



**skill**

Soft sKills dIgitAl Learning for the ICT workforce

# Summary of Curriculum and Modules

## Course title:

**EU Soft skills**

## Overall capacity building objective:

The overall capacity that the EU soft skills course aims to build is to foster the identified soft skills by the needs assessment for the targeted ICT subject matter experts (SMEs) and micro-firm groups.

## Target audience (s):

ICT personnel, managers and trainers should be trained to incorporate ICT skills in their work settings - organizations and micro firm groups.

Educators from schools will be the reference people in the educational centers and will be spreading the knowledge and methodologies. These educators must be also trained via a train-the-trainers course that will help them contribute to building the capacity of ICT skills.

The virtual learning content can be reorganized to fit specific needs or organizations or repurposed for additional audiences.

## Summary learning outcomes (LOs):

After studying this course to meet the overall capacity building objective, participants will be able to:

- develop relationships that will be based on trust, respect, and mutual understanding in the workplace;
- apply successful customer service methods;
- evaluate situations and correct mistakes;
- gain higher levels of adaptability and flexibility in work settings;
- demonstrate leadership qualities;



The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein. Project no: 2020-MT01-1-KA226-092418



- develop strategies to mitigate risks and overcome problems;
- monitor and plan processes using technology;
- take initiative to innovate.

**Modality:**

This course involves a combination of self-directed, self-paced online modules in bite-sized size and with the form of micro-credentials which cover the core concepts. Weekly virtual workshops may be incorporated in which learners will conduct problem-based learning tasks in small groups. At the end of the course participants complete an individual assignment which involves applying the skills learned in the course to their own professional and cultural contexts.

**Duration:**

The learners will be approximately required to study 15 hours, spread over a five-week period.

**Assessment:**

- a) formative assessment: instant quizzes that provide ongoing feedback to the learner on their progress, the results of which are not included in the final grade for the course. Reflective assignments are also included;
- b) summative assessment: assignments that define the final grade for the course; they assess the depth of learning through real-life scenarios and simulations; reflection assessments evaluate higher order skills such as analysing, evaluating and creating.

**Certificate:**

Badges will be available to the learners after the completion of each module.

After the completion of this course, the learners will be able to:

1. identify the components of the notion of soft skills;



The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein. Project no: 2020-MT01-1-KA226-092418



2. determine the importance of soft skills in workforce;
3. use soft skills to handle real-life scenarios at work;
4. apply problem-solving skills in a creative manner;
5. enhance the ability of emotional intelligence in facing work situations;
6. improve their self-management and resiliency in managing conflicts;
7. familiarize with communication theories and effective communication in workplace;
8. apply good communication practices for building trust in groups;
9. demonstrate empathy in group collaboration.

### Soft skills definition and attributes

This course is based on the acquisition of soft skills as they are defined in Collins English Dictionary: “desirable qualities for certain forms of employment that do not depend on acquired knowledge: they include common sense, the ability to deal with people, and a positive flexible attitude” (Harper Collins, n.d). Acquired knowledge refers to the person’s ability to perform specific tasks and activities, the hard or technical skills. In contrast with hard skills, soft skills can be performed in diverse conditions, in any context and under any circumstance, since they refer to human interactions either in personal life or workplace.

### Pedagogical strategies

- **Role playing and simulation-based learning:** an active experiential learning process by which the learner cultivates knowledge of real word processes through artificial representation.
- **Problem/ project-based learning:** a student-centered pedagogy in which students learn through the experience of problem solving.
- **Reflection learning:** reflective practice is 'learning through and from experience towards gaining new insights of self and practice' (Finlay, 2008) and follows a cycle of processes that needs to be repeated; reflection learning encourages learners to take responsibility for their learning and engage in the learning process.



The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein. Project no: 2020-MT01-1-KA226-092418

- **Game-based learning:** training and educational tools for motivating and engaging learners, and reaching hard-to-reach learner groups; interesting narratives, interface responsiveness, dynamic feedback mechanisms, and maintaining the illusion of choice or control (“agency”) are some of the techniques used in gamified learning; the sense of achievement, the personalization of the context, the micro interactions with animated characters and the countdown that creates a sense of urgency, create a setting of real story and at the same time of adventure that helps the learner delve into the learning experience; the end-goal and the rewards such as badges contribute to the metacognitive awareness; quiz games, role-play games, strategy games, and word games can be used in this course.

## Course Structure – Modules

### 1. Introduction to Soft Skills

*In this module, you will explore the notion of soft skills and align them with today's requirements of workforce. You will consider the developments of the 4th Industrial Revolution and discuss the changes in hiring processes and performance assessment. You will also learn some strategies to explore your own strengths and understand the purpose of constant improvement of your soft skills. Lastly, you will explore some curricular approaches for soft skills training and get ready to delve into specific categories of soft skills in the subsequent modules.*

*By the end of this module you will be able to:*

- *List the main components of the notion of soft skills;*
- *Provide examples of the changes in the current employment landscape and what constitutes job quality;*
- *Reflect on the difficulties of recruiting specialists for various jobs;*
- *Create guidelines for soft skills training and assessment;*
- *Evaluate the importance of soft skills in real-world work settings.*



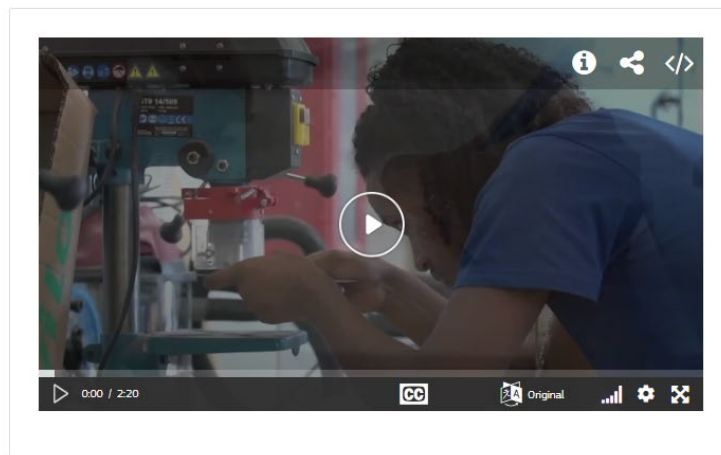
The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein. Project no: 2020-MT01-1-KA226-092418

**In 2020, the European Commission presented European Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience.**

#### 4IR

"The Fourth Industrial Revolution, 4IR, or Industry 4.0, conceptualizes rapid change to technology, industries, and societal patterns and processes in the 21st century due to increasing interconnectivity and smart automation. Technologies such as advanced robotics, autonomous transport, artificial intelligence, machine learning, advanced material, biotechnology, genomics, lead to an ongoing automation of manufacturing and industrial practices."

*Watch the following video to explore the recovery plan to support youth employment through vocational education and training on soft skills.*



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union



The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein. Project no: 2020-MT01-1-KA226-092418

## 2. Problem-solving fundamentals

*Have you ever known someone who seems to have an answer for any challenge? No matter what life throws their way, they take it in stride. While some people may just be talented in problem-solving, the truth is that anyone can develop strong problem-solving skills.*

*In this module, you'll start with a five-step problem-solving process anyone can use. Then, you'll learn some strategies and behaviors to make problem-solving easier. You will be provided with tips for rising above challenges and barriers that will inevitably come your way and learn how to apply them according to the nature of the problem. You will also get familiar with the notion of creative problem solving and practice its application in teamwork cases. Finally, you will explore elements of crisis management and learn when to seek help from the HR department.*

*By the end of this module you will be able to:*

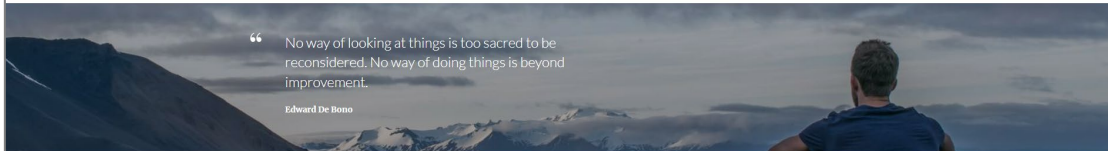
- *Apply critical thinking skills to complex problems;*
- *Apply a model for solving problems and pose questions to further understanding of specific problems;*
- *Apply appropriate problem-solving and decision-making processes;*
- *Identify common obstacles to effective problem solving and decision making;*
- *Use analysis, synthesis, and positive inquiry to address organizational problems;*
- *Evaluate solutions and anticipate likely risks;*
- *Plan and create innovation to solve complex problems;*
- *Develop a plan for your own creativity development.*



The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein. Project no: 2020-MT01-1-KA226-092418

Problem-solving is a strategic process. You identify an issue and then determine the best actions to solve it.

Although the problem-solving process can seem time-consuming, it will save you time in the long run. When you make informed decisions, you'll get better results.



“ No way of looking at things is too sacred to be reconsidered. No way of doing things is beyond improvement.

Edward De Bono



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union



Which step should you take first to solve the problem described above?



Email Adam, copying your boss. Be sure to include a rundown of the tasks you've already completed. That way your boss will know you're not the one holding up the project.

### 3. Emotional Intelligence

*In this module, you will learn about the notion of emotional intelligence and its effectiveness in the workplace. You will get familiarized with the four pillars of emotional intelligence, namely, self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. You will explore the five elements of self-regulation and practice your empathy skills. Finally, you will learn strategies to help you*



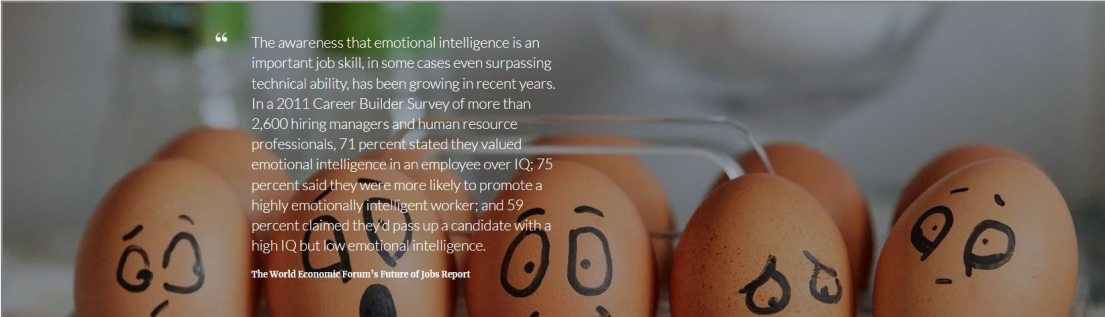
The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein. Project no: 2020-MT01-1-KA226-092418



*overcome barriers to healthy work relationships and delve into real-life scenarios to reflect on your own practices.*

*By the end of this module you will be able to:*

- *Distinguish the notions of EQ, IQ, and personality;*
- *Explain the importance of emotional intelligence in the workplace;*
- *Recognize your own emotions and the consequences of your actions;*
- *Make good decisions based on being self-aware;*
- *Analyze the five characteristics of self-regulation;*
- *Identify the four elements of self-motivation;*
- *Distinguish the different types of empathy, benefits, and barriers;*
- *Classify flow states and their benefits;*
- *Explain social skills and their benefits for collaboration, teamwork, and trust;*
- *Create a plan to boost social skills.*



“ The awareness that emotional intelligence is an important job skill, in some cases even surpassing technical ability, has been growing in recent years. In a 2011 Career Builder Survey of more than 2,600 hiring managers and human resource professionals, 71 percent stated they valued emotional intelligence in an employee over IQ; 75 percent said they were more likely to promote a highly emotionally intelligent worker; and 59 percent claimed they'd pass up a candidate with a high IQ but low emotional intelligence.

The World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs Report

---

### What's Your Reaction?

When you're stressed, aggravated, or overwhelmed, how do you typically react?

☐ I panic. If my emotions are running high, I feel anxious and unnerved.

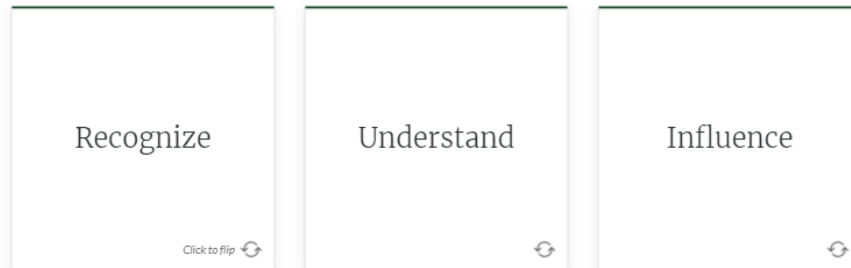
☐ I calm myself down. I take a deep breath and practice self-calming techniques.



The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein. Project no: 2020-MT01-1-KA226-092418

## What Is Self-Awareness?

As the cornerstone of emotional intelligence, self-awareness covers three components. Flip the cards below to learn more.



I UNDERSTAND

Self-awareness is understanding how the external world influences your internal reality. It revolves around recognizing your emotions and their effects.

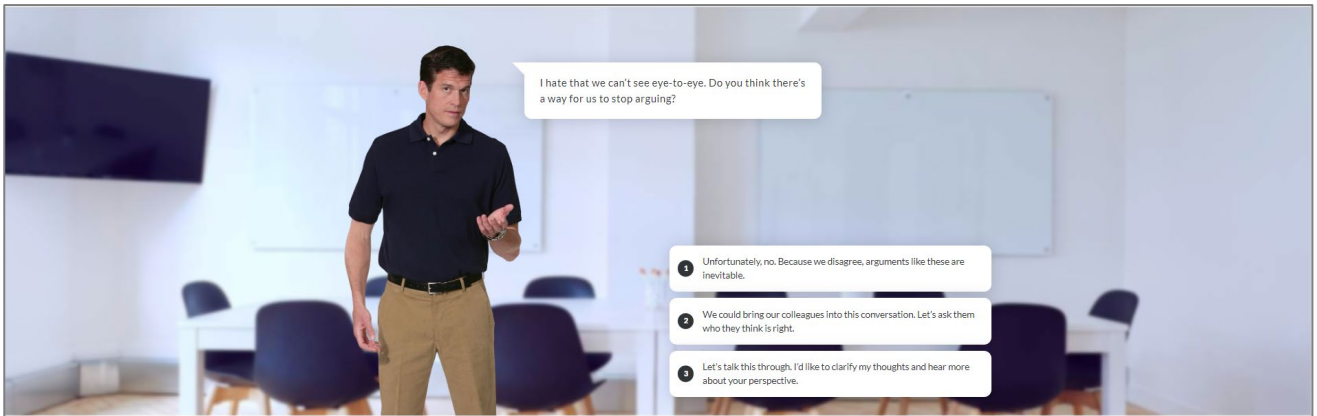
## 4. Working with people

*By the end of this module you will be able to:*

- *Describe different types of communication and how they are used in the workplace;*
- *Recognise the skills required for effective communication;*
- *Understand the impact that communication can have on how people are perceived by others;*
- *Identify how effective communication can overcome challenges in the workplace;*
- *Reflect on current personal communication skills and how these can be developed and used more successfully.*



The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein. Project no: 2020-MT01-1-KA226-092418



Stephen Robbins has given "conflict" the following definition: "A process that begins when one party perceives that another party has negatively affected or is about to negatively affect something the first party cares about."



## 5. Soft Skills for Technology Use

*In the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) the use of soft skills in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) by workers will be increasing. As a result, ICT workers must be trained on using soft skills since they interact with other individuals to complete projects and to provide service. The individuals the ICT worker interacts*



The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein. Project no: 2020-MT01-1-KA226-092418

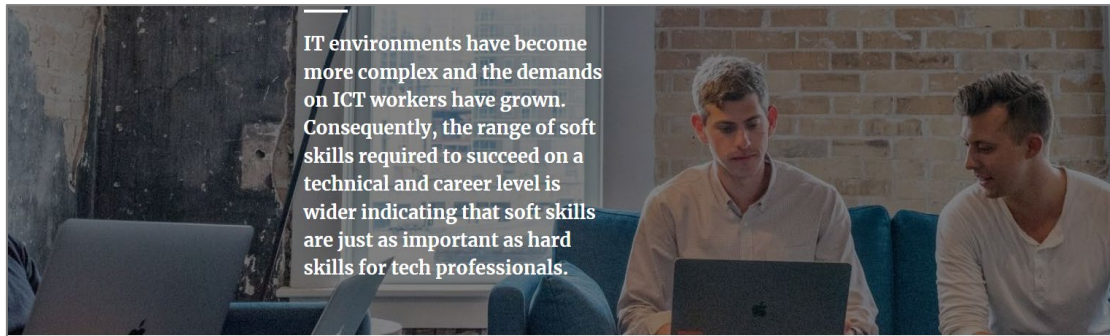
*with could be from different sectors, with different technology expertise levels, and different age groups. Hence, the ICT worker must have appropriate soft skills to relate to these sectors to be successful on the job. The ICT worker must apply good digital citizenship and online netiquette, follow good well-being and mental health strategies, use digital dexterity to be successful on the job, and use appropriate communication skills when working in teams or one-to-one basis.*

*In this module, you will be introduced to the notion of digital dexterity and digital citizenship through specific examples and tools. You will learn which factors influence your wellbeing at the workplace and how you can maintain your digital wellbeing throughout hectic periods. Finally, you will set some guidelines for digital behaviours and online netiquette, as well as for communication under the circumstances of remote working.*

*By the end of this module, you will be able to use soft skills appropriately when using technology. Specifically, you will be able to:*

- *Define digital citizenship and list the 9 Key P's of digital citizenship.*
- *Describe “digital dexterity” and its impact on business success as a factor of increasing ROI;*
- *Explain the importance of technology in work settings;*
- *Maintain strong relationships in a digital setting;*
- *Work safely, responsibly, and ethically maintaining good digital citizenship;*
- *Follow guidelines for digital behaviors to maintain personal health, safety, work-life balance, and digital wellbeing of employees;*
- *Describe how to check online netiquette and reputation on the internet and protect it.*
- *Use technology appropriately to prevent stress and maintain good mental health and well-being.*





IT environments have become more complex and the demands on ICT workers have grown. Consequently, the range of soft skills required to succeed on a technical and career level is wider indicating that soft skills are just as important as hard skills for tech professionals.

#### Employment and recruitment of ICT specialists

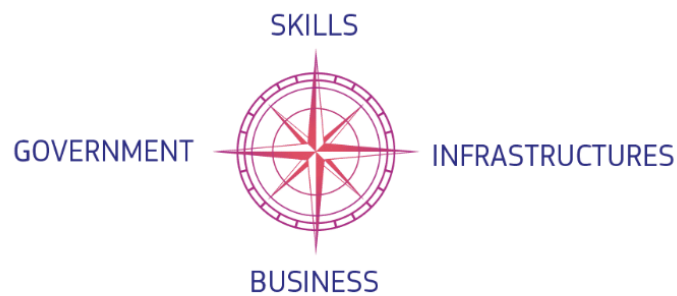
"In 2020, 19 % of EU enterprises employed ICT specialists. Among the EU Member States, Ireland and Belgium presented the highest proportion of enterprises employing ICT specialists, with 30 % each. Italy, with 13 %, presented the lowest ratio of enterprises employing ICT specialists in 2020.

The information and communication sector had the highest proportion, with 72 % of enterprises employing ICT specialists in 2020. Apart from the enterprises in information and communication activities, the highest percentages of enterprises employing ICT specialists were observed in

Enterprises employing, recruiting and having hard-to-fill vacancies for ICT specialists, by economic activity, EU, 2020 (% enterprises)



"One of the consequences of the skills gap and the difficulty to hire qualified ICT professionals is the very high percentage of outsourcing of ICT services, especially in some EU countries, such as Cyprus and Latvia, where ICT outsourcing is as high as 84%. The share of enterprises outsourcing their ICT function reached 81% among large enterprises, compared with 69% for small enterprises in 2019".



Source: ec.europa.eu

The Digital Compass for the EU's digital decade evolves around the above cardinal points and presents a vision and routes for Europe's digital transformation by 2030. To pursue these digital ambitions, the Commission will adopt concrete terms, such as targets and projected trajectories, robust joint governance framework, multi-country projects combining



The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein. Project no: 2020-MT01-1-KA226-092418