

# A short guide for employers recruiting international talent in local (EU) ecosystems

## Introduction

Recruiting and integrating international talent into a company might present more challenges than recruiting domestic professionals. If you intend to hire internationals or if you as an employer already have experience in recruiting, onboarding, and retaining international talent in your organisation, it is always valuable to review your processes to remain agile and successful.

This guide serves as a tool for you as an employer to consider the most important and relevant aspects when recruiting and onboarding international talent locally, including international students and graduates.

For the sake of completeness, the guide contains some points that apply to every hiring process, including domestic staff.

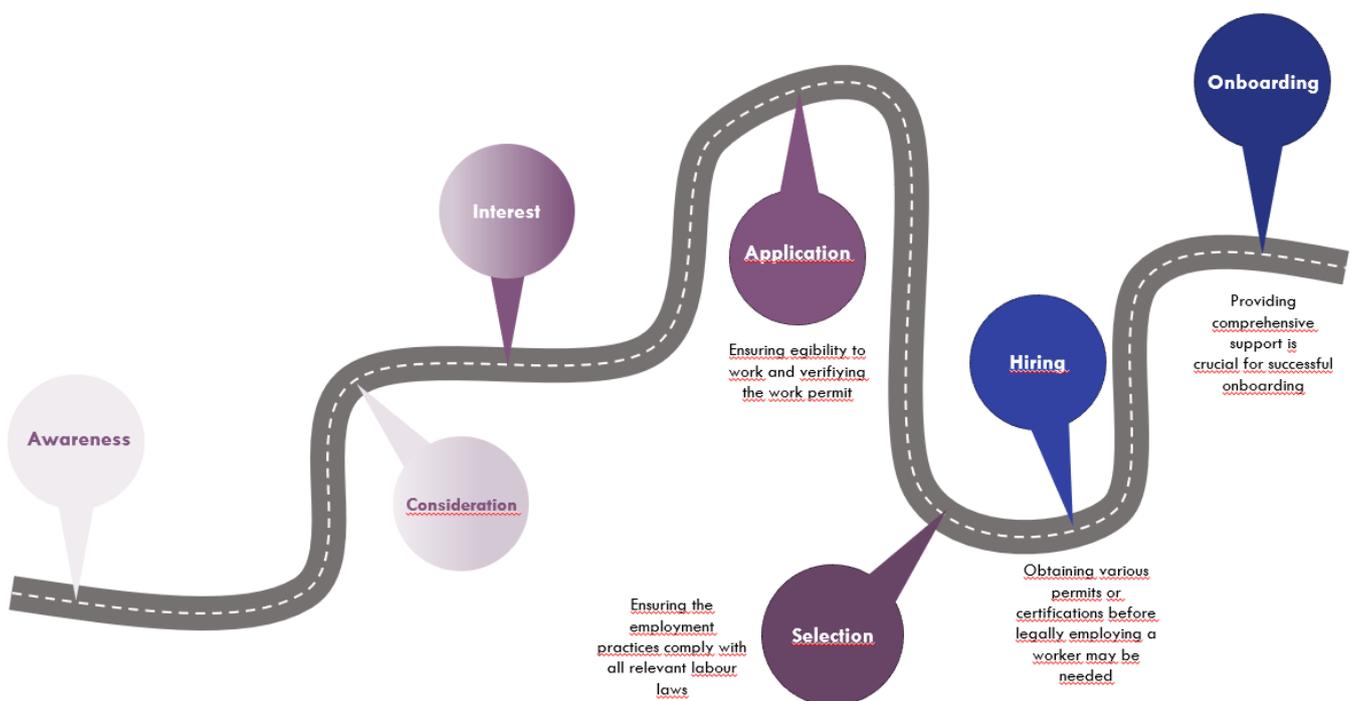
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Before we look at the important aspects of hiring international talent, you should get an overview of the candidate journey. A candidate journey is a map of the various touchpoints that candidates hit along the way until they are integrated into the company.

The touchpoints in the illustration are specific events that take place as part of the candidate journey as defined in this guide (in particular the last three selection, hiring, and onboarding).



## 1. Ensure eligibility to work

### Work permits, visas, and other immigration requirements

Once you have selected a candidate the first step in hiring international employees is to ensure their eligibility to work. This step involves verifying that the employee is legally authorised to work in your country, which usually involves checking work permits and other relevant documentation. This applies in particular to non-EU citizens. EU citizens need no visa or work permit and can pursue any occupation. This also applies to Switzerland, the EEA, and candidate countries. You also might want to notice that changes in visa permissions can be needed if the future employee changes from student to full time employee.

### Compliance with immigration and tax laws

This includes verifying the employee's eligibility to work, completing all the necessary paperwork and documentation, and ensuring that the employee's work permit is valid throughout their employment. You must also ensure to comply with domestic tax laws.

### Anti-discrimination laws

It is important for employers to ensure that they do not discriminate against international employees based on e.g. their national origin or immigration status. Anti-discrimination laws protect international employees, and employers must treat them the same way as any other employee in terms of pay, benefits, and working conditions.

### Language barriers

Providing translation services or offering language training can help you ensure that international employees are able to communicate effectively with their colleagues and perform their jobs to the best of their ability.

### Recognition of candidate background

In addition to the legal requirements, you also need to be aware of the recognition of international candidates' qualifications. This supports you as an employer, e.g. in the correct legal classification and remuneration, but also in being able to use all the skills that an employee brings to the company. Keep these points in mind and integrate them already in the application process:

- Understand the education system in the candidate's country (can be relevant to the working method)
- Check if a candidate's diploma needs to be acknowledged/evaluated by a local authority
- Conduct skills assessments (check previous certificates, further education, previous qualifications in the country of origin etc.)
- Be open to alternative qualifications (check unknown skills from the country of origin of your international talent like language or IT skills etc.)

## 2. Comply with labour laws

### Compliance with employment regulations and standards

When employing international employees, it is important to ensure that your employment practices comply with all relevant labour laws, including those that pertain to minimum wage and hour requirements and workplace safety regulations.

### Comply with labour laws when hiring an international student

If you are planning to employ international students already enrolled in a local higher education institution, please consider these aspects:

- Check your country-specific regulations (e.g. at a higher education institution or the regional employment agency). Most international students have the right to work during their studies. Depending on the country and the residence permit an international student can work a set number of hours per week during academic terms and usually unlimited hours during holidays.
- After graduation the international student may apply for a residence permit for work or for a job-seeking residence permit.
- The duration of the job-seeking residence permit may vary from country to country (in the EU it can vary between 6 and 24 months).

## 3. Obtain necessary permits and licenses

### Obtain legal authorisation for employment

Depending on the country of origin of the employee and the nature of the work they will be doing there may be a variety of permits or certifications that the employer needs to obtain before the employee can legally be employed.

### Professional certifications

Some types of work may require specific professional certifications to be legally performed. For example, medical professionals may need to be licenced by the relevant regulatory body to practice in a particular country.

### Safety certifications

Some types of work may require specific safety certifications. For example, employees in the construction industry may need to have specific safety certifications to operate heavy machinery or work at heights.

It is important for employers to understand the specific requirements and regulations for the type of work and country of origin of the international worker in question. This may involve working with legal or immigration experts to ensure that all necessary permits and certifications are obtained before the worker is employed.

## **4. Provide necessary support (onboarding and retention)**

### **Facilitate successful onboarding**

If you employ international talents you must provide the necessary support to help these employees settle into their new roles. This should be independent of whether the international talent has been in the country for a long time or not. Onboarding in the new function is the most important basic element for retention. This support is critical to ensure that the worker can integrate into the new work environment smoothly and effectively.

### **A common language**

If an employer is hiring internationals without local language skills for the first time, companies need to consider onboarding, training, and work instruction to be available in a common language (e.g. English).

### **Provide orientation and training**

It is important to provide orientation and training to help the new international talent to adjust to the new work environment.

### **Provide ongoing support**

Employers should continue to provide ongoing support to international talent throughout their employment.

### **Diversity Management**

Employers can foster a sense of inclusion and psychological safety within their teams, promoting a diverse and vibrant work environment.

### **Social bonding**

Studies have shown that the successful retention of international talent includes social aspects. If you want to increase the integration and retention of your international talent, you should try to support your employees in well-being, mental health, work-life balance, cultural sensitivity, accommodation, language, sports, family support, cultural differences, or legal requirements. You can also provide a mentor during the first weeks.

## **5. Document and maintain accurate records**

This is an essential part of the hiring process for you as an employer especially when it comes to international employees. The following aspects help you to ensure that all relevant information related to the worker is documented and up to date.

## Legal compliance

It is important to maintain accurate records to comply with relevant laws and regulations related to the employment of international employees. Depending on the country and the type of work performed there may be specific requirements for documentation and reporting.

Accurate records can help to verify the worker's legal status and eligibility to work in the country. This may include documentation of their work permit as well as any other relevant information related to their immigration status.

## Payroll and benefits

Accurate records are essential for payroll and benefits administration, including documentation related to pay rates, tax withholding, and benefits.

## Auditing and inspections

Accurate records are often subject to inspection by government agencies or auditors. Having up-to-date documentation readily available can help to facilitate these inspections and ensure compliance with relevant regulations.

## 6. Key contacts to help

Depending on the country and region employers have different options for receiving support related to the information above. These points of contact can be helpful for you as an employer in the recruitment and retention of international talent:

- EURES: The European Job Mobility Portal Website
- European Commission Practical guide to doing business in Europe
- Regional chambers of commerce
- Local chamber of crafts
- Local International House
- Local employment office
- Municipal integration service
- Branch or sector associations
- Regional economic development agencies
- Adult education centres
- Regional welcoming services
- Social institutions with counselling e.g., professionals with migrant backgrounds
- Higher education institutions

## 7. Conclusion

Hiring international talent is a complex process and it is important for you to understand the legal and practical considerations involved. The steps outlined in this short guide can help to ensure that you are prepared to hire international employees and can do so in compliance with all relevant laws and regulations. By taking these steps, you can support your international employees and tap into their valuable source of talent to help your organisation grow and thrive.

So far in the Developing level of the INTERLOCALITY Employer-ability course we have talked about **employer branding, recruitment, onboarding, and retention** of international talent. Moving on in this level you will find information about **intercultural teams, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) and social justice**, as well as about **unconscious bias, microaggressions, and antiracism**. Finally, we will touch upon the theme of **Emotional Intelligence (EI)**.

To learn more about **inclusive leadership, diversity recruitment, diversity management, language inclusive work environment, and internships**, please make sure to go through the Skilled level of the INTERLOCALITY Employer-ability course. There you can also find the INTERLOCALITY **Employer Readiness Scan** and the INTERLOCALITY **Language Inclusive Recruitment Guide**. If you are considering hiring interns, please have a look at the INTERLOCALITY **Guide for Successful Internships**.

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