



EU-OBP

open badges platform

Guide for trainers



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Authors: Petja Janžekovič (SI), David Rihtarič (SI), Andreea Cle-
minte (RO), Elza Gheorghiu (RO), Alba Gonzales Martin (ES),
Olesea Balan (DE), Aleksandra Sikorska (DE), Pierre L. Carollaggi
(FR), Vasilis Athanasiou (CY), Eilana Iliofotou (CY), Miguel Vi-
cario (ES), Sandra Hernandez Ramos (ES), Daniel Tretinjak (SE),
Ola Hall (SE), Patric Kalnins (SE)

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What is an Open Badge?

A badge is a digital image that provides verifiable information about achievements, skills, competences or a quality of an individual. It allows valuing and recognizing the competences acquired through informal in and out of formal education, on-line and support so far lifelong learning.

Prior to getting started using badges as an institution, i.e. Issuer, one must reflect on:

- ✓ *How and why you want to use Badges?*
- ✓ *Which courses or learning units have the right content and structure for badging?*
- ✓ *How much involvement from the educational staff and technical department will need to be considered?*
- ✓ *What is the timeframe for the implementation?*
- ✓ *What are the costs of the issuing process? Will badges have the potential to be used by other educational institutions?*

In order to further realize the badging system, it is vital to select the appropriate learning badging platform, which makes the creation, displaying, sorting and saving of badges an easy task.

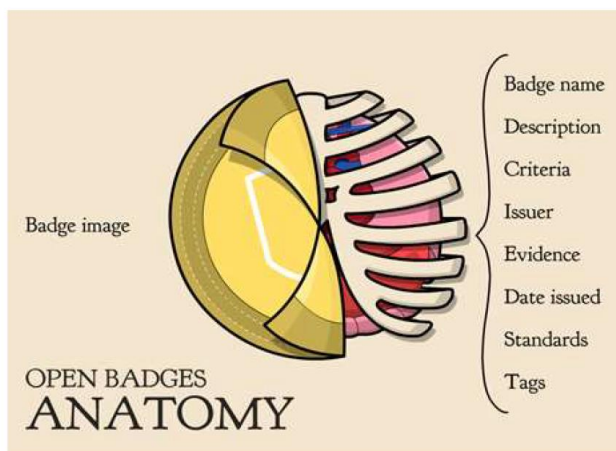
Adult education centers, as Issuers, find it difficult to persuade teachers in using such methodology since at first this may be an administrative or a technical burden for teachers who are already putting in countless hours. In order to counter act to this mentality it is important to keep teachers and administrative staff up-to-date on technical skills. This means they should be familiar with badge designing, editing tools, determination of criteria and content embedded infrastructure of an



issuing platforms. They should converse on the principles of awarding, displaying and sharing of badges. Communication is key in ensuring a high standard of badge issuing within an institution. Workshops and round tables with educational staff should be organized to go through the steps for implementation of the badges for educational purposes.

The issuing institutions should increase also its external communication. Local events with relevant stakeholders and employers will raise the awareness on the use of badges as trustworthy credentials. For employers the first glimpse of badges may appear playful, but upon checking badges reliability and authenticity, any skepticism or hesitation will be written off.

Mozilla Foundation created the specifications for Open Badges in 2011 with the following data embedded:



Doug Belshaw, Badge anatomy

Why are badges useful?

An Open Badge was designed not to compete or replace a certificate, but to complement it. It is used to highlight specific abilities and qualities that may not appear on traditional certificates and are not represented by a course outcome, hence giving learners confidence in own capability to perform a task.

Additionally, it provides a unique way to issue a digital credential, which can be instantly shared across the web.



Why is it interesting for educators?

Badges have great pedagogical potential for you as an educator, to:

Introduce playfulness in the educational atmosphere, allowing a friendly competition between learners and showing how close they are to accomplishing a goal. Badges speak to learners used to video games.

Provide feedback to the learners regarding their progress

Act as milestones on pathways towards learning goals, breaking lessons into smaller assignments

Valorise individual's talents, highlighting specific abilities and qualities that may not appear on traditional certificates.

Validate soft skills, thus providing a more complete picture of an individual

Drive learners' engagement and participation in a course;

Stimulate disadvantaged learners, for whom the traditional education system hasn't worked **and** a badge provides visible recognition and validation for accomplishments or mastering a skill.

Participate to the development of digital skills: Badges earner learns how to manage them on their online backpack and include them in an e-portfolio or display them on their online profile, or anywhere on web.

Show learners how to professionalise their use of social networks: By displaying their badges on Facebook, they will make it look more professional. Through badges they may



also be driven to create an account on Networks such as LinkedIn.

Badges developed by my organisation

If your organisation is not yet delivering badges, you can suggest to enquire about this possibility (cf. Guide for educational organisations).

If your organisation is already awarding badges, they need to provide you an account on the platform used to create them.

Note that if the platform used is badgr.io, you will find step-by-step instructions visualised in short videos on <http://www.open-badges.eu>

Create your own Badges

To create your own badges, we suggest to use <https://badgr.io> because it is open source, free and easy to use, with no limitations in numbers of learners or badges, and the possibility to create badges.

The steps are:

- 1. Login**
- 2. Click on “create issuer”**, typing your name and the website of your organisation, confirming your email, writing your role in the organisation
- 3. Click on create badge**, entitle it, define the criteria for earning the badge, select from the platform applications a graphic image or upload one from another platform/your account



Be aware that choosing to use a free platform means that you take the risk of losing the continuity of service and facing some unexpected changes in the features.

A useful approach to write badge criteria is SMART-method. It stands for:

- Specific - what will the badge earner have accomplished by earning this badge? Any specific activity achieved during a learning path can be the object of a badge.
- Measurable - If you want to valorise a skill, how will you know when the level at which the badge is awarded has been achieved?
- Achievable - It is important to design badges that learners can obtain in order to develop self-confidence and to maintain the motivation
- Relevant - is this badge worth earning? what opportunities does it unlock?
- Timely - the timeframe for earning the badge needs to be limited and known in advance

In particular you can create badges to valorise practical activities that have been achieved during the training period such as a contest, the organisation of an event, the participation to an external conference, a volunteer action... There are many activities that can enrich the CV of a learner with little professional experience. By badging them, you will



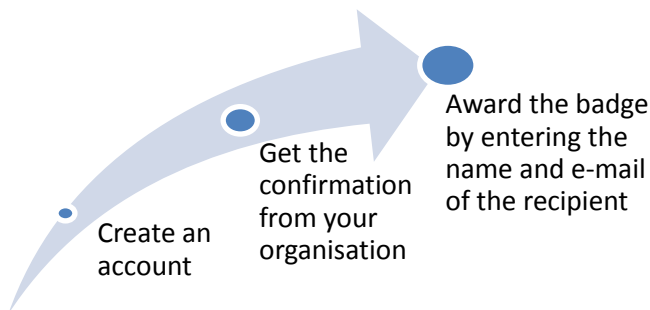
help learners to valorise them as an “official” third part explaining and certifying the action. (...)

Don't forget that when you create and deliver badges, you are involving the reputation and legitimacy of your employer.

EU-OBP Open Badges

The EU-OBP project provides **more than 250 badges** related to raising soft skills and key competences, including communication in mother tongue, foreign languages, digital skills, numeracy, literacy, sciences and technologies, learning to learn, social and civic responsibility, initiative and entrepreneurship, cultural awareness. There are also 50 open badges available related to behaviours and attitudes evidenced by attending adult education courses and 50 badges related to key competences, like communication in mother tongue, foreign languages, digital skills etc., available on www.eu-obp.eu via <https://badgr.io>.

To use them you just have to:



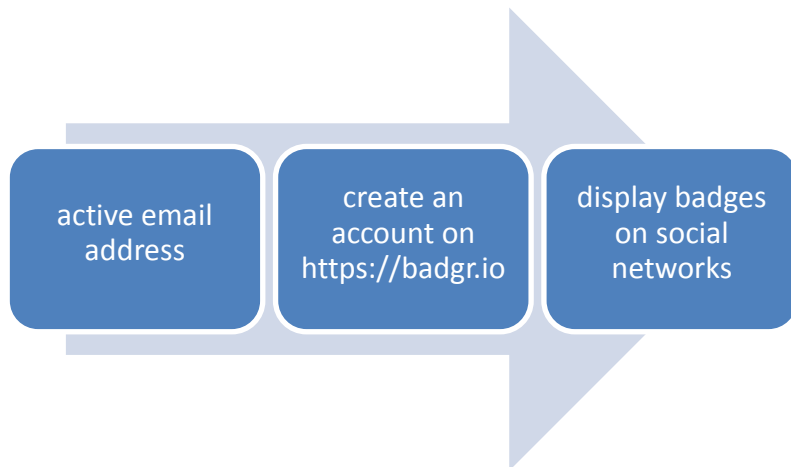
Valorise badges

Badges serve a mechanism to show and communicate to a broader audience, what an individual is capable of, or if an individual belongs to a group or is member in a community.

Learners have the option to keep their achievements private and store badges in a “backpack”, which is basically a private website that act as an e-portfolio. Directly, or from this backpack, selected Badges can be displayed on social media platforms, include in learning environments and Europass CV.

Help learners to take advantage of badges and signal their achievement to their peers and their professional suitability to the employers. This could have a positive impact on jobs and career advancement.

Steps for the learners:



Motivating learners, communicating about badges

Organise an open discussion (1,5h) to present badges, let the learners express their experience with badges and their vision of badges, how can they use them? What added value they see? Which media they will prefer? What are their fears? What they don't understand? It is advised to invite a learner from the same target group who has already received some badges so that s/he can act as ambassador.

The list of badges that you provide needs to be presented to the learners. We also suggest that learners can be involved in the process by suggesting that a badge should be awarded to a co-learner. They can also claim for a badge when they estimate they fulfil the requirements.



PROJECT PARTNERS:

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