



## WBL Champion - Press Release Num.1

# New EU Project Launched to Transform Higher Education Through Work-Based Learning

The new European initiative is set to redefine the relationship between education and employment. Work-Based Learning Champion (WBL Champion), an Erasmus+ EU-funded project, officially launched in September 2024 with the mission to embed high-quality, work-based learning (WBL) within higher education systems across Europe.

Bringing together four organisations from Italy, Malta, Portugal, and Ireland, the project aims to develop a unified European framework for WBL that directly addresses labour market needs while enhancing the quality and relevance of academic programmes. It is coordinated by VITECO (Italy), with partners including Central Mediterranean Business School (Malta), INOVA+ (Portugal), and Technological University Dublin (Ireland).

The WBL Champion project was initiated in response to the growing recognition that traditional higher education pathways often fall short in equipping students with the practical skills and real-world experience required in today's rapidly evolving labour market. By integrating academic learning with professional application,

WBL bridges the gap between theory and practice and helps students develop transversal competencies essential for long-term employability. While several European countries have already established comprehensive national WBL frameworks, others operate within advanced policy contexts but still face challenges due to partial or emerging frameworks. The quality and consistency of implementation varies widely. WBL Champion seeks to address these gaps by creating a unified European framework built on principles of quality, accessibility, and sustainability.

At the core of the initiative is the belief that learning should not stop at the classroom door. WBL enables students to gain valuable workplace experience that aligns closely with industry expectations, thereby facilitating a more seamless transition from education to employment. Although many European countries recognise the value of WBL, a more consistent and quality-assured approach is needed. The project aims to champion WBL as a transformative model for modern education, fostering closer collaboration between academia and industry across borders.



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The first major milestone of the project is now underway. Each project partner is preparing a comprehensive Country Report that documents national best practices in the design and delivery of work-based learning. These reports will provide structured and contextual overviews of how WBL is being implemented in each participating country, with a focus on innovative, effective, and replicable approaches.

This milestone plays a crucial role in shaping the overall direction of the project. By identifying successful models across diverse national contexts, WBL Champion contributes to a broader understanding of how work-based learning can be scaled and adapted across Europe. The Country Reports will also inform the development of the joint EU-wide WBL framework and will serve as a resource for policymakers, education providers, and employers alike.

Each partner organisation is coordinating the research and stakeholder engagement needed to ensure their country's report offers a holistic perspective on the national WBL ecosystem.

Insights are being gathered from carefully selected stakeholders representing education, regulation, and industry ensuring balanced contributions from all parts of the WBL landscape.

As the project progresses, key deliverables will include the development of a quality assurance toolkit, a collaborative online platform, the redesign of academic curricula to integrate WBL, and professional development courses for tutors, mentors, and education professionals. These tools and methodologies will be piloted in Malta (through the Central Mediterranean Business School) and Ireland (through Technological University Dublin), with a view to scaling them more widely across Europe.

A central feature of the project will be the launch of a digital hub designed to support WBL practitioners, educators, and employers. This online platform will act as a collaborative space for sharing knowledge, resources, and best practices, while promoting ongoing professional growth.



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As Europe continues to prioritise innovation, employability, and lifelong learning, WBL Champion positions itself as a flagship initiative driving educational transformation. The project aims to empower institutions to deliver career-ready learning experiences and to strengthen meaningful partnerships between academia and the world of work.

For media inquiries or more information about WBL Champion, please contact:



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Project No: 2024-1-IT02-KA220-HED-000245540