

Profesia Lab Guide 2025



For more information



Profesia Lab was founded in December 2022 as part of Profesia's CSR activities (from January 2024, Profesia became Alma Career Slovakia).

Contact for more information: anna.podlesna@almacareer.com, www.sosrdcom.sk

Organizers:



Partners:



Profesia Lab strives to strengthen the community of practice focused on the employment of individuals with disabilities.

We share both, concerns, and joy regarding our hands-on experiences. Together, we learn how to improve. Regular meetings allow us to exchange experiences and knowledge.

The Profesia Lab community encompasses job seekers, employers, NGOs, schools, HR and career counselors, experts in various disabilities, and social and communication skills facilitators.

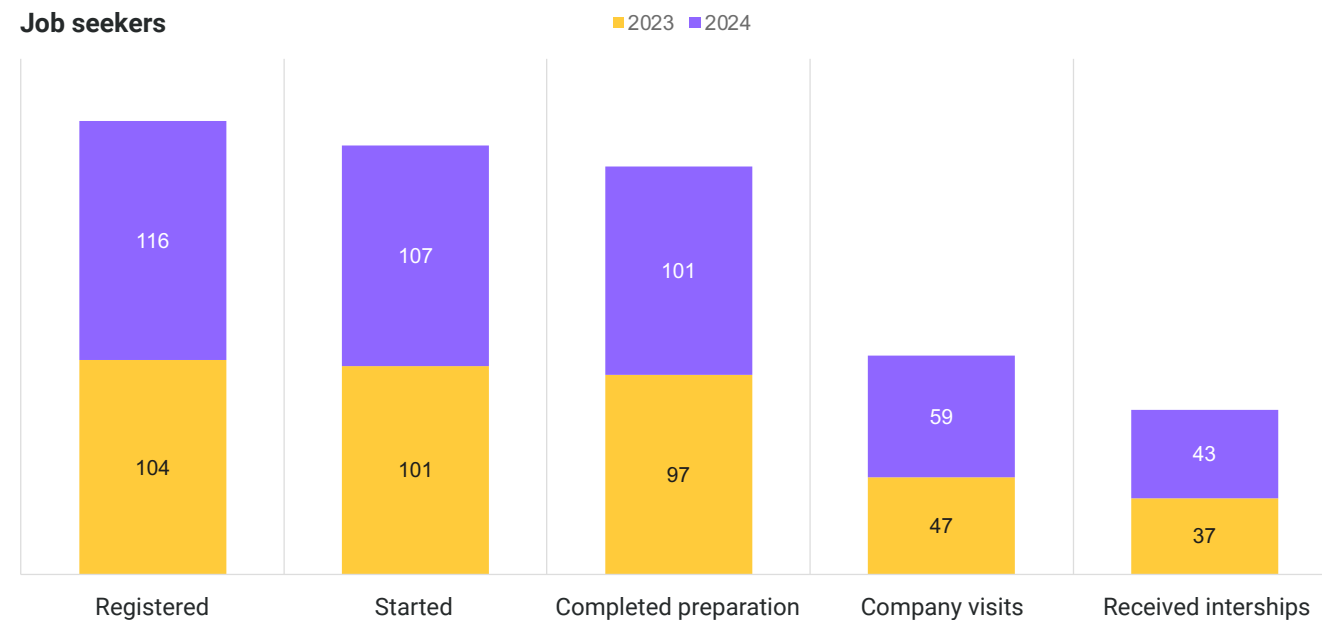
Results for the First Two Years

Job Seekers

Profesia Lab has seen significant engagement and success in its first two years. A total of 220 participants registered, with 208 commencing the preparation phase. Out of these, 198 successfully completed the training in social and communication skills for the job market (ASSET). Participants with more than 75% attendance were eligible to participate in company site visits and apply for internships.

A total of 106 candidates went on company visits. When selecting a company visit from the portfolio of employers participating in Profesia Lab, we prioritize the participant's interest in working at the company and the relevance of the type of work offered to their career goals. If a participant cannot find a good match, they are encouraged to seek employers outside of Profesia Lab. However, job coaching is only funded for internships within Profesia Lab. Over the two years, 80 internships were completed, ranging from 2 weeks to 3 months.

According to satisfaction surveys, 96.5% of graduates (n=57) recommend participating in Profesia Lab.



ASSET Facilitators and Employment Specialists

In the preparation phase, ASSET facilitators, who focus on social and communication skills, partner with employment specialists, also known as job coaches. Over the past two years, we have conducted 26 ASSET groups (12 in schools, 7 with community partners, 3 in a hybrid format, and 4 online).

We strive for a nationwide solution and a stable network of partners, working with experts from various regions. These experts include psychologists, social workers, HR professionals, specialists in various disabilities and vocational rehabilitation, and professional trainers.

We would like to thank the following partners for their contributions over the past year: Eva Birčáková, Barbora Čaputová, Gabriela Čičmancová, Juraj Gabriš, Juraj Hudák, Michala Kamhalová, Dagmar Kočiová, Andrea Kozová, Stanislav Lörincz, Martina Mladšíková, Mária Mojžišová, Michal Minarský, Patrik Pauko, Magda Sedláčková, Janka Sekerešová, Lucia Sujová, Zuzana Švedová, Katarína Vanková, Mária Wolf, and Lenka Zemančíková.

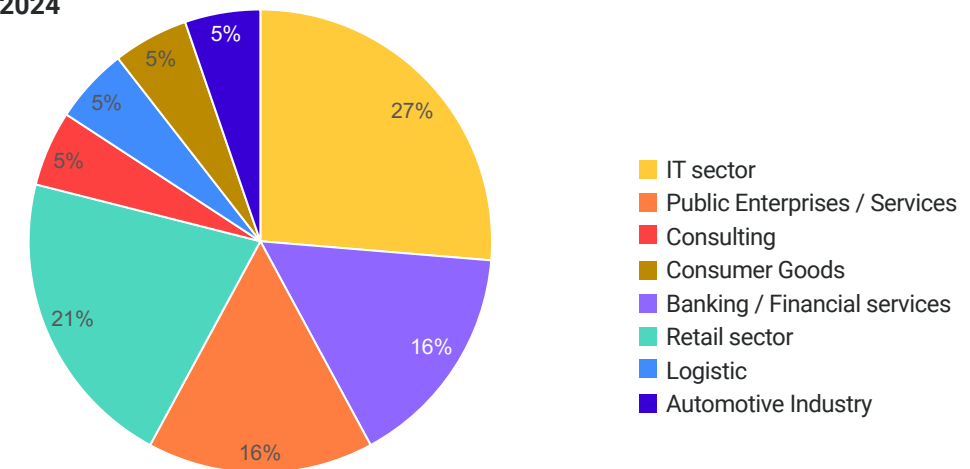
We have delivered more than 400 hours of the ASSET program and provided over 500 hours of job coaching.

Employers

Our goal is to enable people with disabilities to gain their first work experience in the competitive labor market shortly after finishing school. We are not running a charitable project; instead, we seek jobs where the talents and strengths of the candidates can shine.

The availability of internships is closely tied to the employers we can attract to Profesia Lab. We are grateful that after the pilot year, we have gained an additional 8 employers, and in 2024, 18 employers have offered company visits.

Year 2024

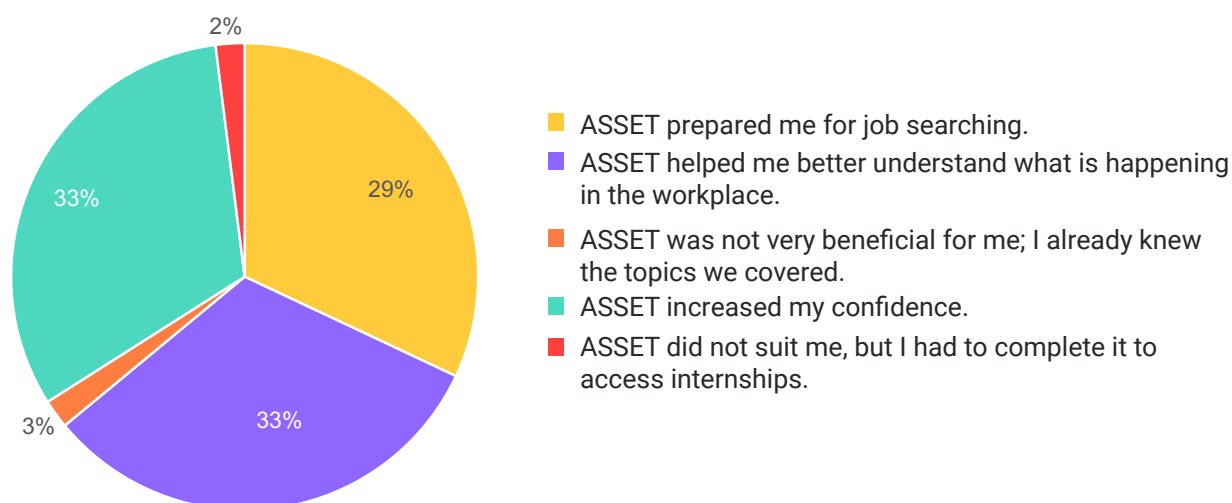


Partnership with Michigan State University

The Profesia Lab model also serves as a foundation for research in vocational rehabilitation, as per a Memorandum of Understanding between Alma Career Slovakia and Michigan State University. This agreement is in effect until 2027 and facilitates the gradual transfer of knowledge and evidence-based practices.

- In 2022, we translated and adapted the Assistive Soft Skills and Employment Training (ASSET, Sung et al., 2019). In 2023, we performed a second revision of the program, incorporating insights gained from our own experiences.

Satisfaction survey (n=57)



- In 2025, we aim to validate the scale used to assess employee performance in entry-level positions and to capture integration needs (The Job Observation and Behavior Scale; JOBS; Rosenberg and Brady, 2001).

Work-Required Daily Living

- Attendance
- Punctuality
- Personal Hygiene & Grooming
- Travel
- Verbal Communication
- Non-verbal Communication
- Money Use
- Reading
- Math
- Self-identification
- Work Schedule
- Personal Schedule
- Work Facilities

Work-Required Behavior

- Stress Tolerance
- Interpersonal Work Interactions
- Interpersonal Social Interactions
- Changes in Routines
- Honesty
- Reaction to Criticism
- Work Initiative
- Work Endurance

Work-Required Job Duties

- Quality of Work
- Quantity of Work
- Speed of Learning New Tasks
- Performance on Previously Learned Tasks
- Multiple Task Performance
- Organization of Work Tasks
- Safety Procedures
- Cleanliness of Work Environment
- Employee Motivation



Funding

Profesia Lab has so far been funded by 2% of income tax, donations, and the CSR budget of Alma Career Slovakia. This was also made possible through a partnership with the non-governmental organization KOGNEO, led by Klaudia Bednárová. The first training and supervision for ASSET program facilitators were financed by The Humphrey Alumni Impact Award, which Anna Podlesná received from the U.S. Department of State, The Fulbright Programs Committee, and the Institute of International Education.

In 2025, Profesia Lab's activities will be financed in the same way and will be free for job seekers and employers.

However, we recognize the need to support employers in cases where Profesia Lab graduates have secured employment and require guidance for further development. At the same time, our database of job seekers with disabilities on profesia.sk is growing, where a different type of counseling is needed. Therefore, we want to create a **long-term support source through the Help with Heart program**. For more detailed information, please contact anna.podlesna@almacareer.com.

Profesia Lab 2025

Profesia Lab enables people with disabilities to gain their first work experience in the competitive labor market. It lasts approximately 9 months.

Preparation

Preparation begins in January **with group training in social and communication skills** for the job market (ASSET). If a candidate successfully completes ASSET (**with more than 75% attendance**), they move on to job coaching. Job coaches assist candidates with resume preparation, practice introductions for job interviews, and serve as contacts for selecting company visits, coordination of company visits, and applying for internships. Participating employers also undergo preparation in the form of **three online webinars** and individual consultations. Dates of webinars are predetermined, and recordings are available for internal sharing.

Company visits

Companies pre-select a **maximum of two dates, and one visit typically lasts up to 3 hours**. The aim is to present the workplace and the type of work the company is considering offering as a paid internship. We require a **job description in advance** so that we can prepare candidates during job coaching sessions. Candidates should also have the opportunity to try out the job during the site visit.

Internships

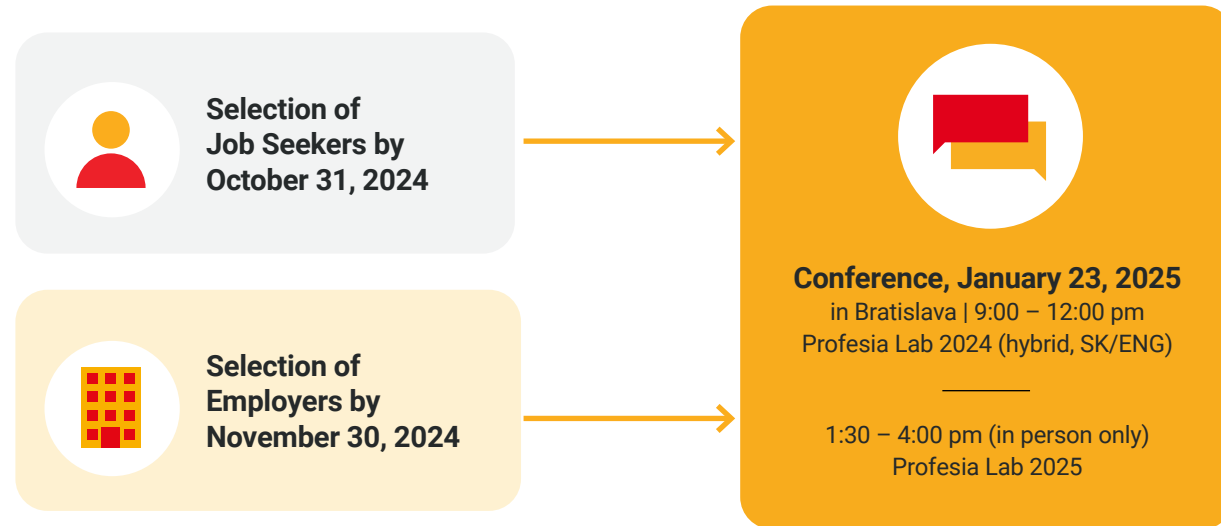
Every job seeker who has successfully completed the preparation phase can apply for an internship. The duration and timing of the internship are determined by the employers. The only condition is that the **internships must be paid work**. Whether a job offer will follow the internship is up to the **employer's decision** and their communication with the intern. During the internship, each intern has the opportunity to receive support from a job coach. Ideally, the company, the intern, and the job coach should jointly define the rules of communication and the level of support when starting the internship. Profesia Lab can provide recommendations based on the JOBS questionnaire.

Evaluation

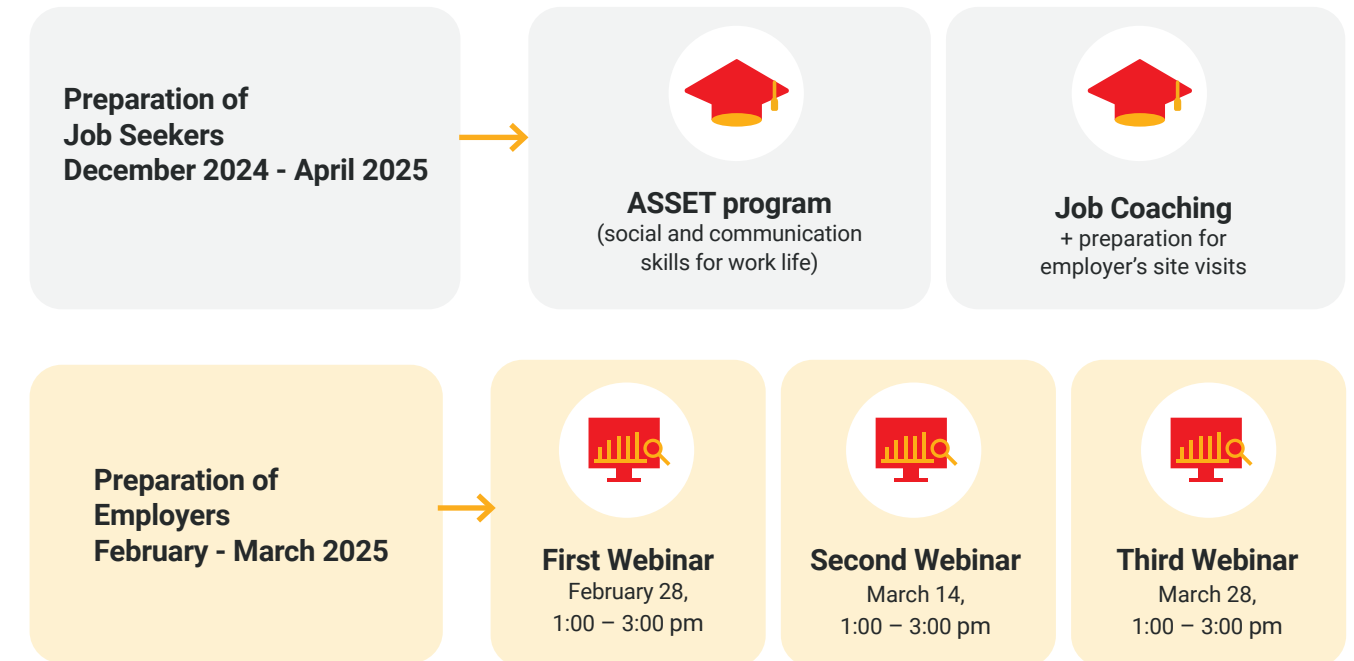
In each stage, there are **questionnaires and qualitative interviews** that help us prepare job seekers for competitive labor market, set up job coaching, and plan the next edition of Profesia Lab. We also provide the data anonymously to Michigan State University for research purposes in vocational rehabilitation.

Profesia Lab Roadmap

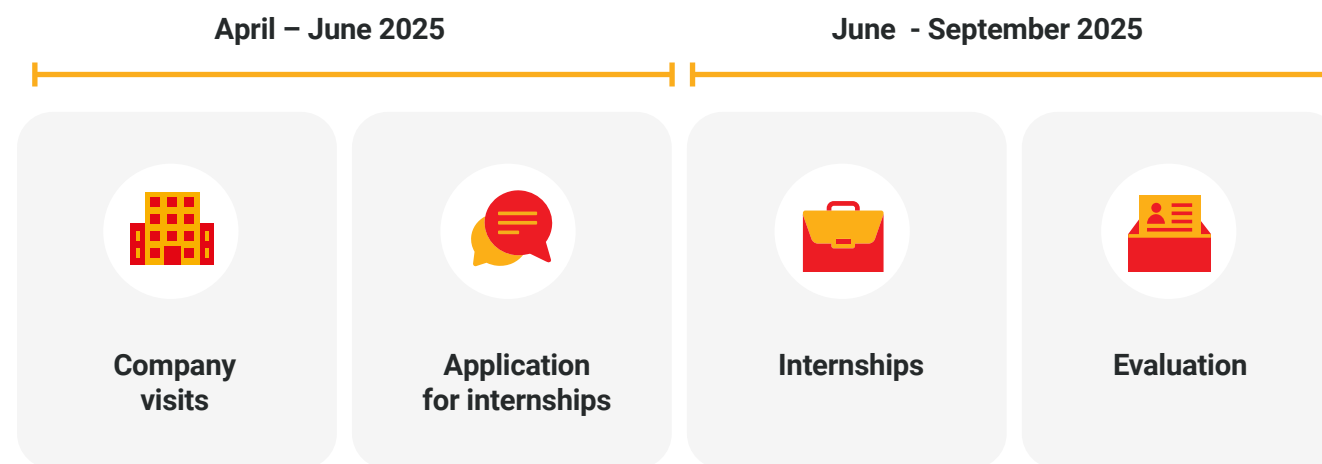
1 – Registration and Selection



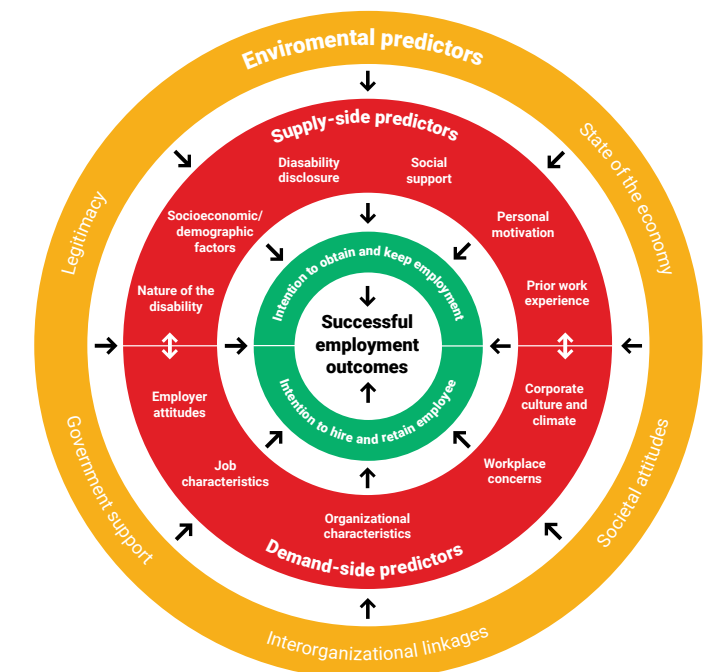
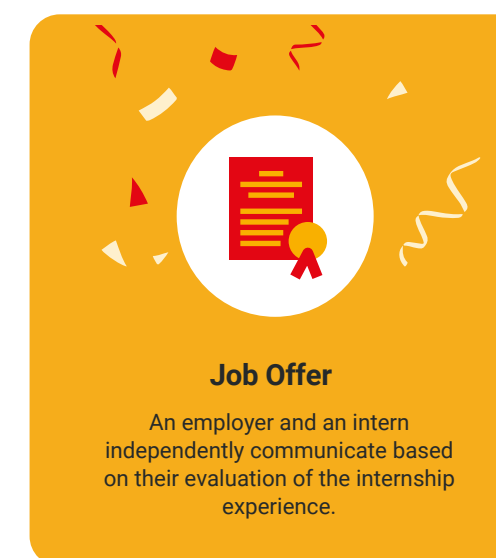
2 – Preparation Phase



3 – Site Visits and Internships



4 – Job Offers



Whether the internship at Profesia Lab results in employment offer depends on the individual communication between the applicant and the employer. Several factors influence this, which have been described by Ikutegbe et al. (2023).

Ikutegbe, P., Randle, M., Sheridan, L., Gordon, R., & Dolnicar, S. (2023). Successful Employment Outcomes for People with Disabilities: A Proposed Conceptual Model. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice & Research*, 75(3), 202–224. <https://doi-org.proxy2.cl.msu.edu/>

Preparation of Job Seekers

Contents of the ASSET Program

Session 1: Welcome

- ASSET program introduction
- Objectives of Profesia Lab, cooperation with job coaches and companies

Session 2: Types and Ways of Communication

- Explore different types of communication (verbal vs. nonverbal)
- Understand the importance of listening

Session 3: Communication Expectations in the Workplace

- Identify appropriate and expected ways of communication
- Recognize the nuances of communication differences across people and settings

Session 4: Working with Different Personalities

- Learn various personality traits using the 'OCEAN' model
- Recognize different personality types

Session 5: Showing Positive Attitude and Enthusiasm

- Learn what attitude is (positive vs. negative) and what it looks like

Session 6: Disability Awareness and Self Advocacy

- Identify one's own strengths and support needs and how they relate to the workplace
- 14 skills needed for a competitive job market (JOBS questionnaire)
- Job coaching in Profesia Lab
- How to communicate your needs to an employer

Session 7: Teamwork

- Learn the importance of teamwork and different roles in team
- Explore characteristics of good team player

Session 8: Networking and Digital Identity

- Making contacts, how to briefly introduce yourself, important principles in the use of technology and networking in online world

Session 9: Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

- Understanding the importance of critical thinking
- Discuss effective strategies to solve common workplace problems

Session 10: Introduction to Professionalism

- Setting professional goals
- How to behave professionally in the workplace

Session 11: Time Management and Planning and Being organized

- Managing your time in the workplace: meetings, work tasks

Session 12: Mental Health and Stress Management

- How to take care of your mental health
- Managing stress in different situations



Session 13: Emotion Recognition and Regulation

- How to recognize and regulate emotions
- Conflict resolution options

Session 14: Self-Awareness and Awareness of Others

- How your behavior affects others at work

Session 15: Maintaining Workplace Relationships

- Workplace culture (company culture)
- Personal hygiene

Meetings with a Job Coach

- Personal and Professional Goals
- What to Expect from Company Site Visits and Internships
- How to Search for a Job and Choose an Internship
- Resume
- How to Prepare for a Company Visit
- Preparation for a Job Interview
- JOBS Questionnaire and How to Request Workplace Accommodations
- Workplace Relationships and Corporate Culture

Preparation of Employers

First Webinar (February 28, 1:00 – 3:00 pm)

- Job Seekers in Profesia Lab 2025

Second Webinar (March 14, 1:00 – 3:00 pm)

- Collaboration with Job Coaches

Third Webinar (March 28, 1:00 – 3:00 pm)

- Company Site Visits and Internships



Executive Team



Anna Podlesná

CSR Manager responsible for partnership with Michigan State University and development of Profesia Lab

Alma Career Slovakia

anna.podlesna@almacareer.com



Martina Čápková

CSR coordinator responsible for management of activities in Profesia Lab

Alma Career Slovakia

martina.capkova@almacareer.com



Klaudia Bednárová

Consultant for adult education and ASSET program



Patrik Pauko

Responsible for training of ASSET facilitators



Katarína Vanková

Responsible for training and supervision of ASSET facilitators, ASSET facilitator



Andrea Kozová

Consultant for ASSET program and job coaching, ASSET facilitator



Gabriela Čičmancová

Responsible for supervision of job coaches, job coach

Partners for ASSET Program and Job Coaching

Bratislava	Institute for Vocational Rehabilitation of Citizens with Disabilities www.iprba.sk Integration of Children and Youth www.integracia.sk
Levice	Aptet www.aptet.sk
Banská Bystrica	Alternative - Centre for Independent Living www.alternativacentrum.sk
Košice	Smile at me (Usmej sa na mňa) www.usmejsanamna.sk
Prešov	Francesco - Regional Autism Center www.online.autistipresov.sk

Checklist

Job seekers

- Attend ASSET sessions regularly (apologize in advance in case of absence)
- Register for meetings with the job coach (info will be provided by ASSET facilitator)
- Complete JOBS self-report by **March 31st, 2025**
- Register for company site visits
- Apply for an internship
- In case of an internship, complete JOBS self-report by the end of your internship
- Complete the satisfaction survey

Employers

- Sign the Memorandum of Understanding by **February 28th, 2025**
- Attend the first webinar: **February 28th** from 1:00 to 3:00 pm
- Meet with your site visit coordinator, individual consultations
- Attend the second webinar: **March 14th** from 1:00 to 3:00 pm
- Set site visit dates and type of work that job seekers can try out
- Attend the third webinar: **March 28th** from 1:00 to 3:00 pm
- Organize a maximum of two site visits
- Publish internship offers
- In case of an internship, complete JOBS informant report at the end for each intern
- Participate in the exit interview from Profesia Lab

Job Coaches (ASSET facilitators upon agreement)

- Sign the Memorandum of Understanding by **January 31st, 2025**
- Attend the first webinar: **February 28th** from 1:00 to 3:00 pm
- Meet with employers where you will coordinate site visits
- Attend the second webinar: **March 14th** from 1:00 to 3:00 pm
- Communicate dates for site visits and types of jobs to job seekers, start preparation
- Attend the third webinar: **March 28th** from 1:00 to 3:00 pm
- Complete JOBS informant report by **March 31st, 2025**
- Help with coordination of site visits (facilitate communication between company and job seekers)
- Help to set up job coaching for assigned interns at the beginning of their internship and complete JOBS informant report at the end of their internship

