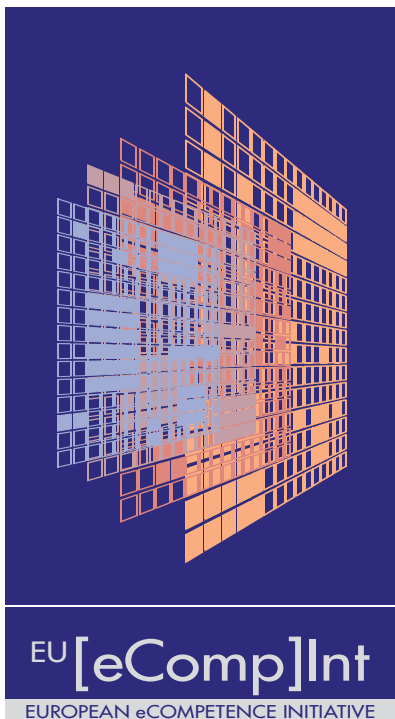


# EUROPEAN eCOMPETENCE INITIATIVE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION STAFF



## EUROPEAN eCOMPETENCE INITIATIVE project summary (to be used for publishing)

Project acronym: EU [eComp]Int

The aim of the European eCompetence Initiative is the development of an appropriate qualification for academic staff (in Higher Education) in the use of ICT in teaching and learning. Specifically, it aims to undertake a wide ranging study of current eCompetence training, a needs analysis across the sector, and to develop examples of blended learning scenarios that combine face-to-face and online modules in a coherent manner. Whilst eCompetence has been referred to in a number of projects funded under the eLearning Action Plan, there has been, thus far, no substantial in-depth analysis or development of the theme on a European level for Academic Staff in Higher Education.

Frequently, e-learning implementations in universities do not fit well with existing institutional cultures, values, structures and pedagogy. Key issues that must be addressed in order to ensure effective use of ICT in European Higher Education include; the shift in emphasis from *teaching* to *learning*, the changing role of teachers, pedagogical approaches, the complex interactions between various specialists and departments, quality assurance and organisational change. Therefore, the issue of staff development and qualification in e-learning must be embedded in wider strategies for institutional innovation.

"eCompetence," requires careful definition that reflects the range of aspects spanned in Higher Education organisations. For example, the *eCompetence of an individual staff member* centres on their use of eLearning in a lecture or course, whereas the *eCompetence of an institution* focuses on strategies to implement eLearning in a complete study programme or set of courses.

In the context of Higher Education, we define eCompetence as the integration of pedagogical concepts and institutional frameworks into the process of technological innovation in teaching and learning. We believe that eCompetence will be one of the key, decisive factors in the full exploitation of the potential of new media. Further, sustainable diffusion of e-learning will be dependent on the competencies and the commitment of all those involved in Higher Education.

The European eCompetence Initiative addresses problems that are continually arising in a similar way in many universities when it comes to the integration of ICT. The combination of its two main objectives - qualification of individual actors (the human factor) and institutional commitment (the organisational framework) - deal with the core processes of educational innovation.

The activities outlined and the expected results and outcomes address two target groups:

- HE staff developers and actors in the field of e-learning, directly involved in ICT-related education and training activities, who are open to educational innovation and who will serve as multipliers for the promotion of the eCompetence Initiative
- HE policy and decision makers who work on strategies for the sustainable integration of ICT- related staff qualifications into their core institutional business frameworks

In order to achieve these objectives, the eCompetence Initiative defines four subtopics that are the basis for the four workgroups of the project:

- Subtopic A: Field-based analysis of eCompetence programs in Higher Education
- Subtopic B: Policy-focused analysis of the integration of eCompetence programs into institutional innovation strategies in Higher Education
- Subtopic C: Building a European dimension for eCompetence consultation and support
- Subtopic D: Dissemination and application of the research results and of the European service platform for staff development

These workgroups define the research activities and the documentation that will be developed and disseminated during the project. The workgroups will produce reports and discussion papers offering insight into the analytical, evaluative and benchmarking tasks in European eCompetence programmes and institutional strategies. Guidelines and manuals will contain final summaries of the criteria for the qualification of teaching staff, innovative ICT integration into universities (including case studies) and a European accreditation system for eCompetence.

Within the framework of the project, the workgroups will establish a web platform which will: provide access to a database of key actors in the field of eCompetence (spanning pedagogy, practice and policy); include a pilot European consultation service (offering training for academic staff); enable the publication of a set of well-structured and designed documents, and allow dissemination of the outputs of the European eCompetence Initiative.

Coordinating organisation:

University of Dortmund - Center for Research on Higher Education and Faculty Development

Partner organisations:

The project consortium involves 26 European and international partners, who combine a high level of expertise in the field of e-learning and agree on the benefits for the innovation of European universities that a close cooperation in the topic of eCompetence offers.

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