

EMPLOYER-ABILITY

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KNOWING WHERE TO START



Welcome to the employer-ability course!



Initial Quiz



Instructions

BEGINNER LEVEL



Introduction



The societal need for international talent

 **Small and medium-sized enterprises**

 **Employability**

 **Employer-ability**

 **Stakeholders of Employer-ability**


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 **Employer Branding**

 **Recruitment**

 **Onboarding**

 **Retention**

 **Intercultural Teams**

 **Diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and social justice**

 **Unconscious bias, microaggressions, and antiracism**



Emotional Intelligence



Check your learning



Conclusion



Sources

SKILLED LEVEL



Introduction



Attraction and retention of international talent as organisational change



Inclusive Leadership



Diversity Management



Language inclusive work environment



Diversity Recruitment



Internships



Check your learning



Conclusion



Sources

Welcome to the employer-ability course!

IA Interlocality AR



This course was developed in the framework of the Erasmus+ project INTERLOCALITY co-funded by the EU, with the aim of increasing local employability among international higher education degree students. This course is co-funded by the European Union and it reflects the views only of the author, and the European commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Lack of local employment of international higher education degree students and graduates is a growing problem in many countries in the world, especially in those with a diminishing population in need of work-based immigration and international student and graduate retention. This problem touches many different stakeholders in the local employment. **This course has three main target groups: local small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs); higher education institutions (HEIs); and third-sector organisations.** By third-sector organisations we mean government and non-government organisations, associations, labour market organisations and any other organisations besides HEIs that support the employment of international talents in the host country.

In the INTERLOCALITY project, we believe that it is essential to not only address the issue of **employability** of the international students and graduates, but also the issue of **employer-ability** of the local SMEs, i.e. the employers' willingness and ability to attract and retain them. We have explored and developed tools for HEIs and third-sector organisations to support the development of both. Additionally, many HEIs and third-sector organisations are employers in themselves.

By completing this course, you will learn to understand the societal need for the employment of international talents and the roles of different stakeholders. You will also understand the difference between employability and employer-ability, as well as the basic concepts of employer-branding, recruitment, onboarding, and retention. You will be able to apply tools and strategies related to inclusive leadership, diversity management, and diversity recruitment in practical situations, as well as provide support and improvements to internships for international students. Lastly, you will gain an understanding of how to actively contribute to fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion within your organisation.

This course consists of three levels: Beginner, Developing and Skilled. Each level takes approximately 4 hours to complete, including text, videos and learning activities. At the end of each level, you will check your learning through a short quiz and self-reflection questions.

The levels Beginner and Developing are designed for all target groups of this course (SMEs, HEIs and third-sector organisations). The Beginner level is an introduction to the concepts of employability and employer-ability, and explains the different roles each of the stakeholders have in them. The Developing level is an introduction to recruitment, onboarding, and retention for those who would like to know more about the employer-perspective or find new insights within these topics. **The Skilled level of the Employer-ability course is targeted only to those who are actively involved in recruitment and onboarding.**

Before starting the course, go to the initial quiz to know which level you should start with!



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We have used OpenAI's ChatGPT 3.5 in editing our texts and ensuring a coherent use of language in the course, which has been created by a wide range of project members.



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CONTINUE TO THE INITIAL QUIZ

Initial Quiz



The Initial quiz of the Employer-ability course includes 5 multiple-choice questions with the aim to suggest the appropriate level for you to start with: Beginner, Developing, or Skilled. This makes the course flexible and centred on your needs and prior knowledge and competencies.

Please note that the quiz results are preliminary recommendations based only on your score. Therefore, **you should also review the content of each level (presented after the quiz) to choose the most suitable level for you!**

Go ahead and start the quiz!

Question

01/05

Can you explain the difference between employability and employer-ability?

☐

Yes

☐

No

Question

02/05

Can you explain the processes of employer branding, recruiting, onboarding, and retaining talent?

☐

Yes

☐

No

Question

03/05

Can you explain the concepts of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging, and Social Justice?

☐

Yes

☐

No

Question

04/05

Can you explain the concepts of Inclusive Leadership, Diversity Management, and Diversity Recruitment?

☐

Yes

☐

No

Question

05/05

Are you directly involved in recruiting or onboarding new colleagues/team members?

☐

Yes

☐

No

Instructions



Depending on your score, you can choose which level to start with. **Please note that these are preliminary recommendations based only on your score, and you should therefore also review the content of each level below. You are of course free to choose any level!**

- **Between 0% and 40%: Beginner**
- **Between 40% and 80%: Developing**
- **Between 80% and 100%: Skilled**

If you get exactly 40% or 80%, please choose the level you want to start with, according to your personal experiences and knowledge of the course topic.

The **Beginner** level is designed **for all target groups** (SMEs, HEIs, and third sector organisations). It explores the societal need for the employment of international talents, the evolving landscape of work and societies, and the particular role of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Additionally, we explore the difference between employability and employer-ability, identify and describe the various stakeholders involved, and gain awareness of our own roles in shaping these concepts.

The **Developing** level is also designed **for all target groups** (SMEs, HEIs, and third sector organisations). It contains interesting topics for staff at HEIs and third-sector organisations to better understand the employer perspective. It can also provide new insights for e.g. smaller companies who would like to develop their knowledge and skills in this area. The level focuses on the processes of employer branding, recruiting, onboarding, and retaining talent. You will also learn about fostering

diversity, promoting equity and inclusion, and addressing unconscious bias to create a workplace culture that embraces all employees.

The **Skilled** level is designed **for those who are actively involved in recruitment and onboarding**. It explores crucial topics such as attraction and retention of international talent, inclusive leadership, diversity management, diversity recruitment, and the role of internships in fostering organisational growth and success. There are **three stand-alone tools** attached to this level, which you can use in your work.

If you would like to start with the **Beginner** level, please click on the Introduction button below.

If you would like to start with the **Developing** or **Skilled** level, please find them in the buttons below.

Developing level

GO

Skilled level

GO

INTRODUCTION

Introduction



Welcome to the BEGINNER level of the Employer-ability course!

In this level, we will explore the societal need for the employment of international talents and the particular role of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Additionally, we will explore the difference between employability and employer-ability, identify and describe the various stakeholders involved, and gain awareness of our own roles in shaping these concepts.

Employability consists of the attributes and qualifications (e.g. educational credentials) individuals have, and by which they gain employment and remain employed over time. **Employer-ability** focuses on the characteristics and practices that make organisations attractive to potential employees. By understanding the difference between these concepts, we can develop strategies to enhance both personal employability and organisational employer-ability.

In addition to understanding the concepts, we will identify and describe the **various stakeholders involved in employer-ability**. From individuals seeking employment to educational institutions, government agencies, employers, industry associations, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), several stakeholders can play important roles in developing an organisation's employer-ability. By understanding their perspectives and interrelationships, we can increase collaboration, share knowledge, and solve common problems. This course level also emphasises **self-awareness of our own roles** in the development of employability and employer-ability.

At the end of this level, you will be able to:

- Understand and communicate the societal need for employment of international talents, the particular role of SMEs, and the difference between employability and employer-ability
- Identify and collaborate with the various stakeholders in employer-ability
- Be aware of your own role in the development of employability and employer-ability

Throughout the lessons and the activities of the level, we encourage **active participation and critical thinking** by providing you with practical exercises, self-reflections, videos and readings. The level is meant to be flexible to accommodate your needs and resource limitations (e.g. time). You can complete lessons and activities as you wish, take a break, and continue anytime you want.

The duration is about 4 hours.

This level consists of the following themes:

- The societal need for international talents
- The particular role of SMEs
- Employability and employer-ability
- Stakeholders of employer-ability

Let's embark on this exciting learning journey together!

CONTINUE

The societal need for international talent



In a highly interconnected and competitive global economy, businesses and organisations require a diverse pool of talented individuals with a range of skills, experiences, and cultural perspectives to help them thrive. Demographic change is affecting the job market, with fewer young professionals entering and experienced baby boomers retiring soon. As a result, many organisations are struggling to fill vacancies for trainees, workers, managers, and specialists. To address this issue, organisations need to broaden their search for talent by targeting unfamiliar groups, including international talent, such as e.g. international students and graduates. ([Charta der Vielfalt, n.d.](#))

Skills shortage, skills gaps, and skills mismatch

Skills shortage, skills gaps, and skills mismatch are related concepts that are often used interchangeably, but they have small differences in their meanings and implications in the context of the labour market. **Skills shortage** refers to a lack of supply of workers with specific skills, **skills gaps** refer to the gap between skills supply and demand, and **skills mismatch** refers to a misalignment between the skills of the workers and the skills demanded by employers. Skills mismatch can contribute to skills gaps and skills shortages in the labour market.

Voluntary reading

McKinsey: The future is now: Closing the skills gap in Europe's public sector

GO

Voluntary reading

Vervoe: What Is a Skills Mismatch and How Can You Solve It for Your Business?

GO

Voluntary reading

Cedefop: Skill mismatch in Europe

GO

Voluntary reading

Oxford Economics: Global Talent 2021

GO

Significant skills shortage in Europe

The labour shortages in Europe are becoming more widespread and notable, with companies all over the continent struggling to find skilled workers. To address the labour shortages, some companies are offering improved working conditions to attract workers, while member states are considering relaxed visa requirements for workers from third countries. However, finding a solution to the labour shortages across Europe remains a significant challenge, requiring cooperation and coordination among countries, industries, and stakeholders to address the gaps in the labour market and ensure sustainable economic growth. ([EURACTIV Network & Allenbach-Ammann, 2022](#))

Voluntary reading

Aristek Systems: A Broad Look At The European Labor Shortage & How L&D Can Be Pivotal For Change

GO

Voluntary reading

Annapurna: EU Skills Shortage: Is It As Bad As It Seems?

GO

The demand and supply of international talent

The labour market is a complex ecosystem with various stakeholders involved in aligning the supply and demand of talent. While employers and educational institutions may traditionally be viewed as the demand and supply side respectively, the reality is more nuanced. Talent, especially in critical profiles and skills, has become the demand side with employers and educational institutions serving as suppliers. In this broader ecosystem context, both talent and businesses are customers, with the government and other local service providers as enablers or suppliers. The challenge is to take a more customer-centric approach and optimise customer journeys for both talent and business. This requires systemic change and adjustments, including smart collaboration between governmental agencies and the private sector. The aim is to increase access to talent and skills, including **collaborative talent attraction**. ([van Haelst, 2022](#))



However, attracting international talent to a country, region, or company is not enough. **Retaining** them is a longer and more complex process than merely offering them jobs. **If they do not thrive in the workplace and the social context, they will end up leaving.** This retention goes far beyond the workplace itself and is about feeling welcomed and appreciated both at work and in society. It is about wanting to set down roots and creating networks, developing careers and building families. The members of society and government are therefore key players in addition to the employers and co-workers in making the internationals want to stay.



Podcast

Listen to this 7,5 min section (30:30-21:55) of the All Points North podcast [Finland's foreign talent flight](#) as an example to learn more about why international talents, including both international students and employees, are thinking about leaving despite intentions to stay.

Diversifying workforce

With the increase of study- and work-based immigration, as well as the increase of second- and third-generation immigrants, our societies and workforces are rapidly diversifying. This means that the local talent pools are diversifying, regardless of whether a particular employer has chosen to recruit international talent so far. Sooner or later, most employers will need to be able to handle diversity in the organisation and develop an inclusive work environment.

Strengthening relationships and cultivating inclusion are essential to developing a diverse workforce. This can be done through team-building exercises, workshops, education, and policies that encourage diverse employees to express their cultures and unique wants and needs. Seeking out

diversity of thought is as crucial to creating a thriving business as the diversity of race, gender, and socioeconomic background. Diverse companies have several key advantages over their more homogeneous counterparts, including better ideas, more innovation, differentiation for attracting business, and higher rates of productivity. Developing a more diverse workforce is a long road, but it is a necessary and worthwhile process that requires actions at almost every stage of the hiring and management process. ([Ordorica, 2022](#))

Recruitment of international talent

If you would like to know more about the recruitment of international talent and DEIB (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging), please visit the Developing level of this Employer-ability course.

GO

Practical exercise:

- 1 Pick one of the voluntary readings or any of the other sources we have provided in this section on The societal need for international talent.
- 2 Read it and reflect on how it relates to your own work.
- 3 Note down the connection to the reading you identified.
- 4 Feel free to summarise and share your thoughts with these colleagues or on social media.

CONTINUE

Small and medium-sized enterprises

IA Interlocality AR

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) play a crucial role in the European economy, both in terms of the number of companies and the share of jobs they provide. SMEs are defined by staff headcount, as well as either turnover or balance sheet total. SMEs are defined by the European Union as enterprises with fewer than 250 employees and an annual turnover of no more than €50 million, or a balance sheet total of no more than €43 million. ([European Commission, n.d.](#))

MICRO AND SMALL ENTERPRISES (MSES)	MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES	LARGE ENTERPRISES
<p>In 2019, 99% of EU businesses in the non-financial business* economy were micro or small enterprises, employing fewer than 50 individuals. They employed approximately half (48.4%) of the non-financial business economy workforce in the EU, and contributed just over one third (35.3%) of the value added. (Eurostat, 2022)</p> <p><i>* The non-financial business economy includes the sectors of industry, construction, distributive trades and services. (Eurostat, n.d.)</i></p>		



**MICRO AND SMALL ENTERPRISES
(MSES)**

MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES

LARGE ENTERPRISES

In 2019, only 0.9% of EU businesses were medium-sized enterprises with more than 50 but fewer than 250 employees. They employed just over a sixth (16.0%) of the EU's non-financial business economy workforce, while they contributed around the same share (17.1%) of the value added. ([Eurostat, 2022](#))



**MICRO AND SMALL ENTERPRISES
(MSES)**

MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES

LARGE ENTERPRISES

There are very few (0,2%) large enterprises with more than 250 employees in the EU, but in 2019 they accounted for a large share of employees (35,6%) and an even greater share of the value added (47,6%). ([Eurostat, 2022](#))



Why are SMEs important?

In 2019, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) represented 99,8% of all businesses and employed 64,4 % of the workforce in the EU. These numbers highlight the significant contribution of SMEs to the European economy in terms of the number of companies and jobs they provide, highlighting their importance as engines of economic growth, innovation, and employment. However, it is important to note that the share of SMEs in Europe may vary across different countries and regions, and can be influenced by factors such as economic conditions, industry sectors, and policy frameworks. ([Eurostat, 2022](#))

Challenges for SMEs compared to larger organisations

SMEs face challenges such as limited financial resources, access to talent, technology, and business networks. Overcoming these challenges requires strategic planning, innovation, adaptability, and leveraging available resources and support systems. Many SMEs, and particularly small and micro companies lack human resource (HR) capacity and -support. **Very small employers**

often handle HR responsibilities themselves, which essentially means business owners and general managers handling specialised HR tasks. As they do not have sufficient resources or know-how in the organisation, employers might also feel ill-equipped to recruit and retain international talent. Especially since the need for support can range from recruitment tools and candidate screening to mentorship or internship programs, language training, workplace diversity training, skills upgrading support, and community integration assistance. **In comparison with larger companies, SMEs rely more on collaboration with external stakeholders in the local employment of international students and graduates.** ([Welsh, 2012](#))

Practical exercise:

1

Please watch this 3-minute video on [How SMEs can compete for talent](#). You can turn subtitles on by clicking on the closed caption 'CC' icon that appears at the bottom of the video when you start it.

2

If you are currently working in an SME: how do you perceive these challenges and opportunities, and did you get any new food for thought with regards to employing international students and graduates?

3

If you are currently not working in an SME: how many SMEs do you know your organisation cooperates with? Who in your organisation would know more about this? How do you perceive the challenges and opportunities in the video, and did you get any new food for thought regarding employing international students and graduates?

CONTINUE


Employability

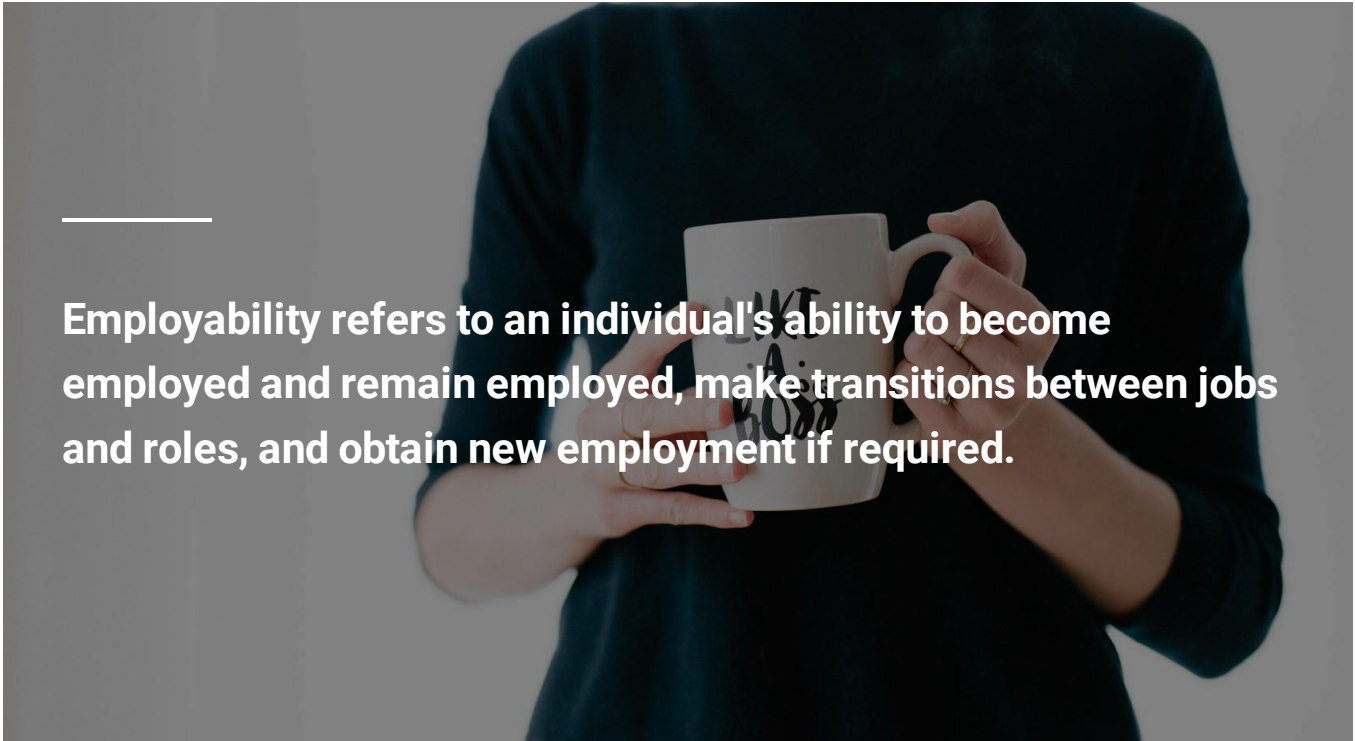
IA Interlocality AR

In today's fast-paced and ever-changing job market, employability is becoming an increasingly important concept for both employers and employees. **Employability is the individual's ability to become employed and remain employed, make transitions between jobs and roles, and obtain new employment if required.** This means having the necessary skills, knowledge, and attitudes to succeed in the workplace. This includes not only technical skills, but also employability skills such as communication, problem-solving, and adaptability. It also includes the quality of the job, which should be fulfilling, sustainable, and correspond with the individual's skills and potential. ([University of Plymouth, n.d.](#))

Please watch this 2.5-minute video [What is employability?](#) to see how broad the concept is, and how we might all understand it differently.

You can turn subtitles on by clicking on the closed caption 'CC' icon that appears at the bottom of the video when you start it.



A person wearing a dark blue long-sleeved shirt is holding a white ceramic mug with both hands. The mug has the words "TAKE A BREATH" printed on it in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The person's face is not visible, and the background is a plain, light-colored wall.

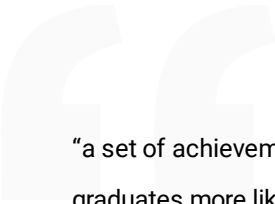
Employability refers to an individual's ability to become employed and remain employed, make transitions between jobs and roles, and obtain new employment if required.

Employability of international students and graduates

International students often face significant financial challenges in the host country, including tuition fees, living expenses, and other costs associated with studying abroad. Finding employment can help them cover these expenses and reduce their reliance on financial support from their families or home countries. Securing internships and part-time jobs can provide international students with valuable practical experience in their field of study and is sometimes a compulsory requirement as part of the degree (especially in universities of applied sciences). Working in their host countries allows international students to build professional networks that can be invaluable in their future careers. Many international students want to find employment in their host country after completing their studies. However, international students and graduates are often at a disadvantage compared to their local peers on the host country labour market, and struggle more to find employment despite having the same education. That raises the question of whether the lack of employment really only depends on the level of the individual's employability, or maybe also on issues related to the employers.

Employability vs employer-ability

Globally, the discussion around employment of international students and graduates centres around the term '**employability**' which commonly is defined as:



"a set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes – that makes graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy."

- [Yorke, 2006, p. 8](#)



01:36

If you prefer, you can **listen to the following two paragraphs** instead of reading them.

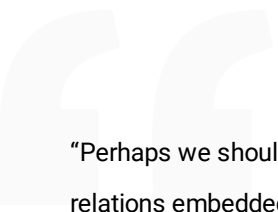
This suggests that employment is the responsibility of the individual student or graduate and that they need to develop their employability to find, and succeed in, employment. This will then benefit themselves, the workforce, the community, and the economy. The employers are not mentioned, but they too of course benefit from this employability. Interestingly, **the concept of employability places all the responsibility on the individual, although clearly many stakeholders beyond the individual benefit from it.** However, there is rarely any mention of responsibilities for employment or the development of employability on the part of the stakeholders benefitting from the employment.

If employment is defined as sufficient employability, then all the responsibility lies with the individual. This is not fair, realistic, or sustainable. **Employment, and the responsibility for it, must go beyond individual employability and be balanced with 'employer-ability'.** Employer-ability has never been defined as a term. By other terms, it might refer to e.g. employer willingness, ability, capability, and

readiness to employ international students and graduates. The development of these employer attributes does not happen all on its own, but requires suitable environments and support.



Employment, and the responsibility for it, must go beyond individual employability and be balanced with 'employer-ability'.



"Perhaps we should develop the concept of employer-ability to balance out the power relations embedded in the employability discourse of recruitment and retention. The implication is that the education process should also extend to employers. They need to be more sensitised to issues pertaining to differences of gender, race, social class, disability and sexual orientation. Only then will the same employability attributes have similar economic and professional values for different social groups. "

- [Morley, 2001, p.137](#)

Self-reflection exercise

1

With your own organisation in mind, please reflect on how it currently is connected to the development of international student and graduate employability. Could this be developed further?

2

Please reflect on your own role in the employability of international students and graduates. How could you contribute?

3

Did you find anything unexpected? Any new perspectives? Please feel free to share these with your colleagues and/or on social media.

CONTINUE

Employer-ability

IA Interlocality AR

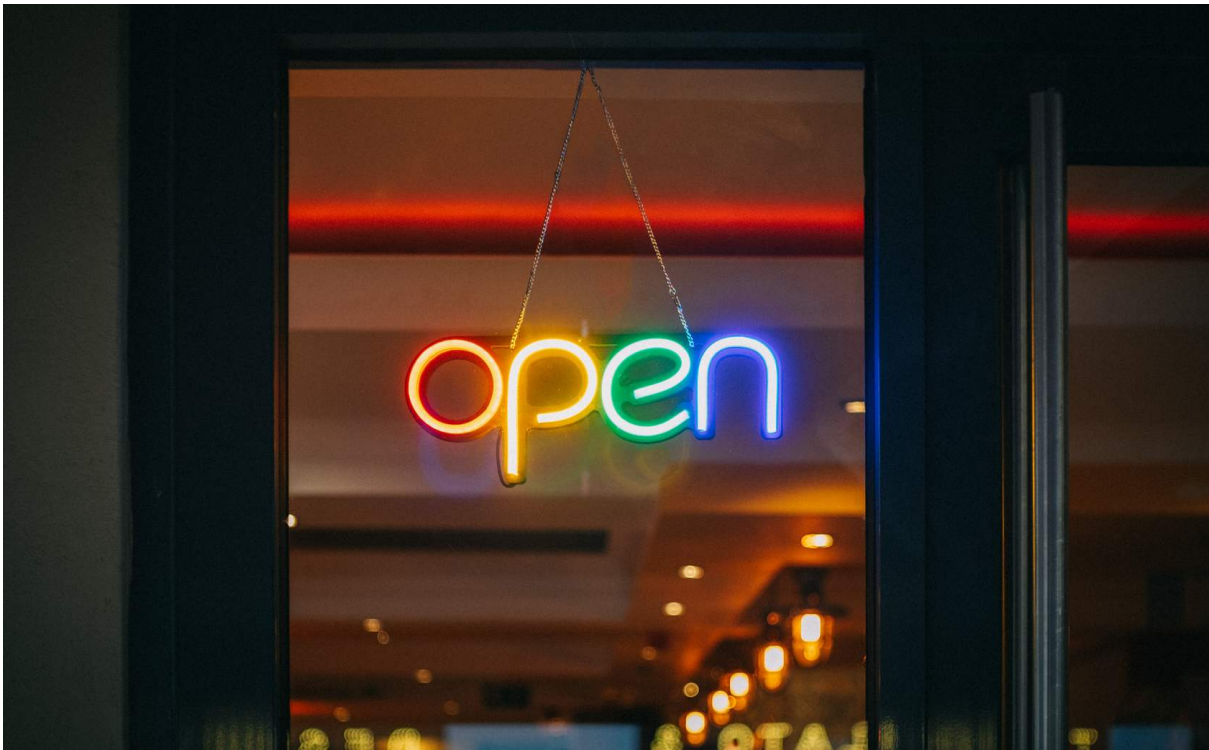
Developing necessary management skills in order to make international talent a source of competitive advantage for the organisation is an investment. It is a risk taken by employers (as with hiring any employee), either by necessity (no local labour available) or by choice (wanting to recruit international talent). The management skills need to go beyond the initial recruitment phase to the onboarding and retention of the international talent, as the risk otherwise is further increased by the possibility of the talent choosing to leave the organisation. **'Employer-ability' might therefore, in this context, be defined as an employer's willingness and ability to attract, recruit, and retain international students and graduates. This also includes the readiness or capability of the organisation as a whole to receive these talents.**

Employer willingness and ability to hire international talent

WILLINGNESS

ABILITY

Employer willingness to hire international talent depends on the **openness** and **readiness** of employers to hire workers from different countries or cultural backgrounds. This willingness can be influenced by various factors, such as the lack of domestic talent, the employer's need for specific skills or expertise, the legal and regulatory framework governing foreign workers, and the employer's diversity and inclusion policies. However, employers' willingness to hire international talent can also be influenced by various challenges and barriers, such as lack of language skills, cultural differences, visa and immigration issues, and discrimination. To address these challenges, employers can create a more inclusive workplace, by e.g. providing language and cultural training, promoting diversity and inclusion policies, and establishing clear and transparent recruitment and selection processes. ([Welsh, 2012](#))



WILLINGNESS

ABILITY

Employer-ability to hire international talent may depend on various factors, such as immigration laws, visa requirements, language proficiency, cultural differences, and the availability of suitable candidates in the local market. Employers may need to navigate complex legal and administrative processes to hire international talent, which can be time-consuming and costly. This is an issue especially for SMEs that have fewer resources than larger enterprises they might be competing for talent with. Small- and micro companies might not have in-house human resource (HR) staff or competence for attracting, recruiting, and retaining international talent. If the capability to hire and retain international talent is not available within the organisation, it might well be available outside the organisation, as there are external service providers, NGOs and municipal or national organisations offering support to companies in these matters. ([Welsh, 2012](#))



Self-reflection exercise:

1

With your own organisation in mind, please reflect on its current employer-ability. What is the level of willingness and ability to employ international students and graduates? What might need to be developed?

2

Please reflect on your own role in the employer-ability of local employers in attracting and retaining international students and graduates. How could you contribute?

3

Did you find anything unexpected? Any new perspectives? Please feel free to share these with your colleagues and/or on social media.

CONTINUE

Stakeholders of Employer-ability

IA Interlocality AR

Although locally educated international students and graduates are often perceived as low-hanging fruit for companies to recruit, the lack of local employment of international higher education degree students and graduates is a growing problem in many countries in the world. This is especially the case in countries with a diminishing population in need of work-based immigration and international student and graduate retention. This problem touches many different stakeholders in the local employment, e.g. the host government and municipality, the local companies and organisations in need of highly skilled labour, the higher education institutions (HEIs), third-sector organisations, labour market unions, the international students and graduates themselves and their families etc. **We will highlight the three main organisational stakeholders of employer-ability with regard to local employment of international students and graduates below: local employers, HEIs, and third-sector organisations.**



Employers

Employers are key in the local employment of international students and graduates, but may need support from other stakeholders in e.g. recognition of educational credentials, finding international talent, recruiting and onboarding them, and making sure they thrive also beyond the workplace.

▶ ● ————— 01:44

If you prefer, you can **listen to the two following paragraphs** on the role of employers instead of reading them.

The role of employers

Employers have several responsibilities in the **employment relationship**, which include legal compliance, providing a safe and inclusive workplace, training and development, providing fair hiring, compensation, and promotion processes, and offering support to accommodate different needs. In addition to the employment relationship as such, employers play a crucial role in supporting the employment of international students and graduates in host countries. International students face several challenges when it comes to finding employment in a new country, such as a lack of work experience, unfamiliarity with the local job market, and visa restrictions. Employers can offer internships, projects, thesis work, or part-time work to international students and graduates, which can help them gain practical work experience, build their network, and enhance their employability.

Employers can also provide language and cultural support to international students and graduates, such as language classes, cultural orientation, and mentorship, to help them integrate into the workplace and enhance their communication skills. Employers can support international students and graduates in their visa applications by providing letters of support, sponsorship, or job offers, which can help them secure the necessary permits to work in the host country. Employers can also promote diversity and inclusion by actively seeking out international students and graduates as part of their recruitment strategy, which can help them tap into a diverse talent pool and benefit from a broader range of perspectives and experiences.



Higher education institutions (HEIs)

It is in the best interest of HEIs to support not only their students and graduates to develop their employability, but to also support local employers in developing employer-ability. This can be further enhanced e.g. by partnering with third sector organisations.



01:35

If you prefer, you can **listen to the two following paragraphs** on the role of HEIs instead of reading them.

The role of higher education institutions

There are several reasons why it is in the interest of higher education institutions (HEIs) that their international students and graduates find local employment during and after their studies in the host country. Attraction and recruitment of new students to HEIs are heavily dependent on the satisfaction

and recommendation of previous students and graduates. In addition, national funding mechanisms for HEIs are sometimes tied partly to local post-graduate employment and/or student and graduate satisfaction. Universities of applied sciences and their global counterparts (e.g. polytechnics, community colleges etc.) often have compulsory internships as parts of their degrees, and therefore cannot graduate international students who have not been able to secure internships either in the host country or abroad. Finally, the affordability crisis is placing greater emphasis on employment during studies, and the lack of employment causes some students to drop out entirely, especially the ones who pay tuition fees and need to fund them.

Higher education institutions have a significant responsibility in **preparing students for employment and their continued success in the workforce**. HEIs can also **support employers in the employment of international students and graduates** in the host country in a number of ways, including:

Providing quality education —

Preparing students for the demands of the workforce. This includes providing relevant and up-to-date coursework, practical training, and access to industry experts and resources.

Promoting diversity and inclusion —

This can translate to the workplace through collaboration with employers. Employers who value diversity and inclusion may be more willing to hire international students and graduates, especially those with unique perspectives and experiences.

Career guidance and counselling services —

These can help international students and graduates navigate the job market. They can provide job search resources, workshops on interview skills and resume building, networking events, and other services to help students and graduates connect with potential employers.

Building industry partnerships with employers —

Creating job opportunities for international students and graduates. These partnerships can include internships, thesis work, projects, and other initiatives that help students and graduates gain work experience and build their professional networks. These partnerships can also help employers to better understand the value that international students and graduates bring to the workplace.

Providing job placement services —

Connecting graduates with potential employers and helping them navigate the job market. This can be done in cooperation with external service providers if it is beyond the scope of the higher education institution itself.

Tapping into their alumni networks —

Connecting international graduates with alumni who are working in the same field. This can provide graduates with valuable networking opportunities and insights into the job market.

Providing language and cultural training to international students and graduates —

This can help them to better understand the host country's culture and to communicate effectively with potential employers.

Providing support for navigating immigration systems

Higher education institutions can provide support for international students and graduates in navigating the complex immigration system in the host country. This can include advice on visa applications, work permits, and other immigration-related issues.

Advocacy

Advocating for policies and programs that support the employment of international students and graduates in the host country. This can include lobbying for changes to immigration policies, promoting diversity and inclusion in the workplace, and raising awareness about the benefits of hiring international talent. By advocating for these policies, institutions can help to create a more welcoming and supportive environment for international students and graduates.

Conducting research

Researching the benefits and challenges of employing international students and graduates, and sharing this information with employers. This can help employers make informed decisions about their recruitment and hiring strategies.



Third sector organisations

The main purpose of third-sector organisations, associations, foundations, labour market organisations etc. is to support their customers in achieving their goals, whether they act as employers or employees. Together with HEIs they can help bridge the gap between education and work.

The role of third sector organisations

By third-sector organisations we mean such private organisations, associations, NGOs, and government organisations that provide services to either international students and graduates, or to employers, in order to facilitate local employment. These organisations are dependent on the amount of, and satisfaction of, their customers and the lack of local employment of international students and graduates is very much their concern. They often act as a bridge between the students/graduates and the employers. In some cases they also cooperate with the local HEIs.

While their primary focus is not on providing education, **they can support students and graduates in several ways**. Some of the responsibilities of third-sector organisations in graduate employment are:

Providing job search resources

Providing resources for international students and graduates, such as job boards, resume writing workshops, and interview coaching to help them navigate the local job market and increase their chances of finding employment.

Offering training and development

Offering training and development opportunities to help students and graduates acquire new skills or enhance their existing ones, making them more attractive to potential employers.

Providing cultural and linguistic support

Providing e.g. language classes, cultural orientation, and mentorship for international students and graduates to help them integrate into the local community and workplace.

Providing work experience

Offering internships, volunteer opportunities, or temporary employment to students and graduates can help them gain practical work experience, build their networks, and add relevant work experience to their resumes.

Offering career support

Arranging or informing international students of e.g. industry events, conferences, or networking sessions to help them connect with potential employers or other

professionals in their field.

Facilitating networking opportunities

Such as industry events, conferences, or networking sessions, to help international students and graduates connect with potential employers or other professionals in their field.

Advocacy

Advocating for policies that support international students, such as streamlined work permit processes, recognition of foreign credentials, or access to post-graduation work permits.

Third-sector organisations can also **help local employers tap into the skills and talents of international students and graduates**, while also supporting the integration of these individuals into the work community by:

Providing information and guidance to local employers

Employers might need guidance e.g. the benefits of recruiting international students and graduates, and how to navigate the visa and immigration processes. Third-sector organisations can also provide advice on cultural differences and ways to create a welcoming and inclusive work environment.

Facilitating networking opportunities

Facilitating networking opportunities between local employers and international students and graduates. This could include organising job fairs, networking events, or mentorship programs.

Providing cultural and linguistic support to employers

Employers can benefit from language classes, cultural sensitivity training, and support for setting up Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) policies.

Advocacy for policies that support employment

Such policies can be providing tax incentives for employers who hire international graduates, promoting workforce development programs, or investing in job creation initiatives.

Advocacy for fair and equitable employment practices

Third-sector organisation can promote equal pay, non-discrimination, and work-life balance, both within organisations and in the broader community.

Partnering with employers

Third-sector organisation can partner with employers to develop employment programs or provide job opportunities for marginalised or disadvantaged groups, such as

international students and graduates, and refugees.

Self-reflection exercise:

1

Think back to the previous self-reflection exercise on your current organisation's employer-ability and now reflect on the two other stakeholder groups and their roles described above. How could such stakeholders support the development of your organisation's employer-ability to attract, recruit and retain international students and graduates?

2

Please list the names of such **organisational stakeholders** in your own context and consider initially reaching out to at least two of these for an informal chat online or in person.

CHECK YOUR LEARNING

Check your learning

IA Interlocality AR

This section is meant to help you recall and assess your learning in this level. It consists of two parts: a quiz and a self-reflection exercise.

Quiz

Please tick the box or boxes you think are correct and then click on 'submit'. After that, please scroll down to the following question until you reach the self-reflection part of the assessment. **Please note that there may be multiple correct answers.**

Why is the employment of international talents in SMEs different from larger enterprises?

☐

SMEs may have limited resources and capacity for recruitment compared to larger enterprises, making the hiring of international talents more challenging.

☐

As smaller organisations, SMEs are often more agile and flexible, which might make it easier for them than for larger organisations to hire international talents.

☐

Employment of international talents in SMEs is not different from larger enterprises because both types of organisations face the same challenges in recruiting and integrating foreign talent.

SUBMIT

What is the difference between employability and employer-ability?

☐

Employability and employer-ability are two terms used interchangeably to describe an individual's ability to find and keep a job.

☐

Employability refers to an individual's skills, qualifications, and attributes that make them suitable for employment. Employer-ability, on the other hand, refers to the characteristics and practices of an organisation that make it an attractive place for employment.

☐

Employability refers to an organisation's ability to employ talents, while employer-ability describes an individual's suitability for contributing to the employing organisation.

SUBMIT

Who are the stakeholders involved in employer-ability?

☐

The only stakeholder in employer-ability is the employer, as they hold the power to hire and make decisions related to employment.

☐

The stakeholders in employer-ability are limited to job seekers, employers and recruitment agencies, as they directly participate in the employment process.

☐

The stakeholders in employer-ability include e.g. employers, employees, government agencies, educational institutions, third-sector organisations, and professional associations. Each of these groups can play a role in supporting the receptiveness of work communities or ensuring the development of a skilled workforce.

SUBMIT

Self-reflection

Reflect by yourself or discuss the following questions with a colleague. Your answers will not be assessed. Instead we hope you will gain an insight into what you have learned in this level and how you can develop further in your own work.



How do your skills, experiences, and personal qualities contribute to your organisation's employer-ability, and how can you further enhance it?

2

Are you open to exploring and embracing new methods, technologies, and collaborative approaches in the context of employer-ability? How can you actively engage in them?

3

Do you actively seek out and consider different perspectives and viewpoints of employers, employees, government agencies, educational institutions, and professional associations when it comes to employer-ability? How can you develop a deeper understanding and empathy for diverse stakeholders to foster effective collaboration and mutual growth?

CONTINUE TO CONCLUSION

Conclusion



Congratulations! You have successfully completed this level.

In today's rapidly changing world, understanding and addressing the societal need for international talent, the evolving dynamics of work and societies, and the specific role of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is increasingly important.

Employability refers to the qualities, skills, and qualifications that individuals possess to enhance their chances of securing and maintaining employment. On the other hand, employer-ability focuses on the characteristics and practices that make an organisation attractive to potential employees.

Recognising and understanding the various stakeholders involved in employer-ability is crucial for solving issues around skills shortages, skills mismatch, and international students' and graduates' local employment in the host country. These stakeholders encompass e.g. individuals seeking employment, HEIs, government agencies, employers, industry associations, trade unions, professional bodies, recruitment agencies, and NGOs.

Embracing interest, curiosity, and open-mindedness towards new forms of operating and collaborating with stakeholders in employer-ability are important traits and attitudes in increasing the local employment of international students and graduates. This begins by understanding different stakeholders' points of view as well as your own role(s) in the context.

Did you reach the following learning objectives, by now being able to:

☐

Understand and communicate the societal need for employment of international talents, the particular role of SMEs, and the difference between employability and employer-ability

☐

Identify and collaborate with the various stakeholders in employer-ability

☐

Be aware of your own roles in employability and employer-ability

Thank you for engaging with the Beginner level of the Employer-ability course!

If you would like to continue to another level of the Employer-ability course, please find them through the buttons below.

Developing level

If you would like to continue to the Developing level of this Employer-ability course

GO

Skilled level

If you would like to continue to the Skilled level of this Employer-ability course

GO

If you would like to try out a level of the **Intercultural Sensitivity** or **Guidance and Counselling** courses, please go back to the main page and choose the course.

It was a pleasure having you with us!

[CONTINUE TO LIST OF SOURCES](#)

Sources



Here you can find the full references for all the sources we have used in the development of the content in the BEGINNER level of the Employer-ability course. The 'voluntary reading' and video sources are not included, as they are used only as external content.

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If you would like to continue on your learning journey, please go to the Developing and Skilled levels of this Employer-ability course!

CONTINUE TO THE DEVELOPING LEVEL

Introduction



Welcome to the DEVELOPING level of the Employer-ability course!

This level is designed to equip you with the essential knowledge and skills to understand and navigate the complex dynamics of the modern workplace. In today's globalised world, organisations face unique challenges in attracting and retaining top talent. Both team members and managers are central in creating a compelling and inclusive work environment that appeals to international talents.

Employer branding and recruitment are critical to building a diverse and high-performing workforce. We will explore the concepts of international talent attraction and inclusive recruitment. Once the talent is hired, organisations must focus on effective onboarding programs to facilitate their integration into the workplace. We will examine the key elements of successful onboarding initiatives, considering cultural nuances, cross-cultural communication, and the importance of building strong social connections within teams.

Diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and social justice are essential to building inclusive organisations. We will examine the significance of these concepts and how they contribute to a positive work environment where everyone feels valued and respected. You will learn about fostering diversity, promoting equity and inclusion, and addressing unconscious bias to create a workplace culture that embraces all employees. We will also explore the importance of emotional intelligence in the workplace, including self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and relationship management.

At the end of this level, you will be able to:

- Understand, communicate and apply basic concepts of employer branding, recruitment, onboarding, and retention
- Understand, communicate and apply basic concepts of intercultural teams, diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging (DEIB), social justice, and Emotional Intelligence
- Be aware of other stakeholders' points of view, have an inclusive mindset and openness to diversity, as well as self-awareness regarding your own emotions

Throughout the lessons and the activities of the level we encourage **active participation** and **critical thinking** by providing you with practical exercises, self-reflections, videos, and readings. The level is meant to be flexible to accommodate your needs and resource limitations (e.g. time). You can complete lessons and activities as you wish, take a break, and continue anytime you want.

The duration is about 4 hours.

This level consists of the following themes:

- Employer branding
- Recruitment
- Onboarding
- Retention
- Intercultural teams

- Diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and social justice
- Unconscious bias, microaggressions, and antiracism
- Emotional Intelligence

Let's embark on this exciting learning journey together!

CONTINUE

Employer Branding



Employer branding is the process of developing and promoting an identifiable and unique employer identity that differentiates a company from its competitors. It involves creating a clear view of what makes a company different and desirable as an employer. This process is usually described as a three-step process. The first step is to develop the **value proposition** which is a true representation of what the company offers to its employees. The second step is to market the value proposition to the targeted potential employees and recruiting agencies. The third step is to internalise the value proposition into the company and incorporate it as part of the organisational culture. The goal of employer branding is to develop a workforce that is committed to the set of values and organisational goals established by the company. ([Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004](#)).

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in employer branding

Please watch this 3-minute video on [Corporate Social Responsibility](#).

Turn subtitles on by clicking 'CC' at the bottom of the video player.

As stated in the video, CSR is the idea that businesses have a responsibility to the society around them. It should, however, also include managing the diversity within the organisation itself. Diversity management emerged as a prominent HRM strategy in the 1990s and has since gained widespread recognition as a crucial management tool. Literature highlights its dual aims: removing workplace discrimination and leveraging diversity for competitive advantages in team and organisational performance. ([Mazur, 2013](#))

Research has shown that employees tend to show better job satisfaction and commitment to the employer when the company they work for has a strong CSR management philosophy. ([Gannon & Hieker, 2022](#))



Diversity and inclusion in relation to CSR

Diversity and inclusion are crucial aspects of employer branding. Job seekers, especially young people, immigrants, and racialised individuals value organisations that prioritise diversity and

inclusion. Companies need to communicate their diversity and inclusive work environments to attract talent from diverse backgrounds. ([Confetto et al., 2023](#)).

Diverse teams can also be more flexible, have a better understanding of the organisation's target groups, and be more creative than homogenous teams. Some research shows increased productivity and performance in diverse workplaces. ([Mazur, 2013](#))

CONTINUE

Recruitment



Recruitment is the process of attracting and influencing potential candidates to apply for, maintain interest in, and accept a job offer. Its importance lies in filling job vacancies with the right people who will perform well and stay with the organisation. Effective recruitment strategies are essential to get applicants' attention, sustain their interest, increase the chances of offer acceptance, and allow for an efficient screening and hiring process. Recruitment efforts can be improved by focusing on factors positively associated with applicant attraction, such as how personable, competent and trustworthy the recruiter is, how aesthetic and navigable the company website is, characteristics of the job and organisation, and perceived fit with the job or the organisation. Recruitment efforts should be systematically examined for their effects on applicants and non-applicants, applicants' persistence in the hiring process, their response to job offers, and their perceptions about the process. ([Paul, 2020a](#))

Talent attraction

Talent attraction is an essential aspect of the recruitment process that involves strategically showcasing an organisation's unique attributes and opportunities to attract the best candidates. Talent attraction aims to create a positive first impression and establish a strong employer brand, making the company more appealing to potential hires. Talent attraction is also about identifying the ideal candidates in terms not only of their skills and experiences, but also in terms of values. Finally, it is important for the employer to use the right channels for reaching and communicating with potential future employees. The messages need to be tailored to the target groups, and the employers need

to think about the value proposition already discussed in the Employer brand section of this level. ([Itentio, 2024](#))

Voluntary reading

Itentio: Talent Attraction: Meaning, Importance, Strategies

GO

Voluntary reading

Forbes: Want To Attract Top Talent? Eight Lessons To Take With You Through 2023

GO

Attracting talent across generations

When recruiting international students and graduates, it is important to consider how they might differ from your current workforce. Different generations carry with them different values and prioritise different things in private and working life. This needs to be taken into account in talent attraction.

GEN X	MILLENNIALS	GEN Z
Gen X are generally born between 1965 and 1980 and make up a big part of the current workforce, especially in senior roles. They are often concerned with work-life balance and financial stability. (Preston, 2023)		



GEN X

MILLENNIALS

GEN Z

Millennials, or Gen Y, are born roughly between 1981 and 1995. They grew up with digital technology and are now balancing families with careers. They are concerned with the economic burdens and are therefore concerned with their career progression into more senior roles. ([Preston, 2023](#))



GEN X

MILLENNIALS

GEN Z

Gen Z are born between 1996 and 2012. They are entering the workforce and will bring with them their values and worldviews. They were heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and are very conscious about well-being and mental health. They are concerned with environmental challenges and sustainability, and are expecting diversity, equity, and inclusion to be addressed in the workplace. They want flexible working arrangements and expect employers to let them know why they should choose them, rather than the other way around. ([Preston, 2023](#))



Employee fit

Employee fit refers to the compatibility between individuals and organisations, encompassing personality, values, preferences, needs, goals, knowledge, skills, and abilities. It can be **supplementary**, where an individual aligns with the existing environment, or **complementary**, where they bring new skills. Fit occurs at various levels, including person-environment, person-vocation, person-job, person-group, person-supervisor, and person-organisation fit. It significantly impacts recruiting outcomes, employee attitudes, and behaviours. Perceptions of fit during recruitment strongly influence applicant attraction. Ensuring employee fit is crucial for aligning employees' needs and characteristics with their roles and the broader work environment, ultimately enhancing organisational outcomes. ([Stepanek & Paul, 2022](#))



Employee fit is influenced by various factors throughout the recruiting and employment process. The attraction-selection-attrition (ASA) framework suggests that people are drawn to organisations with similar values, and organisations tend to hire individuals who resemble them. **Those who don't align with the organisations values are more likely to leave, resulting in a workforce with a high level of fit.** ([Stepanek & Paul, 2022](#))

Job applicants' perceptions of fit are shaped by factors like job characteristics, the organisation, and the recruitment process. Onboarding also affects how employees perceive their fit within the organisation. It's crucial to base decisions about the desired personality traits for a job on thorough job analysis. Without this, attempts to match new employees with their supervisors or teams can lead to biased hiring and reduced diversity. Efforts to improve employee fit during hiring should therefore be approached carefully. ([Stepanek & Paul, 2022](#))

Recruiting international talent

Hiring international talent offers several **benefits for organisations**. They can fulfil labour needs and contribute with unique skills, enhancing competitiveness in the global marketplace. Moreover, they can facilitate connections to other valuable talents and organisations. International talent brings fresh perspectives and innovative approaches, making organisations more effective. Their multilingual abilities and cultural knowledge enable access to new local customers and global markets. ([Government of Canada, 2019](#))

To learn more about the details of recruitment of international talents, please view the Skilled level of this course.

Skilled level of the Employer-ability course

This button will take you to the beginning of the Skilled level of the Employer-ability course, which focuses on practical tools and information for attracting and retaining international talents.

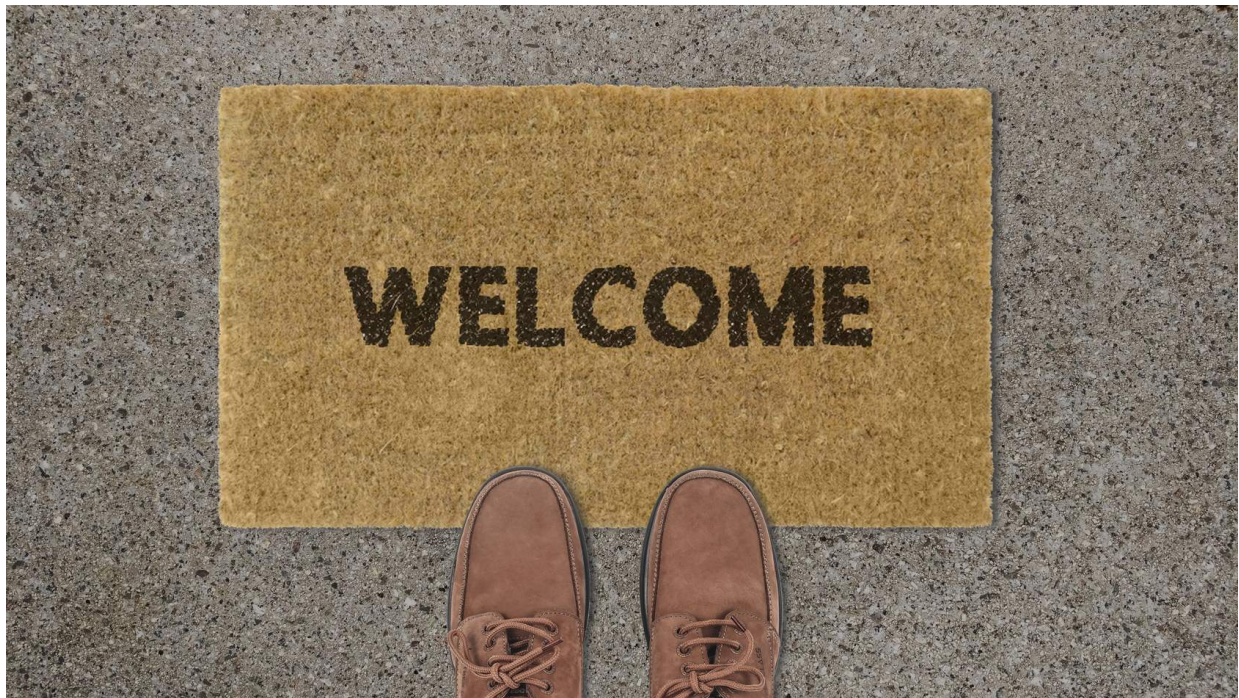
GO

CONTINUE

Onboarding

IA Interlocality AR

Onboarding is the process through which new employees acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to effectively integrate into an organisation. It typically spans several months and aims to facilitate their successful functioning as valued members of the company. However, beyond the technical aspects, effective onboarding also focuses on establishing meaningful connections within the organisation. When new employees receive proper preparation, it reduces the need for extensive on-the-job learning, enabling them to perform their job functions more efficiently and at a higher level. This, in turn, minimises the amount of additional training required, saving valuable time for both new and existing employees. Moreover, thorough onboarding decreases stress levels among new hires as they gain a clear understanding of their roles and feel more comfortable within the organisation. By fostering job satisfaction and making new employees feel valued, committed, and included as part of the team, onboarding plays a crucial role in reducing employee turnover. ([Bauer, 2010](#))



Dr. Talya Bauer, from the SHRM Foundation states that successful onboarding involves proactively addressing "The Four C's": Compliance, Clarification, Culture, and Connection. These can be especially important with regard to international talents, who may have a different understanding of workplace culture. ([Bauer, 2010](#))

Click to turn the cards below and use the arrows to move to the next card. The cards are based on Dr. Bauer's four C's ([Bauer, 2010](#)).

Compliance

Begin by ensuring new employees understand and adhere to the organisation's rules and policies. Provide the necessary paperwork and familiarise them with compliance requirements. ([Bauer, 2010](#))

Clarification

Help new hires understand their roles and responsibilities. Describe upcoming projects they will be involved in and how their contributions matter. ([Bauer, 2010](#))

Culture

Introduce new employees to the organisation's norms and values. Offer a tour of facilities, explain how things operate, and illustrate their impact on the larger organisation. ([Bauer, 2010](#))

Foster relationships between

Connection

4 of 4

oyee

new hires and existing team members, making them feel like part of the team. Encourage introductions, both formally and informally, and facilitate interactions such as shared lunches. Assigning a mentor or buddy who can bridge the gap and provide support is

Organisational culture

Organisational culture refers to the shared values, beliefs, attitudes, behaviours, and practices that shape the way people within an organisation interact and conduct business. It represents the personality of a company and is reflected in its customs, language, dress code, work environment, and social interactions. Organisational culture influences the decisions, actions, and performance of employees, and plays a critical role in determining the success or failure of a business. A positive and healthy culture can lead to improved employee morale, engagement, and productivity, and contribute to higher levels of job satisfaction, retention, and loyalty. On the other hand, a dysfunctional or toxic organisational culture can have severe negative consequences for a business.

([Wong, 2023](#))



A strong organisational culture can be a powerful competitive advantage in attracting and retaining top talent, and in differentiating the business from its competitors. ([Wong, 2023](#))

Organisational culture can play a vital role in shaping the experiences and well-being of international employees. Companies that foster inclusive, communicative, and supportive cultures are more likely to attract and retain diverse talent while facilitating their successful integration into the workplace.

([Bush, 2023](#))

Practical exercise:

1

Watch this 9-minute video on [workplace inclusion](#). Turn subtitles on by clicking 'CC' at the bottom of the video player.

2

Reflect on workplaces/groups/events where you have **not** felt you fit in.

3

Reflect on workplaces/groups/events where you have felt you fit in.

4

Now compare the circumstances in the two cases. What made you part of the in-group?

5

Place yourself in the shoes of an international colleague, friend or acquaintance. How do you think they would feel in these situations?

6

Come up with 3 ways of contributing to opening up the current groups you belong to in order to invite others into those groups.

What to consider when onboarding an international employee

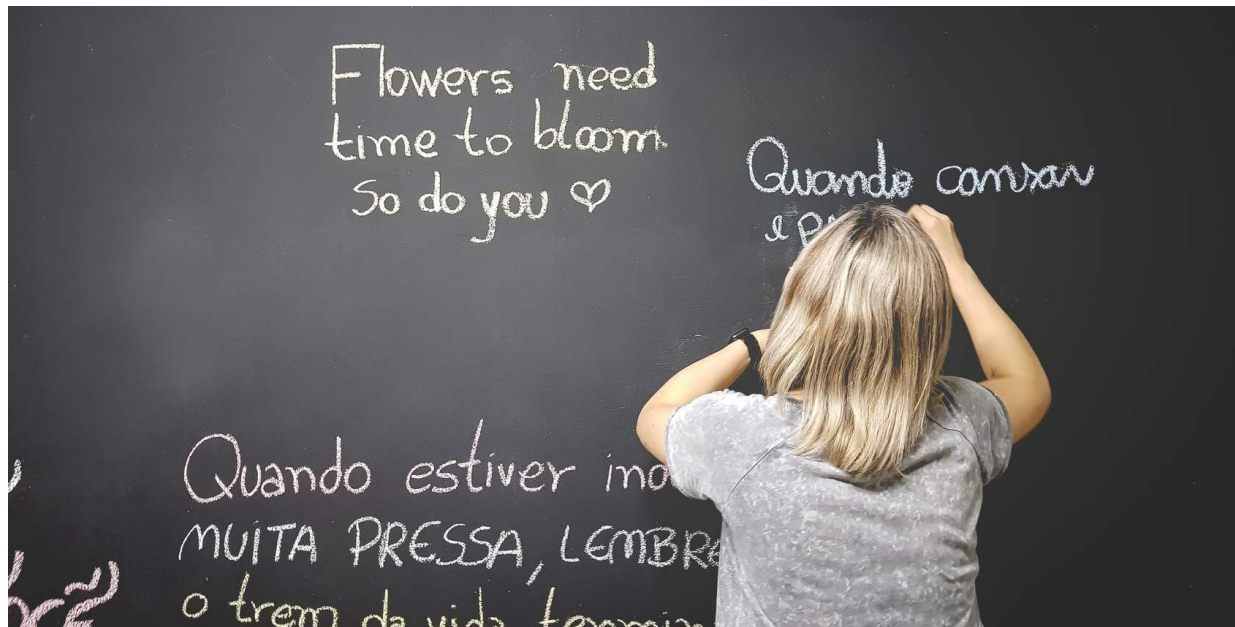
LANGUAGE TRAINING

LOCAL CULTURE

CULTURE SHOCK

SPOUSE, FAMILY AND SOCIAL NETWORKS

Language training improves work performance by enabling better communication and understanding between employees, employers, and customers. This can help businesses develop their teamwork skills and boost morale among their workforce. Language training can also improve employee loyalty by showing employees that their company values them. Workers who feel valued and invested in by their companies are more likely to stay loyal, which benefits the individual by giving them opportunities for advancement within their company and benefits the company's reputation. Language training can aid in breaking down cultural barriers within the office and allows for effective communication at all levels. Language barriers present a significant problem for international businesses, and business language training is used to create a common way for employees to communicate. ([Simon & Simon, 2021](#))



LANGUAGE TRAINING

LOCAL CULTURE

CULTURE SHOCK

SPOUSE, FAMILY AND SOCIAL NETWORKS

To familiarise an international employee with the local culture, it is important to provide them with a comprehensive information package about the country, society, and local way of life. This includes understanding the rules of society and different behaviours, as well as tips for new and challenging situations. It's also helpful to provide information on daily life, such as school options for children, hobbies, and local nature spots. To familiarise a new international employee with local working life, it is important to cover topics such as communication, employer and employee responsibilities, legislation, taxation, and ending employment. It's important to provide comprehensive information about local working culture and rules so that the newcomer can have a smooth start in the new environment. Other important topics to cover include local meeting practices, decision-making in companies, compulsory deductions from salaries, and the pension system.

([University of Oulu, n.d.-a](#))



LANGUAGE TRAINING

LOCAL CULTURE

CULTURE SHOCK

**SPOUSE, FAMILY AND
SOCIAL NETWORKS**

Culture shock is a term used to describe the feelings of stress and anxiety caused by the absence or distortion of familiar environmental and social cues when individuals travel to a new society. The severity of the shock can lead to the international employee feeling uncertain, isolated, and anxious, which may even cause them to return home. HR professionals can play a critical role in managing culture shock for international employees as they can increase opportunities for social connection with host country nationals to create favourable social environments for their international workers. ([Bussen, n.d.](#))



LANGUAGE TRAINING

LOCAL CULTURE

CULTURE SHOCK

SPOUSE, FAMILY AND SOCIAL NETWORKS

Social networks and family ties can have a significant impact on the retention of international employees. When an employee moves abroad, their spouse and family may experience difficulties adjusting to a new environment, which can result in feelings of isolation and homesickness. If the employee's spouse is unhappy, this can affect the employee's work performance and may ultimately lead to their departure from the company. Employers can mitigate these factors by providing support to the employee's family and ensuring that they feel welcomed and integrated into the local community. To address these challenges, companies can provide (or refer to) a spouse orientation program that introduces spouses to the local society and working culture, offers information and advice regarding support services available to spouses and families, provides language training classes, and offers networking and socialising opportunities. Additionally, companies can help spouses to create networks both professionally and socially, introduce them to the local job market, and offer personal career guidance to help them identify existing career options and create a personal career development plan. ([University of Vaasa, 2022](#))



[CONTINUE](#)

Retention

IA Interlocality AR

Employee retention is how well an organisation holds on to its employees. It requires strategic efforts aimed at keeping employees motivated, engaged, and committed to the company. The goal is to encourage employees to choose to stay with the organisation, thereby ensuring their continued productivity and contribution to its success. Factors contributing to retention are e.g. meaningful work, competitive salaries, a nice work environment, and opportunities for advancement and growth. Employee retention not only helps in attracting and retaining key talents but also minimise expensive turnover. ([Holliday, 2024](#))

Voluntary reading

Forbes: 15 Effective Employee Retention Strategies in 2024

GO

Retaining international employees

Retaining international employees is a critical challenge for many companies, as it involves not only finding qualified talent but also ensuring that they feel included and comfortable in their new environment. Language plays a crucial role in creating a comfortable work environment. The company should ensure that all employees have access to a working language, as well as in social settings such as the canteen or coffee room. The company should also show cultural

openness and sensitivity to different nationalities, religions, cultural practices, and preferences, both in daily life and during company events. Providing a thorough introduction to the company is necessary. This includes a guided tour of the premises, introductions to colleagues and tasks, an introduction to the unwritten rules of the workplace, as well as different arrangements and IT systems used in the company. ([DI Global Talent, n.d.](#))

During the introduction, the company should also focus on cultural exchange, which can help create a better understanding between the international employee and their colleagues. It is essential to continuously follow up on the employee's well-being to ensure their integration into the company and local society. This can be done through frequent meetings or mentoring, where questions can be answered, expectations can be adjusted, and challenges can be addressed. It is also advantageous if more employees at the workplace contribute to the well-being of international employees, creating a supportive work environment. ([DI Global Talent, n.d.](#))

Factors that can influence retention of international employees

PERCEIVED ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT (POS)	EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT	PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY
<p>Perceived organisational support (POS) refers to employees' perception of how much their organisation values their contribution and cares about their well-being. It is strongly connected to job attitudes and behaviours such as lower burnout and stress, higher job satisfaction, organisational commitment, job performance, reduced intentions to leave and turnover. POS is influenced by e.g. treatment by organisational members, HR practices, and job conditions. (Paul, 2020b)</p> <p>For international employees, especially those working in a foreign country, the perception of support and value from their organisation can be a critical factor in their decision to stay. When international employees feel that their organisation values their contribution and cares about their well-being, they are more likely to develop a strong attachment to the company.</p>		



**PERCEIVED ORGANISATIONAL
SUPPORT (POS)**

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

Employee engagement refers to the attitudes and behaviours related to high personal investment in one's work. Employee engagement is important because it is positively associated with job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and job performance, and negatively related to turnover. Employee engagement is influenced by e.g. job demands, personal resources, employee disposition, job attributes, and work environment characteristics. Efforts to improve and evaluate employee engagement through personal and job resource building, leadership training, and health promotion have been successful. ([Paul, 2020c](#))

Employee engagement is particularly relevant for international employees because it fosters a sense of personal investment in their work. When international employees are engaged in their roles, they are more likely to feel connected to their job, team, and the organisation as a whole.



**PERCEIVED ORGANISATIONAL
SUPPORT (POS)**

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

Psychological safety can influence employee retention by contributing to their job satisfaction, engagement, commitment, and citizenship behaviours. When employees feel psychologically safe, they are more likely to stay in their jobs because they feel attached to their work and team and are willing to take interpersonal risks without fear of negative consequences. Psychological safety can be increased by promoting positive relationships between workers and leaders, designing positions to improve autonomy, interdependence, and role clarity, and by providing support from peers, leadership, and the organisation. ([Orsi & Paul, 2020](#))

Psychological safety plays a significant role in retaining international employees. In an unfamiliar work environment or culture, feeling psychologically safe becomes paramount.



Short guide for employers on recruitment, onboarding, and retention of international talent

Recruiting, onboarding, and retaining international talent is a complex and holistic task. To make it a bit easier to navigate we have collected some important aspects to keep in mind when doing so. This stand-alone tool **INTERLOCALITY Short Guide for Employers** can be downloaded and used as you see fit.



INTERLOCALITY Short Guide for Employers.pdf
533.6 KB



Employer readiness scan

Is your organisation ready to recruit, onboard, and retain international students and graduates? The INTERLOCALITY Employer readiness scan is a stand-alone self-assessment tool that can be downloaded and used to reflect on the level of preparedness in your organisation. It also provides suggestions for actions to improve the readiness.



INTERLOCALITY Employer Readiness Scan.pdf

306 KB



This tool can also be found in the Skilled level of this Employer-ability course in the section of Attraction and retention of international talent as organisational change. Please feel free to take part of that content as well.

Skilled level

Attraction and retention of international talent as organisational change

GO

CONTINUE

Intercultural Teams



Intercultural teams are composed of individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds who work together to achieve common goals. Such teams can bring great benefits, such as a variety of perspectives and ideas, but can also present challenges due to differences in communication styles, values, and expectations. Working in intercultural teams is nowadays the norm. However, while some teams and company cultures excel in this environment, others fail to recognise and embrace cultural differences, which may result in an increased risk of miscommunication and misinterpretation and decreased productivity. For this reason, **providing teams and staff with in-depth understanding and awareness on how intercultural teams work, what the benefits and the challenges are, and how to deal with them is crucial.** ([University of Oulu, n.d.-b](#))

Challenges of intercultural teams

Some challenges of intercultural teams may be ([Szpilko et al., 2022](#)):

Communication barriers

Differences in language, tone, and body language can make communication challenging, leading to misunderstandings and potential conflict.

Stereotypes and biases

They can create a negative work environment, which can lead to a lack of trust and cooperation within the team.

Conflict resolution

This can be challenging due to differences in cultural norms and expectations.

Differences in work styles

Different cultures have different approaches to work, which can lead to differences in expectations and approaches to completing tasks.

Different time perception

Different cultures may have different time perceptions and a different consideration of punctuality and time management.

Benefits of intercultural teams

Some benefits of intercultural teams may be ([Szpilko et al., 2022](#)):

Diversity of perspectives and ideas

Intercultural teams bring together individuals with unique perspectives and experiences, which can lead to more creative solutions and innovative ideas.

Increased adaptability

Teams that are accustomed to working with individuals from different cultures tend to be more adaptable and flexible in response to changing circumstances.

Improved communication

Intercultural teams offer opportunities to learn different communication styles, which can lead to improved communication and reduced misunderstandings.

Increased global awareness

Intercultural teams provide a greater understanding of different cultures and the way they operate, which can lead to improved interactions with people from different backgrounds in other settings.

Greater cultural awareness

Intercultural teams offer the opportunity to learn more about different cultures and can help to foster greater cultural awareness and sensitivity.

Attraction of international talents

Intercultural teams attract international talent to the company, and take part in creating a diverse and inclusive workplace to ensure that they stay.

Making intercultural teams successful

Building successful intercultural teams involves several key steps.

Press start to find out what they are!

This content is based on [Thompson \(2024\)](#) and [Khan \(2020\)](#).

Step 1

Acknowledging and respecting cultural differences

Acknowledgement and respect are essential first steps, as they allow team members to understand and navigate diverse backgrounds effectively.

Step 2

Establishing team norms

This is the next step, ensuring everyone contributes to their formation and feels committed to following them. Regular check-ins and flexibility in amending norms based on feedback are crucial for their effectiveness.

Step 3

Developing a team identity and outlining roles and responsibilities

This can help create a shared goal and promote teamwork. It is important to break down the common goal into actionable steps and ensure clarity about each team member's contribution.

Step 4

Overcommunication

Overcommunication is vital in culturally diverse teams to avoid misunderstandings. Using simple language, checking for understanding, and cultivating an environment where questions are encouraged help bridge communication gaps.

Step 5

Building rapport and trust

This takes time but can be fostered by respecting differences, following group norms, and having a common goal. Face-to-face interaction, when possible, enhances communication. Consider organising team-building activities or retreats to create shared experiences and gather feedback for improvement.

Step 6

Mentorship

Mentorship plays a crucial role in the success of multicultural teams. Pair team members with mentors who can provide guidance and support. This helps individuals improve their skills, overcome challenges, and foster a more efficient and collaborative work environment.

Summary

By following these steps, teams can build stronger cross-cultural relationships, promote collaboration, and enhance overall team performance.

([Thompson, 2024](#)) and ([Khan, 2020](#)).

Voluntary reading

QIC-WD: Cultural Intelligence

GO

Voluntary reading

Harvard Business Review: Managing Multicultural Teams

GO

Practical exercise:

1

Watch this 7-minute video [Introduction to cross-cultural teams](#). Turn subtitles on by clicking 'CC' at the bottom of the video player.

2

What investments would you expect from team **leaders** to make intercultural teams successful in your context?

3

What investments would you expect from team **members** to make intercultural teams successful in your context?

4

Note down your reflections.

5

Are your expectations met? If you think there is room for development, please note down what you think could be developed and suggestions for how. Then raise these issues at a suitable opportunity with your team, management, or HR staff.



For more information about how to work with international teams, please view the INTERLOCALITY course Intercultural Sensitivity.

CONTINUE

Diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and social justice



Diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging (DEIB) and social justice are interconnected concepts that contribute to creating fair and inclusive societies. Each term represents a specific aspect of promoting equality and addressing systemic inequalities. DEIB principles promote respect, empathy, and understanding among team members. For example, by creating a safe and inclusive environment, team members are more likely to feel comfortable expressing their opinions and perspectives, leading to better decision-making and increased creativity. **DEIB principles also help to mitigate the negative effects of unconscious bias and stereotypes that may arise when working with people from different cultures.** By acknowledging and addressing these biases, teams can work together more effectively and create a more equitable and inclusive workplace. ([Findem, n.d](#); [Soken-Huberty, n.d](#); [University of Pittsburg, n.d](#).)

DEIB in the workplace is crucial for international employees because it not only promotes fairness and equality but also enhances retention, productivity, and the overall success of the organisation in a diverse and interconnected world. It recognises the value that international employees bring and ensures that they are fully integrated into the workplace, contributing to the organisation's growth and success.

Diversity

Diversity refers to the presence and recognition of various individual and group differences within a community or society. These differences can include characteristics such as race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, religion, and socioeconomic status, among others. Embracing diversity involves valuing

and respecting these differences and recognising the unique perspectives, experiences, and contributions that individuals from diverse backgrounds bring to the table. It goes beyond mere representation and aims to foster an environment where everyone feels included and valued. ([Findem, n.d](#); [Myers & Paul, 2020](#); [Soken-Huberty, n.d](#); [University of Pittsburg, n.d.](#))

Equality —

Equality refers to the state of being equal in terms of rights, status, and opportunities for all individuals. It emphasises treating everyone the same regardless of their backgrounds or circumstances. The principle of equality aims to ensure that individuals are not discriminated against or disadvantaged based on factors such as race, gender, religion, or socioeconomic status. It advocates for equal access to education, healthcare, employment, and legal protections for all members of society. ([Findem, n.d](#); [Myers & Paul, 2020](#); [Soken-Huberty, n.d](#); [University of Pittsburg, n.d.](#))

Equity —

Equity goes beyond equality by recognising and addressing the inherent disadvantages or barriers that certain individuals or groups may face due to historical, social, or systemic factors. It focuses on ensuring fairness and justice by addressing systemic disadvantages or barriers that certain individuals or groups face. It recognises that treating everyone equally does not necessarily lead to equality due to historical, social, or structural factors that have created inequalities. Equity seeks to provide additional resources, support, or opportunities to those who have been historically marginalised or disadvantaged. It aims to level the playing field and create equal access to opportunities, resources, and outcomes. ([Findem, n.d](#); [Myers & Paul, 2020](#); [Soken-Huberty, n.d](#); [University of Pittsburg, n.d.](#))

Inclusion —

Inclusion refers to creating environments, systems, and practices that actively engage and embrace all individuals, regardless of their backgrounds or identities. It involves fostering a sense of belonging, where people feel valued, respected, and empowered to contribute their unique perspectives and experiences. Inclusion requires removing barriers, promoting diversity, and ensuring equal access to opportunities and resources. It involves creating a culture where everyone's voice is heard, valued, and integrated into decision-making processes. ([Findem, n.d](#); [Myers & Paul, 2020](#); [Soken-Huberty, n.d](#); [University of Pittsburg, n.d.](#))

Belonging —

Belonging is the feeling of being accepted, valued, and included within a particular group, community, or society. It goes beyond mere inclusion and recognises the emotional and psychological connection individuals have with their environment. Belonging is about feeling a sense of shared identity, purpose, and connection with others. It involves creating an environment where people feel safe, supported, and empowered to express their authentic selves without fear of discrimination or exclusion. ([Findem, n.d](#); [Myers & Paul, 2020](#); [Soken-Huberty, n.d](#); [University of Pittsburg, n.d.](#))

Social justice —

Social justice encompasses the pursuit of fairness, equality, and dignity for all members of society. It addresses systemic injustices, discrimination, and inequalities based on social identities such as race, gender, socioeconomic status, and more. Social justice aims to dismantle unjust power structures, challenge discriminatory practices, and advocate for policies that ensure equal rights, opportunities, and resources for everyone. It involves actively working towards a society where individuals can live with dignity, freedom, and justice. ([Findem, n.d](#); [Myers & Paul, 2020](#); [Soken-Huberty, n.d](#); [University of Pittsburg, n.d.](#))

Organisational justice —

Organisational justice refers to the perception of fairness and equity within an organisation. It involves ensuring that employees are treated fairly and that their voices are heard. This includes fair policies and procedures, as well as a culture that values diversity, inclusion, and belonging. ([Findem, n.d](#); [Myers & Paul, 2020](#); [Soken-Huberty, n.d](#); [University of Pittsburg, n.d.](#))

Diversity is the existence of differences. An organisation might choose to acknowledge and value individual differences. While **equality** focuses on equal treatment, **equity** emphasises fairness by

acknowledging and addressing existing differences. **Social justice** seeks broader societal change to achieve fairness and equality for all and organisational justice is fairness and equity within an organisation. ([Findem, n.d](#); [Myers & Paul, 2020](#); [Soken-Huberty, n.d](#); [University of Pittsburg, n.d.](#))

Diversity = the existence of differences

Inclusion = embracing and engaging all individuals



Diversity



Inclusion

The opposite of inclusion is **exclusion**, which is based on the belief that there are "normal" people and others who are not, leading to the exclusion of individuals with diversity in some form.

Segregation involves separating and excluding certain groups based on e.g. sex, race, religion, ability, or ideology. **Integration** maintains the concept of "normality" and considers those who can adapt as part of society. The more someone resembles the "norm," the more integrated they are perceived to be. **Inclusion**, often confused with integration, goes beyond it. It is about accepting others, embracing differences, and creating inclusive environments without barriers. It recognises and values individual characteristics without imposing a normalised standard of being. Inclusion upholds fairness, cooperation, and the recognition of diversity as a human right. ([Volem Valencia, n.d.](#))

Please watch these two short videos on [The Difference Between Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity](#) (3min) and [Equality, Equity, and Social Justice](#) (2,5min) to better understand the concept of equity.

Turn subtitles on by clicking 'CC' at the bottom of the video player.

Voluntary reading

QIC-WD: Cultural Intelligence

GO

Voluntary reading

AIHR: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging At Work: A 2025 Guide

GO

Voluntary reading

LinkedIn: Should Belonging be a part of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in the workplace?

GO



For more information about intercultural aspects, please view the INTERLOCALITY course Intercultural Sensitivity.

CONTINUE

Unconscious bias, microaggressions, and antiracism

IA Interlocality AR

Unconscious bias, microaggressions, and antiracism are interconnected concepts that play a significant role in understanding and addressing racism. **Unconscious bias** refers to the implicit biases or prejudices that individuals hold, often without conscious awareness. **Microaggressions** are subtle, everyday verbal or nonverbal behaviours that communicate disrespectful or negative messages towards individuals from marginalised groups, including racial minorities. **Antiracism**, on the other hand, is the active commitment and effort to challenge and dismantle racism in all its forms. It involves recognising and confronting personal biases, addressing systemic inequities, and advocating for justice and equality. Antiracism focuses on actively opposing racism rather than passively rejecting it. By understanding the relationship between unconscious bias, microaggressions, and antiracism, we can foster greater awareness, empathy, and action in combating racism and promoting equality.

Unconscious bias

Unconscious biases, also known as implicit biases, refer to attitudes that are held at a subconscious level and influence individuals' feelings and thoughts about those around them.

These subconscious attitudes may not be fully formed thoughts but can be deeply ingrained and impact both emotional and rational responses in everyday situations. Biases and prejudices often take root in early childhood as children begin to form assumptions based on personal experiences. They may also absorb stereotypes from parents, educational systems, cultural institutions, and popular media like books, movies, and social media. Consequently, unconscious biases can develop over many years without being consciously detected. There are various types of unconscious biases.

Some of the most prevalent ones involve how individuals perceive their own thinking processes and reasoning abilities. ([Reiners, 2024](#))



One example is **confirmation bias**, where individuals focus on negative qualities that align with their existing attitudes. Other unconscious biases are linked to people's appearances. These biases rely on stereotypes and can lead to discriminatory practices where individuals are not treated as individuals **but as representatives of groups of people**, resulting in forms of bias such as racism, ageism, and beauty bias. Additionally, there are unconscious biases that stereotype individuals based on their behaviour. Although these biases may not be frequently discussed, holding such biases can result in discrimination based on personalities. ([Reiners, 2024](#))

In some workplaces, most of the leaders might be older, straight, white men. If you don't fit into this group, you might feel that decisions are made unfairly. It's important to regularly check for biases and try to get rid of them. A diversity professional can help with this. Some businesses try to quickly fix their diversity problems by having one female manager or one person of colour in the office. This is called **tokenism**, where they meet the minimum requirement only to appear diverse. DEI initiatives

can help by not only welcoming more diverse people into the organisation but also by addressing tokenism and bringing in new perspectives. Instead of making token efforts, businesses should actively include diversity in their long-term plans. ([Lloyd Owen, 2023](#))

Voluntary reading

Builtin: Unconscious Bias: 18 Examples and How to Avoid Them in the Workplace

GO

Please watch this 2,5-minute video [What is Unconscious Bias?](#) to better understand the concept.

Turn subtitles on by clicking 'CC' at the bottom of the video player.

Microaggressions

Microaggressions are subtle, often unintentional, verbal or nonverbal insults or slights that can have a significant impact on marginalised or non-mainstream individuals. These remarks can make people feel devalued or disrespected in terms of their identity. Despite the term "micro" implying something small, these subtle insults or slights can have a profound impact on the individuals who experience them. Microaggressions can take various forms, whether intentional or unintentional. They often stem from implicit biases influenced by family, media, or stereotypes. ([Cleveland Clinic, 2022](#))

Microaggressions can also be nonverbal, expressed through actions or body language. Some examples are: following someone around due to unfounded suspicions, rolling eyes when someone expresses feeling invalidated, avoiding someone, scheduling events that conflict with religious observances, and neglecting dietary restrictions when ordering food for events. It's important to

recognise and address these microaggressions as they can have a significant impact on individuals' well-being and sense of belonging. ([Cleveland Clinic, 2022](#))

Click on the + signs in the picture below to find out more about **microassaults**, **microinsults**, and **microinvalidation**.





Microassaults

Microassaults are deliberate slights or insults intended to hurt someone through discriminatory actions, name-calling, or offensive language. They can perpetuate harmful stereotypes and are sometimes dismissed as jokes. ([Cleveland Clinic, 2022](#))



Microinsults

Microinsults are subtle, rude comments that disrespect a person's racial heritage or identity, implying they don't belong or perpetuating stereotypes. ([Cleveland Clinic, 2022](#))



Microinvalidation

Microinvalidation occurs when someone tries to discredit or minimise the experiences of a person from an underrepresented group, denying or dismissing their encounters with discrimination. ([Cleveland Clinic, 2022](#))

To address microaggressions, are often unintentional, in the workplace, it is suggested to assume positive intent. Starting the conversation with curiosity and a desire to understand can help foster a constructive dialogue. You can approach the person involved by expressing curiosity and saying you want to better understand their perspective or intentions. For example, asking, "I am curious and want to better understand why you said/did what you did," or "I'm not sure if you're aware, but this is how I perceived what was said/done. Was that your intention?" It is important to note that many individuals who have delivered microaggressions may not have intended to be offensive. Engaging in discussions around intent versus impact can be helpful. While the person may not have intended harm, it is essential to address the impact of the microaggression and how it made others feel. By approaching these conversations with curiosity and a willingness to understand, it becomes possible to create a space for open dialogue and raise awareness about the impact of microaggressions, promoting a more inclusive and respectful work environment. ([Cleveland Clinic, 2022](#))

Please watch this 2-minute video on [How microaggressions are like mosquito bites](#) to understand the concept better.

Turn subtitles on by clicking 'CC' at the bottom of the video player.

Antiracism

In a society that favours white people and whiteness, racist ideas are deeply ingrained in our media, culture, social systems, and institutions. Historically, these ideas have been used to justify the mistreatment and oppression of people of colour, such as through slavery and segregation. While we often think of racism as an individual issue, racist policies also contribute to systemic inequalities. To achieve equality, we need to actively make unbiased choices and be anti-racist in all aspects of our lives. **Being antiracist means actively opposing racism.** Racism can take various forms, often working together to reinforce discriminatory ideas, behaviours, and policies. ([National Museum of African American History & Culture, n.d.](#))

Individual racism

Individual racism refers to the beliefs, attitudes, and actions of individuals that consciously or unconsciously support racism. ([National Museum of African American History & Culture, n.d.](#))

Interpersonal racism

Interpersonal racism involves public expressions of racism, including slurs, biases, and hateful actions. ([National Museum of African American History & Culture, n.d.](#))

Institutional racism

Institutional racism occurs within organisations and is characterised by discriminatory treatment, unfair policies, and biased practices that disadvantage people of colour. ([National Museum of African American History & Culture, n.d.](#))

Structural racism

Structural racism refers to the overall system of racial bias across institutions and society, granting privileges to white people while disadvantaging people of colour. ([National Museum of African American History & Culture, n.d.](#))

In the labour market, structural racism means structural inequalities where racialised people are denied employment, income, or opportunities. Structural racism is the result of a history of abuse and exploitation, due to and upheld by institutions, policies and practices. Despite legislation prohibiting racial discrimination in Europe, we are still far from employers committed to DEI and advocacy from civil society organisations for an inclusive labour market. ([Sanaullah, 2022](#))



For more information about bias, conflict, and judgement, please view the INTERLOCALITY course Intercultural Sensitivity.

CONTINUE

Emotional Intelligence

IA Interlocality AR

Emotional intelligence (EI) can be described as the capacity to comprehend and regulate one's own emotions while also recognising and influencing the emotions of others. EI encompasses four key competences: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. ([Landry, 2024](#))

Click on the + signs in the picture below to find out more about the four key competences **self-awareness**, **self-management**, **social awareness**, and **relationship management**.





Self-awareness

Self-awareness involves understanding one's strengths, weaknesses, and emotions, and recognising how they impact personal and team performance. ([Landry, 2024](#))



Self-management

Self-management entails the ability to regulate and control emotions, particularly in challenging situations, and maintain a positive mindset despite setbacks. ([Landry, 2024](#))



Social awareness

Social awareness refers to the skill of perceiving and understanding the emotions of others, as well as grasping the dynamics within an organisation or social setting. ([Landry, 2024](#))



Relationship management

Relationship management involves effectively influencing, coaching, and mentoring others, as well as skilfully resolving conflicts. ([Landry, 2024](#))

By developing these four components of EI, individuals can enhance their ability to understand and manage emotions, positively interact with others, and navigate various social and professional situations. ([Landry, 2022](#))



EI is becoming increasingly important in workplaces. The ability to identify your, others', and different groups' emotions; to manage and control them; and to perceive emotions to facilitate thought and personal growth, are nowadays essential skills of people working in teams and, above all, of good leaders. EI plays a crucial role in the workplace as it helps individuals to effectively communicate, collaborate, and build strong relationships with others. For leaders, EI helps to successfully coach teams, manage stress, deliver feedback, and collaborate with others. If leaders lack emotional intelligence, it could have more far-reaching consequences, resulting in lower employee engagement and a higher turnover rate. ([Landry, 2024](#))

Research shows that **emotionally intelligent individuals are more open to diversity and better at managing interactions within diverse teams.** Emotionally intelligent individuals can effectively manage and reduce conflict in multicultural teams, leading to improved performance. Organisations often prioritise core management skills over multicultural competence and emotional intelligence. To succeed in diverse workplaces, it is essential for managers to develop both interpersonal and stress management skills, fostering multicultural competence. ([Clark & Polesello, 2017](#))

Developing emotional intelligence

You can develop emotional intelligence by practicing of the following things recommended by Cherry ([2024](#)):

- Accepting criticism and responsibility
- Moving on after making a mistake
- Saying no when you need to
- Sharing your feelings with others
- Solving problems in ways that work for everyone
- Having empathy for others
- Listening actively

- Knowing why you do the things you do
- Suspending judgement

Please watch this 10-minute video on [EI and performance](#) to understand the key competences of EI better.

Turn subtitles on by clicking 'CC' at the bottom of the video player.

Voluntary reading

Corporate Training Materials: Navigating Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace

GO

Voluntary reading

Very Well Mind: You Can Increase Your Emotional Intelligence in 3 Simple Steps—Here's How

GO

Practical exercise A (choose this or B):

Self-awareness - the ability to understand your strengths and weaknesses

Think about your personal story and answer these questions:

- 1 Think about the last time you laughed at work. How did it feel? How did it impact your interactions?
- 2 Think about the last you felt helpless at work. Did the others sense your mood? How did it impact your work and communication?
- 3 Think about the last time you felt satisfied at work with your results. How did it affect your work motivation and your interactions with your colleagues?
- 4 Think about the last time you felt angry at work. Why were you angry? How did it affect the interaction with your colleagues?
- 5 Think about the last time you felt proud of your work and colleagues. How did that pride impact your colleagues and your work motivation?
- 6 Think about the last time you felt disappointed in your work and colleagues. How did that disappointment affect your colleagues and your work motivation?

In thinking about these situations above, make a list of 5 qualities/strengths/weaknesses you have. Then write beside each quality/strength/weakness:

- 1 Why it is helpful in a workplace?
 - 2 How might others perceive this quality?
 - 3 When does this quality normally help you or your colleagues?
 - 4 Are there any specific strengths that could help you to develop and turn weaknesses into strengths?
-

5

What behaviours or actions should you take to work on your weaknesses?

6

Who or what could help you?



This activity has been adapted from the workshop plans in chapter 3 of the ELIM-Emotional Intelligence on Labour Market (2021) Supporting Materials for Vocational Advisors - Handbook for Trainers, available at: <https://www.eduforma.it/erasmuseilm/>

Practical exercise B (choose this or A):

Self-management - the ability to control your emotions

1

Think about one moment at work when you couldn't control your negative reactions towards your team/colleagues or supervisors due to stress or workload pressure. Please write down:

- What were your emotions?
- How did these emotions make you react and interact with others?
- What did you think at that moment and afterwards?
- Which response did you get from the others after your reaction?

2

Do the same exercise by thinking about one moment where your colleague or supervisor reacted negatively towards you.

- What were your emotions?
- How did these emotions make you react and interact with this person?
- What did you think at that moment and afterwards?
- Which response did this person get from you after his/her reaction?

3

Now, looking at these moments where you have experienced negative reactions at work, reflect and answer the following questions:

- Were you proud of your reaction or did you regret it? Why?

- What would you like to change in your reaction, or what would be a better reaction in those situations?
- Which reactions could you get from others after these changes?

Please note the changes and reactions that you think would lead to a more positive outcome in the interaction with the others as well as to control your own emotions.



This activity has been adapted from the workshop plans in subchapter 3B of the ELIM-Emotional Intelligence on Labour Market (2021) Supporting Materials for Vocational Advisors - Handbook for Trainers, available at: <https://www.eduforma.it/erasmuseilm/>

CHECK YOUR LEARNING

Check your learning

IA Interlocality AR

This section is meant to help you recall and assess your learning in this level. It consists of two parts: a quiz and a self-reflection exercise.

Quiz

Please tick the box or boxes you think are correct and then click on 'submit'. After that, please scroll down to the following question until you reach the self-reflection part of the assessment. **Please note that questions may have one or more correct answers.**

What is employer branding?

☐

The process of creating a strong corporate image for marketing products

☐

The reputation and image a company projects as an employer

☐

The act of recruiting employees from diverse backgrounds

☐

The strategy of retaining existing employees in the organisation

SUBMIT

What is the purpose of onboarding?

☐

Attracting potential candidates for job openings

☐

Retaining top performers within the organisation

☐

Integrating new employees into the company culture and processes

☐

Developing long-term relationships with external stakeholders

SUBMIT

How can companies improve employee retention?

- ☐ Offering competitive salaries and benefits
- ☐ Focusing on attracting new talent
- ☐ Ignoring employee feedback and suggestions
- ☐ Providing growth and development opportunities

SUBMIT

What is the significance of diversity in intercultural teams?

- ☐ It leads to conflicts and communication barriers
- ☐ It promotes creativity and innovation within the team

☐

It enhances problem-solving and decision-making abilities

☐

It promotes a homogeneous work environment

SUBMIT

What is an essential component of fostering Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) in the workplace?

☐

Discrimination based on individual characteristics

☐

Providing equal opportunities and fair treatment to all employees

☐

Maintaining a hierarchical management structure

☐

Encouraging a narrow-minded approach to problem-solving

SUBMIT

What does Emotional Intelligence (EI) refer to?

- ☐ The ability to communicate effectively across cultures
- ☐ The process of promoting diversity and inclusion in the workplace
- ☐ The capacity to recognise, understand, and manage one's emotions and those of others
- ☐ The act of forming teams consisting of individuals from diverse backgrounds

SUBMIT

Self-reflection

Reflect by yourself or discuss the following questions with a colleague. Your answers will not be assessed, instead we hope you will gain an insight into what you have learned in this level and how you can develop further in your own work.

1

How well do you understand the perspectives and interests of others and how does this understanding influence your decision-making?

2

What kind of actions show that you are open to diversity and that you promote inclusion in your contexts?

3

How effectively are you recognising and managing your emotions in different situations, and what strategies are you using to ensure they do not negatively impact your interactions and decision-making?

CONTINUE TO CONCLUSION

Conclusion



Congratulations! You have successfully completed this level.

This level has covered a wide range of topics that are crucial for creating inclusive, diverse, and equitable workplaces. We have explored effective recruitment strategies, emphasising the need for unbiased processes that prioritise diversity and inclusion. We have discussed the significance of onboarding and the importance of retention strategies, acknowledging that creating an inclusive environment where employees feel valued and supported is key to reducing turnover and fostering long-term commitment. We have also explored the importance of employer branding, recognising that a positive employer brand is essential for attracting and retaining top talent.

We have addressed the complexities of intercultural teams, as well as the concepts of diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and social justice. We have also explored the concepts of unconscious bias, microaggressions, and antiracism. Recognising and mitigating unconscious biases and addressing microaggressions are crucial steps towards creating an inclusive and respectful work environment.

Lastly, we have highlighted the significance of emotional intelligence in fostering effective leadership and interpersonal relationships. Understanding and managing emotions, demonstrating empathy, and fostering positive communication are critical skills for creating inclusive and supportive work environments.

Did you reach the following learning objectives by now being able to:

☐

Understand, communicate, and apply basic concepts of employer branding, recruitment, onboarding, and retention

☐

Understand, communicate, and apply basic concepts of intercultural teams, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB), social justice, and Emotional Intelligence

☐

Be aware of other stakeholders' points of view, have an inclusive mindset and openness to diversity, as well as self-awareness regarding your own emotions

Thank you for engaging with the Developing level of the Employer-ability course!

If you would like to continue to another level of the Employer-ability course, please find them through the buttons below.

Beginner level

If you would like to continue to the Beginner level of this Employer-ability course

GO

Skilled level

If you would like to continue to the Skilled level of this Employer-ability course

GO

If you would like to try out a level of the **Intercultural Sensitivity** or **Guidance and Counselling** courses, please go back to the main page and choose the course.

It was a pleasure having you with us!

CONTINUE TO LIST OF SOURCES

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If you would like to continue on your learning journey, please go to the Skilled level of this Employer-ability course!

CONTINUE TO THE SKILLED LEVEL

Introduction



Welcome to the SKILLED level of the Employer-ability course!

This level of the Employer-ability course is targeted to those who are actively engaged in recruitment, onboarding, and retention.

In today's diverse and dynamic business environment, organisations are realising the immense value of attracting, retaining, and effectively managing a diverse pool of talent. The objectives of this level are to give you insights into how attracting and retaining international talent can be a catalyst for organisational change and to explore the concept of inclusive leadership, diversity management, language inclusive work environment, and diversity recruitment. The aim is to understand their roles in leveraging the strengths of a diverse workforce for enhanced organisational performance. We will also highlight the significance of internships as a valuable talent development tool and their role in bridging the gap between education and work.

Three stand-alone tools

There are three stand-alone tools attached to this level. You will be introduced to, and asked to engage with, the tools in the level content. The stand-alone tools are:



The INTERLOCALITY Employer Readiness Scan

- The INTERLOCALITY Language Inclusive Recruitment Guide
- The INTERLOCALITY Guide for Successful Internships for International Students

At the end of this level, you will be able to:

- Understand and compare complex concepts of attraction and retention of international talent as organisational change
- Apply tools for inclusive leadership, diversity management, language inclusive work environment, diversity Recruitment, and internships for international students
- Display willingness and conscious effort to enhance employer-ability and to take action for a more inclusive workplace

Throughout the lessons and the activities of the level, we encourage **active participation** and **critical thinking** by providing you with practical exercises, self-reflections, videos, and readings. The level is meant to be flexible to accommodate your needs and resource limitations (e.g. time). You can complete lessons and activities as you wish, take a break, and continue anytime you want.

The duration is about 4 hours.

This level consists of the following themes:

- Attraction and retention of international talent as organisational change
- Inclusive leadership
- Diversity management

- Language inclusive work environment
- Diversity recruitment
- Internships

Let's embark on this exciting learning journey together!

CONTINUE

Attraction and retention of international talent as organisational change



Attraction and retention of international talent as organisational change

As you can find out more about in the Beginner level of this course, **Employer-ability is essentially the willingness and ability of employers to attract, recruit and retain talent.** The willingness and ability might be different when it comes to recruiting international talents, as they are often seen as potentially adding to the workload, costs, need for professional development among current staff, and even risk of leaving or negatively affecting the current workplace culture.

Attraction and retention of international talent can be very different from hiring and onboarding local talent. Especially if an organisation is hiring its first international talent it really is about an organisational change process. To attract and retain international talent organisations must undergo cultural change to foster inclusivity and diversity. This includes e.g. adapting policies and practices to accommodate different cultural norms and values, offering training and development, and creating an inclusive work environment.

Click on the flashcards below to find out more!

Recruitment

The **recruitment processes** need to be modified to appeal to international talents. This may include collaborating with higher education institutions, participating in job fairs, and using social media for job postings.

Onboarding

Onboarding processes should be revised to support the specific needs of international hires. This could involve providing assistance with visa applications, housing, and helping them adjust to a new cultural environment.

Training and development

Training and development

programs for staff and management should be tailored to address the needs of international talents, such as cultural sensitivity training, language classes, and mentorship initiatives.

Inclusive environment

Creating an inclusive

environment where international talents feel valued and have opportunities for growth is important. This also includes making sure that international talents are involved in decision-making processes.

All of these changes require a shift in the organisation's mindset and practices. They may require buy-in from key stakeholders and significant effort to implement. Therefore, **attracting and retaining international talent can be considered an organisational change process that requires careful planning, communication, and implementation.**

Organisational change, -readiness, and change management

Especially for smaller organisations, **employing international talents may bring about significant change in operations, culture, and communication**. Rather homogenous organisations and teams become more diverse and will have to adapt to more viewpoints, experiences, communication styles, and potentially languages. It is natural for humans to resist change and therefore it is important for organisations to support them in the transition into a new environment and ways of working. This might include coaching, training, and peer support. We will dig deeper into these themes in the following section of this level.

Organisational change, organisational readiness, employee readiness, and change management are related but distinct concepts in the field of organisational development. The main differences between these concepts are as follows:

ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE	ORGANISATIONAL READINESS	EMPLOYEE READINESS	CHANGE MANAGEMENT
Organisational change is any significant change in an organisation's structure, culture, processes, or operations that affect its employees, customers, or other stakeholders. (MBN, n.d.)			



ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE

ORGANISATIONAL READINESS

EMPLOYEE READINESS

CHANGE MANAGEMENT

Organisational readiness is the **level of preparation** an organisation has to successfully implement a change or achieve a particular goal. It involves assessing an organisation's capabilities, skills, leadership, resources, and willingness to accept and adopt a new initiative or change. ([CIO Wiki, 2023](#), [Indeed, 2024a](#))

It is important to determine whether a particular initiative or change is feasible, and if it is, what steps the organisation needs to take to ensure its successful implementation, e.g. in the form of an action plan. ([CIO Wiki, 2023](#), [Indeed, 2024a](#))



ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE

ORGANISATIONAL READINESS

EMPLOYEE READINESS

CHANGE MANAGEMENT

Employee readiness for change is the extent to which the employees themselves are prepared to adapt to and embrace changes within their organisation. Employees who are ready for change tend to be more receptive to new ideas and willing to explore new ways of working. They may also be more motivated to learn and develop new skills to support the change. On the other hand, employees who are not ready for change may resist or even actively oppose new initiatives. They may feel anxious or uncertain about how the changes will affect their work or may be sceptical of the benefits of the proposed changes. ([Turner, n.d.](#))

Organisations may use surveys, focus groups, or interviews to assess employee perceptions and identify potential barriers to change. By understanding employee readiness for change, organisations can take steps to address concerns, communicate effectively, and provide the necessary support and training to help employees adapt to new ways of working. ([Turner, n.d.](#))



ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE	ORGANISATIONAL READINESS	EMPLOYEE READINESS	CHANGE MANAGEMENT
<p>Change management is the process of planning, implementing, and monitoring changes in an organisation to ensure that they are successfully adopted and integrated into the organisation's operations. It involves the use of tools and techniques to manage resistance, minimise risks, and ensure that the change is effectively communicated to all stakeholders. (IMD, 2024)</p>			



Practical exercise: try out the INTERLOCALITY Employer Readiness Scan

Is your organisation ready to employ and retain international talent? Use the INTERLOCALITY Employer Readiness Scan to see if you are, and/or which improvements you can make.



INTERLOCALITY Employer Readiness Scan.pdf
306 KB



CONTINUE

Inclusive Leadership

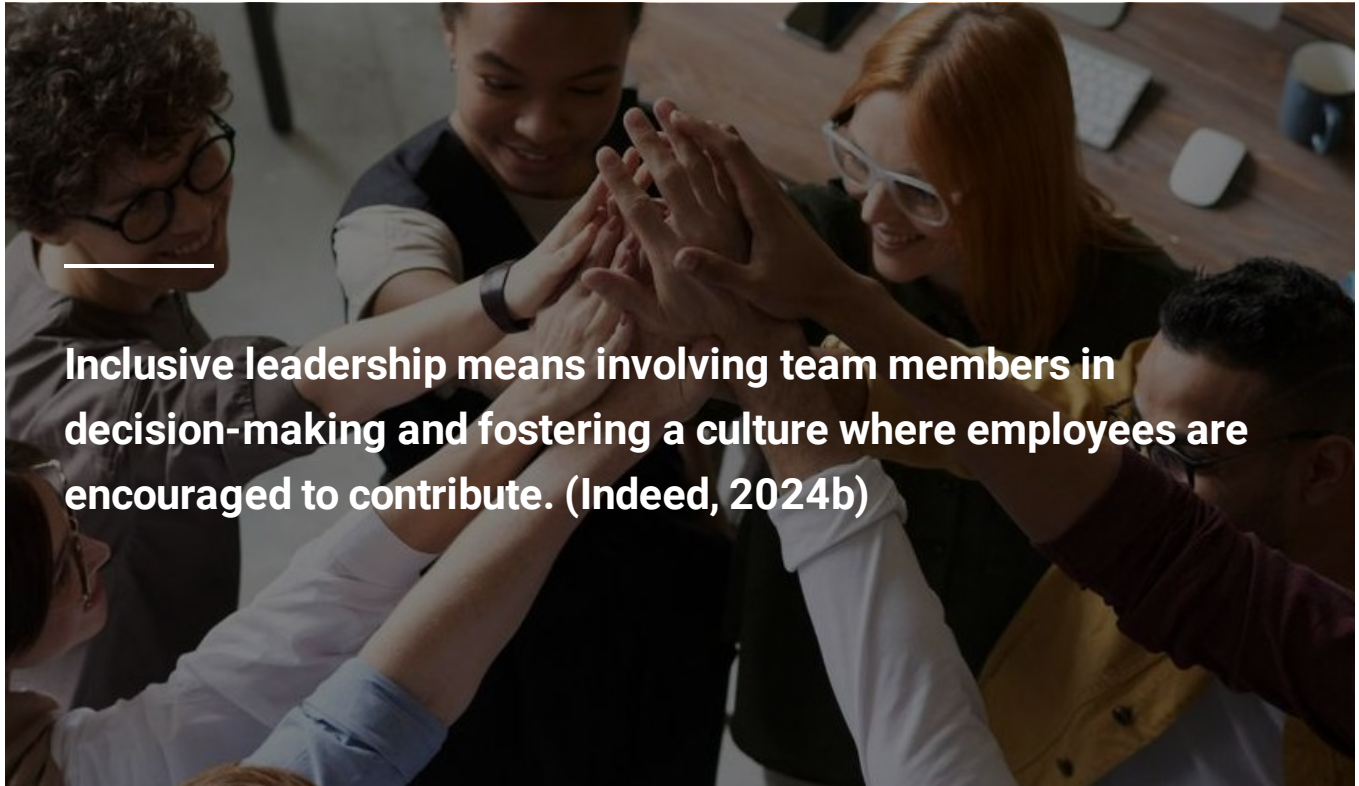


Inclusive Leadership

A big part of employer-ability is to be a good employer for all kinds of employees. Attracting and retaining international talent requires organisations to adopt inclusive leadership practices. **Inclusive leadership refers to a leadership style that values and respects the diversity of all individuals in a team or organisation.** It involves creating a culture of inclusion where everyone feels valued, heard, and appreciated for their unique perspectives and contributions. Inclusive leadership also involves recognising and addressing biases and systemic barriers that may prevent some individuals from fully participating or advancing in their careers. It requires a commitment to ongoing learning and development to become more aware of one's own biases and to actively work to eliminate them. Overall, inclusive leadership helps to create a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace, which can lead to increased innovation, better decision-making, and improved organisational performance. ([Indeed, 2024b](#))

Please watch this 2-minute [video about the business case for diversity and inclusion](#).

You can turn subtitles on by clicking on the closed caption 'CC' icon that appears at the bottom of the video when you start it.



Inclusive leadership means involving team members in decision-making and fostering a culture where employees are encouraged to contribute. (Indeed, 2024b)

Inclusive leaders have a range of qualities that contribute to their effective and collaborative leadership style. **Inclusive leadership means involving team members** in decision-making and fostering a culture where employees are encouraged to contribute. This enhances overall productivity and performance. The following are key traits shared by inclusive leaders ([Indeed, 2024b](#)):

Embracing humility —

Embracing humility and modesty, recognising their limitations while appreciating the strengths of others. They are willing to listen to others' expertise.

Listening actively

Actively listening to others' ideas before making important decisions. By cultivating strong listening skills they create an environment where team members feel comfortable expressing themselves without fear of interruption. This promotes collaboration and engagement.

Communicating effectively

Discussing with team members, encouraging them to analyse problems, propose strategies, and provide feedback.

Embracing open-mindedness

Actively seeking and considering fresh ideas that may differ from their own. They foster an environment that encourages innovation, creative thinking, and change in the workplace.

Committing to diversity

Actively seeking out diverse voices and perspectives, emphasising the recruitment and inclusion of individuals from various backgrounds.

Demonstrating empathy and compassion

Attentively listening to others' perspectives and understanding their thoughts and emotions. Empathy enhances their communication skills and ensures that all viewpoints are considered before making decisions.

Providing and receiving constructive feedback

Ensuring that employees are aware of their strengths and weaknesses, while also themselves attentively considering feedback provided by their team.

Intercultural Teams

To learn more about managing intercultural teams, please go to the Intercultural Teams section of the Developing level of this Employer-ability course.

GO

Developing inclusive leadership skills

Developing inclusive leadership skills requires a commitment to ongoing learning and growth, and a willingness to learn from others. This way, you can become a more inclusive leader and help create a more equitable and inclusive workplace. ([Helsinki Region Chamber of Commerce, 2017](#))

- Take the time to **educate yourself** on issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Read books, attend webinars or workshops, and seek out other resources to help you better understand different perspectives and experiences.
- Engage in **self-reflection** to understand your own biases and how they may impact your leadership style. Consider seeking feedback from others to gain a better understanding of how you are perceived by others.
- **Listen actively** to your team members and seek to understand their perspectives and experiences. Be open to feedback and be willing to make changes to your leadership style based on what you learn.



Do a leadership test, e.g. for free online, to identify your own leadership skills and styles and then reflect on the results alone or together with your team, peers, or superior.

([Helsinki Region Chamber of Commerce, 2017](#))



Please watch this 7-minute [video by Jennifer Brown about how to become an inclusive leader](#) from awareness to action and advocacy.

You can turn subtitles on by clicking on the closed caption 'CC' icon that appears at the bottom of the video when you start it.

Some examples of free online leadership tests:

Leadership test

MTD: Leader DNA assessment test for benchmarking yourself against leadership skills.

GO

Leadership test

Leadership Circle: Self-assessment tool for understanding your leadership style compared to other leaders globally.

GO

Leadership test

Mindtools: What's Your Leadership Style? Based on Daniel Goleman's 6 leadership styles, including a video explaining them.

GO

CONTINUE

Diversity Management

IA Interlocality AR

Diversity Management

In addition to inclusive leadership, diversity management is a part of employer-ability that is needed at all levels of the organisation. By actively managing diversity organisations ensure that international employees from diverse cultural backgrounds are integrated with respect and understanding, reducing the potential for misunderstandings and conflicts. This approach fosters a sense of belonging, making international employees feel valued and included, ultimately leading to higher job satisfaction and better overall team dynamics. Additionally, diversity management helps leverage the unique skills and perspectives that international talent brings, leading to greater innovation and adaptability within the organisation.

DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

Diversity management is a systematic and strategic approach to managing diversity in the workplace with the goal of creating a more inclusive and effective organisation. The key elements of diversity management include identifying the benefits of diversity, assessing the current situation, planning and implementing strategies to promote diversity, and evaluating the success of these efforts. By embracing diversity, organisations can tap into the talents, perspectives, and experiences of a broader pool of employees and customers. This can lead to greater innovation, improved decision-making, and enhanced customer satisfaction. ([Charta der Vielfalt, n.d.-a](#))



Please watch this 4-minute [video about Diversity Management](#).

You can turn subtitles on by clicking on the closed caption 'CC' icon that appears at the bottom of the video when you start it.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging, and Social Justice

To learn more about these topics, please go to the corresponding section in the Developing level of this Employer-ability course.

GO

**SMALL AND MID-SIZED
ENTERPRISES**

PUBLIC SECTOR ORGANISATIONS

**ASSOCIATIONS, SOCIETIES, AND
FOUNDATIONS**

For small and mid-sized enterprises (SMEs), diversity management is a crucial tool for achieving success, whether it's by meeting the demand for skilled labour or fostering innovation. Additionally, diversity is becoming increasingly important to customers, and promoting it can help attract a wider pool of talented individuals during recruitment. To implement diversity management, SMEs often take a practical approach and develop a diversity strategy tailored to their business objectives. Diverse teams have been shown to produce better results, particularly in the development of new ideas and products. ([Charta der Vielfalt, n.d.-b](#))

Examples of concrete actions can be found in the Charta der Vielfalt guide: [SMEs: Measures for your Diversity Management](#).



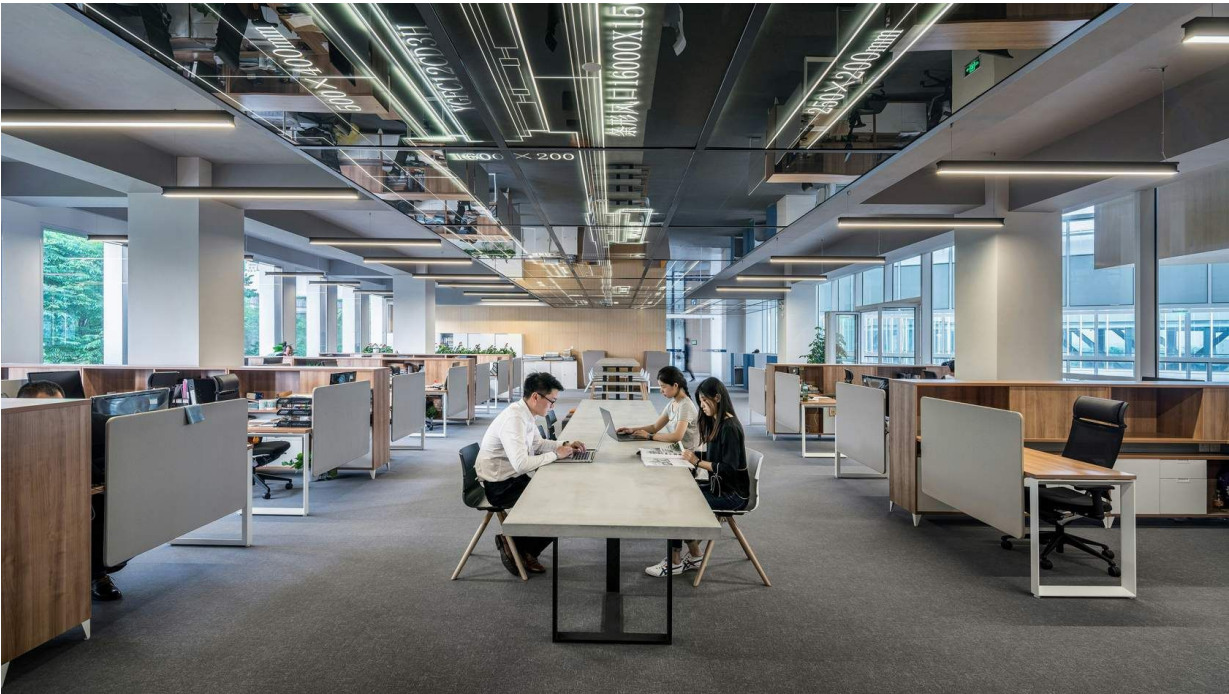
**SMALL AND MID-SIZED
ENTERPRISES**

PUBLIC SECTOR ORGANISATIONS

**ASSOCIATIONS, SOCIETIES, AND
FOUNDATIONS**

The public sector organisations have a responsibility to promote diversity and serve as role models for other sectors. With diversity management they can better address the needs and concerns of their target groups while upholding important democratic values like equal opportunity, gender equality, participation, and social cohesion. This can help them establish a positive organisational culture and attract talented individuals during recruitment. Diversity management can also support efforts to promote equality of opportunity and facilitate cooperation among teams of different ages. ([Charta der Vielfalt, n.d.-c](#))

Examples of concrete actions can be found in the Charta der Vielfalt guide: [Public Institutions: Measures for your Diversity Management](#)



SMALL AND MID-SIZED ENTERPRISES	PUBLIC SECTOR ORGANISATIONS	ASSOCIATIONS, SOCIETIES, AND FOUNDATIONS
<p>Associations, societies, and foundations can promote diversity within their organisation and leverage its benefits to strengthen their positioning. By fostering societal diversity within their ranks they can enhance their effectiveness and increase their chances of fulfilling their social purpose and achieving their goals, including developing relevant offerings to remain future-proof. Diversity management offers many opportunities for associations, societies, and foundations to promote diversity in all areas of their work and processes, both</p>		

internally and externally. They can also act as mediators and opinion leaders by promoting diversity and educating their members about its benefits and successful implementation. Concrete examples of implementing diversity include programs focused on recruiting young talent from diverse backgrounds, promoting intercultural understanding, or addressing age and generational diversity. Participation in public festivals and events can also demonstrate openness and appreciation for diversity. Overall, promoting diversity can help organisations open up to new groups, recruit members, and advance their social purpose. ([Charta der Vielfalt, n.d.-d](#))

Examples of concrete actions can be found in the Charta der Vielfalt guide: [Associations](#), [Foundations](#), [Societies](#)



CONTINUE

Language inclusive work environment

IA Interlocality AR



This section on language inclusive work environment is an adapted version of the Family Federation of Finland's publication "[Kielitietoinen rekrytointi ja työyhteisö – työkaluja työnantajalle kielitietoiseen ja inklusiiviseen työyhteisöön](#)" available only in Finnish. The content has been translated with DeepL Translator, edited, and adapted for an international audience with the permission of the original authors Gunta Ahlfors and Inka Saarela. The picture and video are not a part of the original publication.

Language inclusive work environment

Creating a work environment that is inclusive of all languages is important in workplaces where multiple languages are spoken. A shared language can either foster inclusion or become a tool of exclusion. By implementing language-sensitive practices, employers can welcome new employees and also support long-term employees who may struggle with adjusting to a new vocabulary, such as using English in the workplace. There are several practices that can help ensure equal treatment of employees in a multilingual environment. A language-sensitive workplace can complement other workplace practices, such as safe space and psychological safety.

A supportive and encouraging atmosphere

A language-aware workplace has a supportive and encouraging atmosphere around language.

- Language use is flexible and respectful of linguistic minorities, not neglecting home languages.
- Language practices change according to the situation and the participants. Balance is important.
- Language learning is a process - feel free to ask staff about their language skills and willingness to use them.
- It is important to learn how to pronounce a foreign name correctly - make sure by asking the persons themselves.
- In multilingual situations, language mentors can help.



Space for everyone's thoughts

Allowing space in a linguistically sensitive and equitable way.

- Allow more space and time if the person is not speaking their mother tongue.
- Awareness of one's own role and position is important when using one's own mother tongue to communicate.
- Valuing everyone's opinion. Allowing room for different perspectives and different ways of expressing things.
- Allowing space and time for linguistic development as change does not happen overnight. The same applies to employees who experience difficulties in their work when communicating e.g. in English.

Please watch this 2-minute [video about cultural diversity in communication](#).

You can turn subtitles on by clicking on the closed caption 'CC' icon that appears at the bottom of the video when you start it.

Asking is easier than assuming

In a language-aware workplace listening and openness are key.

- Asking the same questions when getting to know someone as you would ask anyone else, i.e. not just questions related to a different background.
- Avoid making assumptions.
- Be sensitive with questions. Not everyone wants to share personal information.
- Take care of the balance of the conversation: if you ask a lot of questions, tell them about yourself as well.
- Language has an impact on professional identity. As the language changes, so can the balance of roles of employees in the conversation.

The development of language awareness is a gradual process that requires ongoing attention. Gathering feedback on language awareness activities is a valuable step in tailoring them to the needs of the workplace community. Feedback can be obtained through means such as staff surveys or individual discussions with teams. It is important to recognise that cultural change is a continuous process.

Meeting practices

Establishing a positive and supportive environment for all employees is crucial. Language-sensitive meeting practices can facilitate discussions and aid in making inclusive language choices. These practices can also be integrated into an organisation's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) plan.

The name matters —

Learn to pronounce foreign names correctly. This will increase the sense of belonging to the work community.

Language skills —

Do you know the language skills of all participants? If you are not sure, find out before the meeting.

Use of language —

At the beginning of the meeting, explain which languages will be used and allow participants to be flexible in their use of languages. The meeting can e.g. be held in the local language, but participants can comment in English.

Multilingual practices —

Make it clear that as the chair of the meeting you are responsible for multilingual practices. You can help with language problems by summarising or translating terms or the content of a summarised message. This will support linguistic minorities in the meeting, including non-English-speaking natives.

Clear language —

Aim to use clear language regardless of the language in which the discussion is taking place. Also remind other participants to avoid phrases, idioms, or abstract expressions that do not translate well into another language.

Change of language —

If the language of the meeting suddenly changes to exclude part of the attendees, try to tactfully change the language of the conversation back to a language that is inclusive.

Space and time

Allow more space and time if the person is speaking a language other than their mother tongue.

Confirming understanding

During the discussion, make sure that issues and decisions are not unclear to participants. A mere nod is not a sure sign of understanding.

Asking questions

Feel free to ask questions if you do not understand what is being said - you are probably not the only one.

Feedback

Allow giving feedback on language practices. This will ensure that you know if someone has felt left out of the meeting but did not raise the issue. What is the best channel for feedback in your organisation?

Internal language mentors

Language mentors ensure that during the meeting members of the linguistic minority understand the main points. Language mentors can also support those who are less fluent in English if the meeting is in English.

Maintaining a common language during social situations, such as during a break, is important to ensure that everyone can participate. **Creating a language-sensitive and welcoming environment is the responsibility of every employee.**

DEI questionnaire

The term DEI is commonly used in the context of diversity and inclusion policies. It stands for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and encompasses a range of activities that promote diversity and create an inclusive environment. The term acknowledges that not everyone starts from the same place and language awareness is one way to promote equity (equal opportunities for all). A DEI language awareness survey can help explore the impact of language on work and work culture. A well-designed questionnaire can provide valuable insights into areas that need improvement within the organisation. It is also beneficial to have open discussions in the workplace about how working in multiple languages affects employees' work experiences.

Below you can find an example of such a questionnaire.

Background questions

- Gender (female, male, other)
- Age groups
- Role in the organisation (manager, supervisor, employee, other)
- Mother tongue/strongest language (local/other language)
- Location of workplace (country of work, remote working or on-site)

- How long they have worked in the organisation (less than 1 year, 1-3 years, more than 3 years)
- Type of employment relationship (permanent, temporary, part-time, freelance)
- Any other background factors

You can also choose only a few background questions.

If the work community is small the anonymity of respondents should be kept in mind.

Organisational culture —

- Does the organisation adequately support diversity and inclusion efforts?
- Does the organisation treat everyone equally?
- How does the workplace deal with mistakes made by employees?
- Is there respect and appreciation for all employees, regardless of background?
- Are discriminatory and racist comments taken seriously?
- Is there confidence in the employer's ability to deal with discriminatory situations?
- Are employees from different backgrounds able to work well together?
- Is work and family/leisure time perceived to be sufficiently balanced?
- Please feel free to share your experience of the working culture

Open-ended questions provide a broader understanding of the situation, especially if the results show strong positive or negative experiences.

Belonging to the work community —

- Is it possible to express different opinions in the workplace without fear?
- Does everyone feel they can be themselves in the workplace?

- Does everyone feel heard when expressing an opinion?
- Does everyone feel that they belong in the workplace?
- Does the organisation value different opinions and ideas?
- Is there an atmosphere in the workplace that allows people to freely express their own ideas, opinions, and beliefs?
- Please share your experience of being part of a workplace community

Language awareness —

- Does the employee feel that he or she has the same rights regardless of mother tongue?
- Do they feel that they have the same opportunities as others?
- Is there always a common language at work that everyone understands?
- Is a common language that everyone understands used in social situations in the organisation, such as coffee breaks?
- Is the language used in meetings and discussions changed flexibly so that everyone involved understands and can participate?
- Does one's knowledge of the local language influence the possibility of performing well at work?
- Does one's knowledge of the local language influence the ability to receive all the information related to work?
- Please share your experiences of language related practices

Wage development —

- Is the current pay system perceived as transparent and understandable?
- Is pay and compensation perceived as fair and equal?
- Is the compensation and pay fair and equitable compared to other similar jobs?

- Is the workload the same as in comparable jobs?
- Does an increase in workload change the level of pay or compensation?
- Are the measures for requesting a salary increase known?
- Please share your experiences with salary increase

Career development

- Do people feel that they have the same career opportunities regardless of their background?
- Is everyone, regardless of background, encouraged to apply for more senior positions?
- Are there incentives for people of all backgrounds to apply for senior positions?
- Are promotions within the organisation perceived as fair?
- Is there a fair assessment of employees' success at work, regardless of background?
- Is the current nature of the employment relationship satisfactory (e.g. permanent, fixed-term, hourly, freelance)?
- Please share freely your experience of career development

DEI plan

A DEI plan outlines an organisation's diversity and inclusion initiatives and their respective timelines for implementation. The plan can be presented in various formats, such as a visualisation, a table, or a document, but it is recommended to include the key elements discussed below.

Resources to be used

Who will be responsible for its implementation and who will have the time to do it? Will everything be done in-house or will external consultants be used? Identify the persons and/or the DEI team.

Inclusive strategic management —

Diversity and inclusion work is not just a matter for HR and communications. A strategy and real commitment from management will ensure successful organisational culture change.

Assessment of the current situation —

Diversity and inclusion work is also guided by the current situation of the organisation. This can be assessed using existing data and a separate DEI survey.

Monitoring —

The aim is to make concrete changes within the work community and improvements that can be monitored and measured.

Transparency and understanding of diversity and inclusion policies —

This will ensure a more positive reception of change in the workplace.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging, and Social Justice

To learn more about these topics, please go to the corresponding section of the Developing level of this Employer-ability course.

[GO](#)[CONTINUE](#)

Diversity Recruitment



Diversity recruitment

Employer-ability is very much related to the receptiveness of the organisation towards newcomers. When it comes to attracting and retaining international talent it is important to evaluate the willingness and ability of the organisation to welcome the new talent into the workplace and - community. Most of us want to work in places where we fit in and feel a part of the group. **For international talents, diversity in the workplace might be an important factor in applying for a certain position or choosing a company.**

To increase diversity within your organisation it is important to assess the current state of diversity and identify areas that need improvement. Here are some questions to consider:

- How diverse is your organisation currently?
- Are there areas where you could benefit from more diversity?
- How are your employees' language and cultural skills?
- Are there any obstacles to employment in your organisation?

([Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, n.d.](#))

If your organisation is homogeneous, consider why this is the case and how recruitment practices may be influencing this. Are you only looking for candidates who are compatible with your culture or are you also seeking out those who can bring something new to the table? Assessing your organisation's diversity can help identify areas that need improvement and expand the pool of skilled applicants. ([Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, n.d.](#))

Assessing your organisation's current diversity might involve e.g.:

- Collecting demographic data
- Reviewing HR records
- Conducting surveys
- Analysing hiring and promotion patterns
- Studying organisational structures
- Engaging in employee discussions
- Comparing with benchmarks
- Implementing diversity metrics
- Seeking external expertise
- Evaluating workplace culture

Ethical recruitment

Employers have a responsibility to maintain ethical standards during the recruitment process. Ethical recruiting involves using hiring practices that align with an organisation's values and moral principles.

Ethical recruitment practices include assessing candidates without discrimination, moving the

hiring process forward without delays, communicating professionally and sincerely with job candidates, and updating applicants about the progression of the recruitment process. By maintaining ethical standards during the hiring process, you can ensure that your organisation attracts top talent and retains a positive reputation in the job market. ([Kugell, 2024](#))

UNETHICAL HIRING PRACTICES

Unethical hiring practices can have serious consequences, including loss of trust, legal issues, and negative impacts on the company's reputation. False advertising, exaggerating job benefits and salaries, and expiring offers where recruiters pressure candidates to accept offers quickly are some unethical practices. These practices can lead to wasted time and resources, missed opportunities, and damage to the company's reputation. It is important to maintain ethical standards in hiring to ensure fair treatment of all candidates and protect the company's long-term success. ([Kugell, 2024](#))



Please watch this 3-minute [video about fair and ethical recruitment practices](#).

You can turn subtitles on by clicking on the closed caption 'CC' icon that appears at the bottom of the video when you start it.

Language inclusive recruitment

Language inclusive recruitment is important because it broadens the pool of potential candidates, ensuring that you can access individuals with diverse skills and experiences. This inclusivity supports cultural understanding and can improve customer service and innovation. It also helps organisations gain a competitive edge and build a positive brand image as an inclusive employer.



The comprehensive INTERLOCALITY Language Inclusive Recruitment Guide offers employers practical strategies and valuable insights for implementing language-aware recruitment practices. It covers everything from assessing the language proficiency needed for specific roles to conducting inclusive job interviews. The goal is to empower employers with the knowledge and tools to foster an inclusive and diverse workforce.

Practical exercise: try out the guide on language inclusive recruitment

Please read the INTERLOCALITY Language Inclusive Recruitment Guide below. Reflect on which aspects of the guide your organisation is already addressing and which you might consider as a result of reading the guide. List at least three issues that caught your attention and plan how you can bring them up in your organisation.



INTERLOCALITY Language Inclusive Recruitment Guide.pdf

285.9 KB



Anonymous recruitment

Anonymous recruitment, **also known as blind hiring**, involves concealing the identities of job candidates to ensure fairness in the selection process. This is typically done by removing any identifying information from resumes or applications. The goal is to allow recruiters to evaluate candidates based on their abilities rather than their personal background. This can be done e.g. by removing resumes, education, and experience altogether and using anonymous, skills-based assessments instead. ([Caccavale, 2021](#))

Why is it important to anonymise applications? Even with good intentions, humans are prone to unconscious bias. We often make snap judgments based on stereotypes, prior experiences, and even what we see in the media. A person's identity can have a significant impact on how they are perceived. While "gut instinct" may help make quick decisions in daily life it can lead to biased hiring decisions. For instance, research has found that candidates who wear a headscarf in their application photo may have significantly reduced chances of being hired. By anonymising

applications, organisations can reduce the risk of unconscious bias and create a more equitable hiring process. ([Caccavale, 2021](#))

Unconscious bias

If you would like to learn more about unconscious bias, please also view the corresponding section of the Developing level of this Employer-ability course.

GO

CONTINUE

Internships



Internships

The INTERLOCALITY-project focuses on the increased employment of international students and graduates. Therefore, as a part of this Employer-ability course we wanted to bring up the importance of internships that provide an excellent opportunity to bridge education and work. However, there are often misunderstandings regarding internships, especially unpaid ones. In this section, we will explain the concept of internships and how to make them benefit all parties involved.

INTERNSHIPS

Internships differ from regular employment as the primary purpose of an internship is to provide practical work experience and learning opportunities for individuals, typically students, to bridge the gap between education and the professional world. Internships are typically of a fixed duration, ranging from a few weeks to a few months. Internships may or may not provide financial compensation, but should always be facilitated learning experiences. If the internship is unpaid, there must be educational credits awarded for it. If not, it becomes unethical exploitation of labour. When it comes to recruiting, onboarding, and managing international students as interns, it is beneficial to use the same procedures as described previously in this course.



Internships are learning environments situated in the workplace

Internships prioritise the development of skills and hands-on experience for the interns, providing them with an opportunity to apply their theoretical knowledge in a professional setting. Internships often involve close supervision and mentorship from experienced professionals within the host organisation to guide and support the intern's learning and development. **Internships generally have defined learning objectives and specific tasks assigned to interns, aimed at helping them gain practical experience in a particular field.**

WRITTEN AGREEMENT

It is important to note that internships can vary widely depending on the organisation, industry, and local labour laws. The specific terms and conditions of an internship are typically outlined in **a written agreement or contract between the intern, the host organisation and the higher education institution awarding the study credits for the internship**. When formulating the internship offer and position it is important to define the

expected learning outcomes in collaboration between the host organisation and the higher education institution, especially if the internship is part of a formal curriculum. Once the intern has been selected it is recommended to review these learning outcomes with all parties. This review ensures that the learning outcomes can be tailored to meet the intern's specific needs and objectives.



Benefits of internships for employers

The concept of internships varies significantly across countries, as well as between higher education institutions and employers. It is crucial to ensure the commitment of all parties involved in internships to minimise misconceptions and misunderstandings and to maximise the benefits for both the interns and the host organisations. Unfortunately, these misconceptions often arise from a lack of clarity regarding the advantages that host organisations can gain from implementing quality internships. Internships serve as an effective form of work-based learning, facilitating a seamless transition for interns from higher education to the world of work. Additionally, they offer host organisations a valuable resource of new skills, ultimately boosting their competitiveness and productivity in the workplace. Host organisations stand to gain substantial benefits, including economic profitability, skills acquisition, and an enhanced brand image. ([SPRINT, n.d.](#))

Please view this 3-minute [video on the top 7 reasons companies should hire interns.](#)

You can turn subtitles on by clicking on the closed caption 'CC' icon that appears at the bottom of the video when you start it.

Successful internships

To ensure the success of an internship and provide security for all stakeholders involved, a written agreement or contract should clearly outline the rights and obligations of all parties:

- The agreement should include the **signatures** of all involved parties, including the intern, host organisation, representative from the higher education institution (if applicable), and any other relevant parties.
- The agreement should identify the **tutor(s)** who will provide guidance and support throughout the internship.
- The **length of the internship** should be clearly specified.
- The **expected working hours** or presence hours and a timetable should be outlined.
- A description of the intern's **role and tasks**, as well as those of the host organisation, should be provided.
- The agreement should outline the specific **learning objectives** and skills to be developed during the internship.

- Information regarding the intern's **salary** should be included.
- The agreement should provide information on **workers' representation** and any applicable collective agreements.
- Clear indications regarding the **location** of the internship should be stated.
- The agreement should clearly define the **rights and duties** of all parties involved.
- Information about **social insurance coverage** should be provided.
- The agreement should include details about the allocation of **study credits**.

By ensuring that these criteria are included in the written agreement the internship can be conducted in a structured and secure manner, benefiting all stakeholders involved. ([SPRINT, n.d.](#))



For more information on how to engage in guidance and counselling aspects of internship supervision, please view the Developing and Skilled levels of the INTERLOCALITY Guidance & Counselling course.



INTERLOCALITY Guide for Successful Internships for International Students

The guide is designed to help you as an employer to create effective internships offering both you and the international students the best preconditions to succeed.

Practical exercise: try out the INTERLOCALITY Guide for Successful Internships for International Students

Please read the INTERLOCALITY Guide for Successful Internships for International Students to see if you are aware of all the factors you need to consider when taking on an international intern, and the benefits you might gain from doing so.



INTERLOCALITY Guide for Successful Internships for International Students.pdf

310.3 KB



CHECK YOUR LEARNING

Check your learning

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This section is meant to help you recall and assess your learning in this level. It consists of two parts: a quiz and a self-reflection exercise.

Quiz

Please tick the box or boxes you think are correct and then click on 'submit'. After that, please scroll down to the following question until you reach the self-reflection part of the assessment. **Please note that there may be multiple correct answers.**

What is the main objective of attracting international talent as organisational change?

- ☐ To increase workforce diversity and inclusion
- ☐ To solve a shortage of skills
- ☐ To improve the employer brand

☐

To help the organisation adapt, grow, and succeed in a globalised market

SUBMIT

What is the main role of inclusive leadership in promoting diversity and inclusion?

☐

To set an example for other employers

☐

To foster an environment where diverse individuals feel valued, respected, and included

☐

To provide training and development opportunities for all staff

☐

To promote opportunities for underrepresented groups in the organisation

SUBMIT

What is the primary goal of diversity management?

- ☐ To manage differences in the workplace
- ☐ To remove barriers and restrictions for diverse employees
- ☐ To maximise employee satisfaction and engagement
- ☐ To create and maintain an inclusive work environment

SUBMIT

What are effective tools for diversity recruitment?

- ☐ Publishing job ads in English regardless of the requirements for the position
- ☐ Implementing unbiased interview techniques

☐

Using diverse job boards and recruitment channels

☐

Clearly communicating why diversity is valuable for the organisation

SUBMIT

What is the purpose of internships for international students?

☐

To provide them with an opportunity to explore different career paths

☐

To offer them an opportunity to gain practical work experience

☐

To gain access to a broader talent pool

☐

To have access to affordable labour

SUBMIT

What are essential components of a successful internship program for international students?

- ☐ Offering support and guidance during their internship
- ☐ Selecting the intern with the most potential
- ☐ Providing mentorship and cultural integration support
- ☐ Having an attractive employer brand

SUBMIT

Self-reflection

Reflect by yourself or discuss the following questions with a colleague. Your answers will not be assessed, instead, we hope you will gain an insight into what you have learned in this chapter and how you can develop further in your own work.

1

How will you actively contribute to enhancing your own (organisation's) employer-ability?

2

What specific actions will you take to promote a more inclusive workplace environment?

CONTINUE TO CONCLUSION

Conclusion



Congratulations! You have successfully completed this level.

This level has highlighted the crucial role of Employer-ability in attracting and retaining international talent, including students and graduates. By diversifying the talent pool, organisations can bring in fresh perspectives, innovative ideas, and unique skills that contribute to growth and success. It is essential for organisations to create an inclusive and welcoming environment that embraces cultural diversity and supports the integration of international talent into the workplace. By fostering an inclusive leadership style, organisations can create a sense of belonging, enhance employee engagement, and leverage the full potential of their diverse workforce.

A central part of Employer-ability is managing diversity, which involves recognising and valuing individual differences, promoting equal opportunities, and creating an inclusive environment where everyone can thrive. Successful diversity recruitment strategies are vital for organisations seeking to build a diverse workforce. By adopting inclusive hiring practices, organisations can attract candidates from different backgrounds and ensure that their talent pool reflects the diversity of the communities they serve. Effective diversity recruitment involves cultivating diverse networks, removing biases from the selection process, and creating opportunities for underrepresented groups.

Internships play a crucial role for international students in bridging the gap between academic learning and professional practice. They provide valuable opportunities for students to gain practical experience, develop skills, and explore potential career paths. Organisations that offer internships can tap into a diverse talent pool and cultivate a pipeline of future professionals. Moreover,

internships contribute to the development of a robust talent ecosystem by fostering relationships between higher education institutions and industry.

Did you reach these following learning objectives by now being able to:

☐

Understand and compare complex concepts of attraction and retention of international talent as organisational change

☐

Apply tools for inclusive leadership, diversity management, diversity recruitment, and internships for international students

☐

Display willingness and conscious effort to enhance employer-ability and to take action for a more inclusive workplace

Thank you for engaging with the Skilled level of the Employer-ability course!

If you would like to continue to another level of the Employer-ability course, please find them through the buttons below.

Beginner level

If you would like to continue to the Beginner level of this Employer-ability course

GO

Developing level

If you would like to continue to the Developing level of this Employer-ability course

GO

If you would like to try out a level of the **Intercultural Sensitivity** or **Guidance and Counselling** courses, please go back to the main page and choose the course.

It was a pleasure having you with us!

CONTINUE TO LIST OF SOURCES

Sources



Here you can find the full references for all the sources we have used in the development of the content in the SKILLED level of the Employer-ability course. The 'voluntary reading' and video sources are not included, as they are used only as external content.

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