



METHODOLOGICAL GUIDE



INCLUSIVE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING

A PATHWAY FROM ADMISSION TO EMPLOYMENT

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The Guide focuses on the practical aspects of organising inclusive learning within VET institutions. It presents contemporary frameworks for inclusive education and disability, addressing key areas such as accessibility, universal design, reasonable accommodation, identification of educational needs, and the organisation of learner support. Particular attention is given to supporting learners at every stage of their vocational pathway – from career guidance and admission through learning and work placements to the transition into employment.

The Guide features practical recommendations, step-by-step procedures, real-world examples, and checklists designed to help plan, implement, and improve an inclusive learning environment.

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Inclusive VET: Improving Training for Veterans and People with Disabilities

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National Assembly of People with Disabilities of Ukraine (NAPD) in partnership with Christoffel-Blindenmission Christian Blind Mission e.V. (CBM)

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Preface

The development of inclusive vocational education and training (VET) is becoming particularly critical at a time when a growing number of people with diverse educational and life experiences need opportunities to acquire an occupation, undergo vocational retraining, and re-enter the workforce. These individuals include young people with special educational needs, persons with disabilities, veterans, and adults who choose VET as a pathway to professional fulfilment, economic independence, and active participation in community life.

For the National Assembly of People with Disabilities of Ukraine (NAPD), access to education, vocational training, and employment is a vital component of safeguarding the rights of persons with disabilities. For many years, NAPD has worked to promote systemic change in the areas of inclusion and accessibility: reviewing legislation and regulatory frameworks, drafting policy recommendations, carrying out advocacy, training professionals, and advancing approaches rooted in human rights, non-discrimination, and equal opportunities.

NAPD's long-standing practical experience shows that access to vocational education and training extends far beyond the physical accessibility of facilities. Barriers can arise throughout a person's entire pathway – from obtaining information and navigating admission, to learning, assessment, practical work placements, and the eventual transition to employment. It is therefore important that people are not expected to adapt to a rigid system; rather, the educational system itself must be flexible enough to accommodate to diverse needs of every learner.

VET providers already have experience of teaching learners with special educational needs and implementing inclusive practices. At the same time, the development of inclusive learning raises a number of specific, practical questions for VET institution teams: how to ensure accessible admissions and learning environments; how to identify barriers and determine required support; how to organise teamwork and provide adaptations without lowering vocational qualification standards; how to make work placements safe and accessible; and how to cooperate with employers and support learners as they transition from education to employment.

The search for answers to these questions formed the foundation of this methodological guide, ***Inclusive Vocational Education and Training: A Pathway from Admission to Employment***.

The Guide was developed based on the findings of a comprehensive study examining the current state and development needs of inclusive vocational education and training in Ukraine. The study made it possible to identify not only existing barriers and systemic challenges, but also the practical experience of VET providers, the needs of administrators and teaching staff, and effective solutions already applied in practice. These findings reaffirmed the need for accessible methodological tools that help translate the principles of inclusion into the day-to-day operations of VET institutions.



The Guide combines contemporary approaches to inclusive education and disability, international principles, and the Ukrainian context with practical recommendations for VET providers. It covers the learner's entire vocational journey – from career guidance and admission, through learning and work placements, to entry into the labour market.

At the same time, the Guide does not offer a single, one-size-fits-all solution for everyone. Inclusive learning requires focusing on the individual – their strengths, vocational goals, level of functioning, and the environmental barriers they may encounter. The proposed approaches and tools are designed to help professionals analyse specific situations, collaborate on solutions, and create conditions that maximise each learner's participation and independence.

The guide was prepared as part of the project **“Inclusive VET: Improving Training for Veterans and People with Disabilities”**, implemented by the National Assembly of People with Disabilities of Ukraine (NAPD) in partnership with Christoffel-Blindenmission Christian Blind Mission e.V. (CBM). The project is co-financed by the European Union, Germany, Poland, Estonia and Denmark within the framework of the Multi Donor Initiative Skills4Recovery.

Skills4Recovery is implemented by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH and the Solidarity Fund PL (SFPL).

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to the VET providers that contributed to the discussions surrounding this Guide and offered valuable suggestions regarding its content and practical materials. Special thanks are also extended to the experts at the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine for their substantive comments and recommendations.

We hope that the Guide will serve as a practical resource for VET providers and their partners, contributing to the development of an environment where learner diversity is embraced from the outset, support is planned according to individual needs, and accessibility, participation, and professional fulfilment become part of everyday practice.

Introduction

Vocational education and training (VET) must be accessible to different people – regardless of disability, special educational needs, prior educational experience, or life circumstances. At the same time, equal access to VET means far more than simply having the opportunity to enrol in an educational institution. It requires that learners are able to participate fully in the educational process, train for an occupation, undertake practical vocational training and work placements, acquire the required vocational competences, and prepare for their transition to the labour market.

That is why this handbook approaches inclusive learning not as a set of isolated measures for a particular category of learners, but as a consistent organisation of the educational process with due regard for human diversity and the barriers people may encounter. The focus is not on a person's diagnosis or impairment, but on their functioning, participation, and interaction with the environment. This perspective shifts the core question from "What is wrong with the learner?" to practical inquiries: **What barrier has arisen, what is preventing participation, and what can be changed in the environment or in the organisation of the educational process to eliminate or reduce that barrier?**

The handbook is structured around the logic of the learner's vocational pathway – **from admission to a VET provider through to employment**. This pathway begins well before the enrolment process: it starts with career guidance, access to information, and preparation for the transition to VET. Following admission, key tasks include identifying support needs, removing barriers, organising teamwork, adapting the educational process without lowering vocational qualification standards, preparing for work placements, and creating safe and accessible conditions to complete them. The final stage of this journey focuses on preparation for employment and transition from the educational institution into the workplace.

This approach also determines the structure of the handbook. The first two sections establish a shared foundation for understanding inclusive education: human rights, current perspectives on disability, the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF), accessibility, universal design, and reasonable accommodation. The following sections translate these principles into practical application for VET providers – from organising admissions and the support system to work placements and the transition to employment. Particular attention is given to cooperation between VET providers and community resources, employers, and other partners, as learner support cannot be confined to a single institution. The final section focuses on educators, highlighting the contemporary professional roles and competences required for working in an inclusive educational environment.

The handbook is intended for administrative, teaching, and other staff of VET providers, trainers, mentors, and representatives of civil society organisations – including organisations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) – as well as other partners supporting the development of inclusive VET.



The handbook is designed to help organise inclusive learning in line with current approaches to inclusion, plan learner support at different stages of their vocational pathway, use practical procedures, examples, and checklists, and ensure continuity during the transition from admission and learning to work placements and employment.

The handbook can be read sequentially or consulted by section depending on the specific professional task. **Its practical orientation is embedded directly into its structure:** the “What Does This Mean in Practice?” sections help connect key principles with the work of a VET provider, case studies show how these concepts apply in specific situations, and Checklists for Professional Reflection encourage readers to reflect on their own practice and identify actionable next steps. The appendices complement the main content with practical procedures, forms, and checklists that can be used to analyse specific situations, facilitate team discussions, and plan decision-making. The provided materials do not replace official documents and procedures prescribed by legislation; rather, they serve as supporting resources for practical work.

A cross-cutting principle of the handbook is active **learner participation in decisions that affect them**. Support should not be planned *for* a person without their involvement, but *with them*, taking into account their strengths, experience, vocational goals, needs, and the specific conditions of the educational environment.

At the same time, support does not mean lowering occupational standards. Adaptations, accessibility measures, and reasonable accommodations should create conditions in which the learner can train for an occupation and demonstrate the required learning outcomes, rather than alter the substance of the vocational qualification itself. It is therefore essential to distinguish between requirements that are core to a particular occupation and the safe execution of occupational activities, versus environmental or organisational barriers that can and should be removed or reduced.

Inclusive VET cannot be the responsibility of a single educator, assistant, or support team. It requires coordinated effort from the VET provider, the learner, teaching and other staff, and, where necessary, community specialists and services, civil society organisations, and employers. Such cooperation becomes particularly important during transition phases: entry into VET, progression from classroom learning to work placement, and the final transition from the VET provider into the workplace.

Thus, inclusive vocational education and training is neither an isolated area of a VET provider’s work nor the sole responsibility of a single professional. It is a **shared commitment to creating conditions in which diverse learners can learn, actively participate, gain a vocational qualification, and successfully transition to employment**.

Section 1

Inclusive Education: Current Understanding

In this section, we will examine the current understanding of inclusive education and the core concepts on which it is based. How we understand inclusion, disability, barriers, support, and the role of the educator directly shapes subsequent decisions about how the educational process is organised.

This understanding is grounded in international approaches to inclusive education, current perspectives on disability, and the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Particular attention is given to the practical application of the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) and to current professional terminology. Together, these elements establish a shared foundation for the following sections of this handbook.

1.1. What Is the Current Understanding of Inclusive Education Based On?

The current understanding of inclusive education has emerged from the development of international human rights approaches and their gradual incorporation into Ukraine's education policy. This is reflected not only in legislative change, but also in a rethinking of the role of education, educators, and the educational environment. The most important changes can be summarised in four interconnected ideas.

Education for All

The first fundamental change was a new understanding of the idea of "Education for All," which emerged through a gradual rethinking of approaches to ensuring the right to education. This process has been particularly important for individuals who have most frequently faced barriers to accessing education, including persons with disabilities and learners with special educational needs. At the same time, inclusive education today is based on the recognition that diversity is a natural characteristic of any group of learners and that every person has the right to a high-quality education.

For vocational education and training (VET) providers, this means that inclusion is not relevant only to learners with disabilities. A learning group may include veterans, internally displaced persons, career changers, learners of different ages, and individuals with varying levels of prior

preparation or learning experience. They may have different educational needs, but all of them have an equal right to a high-quality education.

What Does “Education for All” Mean in Practice?

It does not mean that everyone learns in the exact same way. It means that everyone has a genuine opportunity to participate in learning and achieve outcomes through the provision of necessary conditions and support.

Diversity as the Norm

The second important change was a new understanding of diversity. Whereas differences among learners were once often viewed as an exception or a problem requiring separate solutions, diversity is now recognised as a natural norm.

Every person comes to an educational institution with their own life experience, abilities, pace of learning, cultural background, health status, professional background, and needs. This diversity is the everyday reality of education today, not an exception to the rule.

For VET providers, this means that planning the educational process must take learner diversity into account from the outset. The goal is not to create separate conditions only for particular categories of learners, but to organise learning in ways that enable the broadest possible range of people to participate actively in the educational process.

What Does “Diversity as the Norm” Mean in Practice?

It means that educators do not expect an “average” or “typical” learner. Instead, they plan learning with the understanding that people may perceive information differently, learn at different paces, have different prior experiences, and require different ways of participating in the educational process.

Barriers in the Educational Environment

The third important change was a rethinking of the causes behind the difficulties people experience during the learning process. Whereas learning difficulties were previously attributed mainly to the characteristics of the individual, increasing attention is now paid to the barriers that restrict a person’s participation in the educational process.

Such barriers may include inaccessible buildings, learning materials, teaching methods, assessment formats, organisational structures, insufficient communication, or biased attitudes. These factors often limit a person’s ability to participate fully in learning far more than their individual characteristics do.

The current approach does not deny that people may have different needs or require additional support. At the same time, it recognises that one of the main responsibilities of an educational institution is to identify and remove barriers that hinder the learning and participation of every learner.



What Do “Barriers in the Educational Environment” Mean in Practice?

It means that when difficulties arise, the first question should not be “What is wrong with the person?,” but “What barriers prevent them from participating fully in learning, and what can be changed in the educational environment?”

| Support in the Educational Process

The fourth important change was a new understanding of the role of support in the educational process. Whereas support was previously associated mainly with specific categories of learners, it is now regarded as a natural component of high-quality education that anyone may need at a certain stage of learning, or that different people may require depending on their individual educational needs.

A need for support may arise for various reasons and may be temporary or ongoing. It may be related to a health condition, previous educational experience, adaptation to a new educational environment, language-related factors, traumatic experiences, or other life circumstances.

For VET providers, this means that support is not an exception or a form of special treatment for certain learners. It is one of the mechanisms for ensuring equal opportunities for every person to learn and participate.

What Does “Different People May Need Support” Mean in Practice?

It means that support should be determined not by a person’s membership in a particular category, but by their educational needs and the specific barriers they encounter during learning.

| 1.2. How Has the Understanding of Disability Changed?

The understanding of disability has also changed substantially. Whereas disability was once viewed mainly as a problem of the individual, increasing attention is now paid to how a person’s interaction with the environment affects their ability to learn, work, and participate in society. These changes are most clearly reflected in the shift from the medical model to the social model and the rights-based approach enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

| Medical Model

The medical model views disability primarily as a consequence of illness or body function impairment. The main focus is on treatment, rehabilitation, or impairment compensation. Within this approach, an individual’s difficulties are explained mainly by their health condition.

What Does This Mean for Education?

The main effort is directed towards helping the person adapt to the existing education system.

Social Model

The social model transformed the approach to understanding disability. It is based on the idea that restrictions on a person's participation arise not only from a health condition, but also from barriers in the physical environment, the organisation of learning, communication, people's attitudes, and other areas of social life.

What Does This Mean for Education?

The educational institution should not only support the person, but also remove barriers that hinder their learning.

Rights-Based Approach

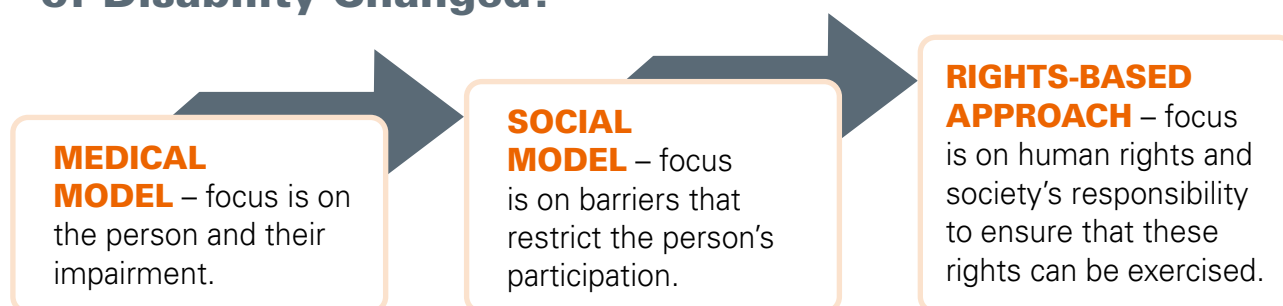
The rights-based approach, enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, regards persons with disabilities as full holders of all human rights. Disability cannot be grounds for restricting the right to education, employment, or participation in society. States and educational institutions must ensure equal opportunities by creating an accessible environment, providing necessary support, and preventing discrimination.

What Does This Mean for Education?

Inclusive education is not a form of charity or social assistance, but a way of realising every person's right to high-quality education.

Graphic 1. Evolution of Approaches to Disability

How Has the Understanding of Disability Changed?



1.3. How Has the Convention Changed the Approach to the Education of Persons with Disabilities?

Throughout this handbook, we refer repeatedly to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This is no coincidence. It is the primary international instrument that fundamentally changed approaches to understanding disability and advancing inclusive education. Many of the principles discussed in this handbook are directly grounded in the provisions of the Convention.



Above all, this concerns four interconnected principles.

1) Right to Education

The Convention affirmed that education is an inherent right of every individual. A person must not lose the opportunity to learn due to a disability or other barriers. States are therefore required to develop an inclusive education system in which everyone can learn on an equal basis.

2) Non-Discrimination

The Convention emphasises that a person's right to education cannot be restricted because of disability. Non-discrimination means not only treating everyone equally, but also creating conditions that ensure genuine equality of opportunity.

3) Accessibility

The Convention regards accessibility as a necessary precondition for exercising the right to education. This encompasses not only physical and architectural accessibility, but also access to information, communication, digital resources, learning materials, and the educational process as a whole. This is why inclusive education today places such a strong emphasis on removing all types of barriers.

4) Reasonable Accommodation

Even in an accessible educational environment, some learners may require additional individual solutions. This is why the Convention introduces the concept of reasonable accommodation. It means necessary and appropriate modifications and adjustments that enable a person to exercise their right to education on an equal basis with others, provided that such changes do not impose a disproportionate or undue burden.

1.4. Why Does an Educator Need the ICF?

The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF)¹ helps educators view a learner beyond a medical diagnosis or the name of an impairment. Instead, it focuses on how the individual learns, performs tasks, communicates, interacts with others, and participates in the educational process.

While a diagnosis may provide important medical information, it does not explain what exactly may be difficult for a person during learning or what support they might need. Two learners with the same diagnosis can have different abilities, difficulties, and needs. Conversely, similar learning challenges can occur in individuals with different health conditions or without a formally established diagnosis.

¹ Ministry of Health of Ukraine. International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF) <https://moz.gov.ua/uk/mkf>

For example:**Before:** "He has cerebral palsy."**After:** "He finds it difficult to write by hand for extended periods and perform precise motor tasks. Oral responses and the use of a computer allow him to demonstrate his knowledge more effectively."**Before:** "She has autism spectrum disorder."**After:** "She finds it difficult to complete tasks when instructions are unclear or change unexpectedly. Short, step-by-step instructions and a predictable lesson structure help her succeed."

In the first scenario, the educator knows only the medical name of the condition. In the second, the educator understands what specifically creates difficulties during learning and can choose an appropriate pedagogical solution. This shift from focusing on a diagnosis to analysing functioning is one of the key practical contributions of the ICF.

From "What Is Their Diagnosis?" to "What Affects Their Participation?"

The ICF proposes considering a person's functioning through their interaction with the environment. A learner's difficulties should therefore not automatically be explained solely by their health condition. It is essential to identify what happens during the learning process, which factors support the learner, and which, by contrast, create barriers.

For example, a learner may fail to complete a written task not because they lack knowledge of the material, but because:

- ✓ they find it difficult to write by hand for a long period;
- ✓ the text is printed in a font that is too small;
- ✓ insufficient time is allowed to complete the task;
- ✓ the instructions contain too many steps at once;
- ✓ the room is noisy, making it difficult for the person to concentrate;
- ✓ the response format does not allow the learner to demonstrate the knowledge or vocational skills they have acquired.

The educator's attention thus focuses not only on the learner's individual characteristics, but also on the conditions under which learning takes place. It is the interaction between these factors that helps explain why difficulties arise and what can be adapted.

From General Labels to Specific Observation

The ICF helps avoid vague judgements such as "inattentive," "cannot keep up," "cannot work independently," or "not ready to learn." Such labels offer little explanation and often reinforce negative attitudes towards the person.

Instead, the educator describes what can actually be observed:



“During spoken instructions consisting of five sequential steps, the learner completes the first two and then requires the explanation to be repeated.”

“After twenty minutes of standing while working, the learner needs a short break.”

“When working in a noisy workshop, the learner misses some spoken instructions but performs tasks well when following a written or visual sequence.”

Such descriptions help identify where difficulties arise and determine what changes may help: breaking instructions down into separate stages, adding a visual prompt, adjusting the pace of work, allowing a break, or offering an alternative way to complete the task.

From Limitations to Abilities and Necessary Support

The ICF does not deny the existence of impairments or functional difficulties, but it does not reduce a person to them. Educators must recognise not only what a learner finds difficult, but also what they can already accomplish, the conditions under which they work more successfully, and the strengths that can be built upon.

For example:

- ✓ A learner finds it difficult to read a large amount of text quickly, but understands spoken explanations well and confidently performs practical tasks when shown a model.
- ✓ A learner finds it difficult to answer in front of the entire group, but expresses themselves meaningfully in individual conversations or when working in a small group.

This perspective helps educators avoid lowering expectations and instead look for solutions that enable every individual to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

What Does This Mean for an Educator's Work?

Applying the logic of the ICF helps an educator to:

- ✓ describe educational needs specifically, rather than merely naming a diagnosis;
- ✓ notice barriers in tasks, materials, communication, and the environment;
- ✓ identify what the learner can do independently and where support is needed;
- ✓ select adaptations and reasonable accommodations based on the actual situation;
- ✓ observe whether the solutions introduced are effective;
- ✓ discuss the learner's needs with the learner, colleagues, and other professionals using clear and specific language.

The ICF does not provide educators with ready-made solutions for every diagnosis. Its value lies elsewhere: it helps them ask the right questions.

Not only: “What impairment does this person have?”

But above all: “What can this person do? Where do difficulties arise? What barriers affect this? What will help the person participate fully in learning?”

This way of thinking helps move from general assumptions about a person to specific pedagogical decisions.

1.5. Current Professional Terminology

As our understanding of inclusive education, disability, barriers, and support evolves, professional language naturally changes as well. We choose words not simply because some are “right” and others are “wrong”. Language reflects **how we view a person**. Current professional terminology therefore helps us speak about learners accurately, respectfully, and without stereotypes.

We Speak About the Person First

Current professional language is based on the understanding that a person cannot be reduced to a diagnosis, impairment, or health condition. First and foremost, they are an individual, a learner, a future professional, a colleague, and a member of the community. Professional communication therefore prioritises wording that does not define a person exclusively through their impairment.

For example, expressions such as **“person with a disability,” “learner with a hearing impairment,” and “learner with cerebral palsy”** are generally preferred over wording that effectively equates the person with their diagnosis.

This approach is not merely a matter of language etiquette. It reminds us that while a diagnosis may be important information for organising support, it does not define a person’s identity, abilities, interests, or potential.

We Describe the Learning Situation Rather Than Judge the Person

Professional language helps avoid broad judgements that explain little about the actual situation. Expressions such as **“inattentive,” “lazy,” “problematic,” or “not ready to learn”** fail to answer the questions of why difficulties arise or how they can be addressed.

Instead, it is best to describe specific observations: what exactly causes difficulties, under what conditions they arise, and what helps the learner participate more successfully in learning. Describing the situation in this manner allows discussions to focus on specific pedagogical solutions rather than personal traits.

We Talk About Support, Not Just Limitations

Current professional terminology increasingly focuses less on impairments or limitations and more on the conditions that enable a person to participate in the educational process. This is why inclusive education widely uses concepts such as **“barriers,” “accessibility,” “participation,” “support,” “adaptations,” and “reasonable accommodations.”**

These concepts help shift the educator’s focus. Instead of asking “What can the person not do?” the key questions become, “What prevents them from participating fully in learning?” and “What can be changed so they can realise their full potential?”

We Respect the Person and Their Choice

Professional language also means respecting how individuals describe themselves. For example, some people prefer the expression **“person with autism,”** while others use **“autistic person”** as part of their identity. If an individual expresses a preference regarding how they wish to be referred to, this choice should be respected.



It is equally important to avoid expressions that evoke pity or portray the everyday lives of persons with disabilities as heroic. Respect is reflected not only in the words used, but also in a calm, appropriate, and professional way of speaking about people and their experiences.

Table 1.1. Appropriate Terminology: Preferred Wording

Instead of	Better to Say
Disabled person	Person with a disabilities
Person with limited abilities	Person with a disability
Confined to a wheelchair / Wheelchair-bound	Uses a wheelchair
Suffers from cerebral palsy	Has cerebral palsy
Normal learners / other learners	Learners without disabilities
Unable to learn	Needs certain conditions or support for learning
Problem behaviour	A specific description of the behaviour or the situation in which it occurs
Special learner	Learner with special educational needs (only when this concept is genuinely applicable)

Using current professional terminology is not a matter of linguistic fashion or formal correctness. It reflects respect for human dignity, the current understanding of inclusive education, and an educator's readiness to focus on individual abilities, barriers, and necessary support rather than diagnoses, generalisations, or stereotypes.

Case Study. From Assumptions to the Learner's Needs

A colleague approached a teacher at a VET provider and said: *"We have a new learner. He will be difficult to work with. They say he has special educational needs."*

During the first lesson, the teacher did not begin by asking about a diagnosis or requesting medical documents. Instead, he carefully observed how the learner performed a practical task, which instructions he understood without additional explanation, when difficulties arose, and what helped overcome them.

After only a few lessons, it became clear that the learner performed practical tasks well, paid close attention to detail, and was genuinely interested in learning. At the same time, difficulties arose when he had to process a large amount of new information all at once or transition quickly from an explanation to performing a task.

These observations helped the teacher reconsider the colleague's initial assumption that "he will be difficult to work with." Instead of attributing the difficulties to the learner's personal characteristics, the teacher began analysing how task requirements, the organisation of the educational process, and environmental conditions affected learning.

This perspective reflects the current understanding of inclusive education: the educator's focus is not on a diagnosis or prior assumptions about a person's abilities, but on their strengths, their interaction with the educational environment, and the conditions required for successful learning.

Checklist for Professional Reflection

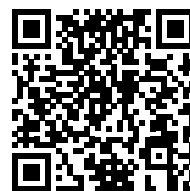
After reading this section, consider how closely the statements below reflect your professional practice today. Tick the statements you can genuinely agree with. If some points are not yet part of your work, return to them after reading the following sections of the handbook.

- ☐ When planning learning, I take into account that learners may have different experiences, learning paces, and educational needs.
- ☐ If a learner finds it difficult to complete a task, I first analyse which barriers may be preventing them from doing so.
- ☐ When communicating with colleagues, I use professional terminology that demonstrates respect for the person.
- ☐ When discussing a learner's difficulties in the educational process, I describe specific observations rather than judging the person.
- ☐ I understand that having the same diagnosis does not mean having the same educational needs.
- ☐ When planning a lesson, I think not only about the learning content, but also about its accessibility for different learners.
- ☐ I regard support as a natural component of high-quality education.
- ☐ Where possible, I use different ways of presenting material or completing tasks.
- ☐ When discussing a learner's needs, I focus more on their abilities and the support required than on the diagnosis.
- ☐ I understand that creating an inclusive educational environment is an integral part of my professional role.

Additional Resources

UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

An international instrument that establishes a rights-based approach to disability and affirms the right of persons with disabilities to inclusive education without discrimination and on an equal basis with others.



Law of Ukraine "On Education"

The main legislative act in the field of education, establishing the principles of state policy, including equal access to education, inclusive learning, and the protection of the rights of persons with special educational needs.





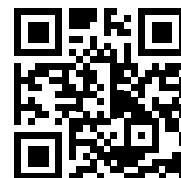
International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF): Information Materials of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine

Information on the ICF, its key concepts, and its use in describing human functioning with regard to activity, participation, and environmental factors. The page also provides the National Classifier NK 030:2022.



Online Course “How to Apply the International Classification of Functioning (ICF) in Education” (EdEra)

A free EdEra online course on using the ICF to analyse learning difficulties, assess learners’ strengths and needs, and plan support.



Section 2

Accessibility, Universal Design, and Reasonable Accommodation

In Section 1, we considered inclusive education as every person's right to quality education without discrimination and without barriers that limit their opportunities to learn on an equal basis with others. Realising this right requires more than simply providing an opportunity to study at an educational institution. The educational environment, information, communication, learning materials, equipment, and the educational process itself must be accessible and give every learner a genuine opportunity to learn and acquire an occupation.

Three interconnected components play a key role in creating these conditions: accessibility, universal design, and reasonable accommodations. Accessibility creates the basic conditions for participation. Universal design helps ensure from the outset that environments, the educational process, materials, and services are planned so that they can be used by as wide a range of people as possible. Reasonable accommodation is required when general accessible solutions are insufficient and an individual learner needs specific changes or support.

2.1. Accessibility as a Precondition for Participation in Vocational Education and Training

Accessibility is one of the essential conditions for realising the right to education. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities² considers accessibility much more broadly than just the ability to physically enter a building. It encompasses access to the physical environment, information and communication, information and communication technologies, services, and other areas of social life.

For a VET provider, this means that **the learner's entire pathway** must be accessible: from obtaining information about an occupation and admission, through learning, work placements, and preparation for employment.¹

It is therefore important to consider different dimensions of accessibility:

- ✓ **Physical accessibility³:** The ability to enter the VET provider safely and move around its premises, use classrooms, workshops, laboratories, sanitary facilities, the canteen, dormitory, sports and recreational areas, and shelters.

² UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 9 "Accessibility." https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/995_g71#Text

³ Ukraine's State Construction Norms: DBN V.2.2-40:2018 "Inclusiveness of Buildings and Structures. Basic Provisions" (as amended) https://e-construction.gov.ua/laws_detail/3875031219359974668?doc_type=2



- ✓ **Information and digital accessibility⁴:** The ability to obtain and use information about admissions, schedules, learning materials, instructions, electronic resources, and the VET provider's website.
- ✓ **Communication accessibility:** The ability to receive information and interact in an accessible way, including through alternative formats, captioning, sign language interpretation, or other necessary means.
- ✓ **Accessibility of the educational process:** The ability to participate fully in practical vocational training, alongside accessible methods of assessing learning outcomes that take the learner's individual needs into account.

Accessibility is particularly important in vocational education and training, where a substantial part of learning takes place outside the classroom. Learners work in workshops or laboratories, use occupational equipment and tools, and undertake practical vocational training and work placements. Accessibility should therefore be considered not only in relation to the VET provider's building, but also in relation to all places and situations in which vocational training takes place.

For example, an accessible entrance to the main building does not by itself mean that all components of VET are accessible to the learner. The learner must also be able to use learning spaces and workshops, access information and learning materials, work with equipment, participate in practical vocational training, and use accessible methods for demonstrating learning outcomes. Likewise, electronic learning material does not automatically become accessible simply because it is available online: what matters is whether a person can read it using assistive technologies, enlarge the text, access information contained in graphics, or use captions for video content.

Safety Must Also Be Accessible

In wartime, the accessibility of civil protection measures requires particular attention. Article 11 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities⁵ emphasises the need to ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies.

For a VET provider, this means assessing the accessibility of shelters, evacuation routes, and warning systems; providing multiple accessible formats of emergency communication; and determining what specific support individual learners may require during an evacuation or while staying in a shelter.

From Individual Solutions to Systemic Accessibility

Accessibility should not be addressed only when a person with a specific disability enrolls at a VET provider. If the institution responds to needs only after difficulties arise, many barriers must be removed while the learning process is already under way.

It is therefore important to move gradually from individual adjustments to a **systematic analysis of accessibility**: assessing buildings and premises, workshops and equipment, information and digital resources, communication methods, and the overall organisation of learning and safety.

⁴ DSTU EN 301 549:2022 "Information Technology. Accessibility Requirements for ICT Products and Services." https://zakon.isu.net.ua/sites/default/files/normdocs/dstu_en_301_549_2022_informaciyni_tekhnologii_vimogi_schodo_.pdf

⁵ The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Article 11 "Situations of Risk and Humanitarian Emergencies." https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/995_g71#Text



At the same time, accessibility does not mean that everyone uses the environment or learns in the same way. Even a well-designed, accessible environment cannot anticipate every individual need. This is why accessibility is intrinsically linked to two other key concepts discussed below: **universal design and reasonable accommodation.**

What does this mean for a VET provider?

It is helpful to ask not only, “Is our building accessible?,” but more broadly: “Can a learner obtain information, reach necessary premises, use materials and equipment, participate in learning and work placements, remain safe, and demonstrate their outcomes without avoidable barriers?”

2.2. Universal Design: Planning for Diversity

Universal design means designing products, environments, programmes, and services so that they can be used by as wide a range of people as possible **without the need for subsequent specialised adaptation.** At the same time, universal design does not exclude the use of assistive products or other individual solutions where these are needed by a particular person.

In education, this idea extends far beyond architectural accessibility. Universal design principles can be applied when arranging classrooms and workshops, organising workstations and the educational process, selecting equipment, and developing learning materials, information resources, and digital resources.

The main idea is simple: **it is better to anticipate learner diversity from the outset than to create an environment for an assumed “average” learner and then remove barriers each time they arise.**

For example, captions in a learning video are essential for a learner with a hearing impairment, but they can also be useful to others when the audio is difficult to hear, when occupational terminology needs to be understood more clearly, or when a particular segment needs to be revisited. A height-adjustable work surface may be necessary for a person who uses a wheelchair, while also making it possible to organise a comfortable workstation for people of different heights.

Seven Principles of Universal Design

The seven principles of universal design help us consider the environment, equipment, information, and the educational process from the perspective of different users.

Table 2.1. Principles of Universal Design: Examples for VET

Principle	What It Means	Example in VET
1. Equitable Use	The environment, materials, and services can be used by different people without unnecessary segregation	An accessible entrance that everyone can use; learning materials prepared in accessible formats
2. Flexibility in Use	Different ways of use are provided according to a person’s needs and capabilities	The work surface is height-adjustable; equipment and tools can be used comfortably with either the right or left hand



Principle	What It Means	Example in VET
3. Simple and Intuitive Use	Using the space, equipment, or resource is easy to understand and does not require unnecessarily complex explanations	Equipment uses clear symbols and pictograms; navigation around the VET provider is simple and consistent
4. Perceptible Information	Important information is presented in different ways and can be perceived by different users	An audible equipment signal is supplemented by a visual signal; videos have captions; instructions combine text with a visual sequence of actions
5. Tolerance for Error	The environment and equipment minimise risks and the negative consequences of unintended errors	Hazardous elements of equipment have protective mechanisms; important actions are accompanied by warnings
6. Low Physical Effort	Using the space and equipment does not require unnecessary physical effort or cause excessive fatigue	Doors are easy to open; work surfaces are adjustable; tools and materials are placed within convenient reach
7. Size and Space for Approach and Use	Sufficient space is provided for approach, movement, work, and the use of assistive products	There is sufficient space between workstations for movement; equipment controls and components are accessible in both seated and standing positions

The principles of universal design are not separate requirements that should be applied mechanically one after another. They help us **ask the right questions at the planning stage**: Who will use this space, equipment, or material? What barriers might arise? Can they be prevented from the outset?

What might this look like in a VET provider?

In a workshop, a teacher or vocational training instructor prepares instructions for a practical task. Instead of presenting them only as a long-written description, the instructions can be provided as a short sequence of steps with photographs or pictograms, supplemented by written or audio guidance. This solution can help learners who find it difficult to process large amounts of text, those who perceive information better visually, and those who are only beginning to master occupational terminology.

Alternatively, when arranging a workshop, sufficient space between workstations, adjustable work surfaces, convenient placement of tools, clear markings, and multiple ways of communicating important signals can be planned from the outset. The environment then becomes more convenient and safer for a much wider range of learners.

Look at a familiar environment in a new way

Choose one space or resource in your VET provider – for example, a workshop, classroom, website, practical-task instruction, or online course – and ask:

- ✓ Who might encounter difficulties here?
- ✓ What exactly creates a barrier?
- ✓ What can be changed immediately to make it easier for different people to use?



Universal Design Does Not Mean “One Solution for Everyone”

Universal design should not be equated with identical conditions for everyone. On the contrary, it is based on recognising that people differ in how they move, perceive information, communicate, work at different paces, and in their previous experience and other characteristics.

Universal design therefore **reduces the number of barriers and the need for separate specialised solutions, but it cannot anticipate the needs of every individual person**. If general accessible and flexible solutions are insufficient to ensure the participation of a particular learner, **reasonable accommodation** is required. This is the focus of the next subsection.

2.3. Reasonable Accommodation: An Individual Solution for Removing Barriers

Even an accessible environment designed according to universal design principles cannot anticipate every person's needs. In a particular situation, a learner may require additional adaptations or support in order to learn and participate in the educational process on an equal basis with others.

This is where **reasonable accommodation** is applied.

Under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, *reasonable accommodation* means necessary and appropriate modifications and adjustments, not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure that persons with disabilities can enjoy and exercise all human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis with others.

The key phrase here is **“in a particular case”**. Reasonable accommodation is not determined solely on the basis of a diagnosis or disability category. Two learners with similar impairments may encounter different barriers and require different solutions.

For example, a learner with a hearing impairment may easily understand a teacher's explanation in a quiet classroom, yet struggle to follow spoken instructions in a noisy workshop. The necessary solution will therefore depend not only on the learner's individual characteristics, but also on the specific task, environment, and particular barrier arising in that situation.

From Barrier to Solution

Planning reasonable accommodation should begin not with the question **“What accommodation does a person with this impairment need?”**, but rather with the following key questions:

- 1. What does the learner need to participate in?**

What task must they perform, and which competence must they demonstrate?

- 2. What exactly creates the barrier?**

Is it the way information is presented, the organisation of space, equipment, the pace of task performance, or the method of communication or assessment?

- 3. What adjustment could help remove or reduce this barrier?**

- 4. Do the learning outcomes, occupational requirements, and safety requirements remain intact?**

- 5. Does the proposed solution work for the individual learner?**



It is important to seek answers to these questions **together with the learner**. The learner can explain what difficulties they encounter, what forms of support they have used previously, and what helps them act more independently.

IMPORTANT! Reasonable accommodation is not a ready-made list of solutions for a particular category of people. It is determined on an individual basis according to the specific barrier, task, and learning environment.

How to Determine Reasonable Accommodation

Reasonable accommodation is determined not by a diagnosis or category of impairment, but by the **specific barrier the learner encounters**. Solutions should therefore be identified together with the learner, focusing on what will help them participate in learning and achieve the required outcomes.

Graphic 2. How to Determine the Necessary Reasonable Accommodations: A Step-by-Step Algorithm

1. Identify what the learner needs to participate in

What do they need to do: obtain information, perform a practical task, use equipment, work in a group, complete an assessment, or undertake a work placement?

2. Identify the barrier

What exactly makes participation difficult or impossible? It may be the physical environment, the way information is presented, communication, equipment, work organisation, time constraints, or the way the task is performed.

3. Discuss the situation with the learner

Ask what exactly creates difficulties, what has helped in similar situations before, and which form of support would be convenient and effective for them.

4. Identify a possible solution

What can be changed to remove or reduce the barrier? This may involve adapting the format of materials, altering the method of communication, reorganising space or workstation, providing extra time, using assistive technology, or allowing an alternative method to perform the task.

5. Check occupational requirements and safety standards

Does the proposed solution preserve the required learning outcomes and the core vocational competences? Can the task be performed safely?

6. Try the solution in practice

Agree with the learner on how the accommodation will be implemented and ensure the necessary conditions are in place.

7. Check whether it works

Has the barrier actually been reduced? Can the learner participate more independently? If the solution is not working or if circumstances change, review and adjust it together.



Reasonable accommodation is an ongoing process of finding solutions rather than a one-time decision. What works in the classroom may need to be reviewed in a workshop, during assessments, or throughout a work placement.

What might this look like in practice?

Reasonable accommodation can relate to different components of the educational process. The examples below show how identifying a specific barrier can lead to a practical solution.

Table 2.2. Examples of Reasonable Accommodation: From Barrier to Possible Solution

Barrier	Possible Solution
The learner finds it difficult to follow spoken instructions in a noisy workshop	Provide key stages in writing or visually; demonstrate the sequence of operations before turning equipment on
Printed material cannot be read in its standard format	Provide an electronic version, a print, a format compatible with screen-reading software, or another accessible format
The standard workstation does not allow the learner to use equipment safely	Adjust the height or position of the work surface, equipment, or tools
The learner needs more time to complete a written task due to their communication method or use of assistive technologies	Allow additional time
An oral presentation creates a barrier, provided spoken communication is not the competence being assessed	Agree on an alternative way of presenting the outcome
The learner cannot perceive an audible signal	Supplement it with a visual or other accessible signal
A barrier arises during a work placement that was not present at the VET provider	Work with the learner and employer to identify necessary adjustments to the workstation, communication methods, or organisation of task performance

These are only examples of possible solutions. The same accommodation will not be equally effective for every learner, so its effectiveness should be evaluated and adjusted where necessary.

Reasonable Accommodation Does Not Change Vocational Competences

In VET, it is particularly important to distinguish between the way a task is performed and the vocational competence the learner is expected to demonstrate.

For example, if a future cook is required during an assessment to calculate the correct quantity of ingredients, handwriting speed is not the vocational competence being assessed. In such a case, allowing the use of an electronic calculator or providing additional time may remove the barrier without altering the intended learning outcome.

At the same time, accommodations should not remove or substitute an essential occupational requirement. If a particular action directly defines a vocational competence or is critical to the



safe performance of work, the team must seek a solution that enables the learner to participate while preserving all relevant occupational and safety requirements.

When planning accommodation, it is therefore useful to ask a key guiding question: **What are we changing – the way the learner accesses the task, or the occupational requirement itself?**

If the Proposed Accommodation Cannot Be Provided

Reasonable accommodation is determined by considering the needs of the individual learner, the effectiveness of the proposed measure, and the feasibility of providing it. Under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, reasonable accommodation must not impose a disproportionate or undue burden.

At the same time, the inability to provide the specific proposed accommodation does not automatically mean that support should be denied. It is important to explore alternative solutions together with the learner – measures that remove or minimise the barrier as far as possible and enable participation in the educational process.

When selecting a solution, the requirements for learning outcomes, vocational competences, and safety must also be considered. Potential risks should be assessed individually to determine whether they can be eliminated or reduced through changes to the environment, equipment, work organisation, or other appropriate measures.

Accessibility, Universal Design, and Reasonable Accommodation: How Are They Related?

Accessibility, universal design, and reasonable accommodation complement one another but perform different functions. It is important to distinguish between them to understand which solutions should be provided for all learners and which must be determined individually based on the needs of a particular person.

Table 2.3. Accessibility, Universal Design, and Reasonable Accommodation: What Is the Difference?

Component	Main Question	Example
Accessibility	Can a person use the environment, information, and services?	The workshop can be entered without barriers
Universal Design	What can be designed from the outset so that it works for as wide a range of people as possible?	The workshop provides sufficient space, adjustable work surfaces, clear markings, and different ways of presenting important information
Reasonable Accommodation	What needs to be changed for a specific person when general solutions are insufficient?	For an individual learner, the position of equipment or the way instructions are received is modified

These three components do not replace one another. Accessibility creates the basic conditions, universal design helps reduce barriers for different people from the outset, and reasonable accommodation makes it possible to respond to an individual need that cannot be fully resolved through general solutions.



Case Study. From an Accessible Environment to an Individual Solution

Mariia is training to become a cook. The training workshop provides sufficient space for movement, work areas are organised clearly, and key instructions are provided not only verbally but also in written and visual formats. These solutions make the environment more convenient and easier to understand for different learners.

During practical sessions, it became clear that the standard placement of some equipment and tools created a barrier for Mariia: she found it difficult to reach necessary items independently and to perform specific operations safely.

The vocational training instructor discussed the situation with Mariia. Together, they identified which elements of the workstation posed difficulties and what could be changed without altering the task itself or the occupational requirements for its performance.

As a result, some tools were relocated within Mariia's comfortable reach, the positioning of specific equipment was adjusted, and a work surface of an appropriate height was selected. After several sessions, Mariia and the instructor evaluated how helpful these changes were. They found that she could perform the same vocational tasks as other learners with greater independence and safety.

This example illustrates how general accessibility and universal design solutions can be effectively complemented by reasonable accommodations tailored to the needs of an individual learner. The physical conditions for performing a task are adapted, while the core occupational requirements and expected learning outcomes remain unchanged.

Checklist for Professional Reflection

After reading this section, consider how closely the statements below reflect your professional practice today. Tick those you can agree with. You can return to the others after reading the following sections of the handbook.

- ☐ I pay attention not only to physical accessibility, but also to information, digital, and communication accessibility, as well as the accessibility of the educational process itself.
- ☐ When planning lessons and practical vocational training, I try from the outset to anticipate solutions that will be convenient and accessible for different learners.
- ☐ I use different ways of presenting information and learning materials to reduce barriers for learners.
- ☐ If a learner encounters difficulties, I first try to identify **what specific barrier arises in that situation**, rather than drawing conclusions solely on the basis of a diagnosis or impairment.
- ☐ I discuss with the learner what exactly creates the barrier, what has helped them before, and which solution may be effective in their specific situation.
- ☐ When determining reasonable accommodations, I check whether they help remove or reduce the barrier without changing learning outcomes, essential occupational requirements, or safety requirements.



- ☐ I recognise that a solution that works during theoretical learning may need to be reviewed in a workshop, during assessment, or during a work placement.
- ☐ After reasonable accommodations has been implemented, I check together with the learner whether it is actually helping and, where necessary, look for alternative solutions.

Additional Resources

Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 1673 of 17.12.2025 “On Approval of the Principles, Criteria and Limits of Reasonable Accommodation and Universal Design”

Defines the principles, criteria and limits for the application of reasonable accommodation and universal design, including in education.



Recommendations for Public Authorities on Presenting Information in Formats that Ensure Accessibility

Practical recommendations for preparing information in accessible formats for different users.



Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1 – Official Ukrainian Translation

International guidelines for ensuring the accessibility of websites and digital content for people with diverse needs.



A Short Guide to Digital Accessibility

Practical recommendations for creating accessible digital content and applying digital accessibility principles.



Section 3

Organising Inclusive Learning in VET Providers

Creating a barrier-free and inclusive educational environment in a VET provider begins long before the first lesson. Career guidance, admission, the organisation of support, adaptation of the educational process, and preparation for employment are interconnected stages that influence a learner's success in education and professional development. This section presents practical approaches to organising each of these stages.

3.1. Career Guidance and Support for the Transition to Vocational Education and Training

The transition to a VET provider is an important stage during which a person becomes familiar with a new educational environment, a future occupation, and learning requirements. For graduates of general secondary education institutions, it involves a transition to more independent learning and work in training workshops; for adult applicants, it may involve changing occupations or returning to education after a break. Therefore, a successful transition requires timely information, preparation of the educational environment, and organisation of support.

Career guidance as a basis for informed vocational choice

The purpose of modern career guidance is to help a person make an informed choice about their educational and vocational pathway. To do so, an applicant should receive reliable information about the occupation, learning conditions, employment opportunities, and should also assess their own interests, strengths, and possible support needs. This helps them choose an occupation that corresponds to their interests and vocational goals and creates the conditions for successful learning and future employment.

Support for the transition to learning: an indicative algorithm

The transition to learning at a VET provider should ideally be planned before the educational process begins. This makes it possible to prepare the educational environment in good time, organise the necessary support, and create conditions for the learner's successful adaptation.



Step 1. Gathering information

When?

May–June (for graduates of general secondary education institutions) or when adult groups are being formed.

What should be done?

With the consent given by the applicant or their legal representatives, the VET provider may gather information on effective ways of organising learning, adaptations, and support. The applicant is the primary source of this information. For graduates of general secondary education institutions, additional information may be provided by their previous educational institution and the Inclusive Resource Centre (IRC); for adult applicants, by a career counsellor from Employment Service, rehabilitation facilities, or other professionals who have previously supported the person.

Purpose: to take account of previous positive experience of learning and support when organising the educational process.

Step 2. Becoming familiar with the educational institution

When?

July–August or 1–2 weeks before the start of learning.

What should be done?

Offer the applicant an individual visit to the VET provider at a quiet time so that they can explore the premises without haste, including the grounds, training workshops, classrooms, shelters, sanitary facilities, rest areas, and other important spaces.

Step 3. First meeting with the vocational training instructor

When?

Before classes begin.

What should be done?

Arrange an individual introduction between the applicant and the vocational training instructor.

During the meeting, it is important to discuss the specific features of learning, answer the applicant's questions, and agree on ways of interacting. For adult applicants, such a meeting helps establish a partnership based on mutual respect and cooperation from the outset.

Step 4. Adaptation period

When?

The first weeks of learning.



What should be done?

During the first weeks of learning, approximately 3–4 weeks, it is advisable to observe how the learner adapts to the new environment, the educational process, and work in training workshops. Particular attention should be paid to the learning schedule, understanding of safety rules, interaction with educators and other learners, the timely identification of barriers, and determination of necessary support. At this stage, successful adaptation and safe entry into the educational process are more important than the speed at which practical tasks are completed.

Partnership during the transition

Support for the transition to VET is based on open dialogue and respect for the person's choices. The role of educators is not to draw conclusions about an applicant's ability to learn an occupation solely on the basis of a diagnosis, disability, or other formal characteristics, but to identify together with the applicant the conditions and support required for successful and safe learning.

For example

Before (medical model)

"He has significant impairments. We are not sure he will be able to work in the workshop."

After (rights-based approach)

"Let us identify together which conditions and adaptations will help you learn the occupation safely and effectively."

3.2. Admissions: Organising a Barrier-Free Admission Process

The admissions process should ensure equal access to vocational education and training and create conditions in which every applicant can obtain the necessary information, communicate their needs, and receive timely support. To achieve this, the VET provider should ensure physical, informational, and communication accessibility.

Organising a barrier-free admissions process

When preparing and conducting the admissions process, it is advisable to pay attention to several key aspects.

Physical Accessibility

The admissions office should be as accessible as possible to all applicants.

It is important to ensure an unobstructed route to the premises, clear navigation, accessible entrances, and the possibility of obtaining assistance when needed. If the building has architectural barriers, the VET provider should provide alternative arrangements for submitting documents and supporting applicants.



Information Accessibility

Admission rules, the list of required documents, admissions office operating hours, application deadlines, and the conditions for studying via vouchers or referrals from the Employment Service should preferably be provided in a range of accessible formats – both on the VET provider's website and directly at the admissions office.

Partnership-based communication during admission

For many people, communication with admissions staff shapes their first impression of the educational facility.

Communication should therefore be based on the principles of respect, equality, and partnership.

It is important to:

- ✓ address the applicant directly, even if they are accompanied by parents or other persons;
- ✓ take into account the life and professional experience of adult applicants;
- ✓ use appropriate and non-discriminatory terminology;
- ✓ create an atmosphere in which a person feels comfortable communicating their need for support.

Appropriate Language

During communication, outdated or stigmatising expressions should be avoided.

It is recommended to use the following terms:

- ✓ person with a disability;
- ✓ applicant with special educational needs;
- ✓ applicant with a hearing, visual, or musculoskeletal impairment;
- ✓ woman or man veteran with a disability.

These formulations reflect a contemporary rights-based approach and demonstrate respect for human dignity.

Initial Identification of Support Needs

During the admissions process, the VET provider does not assess a person's ability to learn a chosen occupation on the basis of a diagnosis or status. Its task is to identify together with the applicant what conditions, adaptations, or forms of support may be required for learning and to prepare the educational environment in good time.

The applicant is the primary source of information about their support needs. It is important to discuss their previous educational or professional experience, strengths, possible barriers, and forms of support that have already proved effective.

With the consent of the applicant or their legal representatives, other sources of information and available documents may also be used. The range of such documents depends not only on the applicant's age, but also on their previous educational and professional experience and life circumstances.



In particular, the following may be useful:

- ✓ an IRC assessment report;
- ✓ an Individual Development Programme (if available);
- ✓ information from the previous educational institution or parents (with the consent of the applicant or their legal representatives);
- ✓ an individual rehabilitation programme;
- ✓ an extract from the decision of an expert team assessing a person's daily functioning, or other documents provided for by law;
- ✓ documents confirming education and professional experience;
- ✓ recommendations from an Employment Service career counsellor or other professionals (if available).

This information can help clarify which adaptations and forms of support were used previously, what proved effective, and which conditions need to be taken into account to organise safe learning.

Initial identification of needs: what does this mean in practice?

Initial identification of needs does not involve assessing a person on the basis of their diagnosis or determining whether they are "suitable" for learning.

Its purpose is to identify which conditions, adaptations, or forms of support will help the person learn successfully and work safely in the training and workplace environment.

Before

"Bring us a medical certificate so that we can understand whether you can train for this occupation."

After

"Let us discuss your previous experience and the support you may need during learning. If you have documents containing support recommendations, they can also help us plan it."

Information obtained during the admissions process may be used for subsequent planning of learner support and preparation of the educational environment before learning begins. This makes it possible to identify possible barriers, necessary adaptations, and other forms of support in advance and to ensure continuity from the first days of learning.

The checklist in Appendix 3.1 may be used to assess the admissions office's readiness for a barrier-free admissions process.

3.3. Organising the Learner Support System after Admission

Once a learner has been admitted to a VET provider, the support system should be organised to ensure their full participation in the educational process, practical vocational training, and work placements. Such support is an integral part of the educational process and involves the timely identification of barriers, joint planning of solutions, their implementation, and review in line with the learner's needs.



From individual solutions to an integrated system

In practice, support at a VET provider is sometimes reduced to individual measures: providing additional time, changing a learner's seat in the classroom, support from a practical psychologist, or adapting a single learning resource. Such solutions can be useful, but without coordination among teaching staff they remain fragmented and do not ensure continuity of support.

For example, a teacher may use an accessible format for learning materials, while the vocational training instructor may not know how best to provide practical instructions to the learner. Similarly, a solution that works well during theoretical learning may prove insufficient in a training workshop or during a work placement.

This is why support requires joint planning. The administration, teaching staff, psychological and pedagogical support specialists, and the learner should have a shared understanding of:

- ✓ the conditions required for the learner's successful learning;
- ✓ who is responsible for implementing the agreed decisions;
- ✓ how these decisions will be applied during theoretical learning, practical vocational training, work placements, and assessment;
- ✓ how the team will determine whether the support is effective.

The learner as a participant in support planning

Decisions about support should not be made only about the learner; they should be made together with the learner. The person themselves knows their own experience best, including how they perform tasks, the conditions in which they work most effectively, and the forms of support they have used previously.

The learner's participation helps avoid decisions based on teaching staff assumptions rather than the learner's actual needs. At the same time, it helps develop independence and the ability to explain which conditions are needed for learning and future professional activity.

Support should strengthen the learner's independence rather than create permanent dependence on help from others. Therefore, when planning support, it is important not only to determine what assistance the VET provider can offer, but also to identify which tasks the person can perform independently, which strategies they already use, and which new ways of working they can learn.

Continuity of support

A learner's needs and learning conditions may change. Solutions that are sufficient in a classroom may not always be suitable in a training workshop or at a workplace in an enterprise. New barriers may arise as topics, equipment, assessment methods, or work placement sites change.

Support should therefore not be planned once for the entire period of learning. The team should observe how the learner participates in the educational process, discuss the effectiveness of agreed solutions with the learner, and review them when necessary.

It is also important to ensure that necessary information is shared among participants in the educational process. At the same time, such information should relate only to the organisation of learning and should be shared in accordance with the learner's right to privacy and confidentiality.

**Table 3.1.** Key Components of the Learner Support System

Component	Purpose
Learner Profile	Helps summarise strengths, previous experience, barriers, and the conditions necessary for full participation in learning.
Psychological and Pedagogical Support Team	Ensures joint planning, allocation of responsibilities, cooperation among participants, and review of agreed decisions.
Adaptations	Translate agreed decisions into specific changes to learning materials, communication, the environment, the organisation of practical work, and assessment.

These components do not operate separately from one another. The Learner Profile helps record the information needed to plan support. Together with the learner, the team identifies and agrees on solutions. Adaptations ensure that these solutions are implemented in practice without lowering the requirements for vocational learning outcomes.

The checklist in Appendix 3.2 may be used to plan and coordinate the support team's actions during the first month of learning.

3.4. Learner Profile: A Tool for Planning Support

What is the Learner Profile?

Once the learner's needs have been identified, it is important to coordinate how support will be organised during learning. Teaching staff may use the **Learner Profile** for this purpose – a practical tool proposed in this handbook that helps systematise information about a person's strengths, barriers, and the conditions required for participation in the educational process.

The Profile is not a document defined by law and does not replace documentation required by legislation. A VET provider may adapt it to its own needs and regularly update the information in line with changes in the learner's needs and the educational process.

From medical information to pedagogical decisions

A common mistake is to plan support solely on the basis of a medical diagnosis or disability status. In reality, a diagnosis does not determine how a person learns or works: even learners with the same diagnosis may have different experiences, strengths, and barriers and may require different adaptations. The Profile therefore helps shift the focus from medical information to pedagogical decisions by answering three questions:

- ✓ Which strengths can we build on?
- ✓ What barriers arise?
- ✓ What changes can help remove them?

**Table 3.2.** How the Learner Profile Helps Move from Diagnosis to Pedagogical Decisions

If we think in terms of diagnosis	What this leads to in education	What we identify about the individual learner	Pedagogical decisions we make
"Learner with ADHD"	We impose rigid expectations for prolonged static discipline and punish inattentiveness.	Strength: remembers visual information well and is interested in assembling mechanisms. Barrier: loses attention during lengthy spoken instructions.	We provide instructions in small chunks, use step-by-step visual diagrams, and build on hands-on practical work.
"Veteran/civilian with a blast injury and acoustic barotrauma (concussion)"	We assume that the person is "unable to learn" because of irritability or forgetfulness, or we avoid setting expectations.	Strength: the person has substantial life and organisational experience and demonstrates discipline and determination. Barrier: becomes tired quickly from workshop noise and has difficulty remembering large amounts of textual information.	We provide noise-reducing headphones, break textual material into checklists, and schedule short breaks during practical tasks.
"Learner with a hearing impairment"	We seat the learner at the front and try to speak more loudly.	Strength: the person processes visual information well. Barrier: has difficulty distinguishing spoken instructions in workplace noise.	We provide short visual instructions, display text on screen, and use gestures and step-by-step photo cards during demonstrations.
"Learner with a musculoskeletal impairment / amputation"	We give the simplest tasks "for form's sake" and exempt the learner from using complex equipment.	Strength: the person works carefully with drawings and demonstrates analytical thinking and accuracy. Barrier: prolonged standing causes pain or discomfort.	We equip the workstation with an appropriate adjustable chair/support and use holders for workpieces and tools.

Structure of the Learner Profile

The Profile should be concise and contain only information that helps organise learning. It is advisable to include four interconnected sections.

1. Strengths, resources, and experience

This section records the learner's strengths, previous experience, practical skills, motivation, and other resources that can provide a foundation for organising learning and overcoming difficulties.

2. Barriers in the educational environment

The second section describes barriers that restrict the learner's participation in the educational process – physical, informational, sensory, social and psychological, or organisational – linking them to specific learning conditions.

3. Necessary support and adaptations

Once barriers have been identified, the team agrees on the necessary adaptations and other pedagogical or organisational solutions, linking them to specific barriers rather than to a diagnosis.



4. Specific aspects of interaction and communication

The final section records practical recommendations for interaction and communication with the learner, for example how instructions should be provided, how information should be duplicated, how changes should be communicated, or how sensory load can be reduced. These recommendations should be brief, practical, and clear to all teaching staff.

What does this mean in practice?

The Learner Profile is not a formal document intended simply for filing in administrative records. Its main purpose is to help teaching staff quickly understand the learner's needs and make informed pedagogical decisions.

The document should be brief, clear, and regularly updated based on the work of the support team. If the Profile contains excessive information or turns into a detailed description of medical data, it loses its practical value.

An indicative Learner Profile template is provided in Appendix 3.3. A VET provider may adapt it to its own needs and learning arrangements.

3.5. Support Team: Partnership and Shared Responsibility

Even a well-prepared Learner Profile will not provide support on its own. Information about strengths, barriers, and necessary conditions must be translated into agreed decisions that are clear to everyone involved in the educational process. This is the purpose of the psychological and pedagogical support team established within a VET provider.

The support team is not a formal meeting convened simply to prepare documents, nor is it a group of specialists who work with the learner separately from one another. It is a way of organising shared responsibility so that agreed decisions are applied consistently during theoretical learning, practical vocational training, work placements, and assessment. Without teamwork, support can become fragmented and depend on the personal initiative of individual teaching staff.

Together, team members:

- ✓ analyse information about the learner's strengths, experience, and needs;
- ✓ identify barriers that may arise in different learning conditions;
- ✓ agree on the necessary pedagogical and organisational solutions;
- ✓ allocate responsibility for implementing them;
- ✓ assess the effectiveness of support and adjust the decisions where necessary.

Who is part of the support team?

The composition of the team is determined by the learner's needs and the specific features of vocational training. It may include the learner, a representative of the administration, a vocational training instructor, teachers, a practical psychologist, a social pedagogue, and other VET provider staff.



Where necessary and with the learner's consent, parents or other legal representatives, a teacher or vocational training instructor assistant, a learner assistant, and other specialists involved in support may take part in discussions of specific issues. These may include healthcare, social, and rehabilitation professionals, veteran support specialists, representatives of the Employment Service, civil society organisations, and employers.

The composition of the team may change depending on the stage of learning and the issues that need to be addressed. Only those participants whose involvement is necessary for making specific decisions should be included in discussions. Information about the learner should be shared confidentially and only to the extent necessary for organising learning and support.

Roles of team members

Table 3.3. Main Roles of Support Team Members

Participant	Main Role
Learner	Participates in identifying their own needs, communicates barriers, suggests ways of performing tasks, and assesses the effectiveness of support. Such participation promotes independence and self-advocacy.
Representative of the administration	Organises the team's work, ensures cooperation among staff, designates responsible persons, provides access to necessary resources, and creates conditions for implementing agreed decisions.
Teacher	Ensures the accessibility of learning information and assessment methods, applies agreed adaptations, observes the learner's participation, and works with the team to assess the effectiveness of the selected solutions.
Vocational training instructor	Analyses barriers and risks during practical vocational training, selects safe ways of performing occupational tasks, and participates in adapting the workstation, equipment, and instructions.
Practical psychologist and social pedagogue	Help identify psychological, communication, and social barriers, advise teaching staff, and support the learner's adaptation and participation in the educational process.
Teacher (vocational training instructor) assistant	Helps the teaching staff member organise an accessible educational process and implement agreed adaptations. Does not make pedagogical decisions or carry out assessment instead of the teaching staff member.
Learner assistant	Helps meet individual daily living and social needs, including mobility, orientation, self-care, communication, and the use of assistive products. Does not perform the functions of teaching staff or complete tasks for the learner.
Other specialists and partners involved	Where necessary, healthcare, social, and rehabilitation professionals, veteran support specialists, representatives of the Employment Service, civil society organisations, employers, and other specialists may be involved in addressing specific issues.



Important

- ✓ The learner is a partner in making decisions about their own support. Instead of assuming, “He will probably find it difficult to work in the workshop,” the team should ask, “What conditions will help you perform this task safely and independently?”
- ✓ Roles of the teacher assistant, vocational training instructor assistant, and learner assistant. The teacher assistant and vocational training instructor assistant help the relevant teaching staff member organise an accessible educational process and provide the necessary support to learners with special educational needs. The learner assistant provides individual assistance to the learner according to their needs. The involvement of assistants does not change teaching staff responsibility for organising learning and making pedagogical decisions.

How to organise the work of the team

The effectiveness of the team depends not only on its composition, but also on how interaction among its members is organised.

1. Designate a coordinator

One member of the VET provider staff should coordinate the team’s work: initiate meetings, ensure the exchange of necessary information, record agreed decisions, and monitor their review. The coordinator does not bear sole responsibility for support, but helps ensure that agreed decisions are implemented.

2. Hold short working meetings

Not every issue requires a lengthy formal meeting. During short working meetings, the team can discuss:

- ✓ what helps the learner learn successfully;
- ✓ what new difficulties have arisen;
- ✓ whether agreed decisions are being implemented;
- ✓ what needs to be changed;
- ✓ who is responsible for the next steps.

The frequency of meetings is determined by the learner’s needs. They may be held more frequently at the beginning of learning or during the transition to a new type of practical activity.

3. Record specific decisions and responsibilities

Following the discussion, it is important to determine **what needs to be done, who will do it, under what conditions, how the effectiveness of the decision will be checked, and when it should be reviewed.**

For example, the wording “provide the learner with more support” is too general. By contrast, the decision “before each new practical operation, the vocational training instructor provides



a short step-by-step instruction with photographs and checks the learner's understanding of the sequence of actions" is specific and clear.

4. Ensure access to necessary information

The teaching staff who work with the learner should know the agreed approaches to interaction and the organisation of learning. At the same time, they do not need full access to medical records or other private information.

For their work, it is sufficient to know which barriers may arise, which conditions help the learner learn, which adaptations have been agreed, and how to act in situations requiring additional support. The Learner Profile and other working documents should be used as sources of practical guidance, not merely for reporting purposes.

5. Regularly review the effectiveness of support

The team should assess not only whether agreed decisions have been implemented, but also their outcomes: whether learning materials have become more accessible, whether the learner can perform tasks more safely and independently, whether identified barriers have been reduced, whether adaptations create any new difficulties, and whether the requirements for vocational competences remain unchanged. The learner must be involved in this assessment.

From support to independence

The purpose of the team's work is not to provide constant supervision or perform tasks for the learner, but to create conditions for the learner to participate as independently as possible in learning and professional activity. The effectiveness of the team is therefore determined not by the number of meetings held or documents completed, but by whether the learner participates fully in learning, whether barriers are reduced, whether teaching staff act in a coordinated manner, and whether support helps the learner become more independent.

3.6. Adaptations without Lowering Standards during Learning and Work Placements

When organising inclusive learning, a natural question arises: can the way a task is performed be changed, can additional time or assistive products be provided, or can a different assessment format be used without lowering the requirements for vocational training?

This is particularly important in VET because an awarded qualification confirms that a graduate has achieved the required learning outcomes and is ready to perform occupational tasks safely and to the required standard. At the same time, identical requirements for outcomes do not mean that all learners must learn, perform tasks, and demonstrate their competences in the same way.

So, it is important to distinguish between:

- ✓ **what** the learner must acquire and demonstrate;
- ✓ **how** the learner learns and performs tasks;
- ✓ **how** the educator verifies achievement of the required outcomes.



Occupational requirements and quality criteria remain unchanged. However, teaching and learning methods, material formats, the organisation of the environment, equipment, and assessment methods may be adapted provided that this does not change the substance of the vocational competence or conflict with occupational safety requirements.

Adaptation and modification: what is the difference?

Adaptation is a change in how material is presented, learning is organised, the environment or equipment is arranged, or assessment is conducted that helps remove a barrier without changing mandatory learning outcomes or vocational qualification requirements.

For example, a learner may use a step-by-step visual instruction, complete a theoretical test on a computer instead of writing by hand, work at an adjustable table, or use a specialised tool holder. The requirements regarding correct performance of the technological operation, quality of the result, and safety remain unchanged.

Modification involves changing the learning content itself or the expected outcome: reducing mandatory content, removing occupationally significant operations, simplifying criteria, or replacing a competence that the learner is expected to demonstrate.

If a particular operation or competence is mandatory for awarding a qualification, it cannot simply be removed because the traditional way of performing it creates a barrier. First, it is necessary to determine whether the learner can perform the occupational task in another safe way – using adapted equipment, assistive products, or a different organisation of work.

Three questions for checking a decision

To determine whether an adaptation changes an occupational requirement, the team can check the decision against three questions:

- 1. Which vocational competence are we assessing?**
- 2. Does the proposed adaptation change this competence or the criteria used to assess it?**
- 3. Does the task remain safe for the learner and other people?**

If only the way information is received, the workstation is organised, or the result is demonstrated changes, while the occupational requirement and assessment criteria remain unchanged, this is an adaptation. Any decision concerning equipment, tools, or the method of performing a practical operation must comply with occupational safety requirements.

What can be adapted?

Adaptations may relate to learning materials and instructions, teaching and learning methods, pace of learning, the workplace and equipment, communication, assessment, and the conditions of practical vocational training and work placements. A specific solution is determined not by a diagnosis or learner category, but by the barrier that arises in a particular learning or workplace situation.

**Table 3.4.** Examples of Adaptations in the Educational Process

Area	Possible Adaptations
Learning materials and instructions	Breaking complex instructions into short steps; plain and unambiguous language; written reinforcement of spoken information; enlarged print and increased contrast; diagrams, photographs, pictograms, video demonstrations; process sheets; digital formats compatible with assistive technologies.
Teaching and learning methods and time management	Presenting material in small chunks; combining explanation with demonstration; repeating a new operation; gradually increasing task complexity; additional time; short scheduled breaks; checklists and visual plans.
Workplace, equipment, and environment	Adjusting the work surface or seating; sufficient space for movement; holders for workpieces; adapted handles; task lighting; high-contrast or tactile markings; reducing unnecessary noise; appropriate protective equipment.
Communication	Short, specific instructions; sufficient response time; checking understanding; written reinforcement of important information; use of a convenient communication channel; advance notice of changes.
Assessment	Additional time; electronic rather than handwritten format; written or visual supports; breaking a complex task into stages; use of assistive technologies where they do not change the competence being assessed.
Practical vocational training and work placements	Adaptation of the workplace and equipment; agreement on adaptations with the employer; designation of a responsible person; adapted instructions; an agreed method of communication and assessment of work placement outcomes.

Important!

Additional time. Providing additional time is an adaptation only when speed is not in itself an occupational requirement. If an occupational task must be completed within a specified time, the required pace should be gradually achieved during learning.

Safety. Adaptations that may affect safety require particular attention. For example, noise-reducing headphones must not prevent the learner from perceiving warning or emergency signals; where necessary, audible signals should be supplemented with visual ones.

Adapting assessment

Assessment should show whether the learner has achieved the required learning outcomes and should not unintentionally measure a skill that is not being assessed.

For example, if knowledge of a technological process is being assessed, a slow handwriting speed should not result in a lower grade. However, if a particular method or pace of performance is an occupationally significant competence, that requirement must remain unchanged.

**Table 3.5.** Examples of Assessment Adaptations without Changing Occupational Requirements

Barrier during learning or assessment	Possible Adaptation
Requirement to complete a handwritten task within a limited time where handwriting speed is not being assessed	Additional time; completion on a computer; voice input; oral response, etc.
Lengthy spoken instructions without written or visual support	Written or visual instructions; process sheet; opportunity to clarify the sequence of operations.
Requirement to complete a complex task over a long period without a break	Breaking the complex task into stages with scheduled breaks without changing the assessment criteria.
Requirement to explain a technological process only orally	Written support materials or a demonstration of the operation where spoken language itself is not being assessed.
Printed technological documentation available only in a standard format that is inaccessible to the individual learner	Enlarged print; electronic format; screen reader; high-contrast text.
Requirement to perform an operation only with a standard tool that the learner cannot use effectively	Adapted handles, holders, or other assistive devices, provided that they do not change the substance of the occupational operation and comply with safety requirements.

Before changing an assessment format, the educator should determine which outcome is being assessed, which criteria remain unchanged, which barrier the adaptation removes, and whether the chosen method allows the learner's independent performance to be assessed reliably and safely.

Adaptations during work placements

Adaptations used at the VET provider should be reviewed in light of the actual conditions at the enterprise. Before the work placement begins, the VET provider, together with the learner and employer, should identify possible barriers and occupational risks, agree on necessary adaptations, check the compatibility of assistive products with equipment, designate a responsible person and communication method, and agree on how work placement outcomes will be assessed.

Only information necessary for organising work and ensuring safety should be shared with the work placement supervisor. The work placement should help assess not only the effectiveness of adaptations, but also the extent to which the learner can use them independently in a real working environment.

The checklist in Appendix 3.4 may be used to assess the accessibility and safety of the training workshop and plan necessary changes.

What does this look like in practice?

During qualification assessment for the occupation of Chef [a cook], a learner with hand tremor had to demonstrate the ability to calculate the required quantity of ingredients, follow the technological sequence, and prepare products made from complex dough.



Because handwriting speed was not a vocational competence being assessed, the learner completed the calculations electronically and was given additional time. For the practical component, a non-slip surface and holders for cookware were provided. These adaptations did not perform operations for the learner and did not alter the cooking technology.

The assessment criteria – accuracy of calculations, adherence to the recipe and technological sequence, safe performance, quality of the finished product, and organisation of the workstation – remained unchanged.

Thus, the vocational outcome did not change; what changed was the way the learner was able to demonstrate it.

What does this mean for the educator?

When planning an adaptation, the starting point should be the specific task and barrier rather than a diagnosis or disability category:

1. What task must the learner perform and which competence must they demonstrate?
2. What specifically prevents the learner from performing it in the usual way?
3. What change could remove this barrier?
4. Do the vocational competence, quality criteria, and safety requirements remain unchanged?
5. Can the learner use the proposed solution as independently as possible?
6. How will the team check its effectiveness?

An adaptation is justified when it removes a barrier without changing the vocational competence, assessment criteria, or safety requirements.

Case Study. From Admission to Work Placement

Andrii was planning to enrol in a VET programme leading to the qualification of Automotive Repair Mechanic. He was interested in technology, understood how mechanisms worked, and already had experience of basic repairs. Andrii has a hearing impairment and uses hearing aids. In a noisy environment, he finds it difficult to distinguish spoken instructions.

Before learning began, representatives of the VET provider discussed Andrii's previous learning experience, strengths, possible barriers, and forms of support that had already proved effective for him. Where relevant documents were available, the team also used information that could help plan support.

During the admissions process, admissions staff did not assess Andrii's abilities on the basis of his hearing impairment. Instead, they asked which conditions would help him learn successfully. Andrii explained that he needed to be able to see the face of the person speaking, receive key instructions in writing, and have an opportunity to review the sequence of an operation again.

After admission and before studies began, the psychological and pedagogical support team worked with Andrii using the Learner Profile to systematise information about the support he required. The profile recorded:



- ✓ **Strengths** – technical thinking, attention to detail, practical experience, and well-developed visual perception;
- ✓ **Barriers** – reliance on spoken instructions and audible warnings in a noisy workshop without visual alternatives;
- ✓ **Necessary solutions** – short written and visual instructions, demonstrations of operations from a position that is easy to observe, and visual duplication of important audible signals.

During the first classes, the vocational training instructor noticed that speaking more loudly did not help Andrii understand instructions better. After discussing this with the support team, he began explaining tasks before equipment was switched on, demonstrating the sequence of actions, and providing a short process sheet with photographs. Other learners in the group later began using these sheets as well.

During a practical assessment, Andrii had to identify a fault, select the necessary tools, perform the required operations, and comply with safety rules. He was allowed to use a process sheet showing the sequence of work stages. However, the sheet did not provide the answer about the fault or how to correct it.

The assessment criteria remained the same as for other learners: correct identification of the fault, feasibility of the proposed solution, safe use of tools, compliance with the technological process, quality of work, and independence. Thus, the way instructions were received changed, but the occupational task and the requirements for its performance did not.

Before the work placement, the vocational training instructor and Andrii inspected the future workplace and agreed with the enterprise representative on communication methods and ways to provide visual alternatives to important messages. During the placement, Andrii himself explained to his supervisor how best to attract his attention before giving an instruction.

The support did not perform occupational tasks for Andrii. It helped remove barriers, preserve qualification requirements, and create conditions in which the learner could learn safely and with increasing independence.

Checklist for Professional Reflection

After reading this section, consider how closely the statements below reflect your current professional practice. Check the statements you agree with. You can return to the others after reading the following sections of the handbook.

- ☐ During admission and at the start of studies, I take into account the learner's strengths, previous experience, vocational interests, and the conditions necessary for their full participation in the educational process.
- ☐ I discuss with the learner which conditions and forms of support help them learn most effectively.
- ☐ When planning support, I analyse barriers that arise from the learner's interaction with the educational environment rather than drawing conclusions solely on the basis of a diagnosis or status.



- ☐ I use information about the learner's strengths, barriers, and needs to make specific pedagogical decisions.
- ☐ I cooperate with other teaching staff and specialists so that support is coordinated across different stages of learning.
- ☐ When planning adaptations, I check whether they remove barriers without compromising learning outcomes, occupational requirements, or safety standards.
- ☐ During practical vocational training and work placements, I review the necessary adaptations in light of real working conditions.
- ☐ I regularly assess whether support helps the learner participate fully in learning and become more independent.

Additional Resources

Methodological Recommendations on Introducing Barrier-Free Educational Services in Preschool, General Secondary, Vocational Education and Training, and Higher Education Institutions

Practical recommendations on creating a barrier-free educational environment.



International Labour Organization (ILO). *Promoting Diversity and Inclusion through Workplace Adjustments: A Practical Guide*

A practical guide for employers on providing reasonable accommodation in the workplace. It offers step-by-step guidance and practical examples of workplace adjustments, including adaptations to job tasks, machinery and equipment, working time, and work organisation.



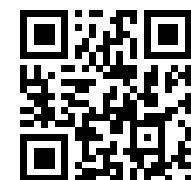
Regional Guidelines on Reasonable Accommodation for Persons with Disabilities in TVET Institutions and the Workplace

Practical guidance on providing reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities in vocational education and training institutions and in the workplace.



Barrier-Free Handbook

A practical resource on the principles of accessibility, appropriate communication, and interaction with diverse groups of people.



Section 4

Inclusive Work Placements and Transition to Employment

Section 4 focuses on organising inclusive work placements for vocational education and training (VET) learners and supporting their transition from education to employment. It covers preparing learners for work placements, selecting and evaluating placement providers, arranging necessary support services, implementing reasonable accommodations, removing barriers, and ensuring a safe learning environment with dedicated mentoring. Particular emphasis is placed on evaluating work placement outcomes, collaborating with employers, leveraging practical work experience to facilitate job placement, and supporting graduates as they adapt to their first workplace.

4.1. Work Placement as Part of the Learner's Professional Pathway

A work placement is one of the key stages of vocational and practical training. During this phase, learners further develop the knowledge and skills they have acquired, demonstrate their vocational competences they have developed, and adapt to real working conditions. A work placement helps determine the extent to which a learner's **learning outcomes** meet the requirements of a particular occupation and workplace. At the same time, **it provides learners with an opportunity to evaluate** whether their chosen occupation, working conditions, and work environment align with their personal interests, capabilities, and professional aspirations.

For **an employer, a work placement offers a direct opportunity to observe** a prospective employee's professional potential and assess their competence, motivation, sense of responsibility, and capacity to learn on the job. Consequently, the successful completion of a work placement can serve as an important stepping stone toward receiving a recommendation, securing a further internship, or obtaining employment with the organisation.

Inclusive work placements are built on the principle that every learner should have a genuine opportunity to perform occupational tasks, demonstrate their competences they have acquired, and participate fully in the workplace environment.

The learning outcomes, vocational competences, assessment criteria, and safety requirements established by the educational programme remain unchanged. However, depending on a learner's individual needs, the conditions, methods, sequence, pace of task completion, formats of



instruction, and organisation of support may be adapted. These adaptations are designed to remove specific barriers without replacing or diminishing the core occupational tasks the learner is expected to perform.

It is equally important to assess not only the learner's readiness for the workplace, but also the workplace itself: its accessibility and safety, the clarity of instructions, the team's readiness for inclusive collaboration, the availability of mentoring support, and the feasibility of providing reasonable accommodation.

The learner is an active participant in selecting their work placement, determining the nature and level of support required, evaluating their achievements, and planning their transition into employment. A learner's lived experience and perspective help identify the conditions under which they perform most successfully, the barriers they encounter, and the forms of support that best foster their independence.

The outcomes of the work placement make it possible to:

- ✓ confirm the learner's achievement of vocational competences;
- ✓ identify the learner's strengths;
- ✓ identify competences that require further development;
- ✓ clarify appropriate working conditions, pace, and work format;
- ✓ determine effective workplace adaptations;
- ✓ compile a portfolio and obtain a letter of recommendation;
- ✓ prepare the learner for job interviews; and
- ✓ discuss potential employment opportunities with the work placement provider.

What Does This Mean in Practice?

For a vocational education and training (VET) provider, this means that when organising a work placement, it is essential to assess not only the learner's readiness to perform occupational tasks, but also the readiness of the workplace itself. Potential barriers, necessary adaptations, reasonable accommodations, and support arrangements required for the learner to perform occupational tasks safely and independently should be identified in advance.

The outcomes of the work placement should serve a dual purpose: evaluating the learner's achievements and planning their further career pathway. This involves identifying effective accommodations, refining ongoing support needs, preparing the learner for a job interview, and discussing possible employment arrangements with the employer.

An inclusive work placement is grounded in ensuring accessible conditions for performing occupational tasks – not in lowering professional standards or exempting the learner from essential job duties.

4.2. Preparing the Learner for Work Placement

The learner is an equal participant in preparing for a work placement, rather than merely a recipient of predetermined support. Their direct involvement in the planning process makes it possible



to account for their previous experience, vocational interests, strengths, functional needs, and expectations regarding future professional activity. This approach promotes informed career decision-making, fosters a sense of responsibility, and develops the learner's ability to identify and communicate their own support needs.

Preparation for a work placement should begin not with an analysis of the learner's diagnosis or assumptions about possible limitations, but with an assessment of their vocational competences and functioning while performing specific work-related tasks. Together with the learner, the VET provider team identifies the learner's existing vocational skills, the conditions that enable effective performance, potential barriers, and the level of support required.

It is important to assess the following:

- ✓ Established vocational competences;
- ✓ The ability to perform core work-related tasks and operations;
- ✓ The ability to use equipment and tools safely;
- ✓ The level of independence;
- ✓ The ability to understand oral, written, and visual instructions;
- ✓ The ability to ask for assistance;
- ✓ Communication skills for interacting with supervisors, mentors, and colleagues;
- ✓ Responses to noise, changes in work pace, unfamiliar environments, and stressful situations;
- ✓ The need for adaptations, assistive devices, or support;
- ✓ Readiness to travel independently to the work placement site.

Assessment should be based on direct **observation of the learner performing specific tasks**. Rather than relying on general evaluative statements, assessors should use specific descriptions that reflect the learner's established competences, the challenges they face, and the conditions under which they are able to perform most effectively.

Table 4.1. Describing a Learner's Vocational Functioning Instead of Using General Evaluative Labels

Instead of	Better to say
Cannot work independently	Performs tasks independently after a practical demonstration and when provided with a brief visual guide
Does not understand instructions	Completes tasks successfully when instructions are broken down into short, sequential steps and accompanied by a demonstration
Works too slowly	Works at a consistent pace, follows the sequence of operations, and achieves the required quality standards
Inattentive	Requires short breaks and periodic check-ins during prolonged or repetitive tasks
Cannot work in a noisy environment	Performs high-quality work when background noise is reduced or when verbal instructions are reinforced with written guides
Constantly needs assistance	Performs familiar tasks independently; requires a demonstration and periodic feedback when learning new skills
Cannot work in a team	Collaborates successfully with colleagues when roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and a designated contact person is available



This assessment approach helps avoid subjective judgement, determine the learner's actual level of occupational competence, and identify the conditions that enable them to work independently and perform effectively.

Support measures and adaptations are selected based on specific occupational tasks, the working environment, and the identified barriers.

They may relate to:

- ✓ the arrangement of the workstation and the accessibility of routes within the work environment;
- ✓ the selection or adaptation of equipment and tools;
- ✓ the provision of instructions in accessible formats;
- ✓ the organisation, sequencing, and pacing of tasks;
- ✓ work duration and break schedules;
- ✓ professional communication and feedback methods;
- ✓ safe work procedures and emergency response protocols.

An important component of preparing for a work placement is the learner's self-assessment and reflection. These help learners develop an understanding of their vocational competences, strengths, challenges, optimal working conditions, and the support they may require. Engaging learners in this process of self-analysis fosters professional responsibility, independence, and a readiness to discuss the conditions they need to perform professional tasks successfully. To facilitate this process, VET institutions may use the Learner Self-Assessment and Reflection Form (Appendix 4.1). The learner's responses should then be discussed during an individual meeting and directly inform the work placement objectives, appropriate adaptations, and overall support plan.

Ultimately, the goal of work placement preparation is not to create a generic profile of the learner, but to establish a clear understanding of the specific professional tasks they are ready to perform, the potential barriers they may encounter, and the conditions and support that will enable them to work safely, independently, and effectively.

4.3. Selecting and Assessing a Work Placement Provider

A work placement provider should be selected not only based on its alignment with the occupation and educational programme, but also with due regard to the individual professional pathway of the learner. When choosing a provider, it is important to take into account the learner's acquired competences, professional interests, functional support needs, level of independence, and the conditions that enable them to perform occupational tasks as effectively as possible. A workplace that is suitable for one learner may create significant **barriers** for another, even if both are pursuing the same occupation and qualification.

When selecting a work placement provider, institutions must evaluate not only whether the organisation meets the educational programme's requirements, but also whether the individual learner will be able to perform occupational tasks safely, demonstrate their competences, and receive necessary support. To this end, it is advisable to evaluate accessibility across various dimensions.



A comprehensive assessment of a work placement provider involves analysing several interrelated dimensions of accessibility.

Physical Accessibility: The ability to enter the workplace premises safely and without barriers, move freely between areas, use the workstation, sanitary facilities, staff break areas, and shelters, and evacuate safely in an emergency.

Examples:

- ✓ An enterprise may fully meet the training requirements for a cook, yet remain unsuitable for a learner who uses a wheelchair if the production facilities are on different floors without a lift, work surfaces are at an improper height, or routes to the sanitary facilities or shelter involve stairs.
- ✓ For a learner with a hearing impairment, a noisy workshop may create a barrier if all instructions, warnings, and emergency alerts rely exclusively on spoken or audible signals.
- ✓ For a learner with a visual impairment, frequently moved equipment, poor lighting, missing high-contrast or tactile signage, and hazardous obstacles along primary pathways may render the workplace inaccessible.

Work Organisation: The suitability of a work placement site may depend on more than just physical accessibility; significant barriers may stem from how work is organised.

Examples:

- ✓ A learner performs vocational tasks successfully when following a clear, step-by-step sequence. However, at the enterprise, tasks change constantly without prior notice, and the workplace mentor gives multiple verbal instructions simultaneously.
- ✓ A learner works effectively and consistently at a steady pace. However, the specific workplace requires frequent and abrupt switching between different tasks.

Psychological and Social Accessibility: Even a technically accessible workplace cannot be considered inclusive if the team is unprepared for professional interaction with the learner.

Examples:

- ✓ Staff display biased attitudes, discuss the learner's personal information, or exclude the learner from meaningful production tasks.
- ✓ The lack of an assigned workplace mentor, unclear allocation of responsibilities, or an employer's reluctance to discuss necessary adaptations may indicate that the placement site is not adequately prepared to provide an inclusive learning environment.

Practical Implementation of Accessibility: It is important to evaluate not only whether specific conditions are formally in place, but also whether learners can effectively use them in practice.

Examples:

- ✓ The formal availability of a shelter does not ensure accessibility if the route to it involves stairs, takes too long to navigate, or lacks clear signage and orientation cues.
- ✓ Assigning a mentor does not guarantee effective support if the staff member does not understand their role, lacks sufficient time to explain new tasks and work procedures, or assumes that providing support means completing tasks for the learner rather than guiding them.



Before the work placement begins, it is advisable to **arrange a preliminary site visit** involving a representative of the VET provider, the employer, and the learner. Where appropriate, this assessment may also include a vocational training instructor, an occupational health and safety specialist, a psychologist, a social pedagogue, or another relevant specialist. During the visit, it is helpful to walk through the daily commute route, inspect the workstation, check the accessibility of tools and equipment, become familiar with safety signals, and practise the route to the shelter. A checklist (Annex 4.2) can be used to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the placement site's suitability.

Learners should be actively involved in assessing the conditions at the work placement site, as they are best placed to determine whether the proposed setup and support measures meet their needs. While specialists can assess technical specifications, **only the learner can determine whether the environment is truly understandable, convenient, and suitable for their needs.**

The following questions should be discussed with the learner:

- ✓ Which tasks are you already able to perform independently?
- ✓ Which aspects of this workplace did you find convenient and easy to navigate?
- ✓ Which aspects of this workplace might make your work more challenging?
- ✓ Are the main routes and safety signs clear and easy to understand?
- ✓ What adaptations or changes would help you work more safely and effectively?
- ✓ Do you feel comfortable asking your designated mentor for assistance?
- ✓ Do you feel that, with these arrangements in place, you will be able to complete your work placement safely and successfully?

The learner's views must be taken into account when decisions are made. If the learner's perspective differs from the assessment of the teachers or the employer, these differences should be discussed rather than disregarded.

The decision on whether an enterprise can serve as a work placement site should be made by authorised representatives of both the VET provider and the enterprise within the scope of their respective responsibilities. The decision must take into account the results of the workplace assessment and the learner's own input. All agreed conditions, adaptations, and responsibilities of each party should be formally documented in the work placement agreement, an annex to it, or another appropriate internal document.

The decision on whether a learner can undertake a work placement must be based on an individual assessment of the specific workplace context. This assessment should take into account the occupational requirements, the nature of the work tasks, the characteristics of the working environment, the feasibility of implementing necessary adaptations, and the ability to ensure occupational safety. A diagnosis, disability status, or general assumptions about a person's abilities must never serve as the sole grounds for denying access to a work placement.

The focus of the assessment is NOT whether the learner is «suitable» for the enterprise, but whether the specific workplace environment enables the learner to perform occupational tasks safely and demonstrate the competences they have acquired.



4.4. Reasonable Accommodations During Work Placements

In the context of work placements, adaptation is defined as a pedagogical or organisational modification to how tasks are performed, instructions are presented, or support is provided, tailored to the learner's educational needs. The term '**reasonable accommodation**' is used in its legally established sense: an individually required modification or adjustment that ensures equal participation for a person with a disability without imposing a disproportionate or undue burden.

Reasonable accommodation does not mean lowering essential occupational standards or exempting a learner from performing core work duties. Instead, it involves adjusting working conditions, task organisation, or instructional delivery so that the learner can achieve the required vocational learning outcome.

Decisions regarding reasonable accommodations should always begin with identifying the specific barriers a learner faces. Adaptations should never be selected based solely on a diagnosis or disability label, as individuals with the same diagnosis may have different support needs, and the same individual may require different forms of support in different workplace situations.

What Can Be Adapted?

- ✓ The workspace: height of the work surface, arrangement of tools, lighting, movement pathways, noise levels, and designated areas for short breaks.
- ✓ Tools and equipment: specialised holders, digital measuring devices, colour coding, enlarged print, audio output of information, and visual or tactile markers.
- ✓ Task organisation: breaking down complex operations into sequential steps, demonstrating model examples, providing written, video, or audio step-by-step instructions, allowing extra time, and gradually increasing task complexity.
- ✓ Communication: using clear, concise instructions, reinforcing verbal information in writing, utilising sign language or pictograms, and notifying learners of any changes in advance.

Identifying necessary adaptations or reasonable accommodations should be based not on a medical diagnosis or general assumptions about a person's abilities, but on a clear analysis of the specific vocational task, the environment in which it is performed, and the specific barriers that arise when the learner interacts with that environment. Appropriate solutions should be developed with the active participation of the learner, tested during task performance, and adjusted whenever necessary. The step-by-step guidance provided in Appendix 4.3 may be used to structure this process.

Agreed-upon measures and adaptations should be documented in the learner's Individual Work Placement Plan. The learner may also request a review of their accommodation if the solution proves ineffective, causes discomfort, or limits their independence.

Reasonable accommodations should not be viewed as a one-off intervention, but rather as an ongoing **flexible process**: identifying barriers, selecting effective solutions, evaluating outcomes, and refining support over time.



Practical Implications

This means that decisions are determined not by a diagnosis or the name of an impairment, but by taking into account the specific vocational task, the barriers that arise in carrying it out, and the conditions required to remove those barriers. Such decisions are made with the participation of the learner, tested in practice, and revised where necessary.

Case Studies

“Instructions in a Noisy Workshop”

Oleksii, a student with a hearing impairment, is training to become an electrician. Before his work placement began, representatives of the VET provider assumed that communicating with his team, workplace mentor, and colleagues would present the greatest challenge. However, during a preliminary site visit, Oleksii identified a different barrier: in the noisy workshop, he could not always hear verbal warnings or the machinery’s audible emergency stop signal.

Together with Oleksii, his workplace mentor, and the occupational safety specialist, a set of practical solutions was agreed upon: verbal instructions would be supplemented with brief written messages; critical stages of each operation would be marked with visual cues; and a visual warning signal and a standardised hand signal for emergency stops would be introduced. Before starting his placement, Oleksii practised responding to these new visual signals in real workshop conditions.

The vocational requirements themselves were not altered. What changed was the method of communicating information, which had previously created a barrier. After the first week, Oleksii reported that written instructions were necessary only when introducing new tasks, as he was already able to perform familiar routines independently. The support plan was revised accordingly.

“Step-by-Step Support without Overprotection”

Maryna was completing her work placement in a commercial kitchen. Although she performed individual tasks at a high-quality level, she became overwhelmed when her mentor issued several instructions simultaneously. Initially, her colleagues responded by constantly reminding her of each step and even completing parts of her work for her.

During a weekly meeting, Maryna explained that rather than having someone constantly by her side, a short, sequential task list would be most helpful. In response, her mentor created a visual shift plan. During the first week, the mentor verified the completion of each task stage; by the second week, check-ins were reduced to twice per shift; and eventually, Maryna managed the plan on her own.

Within just a few weeks, Maryna was using the visual plan independently, requiring only periodic oversight from her mentor. The support did not replace her duty to perform professional tasks; rather, it empowered her to become more self-reliant.

The solution was identified after analysing the specific barrier and taking the learner’s own perspective into account. Rather than replacing her own efforts, the support was structured to foster her independence.



4.5. Safety and Risk Management

An inclusive approach does not override occupational health and safety requirements, nor does it allow for any lowering of safety standards. Broad assumptions about potential risks linked to a learner's disability, health condition, or special educational needs must never serve as automatic grounds for excluding the learner from work-based learning. However, performance of a specific task or operation may be restricted if an individual risk assessment reveals a genuine threat to life or health that cannot be eliminated or adequately mitigated through safe and reasonable measures.

It is important to distinguish between:

- General occupational risks inherent to a specific occupation, piece of equipment, or workplace setting; and
- Individual risks arising from the interaction between the demands of a specific task, the learner's specific functional capabilities, and environmental conditions.

For example, noise is a common feature of many industrial settings. However, for a learner who cannot hear verbal warnings in a noisy environment, the inaccessibility of the communication method creates an additional barrier. In this scenario, the appropriate response is **not to exclude the person from the workplace**, but to implement visual duplication of warning signals and establish clear, practised procedures for bringing operations safely to a stop.

Making this distinction helps to prevent unjustified restrictions while enabling institutions to identify targeted safety measures and the reasonable accommodations required.

What should be done before the work placement begins:

- ✓ Analyse work operations;
- ✓ Identify potential hazards;
- ✓ Assess risk levels;
- ✓ Determine measures to eliminate or minimise risks;
- ✓ Provide accessible safety instructions;
- ✓ Verify the learner's understanding by asking the learner to explain the procedures in their own words and demonstrate them in practice;
- ✓ Practise emergency response procedures;
- ✓ Designate responsible personnel;
- ✓ Agree on how the learner should report any deterioration in their physical or mental health;
- ✓ Define the boundaries of confidentiality regarding personal and medical information.

Learners **must know** that they have the right to stop performing any operation if they do not understand the instructions, spot a potential hazard, or feel unwell. They should also be clear on whom to notify and how to report the situation.



Case Study

“Individual Risk Assessment for a Learner with a Lower-Limb Amputation”

Maksym is enrolled in a programme leading to the qualification of Automotive Repair Mechanic. Following a lower-limb amputation, he uses a prosthesis, moves independently, and confidently performs most vocational tasks. Before the start of his work placement, a representative of the host company expressed doubts about whether Maksym could safely work in a workshop featuring an inspection pit, slippery surfaces, heavy components, and tasks requiring prolonged standing.

The decision regarding Maksym’s participation in the work placement was not based solely on the fact that he had an amputation. Instead, the vocational training instructor, workplace mentor, occupational safety specialist, and Maksym jointly inspected the workplace and analysed each planned task. They determined that working with tools, vehicle lifts, heavy components, and technical fluids involved general occupational risks common to all workers. Maksym’s specific individual risks were primarily associated with descending into the inspection pit via steep metal stairs, walking on wet floors, and carrying heavy components that could compromise his balance.

Following the assessment, the team agreed on the following reasonable accommodations and safety measures:

- ✓ Assign Maksym a workstation close to the main equipment to minimise unnecessary movement.
- ✓ Provide non-slip floor matting and ensure the prompt cleanup of spilled technical fluids.
- ✓ Arrange tools and materials within easy reach.
- ✓ Use a trolley or lifting device to transport heavy components.
- ✓ Permit short breaks whenever fatigue or discomfort occurs.
- ✓ Designate a workplace mentor and agree on a clear protocol for notifying the team if work needs to be paused.
- ✓ Perform tasks that would typically require the inspection pit by using a vehicle lift instead.

Separately, the possibility for Maksym’s safe descent into the inspection pit was assessed. During a practical evaluation, it became clear that the narrow, steep stairs did not allow him to maintain a stable balance, particularly while carrying tools. Because the company was unable to modify access before the placement began, Maksym was temporarily restricted from entering the inspection pit. However, he was not excluded from the work placement overall. Instead, he completed the relevant tasks using a vehicle lift, enabling him to meet the intended learning outcomes without lowering quality standards.

Prior to starting the work placement, Maksym completed a safety briefing, explained the safety procedures in his own words, and demonstrated proper operation of the vehicle lift. It was also agreed that he would immediately stop working and notify his workplace mentor if he experienced pain, fatigue, prosthesis instability, or any safety hazards. Medical details were kept strictly confidential; with Maksym’s consent, only the information necessary to ensure a safe working environment was shared with the team.

The restriction applied solely to a specific hazardous access route, rather than to the trade or placement as a whole. Substituting the inspection pit with a vehicle lift eliminated the barrier, satisfied all safety requirements, and enabled the learner to fully demonstrate the required vocational competences.



4.6. Job Preparedness and the Transition to Employment

At the end of the work placement, it is advisable to hold a joint meeting involving the learner, the mentor, and representatives of both the employer and the VET provider. The discussion should begin with the learner's self-assessment: what they have achieved, which tasks they found most engaging, what challenges they encountered, which conditions supported their work, and how they envision their next professional step.

During the meeting, participants review the outcomes of the placement. They identify the professional tasks and operations that the learner performed successfully and independently, analyse the learner's strengths and achievements, examine any remaining challenges, and evaluate the effectiveness of the adaptations and reasonable accommodations provided. It is also important to determine the extent to which the workplace aligns with the learner's professional interests, capabilities, and functional needs, which competences require further development, and whether there is potential for employment with the placement provider. Based on these outcomes, participants establish specific follow-up actions for the learner, the VET provider, and the employer.

The outcomes of the work placement serve as the foundation for subsequent career decisions. It is crucial to assess not only the learner's vocational skills, but also their soft skills – such as adhering to a work schedule, collaborating within a team, responding constructively to feedback, communicating challenges, managing their workload, and effectively presenting their competences.

What is the role of a VET provider in the transition to employment?

Among the statutory responsibilities of VET providers are ***facilitating the employment of graduates and monitoring their employment outcomes***. To fulfil these responsibilities, a VET provider may establish a **Professional Career Centre** or designate a staff member or organisational unit responsible for career support. This allocation of responsibilities should be formalised in the provider's charter, unit regulations governing the relevant organisational unit, job descriptions, or an order issued by the head of the VET provider.

Through these mechanisms, a VET provider can offer comprehensive career guidance and counselling. This includes assistance with preparing CVs and portfolios, training in self-presentation and job interview skills, help with identifying accessible job opportunities, direct communication with employers, preparation of references, advice on reasonable accommodation, and ongoing support during the initial months of employment.

To ensure systematic support for graduates throughout their transition to employment, institutions are advised to designate a responsible staff member (such as a vocational training instructor, social pedagogue, psychologist, or another specialist) or a dedicated unit (e.g., a Career Centre) and formalise these duties within internal institutional regulations.

Post-employment support (e.g., assistance in addressing workplace adaptation challenges or advice to employers on accessibility and reasonable accommodations) is a **recommended best practice** rather than a mandatory responsibility of the VET provider. Such support may be provided in cooperation with the employer, subject to the graduate's voluntary consent and full compliance with confidentiality requirements.



After employment, the employer is responsible for organising work, ensuring occupational safety, preventing discrimination, and providing reasonable accommodation.

How to Communicate with an Employer?

Communication with an employer should be grounded in a professional partnership. A graduate should be presented primarily through the lens of their professional competences, practical experience, and achievements during work placements. Any necessary adaptations or reasonable accommodations should be framed as conditions that enable effective and safe job performance, rather than as individual limitations.

Practical recommendations, sample wording, and a suggested communication framework are available in Appendix 4.4: Practical Recommendations for Communication with Employers.

Adaptation in the First Workplace

Successful employment does not end with the signing of an employment contract. The first weeks and months are a transition period during which a new employee becomes familiar with their job responsibilities, workplace rules, and colleagues, compares their expectations with actual working conditions, and gradually develops their own working routine.

It is during this initial stage that barriers – which may not have been apparent during training or work placement – are most likely to emerge. These may include an inaccessible workplace, unclear instructions, a fast pace of work, poorly coordinated adaptations, communication difficulties, or the absence of a mentor. Additional challenges may stem from a mismatch between expectations and actual job duties, an unclear division of responsibilities, or a team's insufficient readiness for professional interaction.

The presence of barriers does not necessarily indicate that the employee is professionally unprepared. Rather, barriers often result from a mismatch between the employee's functional needs and how the working environment is organised. It is therefore crucial to identify such barriers promptly, discuss them directly with the employee, and jointly determine necessary adjustments. Regular feedback, mentorship, and periodic reviews of initial accommodations help prevent challenges from accumulating and ensure long-term workplace integration.

Table 4.2. Common Barriers and Ways to Address Them

Barrier	Ways to Address It
Inaccessible workplace	The employee describes the specific barriers they encounter; the employer assesses whether the route, equipment, or work organisation can be modified; with the graduate's consent, the VET provider may offer recommendations based on their functional needs.
Prejudice or isolation within the team	The employer establishes clear rules for non-discriminatory interaction and responds to any violations; the mentor involves the new employee in workplace communication; the employee knows whom to contact if an issue arises.
Excessive assistance	Tasks and support level are determined based on the employee's actual performance. Assistance is gradually phased out as the employee is given opportunities to make independent decisions within their scope of responsibilities.



Barrier	Ways to Address It
Insufficient independence	Complex operations are divided into stages, using demonstrations and prompts, supported by a dedicated mentor; a structured, gradual reduction in support is planned from the start.
Mismatch between expectations and actual working conditions	Job responsibilities, work pace, schedule, quality standards, and limits of support are clarified upon onboarding and reviewed during follow-up check-in meetings.
Disclosure of confidential information	It is agreed in advance what information may be shared, with whom, and for what purpose. The team receives only the information necessary for professional interaction and safety.
Uncoordinated or ineffective adaptations	Each accommodation is linked to a specific barrier, trialled over a defined period, and reviewed collaboratively with the employee.
Support ending prematurely upon employment	Follow-up meetings are scheduled in advance, and support is discontinued or reduced only after its effectiveness and outcomes have been evaluated.
Transport and communication barriers	The commute route is verified in advance; work schedules are adjusted where possible; accessible communication channels and formats are established for sharing work-related information.

Successful adaptation involves not only job retention, but also the ability to perform duties safely and consistently, integrate into the workplace team, build independence, and have opportunities for professional growth.

Case Study

“Mismatch Between Work Pace and Workplace Requirements”

Iryna qualified as a seamstress and successfully completed her practical training. She performed sewing operations to a high standard, followed the required sequence of steps, handled materials carefully, and consistently delivered high-quality finished products. However, she needed more time than other workers to complete certain tasks. Although Iryna was aware of her working pace, she was eager to work in her field and applied for a vacancy at a garment manufacturing company.

The employer offered her a position on an assembly line, where each worker had to perform a specific operation at a strictly fixed pace. During a trial shift, Iryna demonstrated the required precision and quality, but could not keep up with the speed set by the production line. Because the company was unable to adjust the speed of the line, redistribute tasks among the team, or set up an individual workstation, the employer ultimately decided not to offer her the position.

Together with Iryna, representatives of the VET provider analysed the situation. They established that the difficulty was not caused by a lack of vocational competence, but by a mismatch between the graduate's individual working pace and the strict time requirements of the specific workplace. Iryna's portfolio was revised to place greater emphasis on the quality and accuracy of her work, careful handling of materials, compliance with production procedures, and her ability to make finished products independently.

The graduate was subsequently offered another position at a small tailoring workshop where the work was not organised according to a production-line model. Iryna received individual orders, could plan the sequence of operations, and was able to work at a steady pace while maintaining a high standard of quality. After a short period of mentoring support, she successfully adapted to the new workplace.



Being rejected for a particular position does not necessarily indicate that a graduate is professionally unprepared. It is important to distinguish between the acquisition of vocational competences and suitability for the conditions of a particular workplace. Where the essential requirements of a position cannot be aligned with an employee's individual working pace without disrupting the production process, it is advisable to look for a different form of work organisation in which the person's strengths and vocational skills can be fully realised.

Checklist for Professional Reflection

After reading this section, assess the extent to which the statements below reflect the practice of your VET provider. Tick the statements with which you can genuinely agree. If a particular statement does not yet reflect your current practice, consider it a reference point for further development.

Planning Work Placement

- ☐ We evaluate the learner's preparedness for work placement on the basis of specific occupational tasks rather than a diagnosis or general assumptions.
- ☐ The learner is involved in selecting the work placement, identifying the support required, and discussing the conditions under which they can work most effectively.
- ☐ The accessibility of the work-based training placement is assessed before the placement begins, taking into account physical, organisational, information-related, and social aspects.

A Safe and Accessible Environment

- ☐ Each adaptation addresses a specific barrier, preserves the key occupational learning outcomes, and does not violate safety requirements.
- ☐ General occupational risks and individual risks are distinguished from one another, and measures to minimise them are identified before the placement begins.
- ☐ Safety instructions are provided in an accessible format, and the learner's understanding of safety requirements is checked in practice.

Cooperation with the Employer

- ☐ A person responsible for supervising the work-based training placement has been designated at the enterprise, and their responsibilities for supporting the learner are clearly defined.
- ☐ The roles of the VET provider, the employer, and the learner are clearly defined, and personal data are shared only where there is a lawful basis and only to the extent necessary.
- ☐ When presenting a graduate to an employer, the primary focus is placed on their competences, occupational achievements, and work-based training outcomes.

Transition to Employment

- ☐ Support provided during a work placement is aimed at gradually increasing the learner's independence.



- ☐ The results of the work placement are used to develop a portfolio, prepare a CV and a reference letter, and support preparation for a job interview.
- ☐ A person responsible for supporting the transition to employment has been designated, relevant support measures have been planned, and an adaptation plan has been developed for the graduate's initial period of employment.

Additional Resources

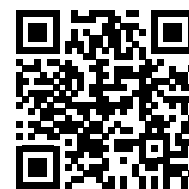
Law of Ukraine "On Occupational Safety and Health"

The principal legal and regulatory act governing occupational safety and health.



Methodological Recommendations on Introducing Barrier-Free Educational Services in Preschool, General Secondary, Vocational Education and Training, and Higher Education Institutions

Practical recommendations on creating a barrier-free educational environment.



State Standard for Equipping Workplaces for Different Types of Functional Impairment

It contains practical requirements for adapting workplaces for employees with disabilities and may be useful when planning workplace adaptations and using state compensation mechanisms.



Online Training Course "Risk Assessment and the Development of Occupational Safety and Health and General Safety Measures in a Vocational Education and Training Institution"

A training course for VET teachers on occupational risk assessment and occupational safety and health.



A Guide to Workplace Risk Assessment (International Labour Organization)

Practical recommendations on assessing occupational risks and applying international approaches to risk management.



Employment of Persons with Disabilities: A Practical Guide for Employers

Practical recommendations on employment, the organisation of support, and the creation of an accessible working environment.



First Aid Manual



Section 5

Organising Support within the Community

Support for a learner is not limited to the activities of a vocational education and training provider. It is built through cooperation among different levels of the support system: the learner, their family, the VET provider, employers, as well as educational, social, medical, rehabilitation, and other community resources. Each of these levels has its own resources, capacities, and responsibilities, while the effectiveness of support depends on how well they coordinate and cooperate with one another.

This section presents support as a system of interconnected levels that brings together the resources of different stakeholders in order to create a comprehensive support system for the learner. It also explains the principles of partnership and cooperation among the VET provider, employers, the community, and other partners.

5.1. Support as a System of Interconnected Levels

Support for a learner should be viewed as a system in which actors operating at different levels perform interconnected but distinct roles. Each has its own capacities, resources, and responsibilities. At the same time, no single actor can independently provide all the conditions required for a learner's successful education and professional development, or for the subsequent employment of a VET graduate. Support is therefore a shared responsibility: each participant makes their own contribution while also drawing on the resources of others.

Any VET learner or graduate may require support. At the same time, persons with special educational needs, persons with disabilities, women and men veterans, and other learners and VET graduates who face barriers during their education or transition to employment may require particular attention. Regardless of the reasons for these barriers, effective support is based on cooperation among different levels of the system and the combination of their resources.

For a VET provider, this means that organising support is not limited to the work of teachers or the psychological and pedagogical support team. It also requires the ability to engage partners, coordinate interaction among them, and draw on community resources to address specific support needs.

A modern approach to organising a support system is based not on transferring responsibility from one participant to another, but on partnership. The VET provider does not replace the family or social services; employers do not perform the functions of teachers; and the community does

not take over the responsibilities of the VET provider. Each participant complements the others, thereby creating an integrated system in which the learner remains at the centre.

What Does This Mean for a VET provider?

When organising support, it is important to ask not only, **“What can our institution do?”**, but also, **“Who else can contribute to resolving this situation?”** and **“What resources are already available in the community?”**

This approach helps move from seeking isolated solutions to building a system of partnership in which the capacities of each participant are strengthened through cooperation with others.

5.2. Support Resources at Different Levels of the System

Each level of the support system has its own resources, which complement those available to other participants. The effectiveness of support depends not on whether one person or institution can address every issue, but on how successfully these resources are combined.

A resource is not limited to a service or an institution. It may also include knowledge, experience, skills, motivation, social connections, an accessible environment, professional expertise, material resources, and other factors that contribute to successful learning, undertaking work placements, and the transition to employment.

Learner

The learner is an active participant in the support system. Their strengths, interests, previous experience, motivation, life goals, and readiness to take part in decision-making are important resources on which the entire support system can build.

Family

The family has unique knowledge of the learner's experience, needs, strengths, and the forms of support that are most effective for them. Depending on the learner's age and life circumstances, the family may be an important partner in planning and providing support.

VET Provider

The main resource of a VET provider is the people who work there. These include, first and foremost, teachers and vocational training instructors who interact with learners every day, as well as other staff members who work together to create the conditions necessary for learning and development.

At the same time, a VET provider's resources include not only its staff, but also the way their joint work is organised: mentoring, teamwork, an accessible educational environment, opportunities to apply adaptations, flexible organisational arrangements, and partnerships with other participants in the support system.

Community

The community broadens the range of support available through resources beyond the VET provider. These include education, social, healthcare and rehabilitation services, civil society



organisations, and other community institutions. Bringing these resources together helps ensure continuity of support for learners and their families.

Employers

Employers are important partners of VET providers in preparing future professionals. Their resources include modern workplace environments, real occupational tasks, mentoring, the experience of employees, opportunities for work placements, and opportunities for subsequent employment.

It is cooperation with employers that helps learners develop vocational competences and a professional identity, understand the requirements of the modern labour market, and make a more successful transition to employment. At the same time, it provides the VET provider with feedback on current requirements for the training of future professionals.

Table 5.1. Levels of the Learner Support System

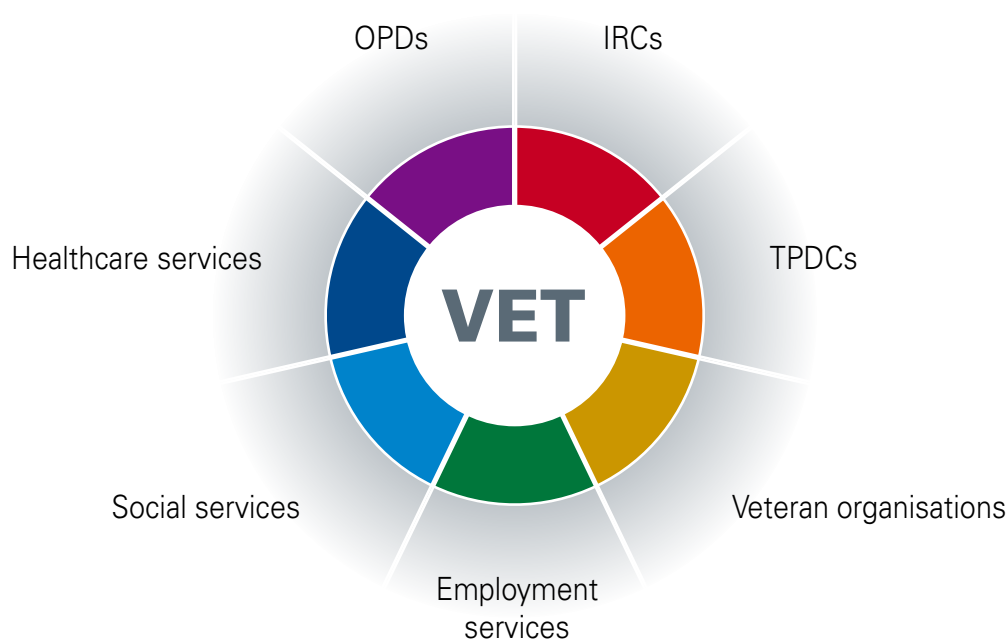
Level of the System	Key Resources	Contribution to the Support System
Learner	strengths, experience, motivation, and active participation	helps identify actual needs and goals and enables decisions to be made jointly with the support team
Family	knowledge of the learner, support, and participation in decision-making	ensures continuity of support and helps take the learner's individual characteristics into account
VET provider	staff, mentoring, teamwork, an accessible environment, and adaptations	creates the conditions for learning, coordinates support, and organises cooperation
Community	Inclusive Resource Centres, Teacher Professional Development Centres, social, healthcare and rehabilitation services, civil society organisations, and other service providers	expands the VET provider's capacity and ensures comprehensive support
Employers	workplace environment, mentoring, professional experience	contribute to the development of professional competences and support the transition to employment

5.3. Partner Support Navigator

A vocational education and training provider should not be expected to address all issues related to the organisation of inclusive learning on its own. A range of institutions and organisations operate within communities and can become important partners by providing advisory, methodological, psychological, social, medical, or expert support.

At the same time, practice shows that the capacities of many of these partners are not used to their full potential. This is often due not to a lack of resources, but to insufficient understanding of the specific types of support they can provide to a VET provider.

The navigator below will help readers quickly identify the resources available in the community, the support they can provide, and the situations in which it may be appropriate to approach them.

Graphic 3. VET Partners within the Learner Support System

INCLUSIVE RESOURCE CENTRE (IRC)

What Support Can It Provide?

Inclusive Resource Centres help ensure the right of persons with special educational needs to obtain complete general secondary education, including in vocational education and training providers and professional pre-higher education institutions. IRC specialists conduct comprehensive psychological and pedagogical assessments of learners' development, provide recommendations on organising learner support, advise teachers and parents or legal representatives, and facilitate interagency cooperation. In addition, VET providers may contact IRCs for advice on other matters related to organising inclusive learning and supporting learners with special educational needs.

Practical Support for VET Providers

- ✓ the findings of a comprehensive psychological and pedagogical assessment of a learner's development, together with recommendations on organising their support and educational process;
- ✓ consultations with IRC specialists on adapting learning materials, teaching methods, assessment approaches, the organisation of the educational environment, and other matters related to learner support;
- ✓ coordination of cooperation between the VET provider, the family, the IRC, and other specialists or institutions involved in organising support.



It is advisable to contact the Inclusive Resource Centre if...

- ✓ there is a need to conduct a comprehensive psychological and pedagogical assessment of a learner with special educational needs who is also completing full general secondary education, provided that such an assessment has not been conducted previously or there are grounds for reassessment;
- ✓ the teaching staff need recommendations on how to organise the learning of a particular learner;
- ✓ it is necessary to determine which adaptations or special learning conditions may be required;
- ✓ the VET provider does not have certain specialists on staff, such as a psychologist, speech and language therapist, or special education teacher, and teaching staff need advice on how to support the learner;
- ✓ there is a need to coordinate cooperation between the VET provider, the learner's family, the Inclusive Resource Centre, and other specialists or institutions involved in organising support.

TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTRE (TPDC)

What support can it provide?

Teacher Professional Development Centres help VET providers organise the professional development of teaching staff, provide methodological support, and foster the development of professional communities. In the field of inclusive education, TPDCs can serve as important partners for VET providers in strengthening the professional competences of teaching staff and introducing modern inclusive approaches.

Practical Support for VET Providers

- ✓ consultations on organising an inclusive educational process;
- ✓ methodological support for teaching staff;
- ✓ assistance in planning teachers' professional development;
- ✓ organisation of professional communities, supervision, and exchange of experience;
- ✓ information on up-to-date methodological materials, professional development programmes, and educational resources.

It is advisable to seek support if...

- ✓ the teaching staff need methodological support on inclusive education;
- ✓ professional consultations, mentoring, or supervision need to be organised;
- ✓ the VET provider is planning professional development for teaching staff;
- ✓ there is a need to identify up-to-date methodological materials or examples of successful practice;
- ✓ the VET provider wishes to join a professional community or establish an exchange of experience with other education providers.

ORGANISATIONS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (OPDS)

What support can they provide?

Organisations of persons with disabilities bring together people with lived experience of disability, their families, and professionals. They promote the rights of persons with disabilities, support the development of a barrier-free environment, and advance inclusive approaches. For VET providers, such organisations can be important partners in building an inclusive culture, assessing accessibility, and developing practices that respond to learners' needs.

Practical support for VET providers

- ✓ advice on the accessibility of the educational environment and universal design;
- ✓ training for teaching staff and management;
- ✓ expert assessment of the accessibility of the physical, information, and communication environment;
- ✓ participation in awareness-raising activities, training sessions, and information campaigns;
- ✓ involvement of experts with disabilities in assessing educational solutions and developing inclusion policies.

It is advisable to contact such organisations if...

- ✓ the VET provider seeks to improve the accessibility of its educational environment;
- ✓ teaching staff need training on current approaches to disability and inclusion;
- ✓ an independent expert assessment of accessibility or universal design is required;
- ✓ the VET provider is developing or reviewing its barrier-free policy;
- ✓ persons with disabilities need to be involved in discussing and assessing management or educational decisions.

EMPLOYMENT SERVICE

What support can it provide?

The Employment Service is an important partner for VET providers in the areas of career guidance, preparation for employment, and cooperation with employers. It helps learners plan their career paths, obtain information about labour market needs, access government employment support programmes, and identify employment opportunities.

Practical support for VET providers

- ✓ information on the needs of the regional labour market;
- ✓ career guidance and career planning consultations;
- ✓ organisation of meetings with employers and job fairs;



- ✓ information on government programmes supporting the employment of persons with disabilities and veterans;
- ✓ assistance in identifying work placement opportunities and subsequent employment opportunities for graduates;
- ✓ participation in joint activities aimed at developing learners' career competences.

It is advisable to contact the Employment Service if...

- ✓ the VET provider plans to strengthen learners' preparation for employment;
- ✓ there is a need to establish cooperation with employers;
- ✓ learners need guidance on choosing their career pathway;
- ✓ the VET provider would like to learn more about current labour market needs;
- ✓ information is needed on government programmes supporting employment.

SOCIAL SERVICES

What support can they provide?

Social services assist individuals and families experiencing difficult life circumstances by providing social case management, counselling, and coordination of the support they need. For VET providers, social services can be important partners in situations where a learner's successful participation in education depends not only on the organisation of the educational process, but also on addressing social issues.

Practical support for VET providers

- ✓ assessment of the needs of the learner and their family;
- ✓ social case management for families in need of support;
- ✓ coordination of cooperation between different services and institutions;
- ✓ counselling on available social services;
- ✓ assistance in accessing the necessary social support and assistance.

It is advisable to contact social services if...

- ✓ a learner's education is complicated by difficult life circumstances;
- ✓ the family needs additional social support;
- ✓ there is a need to coordinate assistance from several institutions;
- ✓ social case management needs to be arranged for the learner;
- ✓ the teaching staff need advice on available social support options.

HEALTHCARE AND REHABILITATION FACILITIES

What support can they provide?

Healthcare and rehabilitation facilities can help assess how a person's health condition may affect their learning, identify the need for rehabilitation interventions, assistive products, or additional consultations with relevant specialists. Cooperation with healthcare providers is particularly important when supporting a learner requires interdisciplinary coordination.

Practical support for VET providers

- ✓ consultations on how a health condition may affect learning and vocational training;
- ✓ recommendations on how to organise the educational process or vocational training safely;
- ✓ provision of rehabilitation interventions in line with the person's individual needs;
- ✓ consultations on the use of assistive products;
- ✓ cooperation with the VET provider, with the learner's consent, to ensure coordinated support.

It may be appropriate to seek support if...

- ✓ there are questions about how to organise learning or a work placement safely;
- ✓ recommendations from medical or rehabilitation professionals need to be taken into account when planning support;
- ✓ the learner requires comprehensive rehabilitation support;
- ✓ coordination needs to be ensured between the VET provider and medical or rehabilitation professionals;
- ✓ teaching staff need advice on the specific support needs of a learner.

VETERANS' ORGANISATIONS

What support can they provide?

Veterans' organisations bring together women and men veterans, members of their families, and professionals working in the field of veteran support. They can be important partners for VET providers in creating a welcoming educational environment, supporting veterans during their studies, and facilitating their transition to employment. Such organisations have a good understanding of the needs of the veteran community and can help strengthen cooperation between the VET provider, the community, and employers.

Practical Support for VET Providers

- ✓ consultations on specific aspects of supporting women and men veterans during their studies;
- ✓ participation in creating a barrier-free and veteran-friendly educational environment;



- ✓ organisation of information and awareness-raising activities;
- ✓ support in establishing cooperation with the veteran community;
- ✓ participation in mentoring, occupational adaptation, and transition-to-employment programmes.

It is advisable to contact them if...

- ✓ women or men veterans are studying at the VET provider or are planning to apply;
- ✓ teaching staff need advice on specific aspects of interaction with veterans;
- ✓ the VET provider seeks to create a more welcoming and barrier-free educational environment;
- ✓ joint activities need to be organised to support veterans;
- ✓ the VET provider is developing partnerships with the community to support veterans' occupational adaptation.

For ease of reference, the main roles of partners and the situations in which it is advisable to involve them in organising support are summarised below.

Table 5.1. Key Partners in the Support System and Their Roles

Partner	Main Role	When to Involve
Inclusive Resource Centres (IRCs)	Identification of educational needs and recommendations on support	When planning support for learners with special educational needs and identifying the necessary adaptations
Teacher Professional Development Centres (TPDCs)	Methodological support and professional development for teaching staff	To strengthen professional competence, implement inclusive approaches, and support team development
Organisations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs)	Expert support on accessibility, inclusion, and rights protection	For accessibility audits, training, consultations, and the involvement of experts with one's own lived experience
Social services	Social support and coordination of assistance	When a learner's participation in education is affected by difficult life circumstances or when interagency cooperation is required
Employment services	Preparation for employment and cooperation with employers	For career guidance, development of career skills, and identifying work placement and employment opportunities
Healthcare and rehabilitation providers	Medical and rehabilitation support	When recommendations concerning safe participation in learning, rehabilitation, or the use of assistive products need to be taken into account
Veterans' organisations	Support for women and men veterans and development of a veteran-friendly educational environment	When the VET provider has veteran learners or develops partnerships to support their occupational adaptation

5.4. How to Organise Cooperation Across Different Levels

The previous subsections have shown that support for a VET learner is provided through cooperation among different levels of the support system, each of which has its own resources, capacities, and responsibilities. However, the mere presence of partners does not in itself guarantee effective support. If each partner acts separately, even the best available resources may remain unused or may duplicate one another.

Effective cooperation requires not only a willingness to cooperate, but also a shared understanding of the goal, a clear division of roles, regular information exchange, and respect for the competences of each participant. The principles of cooperation remain the same regardless of the level of the support system. At the level of the VET provider, they shape the work of the psychological and pedagogical support team; at the community level, they shape cooperation between the VET provider and partners involved in supporting the learner.

This kind of cooperation makes it possible to respond to a VET learner's needs in a timely manner, coordinate support, and avoid situations in which responsibility is shifted from one institution to another.

It is important to remember that cooperation is not a one-off referral to another organisation, but an ongoing process that may change depending on the learner's needs, stage of learning, or transition to employment. Unlike a psychological and pedagogical support team, where cooperation takes place within a single educational institution, cooperation at community level involves different institutions, each with its own mandate, working arrangements, and responsibilities. This is why prior agreements, the designation of a coordinator, and clear communication channels are particularly important.

Defining Shared Goals

The main purpose of cooperation should not be the completion of separate procedures or tasks by different institutions, but the creation of conditions for the successful learning, development and professional growth of a specific learner. A shared understanding of this goal helps all participants coordinate their actions and make decisions based on the needs of the individual VET learner.

Clear Division of Roles and Responsibilities

Effective cooperation requires each participant to understand their own role, respect the competences of others, and refrain from taking over their functions. Each partner is responsible for tasks that fall within their area of competence. The VET provider coordinates the educational process; employers contribute to vocational training and the creation of opportunities for subsequent employment; social and healthcare services provide support within their respective mandates; while the family, where appropriate, and the VET learner themselves are important participants in implementing the joint support plan.



Coordinating Actions

Coordination between different institutions involves agreeing on the sequence of actions, identifying responsible persons, establishing mechanisms for cooperation, and ensuring the timely involvement of the necessary partners.

Regular Exchange of Information

Effective cooperation is impossible without the timely exchange of information among the VET provider, employers, social and healthcare services, and other partners. At the same time, only information that is necessary for organising support should be shared, in compliance with legal requirements and ethical principles.

Accessible Communication

All parties involved should be able to receive and communicate information in a clear and accessible format. Where necessary, adapted materials, plain language, assistive technologies, or other means of communication may be used.

Trust and Respect for Expertise

Partnership-based cooperation is built on mutual respect for the professional experience, responsibilities, and role of each participant. No single partner has all the resources required, so effective support is possible only when decisions are made jointly.

Confidentiality

Cooperation may involve discussion of personal data, health-related information, or other sensitive matters. Such information should be used only to the extent necessary for organising support, in compliance with legal requirements and with due respect for the individual's right to privacy. Particular care is required when information is shared between different institutions or organisations.

Regular Review of Arrangements

A learner's needs may change during their studies, work placement, or transition to employment. It is therefore important to review the agreed arrangements periodically, assess their effectiveness, and, where necessary, adjust the joint action plan.

What Does This Mean for a VET provider?

When organising cooperation, it is important to remember to:

- ✓ start by jointly defining the goal;
- ✓ involve only those partners whose participation is genuinely needed
- ✓ agree on roles and responsibilities;
- ✓ maintain regular information exchange;
- ✓ periodically review the arrangements in line with changes in the learner's needs.

5.5. Employers as Participants in the Support System

Vocational education and training is closely connected with the world of work. For this reason, employers are not only providers of work placements or potential employers of graduates, but also important partners of VET providers. Their involvement helps make vocational training more relevant, practice-oriented, and responsive to the actual needs of the labour market.

In the context of inclusive VET, the importance of such partnerships becomes even greater. The VET provider has a good understanding of the learner's educational needs, strengths, and the support they require. The employer, in turn, understands the specific features of the production process, occupational requirements, and working conditions. Only by bringing this knowledge and experience together is it possible to identify realistic solutions that support not only successful learning but also subsequent employment.

Partnerships with employers should be developed as long-term cooperation rather than being limited to the period of a work placement. Employer representatives can contribute to identifying relevant occupational competences, discussing the content of educational programmes, familiarising teaching staff with modern production technologies and equipment, and contributing to learners' career guidance. Such cooperation helps ensure that the content of training is updated in a timely manner and remains aligned with current occupational requirements.

One important area of cooperation is the joint planning of conditions for work placements and future employment. Employers can help assess potential barriers in the workplace, identify necessary adaptations, discuss the specific requirements of particular work tasks, and prepare the workplace team for a new employee. Detailed recommendations on organising work placements are provided in Section 4 of this handbook.

Workplace mentoring plays a particularly important role. For many learners, especially those entering a professional environment for the first time or requiring additional support, a mentor becomes the person who helps them understand workplace rules, adapt to a new team, gradually master work processes, and develop confidence in their professional abilities. Mentoring is an important factor in successful workplace adaptation and sustained employment.

Employers also make a crucial contribution to building an inclusive culture. An accessible environment is created not only through architectural changes or specialised equipment. To a large extent, it depends on the attitudes of the workforce, colleagues' readiness to work together, respect for human diversity, and an understanding that different employees may require different forms of support when needed. For this reason, partnerships between VET providers and employers can include joint discussions on accessibility, non-discrimination, and an inclusive organisational culture.

Cooperation between the VET provider and the employer should not end once a graduate has been employed. Feedback on graduates' vocational preparation, analysis of difficulties that arise during adaptation to the workplace, and the joint search for ways to improve educational programmes help enhance the quality of vocational education and training and make it more responsive to the needs of the modern labour market.

Thus, the employer is not only a partner of an individual learner, but also a partner of the VET provider as a whole. Long-term cooperation based on mutual trust, shared responsibility, and



readiness for dialogue creates the conditions for successful learning, occupational adaptation, and employment of graduates, including persons with disabilities and other people who require additional support.

What can a VET provider do today?

- ✓ designate staff members responsible for cooperation with employers and maintain regular dialogue with them;
- ✓ regularly discuss with partners changes in occupational requirements, modern technologies, and labour market needs;
- ✓ involve employers in reviewing and improving educational programmes, as well as in delivering selected practical sessions, masterclasses, or study tours;
- ✓ jointly plan the conditions for work placements for learners who require additional support, identifying potential barriers and necessary adaptations in advance;
- ✓ support workplace mentors by providing them, where necessary, with information on how best to interact with learners;
- ✓ after a work placement or transition to employment, collect feedback from employers and use it to improve the educational process.

5.6. The Learner at the Centre of the Support System

In the previous subsections, we considered the roles of the different participants in the support system: the VET provider, teaching staff, the family, employers, and other partners. Each of them performs an important function, but none of them is the ultimate purpose of this interaction. The learner always remains at the centre of the support system.

It is the learner's educational needs, strengths, life circumstances, professional interests, and personal goals that determine what the support system should look like. It cannot be the same for everyone, as each person has their own experience, different resources, and different pathways towards professional fulfilment.

A modern approach to inclusive education involves the learner's active participation in decisions concerning their learning and professional development. Their views, preferences, and vision of their own future should be taken into account when planning support, identifying the adaptations required, and making decisions about next steps in education and professional development. This approach contributes to the development of independence, responsibility, and self-advocacy skills, which are important for future life and employment.

At the same time, the support system should not be limited to responding to difficulties. Its purpose is to create the conditions in which the learner can realise their potential to the fullest extent possible, develop professional competences, participate actively in the educational process, and gradually become more independent.

The effectiveness of the support system is determined not by the number of institutions or specialists involved, but by how well their actions are coordinated. Different participants may perform different functions, but their efforts should be coordinated, mutually reinforcing, and



directed towards a common goal: successful learning, professional development, and the person's ability to participate independently in society.

Support is effective when the different levels of the system do not operate in isolation, but instead strengthen one another's capacity. It is this kind of interaction that creates a coherent environment in which the learner receives not a set of separate services, but comprehensive support at every stage of their pathway – from admission to a VET provider through to successful employment and further professional development.

Thus, the centre of the support system is not an individual institution or specialist, but the person. It is the learner's needs, strengths, life goals, and right to make their own choices that determine who becomes involved in providing support, when they become involved, and in what way. When all participants interact as partners, the system ceases to be a collection of separate services and becomes a coherent environment that helps the learner to learn, develop, and realise their professional potential.

At the same time, the effectiveness of any support system depends to a considerable extent on the professional competence of the people who work with learners every day and put inclusive approaches into practice. The next section is devoted to this issue.

Case Study.

Support During Work-Based Training: Shared Solutions

A learner with a hearing impairment enrolled in a vocational education and training (VET) provider to train as a cook. During the course of study, the learner successfully developed practical skills, worked well with process sheets, and quickly mastered new operations when instructions were accompanied by a demonstration.

When the time came for the work placement, the employer expressed some concerns. The main concern was not the learner's professional skills, but safety-related issues: how to provide occupational health and safety instructions, how to communicate warnings about hazards, and how to ensure effective interaction with the team while working in the kitchen.

To find a solution, the VET provider proposed a joint meeting involving the vocational training instructor, the mentor (or practical training supervisor) from the enterprise, and the learner. During the discussion, it became clear that the learner had already been using short written instructions during training, responded well to demonstrations of practical procedures, and always indicated when an oral explanation had not been understood. The learner also explained which communication methods were the most convenient for them.

Following the discussion, the partners agreed that the mentor appointed by the enterprise would familiarise the learner with the workplace, key safety instructions would also be provided in writing, and the enterprise staff would receive a brief explanation of how best to communicate with the new trainee. The vocational training instructor would remain in contact with the mentor throughout the entire work placement so that any issues arising could be addressed promptly if necessary.

The work placement was completed successfully. The most important factor was not that every possible difficulty had been anticipated in advance, but that the VET provider, the employer, and the learner worked together and were ready to find solutions as the placement progressed.



This situation demonstrates that an effective support system is based not on assumptions about a person's abilities, but on open dialogue, joint planning, and a clear distribution of responsibilities among all partners.

Checklist for Professional Reflection

After reading this section, consider how closely the statements below reflect your current professional practice. Tick the statements that you can genuinely agree with. If some of these points are not yet part of your work, return to them after reading the following sections of the guide.

- ☐ I understand that effective support for a learner is the result of cooperation between the VET provider, the family, the employer, and other partners.
- ☐ When planning support for a learner, I consider not only my own actions, but also opportunities to cooperate with other professionals and organisations.
- ☐ If difficulties arise during learning or practical training, I am prepared to discuss them with colleagues and partners rather than trying to find a solution on my own.
- ☐ If additional support is needed, I know whom I can consult about how it might be organised.
- ☐ When engaging with a learner's family, I seek to build a partnership based on mutual respect and open dialogue.
- ☐ When planning practical training, I regard the employer as a partner in the educational process.
- ☐ When discussing support for a learner with an employer, I am prepared to look for solutions together rather than make assumptions about the person's abilities.
- ☐ I understand the importance of regular communication between the VET provider and the enterprise throughout the entire period of practical training.
- ☐ If additional support is needed, I know that it can be organised through cooperation with relevant community partners.
- ☐ I understand that the development of inclusive vocational education and training depends on the willingness of all partners to work together and share responsibility.

Additional Resources

Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 636 of 10.07.2019 “On Approval of the Procedure for Organising Inclusive Education in Vocational Education and Training Institutions”

It defines the mechanisms for organising inclusive education and establishing a support system in VET providers.



Regulation on the Inclusive Resource Centre

It defines the objectives, functions, and procedures for the operation of Inclusive Resource Centres, as well as the specific features of their cooperation with educational institutions.



Letter of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine No. 1/9-466 of 21.08.2020 “On Teacher Professional Development Centres”

It provides recommendations on the activities of Teacher Professional Development Centres and the organisation of methodological support provided by these centres.



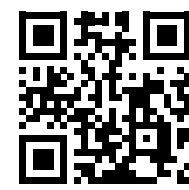
Law of Ukraine “On Vocational Education” (Article 17 “Practical Training of Vocational Education Learners”)

It defines the key principles for organising practical training and the roles of the educational institution, the employer, the practical training supervisor, and the mentor.



Portal of Inclusive Resource Centres

Contains regulatory documents, methodological materials, information on the activities of Inclusive Resource Centres, and contact details for the centres.



Section 6

Professional Profile of a VET Educator

The previous sections of this handbook examined the contemporary understanding of inclusive vocational education and training (VET), the principles of creating an accessible educational environment, planning learner support, organizing the educational process, and cooperating with employers, and other partners. However, putting these approaches into practice depends not only on regulatory frameworks, resources, or organisational mechanisms. A decisive role is played by VET educators, who daily create learning conditions for diverse learners, make professional decisions, work as part of a team, and ensure inclusive approaches are implemented in their daily work.

The professional competence of a VET educator is not limited to subject-specific knowledge and teaching methodologies. **Alongside the core roles of teacher, vocational training instructor, and mentor, a modern educator performs additional professional roles related to teamwork, partnership, planning learner support, and developing inclusive practices.** In modern vocational education and training, inclusion is an integral component of an educator's professional competence.

This section presents the professional profile of a VET educator as a benchmark for professional development and the enhancement of teaching practice. The term "VET educator" is used here as an umbrella term encompassing teachers, vocational training instructors, and other pedagogical staff involved in organizing and delivering the educational process.

6.1. Professional Profile of a VET Educator

The professional profile of a VET educator reflects the set of professional values, roles, competences, and professional behavioural patterns required for high-quality teaching in current settings. It serves as a benchmark for professional development, self-assessment, and the continuous improvement of teaching practice.

The core of an educator's professional activity remains the development of learners' vocational competences and mentoring support for their professional growth. At the same time, modern VET requires a much broader scope of professional engagement. An educator works as part of a team, builds partnerships with learners, coordinates cooperation with other participants in the educational process, and contributes to organisational change within the educational institution.

An essential component of the modern professional profile is the readiness to respond to learner diversity. This includes the ability to create an accessible educational environment, take learners'



individual needs into account, apply flexible teaching and learning approaches, and collaborate with all key stakeholders.

A modern educator operates in an environment of continuous change: educational standards are updated, new learning technologies emerge, learners' educational needs become increasingly diverse, and labour-market requirements evolve. This demands a readiness for ongoing professional development, openness to innovative approaches, and the capacity for critical reflection on one's own teaching practice.

6.2. Professional Roles of a VET Educator Today

The core of a VET educator's professional activity is the development of learners' vocational competences and mentoring support. At the same time, modern VET places new professional demands on educators. Working with learner diversity, a team-based approach to organizing support, the development of partnerships, and continuous changes in education lead to new professional roles that are becoming an integral part of an educator's daily work.

These professional roles do not exist in isolation. In everyday practice, educators combine them dynamically depending on the situation, learners' needs, and the specific context of the educational process.

Manager of the Educational Process

Organizing the educational process at the institutional level is the responsibility of the VET provider's administration. However, every teacher and vocational training instructor manages learning within their own professional domain. They plan the educational process, organise the learning environment and interaction among learners, select methods, learning materials, and assessment approaches, analyse learning outcomes, and adjust decisions when necessary. In this sense, the educator acts as a manager of the educational process.

Planning learning involves more than defining content, topic sequences, and learning tasks. The educator must consider learners' diverse prior experiences, strengths, educational needs, potential barriers, and vocational goals. They define expected learning outcomes and select modes of presenting information, organizing practical activities, and assessing learning that enable all learners to participate actively.

As a manager of the educational process, the educator structures the environment in which learning takes place. This encompasses not only the physical arrangement of the classroom, laboratory, or training workshop, but also the accessibility of information, learning materials, equipment, instructions, and tasks. The educator applies the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), anticipates necessary adaptations, and, where required, participates in identifying and providing reasonable accommodations.

An essential element of this role is managing social interaction during learning. The educator determines formats for individual, pair, and group work, supports the active participation of every learner, establishes clear norms for interaction, and fosters a safe and respectful communication environment. They also involve learners in setting learning goals, discussing task strategies, and assessing their own progress.



Managing the educational process also involves continuous observation of learners' engagement and achievements. The educator analyses not only whether the intended outcomes have been reached, but also which conditions facilitated learning, which barriers arose, and how effective the selected methods, materials, adaptations, and assessment approaches were. Based on these insights, they adjust the pace of learning, instructional presentation, task organisation, or provided support.

Thus, the educator's work as a manager of the educational process is cyclical: **planning – organisation – observation and assessment – adjustment**. The educator does not merely deliver a predetermined curriculum; they make informed professional decisions, evaluate their effectiveness, and respond flexibly to learners' needs. This ensures that the educational process remains accessible, manageable, and focused on enabling every learner to achieve full competence.

What Does This Look Like in Everyday Teaching Practice?

When planning a lesson, the educator anticipates diverse ways of presenting learning materials, options for completing practical tasks, and modes of assessing outcomes, ensuring every learner has an equal opportunity to achieve the planned goals.

Member of the Learner Support Team

Providing necessary support to a learner with a disability, special educational needs, or additional support requirements cannot be the sole responsibility of an individual educator. It requires collaborative effort from teachers, vocational training instructors, other pedagogical staff, and, where appropriate, specialists from healthcare, social services, employment agencies, civil society organisations, employers, and community partners.

As outlined in Section 3, where a psychological and pedagogical support team is established within a VET provider, educators actively contribute to its work. Together with other team members, they identify learner needs and barriers, plan required support, assist in developing and implementing Individual Development Programmes (IDP), apply agreed adaptations and reasonable accommodations, monitor learning outcomes, and contribute to refining team decisions.

If a VET provider lacks specialised staff or has not yet formally established a psychological and pedagogical support team, the educator collaborates with the administration, practical psychologist, social pedagogue, other teachers, as well as with external specialists and community partners. Depending on the learner's requirements, representatives from healthcare, social protection, employment services, civil society organisations, and employers may be engaged.

Within this collaborative framework, the educator operates within their scope of professional competence, complementing rather than replacing other specialists, and coordinating their actions with the broader team.

Their primary contribution lies in establishing conditions for successful learning: implementing agreed-upon decisions in the educational process, applying identified adaptations and reasonable accommodations, professionally monitoring learning progress, keeping the team informed about the learner's strengths, challenges, and progress milestones, and maintaining continuous information exchange among the team members.



What Does This Look Like in Everyday Teaching Practice?

The educator actively participates in support team meetings, shares professional observations regarding the learner's strengths and difficulties, collaboratively determines necessary support measures, and consistently implements agreed decisions during instruction.

Partner of the Learner

In today's vocational education and training, the learner is an active co-creator of their educational and professional pathway. This principle applies equally to all learners, including individuals with disabilities, those with special educational needs, and those requiring additional support. The educator does not decide for the learner; instead, they create an empowering environment that fosters active learner participation in decision-making regarding their education, professional development, and career choices.

The learner's perspective is central when decisions are made regarding educational organisation, support mechanisms, and professional growth. Every learner has the right to be heard, and their views, interests, and career aspirations must inform all decision-making processes.

In practice, this means directly involving the learner in setting educational and vocational targets, selecting pathways to achieve them, determining necessary adaptations and reasonable accommodations, evaluating progress, and planning subsequent professional steps.

The family is also a key partner for both the VET provider and the educator, particularly regarding minor learners. Collaboration with parents or legal guardians should reinforce the learner's development, gradually build their autonomy, and encourage active participation in shaping their educational journey.

Establishing a genuine partnership begins with understanding the learner as a unique individual. The learner profile serves this purpose by identifying individual strengths, interests, career aspirations, educational needs, and existing barriers. It enables the educational process to be tailored to individual characteristics while encouraging active participation in decision-making.

Partnerships are built on mutual respect, trust, open dialogue, and shared responsibility for reaching learning outcomes. This collaborative dynamic fosters the professional autonomy of learners – the capacity to make informed decisions and take ownership of one's learning, professional growth, and future career path.

What Does This Look Like in Everyday Teaching Practice?

Prior to the start of a practical work placement, the educator meets with the learner to discuss their vocational goals, expectations, potential challenges, and required support. In decision-making, the educator gives equal weight to the learner's input alongside information provided by other stakeholders.

Participant in the Interagency Cooperation System

As highlighted in the previous section, comprehensive learner support is achievable only through interagency collaboration. For educators, this means operating not in isolation, but as an integral



component of a multi-agency support network, interacting with diverse professionals and organisations within their designated role.

Depending on the learner's needs, this network may encompass the VET provider's administration, practical psychologists, social pedagogues, teacher/instructor assistants, Inclusive Resource Centre (IRC) specialists, healthcare services, social protection agencies, public employment centres, employers, civil society organisations, and other partners.

The educator plays a vital role in this network. They understand which specialists can be engaged, when their expertise is required, and how internal coordination mechanisms function within the VET provider.

Within their professional competence, the educator collaborates with other partners within the support system, shares relevant data regarding the learner's educational achievements and needs, participates in discussions on support options, and incorporates interagency recommendations into lesson planning and instructional design.

At the same time, the educator does not assume the duties of specialised professionals or administrative leadership. When a situation calls for specialised intervention or resources beyond the educator's scope, they promptly notify institutional leadership and contribute to collective problem-solving within their professional role.

Interagency cooperation enables holistic support, ensures efficient resource utilisation across sector boundaries, and establishes optimal conditions for effective learning, professional development, and successful transition to employment.

What Does This Look Like in Everyday Teaching Practice?

When an educator observes that the internal capacities of the VET provider are insufficient to support a learner, they promptly inform the administration, assist in coordinating external services or employer partners, and adapt educational plans based on joint decisions.

Member of a Professional Community

Modern educators do not work in isolation. Inclusive VET continuously introduces novel challenges for which standard solutions may not readily exist. Consequently, **professional communities** serve as vital mechanisms for ongoing development – offering peer-to-peer learning environments where educators share practice, discuss real-world scenarios, and collaboratively create solutions. Teacher Professional Development Centres play a key role in facilitating these networks. However, the ultimate efficacy of any professional community relies on educators' willingness to collaborate, learn collectively, and exchange experience.

Active participation in professional communities is an essential element of continuous professional development. Professional growth is not limited to formal training courses, webinars, or workshops. Peer dialogue, mutual consultations, case analysis, exchange of effective practices, and the willingness to learn alongside colleagues are equally vital. The ability to seek peer support and contribute to shared knowledge are core elements of modern teaching competence.



A member of a professional community actively enriches the growth of peers while advancing their own skills. They contribute their own findings, participate in professional discussions, support colleagues, critically evaluate their own practice, and remain receptive to refining their own pedagogical methods.

Professional communities can exist both internally within the VET provider and externally across broader networks. They include pedagogical staff, professional associations, working groups, networks, professional development programmes, online communities, and joint projects with employers, civil society organisations, and other partners.

What Does This Look Like in Everyday Teaching Practice?

Faced with an unfamiliar or complex pedagogical challenge, the educator seeks advice from the colleagues, engages in professional discussions, adapts successful experience proven by others, and actively shares their own findings and insights.

Inclusion Leader

Inclusive education is driven not only by policy frameworks, managerial decisions, or discrete project interventions. Its real-world implementation depends primarily on educators who daily champion values of human dignity, equality, participation, and non-discrimination. Therefore, modern educators have the opportunity to act as inclusion leaders – specialists who hold a clear professional vision, consistently apply it in practice, and foster an inclusive institutional culture.

Leadership is not necessarily linked to a particular position or formal authority. It is demonstrated through a willingness to take responsibility for one's own decisions, notice barriers, ask questions, propose possible ways to remove them, and involve others in discussion. A teacher or vocational training instructor can demonstrate leadership within their learning group, workshop, methodological commission, professional community, or learner support team.

An inclusion leader starts with themselves. They examine their own beliefs, attitudes, and professional habits, are prepared to reconsider established decisions, and recognise that some practices may create barriers to learner participation. Such leadership does not mean that the educator must always have ready-made answers. More important are openness to learning, readiness to seek support from colleagues, willingness to listen to learners, and the ability to change one's practice on the basis of experience gained.

In everyday work, leadership is demonstrated through concrete decisions: presenting information in accessible ways, organising learning flexibly, involving learners in discussions about the support they need, communicating respectfully, and responding to biased attitudes. The educator not only uses inclusive practices themselves, but also explains their value, shares experience with colleagues, and supports those who are only beginning to apply them.

At the same time, an inclusion leader does not act alone or assume responsibility for the entire system. They understand the boundaries of their role, cooperate with the administration, colleagues, and other specialists, and initiate change within their existing authority and opportunities. Sometimes this may be a small improvement: changing the format of learning material, revising an assessment method, discussing barriers in a workshop, or proposing a new



way of interacting with learners. It is through such consistent steps that an inclusive culture gradually develops within a VET provider.

Leadership in inclusion also means being able to see the broader significance of one's work. It is not only about supporting an individual learner, but about creating conditions in which diversity is seen as a normal part of the educational environment, everyone has an opportunity to participate, and decisions take account of different needs and experiences. An educator who consistently demonstrates this approach influences not only learning outcomes, but also attitudes, relationships, and the professional culture of the entire VET provider.

Thus, being an inclusion leader does not mean leading a reform or changing the system single-handedly. It means holding a clear values-based position, putting it into practice in one's daily professional work, supporting others, and helping make inclusion a shared responsibility of all participants in the educational process.

What Does This Look Like in Everyday Teaching Practice?

When the educator notices that some learners cannot participate fully in learning, they do not limit their response to individual assistance. They propose changes that will make the educational process more accessible for everyone, share their own experience with colleagues, and support the implementation of inclusive approaches within the VET provider.

6.3. Competences of an Educator Working in an Inclusive VET Provider

The previous subsection examined the contemporary professional roles of an educator. Subject knowledge or teaching experience alone is not sufficient to perform these roles successfully. Educators make professional decisions every day: they plan learning, interact with learners and colleagues, organise support, analyse the results of their work, and continuously improve their own practice. Working in an inclusive VET provider therefore requires a broad range of general and professional competences.

At present, Ukraine has not yet developed professional standards for VET teaching staff that comprehensively define the modern professional competences of teachers or vocational training instructors. At the same time, the professional standards for teachers and heads of general secondary education institutions describe inclusive competence and define current approaches to the professional activity of teaching staff and education managers.

Despite the differences between general secondary education and vocational education and training, a significant proportion of professional competences are common to all teaching staff. Teachers and vocational training instructors can therefore use the professional standard for teachers as one reference point for their own professional development, while heads of VET providers can use the professional standard for heads of general secondary education institutions, adapting its provisions to the specific features of VET.

To better understand how current regulatory documents define an educator's professional readiness to work in an inclusive educational environment, let us consider the content of inclusive competence as defined in the professional standard for teachers.

**Table 6.1.** Inclusive Competence in the Professional Standard for Teachers

Inclusive Competence		
Ability	Knowledge	Skills
Ability to create conditions that ensure the functioning of an inclusive educational environment	• Tools for supporting inclusive learning • Principles and strategies of Universal Design for Learning and reasonable accommodations	• Use tools for supporting inclusive learning in the educational process • Apply the principles and strategies of Universal Design for Learning and reasonable accommodations
Ability to provide pedagogical support to persons with special educational needs	• Principles, forms, and methods of effective support for persons with special educational needs • Types of adaptations/modifications in the educational process arising from learners' special educational needs	• Provide pedagogical support to persons with special educational needs • Implement the necessary adaptations/modifications in the educational process in accordance with learners' special educational needs
Ability to provide favourable conditions in the educational environment for every learner, taking account of age and other individual characteristics	• Approaches to individualised and differentiated learning • Ways of identifying learners' abilities, interests, and learning capacities • Requirements for organising the educational environment as a factor in learners' personal development	• Organise learners' education, upbringing, and development with due regard to their needs, abilities, and learning capacities • Use materials, devices, and equipment (where necessary) when working with learners to meet their individual learning and development needs • Organise the educational environment with due regard to learners' characteristics, needs, abilities, interests, and capacities

As the professional standard shows, inclusive competence covers not only pedagogical support for learners with special educational needs, but also the creation of an inclusive educational environment, the application of Universal Design for Learning, reasonable accommodation, and the use of adaptations and modifications. At the same time, analysis of the professional standard shows that inclusive approaches are not limited to this competence alone. For example, the competence related to creating favourable conditions for every learner also includes individualised and differentiated learning, consideration of individual characteristics, organisation of the educational environment, and cooperation with parents. Inclusion in the professional standard therefore functions not only as a separate competence, but also as a cross-cutting principle of an educator's professional activity. For this reason, this guide treats inclusion as something implemented across all areas of an educator's professional work.

An additional international reference point is the work of the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, in particular the Competence framework presented in the document *Profile of Inclusive Teachers*⁶. It views professional competence as an integrated system of professional values, knowledge, skills, and professional attitudes required for working with diversity. Although the document was developed primarily for general secondary education, its key principles are also relevant to VET.

⁶ European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education. *Profile of Inclusive Teachers*. 2012. (Full bibliographic details are given in the reference list)



Professional standards and the international profile of an inclusive teacher are not a list of requirements that must all be met at the same time. Above all, they can serve as benchmarks for professional self-assessment, planning an individual professional development pathway, selecting professional development programmes, and analysing one's own professional progress. For education managers, these documents may also be useful when planning the professional development of teaching staff.

None of these documents can be transferred mechanically to VET. At the same time, they help identify common reference points for the professional activity of a modern educator. The model of professional competences proposed below is based on a combination of these approaches, while taking into account the specific features of VET.

Taking into account Ukrainian regulatory documents, international approaches, and the specific features of VET, this guide proposes viewing the professional competence of an educator working in an inclusive VET provider as an interconnected system of four groups of competences:

Professional and Pedagogical Competences

These relate to planning and delivering learning using current approaches, Universal Design for Learning, adaptations, reasonable accommodations, and different methods of assessing learning outcomes.

Communication Competences

These support effective interaction with learners, their families, colleagues, employers, and other professionals involved in organising support.

Organisational Competences

These include the ability to plan support, coordinate interaction among participants in the educational process, and create an accessible educational environment.

Reflective Competences

These include professional ethics, the ability to analyse one's own work, engage in lifelong learning, and use new experience to improve one's own practice.

The proposed division is indicative, as in real professional practice all four groups of competences are closely interconnected and mutually reinforcing. When planning and delivering learning, an educator simultaneously draws on professional and pedagogical, communication, organisational, and reflective competences. It is their combination that enables effective work in an inclusive VET provider and creates the conditions for high-quality learning for all learners.

Case Study.

From Individual Solutions to Shared Professional Practice

During training, a teacher noticed that one learner regularly asked for the instructions for practical tasks to be repeated and did not always manage to complete the tasks at the same time as the others. During a conversation, the learner explained that after an injury, it was difficult for him



to listen to explanations, remember the sequence of actions, and carry out a practical operation at the same time. His main concern was whether he would later be able to complete a work placement at an enterprise successfully.

The teacher did not try to find a solution alone. He discussed the situation with the vocational training instructor, the practical psychologist, and the deputy principal responsible for educational and production activities. Together, they analysed which difficulties arose during learning itself and which might arise during the work placement. The team agreed first to review the organisation of the learning process and only then, if necessary, involve other partners.

The teacher then met with the learner to discuss possible solutions. Together, they identified that the most helpful measures were short step-by-step instructions, an opportunity to watch the demonstration of the operation again, and a few additional minutes to complete certain practical tasks without changing the requirements for the learning outcomes.

Because the VET provider had not previously dealt with a similar situation, the educator suggested discussing it with colleagues who taught vocational theory subjects, delivered practical vocational training, and were responsible for organising work placements. During a joint meeting, they analysed the stages of learning at which the learner encountered difficulties, the ways in which instructions were already presented, and which solutions could be introduced without changing the requirements for the learning outcomes.

The vocational training instructor suggested preparing instruction cards with step-by-step photographs of the operations. The vocational theory teacher helped align them with the theoretical material, while the vocational training instructor discussed with a representative of the enterprise whether such cards could be used directly at the workplace. After several weeks, the colleagues met again, assessed which solutions had proved effective, and agreed to use the updated materials when teaching other groups as well.

Before the work placement began, the educator and the vocational training instructor met with a representative of the enterprise. They discussed workplace requirements, the specific features of carrying out production operations, and possible organisational solutions that would allow the learner to perform the work without compromising safety requirements or quality standards.

At the end of the semester, the support team analysed the results. It concluded that the greatest effect came not from individual adaptations, but from continuous cooperation among educators, the learner, the employer, and the professional community. The experience gained was used when planning practical vocational training for other groups, and the updated instructional materials became part of the VET provider's teaching and methodological resources.

The educator did not try to resolve every issue independently or take over the work of other specialists. The educator coordinated cooperation, involved the learner in decision-making, used the resources of the professional community, and continuously analysed the effectiveness of the decisions made.



This is how the modern professional profile of a VET educator is manifested in practice: they work as part of a team, build partnerships, use the resources of the professional community, continuously develop their own practices, and make professional decisions aimed at ensuring high-quality education for every learner.

Checklist for Professional Reflection

After reading this section, consider how closely the statements below reflect your professional practice today. Tick the statements you can genuinely agree with. If some of these points are not yet part of your work, return to them after reading the following sections of the guide.

- ☐ I regularly analyse my own teaching practice and use the results of this analysis to improve learning.
- ☐ If I lack the knowledge or experience needed to address a professional situation, I seek support from colleagues or other specialists rather than trying to resolve everything on my own.
- ☐ When planning learning, I take into account not only the learning outcomes, but also the conditions that will help every learner participate actively in learning.
- ☐ I regard cooperation with colleagues as an important part of my professional activity, not merely an organisational necessity.
- ☐ I regularly update my professional knowledge and use current approaches to organising inclusive learning.
- ☐ When making teaching decisions, I take the learner's views into account and encourage them to be an active participant in the educational process.
- ☐ I am prepared to change my teaching approaches if they create barriers to the participation of some learners.
- ☐ I participate in professional communities, share experience with colleagues, or make use of opportunities for peer professional learning.
- ☐ When addressing complex teaching situations, I rely on teamwork and shared professional responsibility.
- ☐ I view professional development as a continuous process that lasts throughout my teaching career.



Additional Resources

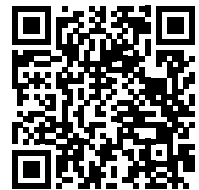
Professional Standard “Teacher at a General Secondary Education Institution”

Defines the professional competences of a modern teacher, including those related to creating an inclusive educational environment.



Professional Standard “Head (Principal) of a General Secondary Education Institution”

Describes the professional competences of the head of an educational institution, including in the areas of strategic development, staff management, and quality assurance in education.



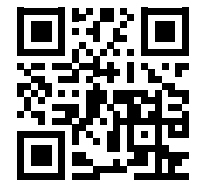
European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education. *Profile of Inclusive Teachers.*

An international document describing the key competences of an educator who is able to work in an inclusive education environment.



EdWay – National Platform for Professional Development Opportunities for Teaching Staff

A platform for finding professional development programmes and planning educators’ professional development.



Vector – National Platform for Professional Development Opportunities for Teaching Staff

A national platform providing information on professional development programmes and opportunities for teaching staff.



Glossary

Accessibility	The creation of conditions in which a person can use the physical environment, information, communication, digital resources, and services, allowing them to participate in the educational process on an equal basis with others. In VET, accessibility covers the learner's entire pathway – from obtaining information and admission to learning, work placements, and preparing for employment.
Adaptation	A change in the way learning material is presented, learning is organised, the educational environment or equipment is arranged, or assessment is conducted that helps remove barriers without changing mandatory learning outcomes or vocational qualification requirements.
Assistant to a VET Learner with Special Educational Needs (Learner Assistant)	A person who provides individual support to a VET learner with special educational needs (SEN) to facilitate their participation in the educational process, including assistance with mobility, orientation, self-care, communication, and the use of assistive devices in accordance with the learner's individual needs. A learner assistant may be a parent (or other legal representative) or a representative authorised by them, a social worker, or another person designated in accordance with legislation.
Assistive Devices and Assistive Technologies	Devices, equipment, software, and other technological solutions that support or improve a person's functioning and independence, helping them participate in the educational process on an equal basis with others (<i>e.g., hearing aids, mobility aids, augmentative and alternative communication tools, and screen-reading software</i>).
Barriers in the Educational Environment	Conditions or characteristics of the physical, informational, communicational, digital, organisational, or social environment that make it difficult for a person to participate in the educational process or restrict their full participation.
Functioning	An umbrella term used in the ICF that encompasses body functions and structures, activities, and participation. Functioning is considered in interaction with a person's health condition and contextual factors (both environmental and personal).
Inclusive Educational Environment	A set of conditions, approaches, and tools for their implementation that enable learners to learn, develop, and participate together, taking into account their needs and abilities.
Inclusive Learning	A system of educational services guaranteed by the state and based on the principles of non-discrimination, respect for human diversity, and the effective engagement and inclusion of all participants in the educational process.



Individual Development Programme (IDP)	A document that supports the individualisation of learning for a person with special educational needs, defining the necessary educational strategies, support services, and adaptations they require. The IDP is developed by the Psychological and Pedagogical Support Team with the participation of the learner and/or their parents (or legal representatives) in accordance with legislative requirements.
Individual Learning Plan (ILP)	A document that defines the sequence, form, and pace at which a learner completes the components of an educational programme to fulfil their individual educational pathway. It is developed by the educational institution in cooperation with the learner, provided that the necessary resources are available.
Individual Rehabilitation Programme	A document developed on the basis of a comprehensive assessment of the functional limitations of a person with a disability, containing an individualised list of required measures and support in various areas of life, including education and employment.
International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF)	An international classification developed by the World Health Organization to describe human functioning, taking into account body functions and structures, activities and participation, and the influence of environmental factors. The ICF considers functioning and disability as the result of interaction between a person's health condition, personal factors, and environmental factors.
Learner Profile	A practical tool for systematising information about a learner's strengths, resources, and experience; barriers arising from their interaction with the educational environment; and the conditions, support, and adaptations required for full participation in the educational process.
Mentoring	A form of support for professional development whose content and role depend on the context. In this handbook, the term is used both for mentoring teaching staff and for mentoring learners / young employees in the workplace.
Modification	A change to learning content or the expected outcome, including reducing mandatory content, removing occupationally significant operations, simplifying criteria, or changing a competence that the learner is expected to demonstrate.
Participation	A person's involvement in a life situation. In education, participation means not only a learner's physical presence, but also their opportunity to actively engage in learning, social interaction, practical vocational training, and other aspects of life at the educational institution.
Person with Special Educational Needs (SEN)	A person who requires additional ongoing or temporary support in the educational process in order to ensure their right to education. Having special educational needs is not the same as having a disability: the need for additional support may be ongoing or temporary.
Psychological and Pedagogical Support Team	A permanent body within an educational institution established by order of the head of the institution. Its purpose is to develop and implement an Individual Development Programme for each person with special educational needs (SEN) in order to support successful learning and social adaptation within the group. The team's activities are governed by the relevant regulations of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine.



Reasonable Accommodation	Necessary and appropriate modifications and adjustments made in a specific case to ensure that a person can exercise their rights on an equal basis with others, provided they do not impose a disproportionate or undue burden. In education, it refers to an individualised solution required by a specific learner to remove or reduce a barrier when generally accessible solutions are insufficient.
Support	A set of conditions, measures, and resources aimed at removing or reducing barriers arising from a person's interaction with the environment and ensuring their participation and maximum independence in the educational process.
Teacher Assistant	A member of teaching staff who supports the learner-centred organisation of the educational process for a learner with special educational needs (SEN), participates in the development and implementation of the learner's Individual Learning Plan, and helps adapt learning materials.
Universal Design	An approach to designing environments, objects, programmes, services, and materials so that they can be used by the broadest possible range of people from the outset, without the need for subsequent specialised adaptation. In education, this means anticipating learner diversity when organising physical spaces, the educational process, workstations, equipment, learning materials, and information resources.
Vocational Training Instructor Assistant	A member of the teaching staff who supports the learner-centred organisation of practical vocational training for a learner with special educational needs (SEN), participates in the development and implementation of the learner's Individual Learning Plan, and helps adapt learning materials.

APPENDICES

Appendix 3.1.

Checklist for Assessing the Admissions Office's Readiness for a Barrier-Free Admissions Process

Purpose: to conduct an internal audit and prepare the VET provider's admissions office for barrier-free submission of application documents. This tool is intended to help ensure equal conditions for applicants, accessible and appropriate communication, and the timely identification of conditions and support required during admission and subsequent learning, without lowering the requirements of admissions procedures.

Monitoring period: " ____ " _____ 20__

Person responsible for the assessment: _____ (full name, position)

Assessment of Readiness Criteria

No	Readiness Criteria	Yes	No	Comments / Required Actions and Resources
1. Architectural and Spatial Accessibility of the Premises				
1.1	An unobstructed route is provided from the building entrance to the admissions office (ramps/lifts are available, high thresholds are absent, and doorways and passageways are of sufficient width) in accordance with DBN V.2.2-40:2018.	☐	☐	
1.2	Understandable internal navigation is provided (clear, high-contrast signs/pictograms directing applicants to the admissions office, medical room, and toilet room).	☐	☐	



No	Readiness Criteria	Yes	No	Comments / Required Actions and Resources
1.3	At least one universally accessible workplace and an accessible waiting area with adequate lighting and an opportunity to rest are provided.	☐	☐	
2. Information Accessibility and Digital Tools				
2.1	Information on the VET provider's website (admission rules, list of occupations, instructions) is accessible to persons with visual impairments, including compatibility with screen readers.	☐	☐	
2.2	The information board provides step-by-step visual guidance on submitting documents (brief instructions and sample completed forms with photographs), as well as information materials in enlarged print (14 pt or larger).	☐	☐	
2.3	QR codes are available linking to brief audio or video instructions on the stages of the admissions process.	☐	☐	
3. Communication Readiness and Ethics of Interaction				
3.1	Admissions office staff use appropriate terminology and have received guidance on interacting with applicants who have specific information-processing needs or heightened anxiety.	☐	☐	
3.2	Where necessary, applicants can be received or consulted individually in a separate quiet room.	☐	☐	
3.3	A procedure has been defined for involving the VET provider's practical psychologist / social pedagogue to provide initial support to applicants.	☐	☐	
4. Organisation of Support and Confidentiality				
4.1	Procedures are in place for the confidential collection, storage, and sharing with authorised staff of information necessary for organising support.	☐	☐	
4.2	An accessible and confidential method is available for applicants to communicate any adaptations to the admissions procedure or support conditions they require.	☐	☐	
5. Readiness for Entrance Examinations / Interviews				
5.1	Reasonable accommodation can be provided in relation to the format, duration, materials, and environment of an entrance examination (for example, additional time or a different task format) in line with the applicant's needs, without changing the content or assessment criteria.	☐	☐	
5.2	Where necessary, assistive products and digital tools required by a particular applicant are available during examinations/interviews.	☐	☐	



Monitoring Results and Follow-Up Actions

- 1.** Barriers identified that need to be removed: _____
- 2.** Required actions and resources: _____
- 3.** Responsible persons: _____
- 4.** Completion deadline: _____

Signatures of Responsible Persons

Executive Secretary of the Admissions Office: _____ / _____

Practical psychologist / social educator: _____ / _____

Confidentiality Note:

Information about an applicant's needs is collected solely for the timely creation of appropriate conditions and planning of support in the educational process. This information is confidential and may not serve as grounds for refusing admission to a vocational education and training institution.



Appendix 3.2.

Support Team Checklist

FIRST MONTH OF LEARNING:

Purpose: to ensure systematic and consistent monitoring of the learner's adaptation during the first month of learning, identify and remove barriers in the educational environment in a timely manner, and coordinate the actions of the support team.

Academic year: 20___ / 20___

Support team coordinator: _____ (full name, position)

Learner: _____

Group / vocation: _____

Stages and Checkpoints during the First Month of Learning

Stage and Activities	Done	Active	Not Done	Responsible Persons and Notes
Stage 1. Introduction, Identification of Needs, and Initial Observation				
1.1. An initial individual meeting with the learner has been held: contact has been established, and the learner's previous experience, strengths, goals, and expectations regarding learning have been discussed.	☐	☐	☐	Vocational training instructor, practical psychologist
1.2. An initial analysis of potential barriers in the educational environment has been conducted during theoretical learning and familiarisation with the training workshops.	☐	☐	☐	Teachers, vocational training instructor
1.3. Where available and with the consent of the learner or their legal representatives, relevant documents containing information that may be useful for organising support have been reviewed. Personal data are processed in accordance with the law.	☐	☐	☐	Designated responsible person
1.4. Initial support and adaptation measures for the first weeks of learning have been identified.	☐	☐	☐	Support team



Stage and Activities	Done	Active	Not Done	Responsible Persons and Notes
1.5. The learner's adaptation, understanding of safety rules, and interaction within the group are being observed in order to refine and review the initial decisions.	☐	☐	☐	Teachers, vocational training instructor, psychologist
Stage 2. Organising the Support Team's Work and Planning Support				
2.1. The composition of the support team has been determined in line with the learner's needs and the specific features of vocational training.	☐	☐	☐	VET provider administration
2.2. The first team meeting has been held with the learner's participation: necessary actions, responsible persons, and arrangements for further cooperation have been agreed.	☐	☐	☐	Support team, learner
2.3. Where necessary, the Learner Profile has been used to systematise information about strengths, barriers, and the support solutions required.	☐	☐	☐	Support team, learner
Stage 3. Organising an Accessible Educational Environment and Adaptations				
3.1. The training workshop, laboratory, and workstation have been assessed for barriers, and the necessary measures to remove them have been identified.	☐	☐	☐	Vocational training instructor, administration representative
3.2. Necessary adaptations to learning materials and instructions have been identified and implemented in response to the barriers identified.	☐	☐	☐	Teachers, vocational training instructor
3.3. Where necessary, accessible digital and assistive tools and appropriate learning and assessment formats have been identified in line with the needs of the individual learner.	☐	☐	☐	Teachers, vocational training instructor, other team members
Stage 4. Agreeing and Reviewing Support				
4.1. The necessary adaptations for theoretical learning, practical vocational training, and assessment have been agreed.	☐	☐	☐	Support team, learner
4.2. Responsibility for implementing the agreed decisions has been assigned, and the date for reviewing their effectiveness has been determined.	☐	☐	☐	Support team
Stage 5. Coordinated Interaction in the Educational Environment				
5.1. Teaching staff working with the learner have been informed, with due regard for confidentiality, of the information necessary for organising learning and the agreed adaptations.	☐	☐	☐	Team coordinator



Stage and Activities	Done	Active	Not Done	Responsible Persons and Notes
5.2. Where necessary, activities have been conducted to promote mutual respect and an inclusive culture within the group without disclosing the learner's personal information.	☐	☐	☐	Vocational training instructor, practical psychologist / social pedagogue

Results of the First Month

What helps the learner participate successfully in learning: _____

Which barriers remain or have emerged: _____

Which solutions need to be continued, changed, or added: _____

Who is responsible for the next steps and when the team will review their outcomes: _____

The purpose of the initial stage is not the formal completion of documents, but the creation of conditions in which the learner understands the requirements of learning and the occupation, participates in planning their own support, and can gradually become more independent.



Appendix 3.3.

Learner Profile

The Learner Profile is a practical tool proposed in this handbook that helps systematise information about the learner's strengths, barriers in the educational environment, and the support conditions required. The Profile is used for joint planning of pedagogical and organisational decisions and may be updated in line with changes in the learner's needs and learning conditions.

I. General information

learner's full name: _____

Year of birth: _____ Learning group: _____

Selected occupation / qualification: _____

Period of learning / work placement: from "___" _____ 20__ to "___" _____ 20__

Sources of information used to prepare the Profile: conversation with the learner, observations by educators, previous learning experience, available documents (*with the learner's consent*).

II. Strengths, vocational interests, and learner participation

(To be completed together with the learner)

1. Vocational interests, aspirations, and goals:

(What does the learner enjoy doing within the chosen occupation? What do they want to learn first?)

2. Preferred method of communication and interaction:

(How is it most convenient to receive information: orally, in writing, through diagrams/video? What is the preferred way to respond?)

3. What helps the learner learn and work most effectively:

(For example: clear process sheets, working in pairs, a quiet environment, regular breaks)



4. How the learner independently communicates a need for support or a change in conditions:

(For example: speaking directly to the vocational training instructor after a briefing, using an agreed signal/card, sending a message via a messaging app)

5. Independence in learning and professional activity

(What can the learner already do independently? In which situations is support still needed? What will help gradually increase their independence?)

III. Map of needs, barriers, and agreed solutions

All adaptations listed below are intended to ensure equal access and remove barriers and do not change the final qualification requirements for the occupation.

Area or Learning Situation	Strengths and Effective Strategies	Barriers in Materials, Communication, Physical Environment, Learning Organisation, or Assessment	Agreed Solutions	Responsible Person	Review Date
Theoretical Learning					
Practical Vocational Training / Work Placement					
Social and Emotional Domain and Environment					

IV. Information on completion and review

Date completed: _____

Next review: _____

Participants in the discussion:

- ☐ learner
- ☐ vocational training instructor
- ☐ teacher(s)
- ☐ practical psychologist / social pedagogue
- ☐ others: _____

Information in the Profile should relate only to the organisation of learning and learner support. Its collection, use, and storage must comply with legislation on personal data protection and confidentiality.



Appendix 3.4.

Training Workshop Accessibility and Safety Checklist

Purpose: to help the vocational training instructor independently assess the accessibility, safety, and ergonomics of the space in the training workshop and promptly develop adaptations for the learner without lowering occupational standards.

Status	Area Being Assessed	What to Consider
Block 1. Physical and Spatial Accessibility		
☐	Width of Work Area Passageways	Passageways between machines, worktables, and shelving allow unobstructed and safe movement and manoeuvring when using the necessary assistive products.
☐	Floor Surface and Changes in Level	The floor is level and non-slip; changes in level do not create barriers to movement; cables and hoses do not cross circulation routes or are properly secured.
☐	Accessibility of Shared-Use Areas	The handwashing area, cupboards, shelves, controls, and other necessary elements are positioned so that the learner can use them safely and as independently as possible.
☐	Evacuation Routes and Exits	Evacuation routes and emergency exits are accessible, free from obstacles, and clearly marked; arrangements are in place to ensure the safe evacuation of learners with diverse needs.
Block 2. Ergonomics of the Individual Workstation		
☐	Adjustability of the Work Surface	The height of the workbench, table, or chair can be adjusted to the learner's anthropometric characteristics, allowing work to be performed while seated, standing, or alternating between these positions.
☐	Reachability of Tools	Key tools, workpieces, and equipment controls are positioned within comfortable reach, without requiring unsafe or forced movements.
☐	Assistive Devices	Where necessary, workpiece holders, enlarged or non-slip tool handles, elbow supports, or special guards for safe cutting/processing are available.



Status	Area Being Assessed	What to Consider
☐	Adapted Seating	For seated work, the chair has adjustable height, backrest, and armrests, as well as a support/footrest to stabilise the feet and pelvis.

Block 3. Sensory and Information Environment

☐	Quality and Level of Lighting	The work area has sufficient general and directed task lighting without creating glare on metal, glossy, or reflective surfaces.
☐	Visual and High-Contrast Markings	Equipment edges, moving parts, and hazardous areas have high-contrast markings in accordance with occupational safety requirements, supplemented where necessary by signs, symbols, or tactile markings.
☐	Alternative Formats for Safety Signals	Where necessary, accessible alternative formats are provided for emergency and other important safety signals, including visual signals, and information on evacuation routes and safe areas is accessible to learners.
☐	Noise Protection and Emergency Alerts	Hearing protection required under occupational safety rules (earplugs/ear defenders) is compatible with the emergency alert system and allows the learner to perceive speech/instructions from the vocational training instructor.

Block 4. Teaching Materials and Occupational Safety Instructions

☐	Accessibility of Process Sheets	Where necessary, instructions and step-by-step work plans are provided in a format accessible to the learner, using diagrams, pictograms, photographs, video, model examples, or other ways of presenting information.
☐	Format of Occupational Safety Briefings	Occupational safety information can be provided in different formats: visual diagrams, subtitled video, printed text in enlarged high-contrast type, or long instructions broken down into sequential steps.
☐	Labelling of Materials and Tools	Boxes containing parts and containers holding liquids/materials have large, high-contrast labels (colour coding, text labels, or symbols).

Block 5. Organisation of Working Time and Interaction

☐	Flexibility of Work and Rest Arrangements	An individual schedule of short breaks is established to reduce physical/visual strain or vary the workload, taking into account the specific features of the technological process and safety requirements.
☐	Adaptation of Time Requirements	Time requirements may be adapted during the initial acquisition of a skill (with additional time determined individually), provided that all quality and safety requirements are fully maintained.
☐	Organisation of Teamwork	When tasks are performed in groups, roles and operations are allocated with due regard to learners' strengths and skills, the requirements of the occupational task, and occupational safety.



ASSESSMENT SHEET AND ACTION PLAN

(To be completed by the vocational training instructor following the workshop visual assessment)

1. Barriers identified in the workshop:
2. Priority steps to remove the identified barriers:
3. Required equipment, materials, or specialist consultations (occupational safety specialist, psychologist, etc.):

Assessment date: " ____ " _____ 20____

Vocational training instructor: _____ / _____

Methodological Note:

This checklist is a working tool for self-assessment and planning changes in the training workshop. It helps translate barrier-free accessibility into specific, technically sound, and safe pedagogical and organisational solutions.



Appendix 4.1.

Learner Self-Assessment and Reflection Form

LEARNER SELF-ASSESSMENT AND REFLECTION

- ☒ I perform best when doing: _____
- ☒ I work confidently when: _____
- ☒ I experience the greatest difficulties when: _____
- ☒ What helps me work effectively: _____
- ☒ What helps me understand a new task: _____
- ☒ If I need help, I: _____
- ☒ During my work placement, it is important for me to: _____
- ☒ During the work placement, I want to learn to: _____
- ☒ What should the workplace mentor or work placement supervisor know to make it easier for me to learn and work?



Appendix 4.2.

Comprehensive Checklist for Assessing the Suitability of a Work Placement Provider

GENERAL INFORMATION

Learner: _____

Occupation / educational programme: _____

Year / group: _____

Name of enterprise: _____

Work placement site address: _____

Planned work placement period: _____

Planned occupational tasks: _____

Assessment date: _____

ASSESSMENT PARTICIPANTS:

Enterprise representative: _____

VET provider representative: _____

INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING THE CHECKLIST

Before the assessment, identify the occupational operations the learner is expected to perform and review their vocational competences, functional needs, and expectations regarding the work placement.



The checklist should be completed during an on-site inspection of the enterprise. It is advisable to follow the main routes, inspect the workstation, sanitary facilities, rest area, and shelter, and check the accessibility of instructions, equipment, and safety signals.

Where possible, the learner should test the workstation in practice, use the tools, and perform selected typical operations.

For each statement, select one response option:

“Yes” – the condition is fully met; no additional changes are required;

“Partly” – the condition is not fully met, but the identified barrier can be removed or minimised through specific changes;

“No” – the condition is not met; the barrier or risk may prevent the learner from completing the work placement safely and effectively.

If “Partly” or “No” is selected, the “Comments / required actions” column should:

- describe the specific barrier;
- identify the necessary solution or adaptation;
- identify the person responsible;
- set a completion deadline.

The assessment should be based on actual conditions rather than assumptions related to the learner’s diagnosis or disability.

The final decision should not be based solely on the number of “Yes”, “Partly”, and “No” responses. Particular attention should be paid to critical conditions: alignment of tasks with the work placement programme, safety of occupational operations, accessibility of evacuation routes and hazard signals, and the ability to respond promptly in an emergency.

ASSESSMENT FORM

1. Alignment with the Occupation and Work Placement Programme

No.	Assessment Criterion	Yes	Partly	No	Comments / Required Actions
1.1	A work placement agreement has been concluded between the VET provider and the enterprise; it specifies the occupation, period, conditions, placement arrangements, and mutual obligations	☐	☐	☐	
1.2	The enterprise provides opportunities to perform the main tasks specified in the work placement programme	☐	☐	☐	



No.	Assessment Criterion	Yes	Partly	No	Comments / Required Actions
1.3	The learner will be involved in real occupational operations rather than only observation or secondary assignments	☐	☐	☐	
1.4	The workplace makes it possible to assess the required vocational competences	☐	☐	☐	
1.5	Requirements for the pace, quality, and volume of work align with the objectives of the work placement and can be reasonably agreed with the learner	☐	☐	☐	

2. Physical Accessibility and Movement

No.	Assessment Criterion	Yes	Partly	No	Comments / Required Actions
2.1	The building entrance is accessible and safe	☐	☐	☐	
2.2	The workplace is accessible to the learner	☐	☐	☐	
2.3	Sanitary facilities are accessible and usable	☐	☐	☐	
2.4	The rest area is accessible to the learner	☐	☐	☐	
2.5	The route to the shelter can be travelled safely and within the required time	☐	☐	☐	
2.6	The main routes through the enterprise premises are safe and easy to understand	☐	☐	☐	
2.7	Stairs, thresholds, narrow passageways, slippery surfaces, and other obstacles are absent or appropriately marked	☐	☐	☐	
2.8	Routes are free from unsecured objects, cables, or equipment that could create a hazard	☐	☐	☐	
2.9	High-contrast, visual, or tactile orientation cues can be provided where necessary	☐	☐	☐	
2.10	The learner can use the main routes safely and independently, or the necessary assistance can be provided	☐	☐	☐	



3. Working Environment Conditions

No.	Assessment Criterion	Yes	Partly	No	Comments / Required Actions
3.1	Workplace lighting is sufficient and does not create glare	☐	☐	☐	
3.2	Noise levels do not prevent the learner from perceiving instructions and hazard signals, or accessible alternatives are provided	☐	☐	☐	
3.3	The temperature range is appropriate for performing the planned tasks	☐	☐	☐	
3.4	Ventilation provides appropriate and safe working conditions	☐	☐	☐	
3.5	The workspace allows tasks to be organised conveniently and safely	☐	☐	☐	
3.6	Where necessary, exposure to noise, bright light, crowds, or other stimuli can be reduced	☐	☐	☐	
3.7	Where necessary, an area can be designated for a short break or recovery	☐	☐	☐	

4. Equipment, Tools, and Workstation

No.	Assessment Criterion	Yes	Partly	No	Comments / Required Actions
4.1	Equipment and tools are appropriate for the occupational tasks of the work placement	☐	☐	☐	
4.2	The learner can safely use the required equipment and tools	☐	☐	☐	
4.3	Personal protective equipment is available, meets requirements, and can be used by the learner	☐	☐	☐	
4.4	Controls, markings, scales, and labels are accessible to the learner	☐	☐	☐	
4.5	The height or position of the work surface can be adjusted where necessary	☐	☐	☐	
4.6	The arrangement of tools and materials can be changed where necessary	☐	☐	☐	
4.7	High-contrast, colour-coded, tactile, or other accessible markings can be used	☐	☐	☐	
4.8	Adapted tools, assistive products, or an alternative method of operating equipment can be used	☐	☐	☐	
4.9	The proposed changes do not lower occupational requirements or create new risks	☐	☐	☐	



5. Accessibility of Information and Communication

No.	Assessment Criterion	Yes	Partly	No	Comments / Required Actions
5.1	Job responsibilities are stated clearly and understandably	☐	☐	☐	
5.2	Work instructions are accessible to the learner	☐	☐	☐	
5.3	Instructions can be provided as short, sequential steps	☐	☐	☐	
5.4	Spoken information can be reinforced in writing or visually where necessary	☐	☐	☐	
5.5	Sign language, pictograms, audio format, enlarged print, or other accessible communication methods can be used where necessary	☐	☐	☐	
5.6	A practical demonstration of a new operation can be provided before the learner performs it independently	☐	☐	☐	
5.7	Understanding of instructions can be checked by asking the learner to explain them in their own words or demonstrate them in practice	☐	☐	☐	
5.8	The learner can be informed in advance about changes to the schedule, tasks, or production process	☐	☐	☐	

6. Work Organisation and Scope for Adaptation

No.	Assessment Criterion	Yes	Partly	No	Comments / Required Actions
6.1	The work placement schedule is appropriate or can be reasonably adjusted	☐	☐	☐	
6.2	The pace of work allows the learner to perform the planned operations safely	☐	☐	☐	
6.3	Working hours and break arrangements correspond to the learner's functional needs	☐	☐	☐	
6.4	Complex operations can be broken down into sequential stages where necessary without changing the occupational outcome	☐	☐	☐	
6.5	The complexity and volume of tasks can be increased gradually	☐	☐	☐	
6.6	The employer is willing to discuss and implement justified adaptations	☐	☐	☐	
6.7	Necessary adaptations can be put in place before the work placement begins	☐	☐	☐	
6.8	A method has been defined for assessing the effectiveness of the adaptations introduced	☐	☐	☐	



7. Transport Accessibility

No.	Assessment Criterion	Yes	Partly	No	Comments / Required Actions
7.1	The enterprise can be reached by public or other accessible transport	☐	☐	☐	
7.2	The transport stop or drop-off point located is at an appropriate distance	☐	☐	☐	
7.3	The route from the transport stop or drop-off point to the enterprise is safe and accessible	☐	☐	☐	
7.4	Transport schedules are compatible with the work placement schedule	☐	☐	☐	
7.5	Where transport barriers exist, an appropriate organisational solution can be identified	☐	☐	☐	

8. Communication among Work Placement Participants

No.	Assessment Criterion	Yes	Partly	No	Comments / Required Actions
8.1	A contact person has been designated by the enterprise	☐	☐	☐	
8.2	A contact person has been designated by the VET provider	☐	☐	☐	
8.3	The learner knows whom to contact regarding work-related and organisational issues	☐	☐	☐	
8.4	A communication method has been agreed among the learner, workplace mentor, and VET provider representative	☐	☐	☐	
8.5	A procedure has been agreed for reporting difficulties, absence, or changes in health status	☐	☐	☐	
8.6	The graduate's personal data are shared with the employer only to the extent necessary and with the graduate's informed consent	☐	☐	☐	

9. Safety and Response in Difficult Situations

No.	Assessment Criterion	Yes	Partly	No	Comments / Required Actions
9.1	Potential hazards have been identified for the main occupational operations	☐	☐	☐	
9.2	Measures for eliminating or minimising risks have been identified	☐	☐	☐	



No.	Assessment Criterion	Yes	Partly	No	Comments / Required Actions
9.3	Occupational safety instruction can be provided in an accessible format	☐	☐	☐	
9.4	Warnings, markings, and hazard signals are accessible or can be provided in an alternative accessible format	☐	☐	☐	
9.5	The learner can safely stop an operation and report a hazard	☐	☐	☐	
9.6	A response procedure has been defined for deterioration in the learner's physical or mental health	☐	☐	☐	
9.7	A procedure has been defined for responding to an occupational injury	☐	☐	☐	
9.8	A response procedure has been defined for a panic reaction, severe stress, or a crisis situation	☐	☐	☐	
9.9	Responsible persons and emergency communication methods have been identified	☐	☐	☐	
9.10	Practical emergency-response drills are provided for	☐	☐	☐	

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

1. Quantitative Summary

Total number of responses:

"Yes" – _____

"Partly" – _____

"No" – _____

The quantitative results help indicate the overall level of readiness of the work placement provider, but they are not, on their own, sufficient grounds for a final decision. A single "No" response concerning a critical condition may be more significant than several positive responses concerning secondary aspects.

2. Qualitative Analysis

During the analysis, review all "Partly" and "No" responses systematically and determine:

- What specific barrier or risk has been identified?
- Which occupational tasks does it affect?



- Can this barrier be removed or minimised?
- What accommodation or organisational solution is required?
- Does the proposed solution preserve the essential occupational requirements?
- Is it safe for the learner and other employees?
- Who is responsible for implementing it?
- Can the solution be implemented before the work placement begins?
- How will its effectiveness be assessed?
- Does the learner agree with the proposed solution?

3. Critically Important Conditions

Critically important conditions include:

- alignment of the enterprise's activities with the occupation and work placement tasks;
- the possibility of performing key occupational operations;
- safety of equipment and production processes;
- accessibility of the evacuation route and shelter;
- accessibility of threat warning signals;
- the possibility of providing understandable safety instruction;
- availability of emergency response procedures;
- the possibility of providing the necessary protective equipment;
- the presence of a responsible person at the enterprise.

If any of these conditions is marked "No," the work placement should not begin until the barrier has been removed or another placement provider has been selected. A "Partly" response for a critical condition requires a mandatory action plan, a responsible person, a completion deadline, and a follow-up assessment.

4. Learner's Perspective

- What do I find convenient and easy to understand at this work placement site?
- What might make my work more difficult?
- What changes or support do I need?
- Do I agree to undertake my work placement at this site under the specified conditions?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ I need further discussion

Learner's comments: _____



FINAL DECISION

Based on the assessment results, select one of the following options.

☐ **1. The work placement provider meets the learner's needs**

The enterprise enables the learner to perform the occupational tasks specified in the programme and provides an accessible and safe working environment, necessary communication, and mentoring support.

☐ **2. The work placement provider partly meets the learner's needs**

The work placement may begin once the identified adaptations have been implemented and the identified barriers removed.

Mandatory conditions before the work placement begins: _____

Follow-up assessment date: _____

☐ **3. The work placement provider does not meet the learner's needs**

The identified barriers or risks cannot be removed or minimised without compromising safety requirements and essential occupational outcomes, and the proposed reasonable accommodation measures are ineffective or impose a disproportionate or undue burden under the criteria established by law. Another work placement provider must be selected.

A positive assessment does not mean that no barriers exist; it confirms that they can be removed or minimised so that the learner can perform occupational tasks safely and achieve the intended work placement outcomes.



Appendix 4.3.

Procedure for Identifying Adaptations and Reasonable Accommodations

An adaptation or reasonable accommodation should remove or reduce a specific barrier without changing the substance of the occupational task or the requirements for the quality and safety of its performance.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Learner: _____

Occupation: _____

Work placement provider: _____

Workstation: _____

Workplace mentor: _____

Date: _____

Participants in the discussion: _____

Step 1. Identify the Occupational Task

Describe the occupational operation, expected outcome, and quality and safety requirements. It is important to distinguish the essential vocational competence from the customary way of performing the task.

Occupational task: _____

Expected outcome: _____

Essential quality and safety requirements: _____

Essential vocational competence: _____



Step 2. Identify the Specific Barrier

Identify what specifically makes the task more difficult: the working environment, equipment, the way instructions are provided, pace, work organisation, communication, or another factor.

The barrier should be described through specific observation. For example, instead of “does not understand instructions,” use “after a five-step spoken instruction, completes the first two stages and then requires the explanation to be repeated.”

Identified barrier: _____

How it affects quality, safety, or independence: _____

Step 3. Ask for the Learner's Perspective

Discuss with the learner what specifically causes difficulty, which forms of support have helped previously, and which solution they consider acceptable.

Suggested questions:

- What makes the task more difficult to perform?
- Which part of the operation can you perform independently?
- What has helped you in the past?
- What could be changed to make it easier for you to perform this task safely and independently?
- What assistance is useful, and what assistance is excessive?

Learner's perspective: _____

Solution proposed by the learner: _____

Step 4. Determine the Level of Independence in Performing the Occupational Task

Identify which stages of the operation the learner already performs independently, where limited support is required, and what needs further practice.

Stage of the Operation	Independently	With Support	Requires Further Training	Comments

Stage or condition of task performance that requires a change: _____



Step 5. Select a Possible Accommodation

The accommodation may relate to the workstation and movement routes; equipment and tools; the way instructions are provided; the sequence and pace of work; communication and feedback; break arrangements; or temporary mentoring.

It is advisable to consider several options and select the simplest safe and effective solution that is sufficient to remove or reduce the specific barrier.

Solution Option	Expected Outcome	Possible Limitations

Selected solution: _____

Step 6. Check the Safety and Appropriateness of the Selected Solution

Before implementation, make sure that the selected solution addresses a specific barrier, has been agreed with the learner, does not change the substance of the occupational task or the required outcome, complies with occupational safety requirements, creates no new risks, and promotes the learner's independence.

Check Question	Yes	No	Comments
The solution removes or reduces the barrier			
The learner agrees with the solution			
The substance of the occupational task and the requirements for the outcome are preserved			
Safety requirements are met			
No new risks are created			

If the solution does not meet safety requirements, creates new risks, or changes the substance of the occupational task, another option should be considered.

Step 7. Assess Effectiveness

After trialling the selected solution, the workplace mentor and learner assess whether the quality, safety, and independence of occupational task performance have improved.

Indicator	Improved	No Change	Worsened
Quality of Performance			
Safety			
Independence			
Understanding of the Task			



Learner's comments: _____

Decision on the Adaptation or Reasonable Accommodation

- the solution is effective and will continue to be used;
- the solution needs to be adjusted;
- another solution needs to be trialled.

Additional Actions

- support can be gradually reduced;
- additional training in performing the occupational task is required;
- a follow-up assessment is required after _____.



Appendix 4.4.

Practical Recommendations for Communication with Employers

Communication with an employer should be based on professional partnership. A graduate should be presented first and foremost as a specialist with a qualification, practical experience, established competences, and professional potential. Discussion of necessary working conditions should be specific, non-discriminatory, and involve the graduate directly.

When communicating with an employer, it is important not to present the employment of a person with a disability as an act of charity or a concession by the employer. The aim is to recruit a qualified employee and broaden the enterprise's talent pool. Where the candidate's competences match the requirements of the position, such employment can offer the employer workforce, organisational, reputational, and economic benefits, including:

- broadening the pool of candidates and gaining access to an additional source of skilled workers, which is particularly important during labour shortages;
- recruiting employees with the required qualifications, practical experience, and non-standard approaches to solving occupational tasks;
- reducing staff turnover and the costs of repeated recruitment and training where work is properly organised and the employee receives appropriate support;
- developing an inclusive organisational culture, improving internal communication, and creating more accessible processes that benefit the entire workforce;
- strengthening the employer's reputation as socially responsible among employees, clients, partners, and the community;
- meeting the statutory employment quota and, accordingly, avoiding the obligation to pay a contribution supporting the employment of persons with disabilities for unfilled quota positions;
- applying the employer's 8.41% unified social contribution rate to the wage base of an employee with a disability, provided that appropriate documentation confirming disability is available and the statutory conditions are met;



- the possibility of receiving reimbursement of actual costs incurred in purchasing assistive products to equip the workstation of an employed person with a disability, in accordance with the procedure and limits established by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine;
- access to free consultations, recruitment services, and other employment-support programmes provided by public institutions, where the relevant statutory eligibility criteria are met.

Financial incentives should not be the sole basis for a decision. Candidate selection should be based on the person's competences, the requirements of the specific position, and the possibility of ensuring safe working conditions and any necessary reasonable accommodation. Most accommodations are organisational or low-cost, and some measures – such as written instructions, clear task structuring, mentoring, and flexible communication – can improve the effectiveness of the entire workforce.

Regulatory Note. The specific conditions for applying the unified social contribution rate, counting an employee towards the statutory quota, receiving reimbursements, and accessing other forms of support should be verified as of the date of employment. Key legal references include Law of Ukraine No. 875-XII “On the Fundamentals of Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities in Ukraine”; Law of Ukraine No. 2464-VI “On the Collection and Accounting of the Unified Contribution for Compulsory State Social Insurance” (Article 8, part thirteen); Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine No. 893 of 22 August 2023; and Law of Ukraine No. 4219-IX of 15 January 2025.

When communicating with employers, focus not on what a person “cannot do”, but on what they can do, which tasks they perform, and the conditions under which they work most effectively.

These recommendations are intended to establish a shared understanding of the objectives of communication with an employer. An indicative procedure for preparing for and conducting such a conversation is provided below.

I. Algorithm for communication with an employer

1. Preparing for the Conversation

Before meeting with the employer, it is advisable to:

- review the vacancy requirements and job responsibilities;
- identify the graduate's competences that correspond to these requirements;
- prepare specific examples of work completed;
- prepare a CV and professional portfolio;
- clarify the graduate's strengths and vocational interests;
- identify the conditions under which the graduate works most effectively;
- discuss necessary adaptations with the graduate;
- agree on what information may be shared with the employer;



- determine which information the graduate will present independently;
- prepare proposals for support during the initial stage.

It is important to discuss the planned conversation with the graduate in advance. A representative of the VET provider should not speak on the graduate's behalf if the person can describe their own experience, competences, and needs independently.

2. Sequence of the Conversation

Step 1. Clarify the Employer's Requirements

First, it is necessary to determine:

- which tasks the employee will perform;
- which competences are mandatory;
- what equipment is used;
- the requirements for quality and pace of work;
- the work schedule;
- the risks associated with the workplace;
- which working conditions can be changed without disrupting the production process.

Examples of questions:

- "What are the main operations required for this position?"
- "What are the quality and work-pace requirements?"
- "What equipment does the employee use?"
- "How do new employees receive instructions?"
- "Is a mentor assigned during the adaptation period?"
- "Which workplace conditions can be changed organisationally?"

Step 2. Present the Graduate's Vocational Competences

The discussion of the candidate should begin with their education, experience, and vocational achievements.

Suggested wording:

- "The graduate holds a qualification in..."
- "During the work placement, they successfully performed..."
- "They independently use the following equipment..."
- "They follow the required technological sequence and safety requirements."
- "The graduate can best perform the following operations..."
- "Here are examples of completed work from the portfolio."
- "The workplace mentor gave positive feedback on the quality of the graduate's work, sense of responsibility, and reliability in meeting agreed arrangements."



Instead of general descriptions such as “hard-working” or “a good employee”, provide specific evidence: operations performed, work placement outcomes, products, projects, and feedback from the workplace mentor.

Step 3. Assess How the Graduate’s Competences Match the Position Requirements

Determine:

- which job tasks the graduate is ready to perform independently;
- which tasks may require initial support;
- which competences still need further development;
- how well the working conditions match the graduate’s vocational capabilities and interests.

Examples of wording:

“Their [the graduate’s] experience matches the main tasks of this position.”

“They perform this operation independently and to the required standard.”

“They will need an initial demonstration when learning to use new equipment.”

“During the work placement, they demonstrated the ability to work with...”

“They need additional practice in the operation of..., but the core vocational competences have been developed.”

Step 4. Discuss Conditions for Effective Work

The focus should be on specific functional needs and possible solutions, rather than on a diagnosis.

For example: *“The graduate performs assembly operations to a high standard. In a noisy environment, they may miss some spoken information, so new tasks should also be provided in writing. This will help them work safely and independently.”*

Step 5. Agree on Follow-Up Actions

At the end of the conversation, determine:

- whether the employer is willing to consider the candidate;
- which adaptations need to be tested;
- who will be responsible for implementing them;
- whether a workplace mentor will be assigned;
- when the interview or next meeting will take place;
- what role the VET provider will play during the adaptation period.



II. Practical materials

1. How to Describe Necessary Working Conditions

Avoid Saying	Preferred Wording
He has hearing problems, so it will be difficult for him	For effective communication, spoken tasks should also be provided in writing or visually
She has poor vision	The work requires adequate lighting, enlarged markings, and consistent placement of tools
He does not understand complex instructions	He performs the operation successfully when the instructions are provided in short, sequential steps
She works too slowly	She works at a steady pace and achieves a high level of accuracy and quality
He cannot work for long periods	Short scheduled breaks should be provided to maintain productivity
Someone has to be with him all the time	A workplace mentor should be designated during the initial stage, with support gradually reduced
He cannot work in a team	He interacts most effectively with colleagues when roles are clearly allocated and a designated contact person is available
She has mental health problems	In situations of severe stress, she needs the option of taking a short break and contacting a designated person
She is bound to a wheelchair	She uses a wheelchair; an accessible route and a work surface at an appropriate height are required
He needs to be given simpler tasks	The requirements for the outcome remain unchanged, but a complex operation should be presented as a sequence of individual steps

Phrases for Discussing Adaptations

To explain the purpose of an accommodation:

"This is not about lowering occupational requirements, but about providing an accessible way to perform the task."

"Quality and safety requirements remain unchanged."

"The proposed solution helps remove a specific barrier."

"This adaptation was already used during the work placement and proved effective."

"The way work is organised is adapted, not the occupational outcome."

To make the solution specific:

"For new tasks, spoken instructions should be reinforced with a brief written step-by-step guide."

"Tools should be kept in designated, consistent locations."



"A practical demonstration of the operation will be useful during the initial stage."

"The main route should be clearly marked to support safe movement."

"A workplace mentor should be designated for the initial adaptation period."

"We suggest trialling this solution during the first two weeks."

To agree on responsibility:

"Who can be responsible for implementing this change?"

"When can the readiness of the workstation be checked?"

"Who will act as the workplace mentor?"

"What criteria will we use to assess the effectiveness of the accommodation?"

"When will we hold the first follow-up meeting?"

"The VET provider is ready to provide advisory support during the adaptation period."

2. How to Respond to an Employer's Concerns

Concern	Possible Response
We do not know how to work with him	We can provide specific recommendations on task organisation and communication. During the work placement, approaches were already identified that help the graduate work safely and independently.
This will create an additional burden for the team	It is best to identify exactly what support is required first. Often this involves clear instructions, advance notice of changes, or mentoring only during the initial stage.
We do not have special conditions	First, it is necessary to clarify exactly which conditions are required. Some accommodations are organisational and do not require significant expenditure or alterations to the premises.
We cannot lower the requirements	Lowering requirements is not proposed. Reasonable accommodation changes how work is organised or a task is performed, but not the requirements for quality, safety, or the occupational outcome.
We are concerned about liability	The decision should be based on an assessment of specific operations and risks. Safety measures, responsible persons, and a response procedure can be agreed jointly without restricting the candidate on the basis of general assumptions.
Our work pace is very fast	It is important to determine whether this pace is an essential requirement of the particular position. If it cannot be changed, consider another work area or vacancy where the candidate's vocational competences can be fully utilised.



3. Involving the Graduate in the Conversation

Do not speak about the graduate as though they were not present. A VET provider representative may briefly introduce the candidate, but wherever possible the graduate should describe their own vocational interests, experience, and expectations.

Questions for the graduate:

- "Please tell us which tasks you performed during your work placement."
- "Which occupational operations do you perform best?"
- "Please show examples of work from your portfolio."
- "What format of instructions helps you work independently?"
- "What support might you need when you first start work?"
- "What questions would you like to ask the employer?"

Phrases for the VET provider representative:

- "I suggest asking the graduate directly."
- "It is important to agree these conditions with the candidate themselves."
- "The graduate can explain which way of organising work is most effective for them."
- "The graduate has the right to determine the limits of disclosure of personal information, except where its processing or disclosure is based on another ground expressly provided for by law."

4. Expressions to Avoid

Avoid a pitying tone or framing the employment as an act of charity.

Inappropriate phrases:

- "Give him a chance."
- "Take him on at least for a trial period."
- "Do a good deed."
- "Life is difficult enough for him already."
- "Go easy on him."
- "Do not expect too much from him."
- "He is special, so everything has to be explained to him."
- "Try hiring her – perhaps she will manage."

Professional alternatives:

- "We suggest considering the candidate on the basis of the vocational competences."
- "His training matches the main tasks of this vacancy."
- "During the work placement, she demonstrated the ability to perform the following operations..."



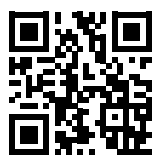
- “We suggest discussing the conditions under which the employee will be able to work most effectively.”
- “The requirements for the outcome remain the same; only the way the work is organised changes.”
- “If needed, we are ready to provide advice during the initial adaptation period.”

Example: *“Iryna is qualified as a seamstress and has work placement experience in a tailoring workshop. She independently performs core sewing operations, follows technological procedures, and works with a high degree of precision. She works best in conditions where she can plan the sequence of operations independently and maintain a steady pace. Her portfolio includes examples of finished products and positive feedback from her workplace mentor. We suggest considering her application, inviting her for an interview, and discussing the prospects of work in a non-production-line setting.”*

Employing a graduate is not an act of assistance, but a professional partnership in which the employer gains a trained employee and the graduate gains an opportunity to use their competences in accessible and safe working conditions.



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