



THE PROFESSIONAL PROFILE OF THE EUROPEAN GUIDANCE COUNSELLOR

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Premise

What is a kit

The kit is a package of information, documents and instruments structured in such a way as to provide, on the one hand, a panorama at the European level regarding the contents of the theme dealt with, and on the other hand offer readers a series of points for reflection and consideration to broaden their own professional activities towards a prospect of European orientation.

What it does

The kit is intended to promote awareness of the theme and develop knowledge among operators working in a European dimension, stimulating networking and reciprocal interchange at local and international levels. The kit is an instrument for widespread dissemination of thematic contents, and in this sense must promote awareness of products or documents already available at the European or national level.

Who it is for

The kit is aimed at operators on the local level who are called upon to provide guidance in a European dimension. The language should thus be as simple and clear as possible.

How to use it

The kit can be consulted as a product for self-updating on the theme or, in a perspective that is more coherent with the project's aims, as an instrument to support activities of dissemination. In this sense it lends itself to group work, with open questions and proposals for further study.

How it was developed

The kit is the product of an international work group that discussed the theme and attempted to develop a synthesis of the key questions that might be of common interest for all operators, precisely from the viewpoint of always working within a European dimension. Thus, it is not proposed as a complete and exhaustive document with regard to the theme, but as an initial element to stimulate further contributions, discussions and inquiry in a perspective of constantly increasing sharing of themes among European operators.

How it is organized

The kit is organized by key concepts, which represent the synthesis of elements of debate that emerged in the course of the international workshop. Linked to each key concept are open questions that represent points of investigation and awareness for operators, who will find in the last part of the kit a series of proposals, documents, instruments, good practices and other useful references. The kit proposes information and elements of international comparison aimed at developing a "European" point of view with respect to the theme and a greater awareness of the European dimension of guidance on the part of operators.

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The professional profile of the European guidance counsellor

One European Lifelong Guidance System?

Career guidance plays a key role in helping labour markets work and education systems meet their goals. It also promotes equity: recent evidence suggests that social mobility relies on wider acquisition not just of knowledge and skills, but of an understanding about how to use them. In this context, the mission of career guidance is widening, to become part of life-long learning¹.

In recent policy documents, both the EU Commission and the OECD have focused on career guidance and information as key policy areas in terms of life-long learning, and economic and social development. Key EU documents include the *Memorandum on Lifelong Learning* (EU Commission, 2000), which explicitly points to guidance as one of 6 central policy areas, opening an avenue for not merely life-long learning, but also life-wide learning.

Life-long and life-wide guidance are closely related to these learning concepts: modern, highly individualised career paths call for and build upon personal (long, wide, and certainly in-depth) guidance, tutoring, mentoring, coaching and counselling.

The OECD, in turn, in its report *From Initial Education to Working Life - Making Transitions Work* (OECD, 2000), pointed out the fact that national economies and, indeed, the global economy are decisive factors in creating smooth transitions from education to work, but the OECD also included information and career guidance as key factors.

At the moment, we cannot speak about a single *European Lifelong Guidance System*, because in many EU countries there are a variety of services offered to clients by different types of professionals, involving different activities, clients, and types of training.

See Annex 1 – some National Guidance Systems

The European Commission's Expert Group on Lifelong Guidance has already defined a set of common aims and principles for lifelong guidance provision agreed under the auspices of the European Union's Education and Training 2010 work programme.

The development of common aims and principles for lifelong guidance provision at the European level to support national policy and systems development was recommended in the Interim Report "Education and Training 2010" of the European Council (Education/Youth) and the European Commission (2004) and was noted in the May 2004 Council Resolution (Education/Youth) on strengthening policies, systems and practices for lifelong guidance in Europe. The Resolution prioritised the centrality of the individual/learner in the provision of such services, and the needs to (i) refocus services to develop individuals' career competency, (ii) widen access to services and (iii) improve the quality of the services².

The principles for guidance provision that follow are grouped according to those priorities.

1. What Does Lifelong Guidance Mean?

¹ OECD 2003 - Education Policy Analysis

² Career Guidance: A Handbook For Policy Makers – ISBN – 9264015191 © OECD/ European Communities 2004

Guidance refers to a range of activities that enable citizens of any age, and at any point in their lives, to:

- identify their capacities, competencies and interests;
- make meaningful educational, training and occupational decisions;
- and manage their individual life paths in learning, work and other settings in which these capacities and competencies are learned and or used.

Guidance is provided in a range of settings: education, training, employment, community, and private.

2. Aims

Guidance aims to:

- Enable **citizens** to manage and plan their learning and work pathways in accordance with their life goals, relating their competencies and interests to education, training and labour market opportunities and to self-employment, thus contributing to their personal fulfilment;
- Assist **educational and training institutions** to have well motivated pupils, students and trainees who take responsibility for their own learning and set their own goals for achievement;
- Assist **enterprises and organisations** to have well-motivated, employable and adaptable staff, capable of accessing and benefiting from learning opportunities both within and outside the workplace;
- Provide **policymakers** with an important means to achieve a wide range of public policy goals;
- Support local, regional, national and European **economies** through workforce development and adaptation to changing economic demands and social circumstances;
- Assist in the development of **societies** in which citizens actively contribute to their social, democratic and sustainable development.

3. Principles of Guidance Provision

The following principles underlie the provision of guidance:

Centrality of the beneficiary

- **Independence** – the guidance provided respects the citizen/user's freedom of career choice and personal development;
- **Impartiality** – the guidance provided is in accordance with the citizen's interests only, is not influenced by provider, institutional and funding interests, and does not discriminate on the basis of gender, age, ethnicity, social class, qualifications, ability etc;
- **Confidentiality** – citizens have a right to maintain the privacy of personal information they provide in the guidance process;
- **Equal opportunities** – the guidance provided promotes equal opportunities in learning and work for all citizens;
- **Holistic approach** – the personal, social, cultural and economic context of a citizen's decision making is valued in the guidance provided.

Enabling citizens

- **Active involvement** – guidance is a collaborative activity between the citizen and the provider and other significant actors (e.g. learning providers, enterprises, family members, community interests) and builds on the active involvement of the citizen;
- **Empowerment** – the guidance provided assists citizens to become competent at planning and managing their learning and career paths and the transitions therein.

Improving access

- **Transparency** – the nature of the guidance service(s) provided is immediately apparent to the citizen;
- **Friendliness and empathy** – guidance staff provide a welcoming atmosphere for the citizens;
- **Continuity** – the guidance provided supports citizens through the range of learning, work, societal and personal transitions they undertake and/or encounter;
- **Availability** – all citizens have a right to access guidance services at any point in their lives;

- **Accessibility** – the guidance provided is accessible in a flexible and user-friendly way such as face to face, telephone, e-mail, outreach, and is available at times and in places that suit citizens' needs;
- **Responsiveness** – guidance is provided through a wide range of methods to meet the diverse needs of citizens.

Assuring quality

- **Appropriateness of guidance methods** – the guidance methods used have a theoretical and/or scientific basis, relevant to the purpose for which they are used;
- **Continuous improvement** – guidance services have a culture of continuous improvement involving regular citizen feedback and provide continuous training opportunities for staff;
- **Right of redress** – citizens have an entitlement to complain through a formal procedure if they deem the guidance they have received to be unsatisfactory;
- **Competent staff** – staff providing guidance have nationally accredited competencies to identify and address the citizen's needs, and where appropriate, to refer the citizen to more suitable provider/service.

4. European Union Policy Goals that Lifelong Guidance contributes to

Lifelong guidance assists policymakers in Europe to achieve a number of common policy goals:

- **Efficient investment in education and training:** Increasing the rates of participation in and of completion of education and training through improved matching of individuals' interests and abilities with learning opportunities;
- **Labour market efficiency:** Improving work performance and motivation and rates of job retention, reducing time spent in job search and time spent unemployed through improved matching of individuals' competencies and interests with work and career development opportunities, through raising awareness of current and future employment and learning opportunities, including self employment and entrepreneurship, and through geographical and occupational mobility;
- **Lifelong learning:** Facilitating personal development and employability of all citizens through continuous engagement with education and training, assisting them to find their way through increasingly diversified but linked learning pathways, to identify their transferable skills, and to validate their non-formal and informal learning;
- **Social inclusion:** Assisting the educational, social and economic integration and reintegration of all citizens and groups, especially those who have difficulties in accessing and understanding information about learning and work, leading to social inclusion, active citizenship and to a reduction in long-term unemployment and poverty cycles;
- **Social equity:** Assisting citizens to overcome gender, ethnic, age, disability, social class and institutional barriers to learning and work;
- **Economic development:** Supporting higher work participation rates and enhancing the upskilling of the workforce for the knowledge-based economy and society.

* * *

Can guidance facilitate mobility?

As we can see, the importance of the European dimension of guidance is widely recognised. There is, of course, another key role that a European lifelong guidance system can play: career guidance may facilitate European mobility.

In Europe, one of the purposes of the Single European Market is to increase personal mobility within the European Union. Guidance counsellors have a very important role in supporting their clients in developing the mobility process.

Freedom of movement for individuals is one of the founding principles of the European Union, going hand in hand with the promotion of economic and social progress, the generations of a high level of employment, and the achievement of balanced and sustainable development. It is inseparable from the

creation of an area without internal frontiers, and the strengthening of economic and social cohesion and active citizenship.

The Commission's Action Plan on Skills and Mobility (COM(2002)72) is designed to further the principle of freedom of movement for workers, underscore the importance of labour market mobility in advancing the Employment Strategy, and open up the European labour markets so that they are accessible for all.

Greater labour force mobility, both between jobs (occupational mobility) and within and between countries (geographic mobility), will contribute to meeting all of these objectives, by enabling the European economy, employment and labour force to adapt to changing circumstances more smoothly and efficiently, and to drive change in a competitive global economy. Equipping human resources with the skills needed to address multifaceted challenges is an integral part of the change process. The rapid rate of change and development makes it necessary to constantly acquire and enhance knowledge and skills throughout one's life. Lifelong learning is one of the foundations for lifelong employability. Working and/or studying in another country may, in addition, be an enriching experience that helps to develop important trans-national competencies. A greater degree of mobility between Member States will also foster closer political integration in the EU.

According to the November 2003 European Commission progress report "Mobility and European Co-operation", *"the promotion of trans-national mobility for learning purposes contributes to the feeling of belonging to Europe and to the development of a European conscience and makes it possible to improve professional and personal skills and therefore the competitiveness of the European economy with respect to the rest of the world. Mobility also has the potential for helping people to gain the confidence and skills to live together in multiethnic and multi-lingual societies – both in Europe as a whole and also within their own countries"*.

Efforts to support geographic mobility need to be combined with measures to expand occupational mobility in order to provide openings for workers to move between sectors and regions.

Guidance practitioners can facilitate mobility in Europe in a very effective way:

- Giving good and updated information about educational, training and employment trends and the labour market in European countries;
- Having access to actual job offers in Europe;
- Having helpful information about social circumstances (working and living conditions) in other European countries;
- Assisting clients in their decision making process;
- Helping clients to develop the right strategy for applying to a job;
- Having good information about CV standards in other European countries;
- Giving information about possible financial aid during the job seeking process;
- Giving information about cultural differences.

Their first aim is to make their clients aware of the opportunities available to them. In many EU countries some mobility programmes are under-subscribed and many clients are unaware of the opportunities available to them. Thus, the guidance counsellor can play an important role in promoting and highlighting the benefits of such opportunities as SOCRATES-ERASMUS, LEONARDO and Youth For Europe.

Guidance Counsellors also play a very important role in supporting their clients in developing the mobility process. It is essential that clients going to live, work, train or study in another country are given all relevant information and guidance to support them in undertaking their mobility project. This includes an evaluation and discussion as to whether moving abroad is the right option for an individual, for example, regarding issues such as whether language skills are of a sufficiently high standard, and whether individuals' plans meet with their own long-term objectives.

The professional profile of the European guidance counsellor

Key Concepts

This kit is the result of the international work group for the ERGOINNET project, which discussed the theme during the Munich Meeting (November 2004) and developed a synthesis of 3 key concepts that might be of common interest for all operators, precisely from the viewpoint of constantly working within a European dimension.

The key concepts are:

1. **THE PRACTITIONER'S ROLE**
2. **SKILLS**
3. **TRAINING and NETWORKING**

THE PRACTITIONER'S ROLE

The role of career guidance is to help people reflect on their ambitions, interests, qualifications and abilities. Guidance helps them to understand the labour market and educational systems, and to relate this information to what they know about themselves. Comprehensive career guidance tries to teach people to plan and make decisions about work and learning. Career guidance makes information about the labour market and about educational opportunities more accessible by organising it, systematising it, and making it available when and where people need it.

However, in most EU countries today, career guidance is provided by people with a very wide range of training and qualifications. Some are specialists; some are not. Some have had extensive, and expensive, training; others have had very little³.

There are wide variations both among and within EU countries in terms of the extent and nature of the training required to practise as guidance workers. In some sectors, including the private sector, there are no formal requirements. In general, requirements are more formal in the school sector than elsewhere. In most countries there is no mutual recognition of guidance qualifications between the education and labour market sectors, and no facility for progression from non-expert to expert guidance worker status. The development of progression paths might lead to more consistency in the services clients receive, and assist the development of more seamless guidance provision for clients within and across the education, training and employment sectors⁴.

There are wide differences in the patterns of training and staff development among Member States, partly because of differences in the professional identities of those occupying guidance roles: in some cases they are defined basically as psychologists, in some as teachers, in some as labour market administrators, and in some as guidance specialists.

The professional profile of the guidance practitioner has never been regulated in many countries and, consequently, this professional profile is not recognised at a national level. This is due mainly, in many cases, to the lack of a national law and subsequently a national framework where guidance counselling could formally find its own space.

In some countries public institutions or private organisations try to regulate this professional profile: the German Association of Career Counsellors (dvb) maintains a Directory of Certified Career Counsellors. This directory is seen as important to ensure the transparency to clients of the formal competencies of guidance practitioners. The Institute of Career Guidance in the UK also now maintains a Register of Guidance Practitioners.

The most important association of guidance counsellors is the IAEVG - International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (www.aiosp.org).

See Annex 2 - The professional profile of the guidance practitioner in some EU countries

In order to meet the needs and demands of European clients and to promote and facilitate mobility, guidance is called upon to operate in a new European dimension.

With regard to mobility in the EU, the immediate reference is to the EURES - European Employment Services (<http://europa.eu.int/eures/home.jsp>) as well as to Euroguidance (<http://www.euroguidance.org.uk/>), the network of Leonardo National Resource Centres for Vocational Guidance (NRCVG).

³ OECD 2003 - Education Policy Analysis

⁴ J. Mc Carthy - The Skills, Training And Qualifications Of Guidance Workers – OECD November 2001

EURES (EUROpean Employment Services) brings together the European Commission and the public employment services of the countries belonging to the European Economic Area and Switzerland. Other regional and national bodies concerned with employment issues are also included, such as trade unions, employers' organisations, and local and regional authorities.

The purpose of the EURES network is to provide services for the benefit of workers and employers as well as any citizen wishing to benefit from the principle of the free movement of persons. This involves three types of service provision: information, advice and recruitment/placement (job-matching). The EURES network comprises the EURES members (the national public employment services and the European Commission) and, within the framework of EURES cross-border partnerships, EURES partners such as trade unions, employers' organisations, and local and regional authorities. In the context of the European employment strategy, the mobility of workers is not only a fundamental right, but also a tool to help the labour market adapt to developments. EURES is playing an increasing role in identifying surpluses and deficits of manpower in different sectors, and in overcoming qualification bottlenecks.

EURES works as a network of advisers to provide the information required by job-seekers and employers through personal contacts. There are more than 500 EURES advisers across Europe: they are trained specialists who provide the three basic EURES services of information, guidance and placement to both job-seekers and employers interested in the European job market. They have developed specialised expertise in practical, legal and administrative matters relating to mobility. For small and medium-sized businesses looking for specific know-how, Europe can offer opportunities which are sometimes difficult to make the best use of; EURES can offer such businesses a personalised service to access the potential workers available on the European labour market.

Often, EURES advisers are specialists in the labour market at the national and cross-border levels, but are not necessarily also guidance counsellors. They work within a given country's public employment service, or within other partner organisations in the EURES network.

The **Euroguidance** network has been established by the European Commission and links the NRCVGs - National Resource Centres for Vocational Guidance - to promote mobility throughout Europe.

This network of 65 specialist centres throughout 31 European countries supports the guidance community and promotes good practice and developments within European guidance. Funded by the Leonardo Programme, each Euroguidance Centre acts as the NRCVG - National Resource Centre for Vocational Guidance in its home country.

The NRCVGs, which exist in all EU and EEA Member States and many Central and Eastern European Countries, act as links among the each country's guidance services, exchanging information about work, study and training opportunities throughout Europe.

The Euroguidance network contributes to the development of **PLOTEUS**, the Portal on Learning Opportunities throughout the European Space (<http://europa.eu.int/ploteus/portal/>).

One of the tasks of the Commission is a better operational integration between Eures and Euroguidance, in order to ensure proper management and exchange of information in all the European countries.

While the problem of information could be solved in a short time, with the support of ICT, the development of a European guidance system is now the most difficult task, because of the great differences among national guidance systems.

In many EU regions information and guidance concerning mobility in Europe are not available at a local level. In some countries people can find well-trained advisors, while in other countries clients can find only general information at the local level.

See Annex 3 - Information and guidance concerning mobility in Europe

Who can offer guidance in a European dimension?

This is one of the open questions. The problem of the role and the functions of the European guidance counsellor is yet to be defined.

On the one hand, every guidance practitioner should be able to give general and basic information about study and work possibilities in Europe. Everyone should know the most important facts about mobility in Europe and should be able to have access to websites that provide very good, detailed information about mobility issues, because an increasing number of clients need help in making such decisions. Guidance practitioners should be familiar with these information tools and should be able to use them.

On the other hand, specialists are needed to provide deeper, more specific and individualized information and counselling to more actively assist clients in realizing their mobility aims in Europe and developing personal and individual strategies for their specific situations. Mobility issues in Europe are quite complex (i.e. recognition of titles and degrees, information about social systems, labour markets) and it is impossible for general guidance counsellors to be well-informed about all of these subjects.

The risk is that the majority of specialist advice and information on European opportunities might not be directly available to the public. For example, the Euroguidance Resource Centres are often not open to the public, because they operate by providing a support service to guidance counsellors at the national level.

This is why it should be important that all guidance counsellors in Europe be able to offer advice and guidance on mobility issues and be able to make their clients aware of the opportunities available to them. However, while it may be difficult to estimate exactly how many advisers in Europe feel competent to do so and consider it an important part of their job, it will be strategically important to develop guidance in a European dimension to promote the informing and training of guidance counsellors at the European level. Some have suggested that an initial training on mobility in Europe should be compulsory for any guidance practitioner, to ensure that clients be made aware of mobility as a possibility for their further learning and professional routes.

Incidentally, until mobility becomes an easy and common experience for all people in Europe, we will need European mobility specialists to help people moving from one country to another to make good decisions and plan their experiences abroad with the support of correct information.

At the moment, good connections and cooperation between generalists and specialists is very important to promote guidance at any level (contacts, information tools, workshops, easy communication possibilities by phone, mail or personal meetings). For example, the Euroguidance network provides training, information and a telephone support service with the aim of improving the knowledge and expertise of guidance counsellors across Europe.

As we wait for the creation of a common profile for the guidance practitioner working at the European level, it could be useful to spread these ideas among the "European guidance community", using the tools of the ERGOINNET project.

Some open questions...

How can we define a common profile for the guidance practitioner working at the European level ?

How can we improve awareness and motivations of guidance counsellors' awareness of and motivations regarding the fact of working in a European dimension?

Why is so important to promote mobility?

How can we help people to plan international training and work experiences abroad?

...

SKILLS

Like many services, the quality of career guidance depends overall on the professionalism of the staff. At the moment, we do not have a European quality system for guidance services and there is no common set of skills that identify the *European guidance counsellor*, because in many EU countries there are a variety of services offered to clients by different types of professionals, involving different activities, clients, and types of training.

Some examples of quality guidelines/standards aimed at guidance professionals are found in the Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners (see www.career-devguidelines.org). They cover Core Competencies and Areas of Specialisation, all based on a Code of Ethics⁵.

In this document, Core Competencies are defined as 'the skills, knowledge and attitudes common to all career development practitioners, regardless of their employment setting'. In some work settings core competencies may be sufficient to deliver the range of services provided. Other work settings may require service providers with competency in one or more specialised areas.

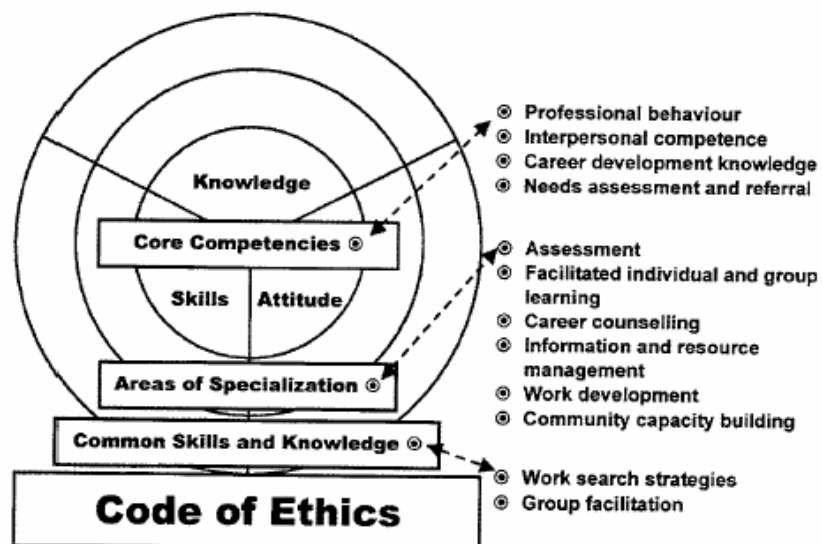


Figure 1. Competency Model for Career Development Standards and Guidelines

Some of the Canadian considerations (summarised in Figure 1) are:

1. People working in career development practice need to demonstrate certain *attitudes*. They need to be:
 - insightful
 - honest
 - open-minded
 - results-oriented.
2. People working in career development practice need to have certain *skills*. They need to:
 - document client interactions and progress
 - accommodate diversity
 - collect, analyse and use information
 - convey information clearly when speaking and writing.

⁵ Peter Plant - Quality In Careers Guidance - OECD November 2001

3. People working in career development practice need to have certain *knowledge*. They need to know:
 - career development models and theories
 - the change process, transition stages, and career cycles
 - components of the career planning process
 - the major organisations and resources for career development and community services.
4. People working in career development practice need to be guided by a code of *ethical* behaviour.

The core and speciality areas are equally valued. There is no hierarchy intended between core and speciality or among the specialisations. No area is seen as more or less important than any other. All competency areas are important in providing comprehensive career development services. Currently, six main areas of specialisation have been identified:

- Assessment
- Facilitated Individual and Group Learning
- Career Counselling
- Information and Resource Management
- Work Development
- Community Capacity Building

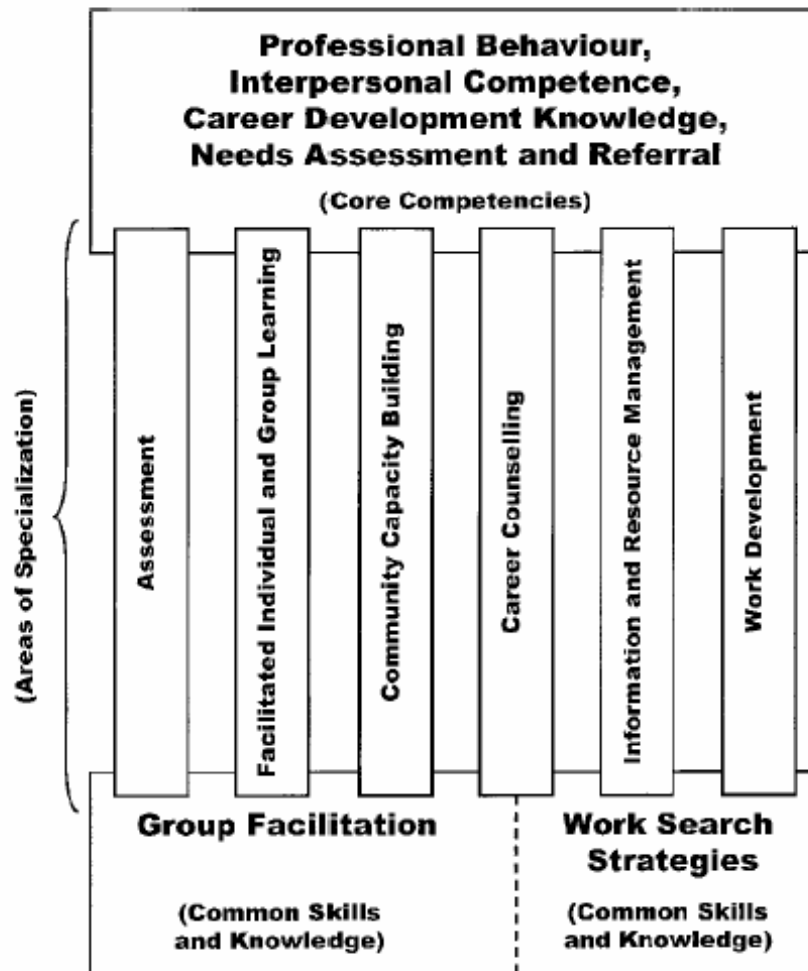


Figure 2. Relationship between Core Competencies, Areas of Specialization and Common Skills and Knowledge

All career development practitioners will need to have a certain number of basic competencies in all six areas of specialisation. Figure 2 illustrates how this relationship might look. The figure presents each specialisation as identical in size, to emphasise that they are all equally important in providing comprehensive services. In practice, however, it is likely that the extent to which the areas of specialisation extend into the core will vary across specialisations. It is also likely that the different specialisations will require varying amounts of competencies, and probably different types and/or amounts of training and experience to be able to demonstrate the competencies. More specific indicators are often used to clarify and differentiate specific skills or competencies.

Is a competence framework possible?

The Canadian example of the Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners provides a framework within which a variety of roles can be identified. It has been developed through a careful process of consultation and consensus-building.

The framework outlines a number of core competencies which all career development practitioners need to have, regardless of their employment setting. It also includes a range of specialised competencies, the need for which will vary according to the nature of the service being provided, the type of work setting, and the client groups that are being served. The framework is being field-tested in a wide variety of settings to assess how it might be used. The Canadian framework has strongly influenced the international standards developed by the International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (www.aiosp.org), which provide a useful reference point for such processes in other countries.

The quality standards and consequently the skills of the guidance practitioners are products of international and cross-sectoral efforts. Especially in the fragmented field of career guidance and counselling, with so many actors and stakeholders, a European framework of quality and skills should be a product of a high and broad participative process.

See Annex 4 - skills, training and qualifications of guidance practitioners in different countries

The IAEVG also defined a set of core competencies together with 10 specialisations. The core competencies include:

- Ethical behaviour and professional conduct
- Advocacy and leadership
- Intercultural awareness
- Ability to apply theory and research to practice
- Ability to communicate effectively
- Ability to design, implement and evaluate guidance programmes
- Awareness of one's professional limitations
- Ability to use computers
- Ability to co-operate in a team of professionals
- Knowledge of the lifelong career development process.

The 10 specialisations are:

- Assessment
- Educational guidance
- Career development
- Counselling
- Information management
- Consultation and co-ordination
- Research and evaluation
- Programme and services management
- Community capacity building
- Placement.

Some associations of trainers and practitioners have set out what they consider to be good practices in the curriculum of the initial training of guidance workers. Focus is often placed on ethical standards.

See Annex 5 – IAVEG Ethical Standards

Some open questions...

What are the key skills of a European guidance counsellor?

Which of these skills do you think you have to improve to work in a European dimension?

What do you think about "ethical standards"? Are they more or less important than professional skills?

What do you think about motivations? Are they important to offer guidance in a European dimension?

...

TRAINING and NETWORKING

There are wide variations both among and within countries in terms of the extent and nature of the training required to practise as guidance workers⁶.

Governments have been largely inactive in defining the content and process of initial training for career guidance practitioners, and in relating these to the goals for public education, training and employment policies. As a result, trainers and practitioner associations have developed training programmes quite divorced from public policy objectives. National reviews of training for career guidance practitioners take place very infrequently or not at all.

Significant differences occur in the quality and types of career guidance services that users experience both within and among countries, due to significant variations in the training of career guidance practitioners.

Too often, qualifications in related fields (for example, psychology or pedagogy) are regarded as sufficient for career guidance practitioners, even though such qualifications have little or nothing to do with career guidance competencies.

There is huge variation in the length of initial training programmes, which range from three weeks to five years. Much of the very brief training that is provided is inadequate to develop the knowledge and skills needed for the job. On the other hand, only a minority of users require longer training programs available to develop skills to provide in-depth career intervention and psychological counselling.

In many European countries, there are not enough well-trained career guidance practitioners to meet demand. In most countries there are no graded and integrated learning pathways that enable guidance workers to progress from non-expert to expert status.

Training programmes are still heavily based upon developing skills to provide assistance in one-to-one interviews. However, psychological testing now receives a reduced emphasis in many countries as counselling theories have moved from an emphasis upon the practitioner as expert to seeing practitioners as facilitators of individual choice and development.

There are many gaps in the content of training programmes. These include: skills in ICT use; training for support staff; skills for delivering career education through the curriculum; knowledge of labour market changes; the international dimension of guidance; and how to organise and manage services⁷.

There is a great need to develop high quality training programmes that combine classroom-based learning with practical skills development and on-the-job experience. It is not only a question of initial training for new generations of guidance counsellors; it is also important to create international training and qualifications pathways to enable European career guidance practitioners to progress from non-expert to expert roles.

Training programmes should also improve the use of distance learning and ICT to make training more accessible. Distance education should also deliver recurrent training for guidance workers at a European level.

The idea of the creation of a real European "Master" on this specific issue of mobility should be promoted by the European guidance community. The master course should be offered as a distance course combined with some international meetings for participants. The course should be available even for experienced counsellors who do not have the opportunity to stop working and dedicate themselves to full-time study.

For example, the University of East London offers a Postgraduate Diploma in Career Guidance that can be undertaken by those with a recognised university degree or equivalent. It can be completed either in one year full-time or in two to three years part-time. It trains people to work with a range of client groups. Successful completion can satisfy requirements for membership in the Institute of Career Guidance (ICG). The course covers guidance theory and practice, equal opportunities (including strategies to promote

⁶ J. Mc Carthy - The Skills, Training And Qualifications Of Guidance Workers – OECD November 2001

⁷ Career Guidance: A Handbook For Policy Makers – © OECD/ European Communities 2004

equal opportunities in a career guidance context), organisational change and development (including examination of a guidance agency in the framework of organisation theory and change management), labour market studies, and education systems and practice. This model of training could be offered at a European level in cooperation with other universities or international guidance counsellors associations. Another good example of training opportunities in a lifelong learning perspective is the Academia Project, funded by the LEONARDO programme, which provides two-week placements for Guidance Counsellors in other European countries.

As we can see, the development of quality standards and training in the field of guidance can not be promoted without a wide use of the European networks. Networking is a key skill for guidance practitioners, but also an approach to managing complex problems at the European level. Euroguidance, the network of the NRCVG - National Resource Centres for Vocational Guidance, can be taken as a best practice example of a European network, because it simultaneously promotes ideas, information, guidance tools, training opportunities for counsellors, mobility throughout Europe, and an active and professional community of guidance counsellors.

In particular, Euroguidance promotes a very important project, called GUIDENET, to create a new trans-national network aimed at identifying new and innovative practises in guidance and facilitating information and best practices exchange among European counsellors.

To promote networking, we provide a list of useful resources for guidance practitioners working in a European dimension.

See Annex 6 – Useful References

Some open questions ...

How kind of training do you think could be useful for European guidance counsellors?

How can we facilitate access to European guidance resources?

How can we improve the quality of European guidance services?

Such as:

- networks
- Internet platforms
- information
- methods
- training

How do you think the project ERGO IN NET could help you to give/promote guidance in a European dimension?

...

The professional profile of the European guidance counsellor

Proposal for national dissemination

Some open questions ...

ROLE

How can we define a common profile for the guidance practitioner working at the European level?

How can we improve guidance counsellor awareness and motivations with regard to working in a European dimension?

Why is it so important to promote mobility?

How can we help people to plan international training and work experiences abroad?

...

SKILLS

What are the key skills of a European guidance counsellor?

Which of these skills do you think you have to improve to work in a European dimension?

What do you think about "ethical standards"? Are they more or less important than professional skills?

What do you think about motivations? Are they important for offering guidance in a European dimension?

...

TRAINING AND NETWORKING

What kind of training do you think could be useful for European guidance counsellors?

How can we facilitate access to European guidance resources?

How can we improve the quality of European guidance services?

Such as:

- networks
- Internet platforms
- information
- methods
- training

How do you think the project ERGO IN NET could help you to give/promote guidance in a European dimension?

...



This kit was produced in June 2005 by *Giulio Iannis* of Centro Studi Pluriversum (Italy). It is based on the national reports produced by the "Ergo-in-Net" project's partnership.