



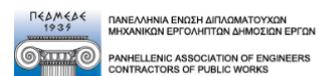
Matching requirements of companies with competences of applicants

Guideline



Matching requirements of companies with
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Project partners:



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Introduction

Across Europe, companies are reporting a shortage of qualified labour, including in the construction sector. At the same time, 40 per cent of training contracts in building construction and civil engineering in Germany are terminated prematurely. Against this backdrop, the project Job Orientation – Better fit (JOB) is focussing on the challenges, opportunities and risks associated with training dropouts. A total of five partners from four countries are working together in a joint, transnational effort to identify challenges, to analyse similarities and differences in the participating countries and to exchange good practice approaches that can contribute to a successful recruitment and onboarding process at the start of training. The project partners are vocational training centres, vocational schools, chambers and vocational training experts from Germany, Italy, Spain and Greece.

These partners initially analysed and compared requirements of companies in the construction industry in the participating countries in terms of knowledge, competences and soft skills. As a result, they were able to develop a common picture of the strengths that young applicants are expected to possess and to identify areas where the companies perceive a need to address qualification gaps for a good match. Based on these similarities, the following guideline analyses how companies can find out the existing skills and interests of their applicants in order to optimise the match between applicants' professional interests and companies' actual requirements/expectations of applicants.

Therefore, the project consortium received a lecture from an expert on how pupils can identify their interests and skills during school career guidance to help them choose a suitable career path. The process is based on a potential analysis, which offers important insights into the strengths of applicants even for companies and thus contributes to a good match with the requirements of the company. Based on the findings of the presentation, namely suitable methods for assessing personal and professional qualities, the following guideline presents further methodologies, specific materials and free-to-use tools to support companies in finding suitable applicants and retaining them in their organisations. Companies can implement these simple tools easily.

Learnings and findings from the lecture:

Potential analysis in Germany

The potential analysis serves as sort of assessment centres at the start of every career orientation which start in school year 8/9 in almost all German federal states. With the potential analysis, young people can find out their strengths and interests early on as a key element in career guidance, e.g. to foster their interest, engagement and thus support informed career decision-making choices, which is why it is based in the curriculum in general education. Potential analyses deal with core competences identified by the Federal Institute for Vocational



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Education and Training (BIBB) in 2005. However, the approach has been constantly undergoing changes since then (e.g. towards a more standardized approach favoured by psychologists rather than a biography-orientated approach favoured by pedagogues) and there is no state-defined procedure.

There are various forms and providers of potential analyses. The following section provides an example of the potential analysis offered by the company TALENTBRÜCKE, which conducts potential analyses at all general secondary schools in year 8 in the German federal state of North-Rhine Westphalia since 2006.

Example: The TALENTBRÜCKE Process

In order to prevent mismatching as far as possible, career guidance in German schools is organised as structured as possible in individual process steps. The first process step during the career orientation is the potential analysis carried out by TALENTBRÜCKE. Its potential analysis currently lasts 4 hours and consists of self-assessment, external evaluation and practical exercises, which are accompanied by individual feedback sessions. In these feedback sessions, the students' own assessments are compared with the findings of the assessors (currently 1 staff member for 4 pupils).

At the beginning of the process, the 11 Key Competences, which the TALENTBRÜCKE potential analysis evaluates, are assessed by the student themselves by completing a questionnaire with 50 questions in order to measure first interests (5-10 Minutes). Like all other components of the potential analysis, this questionnaire can be adapted to specific needs (language barriers, disabilities) and comprises only about half of the questions.

The 11 Key Competences from the potential analysis of TALENTBRÜCKE:

- *Methodical*: Organization, problem-solving
- *Practical*: Dexterity, spatial imagination
- *Personal*: Motivation, creativity, diligence, perseverance
- *Social*: Teamwork, politeness, communication

To ascertain these competences, various activities are carried out, outlined below as examples: First, pupils are asked to design a flat with 2D/3D clues to evaluate their spatial imagination. During the following team-based exercises, which involve the tasks of organising something together, e.g. an excursion, the behaviour of the pupils is observed and matched with the key competences that have been discussed before with the pupils ('What competences are shown in the exercises'). For this, staff members use observation sheets to assess which behaviour fits to which competence. This psychological approach is also being used in the manual dexterity test as the last exercise. This is followed by the aforementioned feedback discussion with the pupil (45 minutes) and the documentation of the results.



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Another example of potential analyses in Germany takes 2 hours longer and the exercises cover 4 specific job areas, with one person observing 8 pupils. In addition, the process includes multiple reflection phases so that the pupils themselves can find out the results of their potential analysis, which is also documented, e.g. in the so-called ‚Stärkenkompass‘ (‚strengths compass‘). Such documentations accompany pupils throughout their entire career orientation phase in general education schools.

Situation in other countries

Italy

In Italy, teachers are responsible for career orientation in schools, who directly observe the students and their development over a period of three years. However, teachers normally change schools yearly (same in Spain and Greece). School and career guidance is typically provided throughout students' educational journey. The first stage takes place in middle school (ages 13-14), helping students choose between high school or vocational education schools.

The second stage occurs in the final years of high school, focusing on career orientation and future professional pathways.

School and career guidance for middle school students is regulated by various directives and guidelines issued by the Ministry of Education. These documents provide guidance to counsellors and teachers to support students in choosing the most suitable educational path based on their aptitudes and interests.

According to these guidelines, guidance is understood as an integral and continuous component of the educational process, starting from early childhood and extending throughout all levels of schools. Schools are required to carry out specific guidance activities and play a key role in supporting students in their educational and career choices. Increasing importance is placed on involving families in the guidance process and documenting the activities carried out by schools in this field,¹ hence achieving the goal of promoting informed and conscious decision-making among pupils and strengthening the transition between the first and second cycles of education.

The new Guidelines for Career Guidance² mark a significant shift toward a structured, data-driven, and personalized approach to education and career planning. By integrating guidance throughout the school system, enhancing digital tools, and fostering strong ties between

¹ Cf. Evangelista 2025.

² Ministero dell'Istruzione e del Merito 2022.



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education and the labour market, the goal is to empower students to make informed choices and successfully transition into higher education or employment.

The guidelines aim to implement reforms introduced by the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR) to enhance career guidance and reduce school dropout rates. The focus is on strengthening the transition between lower and upper secondary education, improving students' ability to make informed choices, and increasing access to tertiary education and employment opportunities.

Key aspects:

1. Career guidance is no longer seen as an occasional intervention but as an ongoing process integrated into the school curriculum from primary education onward. The system is designed to recognize students' talents, aptitudes, and interests, guiding them toward the most suitable educational and professional paths.

The goal is to reduce early school leaving, a key priority aligned with European Union recommendations.

2. The EU promotes policies aimed at reducing early school dropout rates below 10% and improving alignment between education and labour market demands. The guidelines address issues such as the mismatch between skills and job market needs and the growing number of NEETs (people not in Employment, Education and Training). They also emphasize the importance of lifelong learning and the development of technical and vocational education, particularly through Higher Technical Institutes.

3. The introduction of the Personal Competence E-Portfolio, a digital tool that tracks students' academic progress, skills development, and extracurricular activities. This portfolio helps students reflect on their strengths and areas for improvement, aiding decision-making regarding further studies or career choices. A national digital platform which provides structured guidance resources, data on educational opportunities, and insights into labour market trends. The information filled by educators allow to have a complete overview of students' school and extracurricular educational experiences and certifications obtained, which will be included in the student's CV.

4. Starting from the 2023-2024 academic year, secondary schools are required to implement at least 30 hours of career guidance activities per year. These modules shall be integrated into the school curriculum and designed to develop key competencies such as:

- Critical thinking and problem-solving
- Career awareness and self-reflection
- Exploration of higher education and vocational training pathways

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5. Schools are encouraged to collaborate with businesses, universities, and vocational training institutions to provide students with real-world exposure. This includes internships, project-based learning, and partnerships with Higher Technical Institutes and vocational training centres to improve students' employability.

6. Teachers and career counsellors receive specific training to improve their ability to guide students effectively. The training focus on new teaching methodologies, digital tools for guidance, and labour market trends. Special roles will be introduced to support students and their families throughout the guidance process.

7. The system aims to make transitions between different educational pathways more flexible, allowing students to switch programs more easily if needed. Certification of skills will help students gain recognition of prior learning, whether acquired through formal education or extracurricular experiences.

Additionally, regarding the Guidance Council for third-year students at lower secondary school, a national model has been published that class councils can use to formulate their recommendations. This document (see Annex A, p. 26), signed by the school principal, can be completed by accessing the relevant section of the National Student Registry system and subsequently published in the student's personal Competence E-Portfolio.

Greece

In Greece, in each school unit, one School Life Counsellor is appointed when the number of students is up to 150, and two School Life Counsellors are appointed when the number of students exceeds 150, in each secondary education school unit.

In previous years, there was a dedicated course for school career guidance in middle school (ages 13-14) through the course called in Greek: ΣΕΠ, which means School Career Guidance. Nowadays, in middle school, career guidance is part of the Skills Workshops curriculum and provides:

- An introduction to different professions.
- Self-awareness activities to discover personal interests and skills.
- Information on General and Vocational High Schools.
- Advice on study options and career paths.

However, there are no potential analysis during schools in Greece. During career orientation, pupils can fill out tests to define their interests, but they are not mandatory. However, there is a duty to do an internship to get a school diploma. For this reason, there are some



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collaborations between schools and companies, but those collaborations are usually not from the construction sector.

The second stage occurs in the final years of high school. In General High School (GEL) students choose Orientation Groups, which determine their national exam subjects and access to specific university fields.

In Vocational High School (EPAL) students choose Sectors and Specialties, which combine theoretical and practical training. They can take national exams for university entry or gain professional qualifications to enter the job market directly.

Vocational Training Institutes (IEK) offer specialized education and practical training in various professional fields, serving as an alternative to university education.

There are also centres for Educational and Counselling Support (KESY): Operating under the Regional Education Directorates, these centres support schools and students by ensuring equal access to education, promoting students' psychosocial development, and implementing career guidance actions. Their responsibilities include:

- Assessing educational and psychosocial needs.
- Conducting evaluations and interventions.
- Implementing career orientation actions.
- Supporting the overall educational work of schools.
- Informing and training the school community.
- Raising public awareness about educational and career-related matters.

There are also Potential Analyses in Greek Vocational Training Institutes: Employers contribute to shaping curricula by highlighting skills in demand and participating in training programs.

Spain

In Spain, career guidance is a key component of the educational system, helping students make informed decisions about their academic and professional futures. The system identifies students' interests and aptitudes through structured programs across various educational stages.

Career guidance starts during lower secondary education (Educación Obligatoria Secundaria ESO), where students (aged 12-16) receive initial information on educational options. It continues into upper secondary education (Bachillerato), where they choose specializations based on their interests. The high school studies establish three modalities: Sciences and



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Technology, Humanities and Social Sciences and Arts. In order to choose one of them, it is important for the student to define, first of all, what area of knowledge he/she is interested in and where he/she wants to focus his/her professional future choosing from three pathways:

- Vocational Education and Training (Formación Profesional - FP)
 - o Business and Administration
 - o Digital Technologies
 - o Health and Social Care
 - o Tourism and Hospitality
 - o Energy and Environmental Technologies

- Technical Education (Higher Technical Degrees)
 - o Civil Engineering
 - o Architecture and Urban Planning
 - o Telecommunications and IT
 - o Renewable Energy

- University Education (Grado, Máster, Doctorado)
 - o Law and Political Science
 - o Medicine and Health Sciences
 - o Engineering and Architecture
 - o Economics and Business

The Organic Law 3/2020 (LOMLOE) supports personalized guidance and equal access to opportunities, promoting flexible educational pathways. Guidance activities include workshops, counselling sessions, and career exploration, fostering self-reflection and labour market awareness.

Despite the structured framework, lack of information and career guidance remains a challenge in Spain's educational system. Many students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, have limited access to comprehensive career information, which affects their ability to make informed decisions.

One contributing factor is the uneven distribution of career guidance resources across different regions and schools. While urban areas often have better-equipped institutions, rural schools may lack trained career counsellors or digital resources. This disparity can widen the gap in career readiness between students from different socio-economic backgrounds.

Additionally, career guidance services often focus on academic pathways, leaving vocational education and training (VET) options underrepresented. This lack of balanced information may



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discourage students from pursuing vocational careers, which are essential for meeting labour market demands.

Efforts to improve career guidance include digital platforms and collaborative programs in schools. However, further investment in counsellor training and the promotion of vocational pathways is necessary to ensure that all students receive equal access to information and guidance.

Useful methods from the context “potential analysis” for companies

In Germany, no career recommendations may be made as part of the potential analysis, but the results of the potential analysis are good indicators of pupils' interests and skills and thus offer a first, unbiased step towards a career. According to the expert's lecture, it has been proven that the earlier the career orientation process starts, the better the career orientation, allowing potential for development and individual support to be identified early on to ensure that realistic career opportunities are presented to pupils from the very beginning.

Companies could therefore ask students for permission to review the documentation of the potential analysis. Before doing so, companies should be aware of the key competences they are looking for. For pupils, on the other hand, it is important to update the documentation of their career guidance regularly.

The same applies to the aforementioned so-called “Stärkenkompass” (German federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia) and/or the E-Portfolio (Italy) which show an individual development focussed on (potential) professional careers of pupils over a course of two (German federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia) or three (Italy) years. Therefore, it can be used to ascertain a good match between the companies and applicants, since it offers a valuable tool for assessing strengths and interests.

Based on the expert's experience in Germany, lateral entrants, i.e. teachers who have previously worked outside the school system, prepare pupils better for employment than teachers who have not left the school system at all. In addition, teachers are often grateful for the local involvement of companies in schools, e.g. for providing internships in various job fields. Some of these internships are mandatory within the curriculum and range from one day up to a few weeks, depending on the region and type of school. In all partner countries, it is often difficult for private companies to gain access to state schools, yet in addition to the aforementioned advantages for schools and pupils, there are also advantages for companies themselves, which attract young people because of local engagement and visibility in the schools. Companies can be present in schools during fairs, project weeks or for internships to offer hands-on-/experimental-activities that are relevant to the daily lives of pupils to interest them.



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Methodology: Comparing requirements with skills and competences

General recommendations for companies

Based on experience, the project partners recommend to split the job description in two parts to present basic requirements and an individual job description to present ‘the ideal candidate’. This allows applicants to better assess whether they fit the technical requirements of the position AND the culture within the company simultaneously. For this purpose, companies can also refer to the needed general competencies, e.g. spatial imagination and teamwork, that are analysed in potential analyses, allowing especially pupils to directly find out if they match good matching.

Since there are multiple skills and competences, companies are advised to **choose the most important competence they seek for** in a candidate. Companies’ individual key factors for employment (in a technical regard) or fitting in the team (soft skills) could be integrated in the job descriptions and/or in their engagement in schools (as described in the previous chapter). During the demographic change and a smaller application pool, many companies only find suitable employees by accepting non-typical standards, documents or proofs. Their experience shows that a willingness to change, especially when it comes to antiquated requirements for an employment relationship, pays off. An openness towards unconventional target groups, which companies can train on the job according to their needs, often pays off in terms of long-term employee retention. According to the project consortium, it is therefore important that companies are willing to pick up trainees both theoretically (knowledge, skills, train on the job) and literally (e.g. if they don't have a car).

Important skills for construction:

The following scheme is based on the results of the joint exchange of experience at the start of the project. The commonly important aspects in all project partner countries summarised in the Report on requirements of companies in terms of knowledge, competences and soft skills are listed on the left-hand side. On the right-hand side, suitable tools and recommendations are described on how companies can find out to what extent their applicants already possess the required competences in order to improve the matching process.

Overview of the tools

The tools below are designed to identify strengths and training needs. This applies to various target groups, such as the validation of non-formally acquired skills among people with professional experience as well as for young people with no previous work related training. Companies are able to customise the tools for their individual needs and desired target groups.



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Work sample

The work sample can be used to determine (initial) professional skills. It usually involves small practical or mainly manual activities, such as manufacturing or repair work that can be carried out relatively quickly. Candidates can demonstrate that they perform their tasks in a planned and structured manner, carry them out professionally and reflect on their work afterwards. Further knowledge such as compliance with safety standards can also be assessed.

Trial work

During a trial work period, the applicant works in the company for one or more days and is closely accompanied. In this way, the company can find out about technical, job-related competences and manual skills as well as the applicant's fit into the team, flexibility and reliability. For insurance reasons, it is recommended that the trial work is covered by an internship contract or other forms of insurance.

In all project partner countries, it is common to check previous experiences and prove workers during a trial period (max. 2-6 months in Germany, Italy and Spain, depending on the type of employment; in Greece 12 months in case of a permanent contract). However, the company and the person interested in an employment relationship can also agree on a shorter trial period of a few weeks. During this period, the employment relationship can be terminated by both parties (employer and employee) with a shortened (Germany) or no notice period at all (Greece, Italy, Spain). Of course, this depends on the specific terms outlined in the employment contract. In many cases, for instance, the contract may include a standard notice period such as two weeks.

Technical discussion

A technical discussion can be used to assess which (technical) basic requirements influence the candidate's actions and which decisions they make and why. For example, a technical discussion can be conducted during the execution of a specific assignment. The interviewer can scrutinise the candidate's actions throughout each work step and ask for justifications and basic knowledge.

During a technical discussion, participants can also deal with a hypothetical case using verbal descriptions or materials (e.g. diagrams, photos, drawings) provided by the company. In this way, existing knowledge, cognitive and communication skills as well as the applicant's soft skill flexibility can be assessed by developing solution strategies or evaluating diagrams. This theoretical framework also makes the case-based technical discussion suitable for job interviews. By providing the necessary materials (see above) in advance, the candidate can



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prepare for the technical discussion beforehand. This also offers the opportunity to assess the candidate's reliability and motivation.

Role-Play/simulated conversation

A role play is primarily used to assess communication skills, but also the flexibility to adapt quickly to new situations. In a role play, the candidate is placed in a simulated situation in which, for example, they have to advise a customer or explain workflows. Depending on the design of such a simulation, ideally a simulation with practical relevance, companies can also assess knowledge, e.g. about safety & security regulations, and cognitive skills.

Case studies

In a case study, the candidate is provided with realistic materials and a description of the behaviour of people in the workplace. The candidate is asked to use this information to develop and explain a solution strategy and/or approaches. However, the materials should be limited to ensure that the processing time is appropriate for the individual candidate. By providing the necessary materials in advance, the candidate can prepare the results beforehand. This also offers the opportunity to assess the candidate's reliability and motivation.

The candidate can present the result of his/her work in various ways, either in writing (e.g. technical drawings or calculations) or by presenting the results (e.g. oral explanations of calculations, drawings or manufactured workpieces). It is also possible to draw conclusions about manual skills if, for example, the task involves the preparation of drawings.

Presentation

Companies can ask candidates to present previous work results, e.g. workpieces or presentations from their school years. Alternatively, applicants can also be asked to present previous internships. Candidates should describe and evaluate the planning and realisation of their achievements and professional experience in retrospect.

Depending on previous professional experience and/or existing work achievements, especially possessed by the target group of skilled workers, companies can assess technical skills, job-related competences and knowledge of safety and security regulations in addition to language skills and reliability.



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Online assessment tests

Companies can use digital tools to evaluate the knowledge, skills and behaviour of their candidates. Those tests enable a personalized, real-time and scalable assessment, for example online-quizzes, adaptive tests, virtual simulations and AI-based feedback. However, companies should keep in mind that not all people have access to reliable tech and internet³ which could lead to concerns about fairness and reliability⁴. However, instant feedback supports timely improvement and real-life skills can be evaluated.

This applies to various free online platforms that can be used to test maths skills in real time. For example, the learning platforms [Khan Academy](#) and Numbas ([link to searchable database](#)) offer freely accessible tasks for calculating areas and quantities, enabling construction companies to assess initial applied mathematical knowledge relevant to the sector.

Digital skills can be assessed and verified with the free [MyDigiSkills](#) test. The test takes around 20 minutes, is based on the Digital Competence Framework for EU Citizens (DigComp) and is implemented in all EU languages. In addition to information and data literacy, (digital) communication and collaboration, digital content creation and technical problem-solving skills, this test can also be used to self-assess the skills regarding safety in digital environments. If the questions are answered truthfully, this self-assessment also provides companies with important insights into the competences of their applicants.

There are also online tests for other shared requirements of companies that companies can use at a low threshold: Although the spatial reasoning test on [123test.com](#) is only available in English and German, it only comprises 10 questions, so that interested companies from the other project partner countries can easily translate it into other languages. The same applies to the Spatial Imagination Test from [Psychology Today](#), which is published in English only. However, as it mainly involves visual assignments, it can be used globally (the questions can be automatically translated using the standard built-in browser extension).

[Sprachtest.de](#) offers tests (reading and listening comprehension, vocabulary as well as grammar), following the completion of which (15 minutes) an initial classification and information on the current level of knowledge is determined. The free language test is available for English, Business English, Spanish, French, Italian and German. For standardisation and comparability, the language level is divided into levels A1 - C2 in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Similar tests for other languages, including Greek, are offered by [50languages.com](#) and [greek-out.com](#).

There is also a [simulation-based online assessment test](#) (in German and English) and an [online quiz](#) (in Italian) for the evaluation of knowledge of safety & security regulations on

³ Jurāne-Brēmane 2021.

⁴ Cambridge Assessment 2022.



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construction sites. In Spain, there is an [Online Test on Occupational Risk Prevention \(PRL - Prevención de Riesgos Laborales\)](#), a free online test with 10 questions designed to evaluate basic knowledge of occupational safety, personal protective equipment (PPE), risk types, and general safety procedures. This type of test can be useful during recruitment processes to assess whether a candidate understands essential workplace safety concepts.

Furthermore, Modern browsers such as Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome and Microsoft Edge provide the option to easily translate the quiz with just one click. This allows it to be used in other countries, such as Greece, where there is no similar free online tool.

Of course, companies can also develop their own digital assessment test to evaluate the competences that are most important to them. Like the potential analysis, the digital assessment should be strengths-oriented while using self and external evaluations as well as a maximum of 25 questions. There are multiple online tools to create digital assessments in various forms (e.g. H5P.org, Kahoot, Mentimeter, Wordwall) but they are not free to use. Companies could also use survey tools to create their own quizzes, but they require the creation of an account (e.g. Google/Microsoft Forms).

Definition of specific work-related terms

Another low-threshold way for companies to find out the specialist knowledge of their potential employees is to ask for information on certain technical terms that are important for the profession. The German Federal Employment Agency (BA) offers a [free online database with terms from 10 professional fields](#), including construction professions. The database also offers explanations in 12 languages, so that this tool can also be used in the event of possible language difficulties or for self-study to fulfil the requirements of companies for a sufficient language level.

Translations are currently available for German, English and Greek. However, Italian and Spanish companies can also follow the same approach by focussing on individual technical terms that are important to them. Italian companies can also access [a comparable glossary](#). Spanish companies can use the [Diccionario de la Construcción](#) to create their own technical vocabulary quizzes or exercises. This Construction Dictionary by the Fundación Laboral provides a technical glossary of over 2,000 construction-related terms, with illustrations and accessible explanations.

By defining important terms in everyday working life, relevant language skills and knowledge of safety & security regulations can also be assessed.



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Scheme for matching

Requirement	Tools
spatial imagination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work sample (e.g. furnishing a flat based on a floor plan) - Trial work - Online assessment tests (123test.com, Psychology Today)
manual dexterity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work sample - Trial work - Case studies
job-related specific competences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work sample - Trial work - Technical discussion - Role-Play/simulated conversation - Case studies - Definition of specific work-related terms (e.g. 100fachbegriffe.planet-beruf.de/ (DE, EN, GR), Glossario dei termini in edilizia (IT), Diccionario de la Construcción (ES))
applied mathematical knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trial work - Technical discussion - Role-Play/simulated conversation - Case studies - online assessment tests (Khan Academy, Numbas database)
technical skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work sample - Trial work - Technical discussion - Case studies - digital assessment tests (Europass platform, MyDigiSkills)
Flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work sample - Trial work - Technical discussion - Role-Play/simulated conversation
reliability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trial work - Technical discussion - Case studies - Presentation



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Requirement	Tools
Teamwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trial work
Physical fitness and stamina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work sample - Trial work
good knowledge of respective national language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trial work - Technical discussion - Role-Play/simulated conversation - Case studies - Presentation - Online assessment tests (Sprachtest.de, 50languages.com, greek-out.com) - Definition of specific work-related terms (e.g. 100fachbegriffe.planet-beruf.de (DE, EN, GR), Glossario dei termini in edilizia (IT), Diccionario de la Construcción (ES))
knowledge of safety & security regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work sample - Trial work - digital assessment tests (Lernportal BG Bau in EN and DE; https://www.testo-unico-sicurezza.com/DEMO/ in IT; Online Test on Occupational Risk Prevention (PRL - Prevención de Riesgos Laborales) in ES, also translatable to GR) - Technical discussion - Role-Play/simulated conversation - Case studies - Definition of specific work-related terms (e.g. 100fachbegriffe.planet-beruf.de (DE, EN, GR), Glossario dei termini in edilizia (IT), Diccionario de la Construcción (ES))



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Alternative: Use low-threshold tests for other target groups:

Competence assessment procedures should be low-threshold and, as described above, only identify the most important competences from the company's perspective. However, existing skills assessment and recognition or validation procedures are not suitable for the target group of young people without vocational qualifications. A comparison of selected procedures from various European countries shows that these require prior knowledge, are not low-threshold or take too long and/or are costly or tend to be designed as large-scale studies that enable comparative analyses between subgroups (e.g. different training courses, education systems).⁵

Companies can use online tests for certain professions, including construction, to obtain a valid, objective and meaningful assessment of an applicant's professional qualifications and thus judge whether a candidate is suitable for vacancies in their company. In Germany, for example, there is the MYSKILLS online test, which consists of 125 questions. The test was developed for people without a formal qualification but with demonstrable skills in a training occupation, but it can also be used to identify prior knowledge or qualification requirements before training begins. The result provides an overview of your applicant's professional competences - divided into operational fields of application (also known as fields of action). These are derived from the training regulations and the requirements in the workplace. In Germany, the full test is offered by selected organisations under the supervision of qualified instructors, resulting in a high-quality test lasting three to four hours. Companies can contact the local employer service at their local employment agency for more information.

Recommendations for job interviews:

Job interviews are another helpful and important tool to find out whether an applicant matches the company properly. They are an integral part of the assessment process and are essential for determining the cultural fit. Therefore, companies ideally conduct interviews with two people and define the respective roles in advance, i.e. who leads the interview and who focuses more on observation.

How to ask the right questions

As described in the previous chapters, companies are also advised to focus on the 1-2 key competences they seek for in candidates when conducting interviews. Furthermore, companies are advised to establish a set of core questions to ask to all candidates. These are usually competency-based (also known as behaviour-based) questions that give

⁵ Heinsberg, Müller, Reibold 2016.



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applicants the opportunity to use examples to show that they meet the requirements of the job specification.

Helpful categories of questions are:

- basic interview questions
- questions about professional background
- questions about personality
- sector-related questions
- questions about the behaviour during the interview
- challenging questions

Suggestions

Companies can use the following exemplary questions to assess certain competences and individual strengths:

- Questions to discover the motivation of the candidate:
 - o Why did you apply for this job?
 - o Tell me about your current or previous position.
 - o What are your greatest achievements?
 - o What do you consider to be your weakness?
- Questions to assess mastery of essential criteria:
 - o What are your strongest areas of knowledge?
 - o How did you acquire your skills and knowledge?)
- Questions to identify key skills:
 - o *Teamwork*: Tell me about a time when you worked well as part of a team.
 - o *Communication*: How would you go about explaining a complex issue to a colleague?
 - o *Problem-solving*: Describe a time you identified and solved a problem before it became urgent.
 - o *Achieve deadlines*: How do you work under the pressure of tight deadlines?



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Tips for conducting interviews

Conducting a successful interview requires preparation and a methodical approach. One effective framework to guide the process is the "5 Cs" model, which includes Character, Culture Fit, Career Path, Competence, and Communication Skills. These five areas are crucial for determining whether a candidate is both technically skilled and compatible with the team and the company's values. Thus, adequate preparation is essential which can be achieved by designing a structured interview plan to ensure all key topics are covered. One of the primary goals is to build a rapport with the candidate, creating a comfortable environment where they feel encouraged to speak candidly.

During the interview, it is crucial to ask open-ended questions as it allows the candidate to provide detailed answers that reveal more about their experiences, values, and competences. The STAR technique (Situation, Task, Action, Result) is particularly effective in this context. It prompts candidates to share specific examples, demonstrating their skills in action. This method can be used for behavioural and situational interview questions, for example:

- Tell me about a mistake you've made. How did you handle it?
- Tell me about a time you worked with other departments to complete a project.

Furthermore, active listening and careful observation throughout the interview are essential. Companies should pay attention not only to what the candidate says but also to their body language and tone. These non-verbal cues can offer deeper insights into their interests and engagement. Follow-up questions are another valuable tool for assessing the candidate's skill of flexibility as well as diving deeper into the candidate's answers and clearing up any ambiguities.

Evaluating cultural fit is another critical aspect. Does the candidate's work style and values align with the company's culture? This can be assessed through targeted questions and observations, e.g. reactions to cultural aspects such as teamwork or valuing work performance discussed during the interview. At the end of the interview, it is important to provide the opportunity for candidates to ask their own questions. This not only demonstrates respect for their perspective but also offers insights into what they value most in an employer.



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Outlook and conclusion:

The resources presented in this guideline show that career guidance in general education schools not only provides pupils and their teachers with valuable insights into possible career paths. Companies can also benefit from the potential analyses and documentation of school-based careers guidance by comparing their own requirements with the identified strengths and interests of young people. It is important that the assessment procedure is strengths-orientated and uses self & external evaluation so that pupils can reflect on themselves, whilst allowing discrepancies to be uncovered.

It is advisable for companies to be open to as many suitable candidates as possible and to communicate clearly which ideal candidate they are looking for, for instance in the job advertisement. This means that companies should consider in advance which core competences are most important to them, so that the candidates fit the requirements profile both technically and on a personal level, in order to guide both apprentices and companies towards continuous development.

The same applies to asking the right questions in job interviews and additional ways to identify the competences (already) possessed by applicants. For each of the similar requirements identified in all project countries regarding construction industry companies, there are free, often digital, possibilities to identify strengths and qualification gaps. Trial work covers all shared requirements of companies, because it involves practical collaboration. In both Italy and Germany, the three- respectively six-month trial work period has proven its worth in order to determine how matching can be improved within the company over a longer period.

However, shorter, lower-threshold and digital tools are also available for most identified requirements in Greece, Spain, Italy and Germany. These tools offer self-assessments as well as the opportunity to review and verify them. In-house skills assessment procedures should be structured in a similar way if companies would like to check their candidates in detail and/or prepare their apprentices for the individual requirements of the company before they start their apprenticeship.

When developing such content for assessment procedures, companies can benefit from the help of AI. It also offers further possibilities to support job matching more effectively. For example, CVs received or the results of school career guidance can be automatically matched or evaluated regarding the company's most important requirements. However, the handling of personal data on a secure legal basis must be ensured for all possible applications.



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Experience has shown that companies tend to find their future employees by engaging in career guidance at school. In order to attract and retain this interest, AI can help companies to develop content for collaboration in schools and on social media.

In turn, pupils can deepen their career orientation by assessing their interests and information by themselves with AI as well as self-reflecting on their results. AI also opens the opportunity for a simple approach to adapt career guidance to different pupils (e.g. with language barriers or disabilities). Thus, after career guidance, pupils can also be supported by AI in making and finding a career choice, for example in the recruiting process using a chatbot.

The recruitment process is dealt with in more detail during the next part of the JOB project.



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ANNEX A

Career guidance form for the continuation of the education and training path (Italy)

Formulated by the Class Council for NAME SURNAME OF THE STUDENT

With the aim of supporting the student and their family in choosing an educational and training path, also for the fulfilment of the compulsory education requirement and the right-duty to education and training.

During their studies in lower secondary school, the student has shown particular interest in the following areas (it is possible to select multiple options. The indication of sector/specialization is optional):

- Humanities
- Languages
- Mathematics, Science, and Technology
- Technical and Practical Skills
- Digital Skills
- Arts and Expressive Activities
- Music
- Sports and Physical Activities

The student has also developed specific skills through extracurricular activities in the following areas (it is possible to select multiple options. The indication of sector/specialization is optional):

- Cultural and Artistic Activities
- Music
- Sports
- Active Citizenship and Volunteering
- Other activities



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As of the date of this career guidance document, the student has obtained the following certifications (it is possible to select multiple options. The indication of sector/specialization is optional):

- Language Certification
- IT Certification
- Other Certifications

Based on the above considerations, the completed educational path, demonstrated interests and aptitudes, and acquired skills through both school and extracurricular activities, the recommended educational and training path is:

- High School (Liceo)

Liceo programs provide students with the cultural and methodological tools to approach situations, phenomena, and problems with a rational, creative, project-oriented, and critical mindset. These programs equip students with knowledge, skills, and competencies suitable for both higher education and entry into social life and the job market while aligning with their personal abilities and choices.

Specialization: _____

- Professional Education

The professional education system aims to train students in arts, crafts, and strategic professions essential for the national economy, commonly referred to as "Made in Italy." It ensures that the skills acquired in professional education facilitate an easy transition into the workforce and higher education. Furthermore, it supports professional integration in line with the technological advancements outlined in the National Industry 4.0 Plan.

Specialization: _____

- Technical Education

Technical institutes provide a solid cultural foundation in scientific, technological, legal, and economic disciplines, in line with EU guidelines. They integrate general and specialized methodologies and language studies while maintaining strong connections with socio-economic and industrial sectors. Technical education aligns with key national development areas, including digital innovation and the promotion of "Made in Italy." These institutes equip



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students with the technical, linguistic, historical, legal-economic, mathematical, and scientific-technical skills necessary for both employment and higher education.

Specialization: _____

Vocational Education and Training

The Vocational Education and Training pathways are designed for students who aim to acquire specific job-related skills. These programs combine theoretical knowledge with strong practical training, including hands-on lessons from industry experts, laboratory activities, and internship opportunities in professional and corporate settings. VET courses lead to a professional qualification that is immediately applicable in the job market while still allowing for further studies in vocational training or general education.

Specialization: _____