IPA in English?

Should computer apprentices be allowed to do the **I**ndividual **P**ractical **A**pplication part of the vocational final examination in English? (IPA = Individuelle Praktische Arbeit)

The question whether computer apprentices may take their **I**ndividual **P**ractical **A**pplication examination in English has come up repeatedly. The question is especially relevant for companies where business is mainly conducted in English and the technical supervisor in charge of apprentices and their final examinations hails from the English-speaking world.

PK19, in consultation with the Office of Intermediate and Vocational Schooling of Canton Zurich (MBA, Mittelschul- und Berufsbildungsamt), does allow a candidate that is willing and feels up to the job (minimum level "First"), to perform part of the examination in English. Additional conditions that must be met are that the technical supervisor must agree and PK19 must have enough experts proficient in English available.

Evaluation criteria such as clarity, spelling, expression, linguistic style will likewise apply to the English part of the exam.

The PK19 will reject the English language as a recourse basis.

For the benefit of the candidate, PK19 recommends very cautious deliberation before deciding to take the vocational examination in English.

Differentiation

Whatever the case, **product description** (program comments, interface descriptions, user instructions, etc) can be realized in the language required by the customer. The rules described here relate specifically to task definition, validation, IPA report (which obviously contains the products mentioned), presentation (lecture, demo) and technical discussion (“Fachgespräch”).
Task definition must specify in detail in which language the various parts will be performed.

Procedure

A) Under “topic” (“Thematik”) on PkOrg mention language in parenthesis: **(IPA English)**.

B) The Task Definition comment field must specify which part of the examination will be performed in English:

Task Definition •

Validation

IPA Report

Lecture Presentation

Demo Presentation

Technical Discussion

Evaluation Discussion (without the candidate)

With his signature the candidate declares his agreement to the task definition, which also contains the above language specifications.

23.12.2009, F. Kuster, Chefexperte Informatiker ZH