

## ***Greece: Recognition of Greek language competence for social and job integration (along with long term residence)***

### **Type of provider**

**EDUC/OTHER** : Centre for Greek language (under the auspice of Greek Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs- The Ministry of Education)

### **Objectives**

Non-formal learning in Greek (for foreigners) and other languages can be validated through examinations offered by the Greek Language Centre of the Ministry of Education. (The General Secretariat for Lifelong Learning also offers non-formal learning courses on the Greek language that lead to the Greek Language Competence Certificate. The Ministry of Education offers the National Language Certificate that any individual can take through examinations, regardless of how the language skills have been obtained.)

This Certificate is recognised in the public and the private sector and is also mandatory for when applying for public sector positions.

There is thus growing interest from applicants to receive the A2 grade certification which is increasingly being demanded as a pre-requisite for public sector jobs such as municipal cleaners, taxi drivers and nurses, professions which are in demand from foreigners.

### **Assessment approaches**

The Ministry of Education recently set up a system of summative assessment, based on examinations to confirm and certify the knowledge of modern languages obtained through non-formal training. The process leads to obtaining the State Certificate of Competence in Languages. Foreign nationals can obtain certification for their knowledge of Modern Greek.

The examinations are designed around the question of “what should the user of a language be able to do at each level to be considered adequate in order for his knowledge of the language to be certified” and consists of 4 phases, as follows, aiming to assess:

- the ability to comprehend written text;
- the ability to produce written text and inter-relate between Greek and the foreign language;
- listening comprehension;
- the ability to speak (monologue) and to converse in the foreign language under examination.

Standards also exist for the type of questions to be put under each phase, including multiple choice, short answers, ranking and role play among others.

The CGL, at the suggestion of examination centres, may provide special arrangements for candidates with special needs (e.g. provide more time for the writing examination, or more breaks, or transcription of the test into Braille for visually impaired candidates,

## Assessment approaches (rest)

etc.).

Application forms should be filled in very carefully. The candidate's name must be written in capital letters just as it appears on their proof of identity. A candidate may change examination centre under special circumstances only, provided that the CGL is informed and approves of the change at least one month prior to the examination. Along with their application, candidates must also fill in a questionnaire (to be used for statistical reasons) and submit a certified copy of some valid form of identification (ID card, passport, driver's licence etc.) to their examination centre.

For a Certificate of Attainment in Greek to be issued, the candidate must pass all skills tests: speaking, listening, reading, writing and use of Greek (for levels B2, C1 and C2). In case they fail even one of them, they fail the whole examination. At the writing examination and at the reading examination the candidate must use small letters. Detailed examination results are sent to examination centres in late July and report back which skills have been passed or failed using the indication Pass or Fail.

## Target Group

Further to any person interested in obtaining the Certification of Greek Language as Second or Foreign, the focus is on Third Countries Nationals who wish to obtain a 'long stay' permit

## Potential transferability/ scalability

- Regarding the validation of foreigners in Greek language, their benefit is explicitly recognised in the related legislation: the Greek Language Competence certification is a prerequisite to obtain a 'long-stay' permit in Greece and it has to be submitted along with the relevant application to the Ministry of Interior. Also, the Greek Language Competence is a requirement to practise several professions in Greece - anyone who wishes to obtain a professional/vocational licence has to demonstrate sufficient knowledge of the Greek language. The level of competence in Greek is determined by competent authorities for each licence and is adjusted to the demands of the profession, (According to Presidential Decree 38/2010 that transposes the EU Directive 2005/36/EK).

- The CGL, at the suggestion of examination centres, may provide special arrangements for candidates with special needs (e.g. provide more time for the writing examination, or more breaks, or transcription of the test into Braille for visually impaired candidates, etc.).

## Summaries or Basic elements of analysis

As far as trainers for the Greek language are concerned, even though it is felt that it is important for trainers to have formal qualifications, there is the possibility for trainers with at least one year of relevant experience to participate in the train the trainer programmes offered to those interested to support applicants through the process for the recognition of Greek language competence.

More recent developments in relation to the recognition of Greek language competence include that the electronic submission of applications was piloted in 2014 and was rolled out for all exam centres in 2015. Since then, all applications are done

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(rest)

electronically to facilitate applicants who no longer need to visit the exam centres in order to register. A new website with enhanced user friendliness is also in preparation and was launched in 2016. The developments in the governance structure since 2010 underline that there is a clear focus towards complying with EU frameworks and Directives, while upgrading the existing systems.

However, there appears to be a societal preference for formal qualifications and traditional assessment methods, such as written tests. The lack of validation practices in formal education also underlines this. Authorities underline that, given the financial constraints due to the crisis, developments towards validation have to prioritise among the multiple sources of learning. Support for employment is likely to be the key goal of the next steps towards a more comprehensive approach regarding validation.

