

1.3. DIGITAL SKILLS AND ABILITIES AS AN INDICATOR OF CERTIFICATION ASSESSMENT OF THE PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY OF TEACHING STAFF

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Svitlana Naumenko,

PhD (Pedagogy), Senior Researcher,
Leading Researcher of the Department of Monitoring and
Assessment of the Quality of General Secondary Education,
Institute of Pedagogy of the National Academy of
Educational Sciences of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine.

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8279-4427>



owadays, digital technologies are an integral part of social life. They are widely used in everyday life, education, medicine, transport, business, etc. They also play an important role in the personal and professional development of individuals.

The transition of educational institutions of Ukraine, in particular general secondary education institutions, to mixed and distance learning in 2020 (initially due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and since 2022 – due to the introduction of martial law in the country, which is still in force) has stimulated teachers to develop their digital literacy.

Thus, digital skills and abilities are an important component of the professional competence of a modern teacher of a general secondary education institution. According to the professional standard "Teacher of a General Secondary Education Institution" (2024), information and digital competence is one of the three competences (along with subject-methodological and language-communicative) that a teacher of a general secondary education institution must possess in order to perform one of five of his/her labor functions – teaching subjects (integrated courses) to students (Profesiiniyi standart «Vchytel zakladu zahalnoi serednoi osvity», 2024). At the same time, the information and digital competence of a teacher is manifested in his/her ability to: 1) navigate in the information space, search for and critically

evaluate information, as well use it in their professional activities; 2) effectively use existing and create new electronic (digital) resources; 3) use digital technologies in the educational process (Profesiiniyi standart «Vchytel zakladu zahalnoi serednoi osvity», 2024, pp. 12-16).

Since 2019, Ukraine has introduced external assessment (certification of teaching staff) alongside with internal assessment of the professional activities of teaching staff (teacher certification). Since 2019, primary school teachers have been participating in the certification of teaching staff. In 2023, they were joined by teachers of Ukrainian language and literature and mathematics, and in 2024 – teachers of subjects (integrated courses) in the civic and historical educational field and/or the educational field “Social Studies”, and from 2025 – foreign language teachers (English). This means that, at present, not all subject teachers can participate in certification.

The purpose of certification is to identify and stimulate teachers who have a high level of professional skill and who is proficient in competency-based teaching methods and new educational technologies to promote their dissemination (Sertyfikatsiia pedahohichnykh pratsivnykiv. Zahalna informatsiia, n.d.).

Teachers' participation in certification is voluntary, so they can opt out at any stage of the process.

Certification consists of three stages, which take place sequentially one after the other. The first stage is an independent testing of the professional knowledge and skills of teaching staff, which is organized and conducted by the Ukrainian Centre for Educational Quality Assessment and its regional centers. The other two stages of certification are self-assessment of one's own teaching skills and study of the teacher's practical work experience, which are organized and conducted by the State Service for Education Quality of Ukraine and its territorial bodies.

According to the Program for Independent Testing of Professional Knowledge and Skills of Primary School Teachers (2019), one of the components of professional knowledge and skills of primary school teachers is the digital environment (Prohrama nezalezhnoho testuvannia fakhovykh znan ta umin uchyteliv pochatkovoi shkoly, 2019, p. 2). In other words, independent testing assesses primary school teachers' knowledge of the requirements for the use of computer technology in educational institutions to ensure the educational process, safety rules and sanitary and hygienic standards when using computer technology and digital devices, the ability to ensure the information security of students, including cybersecurity,

and their ability to organize the educational process in a digital learning environment, including selecting appropriate software, digital educational environment resources, and information products to solve educational process tasks (Prohrama nezalezhnoho testuvannia fakhovykh znan ta umin uchyteliv pochatkovoi shkoly, 2019, p. 17).

However, it was only in 2022 that a component such as “Information Technology Education and Digital Educational Environment” was added to the test characteristics for primary school teachers, accounting for 6% of the total number of test tasks, i.e. 6 tasks (Pro zatverdzhennia Zahalnoi kharakterystyky testu nezalezhnoho testuvannia fakhovykh znan ta umin uchyteliv pochatkovykh klasiv..., 2022).

The Program for Independent Testing of Professional Knowledge and Skills of Primary School Teachers in General Secondary Education Institutions (2022) separately put the content of the material and the professional knowledge and skills that constitute the professional competence of primary school teachers' in general secondary education institutions for each section. Thus, the component “Information Technology Education and Digital Educational Environment” contains material on: “Information. Data. Objects”, “Algorithms”, “Professional Communication and Cooperation in the Digital Space”, “Electronic (Digital) Educational Resources”, “Digital devices and their software” (Prohrama nezalezhnoho testuvannia fakhovykh znan ta vmin uchyteliv pochatkovykh klasiv zakladiv zahalnoi serednoi osvity, 2022, pp. 18-20). In other words, this component covers issues related to the Internet and Internet safety, including the security of websites, responsibility for one's activities on the Internet, and the risks of non-compliance with security policies; search engines (searching for information, saving it and assessing its relevance), age restrictions on viewing certain pages and creating accounts; sources of information and their reliability and authenticity; methods of presenting algorithms and rules for constructing block diagrams; creating software projects in the Scratch environment and correcting errors in them; the purpose and capabilities of software; digital tools and resources; electronic (digital) educational resources; capabilities of cloud services; purpose, capabilities and limitations of digital devices; network etiquette; rules and norms of academic integrity and copyright while working with electronic educational resources; responsibility for unauthorized access to private data; rules for operating digital devices, safety rules, sanitary and hygienic requirements for using computer equipment; recognizing basic malfunctions of digital devices and programs

(Prohrama nezalezhnoho testuvannia fakhovykh znan ta vmin uchyteliv pochat-kovykh klasiv zakladiv zahalnoi serednoi osvity, 2022, pp. 18-20).

One of the components of “teaching students subjects (integrated courses)” in the Programs for Independent Testing of Professional Knowledge and Skills of Teachers of Ukrainian Language and Literature (2023), Mathematics (2023), Subjects (Integrated Courses) in the Field of Civic and Historical Education and/or the Field of Education “Social Studies” (2024) and Foreign Languages (English) (2024), is the creation and maintenance of a digital environment for the effective teaching of the relevant subject/subjects or integrated courses in a specific educational field (language and literature, mathematics, civics and history, “Social Studies”). At the same time, for teachers of Ukrainian language and literature, subjects (integrated courses) in the field of civic and historical education and/or the field of “Social Studies” and teachers of foreign languages (English), this component includes issues related to the digital equipment of the classroom, electronic (digital) educational resources for organizing lessons and safety in the digital educational environment, and for mathematics teachers – “Basic concepts that are necessary for creating and maintaining a digital educational environment”, “Algorithms”, “Digital equipment for the classroom”, “Electronic (digital) educational resources for organizing educational activities (lessons)”, “Safety in the digital educational environment” (Prohrama nezalezhnoho testuvannia fakhovykh znan i vmin uchyteliv inozemnoi movy (anhliiska mova) zakladiv zahalnoi serednoi osvity, 2024, pp. 15-16; Prohrama nezalezhnoho testuvannia fakhovykh znan i vmin uchyteliv navchalnykh predmetiv (intehrovanykh kursiv) hromadianskoi ta istorychnoi osvitnoi haluzi ta/abo osvitnoi haluzi «Suspilstvoznavstvo» zakladiv zahalnoi serednoi osvity, 2024, pp. 17-18; Prohrama nezalezhnoho testuvannia fakhovykh znan i vmin uchyteliv ukrainskoi movy ta literatury zakladiv zahalnoi serednoi osvity, 2023, pp. 16-18; Prohrama nezalezhnoho testuvannia fakhovykh znan ta vmin uchyteliv matematyky zakladiv zahalnoi serednoi osvity, 2023, pp. 14-17).

In particular, for teachers of Ukrainian language and literature, subjects (integrated courses) in the field of civic and historical education and/or the field of “social studies”, and foreign languages (English), the component “creation and maintenance of a digital environment for effective teaching of the relevant subject/subjects or integrated courses” covers issues related to the purpose and rules of operation of digital devices, including safety rules and sanitary and hygienic requirements for the use of computer equipment; operating systems and application software objects

and operations with them; computer network components; types and purposes of electronic (digital) educational resources; the capabilities of cloud services; recognition of basic malfunctions of computer systems (devices and programs); rules of network etiquette; rules and norms of academic integrity and copyright while working with electronic educational resources; dangers and risks in the digital space; cybersecurity; rules for safe behavior in the digital space; age restrictions on viewing pages and creating accounts; assessing the reliability of Internet sites; identifying risks of non-compliance with security policies; creating strong passwords, recognizing manipulative influences and fraudulent information sources (Prohrama nezalezhnoho testuvannia fakhovykh znan i vmin uchyteliv inozemnoi movy (anhliiska mova) zakladiv zahalnoi serednoi osvity, 2024, pp. 15-16; Prohrama nezalezhnoho testuvannia fakhovykh znan i vmin uchyteliv navchalnykh predmetiv (intehrovanykh kursiv) hromadianskoi ta istorychnoi osvitnoi haluzi ta/abo osvitnoi haluzi «Suspilstvoznavstvo» zakladiv zahalnoi serednoi osvity, 2024, pp. 17-18; Prohrama nezalezhnoho testuvannia fakhovykh znan i vmin uchyteliv ukrainskoi movy ta literatury zakladiv zahalnoi serednoi osvity, 2023, pp. 16-18).

For mathematics teachers, the component “creation and maintenance of a digital environment for effective teaching of the relevant subject/subjects or integrated courses” is supplemented by questions about the essence of the concepts of information, data, object, model; coding and decoding; creating mathematical models and implementing them in spreadsheets; using mathematical models in spreadsheets to conduct experiments and research; linear, branched and cyclic algorithms, identifying and eliminating various types of errors in algorithms; drawing block diagrams using various basic structures to solve mathematical problems (Prohrama nezalezhnoho testuvannia fakhovykh znan ta vmin uchyteliv matematyky zakladiv zahalnoi serednoi osvity, 2023, pp. 14-17).

In 2025, new programs for independent testing of the professional knowledge and skills of teachers of primary school, Ukrainian language and literature, mathematics, and subjects (integrated courses) in the civic and historical education field were approved (Prohrama nezalezhnoho testuvannia fakhovykh znan i vmin uchyteliv matematyky zakladiv zahalnoi serednoi osvity, 2025; Prohrama nezalezhnoho testuvannia fakhovykh znan i vmin uchyteliv navchalnykh predmetiv (intehrovanykh kursiv) hromadianskoi ta istorychnoi osvitnoi haluzi ta/abo osvitnoi haluzi «Suspilstvoznavstvo» zakladiv zahalnoi serednoi osvity, 2025; Prohrama nezalezhnoho testuvannia fakhovykh znan i vmin uchyteliv pochatkovykh klasiv

zakladiv zahalnoi serednoi osvity, 2025; Prohrama nezalezhnoho testuvannia fakhovykh znan i vmin uchyteliv ukrainskoi movy ta literatury zakladiv zahalnoi serednoi osvity, 2025). In particular, the programs for all certification participants were standardized with regard to the component "creation and maintenance of a digital environment for effective teaching of subjects (integrated courses)". The programs for independent testing of the professional knowledge and skills of teachers of the Ukrainian language and literature (2023) and subjects (integrated courses) in the field of civic and historical education and/or the field of education "Social Studies" (2024) were taken as a basis (Prohrama nezalezhnoho testuvannia fakhovykh znan i vmin uchyteliv navchalnykh predmetiv (intehrovanykh kursiv) hromadianskoi ta istorychnoi osvitnoi haluzi ta/abo osvitnoi haluzi «Suspilstvoznavstvo» zakladiv zahalnoi serednoi osvity, 2024; Prohrama nezalezhnoho testuvannia fakhovykh znan i vmin uchyteliv ukrainskoi movy ta literatury zakladiv zahalnoi serednoi osvity, 2023). Thus, for all certification participants, the component "creation and maintenance of a digital environment for effective teaching of subjects (integrated courses)" includes information about digital support for the educational process, electronic (digital) educational resources for organizing educational activities, and security in the digital educational environment. However, compared to the 2023-2024 programs, the 2025 programs have been supplemented with information on the implementation of artificial intelligence systems in the educational process, in particular it relates to the understanding the possibilities of using digital educational platforms, online services and artificial intelligence systems in the educational process and the ability to choose them during their teaching activities, as well the knowledge of the rules of network etiquette (Prohrama nezalezhnoho testuvannia fakhovykh znan i vmin uchyteliv matematyky zakladiv zahalnoi serednoi osvity, 2025, pp. 20-22; Prohrama nezalezhnoho testuvannia fakhovykh znan i vmin uchyteliv navchalnykh predmetiv (intehrovanykh kursiv) hromadianskoi ta istorychnoi osvitnoi haluzi ta/abo osvitnoi haluzi «Suspilstvoznavstvo» zakladiv zahalnoi serednoi osvity, 2025, pp. 24-26; Prohrama nezalezhnoho testuvannia fakhovykh znan i vmin uchyteliv pochatkovykh klasiv zakladiv zahalnoi serednoi osvity, 2025, pp. 26-28; Prohrama nezalezhnoho testuvannia fakhovykh znan i vmin uchyteliv ukrainskoi movy ta literatury zakladiv zahalnoi serednoi osvity, 2025, pp. 25-28).

Table 1 shows the percentage and number of tasks related to computer science education and the digital educational environment contained in independent testing for different categories of teachers in 2022-2025.

Table 1*

Percentage and number of tasks on computer science
education and the digital educational environment contained
in independent testing for different categories of teachers in 2022–2025

	Teacher categories:									
	Primary school teachers		Ukrainian language and literature teachers		Mathematics teachers			Teachers of subjects (integrated courses) in the field of civic and historical education and/or the field of "social studies"		Foreign lan-guage teach-ers (English)
	2022-2023	2024-2025	2023-2024	2025	2023	2024	2025	2024	2025	
% of tasks in the test	6%	6%	6%	7%	6%	7%	7%	6%	6%	5%
Number of tasks in the test	6	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4-5**

* The table was created using data from (Nezalezhne testuvannia fakhovykh znan i vmin uchyteliv navchalnykh predmetiv hromadianskoi ta istorychnoi osvitnoi haluzi. Sertyfikatsia pedahohichnykh pratsivnykiv, 2024, 2025; Nezalezhne testuvannia fakhovykh znan ta vmin uchyteliv matematyky. Sertyfikatsia pedahohichnykh pratsivnykiv, 2023, 2024, 2025; Nezalezhne testuvannia fakhovykh znan ta vmin uchyteliv pochatkovykh klasiv. Sertyfikatsia pedahohichnykh pratsivnykiv, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025; Nezalezhne testuvannia fakhovykh znan ta vmin uchyteliv ukrainskoi movy ta literatury. Sertyfikatsia pedahohichnykh pratsivnykiv, 2023, 2024, 2025; Pro zatverzhennia Zahalnoi kharakterystyky testu nezalezhnogo testuvannia fakhovykh znan i vmin uchyteliv navchalnykh predmetiv (intehrovanykh kursiv) hromadianskoi ta istorychnoi osvitnoi haluzi ta/abo osvitnoi haluzi «Suspilstvoznavstvo»..., 2024; Pro zatverzhennia Zahalnoi kharakterystyky testu nezalezhnogo testuvannia fakhovykh znan ta umin uchyteliv pochatkovykh klasiv..., 2022, 2023; Pro zatverzhennia Zahalnoi kharakterystyky testu nezalezhnogo testuvannia fakhovykh znan ta vmin uchyteliv inozemnoi movy (anhliiska mova)..., 2025; Pro zatverzhennia Zahalnykh kharakterystyk testiv nezalezhnogo testuvannia fakhovykh znan i vmin uchyteliv ukrainskoi movy ta literatury y uchyteliv matematyky..., 2023; Pro zatverzhennia Zahalnykh kharakterystyk testiv nezalezhnogo testuvannia fakhovykh znan ta umin uchyteliv pochatkovykh klasiv, uchyteliv ukrainskoi movy ta literatury y uchyteliv matematyky..., 2023; Pro zatverzhennia Zahalnykh kharakterystyk testiv nezalezhnogo testuvannia fakhovykh znan ta vmin uchyteliv pochatkovykh klasiv, uchyteliv ukrainskoi movy ta literatury, uchyteliv matematyky ta uchyteliv navchalnykh predmetiv (intehrovanykh kursiv) hromadianskoi ta istorychnoi osvitnoi haluzi ta/abo osvitnoi haluzi «Suspilstvoznavstvo»..., 2024).

** Approximate number of tasks in the test.

According to Table 1, it can be concluded that each independent testing test contains 5-6 tasks on information technology education and the digital educational environment.

Let us briefly analyze these tasks.

For example, the test for primary school teachers in 2022 contained tasks on: selecting from the given names of internal memory devices; identifying an error in an algorithm created by a student for drawing a square in the Scratch environment; knowledge of the norms (rules) that must be followed when sharing someone else's video on your Facebook profile; identifying actions that can be implemented using the Google Forms tool; identifying a service that can be used to organize joint activities for students and post information on a virtual board in text or graphic form; knowledge of the characteristics of a secure email (choosing such an email from four emails) (Nezalezhne testuvannia fakhovykh znan ta vmlin uchyteliv pochatkovykh klasiv. Sertyfikatsiia pedahohichnykh pratsivnykiv, 2022, pp. 30-32); 2023 – knowledge of the age at which children in Ukraine are allowed to independently create a Google account outside the Google Workspace of Education domains; ability to create a software project in the Scratch environment – draw a triangle; knowing the norms of academic integrity standards when sharing a colleague's methodological work on social media; identifying statements about the organization of the educational process in Google Classroom; determining the types and functions of software; choosing a service for creating a quiz (Nezalezhne testuvannia fakhovykh znan ta vmlin uchyteliv pochatkovykh klasiv. Sertyfikatsiia pedahohichnykh pratsivnykiv, 2023, pp. 30-32).

The tests for teachers of Ukrainian language and literature and mathematics in 2023 included tasks on: the ability to assess emails for their safety for the recipient (choosing a safe email from four emails); choosing a problem that is the cause of a computer malfunction; knowledge of keys when working in a Microsoft Word document; choosing a service for creating a words cloud; choosing an action that cannot be performed using the Google Docs tool (Nezalezhne testuvannia fakhovykh znan ta vmlin uchyteliv matematyky. Sertyfikatsiia pedahohichnykh pratsivnykiv, 2023, pp. 11-13; Nezalezhne testuvannia fakhovykh znan ta vmlin uchyteliv ukrainskoi movy ta literatury. Sertyfikatsiia pedahohichnykh pratsivnykiv, 2023, pp. 11-13).

In 2024, tests for primary school teachers and teachers of Ukrainian language and literature and mathematics included tasks on: knowledge of the characteristics of safe and unsafe websites (choosing an unsafe website from four options); knowl-

edge of the purpose of a specific panel button; choosing a service that is not suitable for organizing group work for students on a virtual board; identifying actions that can be performed in Google Docs; resolving a specific problem when working with a PC (personal computer) (Nezalezhne testuvannia fakhovykh znan ta vmlin uchyteliv matematyky. Sertyfikatsiia pedahohichnykh pratsivnykiv, 2024, pp. 11-12; Nezalezhne testuvannia fakhovykh znan ta vmlin uchyteliv pochatkovykh klasiv. Sertyfikatsiia pedahohichnykh pratsivnykiv, 2024, pp. 11-12; Nezalezhne testuvannia fakhovykh znan ta vmlin uchyteliv ukrainskoi movy ta literatury. Sertyfikatsiia pedahohichnykh pratsivnykiv, 2024, pp. 11-12).

The test for teachers of academic subjects (integrated courses) in the field of civic and historical education and/or the field of "Social Studies" in 2024 included tasks related to: choosing what to do when receiving an email that looks like spam; solving a problem with a personal computer by taking certain actions; choosing the key used to exit the main window program and cancel certain actions; choosing the level of access for colleagues under certain conditions in Google Docs; defining what Google Drive is (Nezalezhne testuvannia fakhovykh znan i vmlin uchyteliv navchalnykh predmetiv hromadianskoi ta istorychnoi osvitnoi haluzi. Sertyfikatsiia pedahohichnykh pratsivnykiv, 2024, pp. 12-13).

In 2025, tests for teachers of primary school, Ukrainian language and literature, mathematics, and subjects (integrated courses) of the civics and history educational field and/or the educational field "Social Studies" included tasks on: choosing a secure password for a personal Google account from four options; choosing names for devices that can only be used to enter information into a computer; choosing a Microsoft program for designing and laying out pages, creating business cards, invitations, etc.; knowing the safety rules when making a purchase in an online store; determining what Google Keep is (Nezalezhne testuvannia fakhovykh znan i vmlin uchyteliv navchalnykh predmetiv hromadianskoi ta istorychnoi osvitnoi haluzi. Sertyfikatsiia pedahohichnykh pratsivnykiv, 2025, pp. 9-10; Nezalezhne testuvannia fakhovykh znan ta vmlin uchyteliv matematyky. Sertyfikatsiia pedahohichnykh pratsivnykiv, 2025, pp. 9-10; Nezalezhne testuvannia fakhovykh znan ta vmlin uchyteliv pochatkovykh klasiv. Sertyfikatsiia pedahohichnykh pratsivnykiv, 2025, pp. 11-12; Nezalezhne testuvannia fakhovykh znan ta vmlin uchyteliv ukrainskoi movy ta literatury. Sertyfikatsiia pedahohichnykh pratsivnykiv, 2025, pp. 9-10).

So, since 2019, certification system (external assessment) for teaching staff in general secondary education institutions has implemented in Ukraine. This is an

important tool for improving the quality of education and the professional development of teaching staff in general secondary education institutions. Unfortunately, not all subject teachers are yet eligible to participate in the certification process.

Independent testing of the professional knowledge and skills of teaching staff is the first of three stages of certification. One of the components of the external assessment tests of the professional activities of teaching staff in general secondary education institutions is "information technology education and digital educational environment". Each year, each test contains 5-6 tasks on this component, one of which is on the use of electronic (digital) educational resources for organizing the educational process in general secondary education institutions and one on safety rules in the digital educational environment. The tests also pay great attention to issues of academic integrity. In our opinion, the format of the test tasks – choosing one correct answer from the options provided – does not always allow for an adequate assessment of the practical skills of teachers of a general secondary education institution, i.e. the application of knowledge and skills related to information technology education and the digital educational environment in the real educational process. We hope that the introduction from September 1, 2025 independent testing of teachers' professional knowledge and skills in the form of computer-based testing (along with paper-based testing) (Pro vnesennia zmin do Polozhennia pro sertyifikatsii pedahohichnykh pratsivnykiv, 2025) will lead to certain changes in the form and content of test tasks.

In our opinion, it is desirable to supplement the tests for independent testing of teachers' professional knowledge and skills with situational tasks and open-ended tasks in which teachers would solve problem situations related to the use of digital technologies in the classroom and/or during the organization of the educational process, demonstrate their skills in working with digital platforms, software, etc., justify their choice of certain digital tools for specific educational tasks, etc. Indeed, in the context of modern digital education, one of the main indicators of the certification assessment of the professional activity of a teacher in a general secondary education institution is their digital competence, and certification assessment should not be a test of teachers' knowledge and skills, but an incentive for their professional development and learning.

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