INKEY

WP3 TOOLKIT

IN-KEY – Inclusive worK Experiences for Young Professionals

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WORK PACKAGE 3

Toolkit for Inclusive Internships Guidelines, tools and recommendations for host companies

From willingness to readiness: practical steps before, during and after an inclusive internship

Annex: Implementation guide of INKEY Toolkit

LEAD PARTNER: PER FORMARE SRL

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1 • UNDERSTAND

Why inclusive internships matter

Inclusion is about removing unnecessary barriers while keeping meaningful learning and professional standards.

Interns with fewer opportunities are young people who may face barriers that make it harder to access, participate in or complete an internship. Disability is one possible barrier, but not the only one. Economic disadvantage, language barriers, migration experience, geographical isolation, health conditions, discrimination, educational difficulties or limited professional networks may also affect participation.

Inclusive does not mean identical

Equal treatment can still produce unequal results. Inclusive practice means giving each intern the conditions and support needed to participate on an equitable basis, while involving the intern directly in decisions about accessibility, communication and support.

ACCESS	PARTICIPATION	DEVELOPMENT
Recruitment and information can be found, understood and used.	Tasks, meetings and relationships allow meaningful involvement.	The intern receives guidance, feedback and opportunities to grow.

What inclusion is not

✓ It is not lowering professional standards.	✓ It is not assuming that people from the same group need the same support.
✓ It is not creating a separate “special” internship track.	✓ It is not leaving inclusion to one particularly motivated mentor.

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2 • EVIDENCE

What the INKEY survey tells us

The challenge is less about willingness and more about turning goodwill into structured practice.

83.1%	**59.2%**	**94.4%**
STRONG OR FULL MANAGEMENT SUPPORT	FORMAL POLICY OR INFORMAL D&I GUIDANCE	POSITIVE OR CONDITIONAL WILLINGNESS TO HOST

At the same time, several operational areas remain less structured:

46.5%	**31.0%**	**29.6%**
ADAPTED RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES	DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY CONFIRMED	STRUCTURED MENTORING
14.1%	**26.8%**	**48.8 / 100**
REGULAR D&I TRAINING	D&I METRICS / INCLUSION SURVEYS	OVERALL READINESS: DEVELOPING

INKEY therefore focuses on practical tools, clear roles, accessible recruitment, structured mentoring and light monitoring systems that organisations of different sizes can realistically use.

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3 • ACT

Inclusive internship cycle

A simple six-step cycle for host organisations.

PREPARE, RECRUIT, WELCOME → SUPPORT, MONITOR → LEARN, IMPROVE

1 PREPARE Define meaningful tasks, appoint a coordinator and mentor, review accessibility.	**2 RECRUIT** Use inclusive language, distinguish essential requirements and offer accessible options.
3 WELCOME Provide accessible pre-arrival information, onboarding and a clear first-week plan.	**4 SUPPORT** Use regular mentoring, constructive feedback, psychological safety and adaptations.
5 MONITOR Track learning, participation, accessibility, wellbeing and issue resolution.	**6 LEARN AND IMPROVE** Collect feedback, document lessons learned and update future procedures.

Good practice is clear, accessible and measurable

Roles and expectations are understood. Barriers are anticipated and adjustments are reviewed. Feedback and evidence are used to improve the next internship.

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4 • BEFORE

Prepare the organisation before the intern arrives

Inclusion starts before day one.

✓	Appoint one internship coordinator or responsible contact person.
✓	Assign a mentor or tutor with sufficient time for the role.
✓	Define meaningful tasks and clear learning objectives.
✓	Review physical, digital, communication and organisational accessibility.
✓	Use inclusive vacancy wording and avoid unnecessary requirements.
✓	Offer accessible application and interview options when needed.
✓	Arrange a confidential conversation about support needs.
✓	Inform the hosting team and explain roles, confidentiality and expected behaviour.
✓	Prepare pre-arrival information and the first-week plan.
✓	Identify external support services or partners that may help if needed.

Quick principle: ask what would enable participation instead of making assumptions about what a person "should" need.

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5 • DURING

Support learning, participation and wellbeing

Structured support does not need to be bureaucratic.

MENTOR	CHECK-INS	TEAM
Named reference person for tasks, learning, feedback and everyday difficulties.	Short, predictable meetings create space to discuss progress and barriers.	Inclusion is shared: colleagues and managers should involve the intern meaningfully.

Five questions for a regular check-in

✓	What has gone well since our last meeting?
✓	What have you learned or practised?
✓	Has anything made your work unnecessarily difficult?
✓	Do any instructions, tools or arrangements need to change?
✓	What will you work on before the next meeting?

Psychological safety

Interns should be able to ask questions, acknowledge mistakes and request support without fear of humiliation or negative judgement. Performance concerns should still be addressed, but through clear, fair and constructive feedback.

Remote and hybrid internships

Flexibility can remove barriers, but remote work is not automatically inclusive. Check technology, accessibility, contact with the mentor, team participation and clear expectations about outputs and availability.

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6 • AFTER

Close the internship and learn from it

Every placement should leave the organisation better prepared for the next one.

Collect feedback → Review results → Evaluate impact → Identify improvements → Explore future opportunities

INTERN FEEDBACK	MENTOR FEEDBACK	NEXT STEP
Accessibility, communication, mentoring, inclusion, learning and overall experience.	Progress, effectiveness of support, resources, challenges and organisational learning.	Employment, further learning, references, networking or future collaboration where appropriate.

A few useful final indicators

✓ Intern satisfaction score	✓ Intern inclusion score
✓ Learning objective achievement	✓ Mentor satisfaction score
✓ Issue resolution rate	✓ Improvement actions assigned with owner and deadline

Use indicators together with qualitative feedback. A single number should never replace the explanation of what happened and why.

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7 • TOOLS

Use the right tool at the right moment

The full Toolkit contains ready-to-use checklists and templates.

BEFORE

- Organisational Preparation Checklist
- Internal Communication Checklist
- Inclusive Recruitment Checklist
- Mentor / Tutor Assignment Checklist
- Accessibility Quick Assessment
- Onboarding Preparation Checklist
- Ready to Host Final Checklist
- Support Needs / Reasonable Adjustment Record

DURING

- Mentor Checklist
- Weekly / Regular Check-in Template
- Mid-term Intern Feedback Form
- Mid-term Mentor Feedback Form
- Communication Tips
- Inclusive Language Examples
- Problem Record
- Risk Register
- Conflict / Escalation Flow
- Internship Monitoring KPI Sheet

CHALLENGES

- Risk Register
- Problem Record
- Escalation Flow

AFTER

- Final Intern Feedback Form
- Final Mentor Feedback Form
- Final Evaluation Summary
- Monitoring Summary Report
- Post-Internship KPI Review
- Continuous Improvement Plan
- Future Collaboration / Retention Follow-up

Why document anything?

Not to create paperwork for its own sake. Simple records help organisations show that inclusion was planned, implemented, reviewed and improved. They also create useful evidence for self-assessment and the future INKEY Quality Label.

Tip: choose only the tools that fit the size and complexity of the internship. A micro-enterprise does not need the same internal system as a large organisation.

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Five actions you can introduce immediately

Small changes can have a large impact.

1	**Appoint one responsible contact person.**	Make ownership visible from the start.
2	**Assign a prepared mentor with time for the role.**	Informal goodwill is useful; structured availability is better.
3	**Ask the intern what support would be useful.**	Do not infer needs from labels or categories.
4	**Schedule regular check-ins from the beginning.**	Do not wait until a problem appears.
5	**Collect feedback and improve the next internship.**	Turn individual experience into organisational learning.

These actions reflect the central message of the WP3 survey: many organisations are willing to host inclusive internships, but need simple structures that turn willingness into consistent practice.

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9 • SELF-ASSESS

Eight dimensions of inclusive internship readiness

The Toolkit self-assessment is an indicative improvement tool, not a certification.

1 Governance and Strategic Commitment	**2** Inclusive recruitment & onboarding	**3** Accessibility & reasonable accommodation
4 Training and Skills Development	**5** Organisational Culture and Wellbeing	**6** D&I Monitoring and Data
7 Experience with Inclusive Internships	**8** Organisational commitment & governance	**Scoring** 0 / 1 / 2 for 3 statement of every dimension

Scoring logic

0 = not in place or unknown • 1 = informal / occasional • 2 = structured and regularly implemented

The full Toolkit includes 21 statements. The result is converted into a percentage and used to identify a readiness stage and improvement priorities.

Important: the mini self-assessment does not replace the full WP3 Readiness Score or the Quality Label assessment procedure. The Quality Label criteria and assessment is finalized by the University of Lille.

This is considered as a tool of improvement to be implemented by companies to understand how improve their readiness.

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10 • IMPROVE

The INKEY readiness journey

Readiness is a progression, not a pass/fail judgement.

LEVEL	SCORE	MAIN PRIORITY	EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE
INITIAL	< 40%	**Build the foundations.**	Named contact • mentor • accessibility check
DEVELOPING	40–59%	**Turn informal support into repeatable procedures.**	Inclusive vacancy • check-ins • adaptation record
ADVANCED	60–74%	**Improve consistency, outcomes and organisational learning.**	Policy/guidance • training records • KPI review
EXCELLENCE	75–100%	**Demonstrate impact and transfer good practices.**	Case studies • outcomes • peer support evidence

Recommended approach: identify the lowest-scoring dimension, choose one or two realistic actions, assign responsibility and a deadline, then review evidence after the next internship cycle.

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11 • NEXT STEP

Towards the INKEY Quality Label

The detailed Quality Label methodology is still being finalised within the project.

The Toolkit already provides the practical foundation: understand inclusion, self-assess readiness, use the tools, implement an inclusive internship, collect evidence and improve.

The Quality Label framework is currently being finalised by the INKEY consortium, with University of Lille leading the analytical work. The pathway below is therefore indicative and will be aligned with the final agreed methodology.

SELF-ASSESS → PRIORITISE → USE THE TOOLKIT → IMPLEMENT → COLLECT EVIDENCE → REVIEW PROGRESS

START NOW	BUILD EVIDENCE	KEEP IMPROVING
You do not need to wait for the Label to improve recruitment, accessibility, mentoring and monitoring.	Keep simple records of what you planned, implemented, reviewed and improved.	The aim is credible progress over time, not "perfect inclusion" on day one.

One final question

What is the next practical change your organisation can make before hosting its next intern?

For detailed guidance, checklists, templates, KPIs and the full self-assessment, refer to the complete INKEY WP3 Toolkit.

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