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A comment on WP2 (Leonardo Evangelista, Forcoop, 27th of February 2007)

To accredit career guidance practitioners requires several steps.

The first step is to define in advance what is shown when competence is in action or what is related to competence (singular, not countable), here defined as the ability to carry out a good work performance.

As already said there are two options to say that a person is competent:

A. to identify several personal features and knowledge which are considered related to good work performance and assess each practitioner against them or

B. to verify which are the main tasks a career practitioner must accomplish, to define a minimum level of performance for each of them and assess each practitioner performance against the standards.

Both factors (personal features and knowledge and minimum level of performance for the main tasks can be called competences (plural, countable)¹, even if, due to their origin, the first are spelled competencies (American English) and the second competences (UK English). The first option is used in recruiting, when is usually impossible to observe the candidate at work; the second for granting qualifications acquired on the job as in NVQ. The second option is the one best related to EAS, ad the Projects wants to grant a qualification 'not academic, but based mostly on informal and not formal learning' and in my view is the one we must use in EAS. Some existing competency-based framework for career guidance practitioners adopt a pure Option 2 approach (for example in ENTO UK and OCCOPQ CA), some others a mixed approach (as EVGP). I personally prefer pure (or only mildly mixed, as EVGP) Option 2 approaches because they are shorter, the competences are easier to verify and they give value to non formal learning that in Europe is very common amongst guidance practitioners.

Options 1 and 2 require to define

A. the main tasks a career practitioner must accomplish and, related to this,

B. minimum levels of performance for each of them and

C. how to assess them.

Step A: defining the main tasks of a career practitioner

¹ This way competence depends on competences/competencies. Weird, but works this way. This is the reason why in the UK the word competences is very little used, and the main activities of ENTO are called 'units' (of competence) rather than competences. To limit misunderstanding, in EAS internal communications I suggest we always refer to 'main career support activities' when adopting option 2 and when adopting option 1 to call personal features and knowledge with their name (for example knowledge, skills, aptitudes, etc.) instead than competences or competencies.

As we want to develop a European wide framework, the definition of the main tasks a career practitioner must accomplish is not an easy task, because as we know ‘career support activities’² are declined in many different ways in Europe. In my view the best way to identify the main tasks is to compare the main activities listed in the different national competency based framework. The table 1 below has been built using this approach, using table pp.84-86 of WP1 Report (thanks Hazel) and re-examining original sources. Four frameworks have been considered: NTO (used in UK), EVGP (the IAEVG scheme), OCCOPQ (used in Quebec (Canada)), CIC (used in Australia).

² I prefer this term and from now onward I will use it rather than the older ‘career guidance activities’ that sounds more related to a directive practice

Table 1. A Taxonomy of main typical career support activities³	NTO	EVGP	OCCOPQ	CIC
Main activities (the main activities are the one listed with one digit numbers. The two digit numbers give direction for assessment. The letters show areas of main activities)	The numbers below (not tightly controlled) refer to the main activities listed in each framework			
A. Information management 1. find and deliver information related to career support, face to face and at a distance	2.3., 19, 20, 21	5	3.6., 6.5.	
B. Assessment and referral 2. identify the needs of the client and communicate the need of a referral when needed	2.3. 12, 13, 18	Most of 1, 4.8., 6, 9.1., 9.5.	1, 2.4., 3.5.,4.4.	1
C. Career support interview 3. Develop interactions with advice and guidance clients on a 1:1 base. To demonstrate mastering of this activity, the practitioner will be assessed against the following: 3.1. identify the needs of the client and contract modality of delivery 3.2. help clients to clarify their requirements ⁴ 3.3. enable clients to plan a course of action ⁵ 3.4. assess client's features and potentialities and client's action plan ⁶ 3.5. planning of follow up 4. (optional) interact at a distance with advice and guidance clients ⁷	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	1, 2, 3, most of 4, 10.3	2, 3.1., 3.2.	2
D. follow up ⁸ , networking and mediation ⁹ 5. Network effectively 6. follow up and support to people involved in job search and/or educational paths on a 1:1 base 7. follow up and support to people involved in job search and/or educational paths on a small group base 8. Mediation. To demonstrate mastering of this activity, the practitioner will be assessed against the following: 8.1. look for job openings also contacting potential employers directly 8.2. Match individuals to particular vacancies in employment, education or training 8.3. advocate clients with educational authorities or employers	7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 28, 29, 30, 12, 13, 18	, 4.8., 6, 9.1., 9.5. 10	4.4., 2.4., 3.5.,4.4.	6

³ Our English Colleagues will help with wording

⁴ counselling skills

⁵ counselling skills

⁶ assessment at a higher level

⁷ the accreditation of this main activity is possible only after accreditation of the previous main activity Develop interactions with advice and guidance clients on a 1:1 base.

F. Career education ¹⁰ 9.deliver career education activities on 1:1 base 10.facilitate job search techniques courses 11. facilitate other career education activities delivered to small groups	22, 23, 24, 25, 27	2.2., 4.4.,	3	3
G. Program/ service management (some main activities are optional) 12. manage personal caseload 13. evaluate the effectiveness of your action 14. (optional) collect, organize, disseminate information related to career support to be used on a stand alone base ¹¹ 15. (optional) design information materials for use in the service ¹² 16.(optional) design career education activities 17.(optional) design other programs or services 18 (optional).implement programs. To demonstrate mastering of this activity, the practitioner will be assessed against the following: 18.1.supervise programs or services 18.2. supervise / support colleagues 18.3.evaluate the effectiveness of programs or services	14, 15, 16, 17, 26	6.5., 7, 8	4.1., 4.2., 4.3, 5.1., 5.2., 5.3., 5.4., 6.10	5

Some areas overlap. For example group work can be listed as a category on its own or under other headings (i.e. career education). The same with assessment: it can be a main activity on its own or be set under other main activities.

The following are not main activities, but in any case they must be assessed¹³ because they assure that the main functions are carried out well.

1. comply with legislation and where existing codex of ethics 2. constantly upgrade your knowledge 3. integrate theory and research into practice 4. master ICT			6.1., 6.3., 6.11	
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⁸ support of people involved in job search and/or educational paths other than mediation

⁹ to deal directly with educational authorities or employers on behalf of clients or to advocate clients with educational authorities or employers

¹⁰ a systematic program of activities and experiences designed to increase knowledge of self, occupations, training paths, job-search skills and decision-making strategies (includes the integration of work, family, leisure and community roles). http://www.google.it/url?sa=X&start=0&oi=define&q=http://www.career-symposium.org/act_Defs.html&usg=__HnpSYINd2IQE92NmV9rDKFIwTk= Or The development of knowledge, skills and attitudes

through a planned program of learning experiences in education and training settings which will assist students to make informed decisions about their study and/or work options and enable effective participation in working life (Ministerial Council for Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs, 1998).

¹¹ Only some career advisers do this

¹² only some career advisers do this

¹³ In carrying out the main activity number xx, how do you deal with.....

The following activities have been excluded by the career support field:

- Research¹⁴
- Community Capacity Building¹⁵
- Recruiting
- Personnel: help organizations in Human Resources practices
- Counselling on personal issues¹⁶

Table 1 is wide, and for making it more readable it can be useful to synthesize:

Table 2. Main activities and areas synthesized (Same as table 1. The main activities are the one with numbers. The one with letters are areas of main activities and are listed only to help)
<p>A. Information management</p> <p>1. find and deliver information related to career support, face to face and at a distance</p> <p>B. Assessment and referral</p> <p>2. identify the needs of the client and communicate the need of a referral when needed</p> <p>C. Career support interview</p> <p>3. Develop interactions with advice and guidance clients on a 1:1 base.</p> <p>4. (optional) interact at a distance with advice and guidance clients¹⁷</p> <p>D. follow up¹⁸, networking and mediation¹⁹</p> <p>5. Network effectively</p> <p>6. follow up and support to people involved in job search and/or educational paths on a 1:1 base</p> <p>7. follow up and support to people involved in job search and/or educational paths on a small group base</p> <p>8. Mediation.</p> <p>E. Career education²⁰</p> <p>9. deliver career education activities on 1:1 base</p> <p>10. facilitate job search techniques courses</p> <p>11. facilitate other career education activities delivered to small groups</p> <p>F. Program/ service management (some main activities are optional)</p> <p>12. manage personal caseload</p> <p>13. evaluate the effectiveness of your action</p> <p>14. (optional) collect, organize, disseminate information related to career support to be used on a stand alone base²¹</p> <p>15. (optional) design information materials for use in the service²²</p> <p>16. (optional) design career education activities</p> <p>17. (optional) design other programs or services</p> <p>18 (optional). implement programs.</p>

¹⁴ Included in EVGP

¹⁵ Included in EVGP

¹⁶ Included in EVGP

¹⁷ the accreditation of this main activity is possible only after accreditation of the previous main activity Develop interactions with advice and guidance clients on a 1:1 base.

¹⁸ support of people involved in job search and/or educational paths other than mediation

¹⁹ to deal directly with educational authorities or employers on behalf of clients or to advocate clients with educational authorities or employers

²⁰ a systematic program of activities and experiences designed to increase knowledge of self, occupations, training paths, job-search skills and decision-making strategies (includes the integration of work, family, leisure and community roles). <http://www.google.it/url?sa=X&start=0&oi=define&q=http://www.career->

Or even shorter:

Table 3. Main activities (same as table 1 and 2) alone

1. find and deliver information related to career support, face to face and at a distance
2. identify the needs of the client and communicate the need of a referral when needed
3. develop interactions with advice and guidance clients on a 1:1 base.
4. (optional) interact at a distance with advice and guidance clients²³
5. Network effectively
6. follow up and support to people involved in job search and/or educational paths on a 1:1 base
7. follow up and support to people involved in job search and/or educational paths on a small group base
8. mediation
9. deliver career education activities on 1:1 base
10. facilitate job search techniques courses
11. facilitate other career education activities delivered to small groups
12. manage personal caseload
13. evaluate the effectiveness of your action
14. (optional) collect, organize, disseminate information related to career support to be used on a stand alone base²⁴
15. (optional) design information materials for use in the service²⁵
16. (optional) design career education activities
17. (optional) design other programs or services
18. (optional) implement programs.

In invite the Reader to comment this proposal for a taxonomy of main activities.

To agree and list the career support main activities is not enough. We know that a rising attention is now given in the career support field to cultural diversity, and that the same activity must be carried out differently with diverse populations. For this reason EAS accreditation should also consider the culture if the clients looking for career support help (see table 4 below). This way, accreditation will be double fold: each practitioner will be accredited against certain main activities carried out with certain kind of clients.

symposium.org/act_Defs.html&usg=__HnpSYINd2IQE92NmwV9rDKFIwTk= Or The development of knowledge, skills and attitudes

through a planned program of learning experiences in education and training settings which will assist students to make informed decisions about their study and/or work options and enable effective participation in working life (Ministerial Council for Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs, 1998).

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²³ the accreditation of this main activity is possible only after accreditation of the previous main activity Develop interactions with advice and guidance clients on a 1:1 base.

²⁴ Only some career advisers do this

²⁵ only some career advisers do this

Table 4. Clients typology

- | |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• mainstream²⁶ students (same culture of the practitioner)• mainstream adults (women included) (same culture of the practitioner)• immigrants• disabled• offenders and ex-offenders• native minorities• gypsies |
|--|

Again, I invite the Reader to comment the choice to accredit practitioners against main activities and populations, and the list of diverse population at table 4.

Step C. How to assess minimum standards of

There are some factors that make assessment easier, meaning more sure that the person is really able to carry out the main activities. In this case the assessment could be easier/shorter. These could be:

- Many hours of experience in paid work (one year work correspond to about 1000 hours)
- A degree in career guidance, psychology, sociology, economics, law, political sciences
- A training in counselling skills (to be measured in hours)
- A specialised training in career guidance (to be measured in hours)

We could also decide to accredit only people with at least 2 years (2000 hours) paid work in career guidance.

²⁶ Meaning 'ordinary', most common

Appendix

Main activities as listed in each framework

ENTO UK	EVGP	OCCOPQ CA	CIC AUS
AG3 Develop interactions with advice and guidance clients AG14 Manage personal case load AG16 Evaluate and develop own contribution to the service AG18 Operate within networks	1. Assessment 2. Educational Guidance 3. Career Development 4. Counselling 5. Information Management 6. Consultation and Coordination 7. Research and Evaluation 8. Program/Service Management 9. Community Capacity Building 10. Placement	1. Assess the situation rigorously 2. Plan guidance counselling activities 3. Take direct action 4. Act as an advisor to other concerned parties 5. Assess the impact of action 6. Run a rigorous, relevant practice that meets current standards	1. Assessment 2. counselling 3. program delivery 4. working with people with disabilities 5. project management 6. employer liaison