A survey of the use of skills checks in organisations working with adults in Ireland

Introduction to survey

Skills Checks have the potential to help adults self-assess their basic skills of literacy, numeracy and computer/digital skills. A Skills Check may also be known as a Skills profiling exercise, Skills diagnostics, Skills assessment, Skills portfolio, Competence check, Competence assessment, or SkillsChecker.

The aim of this survey is to establish the level of awareness of Skills Checks and to help each participating country identify the conditions that will enable adults use and benefit from a Skills Check.

You will be asked a maximum of 10 questions relating to the experience of your organisation of Skills Checks and the conditions that would enable adults to use Skills Checks. It should take less than 10 minutes to complete.

All responses are anonymous and confidentiality is assured. No IP addresses of computers are recorded or logged. This survey is administered by Waterford Institute of Technology in Ireland and the findings will be presented in collated form to the project partners and available on the project website.

There are no right or wrong answers; we would just like you to answer as honestly as you can. Please only complete this survey if your organisation works with adults with low basic skills, age 25 and over, who have been out of formal education and training, are unemployed or at risk of unemployment and whose levels of educational qualifications are no higher than NFQ Level 4.

The survey will remain open until the 9th of December 2019 but we encourage you to complete it before this time.

Please email Dr Maeve O'Grady mogrady@wit.ie if you have any queries or questions relating to this survey. We would greatly appreciate your participation.

Overview of CITO Project

This survey is part of the Check-In, Take-Off (CITO)project which is an Erasmus+ project. These projects are funded by the European Commission to promote transnational partnerships and mutual learning in order to foster improvement and innovation in education and training. CITO will create a tool that supports adults with unmet digital, literacy and numeracy needs to engage in a new learning experience. The tool will create an environment that builds the confidence of the user by acknowledging the skills they already have and motivating them to take the next steps in achieving their goal. The project will produce a mapping survey, a skills checker tool, as well as training and an outreach toolkit for stakeholders.

Why are we doing this?

Education has the power to transform the lives of learners, their families and their communities and plays an important role in addressing social division and inequality. A return to learning by an adult learner has the potential to offer hope, initiative and positive orientation towards their future.

According to the European Commission, around 1 out of 5 European adults struggle with basic reading and writing, numeracy or using digital tools in everyday life. More than 61 million European adults have a lower secondary education level at most. Adults with basic skills and with a low-level qualification are at a higher risk of unemployment, poverty and social exclusion. To address these challenges, the European Council adopted the Recommendation on Upskilling Pathways in 2016. It aims to help adults to improve their basic literacy, numeracy and digital skills. Based on this Recommendation, the CITO project intends to develop a skills checker tool. The tool will be trialed in the three partner countries, Malta, Ireland and Norway.

How does the CITO project work?

The CITO project will work with stakeholders to develop their awareness of people with literacy, numeracy and digital skills needs. The CITO project will also provide training and an outreach toolkit for stakeholders.

The objective of this survey and the first phase of the CITO Project is to map the awareness of adults of skills checks in general. This is done by asking organisations to encourage low-skilled adults who use their services or who are employed in their workplaces to participate in the survey. The survey of organisations which you are being asked to complete will map the use of skills checks.

For further information about the project, see www.citoproject.eu

 * 1. Consent:

 Please ensure that you have read the above information before agreeing to participate in this survey.

·   I have read and understood the above information and understand how to request additional information on the project.

·   I recognise that my participation in the project is voluntary and I may withdraw at any time. I understand that I don't have to give a reason for withdrawing from this survey.

·   I understand that all responses are anonymous and the results will be presented in collated form.

·   I give permission for my responses to this survey to be stored or electronically processed for the purposes of scientific research/publication and to be used in related studies but only if the research is approved by a Research Ethics Committee.

Please select an option below to continue:

◯ I wish to complete this survey

◯ I do not wish to complete this survey

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* 2. Please select one of the following to describe your organisation:

○ Public employment services

○ Further Education and Training providers

○ Workplace

* 3. Has your organisation ever used a skills check?

○ Yes

○ No

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4. What is the name of the Skills Check that is most used by your organisation?

[   ]

5. How is the Skills Check used?

☐ used with the assistance of a guidance counsellor

☐ used with the assistance of a staff member

☐ used independently by the adult taking a skills check

☐ Other

6. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement:
It is desirable for a Skills Check to be available for adults to work through independently

Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
○	○	○	○	○

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7. Please select one or more reasons for using your particular Skills Check for public employment services:

☐ a. It is part of a legal framework that entitles adults to have access to a Skills Check

☐ b. We have an initial assessment process to place people at the right level in a programme

☐ c. Other reasons

8. Please select one or more reasons for using your particular Skills Check for further education and training providers

☐ a. It is part of a legal framework that entitles adults to have access to a Skills Check

☐ b. We have an initial assessment process to place people at the right level in a programme

☐ c. We use it as part of the induction process for new learners

☐ d. Other reasons

9. Please select one or more reasons for using your particular Skills Check for Workplaces

☐ It is part of a legal framework that entitles adults to have access to a Skills Check

☐ Other reasons

* 10. Does the skills check give learning options?

◯ Yes

◯ No

11. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement:
Our particular Skills Check guides the adult towards lifelong learning.

Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

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* 12. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following:

	Strongly agree	Agree	No opinion	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The skills check might take too much time to administer	○	○	○	○	○
I definitely think that the more the adult does the skills check by herself/himself, the more motivated they get	○	○	○	○	○
I do not think that the adults with low levels of educational qualifications or skills in our organisation can work through a self-assessment skills check on their own. Some assistance is/will be needed.	○	○	○	○	○
The outcome of a skills check should tell the learner what their next learning step should be	○	○	○	○	○