



# GUIDELINES

## CO-CREATION OF BADGES WITH LEARNERS

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The guidelines provide a comprehensive framework for implementing co-creation of badges in distance learning activities within the vocational education and training (VET) sphere. The project STAY+ aims to gamify positive behaviors of young students during the pandemic and beyond, and these guidelines contribute to achieving that goal. The guidelines emphasise the importance of active engagement and collaboration between teachers and students in the badge co-creation process. Distance learning activities are increasingly prevalent due to the pandemic, and the guidelines offer practical strategies to ensure meaningful and interactive learning experiences. Teachers are encouraged to involve students in decision-making, allowing them to contribute their ideas and perspectives to the badge co-creation process. The guidelines provide suggestions for incorporating gamification elements into distance learning activities, fostering motivation and engagement among students. Clear assessment criteria and transparent evaluation processes are essential, and the guidelines offer guidance on how to establish fair and reliable evaluation methods. Digital tools and platforms are integral to distance learning, and the guidelines highlight the importance of utilising technology for efficient collaboration and badge design. Ongoing evaluation and improvement of the badge co-creation process are emphasised, ensuring that the badges remain relevant and valuable to VET students. By implementing these guidelines, teachers can enhance student involvement, skill recognition, and positive behaviors, ultimately creating a more engaging and rewarding distance learning environment within the VET sphere.





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## 1. BACKGROUND

Cocreation of badges is about fostering collaboration, empowerment, and shared ownership. By engaging teachers and students in these activities, you can create a sense of community and enhance the overall learning experience in distance education.

The STAY+ project is a unique initiative that focuses on gamifying positive behaviors of young students from the VET sphere during and beyond the pandemic. This project not only engages students through gamification but also delivers guidelines for trainers to assist them in co-creating badges together with learners, fostering a collaborative and participatory learning environment.

One way the project facilitates badge co-creation is through **VET taster sessions**. Trainers can organise sessions where students get a hands-on experience of different vocational fields. By actively involving students in the design and assessment of tasks, trainers can collaboratively develop badges that recognise the skills and competencies gained during these taster sessions.

**Target group-specific activities** also play a significant role in badge co-creation. Trainers can tailor activities to specific groups of learners, considering their interests, needs, and aspirations. This approach ensures that badges are relevant and meaningful to the learners, motivating them to actively participate and acquire the desired skills.

**Subject matter-specific activities** allow trainers to design badges that align with specific vocational subjects. By incorporating practical tasks, projects, and assessments into the learning process, trainers can engage learners in co-creating badges that validate their subject-specific knowledge and skills. This approach enhances the authenticity and value of the badges within the VET context.

**Transnational learning mobilities** present another avenue for badge co-creation. By facilitating international learning experiences, trainers can encourage students to collaborate with peers from different countries and cultures. Through joint projects and activities, learners can co-create badges that reflect their cross-cultural competencies and the knowledge gained from transnational experiences.



Implementing co-creation of badges for distance learning activities provides a great way to engage teachers and students in collaborative learning experiences. Additional activities in Living Labs facilitates the process are outlined next.

**Badge design workshops:** organise interactive workshops where teachers and students come together to brainstorm and design badges for specific distance learning activities. Provide them with templates and design tools to create visually appealing badges that represent different achievements or skills acquired during the learning process.

**Collaborative badge reviews:** set up a platform or online forum where teachers and students can share their badge designs and provide feedback to each other. Encourage constructive discussions on the design elements, criteria, and relevance of the badges. This collaborative review process will foster engagement and ensure that the badges reflect the collective input of both teachers and students.

**Badge criteria discussions:** facilitate discussions among teachers and students to define the criteria and requirements for earning specific badges. This activity allows them to explore and negotiate the desired learning outcomes associated with each badge. It promotes co-ownership of the badge system and ensures that it aligns with the overall learning goals.

**Badge reflection and iteration:** after a period of implementing the badge system, conduct reflection sessions with teachers and students to gather feedback on their experiences. Encourage them to share insights, suggestions for improvement, and ideas for new badges. This iterative process ensures ongoing co-creation and refinement of the badge system, making it more effective and meaningful for everyone involved.

In addition to all abovementioned activities, **badge showcase events** may contribute to the aforementioned objectives. These are virtual events or exhibitions where teachers and students can showcase their earned badges and present their accomplishments to a wider audience. This activity provides an opportunity for collaboration, celebration, and recognition of individual and collective achievements. It also encourages peer-to-peer learning and inspires others to engage in the co-creation of badges.

The guidelines provided by the STAY+ project emphasise the importance of trainer-student collaboration in the badge co-creation process. Trainers are encouraged to involve learners in decision-making, allowing them to contribute their ideas and perspectives. This approach fosters a sense of ownership and empowers learners to take responsibility for their learning journey.

The project recognises that badge co-creation goes beyond mere recognition of skills. It serves as a tool for fostering motivation, engagement, and self-reflection among learners. Trainers are guided to design badges that reflect not only the outcomes but also the process of learning, enabling learners to reflect on their progress and growth.

The guidelines also highlight the significance of clear assessment criteria and transparent evaluation processes. Trainers are encouraged to work closely with learners to define the criteria for earning badges and establish evaluation methods that are fair, reliable, and valid. This ensures that the badge co-creation process is meaningful, consistent, and aligned with desired learning outcomes.

Furthermore, the STAY+ project promotes the integration of digital technologies in badge co-creation. Trainers are guided to explore digital tools and platforms that facilitate the design, assessment, and sharing of badges. This allows for efficient and seamless collaboration between trainers and learners, irrespective of geographical boundaries.

By emphasising the co-creation aspect, the project encourages trainers to see learners as active contributors to the badge design process. Trainers are urged to create spaces for dialogue, feedback, and reflection, enabling learners to shape their own learning experiences and co-design badges that are valued and respected within the VET community.



The guidelines provided by the STAY+ project also promote ongoing evaluation and improvement of the badge co-creation process. Trainers are encouraged to seek feedback from learners, monitor the effectiveness of the badges, and make necessary adjustments based on the input received. This iterative approach ensures that the badges evolve and remain relevant to the needs and aspirations of VET learners.

In conclusion, the STAY+ project, with its focus on gamifying positive behaviors of VET students, delivers valuable guidelines for trainers in badge co-creation. Through VET taster sessions, target group-specific activities, subject matter-specific activities, and transnational learning mobilities, trainers are empowered to involve learners in the co-design of badges. The guidelines emphasise collaboration, learner ownership, transparent assessment, digital integration, and ongoing evaluation. By implementing these guidelines, trainers can enhance learner engagement, motivation, and skill recognition within the VET sphere.

### 3. GUIDELINES

The guidelines put forth a range of activities that promote the co-creation of badges in distance learning, fostering collaboration between teachers and students. As part of the guidelines, a curated list of activities has been developed to facilitate meaningful engagement and participation in the badge co-creation process. These activities, suggested by the STAY+ project, are designed to align with the project's objective of gamifying positive behaviors among young students from the vocational education and training sphere during the pandemic and beyond. The activities encompass various interactive tasks, discussions, and projects that encourage teachers and students to work together to design badges that recognise valuable skills and achievements. By implementing these activities, educators can enhance student involvement, foster a sense of ownership, and create a collaborative learning environment in the realm of distance learning.

#### 3.1 VET taster sessions

VET taster sessions, as part of the guidelines for activities that facilitate implementing co-creation of badges in distance learning activities engaging teachers and students, play a crucial role in providing learners with hands-on experiences in various vocational fields. These taster sessions serve as introductory activities that allow students to explore different career paths, develop relevant skills, and gain a better understanding of their interests and aptitudes.

VET taster sessions, guided by the STAY+ project's recommendations, enable students to make informed decisions about their future career paths. These sessions foster engagement, collaboration, and skill development while creating a positive learning experience. By aligning taster sessions with the badge co-creation process, learners can receive recognition for their participation, achievements, and the skills they have gained through these immersive vocational experiences.

The taster sessions suggested by the STAY+ project aim to gamify these experiences, incorporating elements of engagement, motivation, and collaboration. The sessions can be conducted in a virtual format, leveraging distance learning platforms and technologies. Key aspects and benefits of VET taster sessions within the context of badge co-creation in distance learning are outlined next.

***Introducing VET fields:*** the taster sessions expose learners to a wide range of vocational fields, showcasing the diversity of career options available. Through interactive presentations, demonstrations, and virtual tours, students gain insights into different industries and occupations.

***Hands-on activities:*** the taster sessions incorporate hands-on activities that simulate real-world vocational tasks. This allows learners to actively participate, acquire practical skills, and experience the challenges and rewards associated with specific vocations.



**Collaboration and problem-solving:** the sessions encourage collaboration among students, fostering teamwork, communication, and problem-solving abilities. Group activities and discussions enable learners to share ideas, learn from one another, and collectively work towards achieving objectives.

**Mentoring and guidance:** trained mentors or industry professionals can provide guidance and support during the taster sessions, offering insights into specific vocations, sharing personal experiences, and answering questions from the students. This interaction helps learners gain a deeper understanding of the career paths they are exploring.

**Reflective assessments:** following the taster sessions, reflective assessments can be conducted where learners are encouraged to evaluate their experiences, identify the skills they have acquired, and reflect on their interests and aspirations. This self-reflection contributes to the co-creation of badges that recognise the skills and competencies developed during the sessions.

**Badge design and assessment:** the taster sessions serve as a foundation for the co-creation of badges. Students, in collaboration with their teachers, can identify the key skills and achievements that should be recognised through badges. They can contribute their ideas for badge design, criteria, and evidence requirements, ensuring that the badges are meaningful and relevant to their learning experiences.

**Motivation and engagement:** by gamifying the taster sessions, incorporating elements such as challenges, rewards, and progress tracking, learners are motivated and engaged in the exploration of vocational fields. The gamified approach enhances their enthusiasm and commitment to the badge co-creation process.

### **3.2 Target group specific activities**

Vocational Education and Training (VET) target group specific activities, as part of the guidelines for implementing co-creation of badges in distance learning activities engaging teachers and students, are designed to cater to the specific needs, interests, and aspirations of different groups of learners. These activities recognise that learners within the VET sphere come from diverse backgrounds, possess varying skill sets, and have distinct career goals. By tailoring activities to specific target groups, educators can create meaningful and engaging learning experiences that promote skill development and badge co-creation. VET target group specific activities within the context of the STAY+ project's guidelines are outlined next.

**Identification of target groups:** the guidelines recommend identifying different target groups within the VET sphere, such as students with specific career interests, learners from disadvantaged backgrounds, individuals seeking career transitions, or those pursuing specialised vocational pathways. This identification helps ensure that activities are designed to address the unique needs and requirements of each group.

**Customised learning content:** target group specific activities involve tailoring learning content to align with the interests and career pathways of the identified groups. This may include designing activities that focus on specific industries, occupations, or skill sets that are relevant to the group's career aspirations.

**Individualised support:** recognising the importance of individualised support, the guidelines suggest providing personalised guidance and mentoring to learners within the target groups. This can be done through one-on-one virtual meetings, online forums, or dedicated support networks where students can receive guidance, clarify doubts, and seek advice related to their specific vocational goals.

**Industry engagement:** to enhance the relevance and applicability of target group specific activities, the guidelines emphasise collaborating with industry partners. Involving industry professionals in the learning process through virtual workshops, guest lectures, or mentorship programs allows learners to gain firsthand insights into their chosen fields and create meaningful connections with industry experts.



**Tailored assessments and badge design:** the guidelines propose adapting assessment methods and badge design criteria to suit the target group's skills and achievements. This ensures that the badges reflect the specific competencies and accomplishments that are valued within the chosen vocational paths. By involving learners in the badge design process, educators can incorporate their input and make the recognition more meaningful and relevant.

**Peer collaboration and networking:** target group specific activities encourage peer collaboration and networking opportunities. Virtual group projects, discussions, and online platforms can facilitate interaction and knowledge sharing among learners with similar career interests. This peer engagement promotes collaborative learning, idea exchange, and mutual support within the target groups.

**Skill enhancement and development:** the activities focus on providing opportunities for targeted skill enhancement and development. This may involve offering specialised training sessions, workshops, or online courses that directly align with the identified group's career goals. By acquiring these specific skills, learners can strengthen their capabilities and increase their employability within their chosen vocational fields.

The target group specific activities recommended by the STAY+ project's guidelines acknowledge the importance of catering to the unique needs of learners within the VET sphere. By customising learning content, providing individualised support, engaging industry partners, and tailoring assessments and badge design, educators can create impactful experiences that empower learners to develop the skills, knowledge, and confidence necessary for success in their chosen vocations.

### 2.3 Subject matter specific activities

VET subject matter specific activities, as part of the guidelines for implementing co-creation of badges in distance learning activities engaging teachers and students, focus on designing activities that delve deeply into specific subject areas within vocational education. These activities are tailored to provide learners with in-depth knowledge and practical skills related to their chosen vocational fields. By engaging students in the said activities, educators can foster expertise, encourage collaboration, and facilitate the co-creation of badges that recognise specialised competencies. VET subject matter specific activities within the context of the STAY+ project's guidelines are outlined next.

**Subject area selection:** e.g., the guidelines suggest identifying key subject areas that are relevant to the vocational fields of the learners. This may include subjects like automotive technology, culinary arts, healthcare, construction, information technology, or any other field specific to the VET domain.

**Comprehensive learning resources:** e.g., involve providing learners with comprehensive learning resources such as online lectures, instructional videos, interactive modules, case studies, or simulations that focus specifically on the chosen subject area. These resources enable students to acquire in-depth knowledge and practical skills related to their vocational interests.

**Practical application and hands-on learning:** e.g., the guidelines emphasise the importance of incorporating hands-on learning experiences into subject matter specific activities. This may involve virtual labs, virtual internships, virtual field trips, or practical assignments that allow students to apply their knowledge and skills in real-world scenarios.

**Collaborative projects:** e.g., encourage collaboration among students. Group projects, problem-solving tasks, or research assignments related to the chosen subject area foster teamwork, critical thinking, and effective communication skills. Collaborative efforts can culminate in the co-creation of badges that recognise the achievements and contributions of the student groups.



**Industry integration:** e.g., to enhance the authenticity and applicability of subject matter specific activities, the guidelines recommend integrating industry perspectives. This can be achieved by involving industry experts in virtual panel discussions, inviting guest speakers from relevant vocational fields, or organising virtual site visits to industry facilities. This engagement provides learners with insights into the practical aspects of their chosen subjects and helps bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world application.

**Assessment and badge design:** e.g., necessitate the design of assessments that align with the learning outcomes and skill development within the chosen subject area. The guidelines propose the inclusion of authentic assessments, such as project portfolios, practical demonstrations, or performance evaluations. Students can actively participate in the design of badge criteria, ensuring that the badges reflect the specific subject matter expertise they have acquired.

**Continuous learning opportunities:** e.g., emphasise the importance of continuous learning and staying updated with the latest developments in the chosen fields. The guidelines encourage learners to engage in professional development activities, participate in webinars or workshops, and explore resources that enable them to deepen their subject knowledge even beyond the designated activities.

By implementing subject matter specific activities within the guidelines, educators provide learners with immersive and focused learning experiences that align with their vocational interests. These activities promote subject expertise, practical application, collaboration, and the co-creation of badges that recognise the specialised competencies acquired within specific subject areas.

### 3.4 Transnational learning mobilities

VET transnational learning mobilities, as part of the guidelines for implementing co-creation of badges in distance learning activities engaging teachers and students, focus on providing learners with international experiences and opportunities for cross-cultural exchange within the VET sphere. These mobilities aim to broaden students' perspectives, enhance their intercultural competencies, and promote global awareness. Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, the STAY+ project suggests innovative approaches to virtual transnational learning mobilities. VET transnational learning mobilities within the context of the project's guidelines are outlined next.

**Virtual international collaboration:** it can be facilitated through virtual platforms and technology. The guidelines propose the establishment of partnerships and collaborations between VET institutions in different countries, enabling students to engage in joint projects, online seminars, or virtual exchange programs. This virtual collaboration fosters cross-cultural understanding and cooperation among learners.

**Intercultural competencies:** focus on developing intercultural competencies in learners. Activities such as virtual cultural exchanges, language learning opportunities, and cross-cultural discussions help students develop an appreciation for diverse perspectives, enhance their communication skills, and cultivate adaptability in multicultural environments.

**Shared learning experiences:** it is paramount to emphasise the importance of shared learning experiences among students from different countries. Virtual workshops, group assignments, or online discussions can be organised to encourage students to collaborate and learn from one another's vocational experiences and cultural backgrounds. These activities facilitate the exchange of knowledge, skills, and best practices across borders.

**Virtual study visits and internships:** to provide students with insights into international vocational practices, the guidelines propose virtual study visits and internships. These experiences can involve virtual tours of international companies, virtual job shadowing opportunities, or online mentorship programs with professionals from different countries. Such virtual engagements allow students to observe and learn about vocational practices in a global context.



**Badge co-creation:** to offer an opportunity for badge co-creation that recognises the international experiences and intercultural competencies acquired by students. The guidelines suggest involving students in the design and co-creation of badges that reflect the skills, knowledge, and cultural awareness gained through their participation in transnational learning activities.

**Reflection and evaluation:** to encourage students to reflect on their experiences and evaluate their learning outcomes. The guidelines recommend providing opportunities for students to share their reflections through virtual presentations, blogs, or online discussions. This reflection and evaluation process contributes to the co-creation of badges that acknowledge students' personal growth, cultural understanding, and vocational insights gained from the transnational learning experiences.

**Global networking:** the importance of global networking and fostering connections among VET students and professionals across borders. Virtual networking events, online conferences, or virtual career fairs can facilitate interactions and networking opportunities that expand students' professional networks and promote future international collaboration.

By incorporating transnational learning mobilities within the guidelines, educators provide students with valuable international experiences despite the limitations imposed by the pandemic. These mobilities promote intercultural competencies, shared learning, virtual study visits, badge co-creation, and global networking, enabling students to develop a global mindset and prepare for the globalised world of work.

## 2.5 Living laboratories (Labs)

VET Living Labs, as part of the guidelines for implementing co-creation of badges in distance learning activities engaging teachers and students, focus on creating real-world, experiential learning environments within the VET sphere. These Living Labs provide students with opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills in authentic workplace settings, foster innovation and collaboration, and contribute to the development of practical solutions. The STAY+ project suggests incorporating Living Labs into the guidelines to enhance the engagement and achievement of VET students. VET Living Labs within the context of the project's guidelines are outlined next.

**Authentic work environments:** to replicate authentic work environments within educational settings. The guidelines suggest creating simulated workplaces or partnering with local industries to provide students with hands-on experience. These environments allow students to apply their theoretical knowledge, practice vocational skills, and gain a realistic understanding of work expectations.

**Problem-based learning:** to emphasise problem-based learning approaches, where students engage in real-world challenges and projects. The guidelines propose designing activities that require students to identify and address industry-specific problems, develop innovative solutions, and collaborate with peers and industry professionals. This problem-solving approach fosters critical thinking, creativity, and teamwork.

**Co-Creation and collaboration:** to encourage students to actively participate in the co-creation of solutions and improvements. The guidelines emphasise the importance of collaboration between students, teachers, industry experts, and relevant stakeholders. By working together, students can pool their diverse perspectives, knowledge, and skills to develop practical outcomes and co-create badges that recognise their collaborative efforts.

**Mentorship and guidance:** to recommend incorporating mentorship and guidance within the Living Labs. Experienced professionals from relevant industries can provide support, guidance, and feedback to students as they engage in real-world projects. This mentorship helps students navigate challenges, develop their vocational competencies, and align their efforts with industry standards.





**Innovation and entrepreneurship:** to promote innovation and entrepreneurship within the VET context. The guidelines suggest designing activities that encourage students to develop entrepreneurial mindsets, identify opportunities for innovation, and explore new approaches to problem-solving. This fosters creativity, adaptability, and an entrepreneurial spirit among VET students.

**Reflection and evaluation:** to encourage students to reflect on their experiences, evaluate their learning outcomes, and document their achievements. The guidelines propose incorporating reflection activities, portfolio development, or presentations where students can share their insights, challenges faced, and lessons learned. This reflective process contributes to the co-creation of badges that recognise the skills, knowledge, and personal growth attained through participation in Living Labs.

**Industry feedback and validation:** to provide opportunities for students to receive feedback and validation from industry professionals. The guidelines suggest involving industry partners in the evaluation and assessment of students' work, ensuring that the activities align with industry expectations and standards. This feedback helps students gain a better understanding of industry requirements and enhances the credibility of the badges they co-create.

By incorporating Living Labs within the guidelines, educators create dynamic learning environments that bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world application. These labs promote experiential learning, problem-solving, collaboration, innovation, and entrepreneurship among VET students. The co-creation of badges within Living Labs recognises students' practical achievements and the competencies they develop while engaging in authentic workplace experiences.

## 2.6 Badge showcase events

VET badge showcase events, as part of the guidelines for implementing co-creation of badges in distance learning activities engaging teachers and students, focus on providing a platform for students to showcase their achievements, skills, and knowledge through the badges they have earned. These events celebrate students' accomplishments, promote peer recognition, and encourage continuous learning. The STAY+ project suggests incorporating badge showcase events into the guidelines to enhance motivation and engagement among VET students. VET badge showcase events within the context of the project's guidelines are outlined next.

**Recognition and celebration:** to recognise and celebrate students' achievements in acquiring specific skills and knowledge. The guidelines propose organising virtual or in-person events where students can present their badges and share their learning journey with peers, educators, and industry professionals. This recognition boosts students' confidence, validates their efforts, and creates a sense of accomplishment.

**Peer learning and inspiration:** to provide opportunities for students to learn from their peers. The guidelines suggest incorporating interactive sessions where students can interact, exchange experiences, and learn about each other's badge-earning journeys. This peer-to-peer learning fosters collaboration, inspires others to pursue their own badges, and creates a supportive learning community.

**Professional networking:** to emphasise the importance of networking opportunities within badge showcase events. Inviting industry professionals, employers, and stakeholders to the event allows students to establish connections, engage in discussions, and showcase their skills directly to potential employers. This networking aspect enhances students' employability and facilitates future career opportunities.

**Panel discussions and expert talks:** include panel discussions and expert talks on topics relevant to the badges earned by students. The guidelines propose inviting industry experts, guest speakers, or alumni to share insights, industry trends, and



the value of the skills represented by the badges. These sessions provide additional learning opportunities and further contextualise the significance of the badges within the labor market.

**Feedback and assessment:** offer a platform for students to receive feedback and assessment on their badge-earning achievements. The guidelines recommend incorporating assessment components, such as presentations or demonstrations, where students can showcase their skills to a panel of experts. Constructive feedback helps students gauge their progress, identify areas for improvement, and further enhance their vocational competencies.

**Virtual Exhibition Spaces:** propose creating virtual exhibition spaces where students can display their badges, project work, or portfolios. These digital platforms allow for easy accessibility, browsing, and interaction among attendees. Students can provide multimedia presentations, videos, or written descriptions to showcase their badge-earning accomplishments.

**Continuous learning opportunities:** to serve as a platform to introduce students to further learning opportunities. The guidelines suggest incorporating information sessions about advanced badges, upskilling programs, or career development pathways. This encourages students to continue their learning journey, pursue higher-level badges, and stay engaged with vocational education and training beyond the initial badge-earning phase.

By incorporating badge showcase events within the guidelines, educators create a sense of achievement, foster peer learning, facilitate networking, and provide opportunities for feedback and assessment. These events celebrate students' accomplishments, promote the value of vocational skills, and inspire continuous learning. The co-creation and showcasing of badges enhance student motivation, engagement, and recognition within the vocational education and training sphere.