

Introduction to infographic

PROFESSIONALISM OF CAREER GUIDANCE

In Europe, much attention is devoted to effective guidance counselling, career guidance and professional mobility. After all, the importance of lifelong learning requires students to be flexible enough to be able to anticipate constant changes in the labour market and in society. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) acknowledges this demand, and is implementing a wide range of activities intended to raise the bar for student career education nationwide. As part of these activities, the ministry gave Euroguidance Netherlands a two-pronged task in 2014. Firstly, to create a current overview of professionalism in Career Education and Guidance* in VET (upper secondary vocational education), and secondly, to issue recommendations to stakeholders (the VET sphere, teacher training programmes, the Ministry (OCW) and partners in the chain) on how professionalism in CEG can be enhanced.

Interviews

Interviews were conducted with four vocational education and training institutions, namely Helicon Opleidingen MBO Nijmegen, Landstede, ROC van Amsterdam MBO College West and Summa Laboratorium.

Although all of the institutions took part in the CEG VET Incentive Project (Stimuleringsproject LOB in het mbo), implemented by the association for VET Services (MBO Diensten), scheduled completion: end of 2015, this is not why they were selected. Three to five meetings were held with each of the four institutions in the spring of 2014, with various groups: management, HR, teaching staff, practice supervisors, first and second-line guidance counsellors, internal advisers and programme managers/team leaders. In some VET institutions, the group members were selected broadly from throughout the institution; other VET institutions opted for groups

from within a single campus or programme cluster.

** In general, CEG stands for 'Career Exploration and Guidance'. In vocational education and training (VET), however, the 'E' stands for 'Education', not 'Exploration'. Exploration (or orientation) is part of career guidance in VET institutions.*

Portraits

Based on these interviews, websites and the available policy and CEG vision documents, a 'Portrait of Professionalism in Career Education and Guidance' was drawn up for two institutions (Helicon Opleidingen MBO Nijmegen and ROC van Amsterdam MBO College West). These portraits reflect the current state of CEG and where the challenges, needs and possibilities lie for enhancing professionalism in CEG. Each portrait concludes with specific recommendations for the relevant institution. Summaries of the two portraits can be found here. They form the core of this publication, and – along with the specific recommendations – have been used to draw up overall recommendations for three stakeholder groups.

Recommendations

At an event held in the autumn of 2014, the VET institutions gave short presentations on the key elements of their portraits and what it meant for them. They then discussed, refined and supplemented the overall recommendations in a group of CEG stakeholders and experts. The CEG recommendations cover three areas:

- Vision, policy and strategy;
- Professionalism of guidance counsellors; and
- Educational leadership.

In addition to these recommendations, this report also contains a summary of real-world practices highlighting the key themes from each area within the portraits.



All of the information offered by the portraits and recommendations can also act as a mirror and incentive for enhancing the professionalism of career education support for students and teachers.

Euroguidance Netherlands will share the results with the European networks of Euroguidance centres and the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN).

Portrait 1 Professionalism of Career Education and Guidance at

HELICON OPLEIDINGEN MBO NIJMEGEN

No. of students:

- 725 students enrolled in school-based pathways
- 150 students enrolled in dual pathways

No. of sessions

- 3

Participants:

- 8 interviewees, including management, team leaders, coaches, work placement supervisors, teachers and career counselling subject teachers.

How does Helicon Opleidingen MBO Nijmegen view CEG?

The school aims to give its students the best possible education by offering structure and effective support. Helicon Opleidingen MBO Nijmegen believes that a successful academic career relies on a **pro-active attitude** by all those involved: in addition to the education institution itself, parents and students, this also includes partners such as municipal authorities, work placement and practical training (BPV) organisations, Youth Care, the Dutch Mental Healthcare Association (GGZ) and other schools.

Student guidance takes place mostly as part of the study programme, and caters as much as possible to the student's individual **support needs**. The support structure starts with recruitment/placement interviews, and has a preventive focus. Additional (second and third-line) support facilities are available for students for whom the basic (first-line) support is not enough.

CEG is the umbrella!

In a framework document, Helicon Opleidingen MBO Nijmegen describes how everything converges at CEG: 'CEG contributes to students' ability to cultivate an understanding of their own competencies, qualities, ambitions and motivations, and their

development. Effective support helps students to make the right choices concerning their education and future profession. Students learn to think systematically about study and career-related questions, reducing the number of early school leavers and promoting healthy movement from pre-vocational to VET/ higher professional education, or on to employment. We respond to changes in the labour market that demand more and more flexibility from employees, who change jobs more often. The study programmes allow scope for students to develop their talents.' CEG includes measures that allow the fulfilment of the best-efforts obligation regarding Career & Citizenship qualification requirements.

What does Career Education and Guidance consist of at Helicon Opleidingen MBO Nijmegen?

Mentoring classes, progress interviews and workplace training. Every student has a mentor or coach, who acts as the student's CEG counsellor and the initial point of contact for the student and their parents. The mentor/coach is also the key agent in first-line care. At least twice per school year, all students take part in an individual progress interview with the mentor/coach about their overall development, including study progress (marks), competency development, and their career. The initial interview in the first year is introductory in nature, and covers the orientation work placements that the student wishes to complete. The second interview focuses more on results and on nine generic competencies, the development of which is also illustrated by a **competency scan** completed online by the student, the coach and the work placement supervisor(s). These interviews are also recorded in a monitoring system.

The generic competencies gradually shift towards career competencies. The interviews take the form of a **reflective dialogue**: students reflect on practical challenges experienced as part of their workplace training (BPV). The school subscribes to the idea that reflective dialogue encourages the acquisition of career competencies.

The mentor classes are scheduled for one hour per week throughout the entire study programme. Students prepare for class activities and the individual progress interviews, reflect on their workplace training (BPV) and work on their portfolios. The progress interviews are scheduled during this hour, resulting in the usual problems: lack of space and time. Teachers are unable to probe deeply during the interviews, since it is impossible to cover everything in 10-15 minutes. Reflective dialogue would be desirable here, but is alas not always practicable – such discussions occur more naturally during on-site BPV visits. In VET school, the mentor lessons and coaching interviews focus on more specific content and mainly cover **the competency tests and reflection on the workplace training. Options following graduation** are also discussed in VET school.

Guidance counselling and citizenship activities

Since 2013, guidance counselling has been taught as a **separate subject** (one hour per week), in tandem with citizenship competencies. The two teachers who develop the guidance counselling curriculum and teach the guidance counselling lessons implemented a **quality boost**: all the main themes and sub-topics have been systematised according to year and programme level. Nearly all lesson materials have been adapted so that guidance counselling **is relevant to the curricula** of the various clusters. Conversely, the subject matter of the coaching sessions over time was also examined, allowing material to be selected that best suits the guidance counselling classes.

Cross-domain Entrepreneurship Programme

During one of the final components of their study programme, students set up a **student enterprise**. According to one of the participants interviewed: 'Students make advertisements of themselves, promote themselves, and show what they have to offer in order to allow matchmaking within their enterprise.'

How does CEG influence staffing and professionalisation policy?

Career development has been addressed for both students and teachers, based on the idea that those who are able to deliberately steer and shape their own careers are in a better position to help students to do so. **Job interviews** with new teachers devote explicit attention to careers, by asking career-based questions such as 'What is your passion?', 'What do you derive the most energy from?', 'Where would you like to make a contribution?' and probing candidates' responses. In addition to recruitment and selection, personnel policy also focuses on the careers of current teachers. Support for staff careers is also an integral part of the motto for the new policy in this regard: Tranquility, Freedom and Direction. Agreements have been made with managerial staff to discuss teachers' own career paths during **performance interviews**. First of all, 'profiles' are drawn up for each teacher outlining their various qualities and preferences, which are then taken into consideration during the annual distribution of tasks and projects. During performance interviews, teachers reflect on their performance and formulate learning objectives and career goals – these interviews are more developmental than evaluative in nature. Managers monitor their teachers to enable prompt intervention where necessary. Once a year, managers carry out **lesson inspections**. Teachers are also invited to contribute ideas on broadening existing study programmes, or setting up new ones.

There is partial support for the consequences of the new approach among teaching staff. They are realising more and more that **pro-activeness and profiling yourself** (making their own qualities and ambitions clear to others) brings benefits, e.g. encouraging inclusion in certain types of projects. They also indicate that it can be enjoyable to participate in activities other than teaching, such as quality assurance, work placement coordination or some type of career teaching.

What does Helicon Opleidingen MBO Nijmegen expect of its CEG professionals?

All professionals...

... must have the **capacity to innovate**, to take initiative, and to both manage and accept change. **Enthusiasm, commitment and passion** for the job are also essential. Professionals must be **versatile** and have a **combination of specialisations** to offer. They can **switch** between their subject lessons, guidance counselling and coaching classes, workplace training and other

CEG activities, and are good **organisers** and **planners**. They must also be **customer-oriented** and **collaborate closely** with colleagues. This also includes **giving and receiving feedback** and **pro-activeness**.

CEG professionals, coaches and first-line counsellors...

... must also possess **communication skills** (including effective interviewing and listening skills, summarising, probing, maintaining a relaxed atmosphere and giving students the freedom to express themselves). They are attentive to **the student's environment** and have a **good understanding of professional practice**. They can also perform **systematic and orderly data administration**, and are **competent in their specialist area**. One of the interviewees formulated it this way: 'CEG is a way of looking at students, it's an attitude. It doesn't just happen during lessons or meetings, and it's something that all staff participate in. Even canteen staff do it, if they notice anything wrong with a student.'

Three years ago, a **train-the-trainer programme** was run on the subject of 'conducting career interviews', after which the participants gave a one-and-a-half-day internal training course to two teams. Pre-vocational education was added in the following year, and now **pre-vocational/VET teachers jointly** complete the training. **Maintaining professionalism** of CEG remains important: refresher and in-depth training courses are offered, and people take part in the CEG-café run by VET Services and the Dutch Secondary Education Council, and the knowledge exchange sessions as part of the VET CEG Incentive Plan (Stimuleringsplan LOB).

It is **difficult to measure** the effects of these training sessions. There are still no regular student evaluations of teachers and their lessons/counselling, although these plans are in the pipeline. There is also a need for some general guidelines on conducting student interviews. When the interviews were being conducted, one work placement student was drawing up a set of reflection tools.

What problems to professionals face, and what needs to they express?

The content of CEG

Helicon Opleidingen MBO Nijmegen wishes to see CEG function as an umbrella concept, integrated throughout the entire education programme. This requires ironing out some kinks, however. For example, the **career continuity pathway** could be more defined:

there is still no strict coordination between coaches, academic student counselling and other subjects. Steps have already been taken in this regard, however still not enough, it would seem. A need has also been identified for a **focus on providing information** about study programmes (including follow-up programmes), and it is still unclear whether CEG is part of the 'acceleration and intensification' working group that has been formed to review the curriculum as part of the 'Focus on Craftsmanship' (Actieplan Focus op Vakmanschap) project. Guidance counselling as a subject presents a dilemma regarding Career & Citizenship qualification requirements, which are an integral part of the qualifications file. The Inspectorate, for example, only imposes a best-efforts obligation, while the school desires greater stringency and wishes to assess CEG using grades or reporting.

The **needs expressed** regarding the content of CEG therefore primarily concern further integration of career competencies into education programmes as a whole, and a properly coordinated career continuity pathway from entry to exit level. Where the latter is concerned, it is important for information provision and support to be included when students switch tracks or go on to further study. The digital student portfolio also requires further development, giving students something they can be proud of and which they can use during coaching sessions, work placements and job interviews.

Roles, duties and support

There is a **lack of clarity** regarding the roles and relevant duties of all staff who contribute to CEG. Those who teach guidance counselling as a subject struggle with their role in supporting students. They go through a lot with students during their classes, and therefore want more time and greater freedom to help students with their problems, instead of sending them straight to their coach. Coaches and work placement supervisors also have **too little time** for work placement visits and digital portfolio progress interviews: 'It is still unclear how precise the referral and coordination processes must be between coaches and other teachers, including guidance counsellors', said one of the interviewees. 'What are the processes, and how do they work exactly?'

Needs include the clarification of everybody's responsibilities regarding CEG, with special attention to communication and coordination between coaches and those who teach guidance

counselling as a subject, and a clear process description for referrals. Lastly everybody wants more time, much more time!

Connections to industry

Practical experience is just the opportunity for students to reflect on their qualities, abilities, passions, etc., and a closer relationship with industry is **desired**: even more pro-activeness in approaching companies and securing workplace training assignments. The establishment of alumni policy also provides opportunities for catering more for CEG, such as utilising the network contacts of graduates, guest teachers, shadowing days, etc.

Quality assurance

Staff experience a few problems in this regard. CEG still enjoys **no school-wide** support, and guidance counsellors also feel that their field has an **image problem**, especially because teachers and coaches are sometimes unaware of what guidance counselling is all about. 'They see it mainly as hijacking lesson content and timetabling space', one interviewee reported. As part of the CEG framework, the school decided to have specially trained experts provide support for guidance counselling teaching activities. Teachers with a particular affinity with 'pedagogical' tasks are suitable for this role. Guidance counsellors support this policy thrust, and see it as a kind of quality assurance. 'Dividing up the job of a guidance counsellor among coaches and subject teachers is not an option, the profession would die out too quickly.' The fact that guidance counsellors are on temporary contracts does put quality assurance at risk.

Various **needs** have been expressed regarding the quality assurance of CEG. There should be more external promotion of experiences, results and CEG activities (e.g. to industry, parents and other Helicon Opleidingen campuses). It is also important to continue to reflect now and again on 'CEG levels', and there is also a desire to enhance the support base for CEG through mutual and joint learning.

Onward and upward!

The interviews conducted at Helicon Opleidingen MBO Nijmegen are viewed as 'a step in the right direction: a kind of **thermometer** (!) for the current state of CEG, and the realisation that many steps have already been taken but improvements are still possible.' The interaction between the various interviewees also proved to

be of great value: treading water for a little while allows for new momentum to be built up. Several points for attention are given below that highlight how the school is charting the right course, but also how there is still much to be gained.

A strong point is that the revitalisation of staff has given an important position to the careers of teachers, counsellors and support personnel. It is precisely the **personal attention** to qualities, values, passion and ambition that allows teachers to rediscover their strength and inspiration. Or the contrary – to realise that they no longer wish to invest more energy into their career in education, or need a change of direction.

It is important to continue with and further expand on the **career performance interviews** – these individual discussions must also be held with team leaders, in order to continually strengthen the connection with the underlying career philosophy. It would be worthwhile discussing the five career competencies during these interviews, an important question being: 'How can theory be converted into practical career guidance from all staff to all students?' One idea in this respect could be to have all staff commit to including one or two **CEG-related activities** during lessons or support activities as part of a **Personal Development Plan**.

A renewed focus on CEG can also be included in a **Team Development Plan**. Any such plan should include **enough room for interaction**, to discuss what everybody plans to do, either alone or in consultation with colleagues. In this sense it is important to involve a colleague who already has experience with incorporating CEG into group programmes, or during individual career interviews either at school or in the field.

Joint and mutual learning (and professionalisation) can be enhanced at various levels: within and between programme teams, among team leaders and among all Helicon Opleidingen schools. What is important is making the learning concrete, and clarifying that it is about CEG dilemmas (e.g. as part of programming, workplace training, counselling) that require a joint solution.

Sharing useful CEG instruments (e.g. reflection tools) and **success stories** (successful interactions, good lessons) are an asset here. Success stories may also be shared outside the school – with parents, industry, etc.

At Helicon Opleidingen MBO Nijmegen, **coaching-on-the-job** could be valuable when including career-oriented topics in lessons, workplace training and/or conducting career interviews. Coaching can be performed by experienced guidance counsellors, or by trained staff via the CEG Incentive Plan.

Continuous **career guidance pathways** – from entry, admission, placement, possible transfers, progress, elective programmes and workplace training to preparation for follow-up study or entry to the labour market – can still be improved. Gaps in the career guidance pathway must be closed, and Helicon Opleidingen MBO Nijmegen must look at how the career guidance pathway can be **aligned as closely as possible with other education reform activities** as part of the ‘Focus on Craftmanship’ (Actieplan Focus op Vakmanschap).

Furthermore, it is essential to obtain **clarity on everybody’s role (and associated duties)** with respect to CEG. What can the management do to support students’ career development process? What about the team leaders, subject teachers, guidance counsellors, coaches/mentors and workplace training supervisors? A second-line CEG employee can help in this regard. In any case, it is advisable for somebody in the management **to have CEG in their portfolio in** order to promote the development of CEG policy, maintain a support base and guide team leaders in the implementation of professional CEG.

Last but not least, **strengthening ties with industry** is also essential to CEG. Ideally company supervisors would also learn to conduct reflective career interviews, possibly in collaboration with workplace training supervisors. In addition to dialogues, this scenario also enables a ‘trialogue’ in which all parties – student, school and company – discuss the student’s qualities, passions and abilities together (among other things). A close relationship with **pre-vocational education** is also worthwhile in terms of CEG, and Helicon Opleidingen MBO Nijmegen has already had some positive experiences in the chain with combined pre-vocational/VET training courses. These can certainly serve as good practices for other VET institutions...

Portrait 2

Professionalism of Career Education and Guidance at

ROC AMSTERDAM, MBO COLLEGE WEST

No. of students:

- 2,400 students enrolled in school-based pathways;
- 1,600 students enrolled in dual pathways.

No. of sessions

- 5

Participants:

- 22 interviewees, including HR staff, Education and Quality project leader, academic/career guidance counsellors, career advisers/head of Career Expertise Centre (CEC), coaches, trainers, coordinator of Training and Coaching Expertise Centre, programme managers and teachers.

How does ROC Amsterdam MBO College West view CEG?

In the 'red book', the Amsterdam Regional Education and Training Centre (ROC Amsterdam, to which MBO College West belongs) expresses the intention to take a competency-based approach to offering all professional programmes as from August 2010. To facilitate this transition, the ROC has decided to formulate standards. Various **standards** are key to CEG: admissions, flexible entry, career guidance, workplace training (BPV), and the professionalisation in competency and team development. Its **policy memorandum** and the implementation plan developed as part of the CEG Incentive Project formulate the vision as follows: The schools equip students for long-term career management through the acquisition of career competencies, supported by counselling, career education and exploration, entrepreneurship and collaboration with businesses.

ROC Amsterdam MBO College West has converted this vision into a CEG policy and adopted it for all programme teams. The College's aim with CEG is to **effectively guide** all students in their academic and professional careers, in order to arrive at appropriate career

and education choices, high attendance and active participation in educational activities, lower dropout rates, high graduation outcomes and successful rates for exit/further study.

Guidance counsellors and the Career Expertise Centre (CEC)

Guidance counsellors at ROC Amsterdam MBO College West indicate the lack of a **generally acknowledged CEG vision**. It is supposed that they all probably do roughly the same thing, however it has never been properly discussed. Guidance counsellors and work experience supervisors believe that it is important for students to feel safe and comfortable, in order to facilitate their learning. Progress supervision must take the form of **coaching**, and be efficient, effective, pragmatic, professionally oriented and made-to-measure. The goal of the Career Expertise Centre (CEC) is to ensure that each student is put on a **suitable pathway**, which does not necessarily have to be a programme at this college. Students should be where they belong, which may also be in a workplace setting. This philosophy is held by everybody throughout the CECs, even the management. It is unclear whether the teams share the same vision.

Programme managers

All programme managers have their own individual CEG vision and goals, depending on their programme teams and target groups. For students in a school-based pathway, **personal growth** and **professional development** are important. These students often do not yet realise what a job actually entails. Young people want all kinds of things, which is why developing a sense of reality by incorporating professional practice is so important. For dual-pathway students, the focus is on the continued development of their career. Women in particular need support in acquiring their diploma (which is often their first). Women with a major fear of failure, from a foreign background and/or with little experience in the labour market can benefit greatly from CEG.

Trainers

The trainers from the Training and Coaching Expertise Centre are more critical of the shared vision. Multiple visions exist, at various levels. Career guidance is often left aside due to lack of time. The trainers focus on **identifying students' intrinsic motivation**, in order to tap into their learning and willingness to learn. **Focusing on self-management** and students' own initiative is difficult for many teams, as they have been in 'care mode' for so long. But change is starting to come. Feedback and taking initiative, portfolio interviews and work placement visits are being employed as instruments more and more. In general the priority lies on getting students 'over the line'; exactly how this happens is of lesser concern. Current practices **more closely resemble progress monitoring than support for career development** by the students themselves.

What does Career Education and Guidance consist of?

There is both first and second-line Career Education and Guidance. The first line consists of guidance counsellors and work placement supervisors, who provide students with career support. The CEC provides second-line support.

First line: CEG varies from team to team

Career guidance varies from team to team, as do the roles, tasks and facilities. For example, guidance counsellors support students in the **Pedagogical Assistant** programme in groups of nine, for the full length of the career pathway from years 1-3. Guidance counsellors or coaches in the **Healthcare Assistant programme** work with entire classes (two classes per counsellor/coach). Due to time constraints, the guidance counsellors cannot carry out work placement visits; these are the responsibility of the workplace training supervisors/classroom assistants. The target-group manager says that the college has a large group of students with multiple problems. **School-based pathway students** receive 1.5 hours a week of regular timetabled CEG, but the teaching staff claim to have to wrestle with their timetables. Professional orientation subjects are short of time. CEG is not timetabled separately for **dual pathway** students; time and the curriculum do not permit it. These students are given **study progress interviews, however**.

In the past, students in the **Assisted Care and Welfare dual pathway** at ROC Amsterdam MBO College West were given 1.5 hours for CEG and coaching. Because of the additional require-

ments for Dutch and Arithmetic, time has been taken from the coaching and CEG is now timetabled for once a week/fortnight. In the **Carer school-based pathway**, CEG is a real, separate subject: 1.5 hours per week in first, second and third year. There are also groups ('houses') of around 10 students per work placement location who visit each other to offer support and help. Teachers visit these 'houses' once a fortnight, so there is a teacher at the workplace.

In the **Level 3 Personal Care Assistant dual pathway**, the career competencies are integrated into the programme itself. Students have a programme folder with assignments that they need to carry out in care practice, developing both core competencies and career competencies in the process. The **doctor's assistant** programme includes interviews per work-placement block. Students in healthcare programmes who wish to reflect on their practical experiences, their studies and their prospects go to **talk with former students**. Counsellors/coaches encourage former students to do this and the students genuinely love it, attaching greater value to the former students' experiences than to information from teachers.

Second line: a problem-solving approach

Second-line career support is provided by the Career Expertise Centre (CEC): a group of seventeen employees consisting of college staff (5.2 FTE) plus a school social worker, a youth doctor, peripatetic teachers and a school attendance officer (among others). Every college has its own CEC, which accepts students without any prior qualifications up to the age of 23 (as part of an anti-dropout policy). People aged over 23 also receive assistance, but it is not long-term and the selection criteria are stricter. Each programme team has a 'plus coach' or care coordinator from the CEC. CECs maintain a holistic philosophy. Each year 900-1000 students are referred to the CEC by programme teams or from admission interviews, where their health, legal, home, care situations etc. are assessed. Students who are sent to the CEC always have a problem of some kind, and usually several. CECs use the diagnosis-prescription model to assess the situation: what is going on, and what are we going to do about it? A problem-solving approach is adopted and responsibility handed back as soon as possible to the students, who must learn to find solutions themselves: 'Pampering is hampering!'



How does CEG influence staffing and professionalisation policy?

Recruitment and selection

The HRM policy agenda includes several CEG-related items.

Versatility is listed as a requirement during recruitment and selection, and in addition to **expertise**, competencies related to **career guidance** are also requested of candidate teachers. As of 2014 there have been few opportunities for increasing the staff complement, however, and an internal assessment is necessary to see whether staff can be reshuffled. Many teachers have been relocated due to the closure of two departments. New teachers (usually external specialists, such as education experts) can only be hired if there are none available anywhere within the institution.

The teams

The policy is very clear: staff career development is the **responsibility of the programme manager**. Some team plans include a **training clause**, but not all of them. The **programme managers differ greatly** in terms of professional development – some are much further ahead than others. Some do the bare minimum, others do more to help develop their team. Progress has been made in **teacher investment** and in raising qualification levels through compulsory training courses aimed for coordinating skills, 360-degree feedback and the use of a development plan. Training is organised centrally by this college according to a supply-based model. **Professional development (compulsory for all relevant teachers and guidance counsellors) exists for CEG, examinations, language and arithmetic, and ICT**. Meetings on team progress are held with the management three times per year. **Team plans** do exist, and much is being done, however there is still too little monitoring. Teachers will allocate a higher priority to collaboration and group learning, and more investments will be made in this area. There will also be increased **guidance from HRM and the management**.

Interview cycle

In its PDP, performance and assessment interview cycle, ROC Amsterdam MBO College West makes use of **competency tables**, which define **four main categories**: fulfilment and perception of role; results; employability/personal development, and quality of collaboration. The interviews are constructed using input from a self-assessment, 360-degree feedback from colleagues, and the manager's evaluation. There is no specific competency profile or accompanying 360-degree feedback model for **career advisers**.

Much could be gained from a reformulation of the underlying competencies/criteria, and from conducting reflective career interviews with teachers focusing on development.

What does ROC van Amsterdam MBO College West expect of its CEG professionals?

First-line teachers and guidance counsellors...

...must effectively be able to distinguish between their **roles as subject expert and guidance counsellor**. The question they must always ask themselves is: when am I a teacher, and when am I a guidance counsellor? They must be wary of the **pitfall** of getting too close to students. Maintain a **bird's eye view** and keep distance. Independent learning is a good thing, but be sure to retain a balance. First-liners must learn to **make connections** between the various activities and processes along with students. Career guidance must be a **recurring theme** throughout the entire study programme.

The competencies and professional requirements required of guidance counsellors, workplace training supervisors or Career and Citizenship teachers include: being **curious**, open to problems, offering a **friendly ear** and the ability to liaise with the care coordinator for potential referral to the Career Expertise Centre (CEC). There are also the key competencies: **patience** and **persistence**, humour, **involvement** (but being able to maintain distance) and **authenticity**. It is also important to be able to set **boundaries**, perform a skills check, to continually be willing to learn, to operate **within a structure**, to be **reflective** and to conduct an **effective dialogue**.

Second-line careers counsellors...

...must try to see each student as a **new person**, maintain **neutrality** and not to adhere too much to any 'labels' that the student may have. **Competencies and professional requirements** of CEC staff include good listening and probing skills, patience and humour, flexibility, involvement from a distance, analytical ability, and being able to work with instruments and interpret results.

What problems to professionals face, and what needs to they express?

New building

Previously, the programmes at ROC Amsterdam MBO College West

were spread across five buildings. One-and-a-half years ago, they all moved into one building. It was all quite a production, with **changes to logistics, ICT and communication** affecting all departments and levels. Everybody needs to acclimatise, and start collaborating with different departments from scratch. 'I miss where we were before, where it was smaller and nicer. Now things are too restless, there are no stable spaces or workstations. You just can't find anyone,' said one of the interviewees. From five locations to a single location is an enormous difference, and the foundation is gone on which the various cultures and the agreements with other departments were built. Everybody needs to start again. CEG also presents a logistical issue. Teachers are sometimes scheduled for CEG in the meanders (or open spaces) where people walk past and can hear what is being said, and students no longer have the security they need to be completely honest and open about career dilemmas.

CEG problem areas

The second line (CEC) has identified a number of problem areas. The CEC is bound by **lots of regulations**, and preventing dropouts and getting students into a new programme fast have priority. Sometimes it would be better to apply a different instrument, but then the centre runs into a lack of time, money and facilities. It is also not always possible to secure a **continuous pathway** and satisfy the compulsory education requirements, for example.

Admissions procedures can also be improved, and **collaboration/feedback** between the first and second line remains problematic. The CEC believes that the first line should be more active. The intake procedure is complicated; first-line entrance interviews are extremely short, or not conducted at all. Opportunities to observe other departments have proven to be very limited, and the CEC also finds it **difficult to contact** first-line staff. The CEC also faces quite a few challenges, such as modified examinations, 'appropriate education' and youth care transition. The CEC believes that the first line should be **quicker in referring students** to the second line. People at the coal face describe the centre as **hectic, busy and sometimes** frustrating.

Support for CEG

First-line interviewees believe that CEG is lacking in support, in terms of both **scope and time**.

Organisation, quality and management of CEG

Management development is required once again in the new

building in order to **work together and learn together**.

Staff also express a preference for students to have **the same guidance counsellor** for the duration of the programme. There is a **lack of coordination among guidance counsellors**, and inconsistency in approaches: between the first and second line, between programmes and between the various years of the same programme. Self-estimates of **CEG competency** could also be improved, as students should be better able to develop the **various career competencies**.

Wishes for developing CEG

Many wishes and ideas have been expressed for the development of CEG. Firstly, the vision on CEG should be **more concrete and vivid**. ROC Amsterdam MBO College West has also expressed a wish for staff to **support each other's development more**, and enter into dialogues with one another in order not only to refine the vision on training and career development, but also to actually **do** something with it. Staff need to know how to take greater advantage of each other's knowhow, and **combine their strengths**. Closer ties must be established between teaching activities and steering one's own career. **Curriculum days** must also be put to better use, the **support base** for CEG strengthened and **peer review** expanded.

Wishes for CEG support

Teachers state that the CEG **groups** must be made smaller; they would also like more **consultation rooms** and a smaller location. Teachers also want to be **locatable and contactable** by students, **more time** and increased support for **flex working** (by telephone, laptop, etc.).

Digital resources could also be simplified. The new portal is more accessible and user-friendly, and must be well-maintained.

Wishes from the CEC

The Career Expertise Centre (CEC) at ROC Amsterdam MBO College West wants to **achieve a greater presence** among students, and the specialist/other **intake procedures** need to start running smoothly. The quality of the **care coordination among programme teams** must also be stabilised and maintained. Communication and handovers could be better, with a more pro-active approach by the programme teams in particular. The CEC also argues for more **parent involvement** in their children's career development. Lastly, there is a desire to use **alumni** to inform students about searching and finding the right job or further study.

Onward and upward!

Settling into the new building is still not without its problems, and some facilities are still perceived as poor or insufficient. It turns out that the various teams all **implement CEG in their own way**. All programme managers are responsible for career education and guidance as a whole, however it is unclear what this means for career continuity policy, for structured counselling, the facilities necessary for providing effective CEG, what professionalisation is required, and coordination between the first and second line. Thankfully there are many positive CEG activities at ROC Amsterdam MBO College West. The school is aiming to safeguard the quality of CEG by updating the standards, however they prove to be not very well-known and/or are not adhered to. It is therefore important for the teams to increase their **interaction regarding the standards**. **Team development plans** could be updated to include the steps to be taken by teams to enhance the quality of CEG.

The positive accounts from colleagues about their first and second-line CEG activities provide many more opportunities for **exchange and mutual learning**. Find the success stories, have students explain why they are happy with their CEG support, and publish the results. The **‘reflective career interviews’ training courses** are also a success, and connect with counsellors’ passion for their work. Participants’ training experiences could be shared more within the team, such as through **peer-review procedures**. Maintaining **counselling competencies** is also seen as an important aspect, one condition being for employees to apply the competencies and reflect on them. The college believes that it is important to hold **working sessions** within teams or between teams, during which first-line CEG counsellors can show their materials. It is also important to discuss students’ work, so that colleagues can explain to one another how the students acquire their career competencies and what the effects of CEG are. Lastly, it is advisable to create a handy list of criteria that CEG must fulfil.

Professionalism of career guidance in practice

VISION, POLICY AND STRATEGY

The ideal preparation for long-term organisational change involves three steps, and the professionalisation of Career Education and Guidance (CEG) is no exception. A transition first needs to be made from vision to policy, and then a strategy is required to implement it. What kinds of things do VET (mbo) institutions do to get this three-step plan off the ground? And where do the difficulties lie?

Written down in just a few lines, it is deceptively simple: without a guiding, inspiring vision (**the 'why'**, i.e. the significance and importance) it is actually impossible to get professionalism of career guidance off the ground within VET institutions. In addition to the vision, it is also essential to formulate a clear policy (**the 'what'**), as it enables people at the coal face to flesh out the development and implementation of Career Education and Guidance. Step three is the strategy (**the 'how'**): determining the steps to be taken by your education institution to put the 'what' into practice. Still, the sessions conducted as part of the present 'Professionalism of Career Guidance' project by Euroguidance have shown that much is involved in these crucial steps.

Educational vision as a starting point

There is no standard formula for CEG, and every education institution needs to develop its **own vision**. The interviews showed that some schools take their own vision on education as a starting point so that **CEG can be a genuinely integrated part** of education. These schools examine the extent to which support for students' careers (and often those of the staff) is expressed in the vision on education, and then formulate a CEG vision. The CEG VET Incentive Project (Stimuleringsproject LOB in het mbo) also involved the creation of methods and resources that VET institutions can use for their own vision and policy development.

The visions of all the schools used in the portraits – regardless of how they were created – are fuelled by a **sense of urgency**; the schools

realise that it is very important for students to learn how they can manage their own careers. Helicon Opleidingen MBO Nijmegen uses a framework document that states: 'CEG contributes to students' ability to cultivate an understanding of their own competencies, qualities, ambitions and motivations, and their development, reducing the number of early school leavers and promoting healthy movement from pre-vocational to VET/ higher professional education, or on to employment. We respond to changes in the labour market that demand more and more versatility from employees, who change jobs more often.' Unfortunately, CEG visions such as this are not communicated in a widespread manner by all VET institutions, which effectively results in the lack of an institution-wide vision: it 'runs aground' with the vision developers and policymakers. ROC Amsterdam MBO College West indicates, for example, that 'it is supposed that all teams are probably doing the same thing', but that it 'has never been discussed'.

The bigger picture

The importance of CEG can be highlighted by **showing how it ties in with other developments in education**, such as Focusing on Professionalism, Targeted Pathways, Appropriate Education and Making Room for Professionalism. This places CEG within a larger context, meaning that instead of being viewed as something completely new, it is regarded as part of a development that is already underway. Right now this is still on the wish list: the interviews have shown that CEG is still being viewed too much as a self-contained element. The bigger picture (or rather: the view of it) is still missing, allowing CEG to slide down the agenda and people to spend time and effort on other priorities. Schools would do well to broadcast the bigger picture using uniform language (a CEG idiom understood by all within the organisation), allowing the CEG vision to become more concrete and vivid, and the realisation to spread that CEG actually makes a positive contribution to the above-mentioned developments in education. This is also a prerequisite for creating a **support base** for an institution-wide CEG vision.

Responsibility

The big picture certainly does not exclude individual interpretations at team level, provided people keep between the lines. For this reason, some of the schools in the portraits **allocate responsibility for CEG as low as possible within the organisation**. Such VET institutions opt for small teams responsible for results, and whose career coaches/guidance counsellors 'develop a pedagogical and dialogue-based relationship with the student', according to one of the interviewees. The danger here, however, is that the teams simply do whatever they like, which is the case in several of the portraits. Within the same institution, this can create CEG with enormous differences between the separate teams. Even the roles, tasks and facilities can differ from team to team, and the coordination between all of these various roles and tasks is not always clear – despite the fact that this is crucial to the smooth implementation of career guidance (and the professionalisation thereof).

The issues noted above are evident in multiple VET institutions. There is clearly a **need for a centralised framework and clarity** (clear task descriptions and communication, and a single CEG idiom). Furthermore, it is important to support team leaders in **interpreting** these centralised frameworks for the various teams. Investing in Educational Leadership can certainly help in this regard.

With and for one another

An effective tool for broadening the support base is to have staff **experience for themselves** how important it is to be career-conscious. This is the case at several VET institutions, and produces the desired results. These schools uphold the adage of 'practice what you preach': the performance and development interviews with staff resemble the career discussions with students, allowing everybody (coaches, managers, the executive) to experience the value of a career-oriented approach for themselves, and to resolve dilemmas jointly. This sense of community also promotes the sharing of useful **CEG instruments** (such as reflection tools), and we must not overlook the fact that **celebrating CEG success stories** (successful interactions, good lessons) also strengthens the sense of community. The schools in the portraits often fail to stop and acknowledge their successes, as things are simply too hectic.

Consistency

This feeling of doing things 'both for and with one another' increases the likelihood of '**consistent configuration**', as Landstede calls it. Or in other words: the mutual coordination and internal consistency of the various components in the educational environment such that they

consolidate and support one another (Hover, 1988). Landstede uses this concept as a basis for its professional and talent development objectives. The expectation is that carrying out CEG reflection sessions at all levels will strengthen the implementation of CEG ideas.

Chain approach

Coordination and consistency is required not only internally, **but externally as well**. The discussions with schools clearly highlight the urgency of approaching other members of the chain. Students will most certainly benefit if pre-vocational education and higher professional education institutions are also involved in creating CEG vision and policy. Helicon Opleidingen MBO Nijmegen has had positive experiences with combined pre-vocational/VET courses in the chain, and information afternoons, action afternoons, shadowing days and alumni activities are also organised. Additionally, Helicon Opleidingen MBO Nijmegen proposes an ideal scenario in which practical company supervisors would learn to conduct reflective career interviews, possibly in consultation with workplace training supervisors from the education institution. In such a scenario, the **dialogue** between schools and students could become a **trialogue**, in which all parties – students, schools and businesses – enter into discussions regarding students' qualities, passions, abilities and career management. For now the scenario remains idealistic, however.

CEG in HRM policy

CEG also affects the HRM policy of the participating schools. The professional development of guidance counsellors, coaches and workplace training supervisors is a **deciding factor** in successful CEG policy, and the interviews with schools have shown that this development is not always properly organised throughout the institution. More on this topic can be read in 'Professionalism of Career Guidance in Practice' (Professionaliteit van loopbaanbegeleiding in de praktijk).

Recommendations for vocational education and training

VISION, POLICY AND STRATEGY

Take the educational vision as a starting point.

Examine the extent to which the educational vision devotes attention to career support for students and staff, and enter into professional dialogues to determine the necessity of including a more explicit formulation of the vision on CEG.

Link CEG to current developments in education.

These include developments such as Focus on Professionalism, Targeted Pathways, Appropriate Education and Making Room for Professionalism. In terms of content, it is easy to associate CEG with professionalism: it is the key preparation for the future. Use policy and work plans to set out in concrete terms how attention to CEG can be identified in these educational developments and in the institution's own HRM policy, in programme redesign and in strengthening the relationship with industry and with feeder/further study programmes.

Create a support base by communicating a vivid and consistent CEG concept.

Communicate the guiding principles, significance, goals and the guaranteed basic quality by projecting a consistent, recognisable and vivid CEG concept. This will generate a support base for CEG policy.

Highlight the importance of CEG, be concrete and formulate SMART.

Communicate the significance and importance of CEG in accordance with your management philosophy. Be clear on its implementation, and agree on SMART goals with the programmes. The CEG portraits have shown that differences can emerge both between and within institutions regarding the quality and pace of CEG implementation. The dilemmas are evident: how to deal

with bottom-up and top-down approaches, teams responsible for results, working with standards, and professional development activities guided by supply and demand.

Ensure cohesion and coordination.

This is crucial in order to project a rigorous CEG concept relevant to students, staff and the organisation as a whole. Ensure cohesion and coordination between:

- the various levels within organisations (the executive, middle management, teachers);
- the various positions, roles and their associated duties (HRM);
- the entire chain: pre-vocational/VET/higher professional education and the labour market.

It is precisely in complex organisations such as VET institutions that cohesion and focus are important, to allow CEG to become part of all educational developments.

Recommendations for teacher training programmes and other educational bodies (public, private, higher professional, etc.)

VISIE, BELEID EN STRATEGIE

Incorporate CEG into the vision on education.

Just as for all VET institutions and organisations, it is also necessary for teacher training programmes and educational bodies to develop a CEG vision as part of their general vision on education. It is important for students to receive career guidance during their admission, study progress, specialisation and graduation.

Have staff participate in career development.

Under the motto of 'practice what you preach', career support for teaching/other staff of teacher-training programmes and educational bodies should play a key role in HRM policy. Examine current HRM policy and establish the extent to which staff career development is a prominent aspect of staff recruitment, appointment, support and evaluation. What are the requirements and opportunities for allowing staff to continue to develop their careers, and contribute as best they can to students' education?

Cater to the requirements of the field.

In the professional development and qualification of teachers, it is important to match the content of available professional development activities/curricula with the requirements of the field, and cooperate with teachers in this regard. Upper secondary vocational education teachers are no longer exclusively subject teachers; they increasingly also act as guidance counsellors in schools' primary processes and during workplace training. CEG can be integrated as a curriculum component into models such as 'Training at Schools' (Opleiden in de School) for future and beginning teachers.

Incorporate CEG into training programmes.

Teacher-training programmes can be enriched through the inclusion of CEG education in the form of modules, projects,

workshops and training courses. This allows students of (initial) teacher-training programmes to gain skills in guidance counselling, including all associated tasks and competencies. CEG should be firmly anchored throughout the curricula of teacher training programmes, and include an attempt to cater for 21st-century competencies. For example, student VET teachers could be trained in the development of CEG activities in a career-oriented learning environment, and in conducting CEG interviews – preferably in consultation with feeder/further education institutions and the industry. It is also important that CEG not merely be a part of the care process (i.e. ancillary support to avoid impending derailment), but to be included as an integral component of education and support for everybody.

Recommendations for national and municipal authorities, education councils, industry and intermediaries (incl. the Social Security Agency)

VISION, POLICY AND STRATEGY

Make career education and guidance a specific point for improvement.

In a competitive and innovative Netherlands, young people and adults must be prepared to take on flexible careers and possess 21st-century skills. In view of lifelong learning, it is therefore also vital that the importance of career support be communicated and facilitated by a range of bodies. In the current age of job insecurity, students and employees have the task of continually shaping their own career prospects. It is the task of the education system, industry, intermediary organisations and government authorities to support them in their efforts. Include career education and guidance as a specific area for improvement in education sectors, in the links between education and the labour market and in the many education and employment policy programmes. Research what can be achieved at interdepartmental level with a joint agenda, and then look at how to implement it at regional and local level. Ensure cohesion and continual career support.

Establish a clear context for CEG.

Schools have a best-efforts obligation with regard to Careers and Citizenship. For the Career component, this means they must provide CEG which, according to the qualification requirements, must focus on five core career competencies: reflection on qualities, reflection on motives, networking, exploration of study programmes and work, and career management. It is advisable to clarify the precise context in which students are able to develop these career competencies, in order to avoid career competencies becoming an end in themselves instead of a means of shaping one's career and of seeking out answers to career-related questions. This context must encompass the student's entire academic career, from admission, progress and workplace training to graduation and moving on to the labour market or further education. Refining the

description of the Career component (i.e. the 'what') may utilise the same format of core tasks, work processes and competencies comparable to that used in the qualification files for the professional component. This may offer schools a more stable foothold as they move on to defining approaches/methods (i.e. the 'how').

Draw up a quality framework.

In addition to clarifying the context for CEG, professional development in the field would also benefit from an unambiguous, common basic quality standard for CEG. Government authorities and the VET sector are in a position to formulate a set of such standards, which would provide a framework for the primary guidance and education process, second-line support and HRM policy. Exactly how VET institutions implement CEG will remain the responsibility of the individual institution. A quality framework will allow executive boards and management to more accurately fine-tune professional career support in VET, and enable students to learn to shape their own careers.

Facilitate interaction with other chain organisations in the region. Develop a joint regional CEG vision, framework and language, and establish a regional consultative platform where these aspects can be discussed in the long term. It is important to enable contact throughout the chain and keep vulnerable transition points to a minimum. This is why investment in continuous career guidance is necessary. At all transition points (within and between work and education), it is important for municipal authorities, the Social Security Agency, training and employment help desks ('leerwerkloketten'), Regional Notification and Coordination Centres (RMCs) and businesses to take responsibility for students, employees and jobseekers, and retain it until the transition is complete. Students and jobseekers must also be expressly encouraged to take responsibility of their own.

Focus on collaboration to support at-risk youth.

The Education Council produced a recommendation titled 'United for an uninterrupted academic career' (Samen voor een ononderbroken schoolloopbaan) in which it highlights the importance of cohesion when dealing with at-risk youth. The council also argues for a greater focus on substantive collaboration between education and youth services and the professional development thereof. Furnishing these collaborative teams with career experts could yield massive benefits in terms of effectively guiding young people towards a promising school career.

Professionalism of career guidance in practice

PROFESSIONALISM OF GUIDANCE COUNSELLORS

Guidance counsellors are the key figures in the development and implementation of professional career guidance. Clarity of roles, tasks and competencies provides a framework for establishing their level of professionalism. Professional development policy acquires its structure and content in accordance with the developmental goals of guidance counsellors and programme teams. How does this happen in practice?

Not to put too fine a point on it: there are plenty of opportunities for improving the above-mentioned clarity. The practical analysis of Educational Leadership has shown that the description of roles, tasks and competencies of the staff involved in career guidance could be made clearer. Roles and tasks clarify what needs to be done, and inform staff of what is expected of them.

The competencies of guidance counsellors

Despite the above-mentioned lack of clarity, all VET institutions have a **clear idea of the 'ideal guidance counsellor'**. The most oft-cited competencies include commitment, flexibility/multiple skill sets, skill in conducting career interviews, a solution-oriented approach, as well as empathy and patience. It is also important to keep career-development-related qualification requirements in mind, to be able to manage career competencies and to translate all of the above into CEG activities for students. Subject expertise is also highly valued, especially if this means having a full awareness of the latest developments in professional practice and a good relationship with the business community, as these qualities not only enable **effective dialogues** with students, but also career-oriented discussions among guidance counsellors, students and workplace trainers. During the research interviews, Summa Laboratorium was one organisation to demonstrate the added value of these types of discussions.

Professional development opportunities

Looking at the ideal scenario, a good deal is expected of guidance counsellors. Some may naturally possess many of the competencies in the list above, while others still need to learn. The institutions in the portraits offer quite a lot of professional development opportunities for guidance counsellors (in terms of learning and change), both through **learning on the job**, and participation in training courses or workshops.

At the portrait institutions, **career coaches** have been trained as part of the CEG VET Incentive Plan (Stimuleringsplan LOB), who took the training course on **'conducting career interviews in dialogue'** and, under the **train-the-trainer-concept**, are able to train other coaches in their organisation. The **training** course employs the new concepts surrounding career development and acquisition of career competencies. Various guidance counsellors also undertook training in **interviewing techniques** and for **their role as coaches** that was not part of the Incentive Plan. Such training is mandatory at some education institutions; at others, staff can **request training** themselves if they feel they need it.

Despite the many forms that professional development can take, the elements of 'time' and 'scope' often form a barrier in practice. Many employees have an enormous **workload**. 'You need to decide whether to have your staff learn or work,' says one of the interviewees from Summa Laboratorium. 'There are currently subjects that are more important: progress or development-based assessment and examination. It's learning verses selection.' And if some scope is found for training activities, the choice does not always fall on CEG.

Effective career guidance for the staff themselves

Those who are able to deliberately steer and shape their own careers are in a better position to help students to do so. For example, it is possible to ruminate on one's own career using the competencies formulated for students. This realisation has dawned on some staff at the VET institutions in the portraits. As one teacher says: **'Teach as you preach'**: you should also master the very content and methods you want to teach your students.' One colleague notes: 'Coaches need both professional and interpersonal skills. Interviews must be of professional quality. Teachers also need to be constantly refining **their own competencies**'.

Helicon Opleidingen MBO Nijmegen has staff discuss their own careers during **performance interviews**. The school draws up 'profiles' for each teacher outlining their various qualities and preferences, which are then taken into consideration during the annual distribution of tasks and projects. During performance interviews, teachers reflect on their performance and **formulate learning objectives** and **career goals** – these interviews are more developmental than evaluative in nature.

During performance interviews at Summa Laboratorium, staff can also indicate how they wish to shape their careers. 'It's easy for staff to shape their own careers here,' says an interviewee. 'During your performance interview, you can always state that you want to work differently, to undertake some training/education, or take on different duties. They always see whether it can be done. You do need to figure it all out yourself, but there are actually never any barriers. If teams want to do some PD, that's fine too.'

CEG professionalisation for all!

'CEG is a way of looking at students, it's an attitude. It doesn't just happen during lessons or meetings, and it's something that all staff participate in. Even canteen staff do it, if they notice anything wrong with a student.' This is a beautiful quote from one of the staff at Helicon. These three sentences underscore a sentiment shared by multiple education institutions. Landstede, for example, states that **all coaches, teachers, managers and Executive Board members** must receive training so that everybody conducts career reflection interviews with students and teachers in the same manner. This approach also allows CEG to potentially become part of educational practice, which – given 'the bigger picture' (see also the practical accounts on Vision, Policy and Strategy) – is certainly to be desired.

Monitoring the effects of professionalisation

With expectations/requirements on the one hand and the opportunities for professional development on the other, it is interesting to look at how career guidance is monitored within the institutions and – as an extension thereof – how the effects of professionalisation can be observed. The interviews first of all reveal that the team members keep each other on their toes. Staff within teams approach each other with professionalism, asking: What do we think needs to happen? For this reason, various schools invest in a feedback culture. A greater focus could be placed on conducting **professional dialogues** between staff and their managers.

There are also various other ways to monitor professionalisation. Landstede, for example, conducted an **evaluation study** among students and teachers, revealing (among other things) that 78% of students are satisfied (or very satisfied) with the counselling and coaching they receive. At Helicon Opleidingen MBO Nijmegen, managers monitor teaching staff in order to enable timely intervention if necessary. This monitoring includes an **annual lesson inspection**.

As mentioned above, CEG professionalisation is also included as an agenda item in the cycle of PDP, performance and assessment interviews. The interviews are constructed using input from a self-assessment, 360-degree feedback from colleagues, and the manager's evaluation. In any case, **maintaining professionalism** in CEG remains important to all schools: refresher and in-depth training courses are offered, and people take part in the CEG-café run by VET Services and the Dutch Secondary Education Council, and the knowledge exchange sessions as part of the VET CEG Incentive Plan (Stimuleringsplan LOB).

Recommendations for Vocational Education and Training

PROFESSIONALISM OF GUIDANCE COUNSELLORS

Create a clear description of roles, tasks and competencies.

Clearly describe the roles, tasks and competencies required of the staff involved in career guidance. These include first-line staff (teachers/career subject teachers, workplace training supervisors), the management and the executive, as well as second-line staff (work placement office, service desks and supervisors in work placement host companies). In this sense, it may be useful to gain inspiration from the publication titled 'Professionalising Career Education and Guidance (CEG) in various forms and sizes', commissioned by the Dutch Secondary Education Council (VO-raad). Roles and tasks represent a means of converting vision and policy into lessons, activities, projects and interviews, both within the school and during work placements. Roles and tasks clarify what needs to be done, as well as when and by whom. The competencies outline the CEG skills that staff must possess in order to perform the roles and tasks effectively. Lastly, roles, tasks and competencies also lay important groundwork for the initiation of professionalisation activities. The identification of roles, tasks and competencies is precisely the sort of thing that the executive can address in conjunction with HRM, while consulting of course with middle management, second-line staff and those in the primary process.

Organise CEG professionalisation activities for everybody.

Work together with work placement companies to organise CEG professionalisation activities for all study-programme levels: management/team leaders, first and second-line guidance counsellors, teachers, and work placement company supervisors. Also include alumni and students from higher years, and ensure that the activities have variety and meet the needs of the different employee groups. Timing is also of great importance: the activities must be relevant to the current stage of CEG in the study programme, otherwise staff will not be able to apply their new

knowledge in practice. In their professionalisation activities, many education institutions seem to focus on conducting reflective career interviews. Although these are important, of course, it is also important to learn to develop CEG activities for inclusion as part of the curriculum. This approach allows education institutions to create a career-oriented learning environment with a high degree of practical relevance, which encourages reflection and provides options.

Monitor the effects of professionalisation and review plans regularly.

It is important to monitor the effects of CEG professionalisation at all levels, as it allows education institutions to establish whether the activities help to realise professionalisation plans at organisational, team and individual level. It is also important to review professionalisation plans once a year. Against the backdrop of vision, policy, and internal and external developments in particular, this allows education institutions to identify any changes required in the direction taken for professionalisation in order to improve CEG for students. It is important to continually compare the effects of CEG and the effects of professionalisation.

Ensure proper career guidance for staff

Career guidance for all employees should be more firmly anchored throughout VET: on the one hand to encourage staff to continue to develop their talents and to discover and achieve their ambitions (in VET or elsewhere), and on the other, to put them in a better position to talk to students about their future and careers. Staff can also use the career competencies formulated for students to think about and discuss their own careers, and move on to make decisions and take action. Career competencies could become part of the annual interview cycle. In a learning organisation, it is

not management and monitoring that will need to take priority, but learning, development and experimentation, along with the importance of strengthening a collective learning culture. The development of individual employees (and their careers) will certainly benefit from collective learning processes in which all staff share knowledge and experience with their colleagues.

Recommendations for teacher-training programmes and other educational bodies (public, private, higher professional, etc.)

PROFESSIONALISM OF GUIDANCE COUNSELLORS

First and foremost, the professionalisation of career counselling should start with lecturers of teacher-training programmes.

The right kind of professional development in career counselling will enable lecturers of teacher-training programmes to support their students in their personal careers as well as in using career counselling in their future roles. Lecturers who actively provide career counselling should complete a more in-depth development programme, to enable them to provide up-to-date and innovative career counselling programmes at higher professional level.

Career counselling must cater to the requirements of the field.

To ensure that lecturers can effectively fulfil their roles as career counsellors, it is important that teacher-training and other education programmes be in line with the requirements of the field where their students will ultimately be working (i.e. secondary schools and VET schools), and with researchers. This will ensure the continued relevance of education programmes to the students' future professions and keep the programmes up-to-date (including the latest developments in career counselling).

Training programmes for various counselling pathways.

Specialist higher professional career and HRM programmes, teacher-training programmes and the remainder of the (often private) education sector must develop and offer a modern and engaging range of training options for career centres, service centres, centres offering career-based educational trajectories and other facilities offering second-line career counselling in the VET sector. The career counsellors in this pathway must be competent in career counselling themselves, but must also be able to collaborate effectively with both first and third-line services (specialist career

and other extramural support). Coordination with the professional field (secondary schools, VET schools and third-line support) is also important here in order to ensure a challenging range of training options.

Recommendations for national and municipal authorities, education councils, industry and intermediaries (incl. the Social Security Agency)

PROFESSIONALISM OF GUIDANCE COUNSELLORS

Encourage and support professional development.

The government should play an encouraging and supporting role in the professional development of guidance counsellors in VET. Such concerns often play out over the long term. Projects such as the CEG VET Incentive Project (Stimuleringsproject LOB in het mbo) and developments such as the 'Teachers' Registry' (Lerarenregister) and the 'Teachers' Agenda' (Lerarenagenda) are important for bolstering the professional development of guidance counsellors. However, even in the beginning it is worthwhile devoting thorough consideration to how VET institutions can take ownership of and guide this process themselves. In addition, supporting collaboration surrounding the transitions between feeder (i.e. secondary) schools, further (i.e. higher professional) education institutions and industry can also have a positive effect on professionalism – it is precisely these opportunities that allow the exchange of knowledge and experience concerning not only students, but also employees' own professional development. This allows professionals to genuinely learn to understand each other, and to look beyond the boundaries of their own working environment.

Develop a framework.

It is important that a framework be developed that sets out the qualification criteria for first, second and third-line guidance counsellors, for which existing frameworks in the Netherlands and Europe can serve as inspiration or a starting point. It would also be best to link such a framework to the (revised) competencies of the Association for the Professional Quality of Teachers (SBL) and the Teachers' Registry, with a view to consistency and unambiguous use of language. This approach will ensure that career guidance is embedded more firmly within the competency requirements for teachers in VET. This framework will provide the definitive point of reference and justification for professional development activities

among VET institutions and training programmes (including teacher-training programmes). Professional guidance counsellors will enable the VET sphere to better guarantee the provision of good-quality CEG.

Professionalism of career guidance in practice

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Targeted efforts and management are necessary in order to make career guidance a reality for both students and staff within programme teams. This type of 'Educational Leadership' (a role normally fulfilled by programme managers and team leaders) entails a number of tasks. What are these tasks? And what is the current state of affairs in Educational Leadership?

Education institutions wishing to ensure continuous high quality of career education and guidance and steer it in the right direction need more than just vision, policy and strategy – Educational Leadership is also necessary for CEG to gain a genuine operational foothold. In practice, such leadership is provided by team leaders and programme managers. Some VET institutions allocate the responsibility for CEG as low as possible within the organisation, resulting in action by small, results-oriented teams. The benefit of this decentralised approach is that nobody is forced into any kind of straitjacket. It allows for some degree of variation, and enables each team member and manager/job holder to make the best contribution they can. However, adequate direction and support is still required in order to produce effective, career-oriented education. There must be someone at the helm in order to:

- enhance the support base for CEG and retain control of the development and implementation of career education within the curriculum and counselling/support structure;
- draw up team and professional development plans;
- safeguard the required CEG competencies when hiring new staff;
- ensure appropriate support; and

monitor and assess the effects of CEG professionalisation, of CEG for students and of CEG for staff.

The interviews with the five VET institutions revealed that much improvement is still possible with regard to Educational Leadership. Several points for attention are given below.

Support base and management

Successful realisation requires a support base. The interview sessions revealed that although staff are fully aware of the importance of CEG, this does not necessarily guarantee the presence of a shared CEG vision. 'There is still **plenty of work** required within teams to ensure **the vision is properly embedded**, discussed and implemented in order to achieve the desired changes in CEG,' says one of the staff from Summa Laboratorium. It is also extremely important that any changes be implemented with the proper supervision. Consultations between team leaders/programme managers within the same VET institution help in this regard. This happens rarely or never at the portrait schools, however: people are concerned mainly with their own programmes. The **workload and full agendas** during consultations and meetings make **mutual exchanges difficult**.

This can result in a lack of clarity, an aspect that emerged from nearly all of the interview sessions. There is a great deal of **confusion** regarding the various concepts in use. The correlations and distinctions between Career Education and Guidance (CEG), guidance counselling (Studieloopbaanbegeleiding, SLB) and the Career and Citizenship qualification criteria across the board are not adequately defined. The **correlations and distinctions between the various roles** (guidance counsellors, C&C teachers, careers coaches, career counsellors, mentors, start coaches) **and tasks** remain vague. This lack of clarity makes it difficult to draw up – and adhere to – effective agreements. There needs to be more **communication** in both directions, preferably using the same 'CEG language', otherwise the teams become subject to **'irritation and a lack of balance and understanding'**, as formulated by one of the Landstede interviewees. All of the above requires strong Educational Leadership.

Team and PD plans

Both teams and individuals are expected to **invest time in** professional development. Most of the portrait schools include CEG in their Team Development Plans (TDP) and Personal Development Plans (PDP). However, these plans contain too little information on what is going well, what can be improved and who is going to improve what, and by what time. Some education institutions also display **major differences within teams**, as well as in terms of the quality of plans, as shown by the interviews.

Helicon Opleidingen MBO Nijmegen is taking a serious approach: in their PDPs, staff must commit to one or two **CEG-oriented activities** in in their classes or support role. Other schools adopt a less concrete approach, and only one of the portrait schools has a CEG professional development plan. 'Everyone is learning all the time, it just isn't written down anywhere', says one staff member. Effective guidance of this process requires **educational leadership** and the confidence of the team in their programme manager/team leader.

New staff

Targeted recruitment and selection can also allow education institutions to acquire the requisite CEG qualities. Helicon Opleidingen MBO Nijmegen has developed an approach to careers education for both students and teachers, based on the idea that those who are able to deliberately steer and shape their own careers are in a better position to help students to do so. **Job interviews** with new teachers therefore devote explicit attention to careers, by asking career-based questions such as 'What is your passion?', 'What do you derive the most energy from?', 'Where would you like to make a contribution?' and probing candidates' responses. Likewise, at Summa Laboratorium, recruitment policy always devotes attention to the tasks of the guidance counsellor. However: 'If the only applicants are those who are very good at their subjects but have no guidance counselling skills, they are hired anyway'. Here, again, it is up to the Educational Manager to demand constant attention to CEG during the recruitment and selection of new teachers.

Support

The proper structuring of CEG produces a high workload, due to the large amount of work required by **changes in VET** such as appropriate education, care responsibilities and Focus on Professionalism. In all portrait schools, employees have **too little time and freedom**. ROC van Amsterdam MBO College West therefore also believes that the CEG **groups** should be smaller. They would also like more consultation rooms and a smaller location. Teachers also want to be **locatable and contactable**

by students and to receive support for **flex working** (by telephone, laptop, etc.). The **digital resources** already available could also be simplified. The Educational Manager is the key figure in all of these desired or existing support aspects, and is the one to ensure that staff receive the support they need in order to carry out CEG policy. Otherwise all good intentions will come to naught...

Assurance

Assurance is a crucial component of implementation, and it is the Educational Manager's responsibility to steer this in the right direction. This process is also subject to some problems. Most of the portrait schools still do not enjoy **institution-wide support** for CEG. A support base and the other items mentioned above (clear management, adequate facilities and the hiring of new staff with CEG qualities) are key quality assurance criteria for CEG. There is currently too little clarity, **and not enough cohesion**. Not to mention the lack of time and available scope. This makes it almost impossible for the team leaders/programme managers to monitor and assess the effects of CEG professional development. The task becomes even more difficult if, for example, guidance counselling teachers are on temporary contracts, as stated by someone from Helicon Opleidingen MBO Nijmegen. This will permit the disappearance of any CEG qualities the school already does possess...

In brief...

Much improvement is possible, as we can see, but only if team leaders and programme managers have the right support. This could take the form of a **special professional development programme**, dealing with the topics of creating a support base, seeking out connections, support for development processes in terms of both content and time, clarifying the criteria for association/integration of CEG with/into current developments in education, using a uniform language for CEG, and quality assurance.

Recommendations for vocational education and training (VET)

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Professionalise educational leadership.

The implementation process for CEG requires educational leadership, taking vision and policy as a basis to realise CEG in practice. The task of educational managers is to create a support base, improve direction, determine scope for innovation, support the CEG development process and safeguard the quality of CEG. Teachers who advance to the role of team leader (thereby becoming responsible for educational leadership), would do well to complete an appropriate specialised professional development programme.

Stress the importance of CEG, and ensure a solid CEG concept.

Focus on the importance of CEG for everybody. Provide inspiration, support, and be tenacious in leadership. Foster a culture of speaking out, in which keeping quiet and saying nothing is not an option. Ensure communication of a uniform CEG concept: one that is shared at all levels, and was created in dialogue. Give this concept concrete expression through a curriculum, support and a professional development policy.

Take a two-pronged approach: one for organisation/team level, and one for individual employees.

Educational managers must establish CEG from two directions. The first is that of the organisation, in which HR policy and team development plans are formulated to provide for professional development and to cater for the 'organisational objectives'. The second is that of the staff, in which personal development plans are formulated, stating the PD preferences of guidance counsellors. These plans must be in line with individuals' goals. Both approaches furnish content for the CEG professionalisation plan, which not only states all the activities the institution and employees will undertake, but also provides scope for the timing of, and a balance between,

team and individual professionalisation. Educational managers ensure not only the formulation of clear objectives, but also their interim, final and follow-up monitoring. Educational managers also coordinate professionalisation plans with the second line, with workplace training and other potentially relevant areas. Educational managers therefore play a key role in safeguarding CEG objectives and the professionalism that they demand, as well as making a vital contribution to the formation of a strategy to achieve the objectives (and updating the strategy along the way as necessary).

Ensure coordination and sufficient scope through consistent configuration.

When implementing career policy, uphold the principle of consistent configuration: coordinate various elements and make them internally consistent in a way that enables them to support and consolidate one another. This coordination must apply to both staff and students. Take responsibility in terms of staff careers, but also give them the opportunity to be responsible themselves. Educational managers must act as initial constructive partners in dialogue, and refer to other experts where necessary.

Include CEG in recruitment and selection.

In recruitment and selection policy, it is important to be aware of the team's current level of CEG professionalism, and of how long it is likely to remain so. Educational managers can use this information when appointing new staff, and can make a conscious decision about whether to select according to career guidance skills.

Recommendations for teacher-training programmes and other educational bodies (public, private, higher professional, etc.)

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Offer PD/refresher training for the position of educational manager/team leader.

Teacher-training programmes could organise refresher courses or modules as part of initial degree programmes to enhance educational leadership in VET at team-leader (i.e. tactical) level. Such courses/modules should address the following topics: creating a support base, improving management, determining scope for innovation, support for the development process in terms of both content and time, implementation, quality assurance and the ability to communicate effectively with both upper management and those at the coal face, i.e. at strategic and operational level. In short: provide training in which team leaders learn tactical adaptation as educational managers. Such training benefits not only CEG, but also other areas that require addressing.

Offer PD/refresher training for the position of educational manager and HRM staff.

Teacher-training programmes could develop refresher courses focusing on career-oriented HR policy in VET, aimed at educational managers (middle management) and HR staff. These courses should focus on optimising recruitment & selection, advancement and outflow, professionalisation and the career ambitions of staff in VET, and potentially also on career guidance for students.

Recommendations for national and municipal authorities, education councils, industry and intermediaries (incl. the Social Security Agency)

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Make use of the job evaluation system and the competencies of the Association for the Professional Quality of Teachers (SBL).

The job evaluation system (Fuwasys BVE) and the (revised) competencies of the Association for the Professional Quality of Teachers (SBL competencies) can be used to define the roles, tasks and competencies of educational managers at middle-management (i.e. tactical) level. These will include, in any case: creating a support base, improving management, determining scope for innovation, support for the development process in terms of both content and time, implementation, quality assurance and the ability to communicate effectively with both upper management and operational-level staff.

Use the professional expertise available in the sector.

Ensure that professional careers expertise – including expertise outside the classroom – is used to ensure increased professionalisation in VET. Here, the focus lies on career support within the institution-student-industry triangle. For educational managers, this mainly means attention to skills: establishing contact, creating connections (i.e. being aware, respecting and making use of each other's interests and positions) and collaboration. In CEG, it is also important to make use of contacts throughout

- pre-vocational education;
- vocational education and training (VET);
- higher professional education chain;
- and co-makship.

Ensure cohesion and continuity.

It is important for the government to create uniformity and cohesion in the areas it addresses. Uphold the principle of consistent configuration: coordinate various elements and make them internally consistent in a way that enables them to support and consolidate one another. Continue to focus on CEG, even after the CEG VET Incentive Project is complete.



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