



IO1. A4 DEFINITION OF SKILLS ACHIEVEMENT & RECOGNITION FRAMEWORK REPORT



SEE FIRST

SEE FIRST SEEKING FIRST JOB EQUIPPED WITH PROPER SOFT SKILLS

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SEE FIRST

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Aims and Activities of Intellectual Output 1 – Activity 4

The Intellectual Output 1 of the “SEE FIRST” project aims to help young people improve specific necessary soft skills in order to have access to the labour market more easily. Through the first two activities of IO1, the current situation was described by companies as well as young people who were asked to complete a questionnaire in regards to youth’s competences on soft skills. In the first two activities (IO1/A1 & A2) a research and questionnaires to employees and employers were conducted to the identification of the most important soft skills that young people needs when entering the labour market and then, the third activity (IO1/A3) was focused on the development of interactive activities that will aim to improve young people’s competences on these skills.

This activity, the fourth (IO1/A4), is highly linked with the results of the previous activities, as it will work on creating a motivation and a recognition of achievement for the IO1 A3’s completion of activities. The framework that will be used will be designed based on the principles of the Open Badges system.

This report will provide more information on the following:

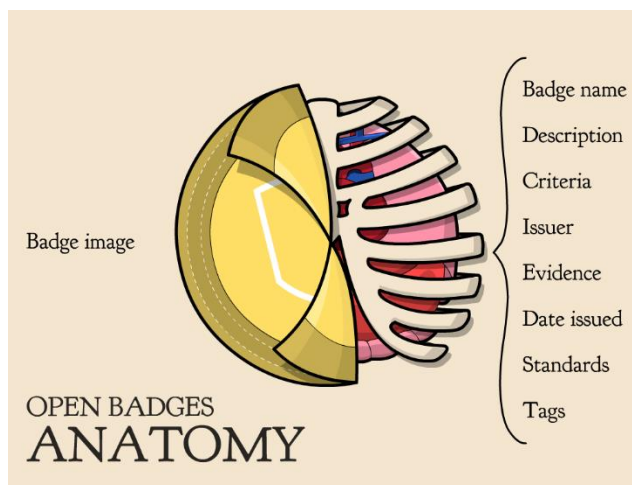
- Theoretical background of the methodology used.
- Description of the Open Badges’ ecosystem in relation to the structure, criteria and description for issuers, graphic design, technical integration with the e-platform and endorsement procedure.
- Practical guidelines for issuing an Open Badge by using the genie (platform) developed in Intellectual Output 2.

2. Open Badges

2.1. What is an Open Badge?

The Open Badges are a digital representation of skills, learning outcomes, achievements or experience such as:

- Hard skills: knowledge, competences, etc.
- Soft skills: critical thinking, communication, etc.
- Participation and community involvement
- Official certification
- Authorization



An Open Badge is an innovative system that was created in the USA and it is now used worldwide for the validation and recognition of learning, as it is offered as an open educational resource. It is a technology which promotes open access and participation of all stakeholders involved in badges process, while allowing the creation of synergies between the learners-earners, the issuers (i.e. schools, stakeholders, enterprises, NGOs including trainers/ volunteers as facilitators) and the badge consumers (i.e. formal education, public authorities, official bodies, (potential) employers). This will lead to the endorsement process leading to a transparent, transferable, valid and credible validation of a body of skills and knowledge related to a set of competences.

The Open Badges system is a very inclusive solution: it enables anyone to get actively involved in designing, testing, implementing and promoting learning outcomes and achievements. This is what major European documents on Recognition are calling for, as well as Erasmus+ which emphasizes in the “transparency and recognition of skills and qualifications to facilitate learning, employability and labour mobility: priority will be given to actions promoting permeability across education, training and youth fields as well as the simplification and rationalisation of tools for transparency, validation and recognition of learning outcomes. This includes promoting innovative solutions for the recognition and validation of competences acquired through informal, non-formal, digital and open learning” (Horizontal Priorities).



The concept comes from the badges that scouts receive for skills they acquire or activities that they have taken part in and are then displayed on the sleeve of their uniform or on their backpacks. Therefore, an Open Badge is visual verified evidence of achievement. In addition to the visual part (image) that a typical badge also has, it includes also meta-data, which is encoded in the image. Each digital badge must comply with the required standard data fields in order to be valid, such as: issuer, date of issue, description of the badge, link to assessment criteria, link to evidence of what a badge owner is claiming, link to a specific competence framework and tags, which puts an Open Badge in relation to specific context.

2.2. What are the benefits of an Open Badge?

Open Badges have various benefits:

- Badges can demonstrate a wider range of skills and achievements of a learner acquired through formal, non-formal and informal learning methods and activities.
- Badges are portable and verifiable digital objects. All this information may be packaged within a badge image file that can be displayed via online CVs and social networks.
- Each Badge includes the description of the achievement: i.e., it describes the particular path a learner undertook for his or her achievement, accompanied by the evidence to support the badge award.
- Each Badge includes information about the earner's identity, a link to information about the issuer and a link to a description of what a badge represents.
- Badges can be used to unlock learning and career pathways. They can be used to support individuals to achieve learning goals, to provide routes into employment; and to nurture and progress talent within organizations.
- Badges can represent personal attributes that matter to employers (such as digital literacy)
- Badges can be used in a professional or educational context. Thousands of organizations, including non-profit organizations, major employers or educational institutions, issue badges in accordance with the Open Badges Specification.

2.3. Key elements

2.3.1 The Issuer

The issuer is responsible to define a competence that could be acquired by a user, to design the learning material for it and to assess the users with regards to the acquisition of the competence. The issuer then creates a relevant badge and makes it available for earning by any user. For each badge, the issuer should make available details of the criteria that an earner must meet in order to be awarded the specific badge. The reviewer of an assessment compares the evidence provided by the earner against the specific badge criteria.

Any individual or organization can create an Issuer profile and begin defining and issuing Open Badges. This is done by a diverse range of organizations and communities, including:



- Schools and universities
- Employers
- Community and non-profit organizations
- Government agencies (including NASA)
- Libraries and museums
- Event organizers and science fairs (Including Intel)
- Companies and groups focused on personal development (such as the SEE FIRST consortium)

2.3.2 The Badge Issuing Platforms

Many companies have badge issuing platforms, compliant with the Open Badges Specification. They provide a wide range of services which allow non-technical users to issue Open Badges credentials. The platforms used for issuing Open Badges offer a variety of custom services including online badge designers, badge discovery, issuing, assessment workflow, display, user profiles, social sharing and tools to integrate with existing learning systems. All Open Badges issuing platforms allow recipients to export their badges to other online options. This allows users to stack and share their badges earned on different platforms and to choose their own spaces to establish their identity on the web.

2.3.3 The Earner

Open Badges help recognize skills gained through a variety of experiences, regardless of the age or background of the learner. They allow earners to have a motivation to go through the acquisition of a new skill, competence etc., to get awards for following their interests and passions, and to unlock opportunities in life and work by standing out from the crowd. Earners have to register on the organization's platform and can claim a badge when the pre-defined criteria have been met during the evaluation phase.

2.3.4 The Assessment Process

There are different options for the assessment process:

- Asynchronous assessment: learners seek out the assessment when it is convenient for them instead of being required to take an exam at a pre-determined time.
- Stealth assessment: assessment and awarding badges can happen automatically and provide immediate feedback.
- Portfolio assessment: work samples, projects and other artefacts the learner has produced can be used as evidence for claiming a badge.



2.3.5 The Displayer

Open Badges are designed to be shared. By sharing them, individuals exhibit their achievements to others and turn them into a valuable currency to unlock new opportunities. Most issuing platforms provide users with the ability to connect and store their badges to this Backpack. When retrieving badges from the earner's Mozilla Backpack (using the account connected to the email address), the displayer will only be able to access those badges that the earner has chosen to be public.

Badges can also be shared:

- On blogs, websites, e-Portfolios, and professional networks
- In job applications
- On social media sites - Twitter, Google+, Facebook, LinkedIn
- In an e-mail signature

2.4. The Technical Aspects

An earnable badge is defined as a badge class, using a variety of data items including descriptions, criteria and information about the issuing organization. When an issuer decides to award that badge to a specific earner, he or she creates a badge assertion. A badge assertion describes the data for an awarded badge. It includes the earner's identity and a link to the generic badge class, which in turn is linked to information about the badge issuer. The image for a badge should be a square PNG (or SVG). The file size should be a maximum of 256KB and should not be smaller than 90 px square.

Things you can verify and explore in a badge:

- Details about the organisation issuing the badge
- What the individual has done to earn the badge
- The criteria that the badge has been assessed against
- That the badge was issued to the expected recipient
- The badge earner's unique evidence (optionally included)
- When the badge was issued and whether it expires



2.5. Institutional Endorsements

2.5.1 Governmental Institutions

The Council of the European Union is one of the intergovernmental institutions which have expressed their support to the open badges as one of the nonconventional approaches to recognize someone's work. Within the EU, the Lithuanian National Commission for UNESCO together with the Lithuanian Association of Non-Formal Education recommend the use of open badges to other UNESCO affiliated schools in the country (Lithuanian National Commission for UNESCO, 2016).

Aside from these EU bodies, in 2013 the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE), funded a study which "explores the feasibility of developing and implementing a system of digital badges for adult learners and the implications for policy, practice, and the adult education delivery system" (Finkelstein, Knight, & Manning, 2013).

2.5.2 Private Sector's Endorsement

Aside from Mozilla Foundation which started with the idea of open badges, various entities in the private sector have been using open badges. For instance, the American company Microsoft "developed a badge system for the Partners in Learning Network (PiLN) of educators and school leaders to promote technological competencies and relevant skills in today's digital age." (Chow, 2014).

3. SEE FIRST Open Badges

3.1. SEE FIRST Open Badges Description

Open Badges provide portable and verifiable information about various skills and achievements. The target group of this project, young people, will follow their personal strategy on specific soft skills and by completing the requested action cards and answering the assessment questions that respond to each activity, they will unlock the corresponding Open Badge. Open Badges represent legitimate, authenticated achievements described within the badge and linked to the SEE FIRST project.

The project's consortium has already designed the competences framework (IO1/A3) which is divided in 3 skill categories. These three skill categories are based on the survey results (IO1/A1 & A2):

- Communication
- Problem Solving



- Teamwork

The consortium has then divided then each category in three subcategories, also known as 'Soft Skills'. These soft skills have also been decided based on the survey results (IO1/A1 & A2).

- Communication
 - Active Listening
 - Negotiation
 - Verbal Communication
- Problem Solving
 - Decision Making
 - Logical Thinking
 - Attention to Detail
- Teamwork
 - Collaboration
 - Reliability
 - Respectfulness

The steps for the learners to test and improve their knowledge as well as to gain the SEE FIRST Open Badges are:

- Learners will firstly set up their own personalized profile on the SEE FIRST Platform.
 - They will answer the initial assessment questions in order to test their knowledge. These questions are 18 in total (2 for each soft skill).
 - After the setup of the learner's profile and the completion of the initial assessment questions, the 'Transversal Skills Genie/Platform' will suggest a specific pathway programme for the users, leading to the action cards of each soft skill that they need to improve. Each soft skill has 6 action cards.
 - After the completion of all the action cards of one subskill, the learner will need to answer to 6-8 assessment questions. By answering all of them correctly, the learner will earn the corresponding soft skill's Badge.
 - By earning the three soft skills' Badges of a Skill Category, learners will be awarded with the corresponding Skill Category Badge. Each Skill Category Badge has a different colour in order to be visibly understandable the division in three groups:
 - Communication: Purple
 - Problem Solving: Green
 - Teamwork: Yellow
- ➔ *Note that the three soft skills that belong to a Skill Category have also the same colour.*
- Lastly, by earning all three Skill Category Badges, learners will be awarded with the Overall Badge that means that learners have completed all the action cards of all soft skills.

In the next page, the tree structure of the SEE FIRST Open Badges can be found.

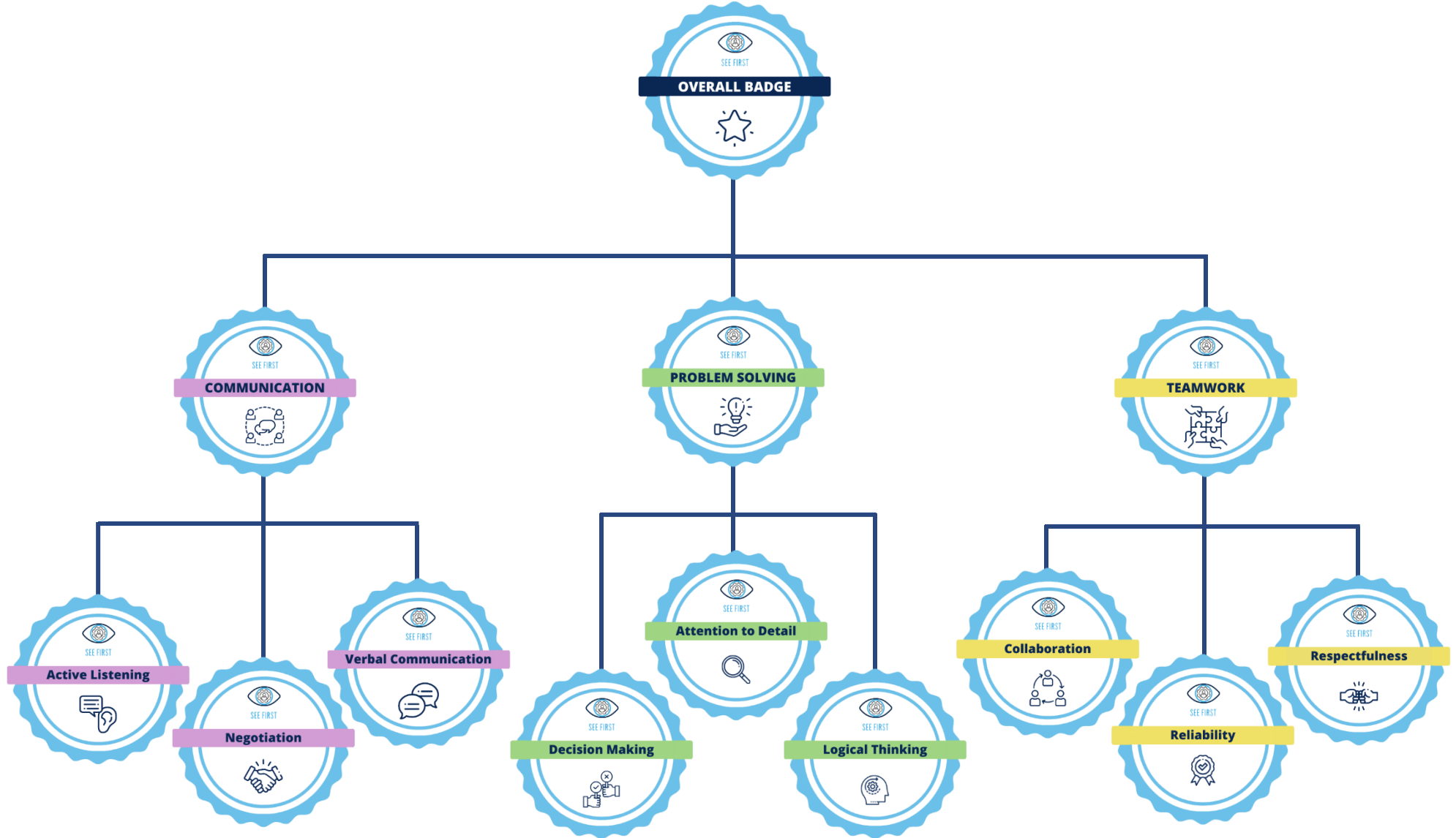


Figure 1: Tree Structure of SEE FIRST Open Badges



Each Open Badge consists of the below:

1. **Name:** The name of the Open Badge is comprised by the name of the skill or its subskill.
2. **Learning Outcomes:** A list of the learning outcomes to be acquired.
3. **Design of Open Badge:** The Visualization (image) of the Open Badge for each skill (see Figure 1)
4. **Main Objective:** A description of the Open Badge related to the main objectives of each Badge.
5. **Assessment Criteria:** The criteria to be used to assess whether the learning outcomes of all groups have been achieved and whether the set of skills and competences of all groups have been acquired by the learners. The criteria and the assessment methods that have to be followed in order to receive a badge are described in the following sections.
6. **Evidence:** The proof and the evidence of the acquired skills i.e. quiz grades, etc. This process is fully automatized on the e-tool where the assessment tests are automatically graded.
7. **Issued by:** In this section the issuer of the Open Badge is specified, which in this case is the SEE FIRST Consortium.

3.2. SEE FIRST Open Badges Awarding Criteria

The learners (young people) will acquire an open badge based on the number of their correct answers. The levels are defined as shown below:

- **Soft skill:** Each soft skill has 6 action cards, with 6-8 final assessment questions at the end of them. Learners should answer correctly all the questions. In other words, in order to receive the Verbal Communication Badge, learners should finish all 6 action cards of this subskill and answer correctly all the assessment questions.
- **Skill Category:** Learners should receive all three badges of the soft skills in order to receive the Badge for one skill category. For example, learners will be awarded with the Communication Badge if they have already collected the badges of Verbal Communication, Active Listening and Negotiation.
- **Overall badge:** To obtain the SEE FIRST Overall Badge, the learners need to complete all the action cards of all skills. In other words, the learners who will receive the badges of Communication, Teamwork and Problem Solving, will then be awarded with the SEE FIRST Overall Badge.



3.3. Overview of the SEE FIRST Open Badges

3.3.1 Communication



Soft Skill: Active Listening

Criteria: Complete all 6 action cards and answer correctly all the Assessment Questions

Description: This badge is awarded for completing the “Active Listening” action cards. The earner of this badge has completed the following action cards:

- Among Distractors
- Are you hiding something?
- I need guidance
- I say jump and you do what?
- Aren’t you going to say something?
- The right answer is penguin

Learning Outcomes: Be capable to communicate more effectively and clearly, be a good listener, negotiate in a professional manner, be more comfortable in a professional environment.



Soft Skill: Negotiation

Criteria: Complete all 6 action cards and answer correctly all the Assessment Questions

Description: This badge is awarded for completing the “Negotiation” action cards. The earner of this badge has completed the following action cards:

- Stages of Negotiation
- Research and practice
- Learning body language cues
- Start a Debate club
- Active Listening
- Assertive Communication

Learning Outcomes: Be capable to communicate more effectively and clearly, be a good listener, negotiate in a professional manner, be more comfortable in a professional environment.



Soft Skill: Verbal Communication

Criteria: Complete all 6 action cards and answer correctly all the Assessment Questions

Description: This badge is awarded for completing the “Verbal Communication” action cards. The earner of this badge has completed the following action cards:

- Put a finger down
- The guessing game
- The use of crutch words
- Be brief, yet specific
- Say Hi!
- Wordless Conversation

Learning Outcomes: Be capable to communicate more effectively and clearly, be a good listener, negotiate in a professional manner, be more comfortable in a professional environment.



Skill Category: Communication

Criteria: Collect all 3 badges of Communication’s subskills

Description: This badge is awarded after the collection of the three badges under the Communication group:

- Active Listening
- Negotiation
- Verbal Communication

Learning Outcomes: Be capable to communicate more effectively and clearly, be a good listener, negotiate in a professional manner, be more comfortable in a professional environment.

3.3.2 Problem Solving



Soft Skill: Decision Making

Criteria: Complete all 6 action cards and answer correctly all the Assessment Questions

Description: This badge is awarded for completing the “Decision Making” action cards. The earner of this badge has completed the following action cards:

- Classification of problems
- Steps involved in decision-making
- SWOT Analysis
- Pros and Cons Analysis
- Brainstorming
- Risk evaluation

Learning Outcomes: Be able to easily make right decision, solve problems in an efficient manner, think logically and have attention to detail



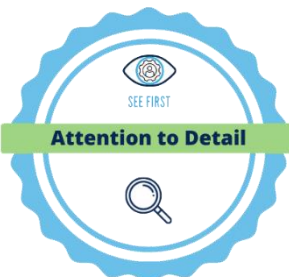
Soft Skill: Logical Thinking

Criteria: Complete all 6 action cards and answer correctly all the Assessment Questions

Description: This badge is awarded for completing the “Logical Thinking” action cards. The earner of this badge has completed the following action cards:

- King or Queen of Reasoning
- A very weird planet
- What would Gods do?
- Is it the Mona Lisa?
- Would you survive?
- Create a very creative problem

Learning Outcomes: Be able to easily make right decision, solve problems in an efficient manner, think logically and have attention to detail



Soft Skill: Attention to Detail

Criteria: Complete all 6 action cards and answer correctly all the Assessment Questions

Description: This badge is awarded for completing the “Logical Thinking” action cards. The earner of this badge has completed the following action cards:

- Do you remember all the words?
- What’s in the box?
- Out of the window
- The parrot’s game
- Travel suitcase
- The “messy” story

Learning Outcomes: Be able to easily make right decision, solve problems in an efficient manner, think logically and have attention to detail



Skill Category: Problem Solving

Criteria: Collect all 3 badges of Problem Solving’s subskills

Description: This badge is awarded after the collection of the three badges under the Problem Solving group:

- Decision Making
- Logical Thinking
- Attention to Detail

Learning Outcomes: Be able to easily make right decision, solve problems in an efficient manner, think logically and have attention to detail

3.3.3 Teamwork



Soft Skill: Collaboration

Criteria: Complete all 6 action cards and answer correctly all the Assessment Questions

Description: This badge is awarded for completing the “Collaboration” action cards. The earner of this badge has completed the following action cards:

- The birthday guessing
- The truths and lies game
- The Match puzzle
- Trust blindly
- Open mindedness
- Once upon a time

Learning Outcomes: Be able to work with and respect your colleagues, be reliable and make your colleagues trust you.



Soft Skill: Reliability

Criteria: Complete all 6 action cards and answer correctly all the Assessment Questions

Description: This badge is awarded for completing the “Reliability” action cards. The earner of this badge has completed the following action cards:

- Manage your commitments
- Time management
- Meet and Manage Deadlines
- Learn your personal values
- How to demonstrate integrity in the workplace
- Be truthful

Learning Outcomes: Be able to work with and respect your colleagues, be reliable and make your colleagues trust you.



Soft Skill: Respectfulness

Criteria: Complete all 6 action cards and answer correctly all the Assessment Questions

Description: This badge is awarded for completing the “Respectfulness” action cards. The earner of this badge has completed the following action cards:

- Aspiring writers
- Ensemble
- You are Top Chef
- And the Oscar goes to...
- Are you a number 7?
- How many Picassos are enough?

Learning Outcomes: Be able to work with and respect your colleagues, be reliable and make your colleagues trust you.



Skill Category: Teamwork

Criteria: Collect all 3 badges of Teamwork’s subskills

Description: This badge is awarded after the collection of the three badges under the Problem Solving group:

- Collaboration
- Reliability
- Respectfulness

Learning Outcomes: Be able to easily make right decision, solve problems in an efficient manner, think logically and have attention to detail

3.3.4 Overall Badge



Overall Badge

Criteria: Collect all Badges of all skill categories

Description: This badge is awarded after the completion of the three skill categories.

Learning Outcomes: Improve your soft skills and be ready to enter the labour market