ALdia programme-trainers' guide

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Project information

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Introduction

This document has been developed within the framework of the ALdia - Accessible Learning Design implementation and Accreditation project. ALdia is a project co-funded by the European programme Key Action 3: Support for policy reform - Initiatives for policy innovation. The main objective of the ALdia project is to reduce disparities in learning outcomes affecting learners from disadvantaged backgrounds and to mainstream the equal access principles and practices into all education sectors and levels in Europe and beyond. The ALdia project aims to establish new knowledge and explore the feasibility of a new accreditation that will prepare and deploy the HE and VET education professional workforce for equity, diversity and inclusion through the use of new and creative pedagogies and tools. ALdia activities are expected to support people with disabilities to obtain higher qualifications and facilitate their transition to the labour market. To this direction, ALdia will design and develop a MOOC (Massive Open Online Collaborative Course) to prepare the education professionals for equity, diversity and inclusion in learning process and certify them with the qualifications of inclusive education. The ALdia training programme: Description of methodologies and tools is a deliverable of WP3 "Development of the training, assessment and accreditation", which is the central WP to the project implementation as it will deliver the major project results:

- Eight training modules,
- Eight self-assessment tests,
- Thirty-two peer-assessment assignments,
- One final exam

The training modules are based on the findings of the previous WP2 to develop innovative and flexible techniques that respond to specific education needs and promote inclusive learning and equality. The programme will abide by the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (EQF) and the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) standards.

The main objective of this WP is firstly to define the ALdia training, assessment and accreditation framework; secondly to develop the training material, eight ALdia training modules to remove or reduce inadvertent barriers which prevent disabled students from successfully participating in courses and programmes of study; and finally, design the assessment and accreditation, in order to assess the competences acquired by the trainees.

This document has been developed within the framework of the ALdia project, in order to provide a guide for the trainers which will facilitate the ALdia training programme.

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ALdia Training Programme

After having specified the training needs of the labour market, the ALdia consortium developed the ALdia training programme and assessment methodology, by associating the sets of desired qualifications/competences with the sets of knowledge.

The ALdia training programme is composed of 8 training modules, common for the target groups, together with peer-assessment assignments and exams for each training module.

Modules

1. Introduction to disability

2. Skills for Special Needs Education

3. Accessible course or program design

4. Accessible lectures, seminars and tutorials

5. Accessible collaborative learning and practical classes

6. Accessible e-learning material

7. Accessible examinations and assessments

8. Accessible placements, study abroad and field trips

ALdia Training Modules Specifications

Below you can find a brief overview of all the modules[1]:

Module 1: Introduction to disability

Module General Objective	Units	Module Duration
The present module will provide an introduction to disability types, the concept of disability, the difficulties and educational needs. Diversity is an inherent part of human development and attention to it implies an education in respect to the peculiarities of heterogeneous group. Having students with disabilities we must be very aware of the type of disability and aspects that can interfere in learning. You will learn to Know and identify the key concepts on disability, identify different types of disabilities, analyze the current regulations/legislation on disability of each country and a analyze the contributions of Inclusive Education.	Unit 1: Introduction and evolution of the concept of disability	125 min
	Unit 2: Typology of disabilities (I): sensory disabilities	120 min
	Unit 3: Typology of disabilities (II): other disabilities in HE and VET context	125 min

[1]For a full description of the common modules refers to R3.2 ALdia training programme.

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Module 2: Skills for Special Needs Educa

Module General Objective	Units	Module Duration
This module will provide a short overview of background legislation and will focus on best-practice a) education strategies and b) institutional services.	Unit 1: Role of teachers in an inclusive society of the 21st century	75 min
	Unit 2: Basic competences of the professional profile related to the attention of the disability. Associated training	165 min
	Unit 3: Evaluation of competences and abilities of students with specific educational needs	165 min
	Unit 4: Good practices and strategies for a successful learning	75 min
	Unit 5: Services to support the teaching staff of students with specific educational needs	30 min

Module 3: Accessible course or program design

Module General Objective	Units	Module Duration
This module will discuss how equality of opportunity demands that the courses should be designed in order to be equally available to disabled students. Accessibility should proceed and not follow course design. This module will also include information on how to create accessible information about courses for disabled students and applicants. You will get to know the key concepts of universal design for all, get to know the ICT tools for the accessible learning for all. You will learn how to design and use accessible materials via ICT in education and communication of students with functional diversity associated with the disability and to develop technical skills of accessibility in the development of trainings.	Unit 1: Design for All (DfA)	125 min
	Unit 2: Accessible materials	120 min
	Unit 3: ICT programs	125 min

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Module 4: Accessible lectures, seminars and tutorials

Module General Objective	Units	Module Duration
Similarly, lectures, tutorials and seminars should be planned and delivered with equity as their core principle. Teaching practices should be accessible by design, so that only minimal adaptations need to be made, reactively, for individuals.	Unit 1: Architectural and psychological barriers for an accessible learning	210 min
	Unit 2: Suitable and proper arrangement of the learning environment	105 min
	Unit 3: Accessible communicative spaces for fluid and enjoyable learning	195 min

Module 5: Accessible collaborative learning and practical classes

Module General Objective	Units	Module Duration
Practical classes take many different forms, and there are wide variations in what is expected of students working in practical classes, reflecting activities associated with a great range of subjects and disciplines. Equipment, materials, teaching facilities, furnishings and locations used in practical class teaching are equally diverse	Unit 1: Building accessibility into the design and delivery of practical lab classes teaching, according to each disability	20 min
	Unit 2: Legal issues of accessibility in His	130 min

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Module 6: Accessible e-learning material

Module General Objective	Units	Module Duration
Accessibility is a core aspect of e-learning design. Technology offers considerable potential as an effective way of overcoming some of the barriers to accessibility present in traditional teaching delivery, thereby widening access to teaching and learning.	Unit 1: UDL model for accessibility	40 min
	Unit 2: Designing and delivering accessible eLearning activities	40 min

Module 7: Accessible examinations and assessments

Module General Objective	Units	Module Duration
Adjustments permissible within an assessment or examination without compromise to academic, training or other standards, such as competences required by professional bodies.	Unit 1: Quantitative and Qualitative assessment – Continuous quality assessment.	280 min
	Unit 2: Questionnaires of qualitative assessment.	240 min

Module 8: Accessible placements, study abroad and field trips

Module General Objective	Units	Module Duration
Adjustments permissible within an assessment or examination without compromise to academic, training or other standards, such as competences required by professional bodies.	Unit 1: The contribution of mobility to education and employment	105 min
	Unit 2: An individual mobility project with target-tailored objectives	100 min
	Unit 3: Construction and modelling of a mobility accompaniment methodology	105 min
	Unit 4: Capitalisation and follow-up after the mobility learning experience	60 min

The ALdia Methodology

The **ALdia methodology** aims at being a system of principles, a structured approach for a learning objective that consists in giving students with disabilities, as well as their teachers, the opportunity to update their skills and, therefore, deal more effectively with this complex issue.

The two main principles standing for the ALdia methodology are:
* Supporting a step by step the e-learning process,
* Promoting a participatory approach.

Following this approach, the training courses will be mainly based on facilitating the learners to develop new solutions through individual work and collaboration with the others.

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E-learning: The Moodle Platform

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All members of the platform need to access through a "Log In" section. The ALdia VLE (http://moodle.aldia-project.eu/) is available in English, Italian, Greek and Spanish and is easily extendable to more languages. It allows to organise the learning program into sections and modules guaranteeing a sequentially of activities
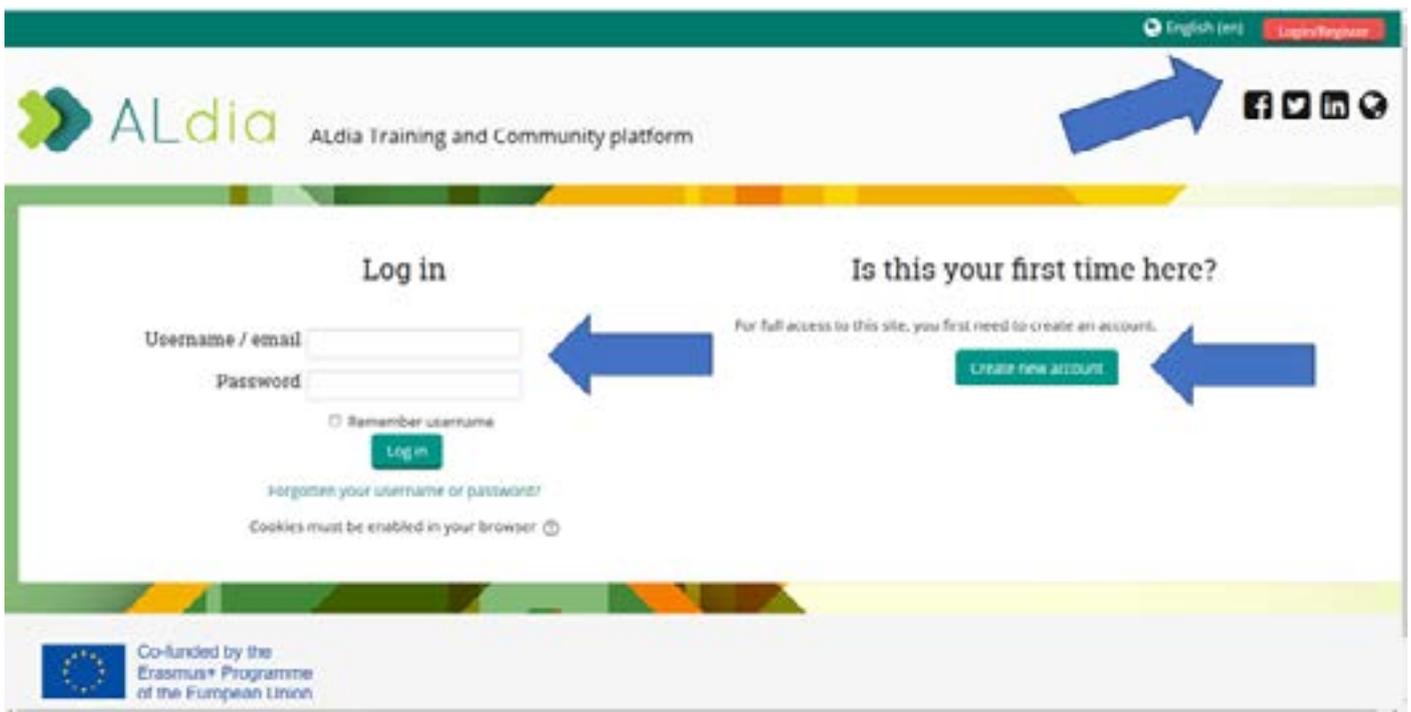
The tools that can be used on Moodle are various:

✓ Google docs, links,
✓ Blogs,
✓ Video Conferences,
✓ Discussion Forums.

The e-learning through the Moodle Platform can be integrated with many useful online tools. Moreover, a Virtual Community is developed where users can meet, exchange experiences, and participate in group activities. The ALdia Virtual Community brings together education professionals from all education levels, including special needs education, disabled students and their families, NGOs and communities, policy-makers and the general public. Also, it is open for researchers that wish to promote their results.

The Role of Trainer

In the **e-learning** the trainer and trainees don't have direct interaction. Nevertheless, the trainer plays a fundamental role in keeping alive the **motivation** of participants that can decrease during the life of the training mostly due to a very high level of self-managing by the participant.

According to the ALdia Methodology, the main aspects that should be taken into account by a trainer in e-learning context are:

✓ Understanding the differences in motivation among participants;
✓ Organizing the tools and applications for a clear use;
✓ Providing constant help with technical difficulties in order not to let learners feeling lost;
✓ Guaranteeing a space for free and creative initiative even within the structure of the digital learning;
✓ Providing constant feedback in order to let learners feel there is an alive communication;
✓ Not leaving behind those who are less active;
✓ Maintaining a pleasant atmosphere using a friendly language through the digital means.

Moreover, the trainer has to perform different roles, such as:

• **Coordinator**: Coordination involves planning, setting ground rules, assuring effective group working, time management and record keeping.
• **Motivator**: Motivation involves inspiring learners, generating enthusiasm, stim-

ulating them to express ideas and listen actively.

- **Advisor**: Advising involves effective cooperation to facilitate the transfer of knowledge.
- **Mediator**: Mediation involves conflict management, sensitivity and patience as well as awareness of the impact of cultural background on communication style, values, attitudes and beliefs.
- **Assessor**: Assessing involves knowledge and usage of recognized assessment methods, practices and strategies.

The role and responsibilities of the trainer is key to ensuring an effective delivery of all phases of the training and ensuring the course objectives and learning outcomes for participants are met. The trainer should support also Peer-learning amongst the target group of trainees and group activities, sharing their expertise and good practices so to develop activities and approaches.

How to get the ECVET Certification

The European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training, often referred to as ECVET, is a technical framework for the transfer, recognition and (where appropriate) accumulation of individuals' learning outcomes with a view to achieving a qualification. Guided by a European-level Recommendation, ECVET tools and methodology comprise a description of qualifications in terms of units of learning outcomes, a transfer and accumulation process and series of complementary documents such as learning agreements, personal transcripts and user guides. ECVET is intended to facilitate the recognition of learning outcomes in accordance with national legislation, in the framework of mobility, for the purpose of achieving a qualification.

ECVET aims to support the mobility of European citizens, facilitating lifelong learning (formal, informal and non-formal learning) and providing greater transparency in terms of individual learning experiences, making it more attractive to move between different countries and different learning environments. At a systems level, ECVET aims towards better compatibility between the different vocational education and training (VET) systems in place across Europe, and their qualifications.

From a geographical mobility perspective, ECVET aims at facilitating validation, recognition and accumulation of skills and knowledge acquired during a stay in another country, with a view to ensuring that such experiences contribute to the achievement of vocational qualifications. The ALdia Training programme has been developed ac-

cording to the ECVET standards in order to provide a framework for the assessment, validation and recognition of learning outcomes, alongside a series of common tools and instruments able to support quality in mobility.

The trainees which want to get the ECVET certification trainees should attend all 8 ALdia modules.

Since **each module will count 10 hours (600 minutes)**, it means that a trainee will attend in total at least 80 hours.

Learning assessment and overall evaluation

In order to assess the competences acquired by the trainees, assessment exams criteria were designed by the ALdia consortium. The assessment will verify if the learning outcomes (LOs) have been assimilated.

Each exam will be composed of a set of questions in English, Greek, Italian or Spanish. In order to reach a successful conclusion, a performance assessment will be developed according to the Module needs. This assessment should aim to test the knowledge, skills and competences acquired during the module, and determine whether or not it was successful for each candidate.

For each module, the trainee will be asked to complete a questionnaire of **10 questions** and to do **4 peer-assessment assignments**.

The <u>most important points</u> to be taken into account before designing these assessment exams are:
•   There should be an online examination for each different module and only the participants that have passed it will be able to get a certification;
•   It is crucial to align each Unit's LOs with its assessment, in order to know they were successful;
•   Each module's examination will consist of a set of questions, at least 10 questions for each unit;
•   The grading of these exams will be based on a point system. For a candidate to receive a pass, there needs to be a minimum grade of 60%;
•   Flexibility and attention to the candidates' specific needs should be one of the main to also take into consideration when implementing the assessment.

Concluding Remarks

The ALdia training programme provides students with disabilities and teachers with the opportunity to:

• reduce disparities in learning outcomes affecting learners from disadvantaged backgrounds,

• update their professional skills and knowledge,

• validate the acquired expertise through certification that will be based on the ECVET principles, thus facilitating its use across Europe.

The application of the EQF/ECVET framework allow the transparency, comparability, transferability and recognition of qualifications, between the participating countries and promotes labor mobility.

So, the proposed training program gives the opportunity to all the students and especially those with disabilities to participate in a transnational project and have access to a 'practice area' in the Aldia MOOC where they will be able to share their accessible learning designs. Finally, it is crucial to refer that the **ALdia certificate will allow the trainees to become trainers**, thus multiplying the impact of the project.