

Best Practice cases in VET - Spain (Partners: AIDIMA)

Master in Vocational Specialization in Wood and Technology Industries (Duration: 950 hours)

This masters programme is run by AIDIMA – Technological Institute of Wood, Furniture, Packaging and Related Industries. It is the result of a collaboration of AIDIMA, IMPIVA (Valencia Institute for SMEs) and the European Social Fund (ESF), that finances this course 100 %. In general the occupational training in Spain is carried out by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. However, it is not certified and (at the moment) not comparable to the professional qualifications defined by the National Qualification Institute. This masters degree is equal to level 4 of the National qualification Framework and European qualification framework.

The Wood and Furniture sector is also one of the most important industrial sector of the Region of Valencia. For many years, this course, within the vocational training offer, has been the only specialized training offer for the wood, furniture and related industries. It already has 19 editions and it has trained more than 340 students who currently hold a post of responsibility in furniture companies.

The aim of the course is to train technicians specialized in the wood, furniture, packaging and related industries sector who will be able to manage the technological innovation, the new products and commercial production.

Course objectives are :

- To know the main characteristics of the sector of wood, furniture and related industries.
- To know the materials used.
- Human Resource management.
- To know about Technical Office / product development.
- To understand logistic processes.

After finishing, the trainees will be able to understand the standard practices in a wood and furniture company. They will acquire a global point of view of the company, of the sector, markets, quality management systems, etc. but also they will specialize in every process in the company: Design and prototyping, manufacturing and logistic processes, TICs, finishing methods and so on.

This kind of training means that most of the students get a management work place after the course is finished.

The methodology used in the lectures combines theory and practice, audiovisual means and computers for design and management. Moreover, students visit companies, trade fairs and workshops. When students finish their theoretical and practical lectures, they do internships in a company involved in the sector (for two months). The assessment methods include written and practical exams and portfolio work.

After course the trainee should have:

- An overall knowledge of the companies' processes and of the sector its involved in.
- Knowledge of the design processes in the company.
- How and when to use the raw materials according to their properties and final product.
- The logistic and manufacturing processes involved in the production (programming, using, tools, machineries, etc).
- The finishing process.

Learner/Employer motivation: The practical knowledge that this course offers and easy access to jobs in wood and furniture sector of the region after the completion of the course are the main motivating factors for learners. Employers find this course particularly useful in that they are getting new employees with skills that adjust to their need. The course is 100% financed by European social fund which makes it possible for employers to get skilled people at zero cost.

Student retention: The course is mainly for unemployed people. The attendance is obligatory. If the student is absent for more than 20% of the hours of the course, they are not certified and fail. Most graduates have fruitful careers in the given industries.

Funding: IMPIVA (Valencia Institute for SMEs) and the European social fund.

Course Evaluation: There is a formal course evaluation in place involving each of the students and the course instructors.

Why this is an example of Good Practice

Course provider's view: Course is highly specialised, easy to run because of the high motivation of attendees and also the sector.

Participant's view: The course offers new perspectives for unemployed people and guarantees them a new job. It is tailored to meet the needs of the students but also the industrial sector.

Industry's view: The course programme is adjusted to industry needs. It respects the needs of the local wood and furniture sector.

Quality Assurance The Training Department of AIDIMA has been certified in 2005 by AENOR (Spanish Association of Standardization and Certification) on the ISO 9000 model for the "Design and Teaching of on the job and vocational training courses for the wood, furniture and related industries" (UNE – EN ISO 9001:2000). Every year the training department must pass an audit in order to be certified.