

Quick Guide EMPLOY

QUICK GUIDE for FACILITATORS

1. Why use the EMPLOY Toolkit?

As a member of teaching staff, careers advisor, employment service agent or who's interested in helping others to improve their employability you may have already downloaded the EMPLOY Toolkit. This Toolkit aims to help you support students and/or jobseekers to improve their competences and employability and to get the job that they want.

The EMPLOY project team carried out research in 2013 which indicates that employers throughout Europe are clearly searching for employees with transversal competences or life skills in addition to academic, technical or practical preparation. Job candidates need the ability to find, manage and use information and new media, know foreign languages and **have a range of essential transversal skills** to meet the ever changing demands of the workplace. Sources also pointed to the need for job applicants to have a balance of psycho-social skills, organizational or work related skills and positive values.

The EMPLOY Toolkit is a 3 step programme which aids jobseekers to plan their way to a job interview and contract by building a competence portfolio. They will develop the competences and skills most demanded by employers and gain confidence in demonstrating them.

The EMPLOY Toolkit offers materials and tools to help. The Toolkit offers:

- the facilitator/trainer this quick guide to the tools on offer in the Toolkit, to help plan and support the competence building process of participants
- the participant a 3 step programme to identify, develop and present their competences to employers in a strong competence portfolio

The overall aim is to offer participants in the programme a better chance of getting a job, by preparing them to meet the requisites of employers beyond the academic and technical skills acquired in their education. Pilot experiences showed that the toolkit works best with students and those actively preparing for the job market and is most suitable for those with an education level of EQF 4 and above. Experience with lower level educational attainment groups showed that the activities needed further adaptation if they were to be universally useable.

The tools can also be downloaded by participants from the website: www.employ-project.com Activities come with full instructions and guidelines and some can be carried out individually. However, the support offered by a facilitator/trainer or coach can help motivate participants to become more involved in the portfolio/competence building process and to spark reflection when the participant may feel overwhelmed, discouraged or disorientated.

The toolkit has three main development phases. Each participant group, class or individual will decide which parts they wish to work on. Below we provide you with some tips on how to carry out the programme but you are free to decide what fits your own training programme best.

2. Using the EMPLOY Toolkit

2.1 Before Starting – Introducing EMPLOY

It is a good idea to introduce the EMPLOY programme to users and participants before starting. You could start by:

A. Identifying Users Interests, Needs and Expectations

It is good to take some time before starting activities to get to know the individuals; their characteristics (age, skills, educational level, expectations, career and course objectives, motivational level etc.)

B. Identifying KEY Competences

KEY Transversal COMPETENCES identified in the EMPLOY Project are listed in the Toolkit Index and also on p.9.

The participants should be encouraged to discover what competences they think employers are searching for. They could either:

- Identify these competences in an engaged way by contact with a real company, human resources department or company websites and job offers.
- Do a simple activity in small groups. They imagine that they are the owners of a company or managers of an institution. On one side of a sheet of paper, they list all the characteristics/ attitudes, abilities they would want in their employees. On the other side they list what characteristics, attitudes, behaviours they wouldn't want and would never choose to employ. They then discuss the results and how they think they can become attractive job candidates and employees.
- View the results of the EMPLOY National Needs Analysis in their own country and discuss the competences that employers are demanding close to home. These Needs Analyses are available on the EMPLOY website.

C. Introducing the Toolkit

Introduce the users to the resources and materials available in the EMPLOY Toolkit.

2.2 Step 1 - PLANNING

In this section, participants and users identify the competences they have and which they may be lacking.

They are invited to do a mini 360 degree competence evaluation and then choose the competences they need to work on. (The Personal Competence Card encourages participants to identify at least 2 further competences specifically required in their field and participants can ideate how best to develop these skills and competences).

In this phase the participants are introduced to:

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- [The Personal Competence Card](#) which has to be filled in (see Toolkit p. 14).

COLUMN 1: In the first column users state their opinion on a scale of 1-5 as to how important they feel these competences are for the world of work. They can add two extra competences which they feel may be especially relevant to their future professional area. Ideas are given on p.6 which can be printed on the reverse side of the Competence Card.

COLUMN 2: In this column, users evaluate (from 1-5) how far they feel they demonstrate the competences at present. Encourage the users to be as realistic as possible. If they give themselves a 5 in everything it would mean they would not need to improve in any area – something uncommon.

COLUMNS 3-4-5: The user will then take the competence card away and carry out a mini 360° evaluation of their competences (from 3 other persons) to complete columns 3-4-5. To do this they will use the Competence Feedback Cards.

- [The Competence feedback cards](#) (p. 16)

These can be offered to three persons (tutor/teacher/friend/boss/family member) to fill in. They will then register the feedback in their Personal Competence Card before the next meeting. A week could be given to complete this part of the programme.

COLUMN 6: At the next meeting results from the 360° can be shared and the next column completed. Given the personal and external evaluation the user(s) will decide which competences they wish/need to work on. The facilitator will design group sessions or guide the individual. The final columns will not be filled in until the user completes Part 2 and 3 of the programme. These act as a review and final evaluation where progress can be seen.

- [The Tips and Tricks Card](#) and [Tips for Job Interview](#) (see pp. 17-18) can be distributed at this stage also. They are for use in Step 2: Practising, to register useful ideas gained in the sessions and activities.

2.3 Step 2 - PRACTISING

Activities to develop 10 key competences requested by employers are available in this section. Some are for individual use but most work best with small groups. There are at least 3 Activities for each competence (See table of contents pp. 2-4)

The 10 competences offered in the Toolkit are

1. Positive Attitude
2. Problem solving
3. Communication skills
4. Work under pressure
5. Learning to learn
6. Flexibility
7. Discipline
8. Time management
9. Team working
10. Responsibility

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Participants can choose to work on the competences they feel need improvement or work through all ten in a group as the facilitator and participants decide. **All participants are recommended to start however, with the competence 'Positive Attitude', as this was the competence that was ranked no 1 by employers in the European survey carried out in 2013.**

Suggestions for Competence Development Sessions

- Participants have previously filled in their Personal Competence Card in step 1, showing which competences they most need to improve.
- For each of the 10 most demanded competences or skills there are 3 activities. You, as facilitator, can choose to introduce or propose one, two or all three activities for each competence chosen.
- In the EMPLOY Toolkit you will find the ten competences or skills demanded by most employers (see Toolkit Index pp.2-5). Each starts with a profile card, describing what the competence or skill involves. We suggest you read this card carefully with participants and discuss it before doing the activities.
- Some competences start with a video-clip or icebreaker. You can choose to use these *or introduce the activity in your own way*. Approximate time that the activity will take is given and any materials that you may need are listed.
- Participants also aim throughout the EMPLOY experience to 'design' their own improvement of a competence or skill. You as facilitator (or the users) are encouraged to introduce your own ideas and activities to improve a competence.

Feedback and Reflection

- The two documents, *Tips and Tricks* and *Tips for Job Interview*, aim to encourage the user to note down ideas and reflections that they may want to remember about a competence because they are of use to him/her. The participant decides for him/herself what is noted down here. The lists are a practical summary of best practice, which can be used in the job search or as preparation for a job interview.
- Feedback on activities can be given in the following session. This helps users to recall what was developed. Users may need support to record specific examples of how they demonstrate a competence and should be given time and lots of encouragement to do so.
- When users start working on Part 3: Preparation for Job Selection and Interview they often forget the competence examples they have gathered on the programme. A review session of the competences in Part 2 is useful at that stage.

Preparation for Presentation of Competences Developed

- After completing work on a competence the participant can fill in the Portfolio Page. On this page the participant reflects and notes how he has improved or can now demonstrate communication or time management competence for example. This should contain statements and proofs such as "I am resilient" or "I have improved my resilience because when I

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experience a setback, I tell myself that this is part of life and I pick myself up quickly and go on. For example, last month when”

The project website www.employ-project.com also hosts additional resources for several competences. The pizza project (also available on the website), allows participants to work on a project which develops several of the key competences developed in the EMPLOY programme.

2.4 Step 3 – PRESENTING

During the last phase of the programme, the participant/user aims to prepare for a confident and successful job interview. The presenting phase contains three activity areas to work on.

- Networking
- CV-creation (including Video CVs)
- Job interview Skills (including preparation for Skype interviews)

The Competence Portfolio

The last phase of the programme is also aimed at organizing the Competence Portfolio.

The Portfolio consists of the Final Competences/Skills Assessment which is used by the participant as an index to organize his/her portfolio.

The final columns of the Personal Competence Card can now be filled in, as the user has completed Parts 2 and 3 of the programme. These act as a review and final evaluation where progress can be seen. **Using these self evaluation columns in combination with the portfolio allows for assessment to take place if the Toolkit is used as part of an educational module.** A tutor can check if the portfolio shows progress as stated in the last columns of the Personal Competence Card? The teacher or mentor can discuss this together with the participant.

It is up to the participant to decide what should be included in the portfolio. Documents in the portfolio may include:

- Personal Competence Card (completed)
- The Final Competence/Skills Assessment
- CV
- Competence Profiles
- Portfolio Pages:
 - with notes on how the user possesses this competence or skill
 - attached proof of activities demonstrating this competence or skill
 - Other proofs of professional competences, attitude and knowledge such as qualifications/certificates
- The EMPLOY project Certificate (also available on the website)

Enjoy using the Toolkit!