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Presentation

Characteristics

The presentation method consists of preparing, presenting and discussing a specific topic in front of a panel of experts (e.g. assessors).

One of the techniques of the presentation method is the poster – preparing and presenting information on a large placard. In this case, the topic is presented in graphic form and all relevant content is shown simultaneously.

During the presentation or directly after it – also in relation to the poster technique – the experts and the audience have the opportunity to ask the candidate additional questions. This takes place in the form of an organised session. When answering questions, the candidate can demonstrate in-depth knowledge on a given topic, explain doubts, refer more broadly to selected expert comments or defend accepted theses or solutions.

The presentation (including the poster technique) is often used to support other assessment methods. Its use is often aimed at clarifying and deepening knowledge about the learning outcomes achieved by the candidate.

Box 1. Designing the method of assessing a presentation (including the poster technique)

General principles to be followed when designing the assessment of a presentation (including the poster technique):

1. The candidate must be informed about the main purpose of the presentation and which of its elements will be analysed.
2. The candidate must be informed about the length of time of the presentation and whether it will be followed by a question and answer session.
3. The candidate must be informed about how the presentation will be assessed, which assessment criteria will be used, and who will conduct the assessment (only the assessor or someone else as well). The proper use of the method depends on providing this information, otherwise, the candidate may emphasise irrelevant elements (e.g. if the poster technique is used, the candidate may focus on impressive graphics instead of the content).
4. The presentation assessment sheet has to be prepared – all assessors must use the same sheet.

It should be remembered that when mainly assessing the candidate's statements, any interruptions to the discussion (e.g. changing the topic) may affect the final result. This is particularly harmful when the new thread relates to learning outcomes that are not included in the validation scenario. An assessor who acts in this way is not performing his/her duties properly. However, even in the case of less significant disturbances, the effect of such behaviour can, for example, change the atmosphere of the assessment process. As a result, the candidate may stop responding in detail or honestly. This is also stressful for the person undergoing assessment, and may result in a worse assessment.

At the same time, this method may be susceptible to the “examiner's effect”, i.e. assessing the candidate on the basis of the overall impression or always awarding extreme or average grades.

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Validation stages in which the use of the method is recommended

The presentation method can be used in each of the three validation stages.

According to Cedefop (an agency supporting the development and promotion of vocational education and lifelong learning in the European Union), it is most often used to assess learning outcomes – this was the case in 17 of the 33 countries included in the study. This method is used less frequently in the other stages of validation:

- four countries in the stage of identifying a candidate's knowledge, skills and social competences;
- three countries used it in the documentation stage.

Scope of the learning outcomes that may be confirmed using the method

Information on the scope of the learning outcomes that can be confirmed by the presentation method is for guidance only. It was developed on the basis of analysing the required learning outcomes contained in the Polish Qualifications Framework (second stage descriptors typical of vocational education and training).

It should be remembered that the choice of a given method must always be based on an analysis of the learning outcomes for a given qualification.

The presentation method allows knowledge, skills and social competences from all levels of the PQF to be assessed.

To achieve the expected result, one must:

- properly define the topic of the presentation (its substantive scope) – which most often concerns knowledge and the skills of using this knowledge, logical thinking, and indicating cause-and-effect sequences;
- develop the assessment criteria – which can include, for example, the candidate's communication skills and ability to use specific tools.

Knowledge: The presentation method can be used to test knowledge at all PQF levels, depending on the subject. The poster technique allows the depth of understanding knowledge to be confirmed.

Skills: A presentation can allow a candidate to demonstrate skills from various PQF levels, in particular those relating to the use of knowledge and communication skills, as well as the skills of working in a group – depending on the adopted assessment criteria, especially in relation to the poster. It is not advisable to use this method when assessing learning outcomes relating to the selection and use of tools and materials.

Social competence: The presentation method allows a narrow range of social competences to be assessed. In this situation, it is recommended that this method be used in combination with others.

[The suggested learning outcomes that can be confirmed using the Presentation method](#)

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Strengths and weaknesses of the presentation

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the presentation makes it possible to identify a candidates' learning outcomes and test his/her knowledge, skills and social competences • the presentation allows more in-depth questions to be asked, which may affect the credibility of the result • this method – especially the poster technique – allows cognitive skills (especially the depth of understanding, analysis and critical evaluation) and creative skills to be confirmed • the presentation allows the oratory and communication skills of a candidate to be assessed (i.e. constructing statements, applying arguments, managing the course of the discussion) and their use before a public audience (including public speaking, coping with stress, answering questions) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not every qualification contains learning outcomes that can be presented and evaluated using presentations • this method is time-consuming and is therefore unlikely to be used in the assessment of large groups of candidates

Limitations of using the method

One of the limitations of using the presentation (including the poster technique) may be the fact that it is mainly based on oral statements, sometimes in front of a larger audience, which may discourage some people or affect the result. In addition, depending on the technique chosen (poster, presentation with or without the help of multimedia), the preparation of the presentation may require knowledge and skills from the candidate that are not directly related to the qualification (e.g. computer skills, broadly understood artistic skills).

The use of this method by awarding bodies may be limited by its costs. Candidates are usually assessed one by one and at least one trained person is required. The use of presentations (including the poster technique) for several people at the same time requires the preparation of appropriate evaluation criteria and assessment tools. However, using this method allows knowledge, skills (including the depth of understanding and skills from higher PQF levels) and social competences to be assessed.

The assessors may have doubts whether the candidate has prepared the presentation (or poster) on his/her own. The solution to this problem may be to include a question and answer session in the presentation, as well as to develop appropriate assessment criteria (e.g. paying special attention to communication skills).

The recommendation of this method by entities describing qualifications is limited by the low level of confidence in its reliability. Meanwhile, this method is relatively popular in other countries. According to 2016 Cedefop data, the presentation as a assessment method was used in 21 of the 33 European countries included the survey. In addition, the poster technique is widely accepted in higher education.

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Required human, organisational and material resources

A qualified assessor is needed in order to be able to use the presentation method. He/she should have the knowledge and skills necessary to correctly interpret the presentation (including with the use of a poster and without the use of multimedia) and infer from it the achieved learning outcomes of the candidate. In this case, the following is of special importance:

- impartiality – otherwise the results obtained through the presentation method may depend on the individual characteristics of the person being assessed, and not only on his/her achieved learning outcomes;
- the ability to distinguish the technical aspects of the presentation, especially the use of multimedia and the poster, from the knowledge, skills and social competences presented with their use that are to be identified or assessed.

During the presentation, other people may also be involved as an audience. In addition, it is advisable to appoint a person(s) responsible for processing the candidate's application.

The costs of using the presentation method include:

- preparing and improving the validation scenario that includes the use of a presentation;
- providing the human resources – the cost will depend in this case on the roles (assessor, person receiving the application, person providing information, etc.) and the number of persons participating in the process (e.g. several assessors, audience), and (indirectly) on the number of candidates;
- providing the technical equipment (e.g. a computer, projector, multimedia board);
- ensuring a suitable room for the presentation;
- additional costs if the presentation is to be combined with other methods ([theoretical test](#), [observation in simulated conditions](#), [interview](#), [analysis of evidence and statements](#)).

Possibilities of combining the presentation with other methods

The presentation can be supplemented by a [theoretical test](#) or [unstructured interview](#) as part of the question and answer session.

This method can also be combined with [observation in simulated conditions](#) (practical task and project) and [observation in real-life conditions](#).

In addition, the poster, the multimedia presentation or the recording from the presentation can be used as proof of achieving the required learning outcomes and be the subject of the [analysis of evidence and statements](#).

Example techniques

A technique is a way of doing a particular task in a given method, used to collect and analyse data proving that a person has achieved the learning outcomes.

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Multimedia presentation

The preparation of a multimedia presentation requires gathering information on a given topic, developing it and presenting it in a form which is attractive to the recipient, using the appropriate software.

The following aspects are assessed: creativity, creative approach to the subject, use of information technologies, planning and organisation of one's own work. In the area of social competences, the candidate's culture of communication is assessed.

Strengths of the multimedia presentation:

- the multimedia form allows the presentation of additional content, allowing the candidate to demonstrate a greater number of achieved learning outcomes.

Weaknesses of the multimedia presentation:

- preparation of a presentation in this form requires knowledge and technical skills that often go beyond the scope of the qualification being validated;
- instead of the content, a candidate may focus on the visual aspects of the presentation; therefore the evaluation criteria must be specified in detail and presented to the candidate.

Presentation without using multimedia

A presentation without using multimedia is usually an oral presentation. This can be defined as a text prepared to be presented to a circle of interested persons, aimed at conveying knowledge on a specific topic. It can also include critical comments.

It is assumed that such a presentation should not last longer than 15-20 minutes.

The paper is particularly recommended for presenting scientific knowledge (including the depth of its understanding) for PQF levels 6 to 8.

Poster

A poster is a way of presenting the content and conclusions on a specific topic in graphic form (usually on a large format placard) to the general public. The presentation of the poster may be accompanied by an oral statement, because the information is presented in the poster in a brief and abbreviated form.

This method is often used to present group research projects in higher education.

A good poster is characterised by:

- content consistent with the topic,
- clear graphics.

Question and answer sessions can be held when using this presentation technique.

Strengths of the poster:

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- allows an assessor to define a candidate's depth of understanding of knowledge, the ability to think logically and synthesise knowledge (the poster requires candidates to select facts, present the most important cause-and-effect factors);
- allows a candidate's creativity to be evaluated;
- assessing a poster is short and concise;
- assessing a poster can be done not only by the assessor, but also by other candidates;
- assessing a poster can be done at any time, also without the participation of the candidate.

Weaknesses of the poster:

- to fully take advantage of the potential of this method, the awarding body should clearly define the assessment criteria (the candidate must know to what extent the substantive content and the manner of its presentation are the subject of the assessment);
- the candidate may focus too much on visual effects, not on content;
- outsiders (counsellors, teachers, peers) can influence the content of the poster.

Below are examples of poster assessment criteria, based on materials from the University of Ulster (Faculty of Computer Science and IT Resources Engineering).

Table 1 Sample poster assessment criteria

Assessment criterion	Comment
Content	
Defining the problem clearly	
Presenting the problem briefly	The candidate summarised the essence of the problem and did not just repeat it.
Proposing a solution	
Presenting the model	The candidate took into account all relevant facts and information. He/she explained the main assumptions and relationships. He/she used his/her own knowledge and experience in a reasonable and appropriate way.
Using appropriate mathematical tools	The candidate used appropriate mathematical tools and resources to present and solve the problem.
Using mathematics in presenting the solution	The candidate achieved the correct mathematical results. He/she used the proper mathematical terminology. He/she briefly presented the use of appropriate methods.
Presenting the conclusions	Conclusions relate to the assumptions of the model. The answer was given. The model was used to describe and explain a given phenomenon and to develop a forecast.
Presenting the content	
Logical presentation of the content	The content layout is logical and easy to follow.
Effective use of different fonts	The headings are bolded. Underlining was used where needed.

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Effective use of illustrations	The illustrations used are necessary and at the same time sufficient to understand the text.
Aesthetics of the poster	
Succinctness of the text	The overall presentation is not too long. It is written with correct language use.
Knowledge of the topic is demonstrated in the conversation	Optional – depends on the main purpose of the poster and whether there is a question and answer session planned.

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