

NEWS

PROJECT

P4W - Passport4Work
an intersectoral skills
passport with gamified
skills assessment and
improvement

📍 Eindhoven, The
Netherlands

TOPIC

Jobs and skills in the
local economy

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Passport4Work expands target group: focus groups with University students

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website



Striving for an inclusive labour market instrument, Passport4Work organized 2 focus group sessions with University students to establish its utility beyond its principal target audience.

From the project outset, Passport4Work has targeted vulnerable job seekers, with a relative distance to the labour market. However, it has always been the project team's ambition to extend its reach to all job seekers in The Netherlands. To first test the waters for this, two focus group sessions were organized with senior year HR students in higher education. The main questions addressed in these focus groups were:

- 1: Does the P4W platform (in terms of look and feel, and its assessment model) hold up in a different environment and for different users than for which it was originally designed?
- 2: Which conditions need to be in place for the platform to succeed in broadening its target audience?

Focus group setup

15 senior year HR students participants in both focus group sessions. In the first session, they provided feedback on the assessment model, by logging in as a job seeker and completing the series of assessments. In the second session, they used the [recently launched employer interface](#).

For both focus groups, students were asked to use the tool autonomously, after which a collective round of feedback was gathered and discussed.

Results

In general, students were very positive about the platform. They indicated that they find the transition to the

labour market a challenging one, and that there are not many readily available tools to assist in their pursuit for a job. The structure provided by P4W was found to be meaningful and helpful, with the distinction between the different types of skills (e.g. social skills, technical skills) being particularly helpful to reduce the level of abstraction typically involved when discussing competencies. The culmination of the results in the skills passport was found to be a distinguishing feature, allowing for every student to present him or herself in a structured manner without having to create customized CV's for different job applications.

The focus groups also resulted in a lot of constructive criticism which will inform the future prototype, some notable examples include:

- The explanation of the assessment in the current form requires audio. A written tutorial alongside would be helpful for situations in which you cannot play the audio.
- It is not possible to skip a tutorial when you login multiple times, and have heard it already
- The hierarchy between the displayed skill mastery levels (1, 4 or 7) is unclear. What is the relationship between them? Make this either visual or explain. Otherwise it is difficult to choose the appropriate level
- The examples used to illustrate the skill mastery levels (for example, "I can pass the ball to a teammate in a soccer match" for the skill seeing depth) are too specific and not always relevant.
- It is not clear what information is shared with employers, and what information isn't. Can this be altered?
- The self-assessment rounds are prone to self-overestimation

Moving forward

Going back to the two main research questions for the focus groups, it has become apparent that there is potential for P4W across the initial target group. At least for university students, the platform could provide value as well, especially given the complex transition from education to the labour market, in which students are often inexperienced in expressing themselves in terms of their skills. Passport4Work could provide a valuable structure for this which is otherwise difficult to find.

As for the conditions for success, this is in part related to the qualitative feedback detailed above. Processing this improves the user experience. However, the overarching challenge that was mentioned by the students is ultimately employer support. Without active use by employers, no matter how technically robust the tool is, there is no incentive for active use. As such, realizing employer support in the remainder of the project period is one of the cornerstones of the project.

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