



## Innovative Approaches to Developing Accredited Employability Skills

**Nick Smith**

[nick@superact.org.uk](mailto:nick@superact.org.uk)

Superact (United Kingdom)

### Abstract

'Amongst core characteristics employers look for are motivation and flexibility. These include willingness to work and learn, and appearance, behaviour, confidence, and positive gestures and mannerisms.'

Bunt K, McAndre F, Kuechel A (2005), Jobcentre Plus Employer

Supporting Employability and Personal Effectiveness (SEPE) is a new BTEC qualification being offered by Edexcel and Superact. The SEPE award is designed to help those who may find accessing traditional routes to employability challenging, to build confidence and gain a meaningful and accredited qualification that has currency world wide.

The qualification is based on 50 hours learning, normally spread over a period of three months on a sessional basis. Working with Exeter University, the qualification was developed in UK prisons using highly skilled musicians. It became clear that an arts based approach to SEPE could be highly successful in reaching out to those who have shunned more traditional forms of learning.

Funded through an EU Leonardo Di Vinci Transfer of Innovation project, the SEPE award is currently being trialled in prisons across five countries; Austria, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal and Turkey.

### Employability Skills

**The purpose** of SEPE is to equip learners with employability skills and the self-confidence to use them. These are the skills needed to obtain work and build the foundations of long term labour market participation. While there will always be some job-specific skills that an employer is looking for, most employers also want to see a set of generic skills associated with teamwork, communication, and self-motivation in potential employees.

### The Superact Approach

Superact is a Community Interest Company that uses the creative process to improve the health and well-being of communities and in doing so maximises the life chances of individuals.