

# BRIDGES

Improving Work-based Learning Through Employer links

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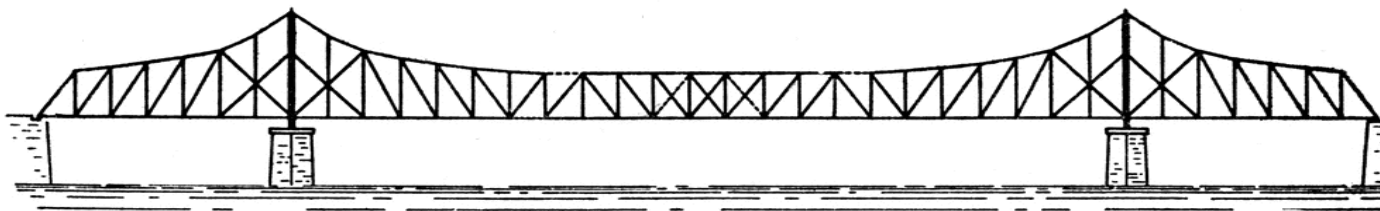
*BRIDGES WBL- Improving work-based learning through employer links*

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## O2 BRIDGES CPD Programme

***Professional standards & set of soft skills in employer engagement***

developed by: EGS, Mindshift, INFODEF, CSI, BMC



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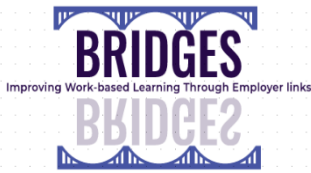


## INTRODUCTION

A culture of employer engagement in VET providers is essential to prepare young people for today's complex and changing world of work. Employers need to be valued as equal partners recognising the importance of proactive engagement in VET to their business. These professional standards set out what optimal employer engagement looks like and are related with the achievement of the learning outcomes defined for each one of the four levels of the BRIDGES Employer Engagement Framework and it sums, for each level of engagement, the set of soft skills needed for effective employer engagement.



**Figure 1: BRIDGES Employer Engagement Path**



These standards have been designed for VET providers and VET professionals, but it is also a valuable tool for employers in general, Human Resources Departments (HRD), training professionals, recruiters and regulators. Every VET professional and provider will make their own judgement about the level at which they need to be operating. At an individual level the standards can be used for: self-assessment; personal training needs analysis; performance development; and career planning. At an organisational level it will support cover the following:

- a) Employers, HRD, training professionals: recruitment and selection; performance management and development; training needs analysis; design in-house training; technical capacity building and career management;
- b) Recruiters: job advertisement; profile specifications, interviews selection, etc.
- c) Regulators: criteria specification for a “fit and proper person”; audit standards; confirmation and compliance.

# PROFESSIONALS STANDARDS & SET OF SOFT SKILLS IN EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

These standards are divided in two functional areas:

- 1) The first area lists the set of knowledge, skills and attitudes required to perform in each of the four levels of the BRIDGES Employer Engagement Path.
- 2) The second area lists the soft skills needed to fully achieve the specific set of knowledge, skills and attitudes associated for each one of the levels.

The table below serves as a guide to better understand the standards.

Level 2- Co-Designing Curricula and Career Pathways	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Unit 1 – Identifying occupational standards</li> <li>● Unit 2 – Relating occupational standards with job roles</li> <li>● Unit 3 – Breaking down with functional maps</li> </ul>	
SOFT SKILLS REQUIRED	
Teamwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Is able to work with remote and in-person teams</li> <li>● Is able to understand different points of view</li> </ul>
Presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Is able to present their ideas for discussion</li> <li>● Is able to present information and course</li> </ul>
Creativity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Is able to use a range of pedagogical methods</li> <li>● Is able to link learning to the employer needs</li> </ul>
Openness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Is open to suggestions and able to handle criticism</li> </ul>

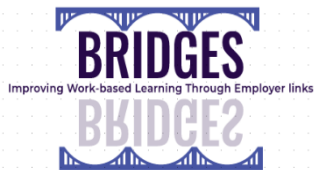
## Level 1 - BUILDING EDUCATIONAL CAPACITY

Advise employers on the dynamics of labour demand, and the need to strengthen VET curricula, facilitate instruction, skill and competences acquisition and assessment, supported by technology-enhanced learning

- Produce a learning needs analysis for the workforce/sector
- Produce training plans and materials recommended by the TNA
- Train sector trainers and assessors to deliver and assess the materials prepared
- Gather relevant information from departments across the employer/sector and correlate the findings into a report
- Produce information and teaching materials relevant to the sector for delivery in house and in conjunction with VET institutions
- Deliver training to sector-based staff on how to effectively deliver VET based learning and assessment
- Ability to interface with workforce and management at all levels of expertise and education to collect relevant information
- Materials and plans reflect industry needs and contain sufficient detail to be teachable at the relevant level
- Ability to apply VET model across sectors/ contexts and different levels of expertise, find solutions for problems

### SOFT SKILLS REQUIRED

<b>Communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Is able to flex their communication style to suit the situation and people</li><li>● Shows empathy for others and enhanced relational skills and networks</li><li>● Acts to build trust and inspire vision</li></ul>
<b>Critical thinking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Is able to review facts or evidence and make important connections or form judgments based on their analysis</li><li>● Is able to evaluate candidate applications, evaluate employee performance and evaluate potential business opportunities to determine the best actions to take</li></ul>
<b>Decisiveness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Is able to make important and timely decisions about work activities</li><li>● Is able to make quick decisions about hiring, task delegation, employee ideas or deadline dates</li></ul>
<b>Design mindset</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Developing work tasks and processes suited for a specific desired outcome</li></ul>
<b>Emotional intelligence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Shows high levels of social awareness; understands own and other emotions and can manage these effectively</li><li>● Works with passion, integrity and is highly motivated</li><li>● Acts with courage to respectfully challenge others and to be challenged</li></ul>
<b>Time management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Understands both the need for prioritisation and how to effectively prioritise tasks</li><li>● Is able to delegate and support others effectively</li><li>● Is able to multitask and meet deadlines with ease</li></ul>



## Level 2 - CO-DESIGNING CURRICULA AND CAREER PATHWAYS

Engage employers in mapping career profiles and developing or modifying VET curricula and/or job profiles

- Obtain national and local occupational/ professional standards for a sector
- Liaise with industry professional bodies and committees on education and training
- Build a functional map of the roles in the sector related to the industry with employers and professional bodies
- Use a variety of avenues to obtain standards designed for an industry or sector in cooperation with educational/professional or legal requirements
- Form relationships with appropriate contacts to relate national standards to job roles
- Use working parties to form a full functional map for the sector to correlate with national standards and identify gaps if they exist
- Use of National Occupational Standards or similar (NOS) to define industry needs
- Ability to present NOS data and requirements in language relating to the sector
- Use functional map to break down areas for VET and identify common (e.g., HSE) and specialist areas across a sector

### SOFT SKILLS REQUIRED

#### Team Work

- Is able to work with remote and in-person teams
- Is able to understand different points of view

#### Presentation

- Is able to present their ideas for discussion
- Is able to present information and courses

#### Creativity

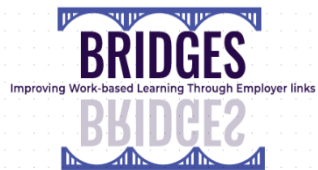
- Is able to use a range of pedagogical methods
- Is able to link learning to the employer needs

#### Openness

- Is open to suggestions and able to handle criticism

#### Conflict Management

- Is able to work with others in challenging conversations
- Able to support a team with idea differences



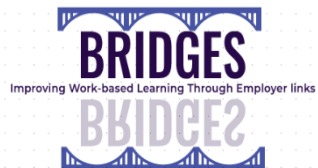
**LEADING AND NETWORKING**

Build (multi)-VET, employers and stakeholders’ partnerships that transform local, regional and/or national workforce systems, boost the growth of targeted industries or sectors and lobbying

- Form partnerships between employers, regulators and educators with relevant expertise
- Ensure that new or revised learning and qualifications are fit for industry/sector purpose and not “off the peg”
- Encourage industry bodies and employers to produce programmes and initiatives to improve VET in a national framework
- Work with industry regulators and stakeholders to identify pathways for employer VET partnerships
- Involve VET partners in design process for new or revised qualifications with employer input
- Present projected outcomes of programmes to local and national regulatory and government bodies to encourage buy in and funding for VET projects
- Ability to interface with all groups and negotiate common ground
- Understand the needs of the employer and the methodology of delivery of the educational institutions
- Ability to present the benefits to all concerned of VET programmes in an industry

**SOFT SKILLS REQUIRED**

<b>Communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Is able to speak clear and present themselves and the organisation</li> <li>● Is able to work and speak as an individual and a team</li> </ul>
<b>Time Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Is able to attend meetings on time and work to deadlines</li> </ul>
<b>Presentation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Is able to present the organisation and themselves in a professional capacity</li> <li>● Is able to present online and at in-person events</li> </ul>
<b>Empathy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Is able to understand different points of view</li> <li>● Is able to develop trans-cultural leadership skills</li> </ul>
<b>Self-Reflection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Is able to understand what works and what needs improvement for future networking and leading skills</li> </ul>



## ENHANCING INTERNATIONALISATION

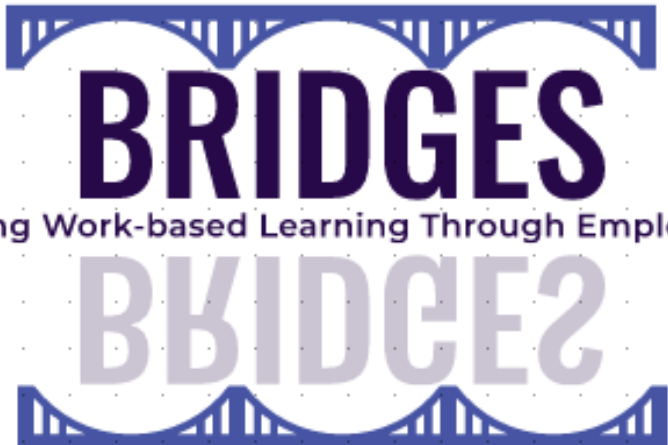
Advise VET providers and employers for the strategic planning of WBL international cooperation

- Understand and develop a business strategy for the organisation which identifies the opportunities and risks in developing WBL international cooperation
- Research the benefits of VET and WBL systems in a sector/ country to enable this to be shown as a positive case for the adoption of the WBL model
- Discover and design CPD and other activities that will raise awareness and confidence of all stakeholders to deliver the organisation's internationalisation strategy
- Carry out research that will inform the strategy, taking into account key areas such as geographical and demographic points of view
- Analyse and compare frameworks and national standards across EU countries showing the benefits to other countries not yet engaged in the VET model
- Deliver within international settings for in-person or digital delivery while adapting learning to different VET systems based on the EQF
- Deliver models of learning to different stakeholders, giving them the ability to apply the VET model to their own national, regional, and local requirements
- Apply and adapt delivery to changing needs of the employers, the sector/nation as knowledge increases and possible changes to programmes have are made
- Produce processes, procedures and policies that support successful international partnerships and cooperation

### SOFT SKILLS REQUIRED

<b>Communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is able to communicate and understand different cultures</li> <li>• Is able to present and speak in a clear and concise manner</li> </ul>
<b>Agility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is able to work and change the process when the country and employer needs do</li> </ul>
<b>Critical Thinking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is able to think back and reflect on success and development areas</li> </ul>
<b>Organisation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is able to plan and use project management models</li> <li>• Is able to work towards multiple projects and outcomes</li> </ul>
<b>Decision Making</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is able to judge the best option and act on this</li> <li>• Is able to work with a team and understand different points of view.</li> </ul>

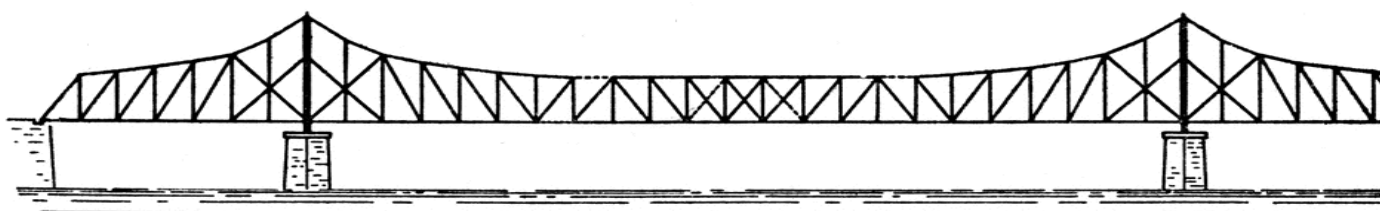




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