

DIGITAL CRAFT PROJECT INTERVIEWS GUIDELINE

PART ONE

GUIDE FOR PARTNERS FOR THE INTERVIEWS CONDUCTION

1. Objective

The interviews are designed to collect targeted insights to inform the needs assessment phase of the Digital Craft project, specifically focusing on the perspectives of VET teachers and industry professionals.

2. Number of Interviews:

A minimum of 4 interviews per partner country, targeting at least 2 VET teachers and 2 industry professionals in the field of graphic design and design thinking.

3. Approach for Student Insights:

Instead of interviews, a questionnaire will be administered to at least 10 students from different VET schools per country. This approach is intended to gather a broader range of data from the student population.

4. Selection Criteria for Interviews:

- Participants should be actively engaged in VET teaching or in the design, innovation, and graphic design industry.
- A balance of experiences and backgrounds is sought to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the VET landscape.
- Willingness to participate and contribute to the project goals is essential.

5. Interview Methodology:

- Semi-structured interviews will allow for in-depth exploration of participants' views while also covering the core topics relevant to the project.
- Interviews should last between 30-45 minutes.
- Whether conducted in person or online, ensure a quiet environment and, with consent, record the session for accurate data capture.

6. Additional Point for Recording and Collecting Information:

- **Data Recording:** With the participant's consent, use digital recording devices or software to capture the interview. Ensure that the recording equipment is tested and functional before beginning.

- **Note-Taking:** Assign a member of the interview team to take detailed notes during the session. This is crucial in case of technical failures with the recording equipment and also serves to capture non-verbal cues and reactions.

7. Conducting the Interview:

- Begin with an explanation of the Digital Craft project and the specific goals of the interview.
- Assure participants of confidentiality and voluntary participation.
- Use language that is clear and accessible to non-experts.

8. Post-Interview Process:

- Transcribe interviews and anonymize data to protect participant privacy.
- Analyze interviews to identify key themes and insights.
- Synthesize findings into a report that will inform the curriculum development process (template is available in the shared google drive folder).

9. Student Questionnaire:

- Distribute the questionnaire through VET schools, ensuring a mix of disciplines and demographics.
- Compile and analyze responses to identify trends and specific needs of the student body.

10. Ethical Considerations:

- Secure informed consent for interviews and questionnaire participation.
- Ensure ethical handling and secure storage of all data collected.
- Utilize information solely for the purposes of the Digital Craft project and its stated objectives.

PART TWO

INTEVIEWS

1. Purpose of the interview

The purpose of this interview is to gather valuable insights and feedback from vocational education and training (VET) teachers, students, and industry professionals in the fields of design, innovation, and graphic design. This information will be instrumental in shaping the curriculum development for the Digital Craft project. The interviews aim to identify current gaps and challenges in the existing VET curriculum, understand the evolving industry needs, and gather suggestions for incorporating digital tools and methodologies. The insights gained will help us create a more relevant, comprehensive, and forward-looking curriculum that meets the demands of the modern workplace and enhances the skills and competencies of VET students in these creative fields. Your participation and input are crucial in ensuring the success of this initiative and in making a meaningful impact on the future of vocational education and training.

2. Brief description of the Digital Craft project

The Digital Craft project is a pioneering educational initiative aimed at redefining vocational education and training (VET) within the realms of design thinking and graphic design. Recognizing the pivotal role these disciplines play in today's digital and design-oriented job market, the project seeks to bridge the gap between current educational offerings and the competencies required in the modern workplace. Over the course of 14 months, it will create a synergy between Italian and Romanian educators to forge a joint curriculum that is not only reflective of contemporary industry practices but also proactive in anticipating future market trends.

This project is particularly significant in its focus on the transformative power of design thinking and graphic design, which have become indispensable tools for innovation, problem-solving, and value creation in diverse industries. By infusing VET programs with these methodologies, Digital Craft aims to:

- **Empower VET Professionals:** Equip educators with the expertise to impart education that goes beyond traditional learning, emphasizing the strategic role of design thinking and graphic design in business and technology sectors.
- **Foster Professional Development:** Offer VET teachers and trainers professional growth opportunities through specialized workshops and training sessions that highlight the intersection of design disciplines with industry needs.
- **Cultivate Awareness:** Enhance the understanding of the critical function that design thinking and graphic design serve in spurring innovation and driving economic growth, ensuring that VET students are seen as valuable assets in the job market.
- **Enhance Employability:** Directly link the curriculum to the needs of the job market, thus providing students with a toolkit of skills that are increasingly sought-after by employers across various sectors.

By realigning the VET curriculum with the demands of the modern job market, Digital Craft is set to elevate the quality of vocational education, thus ensuring that the project's target groups — educators and students alike — are well-equipped to navigate and excel in a job market that is being rapidly reshaped by the forces of design and digital innovation.

3. Assurance of confidentiality and voluntary participation

Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw at any point during the interview process without any negative consequences. You may also choose not to answer any specific questions if you prefer not to do so. Your decision to participate or not will not affect your current or future relations with the Digital Craft project, its partner institutions, or any related entities.

By proceeding with this interview, you acknowledge that you have read and understood this confidentiality and voluntary participation agreement, and agree to participate under these terms.

4. Participant Information:

- Name (optional) _____
- Occupation/Role
 - A) VET teacher
 - B) Thinking design, innovation, graphic design professional
- Institution/Organization _____

5. Interview Questions:

5.1. Problem-Solving

Design thinking provides a systematic approach to solving problems. It helps students to think critically and creatively, and to develop solutions that are not only effective but also innovative. These skills are valuable in any professional context, not just in design-related fields.

- **Question for VET Teachers:**
How do you integrate problem-solving exercises related to design thinking in your curriculum?
- **Question for design thinking, innovation, graphic design professionals:**
In your professional work, how do you utilize design thinking to approach and solve complex problems?

5.2. Adaptability

The modern job market is dynamic and requires workers who can adapt to new technologies and methodologies. Design thinking and graphic design skills ensure that VET students are well-prepared to embrace change and new challenges across various industries.

- **Question for VET Teachers/Professionals:**
Can you provide an example of how the current curriculum prepares students to adapt to technological advancements in design?
- **Question for design thinking, innovation, graphic design professionals**
Can you share an example from your career where adaptability to new technology or methodology was crucial to success?

5.3. Communication

Graphic design skills are essential for effective visual communication. With the increasing importance of digital media, the ability to create clear, compelling visual messages is valuable in sectors ranging from marketing and communication to data presentation and user interface design, including also unrelated fields such as electrical, mechanical, and hydraulic studies.

- **Question for VET Teachers/Professionals:**
In what ways does the curriculum emphasize the development of visual communication skills?
- **Question for design thinking, innovation, graphic design professionals**
How do you leverage graphic design skills to enhance visual communication within your organization or with clients?

5.4. Interdisciplinary Relevance

Design thinking encourages an interdisciplinary approach, blending knowledge from different fields to create holistic solutions. This is increasingly important as the boundaries between traditional roles blur and collaboration across different sectors becomes more common.

- **Question for VET Teachers/Professionals:**
How do you encourage students to apply design thinking across different subjects or disciplines?
- **Question for design thinking, innovation, graphic design professionals:**
Could you describe a project where an interdisciplinary approach was essential, and how design thinking facilitated this?"

5.5. User-Centric Focus

Design thinking centers on user experience, ensuring that products, services, and systems are designed with the end-user in mind. This focus on the customer experience is crucial for the success of any business.

- **Question for VET Teachers/Professionals:**
What methods do you use to teach the importance of user-centric design in your courses?
- **Question for design thinking, innovation, graphic design professionals:**
How do you ensure that end-user experience remains central during the design process in your professional practice?

5.6. Innovation

Both design thinking and graphic design are drivers of innovation. They encourage thinking outside the box and the development of new ideas, which can lead to breakthroughs in any sector.

- **Question for VET Teachers/Professionals:**
How are innovation and creative thinking promoted within your VET sector?
- **Question for design thinking, innovation, graphic design professionals:**
What strategies do you employ to foster innovation and creative thinking within your team or your projects?

5.7. Digital Proficiency

In today's digital age, graphic design skills are intertwined with digital literacy. Understanding the tools and principles of digital design is now a fundamental skill, as digital content dominates in communication, marketing, and product development.

- **Question for VET Teachers/Professionals:**
How proficient do you believe your students are with the digital tools essential for modern graphic design?
- **Question for design thinking, innovation, graphic design professionals:**
"What digital tools and technologies do you consider essential for modern design and innovation, and why?"

5.8. Competitive Edge

In a crowded job market, having design thinking and graphic design competencies can differentiate VET students from their peers, giving them a competitive edge when seeking employment.

- **Question for VET Teachers/Professionals:**

What specific skills do you focus on to give your students a competitive edge in the job market?

- **Question for design thinking, innovation, graphic design professionals:**

What do you think gives a professional in the design and innovation fields a competitive edge in today's market?

5.9. Entrepreneurship

These skills are also key for entrepreneurship. Design thinking helps in identifying market opportunities and developing innovative business models, while graphic design is crucial for branding and customer engagement.

- **Question for VET Teachers/Professionals:**

How does the curriculum support entrepreneurial skills using design thinking and graphic design?

- **Question for design thinking, innovation, graphic design professionals:**

How have design thinking and graphic design contributed to entrepreneurial endeavors you are familiar with?

5.10. Cultural and Social Awareness

Design thinking often involves considering the cultural and social context of products and services, which is important for creating solutions that are socially responsible and culturally sensitive.

- **Question for VET Teachers/Professionals:**

How is cultural and social context incorporated into design projects within your courses?

- **Question for design thinking, innovation, graphic design professionals:**

How do you address cultural and social considerations in your designs to ensure they are socially responsible?

PART THREE

QUESTIONNAIRES

1. QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

1.1. Problem-Solving

Design thinking provides a systematic approach to solving problems. It helps students to think critically and creatively, and to develop solutions that are not only effective but also innovative. These skills are valuable in any professional context, not just in design-related fields.

- **Question for students:**

When faced with a tough school assignment or project, how do you usually find a solution?

- A) I guess until I find something that works.
- B) I try things I've seen work before.
- C) I brainstorm different ideas and pick the best one.
- D) I ask for help from friends or teachers.

1.2. Adaptability

The modern job market is dynamic and requires workers who can adapt to new technologies and methodologies. Design thinking and graphic design skills ensure that VET students are well-prepared to embrace change and new challenges across various industries.

- **Question for students:**

How do you handle new tools or apps in your classes or homework?

- A) I struggle with new technology.
- B) I get by but prefer familiar methods.
- C) I adapt well and enjoy learning new tools.
- D) I'm the first to help others with new tech.

1.3. Communication

Graphic design skills are essential for effective visual communication. With the increasing importance of digital media, the ability to create clear, compelling visual messages is valuable in sectors ranging from marketing and communication to data presentation and user interface design, including also unrelated fields such as electrical, mechanical, and hydraulic studies.

- **Question for students:**

When you need to explain your ideas in class, which one do you find most helpful?

- A) Talking
- B) Writing
- C) Drawing or sketching
- D) Showing a video or presentation

1.4. **Interdisciplinary Relevance**

Design thinking encourages an interdisciplinary approach, blending knowledge from different fields to create holistic solutions. This is increasingly important as the boundaries between traditional roles blur and collaboration across different sectors becomes more common.

- **Question for students:**

Have you ever used ideas from one subject to help with a project or problem in a completely different subject?

- A) Never
- B) Once or twice
- C) Often
- D) All the time

1.5. **User-Centric Focus**

Design thinking centers on user experience, ensuring that products, services, and systems are designed with the end-user in mind. This focus on the customer experience is crucial for the success of any business.

- **Question for students:**

When you work on a group project, how much do you think about what the people who'll use it would want or need?

- A) Not at all
- B) A little
- C) Quite a bit
- D) It's always my main focus

1.6. **Innovation**

Both design thinking and graphic design are drivers of innovation. They encourage thinking outside the box and the development of new ideas, which can lead to breakthroughs in any sector.

- **Question for students:**

In your projects or schoolwork, are you encouraged to come up with new and original ideas?

- A) Never
- B) Sometimes
- C) Often
- D) Always

1.7. Digital Proficiency

In today's digital age, graphic design skills are intertwined with digital literacy. Understanding the tools and principles of digital design is now a fundamental skill, as digital content dominates in communication, marketing, and product development.

- **Question for students:**

How would you rate your skills with computers and online tools?

- A) I'm not comfortable with them.
- B) I know the basics.
- C) I'm pretty skilled.
- D) I could teach a class on it!

1.8. Competitive Edge

In a crowded job market, having design thinking and graphic design competencies can differentiate VET students from their peers, giving them a competitive edge when seeking employment.

- **Question for students:**

What personal strengths do you think will help you get a job in the future?

- A) Hard work
- B) Being punctual
- C) Creativity and unique ideas
- D) Technical skills

1.9. Entrepreneurship

These skills are also key for entrepreneurship. Design thinking helps in identifying market opportunities and developing innovative business models, while graphic design is crucial for branding and customer engagement.

- **Question for students:**

Have you ever thought about starting your own business or making a product to sell?

- A) No, I haven't.
- B) It's crossed my mind.
- C) I have a few ideas.

D) I've already started planning.

1.10. Cultural and Social Awareness

Design thinking often involves considering the cultural and social context of products and services, which is important for creating solutions that are socially responsible and culturally sensitive.

- **Question for students:**

How important do you think it is to understand different cultures or social issues in your future job?

- A) Not important
- B) Somewhat important
- C) Important
- D) Very important