



# **DigiGo - Apprenticeships in the digital era**

## **Intellectual Output 2**

### **A2 Piloting of the Digitalisation of apprenticeships methodology**

**Version 1.2 – December 2022**





Contents

Introduction ..... 3

1.The Methodology..... 5

    1.1 Objectives of the Methodology for the digitalisation of apprenticeship ..... 5

    1.2 Virtual apprenticeships ..... 6

2.Quality Indicators and feedback ..... 7

    2.1 Quality improvement Tool - Annex 1..... 7

        2.11 Function of the DigoGo Quality improvement Tool..... 7

        2.12 Structure of the DigoGo Quality improvement Tool..... 7

    2.2 Questionnaire to the participants Annex 2..... 9

        At the start and end of the apprenticeship , the apprentice will complete a scale of 1 to 5 where they stand vis a vis the subject matter. .... 9

    2.3 Questionnaire to the participants Annex 3..... 9

ANNEX1 (following page ) ..... 9

ANNEX2 ..... 1

ANNEX 3 ..... 2



## Introduction

The joint Cedefop/OECD symposium on apprenticeships in 2019, highlighted the importance of digitalisation of apprenticeships (Flake, Meinhard & Werner, 2019). According to the study, one third of the companies providing VET training have not yet addressed the issue of digitalization. The study showed that 32,2% of company trainers need more support concerning digital teaching and learning approaches and 50,1% need further training offers for trainers. A lot of research and examples from different European Union countries show that apprenticeships are an effective way to prepare qualified professionals with labour market needed skills, thus meeting the needs of employers, and making it easier for individuals to enter the labour market. The benefits of this collaborative form of training are felt by all involved parts: employers, apprentices, the state and other organizations. Among other benefits, apprenticeships are regarded as particularly efficient in supporting the school-to-work transition of young people, enhancing their employability. Together with other forms of work-based learning, apprenticeships are proposed as solutions to combat high youth unemployment rates, low soft skills, constant changes in the labour market, social exclusion, demographic trends, importance of key competences, mobility. Transforming education and facilitating its transition to the digital era, has been a priority in the EU for the past years. The changing role of vocational education and training in a changing world of work underpinned by the fourth industrial revolution, obliges the European Union and its Member States to face the question of how to place and manage apprenticeships, within the education and training system, and in connection to the labour market. It is increasingly important to understand the relevance and the role of apprenticeships in national policies for collective skills formation, as part of human capital development strategies. . The Digital education Action Plan (2020) identified 2 priorities and set out measures to help education institutions address the challenges of digital transformation. It acknowledges that a very high percentage of young people, fail to reach a basic level of digital skills and that less than 40% of educators and trainers felt ready to use digital technologies. We can conclude that there is a real need for the modernisation of apprenticeships through digitalisation

The aim of DigiGo is to support the acquisition of digital skill of VET students, during apprenticeships and to decrease the skills mismatch of VET students.

The specific objectives of the project are:

- To enhance the digital competences of company trainers and mentors
- To support VET teachers and trainers and company trainers and mentors to develop apprenticeship programmes (traditional and virtual) for enhancing digital competences to students.
- To train company trainers and mentors on how to enhance digital competencies of apprentices in the workplace and through smart working
- To raise awareness of VET teachers and trainers, on the possibility to use apprenticeships, for the development of digital skills of VT students

- To engage more companies in providing quality apprenticeships that enhance digital skills of students
- The target group of the project are:
- Company trainers/mentors
- VET teachers and trainers
- VET student – apprentices

The indicative contents of the methodology are:

- Preparation for the organisation of apprenticeships in the digital era
- Establishing VET - company partnerships for the organisation of apprenticeships in the digital era
- Before the apprenticeship (setting up an apprenticeship plan, setting up learning objectives and outcomes according to the DigiComp 2.2, involvement of students)
- During the apprenticeship
- Virtual apprenticeships
- After the apprenticeships (Assessment and evaluation)

O2 will contribute to the following project results

- - Close the gap between digital skills of students and those required by the companies in the workplace.
- - Capacity building of VET teachers and trainers, in order to develop apprenticeship programmes for enhancing digital competences to students.
- - Engagement of companies in providing quality apprenticeships that enhance digital skills of students.
- - Strengthening the collaboration between Vet institutes and companies in the field of apprenticeship and especially, regarding the development of digital competences of students

## 1.The Methodology

During the apprenticeship, trainers will use the methodology guide as prepared by Inqubator Leeuwarden , “Methodology for the digitalisation of apprenticeship”. To apply the natural mentoring methodology and monitor the progress of the students. The methodology will be piloted with 2 apprentices in each partner. Each pilot will have a duration of 1 month. The VET centres (CDE PP, SABA, IEK DELTA, CECO) will pilot it with VET students that they will send to companies, while the rest of the partners (IDEC, Inqubator and Eurodimensions) will pilot it with VET students/ apprentices / on the job learners of entities with whom they hold close and direct cooperation between different stakeholders a key aspect in the implementation of good quality apprenticeship scheme.

The digitalisation of apprenticeships methodology will be evaluated, following a 360o evaluation plan. The methodology will be designed to be implemented both in face-to-face apprenticeships, as well as in virtual apprenticeships. It has been created on the basis of the national contexts of the partners’ countries, however it will be general enough to be applied in different contexts and countries in Europe. The diversified profile of the partners’ countries will cover diverse needs and sectors and subsequently offering at the same time a ‘one size’ programme with specific suggestions to shape it to different contexts, in order to ensure its wider transferability.

The methodology has targeted both VET teachers / trainers and company trainers and mentors and its main aim will be to assist them in organising apprenticeships in the digital era (face to face or virtual). The VET centres (CDE PP, SABA, IEK DELTA, CECO) will pilot it with VET students that they will send to companies, while the rest of the partners (IDEC, Incubator and Eurodimensions) will piloted with Vet students/ apprentices that they will host.

### 1.1 Objectives of the Methodology for the digitalisation of apprenticeship

By combining learning and work, apprenticeships with wider range of skills allow young people to gain work experience while acquiring hands-on skills matching employers’ requirements. Apprenticeships pay off, both for young people and businesses: apprentices often stay in the company where they completed their training or have better chances to find a qualified job than their peers from general education or school-based VET. Small and medium-sized companies’ employers, on their side, secure skilled workers. Training an apprentice allows a company to shape a young person’s work habits and to retain, over time, a qualified and motivated employee.

The pilots will share goals linked to common apprenticeship challenges, emphasizing the applicability and importance of the initiative:

- Help apprentices progress and complete their training
- Create access to hands-on training, engage apprentice learners, instructors, employers in online training
- Support apprentice learning and skills development

The purpose of the Methodology is to highlight the importance of skills and the trainers and mentors assist the apprentice in developing them, providing useful tips and examples. It provides valid information, explains exactly skills should be built on and offers tips and examples of activities aiming to develop and strengthen them. Keeping in mind contemporary needs and digital requirements, the guide aims to assist those responsible in training apprenticeships with a clear outline of the objectives of the exercise (There is a description of the importance of mentoring, goals and the role of a mentor.).

## 1.2 Virtual apprenticeships

COVID-19 has presented significant disruption of education and training, revealing that the apprenticeship system may need to adapt to offer training virtually more readily. Its advantages include

- Reduced transportation costs
- Minimize training-related travel during work hours.
- It appeals to a new generation of employees
- Considers the myriad ways students learn
- Provides more flexibility
- Create additional ways to complete instruction
- Improves diversity and inclusion
- Helps employers widen applicant pools and recruit in rural areas to fulfil education requirements for the apprenticeships they need to fill

Therefore, since virtual apprenticeships achieve the objectives of the DigiGo project these are also considered for the piloting of the programme .

## 2. Quality Indicators and feedback

During the apprenticeship, the mentors/trainers will be guided by the Quality improvement process as indicated in Annex 1 .

At the start and end of the apprenticeship , the apprentice will complete a scale of 1 to 5 where they stand vis a vis the subject matter. Annex 2

At the end of the apprenticeships, students will complete an assessment questionnaire (Annex 3) also noted as the final evaluation form and discuss the results with their mentor. Students will complete this document the impact from the DigiGo apprenticeship.

Lastly, partners will complete the final report on pilots, based on the results from the questionnaires completed, after the apprenticeship.

### 2.1 Quality improvement Tool - Annex 1

Quality improvement is an ongoing process. It is therefore essential that the quality of training and improvement measures of the apprentice are regularly checked by the training centre and company using the DigiGo quality tool

#### 2.1.1 Function of the DigoGo Quality improvement Tool

Applicable to all occupations, the DigiGO tool is used to assess the quality of apprenticeship training. It enables optimisation potential to be pinpointed and thus for training to be improved. The lays basic requirements that all top-quality apprenticeship training programmes must meet.

#### 2.1.2 Structure of the DigoGo Quality improvement Tool

The DigiGo quality tool is comprised of quality indicators . Providers of apprenticeship training are asked to take into consideration each indicator, one by one, and carry out an objective assessment of each ranking from 1 as the lowest and 5 as the highest

#### **Commitment: The host company/institution implements terms of commitment.**

The criteria determining the expected profile of the apprentice are defined.

Interviews are conducted with the applicants selected

Applicants receive information on working conditions.

The contractual clauses (if any )are explained to the applicants.

**Beginning of training: A specific orientation programme is prepared for the learner's arrival in the host company.**

Apprenticeship trainers are designated according to the methodology

Learners receive a personal welcome and information.

Learners are informed about regulations concerning safety, health and hygiene at the workplace.

learners are made aware of the importance of on-the-job learning

**Training: The host company/institution helps learners to acquire the competences and knowledge required professionally and takes the time to train them.**

During the one month period, learners regularly receive feedback from the trainer. The tasks completed by the learner are checked from a qualitative and quantitative viewpoint. The result is discussed with the learner.

The importance of apprenticeship training given to learners and other forms of support is clearly understood in the host company / institution.

**The Methodology plan and the other means to support apprenticeship training are applied consistently.**

Although informal , the apprenticeship trainer sets clear and measurable learning objectives.

The learner becomes involved in the activities and is given increasing autonomy.

The apprenticeship trainer ensures that the learner receives personalised guidance and support

**Commitments and end of apprenticeship : The host company / institution works with all parties involved in the learning process.**

All measures required to prepare formalities are taken in due course.

The arrangements for the departure of the learner are made as required

The host company / institution provides the apprenticeship trainer with the requisite time, financial and material resources.



## **2.2 Questionnaire to the participants Annex 2**

At the start and end of the apprenticeship, the apprentice will complete a scale of 1 to 5 where they stand vis a vis the subject matter.

## **2.3 Questionnaire to the participants Annex 3**

The questionnaire will help apprentices assess their performance and support the development of the skills attained and understand the further skills they will need to improve for a higher personal and professional development. This process will also assist apprentices to be aware of and more responsible for their own learning process.



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1- Lowest Score, 5 - Highest

Quality indicators	1	2	3	4	5	Comments
The measures laid down in DigiGo are effective. The objectives set have been attained.						
<b>Commitment:</b> The host company/institution implements terms of commitment.						
The criteria determining the expected profile of the apprentice are defined.						
Interviews are conducted with the applicants selected						
Applicants receive information on working conditions.						
The contractual clauses (if any )are explained to the applicants.						
<b>Beginning of training:</b> A specific orientation programme is prepared for the learner’s arrival in the host company.						
Apprenticeship trainers are designated according to the methodology						
Learners receive a personal welcome and information.						

Learners are informed about regulations concerning safety, health and hygiene at the workplace.					
learners are made aware of the importance of on the job learning					
<b>Training:</b> The host company/institution helps learners to acquire the competences and knowledge required professionally and takes the time to train them.					
During the one month period, learners regularly receive feedback from the trainer. he tasks completed by the learner are checked from a qualitative and quantitative viewpoint. The result is discussed with the learner.					
The importance of apprenticeship training given to learners and other forms of support is clearly understood in the host company / institution.					
The Methodology plan and the other means to support apprenticeship training are applied consistently.					
Although informal , the apprenticeship trainer sets clear and measurable learning objectives.					
The learner becomes involved in the activities and is given increasing autonomy.					
The apprenticeship trainer ensures that the learner receives personalised guidance and support					



<b>Commitments and end of apprenticeship</b> : The host company / institution works with all parties involved in the learning process.					
All measures required to prepare formalities are taken in due course.					
The arrangements for the departure of the learner are made as required					
The host company / institution provides the apprenticeship trainer with the requisite time, financial and material resources.					

## ANNEX2

### 1- Lowest Score, 5 - Highest

As well as guiding others, I can:

- apply searches to obtain data, information, and content in digital environments,
- show how to access these data, information and content and navigate between them.
- propose personal search strategies and select ways to customise digital environments to personal needs.
- carry out an evaluation of the credibility and reliability of different sources of data, information and digital content.
- store information, data, and content for retrieval.
- use a variety of digital technologies in order to interact,
- select digital services in order to participate in society.
- select digital tools and technologies for collaborative processes.
- Understand discuss behavioural norms and know-how while using digital technologies and interacting in digital environments.
- Understand communication strategies adapted to an audience and cultural and generational diversity aspects to consider in digital environment
- specific ways to protect my reputation online,
- communicate through digital means.
- rules of copyright and licenses that apply to digital information and content.
- organise ways to protect my devices and digital content,
- select safety and security measures.
- understand ways to protect my personal data and privacy in digital environments, while protecting myself and others from damages.
- indicate privacy policy statements of how personal data is used in digital services.
- explain ways to how to avoid threats to my physical and psychological health related with the use of technology.
- select ways to protect self and others from dangers in digital environments.
- understand digital technologies for social well-being and inclusion.
- differentiate technical problems when operating devices and using digital environments.
- select digital tools and possible technological responses to solve those needs
- discuss on where my digital competence needs to be improved or updated,

## ANNEX 3

Dear Apprentice,

You recently completed an apprenticeship under the DIGIGO programme, and we are interested in finding out how this helped you. We have put together a few simple questions below and would be grateful if you would take a few minutes to answer them. The results will help us improve courses for future learners and provide information on the choices they have after they finish. If possible, we would also like to share your answers with the French EU Erasmus Agency who would keep this information confidential.

Thank you!

The DIGIGO Team

Name \_\_\_\_\_

1. What were you doing BEFORE you started receiving DIGIGO mentoring?

If you were doing more than one thing, please tick which one you did for the most amount of hours:

- Working with another entity
- self-employed
- Unemployed & looking for work
- On a training scheme
- In voluntary or unpaid work
- At school
- At a college or university
- Something else- Please specify

2. What have you done since?

Please tick the boxes which is the most appropriate to you:

- Continued in employment
- Continued in employment & got promoted or took on more responsibilities
- Went onto another Further Education Course (e.g., another training course)
- Went into Higher Education (e.g., University)
- Other (please specify e.g., not sure of my plans for future study):

3. How old are you?

4. gender? \*

Male

Female

5. In which country did you do your DigoGo apprenticeship?

Malta /  
France/  
Greece/  
Portugal/  
Netherlands/  
Macedonia.

6. Do you think your trainer/mentor is knowledgeable about the subject that you intended to learn about ?

- Excellent
- Good
- Satisfactory
- Inadequate
- Not sure

7. Has your trainer/mentor given you helpful guidance related to your job?

Yes

No

8. Do you have the chance to learn more than just the skills you need for your job (e.g. soft skills)? \*

- Yes
- No

If yes, kindly elaborate \_\_\_\_\_

9. I am totally engaged in my apprenticeship learning and progress

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree

10. My input is having a positive effect and I feel that I am adding quality to the team

- Agree





- Disagree

If you disagreed to this statement, tell us why and what we can do to improve this

11. Did you have a Virtual apprenticeship?

Yes, If yes go onto the next question (12)

No – Thank you for filling in the questionnaire

12.. How helpful did you find being placed with an apprenticeship that is on a virtual basis rather than face to face your skills development?

- helpful, we occasionally followed up with phone calls and met face to face
- helpful, we managed to communicate solely online
- Not helpful, I was rather lost on the subject matter and found no guidance

