

Successfully empowering professionals with sought-after welding qualifications through Work-Based Learning (WBL) opportunities

The WoW project has proven the concept effectiveness and developed a practical guide to assist other training centers on their initiatives to better leverage Vocational Education and Training (VET) for businesses

Porto Salvo, 18 December 2019 – As materials and technologies quickly evolve, welders are required to step up their skillset, as they must perform increasingly complex tasks. This complexity implies that professionals need to adapt and increase their qualifications, as welding lies at the core of most manufacturing processes, and there is a significant unmet need of apprenticeships in the European Welding Practitioner (**EWP**) and Specialist (**EWS**) EWF's qualification profiles. Developing effective and replicable work-based learning solutions was the goal the WoW project set to achieve, focusing primarily on these two qualification profiles. The project has developed both a Quality Assurance Structure as well as operating procedures to structure work-based learning for the welding sector, and can be leveraged as a relevant best practice of WBL at a European level.

This process was undertaken with the direct participation of in-company trainers, mentors, apprentices/trainees and it was supported by EWF. The idea behind this knowledge transfer activity was to place the focus at the individual (learner), organizational (companies) and sectoral (partnership) levels. The project developed an effective cooperative structure designed for on-job-training supported by a quality assurance system accepted by all stakeholders.

As a result of this uniquely cooperative approach, the project was able to successfully engage all the relevant stakeholders involved, from the trainees participating on the first trial, to the trainers engaged on practical aspects of the curriculum, and lastly to the enthusiasm of those that have received the information about the project and its goals by participating on national and European dissemination events. Overall, WoW has proven the effectiveness of work-based learning to address the training needs in the labour market. Another important milestone to ensure the broad dissemination of this best practice for other training centres/ATBs willing to undertake VET – Business cooperation projects, a practical guide was developed, summarizing the project's achievements. The Guide explains how apprenticeship work, what are the rights and responsibilities of each actor and the key factors to succeed in the implementation of WBL. It will also pave the way for creating a European Network for work-based learning in the manufacturing sector. Given the inherently flexible nature of work based learning approach chosen by this project, the network is supported by an online Platform that aims to provide continuous and final assessments of the trainee, as well as an assessment of the in-company training partnership

Looking forward, it is expected that the learnings from this project can be used in other industrial centres and that, overall, companies will increasingly leverage WBL on their training processes. This will become easier through a closer cooperation between schools, companies, and Authorised Training Bodies made possible by WoW.

Project Partners

The project members comprises 7 organizations, including EWF (European Federation for Welding, Joining and Cutting, TWI (The Welding Institute), ISQ (Instituto de Soldadura e Qualidade), ISIM (Institutul National de Cercetare Dezvoltare in Sudura si Incercari de Materiale Timisoara), CESOL (Asociación Española de Soldadura e Tecnologias de Unión), MHTÉ (Magyar Hegesztéstechnikai és anyagvizsgáló Egység) and IIS (Istituto Italiano della Saldatura).



About the European Federation for Welding, Joining and Cutting

EFW is a pioneer in implementing a harmonized qualification and certification system for joining professionals. Through European projects EWF has been innovating in training methodologies and involved in the development of new technologies and uses for joining. Through its member organisations, EWF has established a firm link to the local industry, providing knowledge and training as well as participating in research initiatives that address the most pressing questions and challenges in the field of joining technologies.