



**EU-OBP**

open badges platform

# Guide for organisations





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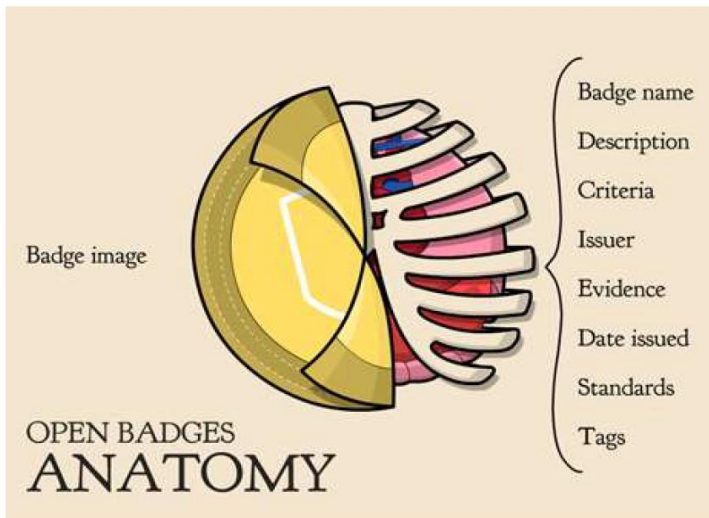
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## What is an Open Badge?

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.

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



Doug Belshaw/ Badge anatomy

## Why is it interesting for educational organisations?

- Innovative and creative way of competence validation: badges allow education institutions to award credentials beyond the traditional transcripts
- Provision of modular and cumulative certifications
- Add playfulness in the educational atmosphere
- Generate interest and maintain motivation of learners
- Possibility to track the progress of learners
- Online marketing: Information about issuing organisation embedded in the badge is spread in the digital environment by badge earners generating brand vitality.

## Create your own Badges

A list of platforms to create and issue Badges is provided by Mozilla<sup>1</sup>. Main criteria to take into account:

- language availability
- cost or possible limitations
- possibility to manage groups of learners (this functionality will save a lot of time when working with groups who meet the same criteria at the same pace)
- possibility to have several issuers under the same organisation

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<sup>1</sup> <https://openbadges.org/about/participating-services/#open-source>

The project consortium European Open Badges platform suggests <https://info.badgr.io/>. You can also access the Badgr through our project website [www.eu-obp.eu](http://www.eu-obp.eu).

It is free for use, no limitations in numbers, possibility to create badges, easy to understand.

The creation of the image is an independent process than can be done through generic software or through badge oriented platforms such as <https://www.openbadges.me/> that provides a free service. The choice of the tool to design the badges will depend on your technical and financial capacities.

A particular effort is required for designing the images as they are the visible part, used for communication. In that sense, it is important for the image of the educational organisation (they need to have all the same feeling to be recognised as your badges) and for learners who will be appealed by nice badges. It is all the more important as they have a strong visual culture of social networks. The process needs to be planned in advance as you may soon be able to deliver number of badges.

Collections of badges in the same range of colours or shape can be created for areas or categories of skills. Badges to illustrate a group of skills can also be planned: they will be able to replace a certain number of “smaller” badges.

To summarise, the issuer will:

- Create an issuer profile/account giving a short description of the educational organisation
- Design a collection of images or select from the platform applications a graphic image
- Entitle the badge and define the criteria for earning it
- Create badges by attaching the metadata to the images.

### Determination of criteria

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?
- **Measurable** - how will the assessor know when the level at which the badge is awarded has been achieved?
- **Achievable** - in what ways can the badge be achieved?
- **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

### Build pathways towards learning goals

Badges are task-oriented and can serve as milestones towards learning goals. Badges can be divided into 2 groups:

- **Badges to monitor a learning path** by certifying the competences acquired within this learning path. The learners get a clear sense of their progress in a course or in general in the competency development. These are usually delivered by online learning platforms.
- **Badges to valorise specific achievements and behaviours.** They can be created for specific purposes at any moment, like participation at a workshop.

## EU-OBP Open Badges

“European Open Badges Platform” (EU-OBP) promotes a common European platform for digital badges, allowing adult education organizations and trainers, educators to integrate an open badges validation system into their “assessment” in order to make the accomplishments, abilities and skills of their learners visible to a wider audience.

The main aim of the project is to upgrade the innovative tools and methods for recognition of non-formal and informal learning in adult educational settings and focuses on the relationship of educational organizations towards open education, distant and blended learning and – above all – the implementation of open badges on different levels and across different organizations.

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.

Badges are available in English, Romanian, French, German, Slovene, Spanish, Greek and Swedish on our platform [www.eu-obp.eu](http://www.eu-obp.eu).

**Therefore, you can find step-by step instructions visualized via short videos developed by the consortium for the awarding process.**

## **Use badges in your organisation**

Delivering badges involves:

- **Managers.** They decide to involve the organisation in badges, they choose a strategy related to badges including internal and external communication to promote them, they plan the badges and they determine the procedure for the awarding.
- **Educators.** They participate to the design process and they are responsible for delivering the badges in non-virtual learning environments.
- **Learners.** They understand the concept of badges, they are motivated to gain badges and learn how to valorise their badges.

Educators need to:

- **become familiar** with the concept so that they are convinced of the added value they bring
- **be able to explain** the concept of badges and the strategy of the educational organisation to the learner (a specific training session is to be organised for that purpose, it will include the management of the backpack



and example of use of badges in social networks and digital CVs

- **be motivated** to deliver badges
- **include** badges in the learning path, deciding when badges are delivered and how.

Invite trainers in your organisation to provide feedback in the learning process via badges, thus preparing a basic structure of the learning event. The learners will be allowed to select badges they would like to earn, so that they can work towards the goals they want to attain. They have the option of keeping their badges private or displaying some of them on social media platforms, export them to Europass CV or attach to mail signatures.

By the virtue of being able to track the badges are being used and displayed, issuers get feedback about which of their training programs are most in demand.

## **External communication**

The concept of badges is not always familiar to employers. Local event should be organised to develop awareness of companies and other stakeholders. It is important to associate them in the awarding process resulting of practice periods. They can also contribute to the definition of badges to valorise the skills that are most in demand in the labour market.

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