

Digital competence framework

Transparency and orientation for a digital society

In a world where digital technologies have a firm grip on almost every aspect of our daily lives, the ability to use digital tools with confidence and competence is essential for actively participating in today's society. To promote a shared understanding of what digital competence means, Austria has introduced a national framework that provides guidance for educational and training programs.

How it works

The National Reference Framework for Digital Competences (NRDK) is a framework model that describes individual digital competences across various areas and levels. The core elements of the NRDK are the digital competence model DigComp 2.3 AT (Austria's adaptation of the European competence model DigComp 2.2 EU), its applications and use cases, as well as the governance structures for classifying educational programs. The NRDK follows a learning outcomes-based approach, defining what learners should know, understand, and be able to do upon completing a specified learning process. This outcome-oriented structure enables educational providers to systematically align their courses and qualifications with the framework, provided their curricula are based on clearly defined learning objectives. In doing so, the National Reference Framework provides citizens, companies, and institutions with valuable foundations for developing digital competences that foster future readiness, participation, and prosperity. It allows for the transparent classification of digital qualifications and offers both learners and educational providers consistent points of reference.

The Big Picture

The NRDK plays a crucial role in building a digitally competent society and helps align the goals of the education system with the evolving demands of the labor market and society as a whole. By enhancing transparency and visibility, the framework makes digital competences more accessible and understandable—not only for educational providers and policy makers, but also for learners, employers, and other stakeholders. As a strategic instrument, the framework supports curriculum development, strengthens quality assurance in digital education, and lays the foundation for future-oriented strategies for lifelong learning. It also facilitates the identification of skills gaps and enables both individuals and institutions to effectively develop tailored learning pathways. On a broader level, the NRDK contributes to strategic coordination between education policy and economic needs, bridging the gap between the supply of digital competences and actual market demand. By standardizing the description of digital competences, it significantly strengthens Austria's digital infrastructure while ensuring that citizens are well equipped for a digitally shaped future.

Quick Facts

- Solution area: **Quality assurance and certification**
- Administrative level: **Federation**
- Solution process: **Digitization and technology, Employment and education**
- Technology: **Information technology, Platform technology**