Part 3

DARE
DIVERSITIES ARE
REVIVING ENTERPRISES

Module 3: Inclusive Talent Management for SMEs

Part 3: Inclusive Selection Interviewing and Offer Strategies

www. **projectdare**.eu

Discover the DARE Modules Learning Pathway:

Enjoy our learning blocks designed to help SMEs build diverse, equitable and inclusive workplaces. Unlock the power of how DEI to drive the sustainable success of your company. Our practical and interactive Modules deliver real life insights and case studies from a European perspective – Join us in creating workplaces and communities where everyone can thrive!

DARE
DIVERSITIES ARE REVIVING ENTERPRISES

MODULE 1
Introduction: Diversities Reviving European Enterprises

Key Features: *Overview and definitions of D&I in SMEs. 12 Dimensions of Diversity. Learning key competencies for business case delivery.*

Part 1: Why D&I Matters for SMEs.
Part 2: Building D&I Competencies for SMEs.

MODULE 2
Inclusive Leadership Skills

Key Features: *Develop inclusive leadership skills (e.g., Bias awareness and mitigation). Tap into the power of neurodiversity. Measure impact and build resilience.*

Part 1: Prepare for Inclusive Change Through Leadership.
Part 2: Unlock Inclusive Leadership & Neurodiversity.
Part 3: Measure Leadership Impact & Build Resilience.

MODULE 3
Inclusive Talent Management for SMEs

Key Features: *Inclusive advertising, recruitment and retention. Performance management and leadership succession planning.*

Part 1: Attracting, Developing, and Retaining Diverse Talent.
Part 2: Creating Inclusive Job Descriptions & Adverts.
Part 3: Inclusive Selection, Interviewing, and Offer Strategies.
Part 4: Employee Talent Development and Retention.
Part 5: Performance Management and Feedback.
Part 6: Succession Planning and Leadership Development.

YOU ARE HERE

MODULE 6
Inclusive Community Engagement for SMEs

Key Features: *Learn the six core principles of inclusive community engagement. Understand the four layers to community context and prepare an effective Engagement Framework and Action Plan.*

Part 1: Foundations of Inclusive Community Engagement.
Part 2: Understand & Engage Your Community.
Part 3: Ensuring Inclusive Engagement through Shared Value.
Part 4: Prepare for an Effective Community Engagement Framework.
Part 5: Create a Community Engagement Framework & Action Plan.

MODULE 5
Inclusive Marketing For SMEs

Key Features: *Embed inclusivity into branding. Understand the needs of diverse audiences. Craft strategic inclusive marketing campaigns.*

Part 1: The Power of Inclusive Marketing for SME Brands.
Part 2: Understand Your Customers and Overcome Marketing Barriers.
Part 3: Crafting Inclusive Marketing Campaigns.

MODULE 4
Building an Inclusive Company Culture in SMEs

Key Features: *Build an inclusive company culture. Design and deliver a strategic cultural change audit, review policies and practices and empower teams through reward and recognition.*

Part 1: Understand and Build an Inclusive Company Culture.
Part 2: Design and Deliver a Strategic Cultural Change Audit.
Part 3: Support Management in Creating a Workplace of Belonging.
Part 4: From Policies to Practice: Cultivating a Culture of Inclusion.
Part 5: Empower Teams Through DEI Collaboration, ERGs, and Recognition.

www.**projectdare**.eu

Introduction DARE to Module 3

Inclusive Talent Management for SMEs

In today's evolving business landscape, diversity and inclusion are more than just values—they are key drivers of innovation, productivity, and long-term success. This module equips European SMEs with the essential knowledge and tools to build a truly inclusive workplace.

From conducting inclusive audits and crafting equitable recruitment strategies to refining selection, interviewing, and onboarding practices, you will learn how to attract, support, and retain diverse talent.

Additionally, this module explores employee development, performance management, and leadership succession planning, ensuring that inclusivity becomes a sustainable and integral part of your organization's growth.

Section 1 — **Becoming an Inclusive European SME Employer**

Section 2 — **Creating Inclusive Job Descriptions & Adverts**

YOU ARE HERE

Section 3 — **Inclusive Selection, Interviewing and Offer Strategies**

Section 4 — **Employee Talent Development and Retention**

Section 5 — **Performance Management and Feedback**

Section 6 — **Succession Planning and Leadership Development**

Part 1
Part 2
Part 3
Part 4
Part 5
Part 6

Part 3

Inclusive Selection, Interviewing and Offer Strategies

❑ Learn how to write inclusive job descriptions that attract and broaden your diverse talent pool.

❑ Discover how to create and promote inclusive job adverts that effectively reach and engage diverse candidates.

❑ Develop inclusive recruitment, onboarding, and retention strategies to be welcoming and demonstrate a supportive environment, enabling an inclusive workplace culture.

09

Step 5: Inclusive Candidate Selection
To ensure fair evaluation when choosing candidates

10

Step 6: Inclusive Interviewing
Creating a fair and supportive environment for all candidates

11

Step 7: Inclusive Selection Post Interview & Offer
Ensure fairness in the final stages of recruitment with respectful feedback

Learning Objectives

❑ Learn how to **design an inclusive selection process** that ensures fair and unbiased screening of candidates.

❑ Understand how to **prepare an interview panel** to ensure inclusivity and fairness in the interviewing process.

❑ Discover **effective interviewing techniques** that promote inclusivity and provide a positive experience for candidates.

❑ Learn how to **give constructive and unbiased feedback** to candidates, regardless of the outcome.

❑ Develop **strategies for extending job offers** that align with your commitment to diversity and inclusion.

09

Step 5

Inclusive Candidate Selection

Designed to ensure fair evaluation when choosing candidates

>> **Step 5** Inclusive Selection

The purpose of inclusive candidate selection is to ensure fair and equitable processes for evaluating and choosing candidates, regardless of their background. It involves using standardised, unbiased methods to assess skills and qualifications, promoting diversity and ensuring all candidates have an equal opportunity to succeed.

Inclusive Selection: Filter for Top Candidates and Minorities

- **Quickly filter.** Public adverts can attract many applicants, but many will not be suitable. Engage in an efficient and quick inclusive filtering process. Engage in blind recruitment by removing identifying information such as names, gender, and age; instead, focus on skills and experience. Use assessment tools to measure competencies rather than subjective impressions objectively.

- **Avoid using social media.** Avoid looking through candidates' social media profiles to sift applicants and learn about them before the interview (including Facebook or, Twitter, or LinkedIn profiles). Look at their CV. They are more up-to-date and reliable. This undoes any efforts taken to anonymise the application process. If needed as a pre-employment check for safeguarding or other reasons, this search could be undertaken by an external agency.

- **HR shortlists the highest ranking.** After HR have marked applications against objective criteria anonymously, they also need to create a shortlist for the highest-ranking (rather than hiring managers who will be interviewing).

- **Include marginalised candidates.** The shortlist needs to ensure that marginalised candidates are included. Ensure that at least six or more women or ethnic minorities are included in the shortlist.
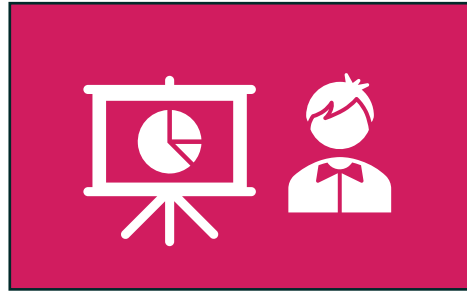
STEP 5

Inclusive Selection: Screen Candidates and Create a Short List

Log all applications

Use the job description and person criteria to assess each CV

Decline all applications that don't meet minimum requirements with a timely response

Score remaining CVs against desirable criteria to create a top-ten list

Review the top ten and confirm CV and cover letter proofing and presentation are flawless

Invite selected candidates to interview as quickly as possible with optional slots

10

Step 6

Inclusive Interviewing

Creating a fair and supportive environment for all candidates.

Step 6 Inclusive Interviewing

The purpose of inclusive interviewing is to create a fair and supportive environment where all candidates can demonstrate their qualifications and fit for the role. It involves using standardised techniques and questions to assess skills and competencies, focusing on the candidate's experiences and potential rather than unconscious biases. It ensures all candidates can perform their best.

DIVERSITIES ARE REVIVING ENTERPRISE

Inclusive Interviewing: Prepare and Train an Inclusive Interviewing Panel

- ❏ **Organise a diverse hiring team.** Assemble a diverse recruitment team from various backgrounds, roles, and levels in your company to bring different perspectives and reduce unconscious bias.
- ❏ **Have a structured process.** Design a structured selection and interview process. Ensure consistency across all candidates to minimise bias and ensure fairness.
- ❏ **Roll out bias training.** If they have not already done so, provide unconscious bias training for everyone involved in the hiring process. This helps interviewers recognise and mitigate their biases. Provide any other necessary inclusive guidelines.
- ❏ **Be timely with responses to applicants.** SMEs must ensure all applicants receive a timely response and that only suitable candidate CVs are reviewed by internal staff.

STEP 6

Inclusive Interviewing: Prepare for a Well-Structured Inclusive Interview

Develop a set of questions and scoring criteria for use in the interview. During the interview, ask all candidates the same questions in the same order and score responses according to the objective criteria. This makes responses comparable and reduces bias.

Conduct interviews using a panel rather than a sole interviewer. Having multiple interviewers in the same interview has been shown to lead to fairer and more accurate results than having multiple interviews with only one interviewer.

Prepare interviewers for consistent interviewing. Provide them with the questions and criteria ahead of time and highlight the need for consistency in the interview. Encourage the panel to meet in advance to assign questions to individual members and take notes.

Interviewers should independently assign scores to each candidate's response before discussing them as a group. Discussing the candidates before this point means interviewers are more likely to be influenced by other interviewers' opinions and potentially by the opinion of the most senior person there. To learn more: How to run structured interviews – an implementation guide.

STEP 6

Inclusive Interviewing: Make Sure You Are Accessible and Inclusive to Potential Applicants

- ❑ **Website interviewee ready.** Professionals will most likely go to a company website to prepare for an interview. Ensure you have a range of online content to help job seekers identify the traits and qualities you want them to demonstrate during an interview. This will also help you determine the candidates who have taken the time to research your company.

- ❑ **Advertise open contact to employees**. Contacting existing employees and studying employer review sites are also seen as important sources of information for interview preparation.

- ❑ **Get on employer review sites;** it is possible to manage your profile on many of them. Identify the most popular, noting that there may be specialist review sites for your industry, and ensure that your profile on these sites accurately reflects your employer brand.
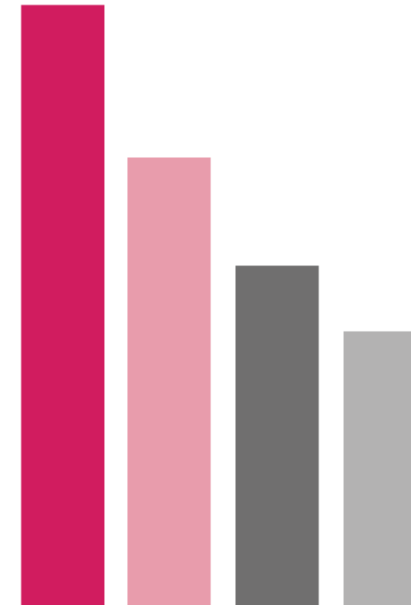
Percentage of Employers that Provide Interview Training

50% Provide training

39% Do not provide training
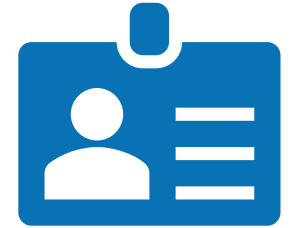
11% Unsure

Sources Used by Candidates to Research a Company

84% Company website

54% Press articles

46% Speaking to existing employees

30% Visiting a review site (e.g. glassdoor.com)

Source Robert tWalters

Inclusive Interviewing: Prepare Candidates for an Inclusive Interview

Set expectations. Provide candidates with clear expectations, timelines, and communications. This is especially important for candidates with caring responsibilities or unpredictable work hours who may have less time to prepare for interviews.

Timeline the process. An employer who is seen as being timely is more attractive to candidates. Share the timeline of the key recruitment stages in the job advert and all communications to candidates.

Explain the recruitment stages. Let candidates know how the recruitment process will work (for example, how many interview rounds are likely, whether specific tasks are involved), when decisions will be made, and how soon they can expect to hear back after submitting an application and following interviews.

Adjustments needed. Proactively ask applicants if they need reasonable adjustments during the recruitment process instead of waiting for applicants to request adjustments. One approach could be sending a survey with a checklist of options and an open-text box for any adjustments not captured by the options provided.

STEP 6
Inclusive Interviewing: Prepare Candidates for an Inclusive Interview
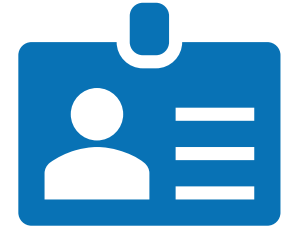
Flexible scheduling. Make scheduling interviews easy, accessible, and flexible. Employers should offer interviewees a range of dates, offer to accommodate them with earlier or later slots than the typical working day if needed, and provide reasonable adjustments as required. Many candidates may have time and budgetary constraints, including caring responsibilities or existing jobs, that may not allow unscheduled time off.
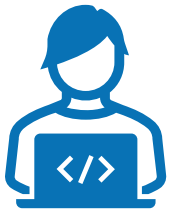
Flexible interview formats. This could include offering virtual interviews, which may be easier for candidates as they reduce travel costs and time. However, some candidates may have limited access to the internet, computing devices, or a quiet interview space, so face-to-face options should also be offered.

Importance of Specific Factors During a Job Interview

Influential Factor	Jobseekers		Employers	
	Very Important	Important	Very Important	Important
Receiving/Providing Enough Information About The Role	85%	15%	70%	28%
The Opportunity To Ask Questions	62%	34%	73%	27%
The Opportunity To Explain Experience Properly	57%	38%	52%	42%
Receiving/Providing Information About The Team That Role Sits With	58%	38%	37%	57%
Receiving/Providing Enough Information About The Company Culture	53%	43%	51%	42%
Receiving/Providing Information About The Benefits Package On Offer	40%	46%	33%	41%

STEP 6

Inclusive Interviewing: Use Both an Interview and Skills Based Assessment
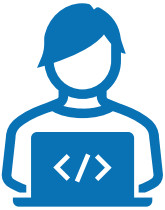
Skill-based assessments are a form of assessment that assesses skills and abilities relevant to the role the employee is applying for. They can include work sample tasks, situational judgement tests, simulation exercises, or assessment centres. Skill-based assessments should resemble actual tasks in the job as far as possible. Skill-based assessment tests have been found to be better predictors of performance on the job when compared with traditional approaches such as tests, reviewing job experience, education, or unstructured interviews.

Examples: For a customer-facing role, role-play a situation that requires the candidate to resolve a challenging customer interaction.

For a role that requires data analysis, ask candidates to analyse a dataset and pull out key summary statistics and trends.

For a role that requires stakeholder management and communication skills, ask candidates to write a brief email to a potential client. To learn more: How To Use Skill-based Assessment Tasks – An Implementation Guide.

11

Step 7

Inclusive Selection Post Interview & Offer

Ensures fairness in the final stages of recruitment with respectful feedback.

Step 7 Inclusive Selection Post Interview and Offer

The purpose of inclusive selection, post-interview, and offer processes is to ensure fairness in the final stages of recruitment. It involves providing constructive and respectful feedback to candidates, making decisions based on objective criteria, and extending job offers that reflect a commitment to diversity and inclusion. This approach helps to promote transparency, ensuring all candidates have a fair chance, feel welcome and encouraged to succeed and thrive from day one.

DIVERSITIES ARE REVIVING ENTERPRISE

Inclusive Selection: Inclusive Filtering Techniques Post Interview Stage

- **Automated Filtering** Implement automated systems to evaluate applicants based on specific, unbiased criteria like required qualifications or relevant experience. Avoid filtering candidates by factors that can introduce bias, such as geographical location or socio-economic background. This ensures that decisions are based on merit and qualifications, reducing unintentional discrimination against certain groups. Automating this stage also allows for a more efficient and consistent review process, focusing on essential job requirements rather than subjective factors.

- **Batch Evaluation of Candidates:** Review candidates in groups rather than individually. By evaluating multiple applicants side by side, you can objectively compare their qualifications and performance rather than making isolated decisions that may introduce bias. This method allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the talent pool and reduces the chance of stereotyping.

- **For instance,** instead of assessing each application as it arrives, set a date to evaluate all completed applications together. Once this is done, you can score and compare candidates' qualifications against each other based on predefined criteria and then determine who moves on to the interview stage. This approach ensures fairer comparisons and consistent evaluation across all applicants. Using batch processing, SMEs can make more informed and equitable hiring decisions, focusing on candidates' merits rather than subjective impressions.

DIVERSITIES ARE REVIVING ENTERPRISE

Inclusive Selection: Inclusive Filtering Techniques Post Interview Stage

Inclusive Calibration After interviews gather the hiring team, including both interviewers and hiring managers, to collaboratively review each candidate's performance. During this calibration meeting, participants can compare interview scores, share observations, and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate. Involving key decision-makers ensures accountability and fairness, as all evaluations are openly discussed, and interviewers must justify their ratings. This process also helps reduce bias by standardising the way candidates are assessed across different employees. Knowing their decisions will be reviewed encourages individuals to provide more objective and thoughtful feedback, reducing the likelihood of biased judgments.

This approach enables SMEs to streamline their hiring process while maintaining inclusivity and minimising bias.

Post Offer: Inclusive Filtering Techniques Post Interview Stage

Provide feedback to all candidates. After a recruitment round, provide all interviewees with feedback on their performance. Make sure this follows a standardised format that aligns with the key objective requirements for the role. Avoid vague feedback and make it as specific as possible.

Collect feedback from candidates (successful and not successful) on the recruitment process through an anonymous survey and ask about inclusion. Providing clear feedback after interviews is likely to increase accountability for hiring manager decisions. When people know that their choices will be reviewed or that they will have to justify their decision to others, gender and racial disparities decrease. Collecting feedback anonymously would help to identify and resolve problems in the recruitment process, including inclusion challenges that may not have been obvious otherwise.

Encourage candidates to reapply. When a candidate narrowly misses out on being appointed, encourage them to reapply the next time there is a suitable vacancy.

DIVERSITIES ARE REVIVING ENTERPRISE

Assess Your Interviewing and Section

❑ **Do you have interview questions designed to measure diversity, cultural competence, and emotional intelligence?**

❑ **How do you define what qualifies someone as a "cultural fit"?** Are you thinking about how a candidate might offer a dimension that your culture is missing and how they effectively mirror your company values or is the qualification more of a gut feeling that someone "fits in"? (be careful of the latter!)

❑ **How successful are your recruitment efforts?** Do you track recruitment patterns for underrepresented groups? Do you have a high acceptance rate?
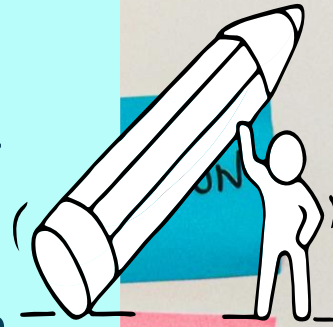
Source Exude HR through the Lends of D&I

Learning Outcomes

❑ **Able to identify and write** inclusive job descriptions that attract diverse talent and broaden your candidate pool.

❑ **Can develop and implement** effective inclusive job adverts to engage and connect with underrepresented candidates.

❑ **Apply fair and unbiased** selection and interviewing techniques to ensure a supportive and equitable recruitment process.

❑ **Implement** inclusive post-interview and offer strategies that ensure fairness, provide constructive feedback, and promote diversity in final hiring decisions.

Well Done!

Now Move onto Module 3 Part 4 Employee Talent Development and Retention

www.**projectdare**.eu

Co-funded by the European Union

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This publication [communication] reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use, which may be made of the information contained therein 2022-2-IE01-KA220-VET-000099060