

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMMES IN GIFTED EDUCATION

For further information and for the submission
of applications, please use the email:
training@echa.info

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The European Council for High Ability

A major aim of the European Council for High Ability (ECHA) is to act as a communication network to promote the exchange of information among people interested in high ability – educators, researchers, psychologists, parents and the highly able themselves. ECHA also aims to advance the study and development of potential excellence in people and one of the ways to reach this aim is training people to become ECHA-Specialists in Gifted Education.

The ECHA Training Programme

The aim of the ECHA Training Programme is to expand knowledge in the area of gifted education particularly in relation to recognising and supporting gifted children and adolescents. The training has a scientific base and is geared to practical situations inside and outside school. This means concrete, practical educational situations, scientific methods of research, description and evaluation are used to help participants understand and develop their practice. In this way, ECHA Training brings together the disciplines of psychology and education and considers issues related to pedagogy and education policy.

After successfully completing an ECHA Training Programme, participants will have knowledge about scientific developments in the area of giftedness and gifted education and about international theories for assessment and counselling concerning giftedness. They will be able to analyse practice using (inter)national theories and assess new projects and developments. They also will be familiar with many (inter)national examples of good practice in assessment, counselling and therapy, inside and outside school. Finally, participants will be part of a (inter)national network of ECHA Specialists in Gifted Education.

This document describes the standards upon which the qualification of teacher training by ECHA is based.

ECHA Training: Basic Components and Conditions

Key Principles

Teacher training programmes that aim to meet the conditions of ECHA Training strive to:

- strengthen awareness of the needs of the gifted and talented
- promote the competencies of professionals working in the field of Gifted Education and Talent Development¹
- build up an internationally accepted system of further education in Gifted Education and Talent Development.

Universities (e.g. Scientific/Research Universities, Schools of Education/Teacher Training, Pedagogical Universities, Universities of Teacher Education and Universities of Applied Sciences) can offer ECHA Training programmes in Gifted Education based on the following conditions:

- Implementation by a national accredited university,

¹ The terms - highly, able, gifted and talented, giftedness, gifted education and talent development – are being used synonymously/interchangeably in this document.

- National accreditation of the study programme by nationally acknowledged accredited institute/s,
- Acceptance of the ECHA Educational guidelines and principles,
- Qualification of the study programme set by the ECHA Educational Board²,
- Research-based, scientific-orientated and vocational-relevant study programme,
- Qualification entry requirements for the participants according to the standards of the Bologna Declaration, and
- Qualification requirements for the lecturers according to the standards of universities.

The ECHA Training Programme can be offered on three different levels, which could build on each other: Certificate of Advanced Studies (CAS), Diploma of Advanced Studies (DAS) or Master of Advanced Studies (MAS). For the levels DAS and MAS participants need to have at least a bachelor degree.

People who successfully complete the ECHA Training Programme can bear the title ECHA-Certificate/Diploma/Masters: 'Specialist in Gifted Education'.

Credit requirements for the following types of ECHA Training:

(According to the standards of the Bologna Declaration):

- ECHA Certificate of Advanced Studies in Gifted Education (CAS): Basic Modules (at minimum 15 ECT)
- ECHA Diploma of Advanced Studies in Gifted Education (DAS): Basic Modules plus Midterm Exam (or comparable assessments) (at minimum 30 ECT)
- ECHA Master of Advanced Studies in Gifted Education (MAS): Basic Modules plus Midterm Exam (or comparable assessments) plus Elective Advanced Modules (Profiles in Gifted Education) (at minimum 60 ECT)

The functions and authorisation of the three levels of ECHA Training also require to be accredited by national systems, policies and requirements in addition to the fulfilment of the module content and competencies mentioned below.

Each of the modules can partly be offered through an online course but a minimum of 20% of the training has to be face-to-face contact plus 5% individual consultation.

Competencies and Themes

Competencies

The competencies of an ECHA Training Programme are based on the CanMeds Model, a Canadian method to qualify training in terms of competencies.

² The ECHA Educational Board consists of experts in gifted education training as proposed by the ECHA General Committee and elected by the General Assembly of ECHA. The responsibilities of the Education Board are to acknowledge training in Gifted Education as ECHA Training and to oversee quality assurance of the ECHA Training Programme.

ECHA-Specialists in Gifted Education:

1 Act as a Specialist in Gifted Education

- Translate knowledge and abilities concerning identification, education and counselling of the gifted and talented to a scientifically based practice of assessment
- Relate the implementation of gifted programmes and talent support to scientific theories
- Carry out or participate in scientific research
- Report in a scientifically reliable way;
- Present in a scientifically reliable way
- Consider information about giftedness and talent critically
- Encourage broadening and development of scientific knowledge
- Continue in professional and personal education and lifelong learning
- Encourage expertise of colleagues in gifted education and care

2. Communicate with all those involved in the education of the gifted and talented

- Enter into and maintain effective relations with the gifted and talented
- Communicate and listen to partners (students, teachers, parents, counsellors) in order to receive and share relevant information
- Discuss information with the gifted and talented and their teachers, counsellors and parents in a professional manner
- Report in a professional manner both verbally and in writing

3. Collaborate with all those involved in the education of the gifted and talented

- Cooperate and consult professionally with colleagues and other professionals
- Refer the gifted and talented to other organisations as appropriate
- Contribute to effective interdisciplinary collaboration in gifted education and care

4. Take responsibility in and influence public discussion concerning the education of the gifted and talented

- Recognize and respond to (psycho)social and biological factors that can influence the education of the gifted and talented
- Encourage effective education for the gifted and talented in general
- Act according to relevant, legal and ethical regulations

Themes

The indicative themes outlined below relate to the main areas that come under consideration in the ECHA Training Programme. They are discussed across the Certificate/Diploma/Masters courses and build on each other thus enhancing and deepening knowledge at each stage of the learning process (spiral curriculum).

Themes	Contents
Conceptions of Giftedness and Talent	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Giftedness and talent development: theories, concepts and models• Intelligence: theories and models• Creativity: theories and models• Motivation and achievement motivation• Learning and developmental needs of the gifted and talented• Excellence and development of expertise• (...)
Identifying the Gifted and Talented	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cognitive, emotional and social characteristics of the gifted and talented• Characteristics of learning processes of the gifted and talented• Recognize different ways of learning and thinking• Psychological tests as methods for identification• Identification procedures during pedagogic practice• Possibilities and limits of diagnostic procedures• (...)
Educating the Gifted and Talented	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Classroom organisation: e.g. acceleration, enrichment and grouping• Separate, integrative and inclusive education• Planning and development of curricula• Design of learning environments• Programme development for schools and educational regions• Extracurricular funding initiatives• Effective learning and teaching policies – national and school level• (...)
Counselling the Gifted and Talented	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Coaching & mentoring of the gifted and talented• Individual case, system & network consulting• Team Development, Cooperation & Intervention• Group dynamic processes: family, school & peers• Special topics: Underachievement, learning disabilities, twice exceptional, gender• Special conditions: gifted minorities, social disadvantage, migration background, disability• (...)
Implementation of Gifted Programmes and Talent	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development and testing of best practice in talent support• Provision of gifted programmes at school level and reflection on their own performance in practice• Evaluation and documentation of work undertaken on the

Support

Training Programme

- Examination of the implementation of practice in the school context within the thesis
- (...)

Thesis / Exams:

- Qualifying (Final) Thesis: Thesis, including presentation of the research project, on Gifted Education and Talent Development (CAS/DAS/MAS obligatory)
- Written (Midterm) Exam (or comparable assessments): Exam on the theoretical background of Gifted Education and Talent Development (CAS optional, DAS/MAS obligatory)

Quality Management/Evaluation:

Annual report including students' and lecturers' evaluation by the local programme coordinator submitted to the ECHA Educational Board.

Qualification Process:

- Universities (e.g. Scientific/Research Universities, Schools of Education/Teacher Training, Pedagogical Universities, Universities of Teacher Education and Universities of Applied Sciences) submit their application in English to the ECHA Educational Board (see enclosed Application Form) by using the email address training@echa.info.
- The applying institution will receive the results of the approval according to the standards of the Bologna Declaration.
- The proposal may be (1) accepted, (2) rejected for revision (3) dismissed.
- Authorisation to use the «ECHA» logo is dependent on the acceptance of the study programme by the ECHA Educational Board.
- The institution has to reapply every five years in order to maintain the right to use the «ECHA» logo. When there are indications for concern about the institution, for example, indications for unethical or unprofessional behaviour, the ECHA Educational Board can ask for an interim evaluation and the right to use the ECHA logo can be withdrawn.

Fees:

- Fixed fee for the expenses of the qualification-process (by the ECHA Educational Board) has to be paid by the institution that offers the training based on a cooperation agreement.
- Fees for the expenses of visitations/supervising the viva (oral defence of the thesis) - by accepted experts - who can also offer lectures and seminars at participating institutions - have to be paid by the institution that offers the training.
- Mandatory annual ECHA International Membership for the participants (during the ECHA Training)
- The institute that offers the training determines participants' fees for the training

Literature:

Selection Criteria for literature to be included in course bibliographies: scientific based, current, relevant according to the module content and learning outcomes and approved by the ECHA Educational Board.

Exams:

- The institution that runs the programme and organises the final thesis is responsible for the adherence of the standards, the programme goals and the quality of the output of the studies.
- Written midterm exams are marked and graded by qualified lecturers³ of, or hired by, the institution that offers the studies.
- For the oral defence the process should include an accepted expert nominated by the ECHA Educational Board. The experts will be nominated by the ECHA Education Board based on their academic qualification and expertise in Gifted Education and Talent Development⁴. In case the programme and the oral defence are given in a local language the expert nominated by the ECHA Educational Board will be nominated from among those who speak this language.

Diploma:

- *Combined document:* The certificate/diploma/masters issued and signed by the university that offers the ECHA Training Programme should include the logos and signatures of the educational institution and local programme coordinator (the professional responsible of the training) in combination with the logo of ECHA and the signature of the chair of the educational board of ECHA.

or

- *Separate documents:* A certificate/diploma/masters from the university that offers the ECHA Training Programme in addition to a separate ECHA Diploma, signed by the chair of the educational board of ECHA.

³ **Requirements for the qualification of the lecturers**

- Scientists as lecturers have to prove profound academic expertise on gifted education and talent development, e.g. in the form of a relevant (post-) doctoral thesis or peer-reviewed papers on research in the field of giftedness and talent.
- Teachers as lecturers have to prove differentiated knowledge and reflect practical experience of individual support to gifted and talented students, e.g. in the form of the ECHA diploma or an analogous further education final degree in gifted education and talent development or gifted education components of a general education degree.

⁴ See above: Requirements for the qualification of the lecturers

Qualification Process

This section provides information for training providers on how to apply to deliver the qualification and on the qualification process itself.

The qualification process is intended to promote consistent quality and excellence in education and professional preparation and thus to provide tangible benefits for participants of gifted educational services, students, the profession, and programmes.

The qualification process involves evaluating the degree to which a programme has developed aims consistent with those of a range of professional practices.

In order for a programme to be accepted by ECHA its goals and standards should match those that have been set out by ECHA. However, when viewed internationally, diversity in programme aims and policies can be expected in the light of the differences among countries in their histories, cultures, political policies, university structures, professional entry levels, licensing requirements, educational needs and services, legal standards, and other important defining qualities. Thus, qualification procedures would recognize and anticipate programme differences.

Planning for qualification

ECHA acknowledges that the development of training programmes varies considerably among countries. Some programmes have become established only recently and, at this stage, may believe they are not yet ready to submit themselves for formal acceptance. Others have a longer history but are based in countries that do not have an appropriate professional association that provides the qualification. There are also many programmes that have been accredited by recognized authorities in their state or country. In order to reflect these differences, ECHA offers two options for qualification and one for a programme review.

Options for ECHA qualification

Option 1: A review of programme documentation together with an optional site visit that may be necessary for full acceptance if the programme it is not nationally accredited.

Option 2: Those programmes that have been accredited through national accreditation or qualification processes following standards that are in line with the ECHA standards may be eligible for qualification by ECHA if they can demonstrate that 1) the standards used to accept their programme are in keeping with ECHA standards, and 2) they have undergone a qualification process and has been accepted for qualification by their national qualification body. In this instance the ECHA qualification may be granted following a review of programme documentation and without a site visit.

THE QUALIFICATION PROCESS⁵

The qualification process is as follows:

1. Those responsible for running a teacher-training programme focused on gifted education and seeking qualification should decide which of the two options would be appropriate for them. In coming to this decision, they are encouraged to hold informal discussions with one of the members of the ECHA Educational Board. The contact address of the Board is training@echa.info.
2. Having decided on the appropriate option, they should apply in writing to the ECHA Education Board by submitting the filled Application Form to training@echa.info.
3. The ECHA Education Board will nominate a member who will be responsible for undertaking the qualification award process. The review team will be made up of trained educational scientists all of whom will be ECHA members with at least one being an experienced practitioner in the field and one being senior staff/faculty member of an accredited ECHA Training Programme. All members will have received training on how to accredit teacher training focused on gifted education using the ECHA standards.
4. The first version of the review report will be sent to the chair of the Educational Board of ECHA (with recommendations as appropriate) for matters of accuracy.
5. The qualification report will state whether:
 - a. the programme achieves ECHA aims and standards;
 - b. the programme may bear the ECHA logo for 5 years;
 - c. the programme (in some circumstances) may receive conditional qualification status.

QUALIFICATION/REVIEW COSTS

Option 1 involves a site visit of maximum three days, depending on the kind of application. The visiting ECHA delegate and the applying organisation will agree beforehand how many days will be necessary – In addition to the administration fee the teacher-training programme will have to cover the costs of travel, accommodation and subsistence for the evaluation team members. In order to offset qualification costs, team members may offer to give a talk or run a workshop in the host country free of charge, the income from which might be used to contribute to the costs of accommodation, travel and subsistence.

⁵ After receiving the application, the qualification process will take approximately 6 months.

Option 2 (no site visit) – teacher training programmes focused on gifted education will be required to pay an administration fee to ECHA-Europe

CAS: 400 Euro,

DAS: 600 Euro,

MAS: 800 Euro

In case of an application for more than one level, a maximum of 800 Euro will be charged. This administration fee has to be paid once in order to gain the right to use the «ECHA» logo for 5 years after which the institution has to reapply.

Fees for the expenses of visitations/supervising the oral defence of the thesis have to be paid by the institution that offers the training.

Institutions that apply for qualification can use the Application Form and will receive a detailed timeline of the qualification process.

ECHA-qualified CAS, DAS and MAS ECHA trainings will be listed on the ECHA website with a brief description, contact person and e-mail address. ECHA-Diploma holders have the opportunity to list themselves on the website together with their country of residence and, if desired, their e-mail address.

Important remark: Diplomas issued after the successful completion of trainings starting after 1st September 2019 may use the trademarked name and logo of ECHA only, if the training was qualified by the ECHA Education Board.

SUGGESTED TIMELINE FOR THE QUALIFICATION PROCESS

Without site visit:

1. Request for qualification

2.	A qualification team (QT) and a team leader is appointed by the head of the Educational Board, the team leader contacts the Programme Coordinator, first read of the documents	Week 6
3.	Consultation with the Programme Coordinator, discussion between team members, completion of documents (if needed)	Week 14
4.	The QT prepares the final decision and writes a report and recommendations if needed to the Programme Coordinator	Week 20
5.a	If there is no need for further changes , the Programme Coordinator accepts the decision, the QT sends the final report to the local Programme Coordinator and to the ECHA Educational Board	Week 24
5.b	If there is need for further changes and discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Completion or change of the application according to the recommendations, discussion between QT leader and Programme Coordinator ii. After completion if there is no need for further changes, the Programme Coordinator accepts the decision, the QT sends the final report to the Programme Coordinator and to the ECHA Committee 	Week 24 + time needed for completion

With site visit:

1. Request for qualification

2.	A qualification team and team leader is appointed by the Chair of the Educational Board, the team leader contacts the Programme Coordinator, first read of the documents	Week 6
3.	Consultation with the Programme Coordinator, discussion between team members, completion of documents (if needed)	Week 14
4.	The qualification team prepares the site visit at a time to suit all parties	Week 20
5.	Site visit	
6.	The qualification team prepares the final decision and writes a report and recommendations if needed	4 weeks after site visit
7.a	If there is no need for further changes , the Programme Coordinator accepts the decision, the QT send the final report to the local Program Coordinator and to the ECHA Educational Board	8 weeks after site visit
7.b	If there is need for further changes and discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Completion or change of the application according to the recommendations, discussion between QT leader and Programme Coordinator ii. After completion if there is no need for further changes, the Programme Coordinator accepts the decision, the QT send the final report to the local Program Coordinator and to the ECHA Educational Board 	8 weeks + time needed for completion after site visit