



## EEE Outcome 4 - Needs Analysis

- From entrepreneurial student to making it in the Horse business





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## **Erasmus Equine Entrepreneur (EEE) Project 2016 - 2019**

### **Outcome 4 - Needs Analysis Report**

## Introduction

The aim of this report is to evaluate the need for and feasibility of creating centers of expertise throughout Europe of which can be of benefit to the wider worldwide equine community. The purpose of this report is in line with the overall EEE project aim to ensure the ongoing success of teaching and training equine entrepreneurs in the future.

The growth of the equine industry worldwide is allowing international opportunities for those with formal equine training both vocationally and academically. Countries across Europe have established recognized training programs for equine professionals which benefit both the horse, competitive riding and leisure activities. It is hoped that through improved networking and sharing of expertise, equine students will increase not only their skill base but also their confidence to enter this growing industry with its worldwide prospects.

In the initial stages of the project key competencies for individuals were identified which should aim to develop successful equine entrepreneurs. This task was completed in collaboration by project partners from the Netherlands, Denmark, Finland and the UK, and with additional support from industry professionals. The key competencies were identified as:

- KC 1A – Show a productive attitude and determination
- KC 1B – Shows ambition and passion (drive) for the equine sector
- KC 1C – Have a “Growth” mindset as against a “fixed” mindset
- KC 2A – See opportunities (market orientation and research)
- KC 2B – Create a solid business plan for the equine sector
- KC 2C – Take educated risks (risk management)
- KC 3A – Create your own equine network
- KC 3B – Understanding the uniqueness of the equine client
- KC 3C – Market your business / products in the equine sector to support growth at home and abroad, with understanding of target markets.
- KC 4A – Show understanding of the requirements of the sector
- KC 4B – Ability to overcome challenges within equine business
- KC 4C – Evaluate and improve continuously
- KC 4D – Understand your USP (unique selling point) and how to leverage this USP to create more equine business.
- KC 4E – Understand the importance of buy-in for the expertise that you don’t have.
- KC 5A – Work with horses and the equine sector within different (new) cultures in a global context.
- KC5B – Find opportunities in upcoming global markets.



## Analysing current curriculum offer

The needs analysis process began by reviewing the expertise held within partner schools and colleges in accordance with the key competencies. This was completed by reviewing current curriculum offered, both taught content and assessments were reviewed from all of the partner schools (see appendix 2).

The results were positive with very few gaps in expertise across partners. All key competencies being assessed in some form whether through theoretical examination, practical examination, internship, assignments or projects.

Across the four schools/colleges some elements of KC 1C “Have a “Growth” mindset as against a “fixed” mindset”, and KC 5A “Work with horses and the equine sector within different (new) cultures in a global context” were not recognized as a strength in any current project partner. However, it may be considered that, both KC 1C and KC 5A require softer skill development and, although not formally “taught”, would be skills acquired naturally thorough visiting and working in different global equine settings. As part of the project students have travelled and attended study tours at partner settings and have already had opportunities to develop these skills.

KC 5B “find opportunities in upcoming global markets” was identified as not having a center of expertise across the partners. It could be fulfilled by developing and continuing the equine entrepreneurship final project building on the experiences from the pilot.. This may potentially also need to be out-sourced through industry links.

All partners identified KC 4A “Show understanding of the requirements of the sector” as a strength. Taking into consideration the qualifications and experience of staff in each school / college it could be expected this this will remain a consistent strength through continued professional development and industry input.

An interesting result from the curriculum comparison was the use of internships as an assessment method. All partners, bar the UK, currently use this method. It would be beneficial to share the benefits of this practice further particularly as the country that uses it the most (The Netherlands) considers it of great importance in developing the project key competencies. This would suggest that an internship opportunity gives students the opportunity to develop the skills that are later required as an equine entrepreneur.

## Analysing student views

The second part of the needs analysis rested on the collection of current student’s opinions. This was to establish if students were familiar with the current need for worldwide equine expertise and how they felt about developing equine skills and knowledge abroad. 20 students participated in the survey, with participants from all of the partner schools / colleges. The survey was anonymous, home country being unidentifiable (see appendix 1 for full questions and possible responses to the survey).



The top two highest responses for each question were as follows:

Question	Answer with highest response	%
1. If you were to set up your own international equine company what skill do you think would be top of your list to develop?	Create a solid business plan for the equine sector	50%
	Create your own equine network	38%
2. What do you think are the benefits of studying an equine related course in another country?	Learning to stand on my own feet	75%
	Expand network	63%
3. How long would you be happy to live abroad to study?	2 months	63%
	1 week	25%
4. How far would you be willing to travel?	Worldwide	63%
	Within Europe	25%
5. Do you consider language a barrier to studying abroad?	No	63%
	Yes	37%
6. How would you approach cultural differences / sensitivities in different countries you were visiting?	Open to it	88%
	Dreading it	12%
7. What would be your biggest concern or barrier to studying abroad?	Leaving horses	63%
	Money	63%
8. What are you missing at your current school that you could gain somewhere else?	Working with horses and the equine sector within different (new) cultures in a global context.	88%
	Opportunities	25%
9. When travelling abroad do you learn the most from seeing, discussion or doing? If I was abroad I would like to:	Work at an equine establishment	88%
	Visit stables	50%
10. How would you measure the success of travelling abroad to complete a course?	Expand my network	63%
	Gained confidence	50%

From reviewing the results, a theme is apparent that students identify the greatest benefits from being able to work on yards and in equine establishments for prolonged periods of time. Students identify that independence, developing strong networks and improved awareness of different cultures is of importance in improving international working prospects.

These results further support the recognition of the value of internships within equine entrepreneur projects, where these skills are enhanced.



It is not to say though that there is not a need for structured and more supportive settings for students on the start of their journey to become equine entrepreneurs. 37% of respondents felt that language would be a barrier to studying abroad, 63% having money concerns and 50% wish to increase confidence while studying abroad. Within educational settings students are supported to overcome concerns and worries in a supportive and inclusive environment. It is possible that individuals who feel as of yet too uncomfortable to participate in an internship abroad, could be encouraged to explore their development wishes within this safe school environment before taking the next step abroad.

Through the implementation of the EEE project, students should feel encouraged and supported to consider the wider worldwide opportunities to them as equine entrepreneurs. Working, learning and building networks with those with similar aspirations with experts in the field.

## Plan for Implementation

For the project to remain of benefit to both students and the industry it should be strengthened with increased membership of industry shareholders. Through these networking connections, knowledge of global equine markets will increase, along with widened prospects for graduates as they develop and share skills with one another. Continued updating and reviewing of centers of expertise according to the key competencies will pull education providers together and allow the sharing of best practice in teaching, learning and assessment of equine students.

Students will be able to recognise the skills they need to develop and, in turn, be able to select an appropriate expertise center to visit. From the student survey it is apparent that students would find this opportunity invaluable should they wish to pursue a career as an equine entrepreneur.

Inclusion of the EEE aims within the existing curriculums, and embedding the use of the handbook within existing curricula would also strengthen the development of the student key competences. Through partnering schools and colleges use of the handbook, students will be given the opportunity to develop their competences in a structured setting, working together to achieve business aims, identifying personal strengths and areas for development.

In the longer-term, consideration should be given to creating specific units where entrepreneur topics do not exist in equine schools / colleges. This may involve working alongside qualification awarding bodies for validation. Working with recognized centers of expertise will improve the quality of provision and training particularly where students have the opportunity to spend some time abroad, such as within an internship.

In planning for implementation of the project a key contact should be in place within each center of expertise for the arrangement of student visits and exchanges. Student profiles can be reviewed and suitable placements offers made. During a student EEE visit the expectation should be that the student works within a yard setting while attending entrepreneur related lectures and networking events. The length of time spent abroad can be arranged to suit personal circumstance and financial limitations, however the outcome should be consistent: the student gains skills and knowledge to support them in becoming an equine entrepreneur. It should be expected that a student visits a variety of expertise centers to reap the benefits of cultural diversity within the industry.



## Appendices

### **Appendix 1**

#### Student Survey questions including all possible responses

1. If you were to set up your own international equine company what skill do you think would be top of your list to develop?
  - Create a solid business plan for the equine sector
  - Create your own equine network
  - Ability to overcome challenges within the equine business
  - Understand you USP ('unique selling point') and how to leverage this USP to create more equine business
  - Find opportunities in upcoming global markets
  
2. What do you think are the benefits of studying an equine related course in another country?
  - Gain independence
  - Culture
  - Responsibility
  - Language
  - Expand network
  - Making new friends
  - Learning new things
  - Learning new approaches
  - Learning to stand on my own feet
  
3. How long would you be happy to live abroad to study?
  - 1 week
  - 2 weeks
  - 1 month
  - 2 months
  - 6 months
  - 1 year
  - more than a year



4. How far would you be willing to travel?
  - A neighbouring country
  - Within Europe
  - Northern Europe
  - Southern Europe
  - Worldwide
  
5. Do you consider language a barrier to studying abroad?
  - Definitely would
  - Probably would
  - Probably would not
  - Definitely would not
  
6. How would you approach cultural differences/sensitivities in different countries you were visiting?
  - Open to it
  - Is that necessary?
  - Loving it
  - Dreading it
  
7. What would be your biggest concern or barrier to studying abroad?
  - Missing partners
  - Missing family
  - Homesick
  - Leaving horses
  - Money
  - Language
  - Lack of home comforts
  - Lack of information
  
8. What are you missing at your current school that you could gain somewhere else?
  - Opportunities
  - New trends in lifestyle
  - Global awareness
  - Riding Skills
  - Working with horses and the equine sector within different (new) cultures in a global context





9. When travelling abroad do you learn the most from seeing, discussion or doing? If I was abroad I would like to:

- Visit stables
- Follow lectures
- Work at an equine establishment
- Start a company

10. How would you measure the success of travelling abroad to complete a course?

- Met my expectations
- Exceeded my expectations
- Gained confidence
- Gained independence
- Completed it
- Expanded my network
- Got offered a job
- Got offered a placement
- Learned a language