



DC4WORK
Digital Competence 4.0



DIGCOMP - A FRAMEWORK FOR DIGITAL COMPETENCES

Suggestions for a practical application of
DigComp – Benefits for SMEs

Sindy Wuerffel
IHK-Projektgesellschaft mbH



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The Digital Competences Framework in a glimpse

Originally the Digital Competences Framework (DigComp) aimed to provide guidance to citizens of EU Member States on how to mainstream digital technologies into education, enable lifelong learning and help them keep pace with the ongoing digitalisation of the world in order to be and remain a successful member of society. If we understand companies as learning organizations DigComp becomes relevant also for them. In the next chapters it will be described how this could look like.

In the current DigComp 2.1 there are five competence areas with a total of 21 competences, in each of which eight different competence levels can be achieved. These competence levels range from learnable basic knowledge acquired under supervision to highly specialised creative competences with personal initiative.



FIGURE 1 – Identification of 5 key areas and 21 competencies integrated into the DigComp 1.

DigComp is not a formal standard as it was not developed by a formal standardisation body. However, at the moment it constitutes a common tool valid across Europe and enjoys official support by the European Commission.

“DigComp is the common language for people in need to communicate digital concepts or explain actions involving digital technology, regardless of their professions or activities.”²

¹ Image extracted from the document “The European Digital Competence Framework for Citizens”, of the European Union, available here: <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/publication/eur-scientific-and-technical-research-reports/digcomp-21-digital-competence-framework-citizens-eight-proficiency-levels-and-examples-use>, retrieved 26/09/2019

² See also: <https://www.digitalsme.eu/digcomp-2-0-digital-competence-framework-eu-citizens/>, retrieved 26/09/2019

Suggestions for a practical application of DigComp in companies

In June 2019 the Joint Research Committee of the European Commission mapped main purposes for DigComp use by Labour Market Institutions across Europe. Here you can compare for which functions with regards to employability the DigComp has been used:

E.g. for the *labour market skills analysis*, when DigComp is used to support the analysis of digital competence requirements in various occupations, often leading to the design of professional digital profiles for both new jobs and existing jobs being transformed by technology and other factors. Hence you could refer to DigComp when defining job profiles in your company.

E.g. the *assessment and certification of digital competence*, when DigComp-based assessment tools are used, either for self-assessment or external assessment. To find out more about assessment of digital competences we can recommend to study the learning module 2 “How to assess digital competences in my company” which was developed as online learning resource for the DC4Work-project.³

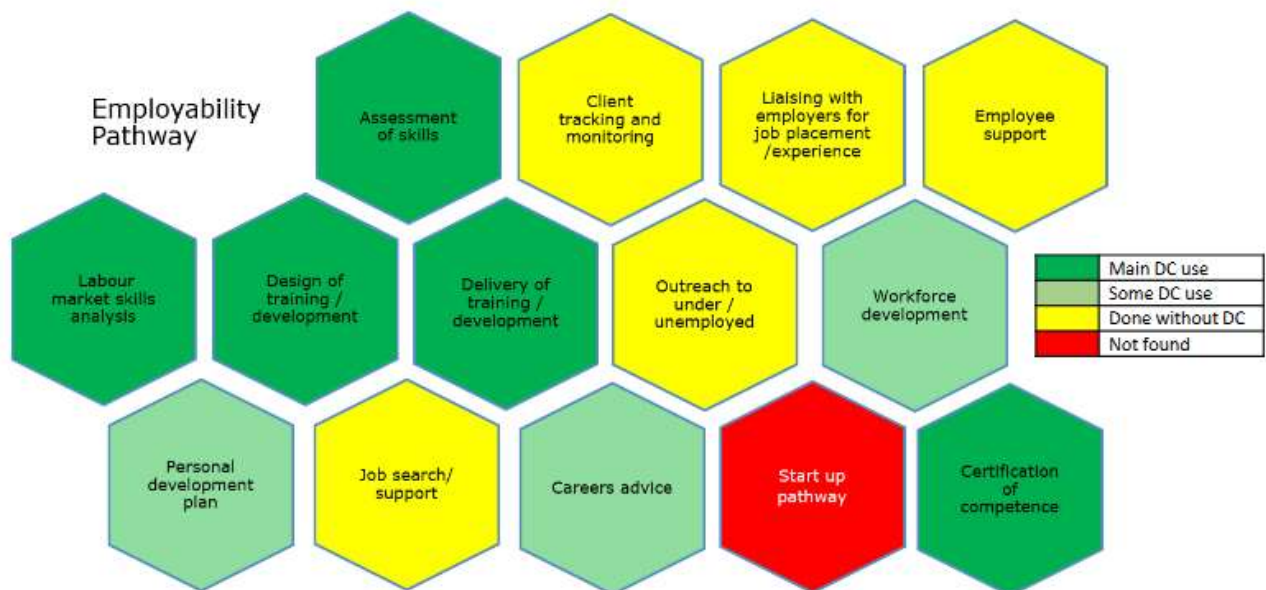


FIGURE 2: DIGCOMP USE ACROSS EMPLOYABILITY FUNCTIONS⁴

³ Source: <https://www.dc4work.eu/unit-2-assess/>

⁴ Source: https://www.ikanos.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/190619.Mapping.DigComp.use_for_Employability.pdf

Job descriptions including DigComp aspects

DigComp can become relevant for creating job descriptions for hiring new people or creating new job positions in your company. For this purpose it is advisable to draw on different reference points for orientation. Those can be

- operational requirements: which business processes require digital skills and which skills will be necessary in the future?
- relationships to customers and partners to gain valuable information about new technologies or tools already being tested and used in other areas, changing applications and how communication with customers or guests can be designed differently, that means which new tools and skills should the employees know and be capable to use?
- existing competence catalogues, among others it can be the DigComp framework of the EU.

Your work of defining job descriptions could be guided by DigComp especially in cases where you intent to find employees across Europe or internationally. With DigComp there is a common understanding and transparent, coherent and comprehensive basis when talking about digital skills of employees (non-ICT professionals). As job profiles are interconnected today in terms of digital, entrepreneurial, other key competences and soft skills it is worth creating them carefully.

“DigComp” as basis for digital skills assessment

If digital skills become more and more important also in your business it could be interesting to get an overview of which digital competencies exist and should be lifted in your staff. On the one hand it gives you clarity about their skills. On the other hand it could be exiting for them to know where they stand or receive concrete inspiration for how to improve their skills set relevant for their work place. There are different online tools available to self-assess their understanding of and readiness for ICT skills referring to DigComp e.g. the Digital Competency Wheel⁵. It is available in English and can be of great support to your staff as it explains different aspects of digital competency and creates positive effects by providing recommendations for improvement.

In general DigComp is flexible and can be adapted to your needs. You can use it for example to define your own set or relevant digital skills for certain functions or jobs in your company. DigComp is quite extensive in the sense that it covers 5 competence areas

⁵ Source: <https://digcomp.digital-competence.eu/>



FIGURE 3: 5 COMPETENCE AREAS OF DIGCOMP6

and allocates certain concrete competences to each of them. From this catalogue you can chose what is important for you and spot competences or improvements of employees against it.

“DigComp” as basis for certification – open badges

It could be also interesting for you and your staff to install a certification system in your company. With new applications this can be done easily. There is for example the open badges system allowing you to kill two birds with one stone: it can be used as motivation tool for employees and monitoring tool for the competence development of your staff. A badge system can be described as frame of several predefined badges used in a certain learning environment. Open Badges might be issued to recognise general (transversal) key competences, or to recognise specific job-oriented skills, such as digital skills. Using existing competency standards improves standardisation and thus recognisability of the badge. It is comparable to a digital certificate that is visual and secure, comprising of an image, name, description, issuer, criteria, evidence, and date of validation until xy. There are an issuing platforms and platforms for staff to store their open badges thus making it easier to install such as system. With its proficiency levels DigComp could provide the basis for your own open badge system. For more information please see <https://openbadges.org/>.

⁶ Source: https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/bitstream/JRC110624/dc_guide_may18.pdf

Application for skills development and learning

With referring to an official EU framework companies can establish themselves as learning organisations. DigComp can help to define learning requirements and be a source for internal learning plans. In this context your company can raise the awareness of staff to see the work place as one privileged context of learning among others. You can support this mind set by creating learning-friendly working conditions for workplace learning ("digital workplaces"); networked learning; learning on the job, experienced-based learning and offering more specific time to learn.

It is important to view digital competence as made of transversal soft skills, knowledge and attitudes (digital culture) important for all members of an enterprise. This way a "Digital Culture" can be set up because effective digitalisation begins in the mind of employees.

Sources

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