EVERY CHILD MATTERS

ULCA PATHWAY TO EXCELLENT SCHOOLS

KNOWLEDGE-SHARING & NETWORKING IN EDUCATION

ULCA GUIDELINES FOR (PRIMARY) SCHOOLS - ULCA GPS

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A PPROACH

ULCA pathway to excellent schools
ULCA Guidelines for (Primary) schools - ULCA GPS
Knowledge-sharing & networking in education

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CONTENT

1. Introduction of the ULCA model

The ULCA school model is an innovative model that **upgrades educational institutions** (employees, schools, managers) into a new, higher and more professional and qualitative level.

The ULCA school model stands for a school that has adopted the **Learner-Centred Approach as the key teaching philosophy** and has made a strategic decision to upgrade all the school processes in line with it.

In an effort to sustain the top quality and sustainability of the upgraded processes, an ULCA school develops in line with the **Learn & Lead developmental approach** to which all their teaching and managing staff is included.

This transformation of an individual and a school itself is supported by the:

ULCA Teacher Development Framework → EFQM model → Training courses

The **ULCA Teacher Development Framework**[1] along with the ULCA observation sheet and a Self-reflection sheet for teachers serve as guiding instruments to assess and monitor competence development of all those members of the teaching and managing staff who has chosen to follow the ULCA path towards their personal and professional excellence.

An ULCA school is committed to be adopting the **EFQM model**[2] quality guidance in order to make transformation successful. The red thread of the globally recognised EFQM model is understanding the connection between the purpose and the strategy of an organisation and how that is used to help it create sustainable future with outstanding results delivery.

In addition, this transformation of an individual and a school itself is supported by professional **training courses** that are clearly listed in the document under the chapter 4.2 *How to become the ULCA school.*

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[1] More at: https://ulca-project.pf.ku.sk/en/
[2] More at: https://efqm.org/the-efqm-model/

2. Aims of the ULCA guidelines

The Upgrade with Learner-Centred Approach guidelines for primary schools
(ULCA GPS) is a document, the main purpose of which is to **support people working in education in their pathway to excellence** in their life-long journey of professional and personal development**.**
It serves as the means of the **creation of the European ULCA School Network** which is supported by national ULCA School Networks. It offers guidance to all who would like to start walking the ULCA pathway to excellence in education.
Moreover, it serves to those who would like to **become ULCA recognised teachers** and get the ULCA friendly teacher badge or an **ULCA recognised school** with an ULCA school friendly badge.
The ULCA friendly badge is awarded to the teachers and organisations once they are monitored and they undergo the assessment carried out by the ULCA assessors.

3. The structure of the ULCA Guidelines for Primary Schools

ULCA Guidelines are powered by the EFQM model, a globally recognised framework for organisational change and performance improvement.

The EFQM is based on three questions.
1. <u>WHY</u>, the answer to which <u>gives directions</u> to what purpose do we fulfil as organisation or as an individual.
2. <u>HOW</u> do we intend to deliver on our purpose and strategy? The answer opens the path to an <u>execution</u>.
3. <u>WHAT</u> do we want to achieve? The answer is <u>results</u> oriented.

Using those three questions the document addresses **pre- and in-service teachers who want to enhance the increase of quality and efficiency in own teaching practice**. Therefore, self-assessment tools are created to help identify development needs of the teachers and training programmes they can follow. Through ULCAGPS, we provide the simplest possible tool for teacher self-development and thus, through teachers, the development of their educational institutions.

Therefore, the document also addresses **managers within schools who want to support the development of the whole school ULCA approach** which goes beyond just a didactic model. The core of it is the way of thinking about the education and as such about mindset transformation. The ultimate goal for the managers is to identify individual and group profiles of teachers who serve as a base for enhancing professionalism in education and in the organisation.

Various components of the educational organisation that need to be considered when the school would like to become the ULCA school are described.

Minimum ULCA standards for each key area of the ULCA school or the ULCA teacher are defined.

4. ULCA pathway to excellence for schools

Managers and teachers at school need to work hand in hand. Only in such situation the highest quality of organisation and people development can be achieved.

Ideally, managers allow the ULCA Teachers Development Framework (TDF) to be offered to teachers and they create supportive environment for teachers to personally grow and professionally develop. Teachers choose to follow the ULCA TDF by themselves. Later on, they are encouraged and supported on their path to excellence where the ULCA friendly teacher badge can be obtained.

4.1 Why to become an ULCA school?

Schools awarded by ULCA friendly school badge, will be connected on European (European ULCA School Network) and National level (National ULCA School Network), where constant development support will be offered. Namely, Life-long learning by connecting, sharing researched based practices and constantly re-thinking education is high on the ULCA agenda. ULCA understands education not only as knowledge transmission but as developing skills and competencies needed to thrive and continuously strive for improvement in the world we live in. ULCA philosophy is not about finding the right educational approach for the needs of tomorrow ULCA strongly believes we are the ones shaping and defining the needs of tomorrow now.

4.1.1 Why to become an ULCA manager?

When we want to transform schools into high quality learner-centred schools and assure the quality in education ULCA Schools network can be and will be of a great support. Not only you will be connected with European colleagues and as such with European schools but needed high quality trainings to support professional development of the teachers in the Learner-Centred Approach and their personal growth will be offered.

4.1.2 Why to become an ULCA teacher?

Teachers are aware that life-long learning is a must nowadays but the demands of the career can be overwhelming at times. Therefore, a carefully structured ULCA Schools' network-based setting can be a strong support in both, professional development in the Learner-Centred Approach and for a personal development in the way to become an innovative teacher, the ULCA teacher. It offers a learning space with diverse expertise, a safe place to ask questions and get advice to stay up-to-date or to see what's working. What's more, it offers a possibility to build a strong network for national and international cooperation to feel connected, to share, inspire and be inspired by fellow professionals.

ULCA ACTION
Find your 'why'. Think about your reason why would you like to become an ULCA manager/teacher and write it down.

Read testimonials of ULCA teachers sharing their why in the next chapter.

4.1.3 ULCA managers & teachers sharing their 'why'

"*Desire to improve and get involved is important for teachers and managers, and a school as a whole. Constant change and improvement are required.*
Teachers need to teach other teachers how to cooperate together, then they'll be able to teach the children the same by being an example. Teachers must create goals for themselves and monitor them.

Why is it important for the manager to desire to become an ULCA manager of an ULCA school? The ULCA principles and ULCA values promote life-long learning, which will always be important in the modern world. In addition, connecting every day events with students' personal experiences and universal knowledge is more and more important. Therefore, students and teachers must find a purpose and meaning in the learning process. To help with that, they must set up goals for themselves to improve motivation and achieve the preferred outcome."

Jurate Mikulskiene, director at Vilniaus Prano Masioto pradine mokykla

"*When I started creating and working on the goals in the ULCA project, my strongest motivation was the role of the mother. Only later I began to perceive my needs, the needs of a university professor who fell into the stereotypes of the educational system at the university. I forgot that I am there for the students whom I do not just want to lecture, consult and explain, but with whom I want to create a relationship, I want to have more interactions, communication, discussions. This is the way they will get more out of the lectures and the overall teaching than if I just lecture what I have prepared for the class.*
ULCAGPS is one of the tools that will help me, our ULCA team and, as I believe, all of you who are reading it right now, find a way to self-development in the role of teacher, manager, school, etc."

Markéta Rusnáková, professor at Catholic University in Ružomberok

"*Do you feel passionate teaching the children?*
Have you got active students within the classroom?
Do you want to get better and improve your teaching skills?

If so, this is your why. Do not hesitate and join the group of ULCA teachers.
You will increase your skills and start enjoying teaching."

Lenka Krasuľová, teacher at Základná škola, Ružomberok

4.2 How to become an ULCA school?

In order to become an ULCA school educational organisation needs to start the transformation following the EFQM model. Based on the EFQM three simple but powerful questions 'why, how and what' the organisation can focus improvement on its priorities, purpose and people. In addition, seven criterions with minimum standards help to identify a clear direction of the organisation, to develop an execution plan and to plan high quality results.

4.2.1 How for managers

An outstanding manager inspires, takes the responsibility and understands the impact of the education on the development of the better world in the future.

See how you can become an ULCA school following the criterions bellow.

ULCA ACTION

Criterion 1: Purpose, Vision & Strategy

Find your 'why to support the whole school approach' which is built around ULCA LCA Teacher Development Framework key areas which define ULCA values (see LCA TDF document[3]).

Minimum to be achieved:
ULCA values can be found in the vision and long-term strategy of the educational organisation.

Criterion 2: Organisational culture & Leadership

Set a whole school approach to ULCA with the teachers and make it a part of the organisation yearly guidelines.

Monitor the implementation and goals achievements based on your vision and strategy on a regular basis, monthly or quarterly each year. Make sure, each member of the school management has precisely defined role in the team.
Responsibilities and tasks of individual members of the school management may change from time to time.
In case of organizational and systemic problems in the school management system, the school management can request the consultation of the teacher trainer or an ULCA assessor.

Minimum to be achieved:
- ULCA model is presented to the school board/parent board,
- ULCA values can be found in yearly guidelines of the organisation.

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[3] LCA TDF document was developed as one of the intellectual outputs led by Jana Chynoradska within Erasmus+ project *Upgrade with Learner-Centred Approach*.

Criterion 3: Engaging stakeholders

Identify professional development phases of your teachers. Invite them to carry out ULCA self-assessment called ULCA teacher development framework which is accessible in several languages at http://uULCA.pf.ku.sk/en/assessment/.
Based on their needs provide them with professional training. For any further information about the trainings contact the respected coordinator of your country (see the list of ULCA country coordinators at the end of the document.

Minimum to be achieved:
1/3 of the teachers are ULCA certified. It means they need to undergo
the two trainings ('Application of the Learner-Centred Approach' and 'The Learn & Lead self-management').

Criterion 4: Creating sustainable value

Support teachers to develop their own action plans of their professional and personal development based on the analysis of a self-assessment done and based on the knowledge they have gained through ULCA trainings.

Minimum to be achieved:
1/3 of the teachers have been observed and assessed by ULCA trainers
(see the list of certified ULCA trainers at the end of the document).

Criterion 5: Driving performance & transformation

Monitor progress of the teachers on a regular basis. Compare and contrast between ULCA self-assesment and the quality of the ULCA use/implementation in their teaching through their lesson observation.
Invite a national representative of ULCA trainer to carry out observations of your teachers based on ULCA observation-sheet and ULCA self-reflection sheet.

Minimum to be achieved:
10% of the teachers reached the phase of expert facilitator (see the chart below).

Criterion 6: Stakeholder perceptions

Think of all people and organisations who care about the success of your organisation. Connect with them to reveal their personal experience and stay informed about their perceptions.

Minimum to be achieved:
- created stakeholders map,
- established way of communication to obtain feedback from the various stakeholders.

Criterion 7: Strategic & operational performance

Develop your own strategy of monitoring the quality of the set objectives achievement. Define key areas to be monitored (your quality standards) and individual member roles. Monitor and evaluate their work performance to understand the linkages between their perception and actual performance when it comes to achieving set goals.

Minimum to be achieved:
Developed quality work performance standards for teachers and managers in line with the chosen strategy.

4.2.2 How for teachers

There are three professional development phases a teacher can reach, competent replicator, aware practitioner and expert facilitator. Each phase is subdivided to two levels, which altogether makes six levels.

Development phase 1		Development phase 2		Development phase 3	
Competent replicator		*Aware practitioner*		*Expert facilitator*	
level 1 (1.1)	level 2 (1.2)	level 3 (2.1)	level 4 (2.2)	level 5 (3.1)	level 6 (3.2)
Any score up to 24 points with at least one third of competence developed at the minimum of 1.2 level.		A score between 25 and 47 points with every individual competence developed at the minimum of 1.2 level.		More than 48 points with every individual competence developed at the minimum of 2.2 level.	

As a support on this path to excellence a teacher can follow *The 9 principles of a smart person*[4] philosophy using the tools we have created.

See how you can become an ULCA teacher following the 9 principles bellow.

ULCA ACTION

Principle 1: Be courageous

Make a decision to devote your time to the development of the art of teaching.
To identify your professional development phase, carry out ULCA self-assessment called ULCA teacher development framework which is accessible in several languages at http://uULCA.pf.ku.sk/en/assessment/.

Principle 2: Be proactive

Once you get the result set your objectives. Decide what areas do you want to improve and to what extend do you want to improve it in a school year.

To improve your professional development phase based on your ULCA self-assessment results you can plan your professional trainings[5]:
- trainings such is 'Application of the Learner-Centred Approach' or
  'The Learn & Lead self-management';
- other ULCA courses or life-long learning programmes.

To reflect on your own learning and leading of your own professional development compare and contrast your ULCA self-assessment results before and after.

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[4] Author: Jana Chynoradska, https://www.hltmag.co.uk/oct20/attachments/download.asp?file=556&type=pdf
[5] Think about funding options for teacher-training programmes suggested above. Explore Erasmus+ programme which supports education, training, youth and sport in Europe.

Principle 3: Be a team player

To identify a quality of the ULCA use/implementation in your teaching invite a peer to observe your lesson. Compare and contrast your reflections about your teaching practice using ULCA self-assessment sheet.

Principle 4: Be intuitive

Develop an action plan for your further professional development where your professional and personal needs are defined and share it with your management (headteacher/head of department/director).

Principle 5: Be open-minded

See job shadowing in ULCA schools (see the list of ULCA schools at the end of the document) across Europe and choose based on your needs.

Read testimonials of the teachers sharing how did they apply the ULCA experience into their teaching in the next chapter.

Principle 6: Be persistent

If you would like to become an expert facilitator you need to be officially recognised by ULCA assessors. Ask your management to invite a national representative and an ULCA trainer to carry out observations of your teaching practice based on ULCA observation-sheet. In addition you will fill in ULCA self-reflection sheet.

Principle 7: Be patient

If you would like to become an expert facilitator you need to join the training of 'Train the ULCA teacher trainer'. To be able to join the training you are obliged to pass the two trainings ('Application of the learner centred approach' and 'The Learn & Lead self-management') delivered by the learn and lead certified trainers.

In the 'Train the ULCA Teacher Trainer' the teacher will learn, train others, observe, self-reflect, receive & give feedback, develop their own personal action plan of further professional development with the certified Learn & Lead trainer.

Principle 8 and 9: Be thankful, believe in yourself and act

Throughout the process be thankful for all difficulties and challenges you face as these are your learning experiences.

Read testimonials of the teachers sharing what was their personal or professional highlight in their journey.

4.1.3 ULCA managers & teachers sharing their 'how'

"*Teachers set professional goals for themselves and create an action plan of how to achieve them. During the process they monitor their achievements, self-reflect and seek guidance from management and school community.*
Colleagues should observe each other in the classroom: to share the good experience and motivation, creativity, find solutions and improve.
Also, it is important to participate in professional trainings and summer schools. ULCA schools should be open to visitors and collaborations between institutions.
Jus go and use LCA methods in your classroom. When in doubt or uncertainty, be brave and do not give up, try again."

Jurate Mikulskiene, director at Vilniaus Prano Mašioto pradine mokykla

"*I try to be a more learner-centred teacher. For example, I try to involve the pupils to be more active during the lessons. I really like they can talk and have a chance to share their experience. During my lessons, I noticed for some students is hard to concentrate and listen to other kids when they talk. So, I gave them the chance to talk to each other. During this activity, one student is listening and asking and the other is talking. And then they switch partners. So, this is very helpful to encourage even shy students to try to speak and share their experiences.*
Also, in every lesson, the students have a chance to say their opinion and share their knowledge with others. I realized that sometimes students memorize more when they listen to their classmates.
As a teacher you also must meet the needs of the pupils: accept them as they are, choose individual activities, and give them challenges.
And last, but not least, try to include more active learning and personal tasks. Also, don't forget about children's interests and areas of expertise, so that they can share their interests."

Iveta Černauskaitė, teacher at Vilniaus Prano Mašioto pradine mokykla

5. List of ULCA country representatives and ULCA trainers

Lithuania

Mykolas Romeris University
Contact person: Irena Zemaitaityte and Agata Katkoniene
e-mail: ulca@mruni.eu

Vilniaus Prano Masioto pradine mokykla
Contact person: Inga Grigaityte
e-mail: ulca@masiotomokykla.lt

North Macedonia

Centar za inovacii i digitalna edukacija DIG-ED
Contact person: Maja Videnovic
e-mail: maja@dig-ed.org

Opštinsko osnovno učilište 'Strašo Pindžur', Negotino,
Contact person: Georgina Dimova
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Slovakia

Katolicka Univerzita v Ruzomberku
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