe

If your organisation agrees with the content of this Manifesto,
please endorse it by following instructions at
www.all-digital.org/manifesto

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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. People 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** 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 people living in Europe.

Digital skills and jobs are a key action area in the **EU's digital strategy (2019 – 2024)** and the

2030 Digital Compass supported by a variety of initiatives announced as part of the European Skills Agenda, **European Education Area** and **Digital Education Action Plan**.

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.

ALL DIGITAL is a leading pan-European association based in Brussels, representing member organisations across Europe that work with 20,000 digital competence centres.

We focus to support Europeans that have an insufficient level of digital skills. That means that they're having less chances to find work, to use online services, to have a better quality of life, to be included in today's society.

We believe that every European should be able to exploit the benefits and opportunities created by digital transformation.

For further questions, please contact us **contact@all-digital.org**

We invite
organisations
working in the field
of digital skills
to

Endorse the Manifesto



This Manifesto includes key principles and recommendations under 5 main areas, underpinned by a set of core understandings:

UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

Since digital technologies affect all aspects of life, digital competences have to be understood as **transversal**. At the same time, digital technologies must be designed, developed and implemented with the perspective to promote **equity** and safeguard individual and societal **wellbeing**. The emergence of **artificial intelligence** technologies requires rethinking fundamental principles in education, at work, and in the provision of essential services.

1

THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING OFFER

Education and training offers must be **relevant** to the current needs, reflect a **lifelong learning** approach, connect with other key competences in a **holistic** manner, while they keep **evolving** and go beyond a user perspective by incorporating **creative** processes.

4

A EUROPEAN APPROACH TO DIGITAL COMPETENCE

The widespread use of **DigComp** should be extended further, while a European level accreditation of **certification** will increase the uptake of digital competence development and enhance **recognition and mobility** of learners. Improved **communication** is required to established shared ways to handle digital skills data.

2

ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Education and training offers have to be available to everyone by being flexible enough to accommodate different learning styles, settings and methods. This means there must be targeted inclusive measures that reach disadvantaged parts of society and adhere to universal design principles of accessibility.

5

SUSTAINABILITY, RECOVERY AND DEVELOPMENT

As all aspects of life are affected by digital technologies, the **collaboration** of a broad range of stakeholders is essential. An all-of-government approach is needed to establish the necessary **infrastructure** and to support the **integration** of digital competence development in a holistic education and training system. Success rests on adequate **investments** being made towards education and training, backed up by inclusive, collaborative **governance** mechanisms.

3

QUALITY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Digital competence development must follow **systematic** approaches based on common frameworks, such as DigComp, underpinned by **qualified** trainers and educators, and **measured** on learning outcomes, ensuring Europe remains **competitive** on a global scale.

UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

Transversal

Digital competences are transversal competences required in every aspect of life in a digital world. They have to be applied in taking part in digital education, in digitalised workplaces, in accessing essential services, and for democratic, social and cultural participation. Digital technologies are not a clearly defined and delineated sector but are tools finding applications in all sectors.

Wellbeing

Any interaction with digital technologies, whether they are active, passive, or creative, has an impact on individual and societal health and wellbeing. This impact can be positive or negative, and most often will share degrees of both. In addition, digital technologies have the potential to support and enhance individual and societal well-being.

We believe that a healthy and sustainable use of digital tools is an essential digital competence in itself, and wellbeing must be considered an essential consideration in every design and implementation of digital tools.

Artificial Intelligence

The emergence of increasingly sophisticated artificial intelligence tools, to be understood as a subset of digital technologies, create an imperative to rethink fundamental understandings and principles brought about by the immense possibilities and substantial risks inherent to the technology. Potential impacts range from altering the structure of labour markets, questioning the validity of testing learning outcomes, disrupting concepts of intellectual property, to multiplying risks to personal and national security. Including how they operate, their possible applications and their possible downside, **understanding of artificial intelligence technologies by regulators, providers and users is fundamental to face these challenges.**

The education and training offer

1

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' (**Council Recommendation on key competences for lifelong learning, 2018**). **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.

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 **Council Recommendation on Individual Learning Accounts**. 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**.

CREATIVE

Digital education and training should encourage the development of competencies needed to **create quality digital content**, such as computer code or multimedia story. This would strengthen **citizens' ability to become active participants** in creating solutions for social challenges and power users of new creative opportunities. Both producers and users of digital content must be equipped with the skills of **critical thinking and attitudes of responsible content sharing**, which is the essence of media literacy as one of the key competencies in a digital society.

Access to education and training

2

AVAILABLE

People 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, people 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, online, 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.

Education and training systems should be adaptable to provide targeted support for all needs to prevent digital exclusion and leave no one behind.

ALL DIGITAL supports the implementation on a [European approach to micro-credentials](#), which will greatly enhance take up of digital competence development offers. To take full effect, the implementation of this European approach to micro-credentials must consider the role of digital competence centres and certification organisations.

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 STE(A)M. Policy makers and providers must consider the specific needs of disadvantaged groups (including migrants, NEET, older persons, the low-skilled, persons with disabilities, detainees, and LGBTQ+) and those in disadvantaged urban or rural territories.

UNIVERSAL

The design of online learning content must adhere to web accessibility standards and principles of universal design, ensuring that senior citizens and people with disabilities can perceive, understand, navigate, communicate, and contribute to the better learning experience. **Lifelong learning programmes in digital inclusion centres should increase the readiness of vulnerable social groups for the new “digital by default” policy of public service providers.** The effective use of digital assistive technologies would facilitate the social inclusion of the most vulnerable and improve their quality of life.

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'. 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](#), [DigCompEdu](#), [e-CF](#), etc.) can be used in conjunction with quality assurance tools to design courses and services without limiting experimentation and innovation, when needed.

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.

COMPETITIVE

The European Union must ensure **globally competitive digital education and training** of the highest quality, which will retain young talents, help develop e-leadership and digital entrepreneurship, and attract investments in the sustainable development of Europe's digital and green economy.

DIGCOMP

DigComp: the European Digital Competence Framework for citizens 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 supports the development of a 'European Digital Skills Certificate' in the form of a quality label for certifications. The eventual label should support quality, inclusion, 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)**.

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**, Individual Learning Accounts, **ESCO** and the EU approach to micro-credentials and be used by digital competence training providers, certification organisations and other stakeholders across the EU.

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) 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.

Sustainability, recovery and development

5

COLLABORATION

Stakeholders from industry, civil 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](#), to represent and contribute to skills development activities across the EU.

INFRASTRUCTURE

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

ALL DIGITAL supports the fulfilment of the **European Education Area** and its key principles of inclusion and diversity, a focus on teachers and trainers and promotion of digital education. We furthermore urge Member States to fully implement the **Council Recommendations on key enabling factors for successful digital education and training and on improving the provision of digital skills and competences in education and training.**

INTEGRATION

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 people.

INVESTMENT

Appropriate investment is necessary to ensure that every person living in Europe 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. Including through a continuation and expansion of the Erasmus+ programme. 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.

GOVERNANCE

The topic of digital competence is a broad ranging area that involves many areas of government, types of practitioners and policies. 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 a multi-stakeholder [DigComp Community of Practice \(CoP\)](#) for communication among stakeholders, and will seek to act as a representative voice in co-development of tools and policymaking.**

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