



MODULE 1.
**Introduction to Soft Skills for
Employees in the Culinary Sector**

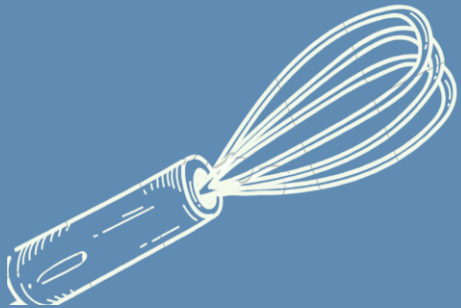


**Migrants' Integration through
Culinary Arts
Cooking Cultures**

Erasmus + Programme [2019-1-KA204-074418]



symplexis



PRIORITY FOR CULINARY SECTOR POSITIONS



There are many professions in the culinary sector. We have gathered some of these professions under 4 groups, based on the jobs of the people who participated in the “Cooking Cultures” surveys. These profession groups and the professions in them are as follows and are indicative:

- 1. Chef and Cooking Professionals:** Chef, Assistant chef, Meat processor, Gastronomy Specialist, Confectioner, Baker, Pastry Chef, Culinary Art Technician, Boutique chocolatier and some local chefs (Pizzeria Chef, Kebap chef (Kebapçı) etc.)
- 2. Kitchen Industry Managers / Experts:** Restaurant Specialist, Kitchen manager, Catering Company Manager, Dietician, Food Engineer, Food Technology Technician
- 3. Customer Services:** Bar attendant, Service attendant, Service manager, Supplier, Courier, Waiter, Chief waiter, Komi, Cashier/Phone customer service
- 4. Cleaning staff/Expert:** Scullery attendant, Dishwasher, Hygiene Staff, Sanitation Staff



PRIORITY FOR CULINARY SECTOR POSITIONS



Not all modules (training courses) we create are a priority for all of these professions. This grouping is made to explain the priorities of the trainings given according to the professions at national and international level. Three types of prioritization systems have been stated. These priorities and meanings are as follows;



HIGH PRIORITY

***This module is a high priority for this profession group.
This professional group should definitely receive this training.***

MEDIUM PRIORITY

***This module is of medium priority for this profession group.
This professional group is recommended to take this module.***

LOW PRIORITY

***This module is of low priority for this profession group. It is not
necessary for the professional group to receive this module.***

PRIORITY FOR CULINARY SECTOR POSITIONS



So, is this module a priority for your profession? Please view priorities by profession groups below.

The priority of the “**Introduction to Soft Skills for Employees in the Culinary Sector**” module for professional groups are as follows:

HIGH PRIORITY

1. Chefs and Cooking Professionals

HIGH PRIORITY

2. Kitchen Industry Managers / Experts

HIGH PRIORITY

3. Customer Services

HIGH PRIORITY

4. Cleaning staff/Expert



AIMS & OBJECTIVES



The aim of this module is to introduce learners, namely migrants working in the culinary sector, to the basic aspects of “soft” and “intercultural skills” (definition, significance for the contemporary employee & value for the food & tourism industry).

Based on the fact that a successful combination of “hard”/technical and “soft”/cognitive skills can offer better career perspectives and increase employability, this introductory module is designed to create to the learners the desire to further develop their soft/intercultural skills, taking the “Cooking Culture’s” Course, which aspires to contribute to migrants’ both social and labour market integration in the culinary sector.



LEARNING OUTCOMES



Upon completion of this module, the learners will be able to:

LOut1: recall the most critical “soft” and “intercultural” skills and differentiate between “hard” and “soft” skills.

LOut2: evaluate the importance of soft and intercultural skills for both personal growth and professional development.

LOut3: summarize the crucial role of soft and intercultural skills, especially for employees in the culinary sector.



KEYWORDS

- Soft skills
- Intercultural skills
- Culinary Sector
- Personal Growth
- Professional Development



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UNIT 1: INTRODUCTION TO SOFT/INTERCULTURAL SKILLS



Introduction to Soft/Intercultural Skills



We can all agree that whether you have or not a degree or certification in Culinary Arts, it takes dedication, patience and a lot of skills, so as to get the job you desire or reach the peak of your career.

Even if you have all the necessary technical skills (food & beverage preparation skills, kitchen skills - from sanitation, hygiene and first aid to culinary expertise and menu planning- or even business management skills), you should have already understand that without the right personal attributes, the chances of success become small.



Introduction to Soft/Intercultural Skills



This introductory module focuses on the so called “soft skills” and the need to further develop them, so as to put yourself on the right path leading to success in the culinary sector or related professions.

It is a fact that “soft skills” are one of the most crucial things employers are looking for when hiring someone; however these skills aren't part of many educational/training programs.

This module will help you understand what employers really mean when they are asking for “soft skills”, how soft skills can be taught and further developed, as well as the benefits of having as much soft skills as possible before you make an application for a new job. But even if you are already a professional in the field of culinary arts, enhancing your soft skills can only be a benefit to you!



Introduction to Soft/Intercultural Skills



Keep in mind that soft and intercultural skills aren't as easy as learning something technical, but they are prized for many reasons, that will be discussed in this module. The most important is this one: the rewards stay with you for life!

A job might come and go, but when you have developed skills as creativity, time management or stress management skills etc., you can be confident that you'll do great wherever life takes you.

Therefore, it is a great idea to start build your skills for a long career success while pursuing your passion for the food & beverage industry and especially the culinary arts!





UNIT 2: WHAT ARE “SOFT SKILLS”?



2.1 Defining soft skills



An introductory module on soft skills in the culinary sector should first of all define the critical term “skill”.

The “Cooking Culture” EU Project follows ESCO* that applies the same definition of “skill” as the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). According to this definition “skill means the ability to apply knowledge and use know-how to complete tasks and solve problems”.

Following ESCO, skills can be both “practical” or “cognitive”. In the first case, manual dexterity is involved, along with the use of methods, materials, instruments and tools (hard skills). In the second case, logic, intuition and creativity make the difference (soft skills).

* ESCO (European Skills, Competences and Occupations) is the European multilingual classification of Skills, Competences and Occupations.



2.1 Defining soft skills



"Soft skills" is a term often used as a synonym for **"people skills"**, because it has more to do with **"who people are"**, rather than "what they know".

Soft skills, are also referred to as communication skills, transversal, personal or interpersonal skills or even social skills or talents.

According to the UNESCO (2016), *the Soft Skills are patterns of thought, feelings and behaviors that are socially determined and can be developed throughout the lifetime to produce value, being vitally important for the employability and adaptability of people.*



2.1 Defining soft skills



The term describes those personal attributes and character traits and skills that define a person's relationships with other people.

Following the CEDEFOP's definition, *soft skills are cross-cutting across jobs and sectors and relate to both personal competences (e.g. confidence, discipline, self-management) and social competences (e.g. teamwork, communication, emotional intelligence).*



2.2 Soft Skills & Hard Skills



To better understand the definition of “soft skills” we need to compare them with the so called “hard skills”.

If hard skills may **“land a person to a job”**, it is the soft skills that will determine his/her future success.

Soft skills are vitally important for the employability and adaptability of citizens in contemporary societies and most of the times they are interrelated and influence each other.



2.2 Soft Skills & Hard Skills



Hard Skills...

- are practical knowledge that the person has gained through any life experience, including career or education (such as culinary know-how for a chef).
- are teachable abilities, usually obtained through formal education and training programs (e.g. certified culinary training programme or vocational school for cooks).
- refer to a person's technical skill set and ability to successfully perform specific tasks (such as cooking techniques for a baker).
- can be relatively easily evaluated through tests and can be proven through certification (e.g. certificate from a Chef's School or Degree in culinary arts).



2.2 Soft Skills & Hard Skills



Soft Skills...

- are personality traits and habits that shape the way a person works either on his/her own or/and with others.
- are a complement to hard skills and play a vital role in helping employees interact with others and successfully perform their tasks
- refer to a person's character, mindset, motivation and attitude and are broadly applicable across various professions and industries, which is exactly what makes them more valuable.
- are more wide-ranging and that is why it is difficult to be defined, measured and be proven through certification



2.3 Top soft skills for workplace success



- ✓ Communication
- ✓ Empathy
- ✓ Negotiation & Conflict resolution
- ✓ Problem solving
- ✓ Responsibility
- ✓ Self-Motivation
- ✓ Creativity
- ✓ Flexibility & Adaptability
- ✓ Teamwork
- ✓ Working under pressure
- ✓ Time management
- ✓ Work ethic & Integrity
- ✓ Leadership
- ✓ Willingness to learn
- ✓ Decisions making & Decisiveness



2.3 Top soft skills for workplace success



Communication

involves knowing how you should speak to others in different situations or settings.

Related communication skills include active listening, confidence, conflict resolution, public speaking, writing, non-verbal communication (body-language), empathy etc.

Empathy

is closely related to emotional intelligence and it is one's ability to understand someone else's emotions and state of mind. For example, if your colleague has recently experienced a loss, you might feel sadness for his/her situation and you're able to imagine the grief and respond in a sensitive way.



2.3 Top soft skills for workplace success



Negotiation & Conflict resolution

are qualities that allow two or more parties to reach a compromise, to settle disputes and reach agreements. These soft skills include abilities such as persuasion, planning, strategizing and cooperating.

Problem solving

is the ability to define a problem, determine its cause, identify and prioritize alternative solutions and then successfully implement the most appropriate one. Related problem-solving skills include creativity, research, critical analysis, risk management, teamwork, decision-making.



2.3 Top soft skills for workplace success



Responsibility

shows to your supervisors and colleagues that you can be counted on to do your job right and on time and that you hold yourself accountable for the outcomes of your actions. In the workplace, responsibility is required in many areas: job duties, corporate guidelines, security, privacy, etc.

Self-Motivation

is our internal drive that pushes us to achieve our goals both in work and in life, in a broader sense. When we feel ready to quit something or just don't know how to start or how to continue, finding ways to be positive and keep moving forward is self-motivation! Self-motivated employees don't need close supervision!



2.3 Top soft skills for workplace success



Creativity

incorporates many different skills (both “soft” and “hard”), leading employees to find new ways to perform their tasks, improve processes or even “open new ways”. Related skills include curiosity, learning from others, open-mindedness, experimentation etc.

Flexibility & Adaptability

means to have the ability to adjust quickly to new situations and change plans, whenever is needed, overcoming easily stress and difficulties. Being “flexible”, is to bend without breaking!



2.3 Top soft skills for workplace success



Teamwork

means working well with clients, colleagues, managers and other people in your workplace, contributing to the creation of enjoyable environment both for yourself and others. Having teamwork skills is related with the ability to communicate well, actively listen and be responsible and honest.

Working under pressure

involves dealing with difficulties and constraints which are often outside of your control, such as limited time or resources or unforeseen changes. In stressful situations some people perform better while others may panic. It is important that you are aware of how you act under pressure and what you can do to improve your effectiveness.



2.3 Top soft skills for workplace success



Time management

is the ability to manage time effectively and helps you structure your work in a way that allows you to accomplish goals on time. Time management incorporates elements of planning, prioritization and organizational skills.

Work ethic & Integrity

is an attitude of professionalism, determination and commitment toward one's job. It means doing the right things, even if no one is watching, much less your boss/ supervisor!



2.3 Top soft skills for workplace success



Leadership

encompasses strong soft skills that enable leaders to motivate and inspire their teams. The ability to lead successfully often depends on a manager's ability to organise, listen to feedback and incorporate their team's ideas and contributions.

Willingness to learn

expresses your desire and readiness to know new things and to improve yourself.

People hiring for jobs are looking for quick learners who can easily adapt to the company's culture and needs. An applicant who shows enthusiasm and asks about further training, shows his desire for improving his/her professional skills and competencies.



2.3 Top soft skills for workplace success



Decisions making & Decisiveness

show your proficiency in choosing between two or more alternatives and make decisions quickly and effectively. Leader decisiveness is the ability to make clear on-time decisions with the appropriate amount of information.



2.4 The key-role of intercultural skills



Intercultural skills, also often considered as soft skills, play a crucial role in the contemporary global workplace and globalized world we all live in.

In simple words, they are related to the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately with people from different cultural backgrounds.

On the one hand this relates to language, i.e. whether or not we speak a second or maybe even a third language. More importantly though, it's about understanding and accepting that customs, standards, and values differ between cultures, and being willing to learn and adapt to them.



2.4 The key-role of intercultural skills



A research conducted by the British Council (Mulholland, 2013) has revealed that employers and recruitment decision makers at large organisations in nine countries, are looking for employers with intercultural skills, including the following:

- ability to understand different cultural contexts and viewpoints
- demonstrating respect for others
- adapting to different cultural settings
- accepting cultural differences
- speaking foreign languages and
- being open to new ideas and ways of thinking.



2.4 The key-role of intercultural skills



Top indicators of intercultural skills, according to the employers who participated in the survey, are the following:

- strong communication throughout the interview and selection process
- the ability to speak foreign languages
- demonstration of cultural sensitivity in the interview
- experience studying and working overseas





UNIT 3: WHY SHOULD WE HAVE “SOFT SKILLS”?



3.1 The need for skills & qualifications in contemporary societies



As the European Commission underlines:

“The way we work, learn, take part in society and lead our everyday lives is changing with technological developments, global and demographic challenges.

The right skills help individuals to adjust to these changes and ensure their well-being while contributing to society, productivity and economic growth.

Today people need to be equipped with a variety of skills ranging from basic skills, such as literacy, numeracy and digital, to vocational or technical skills as well as entrepreneurial skills and transversal skills, such as foreign languages or personal development and learning to learn”.



3.1 The need for skills & qualifications in contemporary societies



Europe today faces a number of challenges:

- The COVID-19 pandemic has made telework and distance learning a reality for millions of people in the EU, revealing limitations of digital preparedness, while has also negatively impacted job opportunities for many.
- Demographic change requires Europe to draw on all of its talents and diversity. At the same time, it will also generate new job opportunities in the “silver” and care economies, aiming at the satisfaction of consumption, living and health needs of older people.
- Green and digital transitions are reshaping the way we live, work and interact and call for a shift in skill sets to reap their full potential.
- Too many people cannot find a job because they do not have the right skills or they are working in jobs that do not match their talents. One in five Europeans struggle with reading and writing, and even more have poor numeracy and digital skills.
- At the same time, 40% of employers cannot find people with the right skills to fill their vacancies. While everyone should have the chance to upgrade their skills on a regular basis, only 4 in 10 adults take part in learning.



3.2 Why are soft skills important?



- Soft skills are important in all aspects of our life and can have a positive influence on both our personal growth and career development. In fact, more and more businesses are considering soft skills as important as technical/hard skills.
- Soft skills can ensure that we are evolving as personalities and picking up new skills and knowledge that will help us move forward and change for the better.
- The era of “a job for life” is now gone, that is why soft skills and especially the abilities to learn and adapt become increasingly essential.
- Soft skills help you build relationships and solve problems to use your hard skills to their full extent.



3.2 Why are soft skills important?



- Soft skills are a vital part of improving our ability to communicate and work with others, contributing to a healthier and happier life.
- Critical thinking and problem solving can strengthen our personality and ensure that we can make decisions and stand by them.
- Learning time management can help us settle our mind and live a life with less stress.



3.3 Can soft skills can be further developed?



Yes, we all have and we all use soft skills, and the most important is to realize that soft skills can be further developed and “taught”!

In fact, enhancing your soft skills before you seek a new job can help you **“make the difference”** and stand out from other candidates.



3.3 Can soft skills can be further developed?



Useful tips

- **“Know thyself...”**
The first and most important step is to become aware of your “strengths” and “weaknesses” and realize which areas you need to work on yourself and learn to be a better you!
The previous unit explaining basic soft skills can be your guide so as to see which of your “soft skills” need to be improved.
- **Discuss and learn from the others!**
While trying to identify your soft skills, other people’s feedback is always helpful. Discuss with friends, colleagues or even your employer about the soft skills they believe you already have or you need to develop. If they can give you some examples where you have or haven’t used that soft skills effectively, even better!
- **Find a coach or mentor!**
If you are already in a job, coaching or mentoring is a great method to build your soft skills. A good coach (e.g. supervisor, a senior colleague or even your manager or boss) can mentor you and offer motivation, support, feedback and, in general, guide you toward strategies to build soft skills.



3.3 Can soft skills can be further developed?



Useful tips

- **Look for personal development resources!**
Books, articles, videos, or podcasts, can help you strengthen a soft skill you're weak in. Online courses, especially those offered for free by European Projects (like Cooking Cultures!) are another option for learning about soft skills that don't come “naturally” to you.
- **Search for YouTube videos and online courses**, in the language you prefer, using key-words like: “soft skills course” or “personal development course” or “social” or “intercultural” skills. This module can offer many ideas for useful “key-terms”.
- **Check in job portals** and recruiting websites for useful tips, articles and videos focusing on soft skills.



3.3 Can soft skills can be further developed?



Useful tips

- **Popular websites** that offer courses to learn soft skills are Coursera, Open University, Lynda.com, Udemy and edX.
- **Reading articles, books, and asking for advice from chef friends**, is always very helpful as it can offer you “food for thought” when considering your own soft skills, feelings, decisions and actions in the kitchen.
- **Don't forget that you get better with practice!**
You can even have your friends or relatives to help you with that: Let's say you want to get better at negotiating and ask your boss to move you to a different job position.
Ask from a friend to play the role of you boss and practice, asking what you want. Then ask your friend to give you feedback and discuss together ideas about how to improve your proposal.



3.3 Can soft skills can be further developed?



Useful tips

- **Some EU funded projects**, offering free courses and related material on soft skills (in various languages) are:
 - <https://softskills4.eu>
 - <https://skillsmatch.eu>
 - <https://ulisseproject.eu>
 - <http://icaro-softskills.eu>
 - <https://jiminy.erasmus.site>
 - <http://www.understandingmyjourney.eu>



3.3 Can soft skills can be further developed?



Useful tips

- **New Europass**
If you want to benefit from an innovative and user-friendly platform to manage your career from a lifelong perspective, you should visit the new Europass website <https://europa.eu/europass>. Europass is valuable if you want to create a professional CV/Resume or right a cover letter.
- Current services are offered in multiple languages and can help you, after creating a “profile”, to record skills, qualifications, interests and experiences, while there are also tailored suggestions of courses and jobs. This information also include links to national services to support finding jobs and learning opportunities.





UNIT 4: THE IMPORTANCE OF “SOFT SKILLS” IN THE CULINARY SECTOR



4.1 The culinary sector as part of the tourism industry



- The culinary sector is *an integral part of tourism and hospitality*, a labour intensive industry that involves a high degree of customer contact.
- Therefore, personal interaction and intercultural skills -or soft skills in general- are essential to anyone who wants to be a successful professional in the field.



4.1 The culinary sector as part of the tourism industry



- **Tourism, hospitality & the culinary sector**

are considered as a “people” business, both from the internal business point of view and from the external customer perspective.

- **Interaction with customers & colleagues**

Many jobs in the sector involve direct customer contact with people from all over the world, such as serving, welcoming or managing a restaurant. However, all the posts related to culinary arts work together as a team to create a pleasant experience for all customers.

- **Variety of posts**

The culinary sector includes from food preparation to table preparation and from event planning to cleaning, reception, and everything in between. "Back of house" restaurant or catering employees prepare and present food or clean dishes, while "front of house" workers welcome and interact with customers.



4.1 The culinary sector as part of the tourism industry



- **Mobility in the tourism sector**

Nearly one in six people employed in tourism-related industries, including the culinary sector, are foreign citizens.

- **Teamwork is the key**

To be successful in the tourism field and especially in the culinary sector, you need to function effectively as member of a –most of the times multicultural team – whether as a leader or a participant.



4.1 The culinary sector as part of the tourism industry



- According to Eurostat statistics (2017), on average, foreign citizens account for 16% of the labour force in tourism industries (of which 9% are from other EU Member States and 7% are from non-EU countries). In the services sector as a whole, the proportion of foreign citizens employed is 11%.

In four EU Member States, more than one in four people employed in the tourism industries are foreign citizens: Cyprus (26%), Ireland (29%), Austria (29%) and Luxembourg (61%).



4.2 The need for soft skills in a kitchen's environment



- The culinary sector and the food industry involve a variety of positions, including kitchen, server, front and back-of-house careers.
- Being, for example, a great chef takes a lot more than excellent technical culinary skills.

Chefs are leaders and in order to succeed as leaders, they need to develop soft skills that facilitate communication and help them build a strong team, able to work effectively under a stressful, but at the same time, creative working environment.

Let's take a look at some of the reasons that a chef needs to develop specific soft skills, along with their culinary education, according to the *ECPI University's Culinary Institute of Virginia*.



4.2 The need for soft skills in a kitchen's environment



- **You need to be a successful “intermediate”**
Management has to worry about attracting guests and keeping the establishment profitable. The kitchen staff has to worry about cooking the food. You, as a chef, have to worry about both and have to do your job with the best interests of both sides in mind.
- **You have to learn to take criticism well**
Chefs, and all people working in the kitchen, must learn to take criticism for what it is: potentially useful information, not a personal or professional attack. Listening to people will win you a lot of friends, but it is crucial to learn how to tell the difference between constructive criticism and mean-spirited comments.



4.2 The need for soft skills in a kitchen's environment



- **You must keep things running smoothly**
The kitchen is a stressful working environment. Emotions run high and this will either encourage a strong sense of unity among the team or will lead to tensions, conflicts, and people quitting in frustration. Chefs, except from time management, ought to make sure that personal problems won't spill over into the workplace.
- **You should be “cool” and decisive under pressure (at the same time!)**
Angry chefs make good TV, but unless you are already famous, try to avoid it! Keeping your stress levels down will make you a better leader, a happier person and a more employable chef. In addition, if you have a good culinary intuition and can make the right decision without spending much time, you can become the perfect chef!



4.3 How can you practice your soft skills in your everyday work?



Any time you interact with your boss,
a co-worker or a customer, you use (or you don't!) your soft skills to make
the interaction more efficient and your work easier.

Do you organize and delegate work to
others or motivate your co-workers to give
the best they can? Then your leadership
skills are in action!



Are you able to adapt yourself easily to the workplace
culture? Can you display suitable behaviours and be
culturally sensitive and appropriate in a multicultural
workplace? This is something difficult to be taught but
if it sounds easy to you, you are already practicing
work ethic and intercultural skills!

If you can make correct decisions in the moment
without running everything by your manager,
then your decision-making and problem-solving
skills are helping you!



4.3 How can you practice your soft skills in your everyday work?



Do you have a positive attitude? Well this is one of the most desirable soft skills for workplaces such kitchen, simply because it suggests that you are resilient, creative, and adaptable.



In the culinary sector and generally in the tourism industry, employers look for individuals who are reliable and dependable. Do you always show up on time to scheduled shifts or are you arrive a little bit late?



Do you follow instructions by your supervisors? Being a respectful employee is very important when working in the culinary sector. Don't forget that this workplace is highly hierarchical, so it's no surprise that employers appreciate respect as a soft skill.



How clearly do you communicate with your co-workers and your staff, especially if you are a Chef or a manager? Effective communication is the most valuable tool in the kitchen.

4.3 How can you practice your soft skills in your everyday work?



In order to succeed in the culinary sector you have to be open to constant learning. Attending this course, definitely proves your will! We all know that practice does make perfect and this applies to both “soft” and “hard” skills! Therefore, your willingness to learn should be shown not only in your CV, through your trainings etc. but also in your daily work.



How do you feel about having your busiest working days when other people are out celebrating? New Year’s Eve, Valentine’s Day, National Holidays, just to name a few. If you love it, because you have a real desire to be the one who makes other people’s festive dining experiences special, that means that you have genuine passion for your work! And this is also a kind of a soft skill that can move you forward! Protecting and encouraging your passion is important!



Do you work clean and tidy? Do you agree with “staying organised means to stay in control”? And what about being multitasking? If, for example, as a chef, you are able to think about everything at once, and understand and know what each section of the kitchen is working on, you are already more valuable than you think!



4.3 How can you practice your soft skills in your everyday work?



Are you able to work well with people of different generations and cultural/national backgrounds? If yes, that means that you are generally more productive and better able to focus on common priorities.



Can you think of a time when your kitchen was dealt a sticky situation and you effectively resolved it? If yes, that means that you have used your creativity, critical thinking and experience!

Don't forget to highlight this skill by listing examples in the case of an interview for a new job.



4.3 How can you practice your soft skills in your everyday work?



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Synopsis



Having completed this module, you should have already understand that some professions like working in the culinary sector, food & beverage industry and/or tourism are synonymous with soft skills and intercultural skills; However, everyone has and everyone uses soft skills regardless of their job and the most important is that these skills can be –and should be– further developed!

Now that you have completed this module, you should be able to:

- give a definition of “soft skills”, differentiating them from “hard skills”
- explain why soft skills are vital assets for a contemporary employee
- clarify the importance of soft and intercultural skills for the culinary sector.



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