

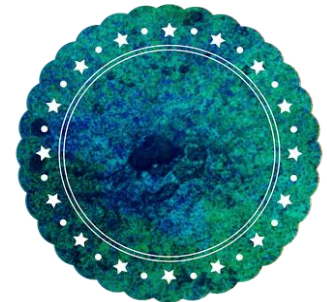
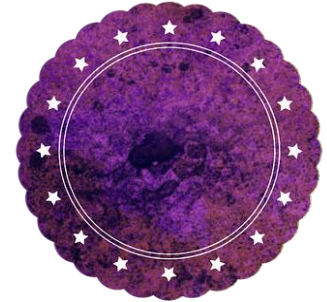
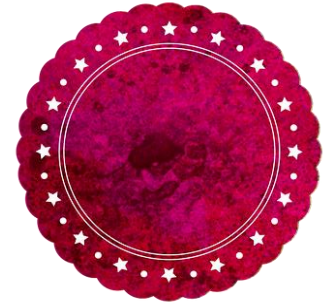
# Creating Open Badges – Checklist

Open badges communicate individuals' competences by providing a picture together with verifiable metadata and evidence that can be shared across the web. Open Badges empower individuals to take their competence with them, wherever they go, building a rich picture of their lifelong learning journey. At the core of the open badges ecosystem is portability. Badges issued via one platform should always work with those from another. Open badges are valuable because they are portable digital credentials, that is why they are called open badges.

To be sure that you take all necessary aspects into account when starting to use open badges in your organisation we have created a comprehensive checklist to help you. You can use it as a step to step guide.

## A. How do I get started with Open Badges in my organization?

- It is important to understand what you hope to achieve by crating and issuing badges. Consider:
  - 1) What are the central activities of your organization?
  - 2) What are the (core) competences that can be gained/developed by being active/working in your organisation? It might be useful to read the descriptions of courses, tasks or even your organisation's strategy and appraise what knowledge, skills, attitudes, responsibility autonomy does the activity and the different tasks in your organisation demand/produce.
  - 3) Can you name a theme/a couple of themes around which you could start building a family of open badges, starting with one or two badges and then possibly expanding to more badges?
  - 4) What would you like to recognise by issuing/using open badges (a specific competence, activity, task or something else). At least the following purposes can be mentioned:
    - Recognition of competences and tasks (education, courses, volunteer tasks and responsibilities)
    - Staff development and competence management (HR tool)
    - Membership and social cohesion (communities and ja organisations)




- Supporting co-operation together with cooperation partners (certification of activity)
  - Transmission and support of values.
- 5) What is the benefit for the earner and how does the badge and the learning made visible with the open badge represent your organization and support your brand. Remember that offering too many, easily earned badges, limits the sense of achievement a learner may feel from obtaining that badge, and again diminish the perceived value of the award. Earning a badge should provide some type of challenge to the individual.
  - 6) On some platforms (e.g Open Badge Factory) for issuing open badges there is a feature that makes it possible to endorse badges created by other organisations as well as endorse single organisations.
  - 7) What platform do you want to use? It is important to ensure that the platform for creating and issuing open badges is reliable, flexible, allows for the portability to other platforms and suits your organisation's needs.
  - 8) Think about the need of offering different language options of the badges.
- Participate in webinars and courses on how to create open badges, watch instructional videos on Youtube and before starting to create your own badges, apply for and earn some badges yourself.
  - What are your resources? Creating and issuing badges (especially if there is an application and evidence involved) require both time and effort. Who is responsible for open badges in your organisation?
  - How do you ensure that the persons in your organization who will be creating, maintaining and issuing badges understand of how badges work and how they can be used to add value to a course, training program, position, task, etc. How do you get them involved and inspired?
  - Once you have the support you need, establish an initial - it can always be revised later - framework or process for the creation and issuing of badges. This should include thought into how badges will be used/earned, displayed/shared and designed.
  - Remember to consult colleagues in organisations who are experienced in creating and issuing open badges. They have valuable experience that you should make use of.

## B. Developing an Open badge

### B 1) The name of the Open Badge

Write text

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Image/Picture	Description	Key words	Criteria (Learning criteria)	Tasks/Assessment	Evidence to be provided	Validity period	Type of Open Badge
	Write text	Write text	Write text	Write text	Write text	Write text	Write text

### B 2) Badge Description: Do you know what you want to badge?

- Choose one competence/activity/task/achievement that you would like to make visible and give recognition to in your organization.
- Give the badge a name that describes the badge earner's competence, task, achievement or something else that you would like to make visible and give recognition to. The name of the badge should give a clear indication of identified and recognised competences. The starting point is that a badge informs about the earner's competence/activity from the badges issuer's point of view. If an application is attached to the open badge, it is up to the potential badge earner to open up and document his/her competences/activities in the evidence sections in the application form.

- Describe the core content of the competence (knowledge, skills, attitudes, responsibility, autonomy), activity, task, achievement, etc. in one sentence.
- If you find it difficult to describe what the badge represents, consider whether the badge has any meaning or relevance to the earner or others viewing the badge.
- Think of suitable key words describing the competence that is described and recognised with the badge.

### **B 3) Badge Picture Design**

- When considering the design of badges strive for a standard which is sustainable and extensible. Consider not just the icon and wording, but the shape and colour to represent different skills, knowledge area, and/or type of badge.
- Take into consideration the visual design guidelines of your organization – how does the badge pictures fit into and represent your organization?
- The open badge issuing platform may set some technical requirements, e.g. concerning the size of the picture (400 x 400 pixels), shape (.svg or .png), the background (e.g. transparent).

### **B 4) Criteria: What will be required to earn a badge?**

- The criteria required when creating a badge are important to the overall design and success of a badge system because they make specific claims to learning. Criteria help set parameters that are useful to learners, evaluators, and those viewing the badge after it has been awarded. Establishing the criteria of a badge provides a clear picture to the learner (i.e. what is he/she supposed to be able to know/understand/be able to do e.g. after a course of after having carried out a certain task) and establishes a claim of learning with the persons viewing the badge (what can the earner of the badge be expected to be able to know/understand/be able to do e.g. after a course of after having carried out a certain task).
- Try to make the criteria as concrete, understandable, measurable, manageable in size and scope so that they can be evaluated.



- Can you list criteria for a certain competence/task/achievement etc. in 3 sentences (learning-based approach – what does a person know /understand /is able to do, with what degree of responsibility and autonomy and in what context)?

➔ Please, have a look at the criteria guide developed in the Open Badges in Folkbildning -project.

### One example of how learning criteria can be created:

1. Start each criterion with the words: The person can..."
2. Each criterion should contain a verb. Continue the sentence with words describing the issue that the participant has been dealing with. For example, a participant can plan a competency-based course.
3. Use only one verb per criteria and avoid complicated phrases.
4. Use concrete and measurable wording. Avoid using unclear verbs such as know, understand, learn, to be able to, familiarize, present, guide, discover, acquaint or perceive. These terms refer more to the purpose of the teaching than the learning outcome.
5. Set your criteria at a realistic level (in this regard reference can be made to the EQF levels) and formulate them so that they can be evaluated and measured. Avoid too large or too narrow and detailed criteria.
6. To the extent feasible, use the revised Bloom's taxonomy for describing learning outcomes and choosing appropriate verbs.
7. Ask your colleagues whether they think the criteria are functional and sensible.

### Bloom's taxonomy and action verbs:



### **B 5) Tasks, Assessment and Evidence: How can the potential earner show that the criteria have been met?**

- Think of how the competence/activity/learning will be assessed – self-assessment, per-assessment, teacher, organization, supervisor...
- If the assessment is made based on an application form – what are the relevant questions/tasks in the application form?
- Robust criteria help establish claims of learning along with specific parameters of that learning; evidence helps substantiate these claims.
- Evidence is important because it establishes trust between the learner and the badge issuer, and then between the badge recipient and those who view the evidence—which may include employers, schools and others connected through social media networks.
- Badge evidence addresses each claim to learning with a persistent, digital artefact that builds a compelling narrative around what the earner has learned.
- Evidence can consist of e.g. text/documents/audio or video files/links to materials etc.
- When you are ready – double-check that the task/evidence and assessment are suitable for the criteria you have set.

### **B 6) Validity period: How long are the badges valid?**

- Badges help promote lifelong learning, and they provide pathways of learning that are stackable, customizable, and evidence-rich.
- Determining how long badges are valid is an important aspect of customizability. For example, in some cases like professional development, badges can be valid for a limited amount of time until more training is needed. For organizations issuing badges that will expire at some point in the future, the email address associated with the badge can be used to notify learners of future training opportunities.
- In other cases, the learning evidenced in the badge is context-specific and should not expire. For example, if badges are used in a course to evidence learning, an expiration date would not necessarily make sense.

## B 7) What type of badge do you want to create?

- There are several types of badges:
  - 1) Ordinary open badge – can be automatically awarded after participation in an education/course/ voluntary work/ holding a position of trust/other competence, knowledge, skills, responsibility and autonomy.
  - 2) Open badge awarded based on application – ordinary open badge that must be apply for.
  - 3) Meta open badge – is awarded based on a mix of skills. To be awarded the badge the earner would usually have to gather a certain amount of ordinary open badges. Badges can be designed to be ‘stacked’ so that a series of smaller badges – steps in learning – result in an ultimate overall badge. The criteria behind each badge indicates the level of work represented by the badge.

## C. Ready?

There are many options concerning badge issuing platforms – what platform will your organisation be using? Badge alliance has listed quite a few options: <http://www.badgealliance.org/badge-issuing-platforms/>. Have a look, compare the pros and cons, contact the platform providers and choose the one that suits your organisation’s needs.

- Go ahead – create your badge and start issuing badges.
- Remember to market your badges (e.g on your webpage, social media...) and explain to the potential earners the benefits of open badges, how the badges can be earned, stored (e.g. Mozilla Backpack, Open Badge Passport, Badge Wallet and even on your own computer) and used (CV, social media, LinkedIn, e-portfolios, job application and if needed, they can also be printed).



- Make your work a bit easier by writing a template for the e-mail message that is sent to earner of the badge. In this way the message connected to a badge will always look the same. This is important especially concerning ecosystems consisting of several different badges.
- Set some measures for success. Look at the numbers of open badged issued and received. Analyse enrolment numbers, engagement, completion and learner satisfaction rates across courses before and after badges are incorporated into study programs.
- Being able to quantify and qualify the benefits of badging within an organization might encourage further investment into both badging and training.

#### Sources:

- <https://evollution.com/programming/credentials/six-steps-to-building-high-quality-open-digital-badges/> (read 10.4.2018)
- <https://elearningindustry.com/guide-to-open-badges-beginners> (read 10.4.2018)
- <https://weareopen.coop/OB101/> (read 17.5.2018)
- <https://openbadges.org/about/> (read 17.5.2018)
- Sivis Study Centre's digital material on open badges: <https://www.ok-sivis.fi/osaamismerkki.html> and on the recognition of competences: <https://www.ok-sivis.fi/tunnista-ja-tunnusta-osaaminen/osaamisen-tunnistaminen.html> (read 13.4.2018)
- Pictures: Pixabay