



A.4.1 Career Guidance Provision 4.0

Competence Profile

Desk research on qualification criteria, learning outcomes for career guidance practitioners, trainers and relevant labour market inclusion professionals

DECEMBER 2024

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1 INTRODUCTION

Career guidance in Europe has become increasingly important in recent years, especially in the context of rapid changes in the labor market and emerging workforce needs. This report focuses on identifying the situation of career guidance practitioners in five European Union countries: Spain, Cyprus, Greece, Italy and Romania.

In Europe, career guidance is seen as a fundamental tool to help people improve their career path through learning, skills development and adapting to job transitions. The European Commission has put academic and vocational guidance at the heart of its strategy, recognizing its importance in achieving ambitious targets, such as getting 50% of adults aged 25-64 to participate in training.

This document presents an initiative to establish standardized qualification criteria, learning outcomes and certification processes for career guidance professionals, trainers and other relevant professionals in the context of Industry 4.0. The project will include:

- Analysis of the transformation of career guidance services in Industry 4.0
- Desk research – Mapping of existing national competency profiles
- Credentials and skills recognition procedures
- Surveys of professionals in partner countries

The ultimate goal is to propose a Competency Profile for the Provision of Career Guidance 4.0, reflecting the skills and knowledge needed for professionals in this evolving field.

2 THE TRANSFORMATION OF CAREER GUIDANCE SERVICES IN INDUSTRY 4.0

The **Fourth Industrial Revolution (Industry 4.0)** has introduced profound changes in the labor market, driven by **automation, artificial intelligence (AI), digitalization, and new work models** such as remote and hybrid employment. These transformations have significantly impacted **career guidance services**, requiring professionals to adopt new **competencies, tools, and approaches** to effectively support individuals in managing their careers.

Artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming career guidance and counseling by enhancing personalization, efficiency, and labor market intelligence. AI-powered tools, such as automated career assessments, chatbot-based counseling, and AI-driven job matching systems, can provide data-driven career recommendations tailored to individual preferences and labor market trends (Cedefop, 2021). These advancements increase accessibility, allowing career services to reach a wider audience and offer real-time career insights (Barnes et al., 2020). However, Kettunen & Sampson (2019) emphasize that career professionals often lack AI-related training, which may lead to misinterpretation of AI-generated insights or over-reliance on automated decision-making. Ethical concerns, such as AI bias in job matching algorithms and data privacy risks, also pose significant challenges (Cedefop et al., 2020). While AI enhances career services, it should complement, rather than replace, human interaction, ensuring that career guidance remains empathetic, individualized, and ethical.

The **digitalization of career guidance services has introduced both opportunities and challenges for career practitioners and individuals seeking career support**. According to Cedefop (2021), the transition to digital career services requires new professional competencies, including proficiency in ICT tools, data-driven decision-making, and ethical management of digital career platforms. Career counselors are now expected to integrate AI-driven job matching, virtual reality career simulations, e-portfolios, and online self-assessment tools into their practice, enhancing the accessibility and personalization of career services (Barnes et al., 2020). However, Kettunen & Sampson (2019) highlight that many career professionals lack adequate training in these emerging technologies, which can hinder their ability to provide effective guidance in digital environments. Furthermore, ethical concerns related to data security, AI bias, and the depersonalization of counseling interactions must be addressed to ensure that digital career services remain client-centered and equitable.

One of the most notable shifts is the **integration of digital tools** into career guidance practices. **Online career assessments, AI-driven job matching platforms, virtual career counseling, e-portfolios, and serious games** have become essential components of modern career services. These technologies enhance accessibility, allowing individuals to receive guidance remotely while offering **data-driven insights** to personalize career support. However, this shift also presents challenges, as career professionals must acquire **digital literacy skills** and navigate ethical concerns related to **data privacy and AI-driven decision-making**.

Another key transformation is the **emphasis on lifelong career management skills**. As jobs become increasingly dynamic and automation reshapes traditional roles, career guidance must focus on **reskilling, upskilling, and adaptability**. The role of career counselors has expanded beyond traditional job placement to include **future-proof career planning, digital career readiness, and empowerment** for individuals facing career transitions.

Another critical aspect of Industry 4.0 is its **impact on career readiness and lifelong employability**. The McKinsey Global Institute (2018) emphasizes that automation is redefining skill requirements, increasing demand for adaptability, digital literacy, and social-emotional competencies. As a result, career guidance must shift from traditional job placement models to fostering continuous career development, reskilling, and proactive career management (Hirschi, 2017). This shift is particularly important in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, which accelerated digital work models and remote career services (Cedefop et al., 2020). However,

digital career services risk exacerbating inequalities, particularly for individuals with limited digital access or lower technological literacy. Therefore, a blended approach—combining face-to-face guidance with digital innovations—is necessary to ensure inclusive and equitable career services that effectively support diverse populations.

On the other hand, Industry 4.0 has also introduced **inequalities in access to career guidance services**, particularly for vulnerable populations who may lack **digital resources or skills (digital divide)**. Ensuring **inclusive career guidance** requires a **blended approach**, combining traditional face-to-face services with digital tools while fostering **social-emotional competencies** such as **resilience, adaptability, and career decision-making self-efficacy**. As career guidance becomes increasingly digital, concerns over **accessibility and inclusion arise, particularly for vulnerable groups** such as low-income individuals, older workers, and those with limited digital literacy. According to McKinsey Global Institute (2018), the shift towards AI-driven and online career services can widen the digital divide, limiting opportunities for those without adequate technology access. Hirschi (2017) highlights that career services must actively integrate inclusive strategies, such as blended guidance models that combine digital tools with face-to-face support. Additionally, Cedefop et al. (2020) suggest that career counselors should focus on enhancing digital skills for clients, ensuring that individuals can effectively navigate online job searches, digital applications, and virtual interviews. Policymakers and career professionals must work together to design accessible career platforms, provide digital literacy training, and ensure equitable access to career services, preventing the exclusion of disadvantaged populations in the Industry 4.0 labor market.

In conclusion, the transformation of career guidance in Industry 4.0 presents both **opportunities and challenges**. To remain effective, career counselors must continuously develop **new competencies, integrate emerging technologies, and balance digital innovation with ethical and client-centered approaches**. Moving forward, targeted **training programs, competency frameworks, and policy support** will be essential to equip career professionals with the necessary skills to **navigate the complexities of Industry 4.0** and support individuals in achieving sustainable and fulfilling careers.

3 TRAINING AND QUALIFICATIONS OF CAREER GUIDANCE PRACTITIONERS

3.1.1 CYPRUS

In Cyprus, career guidance and counseling services for all citizens are provided through a multifaceted approach involving different agencies and government institutions. The Cyprus National Forum of Lifelong Guidance was established in March 2012 by a decision of the Council of Ministers. Enhancing the provision of guidance and counselling services to all population groups is a policy priority, as outlined in the Lifelong Learning Strategy 2014-2020, (Ethniki Stratigiki dia Viou Mathisis) for Cyprus. The vision of Cyprus as for Lifelong Learning (LLL) and lifelong guidance (LLG) is to define an integrated strategy which covers all kinds/types of learning - formal, non-formal and informal at all levels - from pre-school, primary, secondary general and vocational education to higher education, vocational training and adult education. This strategy aims to form a system that ensures that all individuals have the motivation, support, guidance, means, resources and time to participate in learning activities throughout their lifetime.

The main actors for guidance and counselling in Cyprus are the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sport and Youth (MESCY), the Ministry of Labour Welfare and Social Insurance (MLWSI) and the Human Resource Development Authority (HRDA).

- The Career Guidance and Education Service (CCES) of the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth is a service that focuses on the personal, social, educational and vocational development of high school students and the general population. Career guidance and counseling offices are in all public secondary and technical schools, and there are central career guidance offices in the Ministry of Education and Culture. This service provides comprehensive support to help individuals develop their self-esteem, identify their competencies, use their skills for self-awareness, acquire coping competences, adapt to the school environment, and make informed educational and vocational decisions based on an understanding of the various professions and the current socioeconomic landscape. The services are provided by qualified guidance counsellors, who have gone through specialised post-graduate education. The counsellors are placed in each secondary school and at the central offices of the CCES at the MECSY.
- The Vocational Guidance Service of the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance is delivered through the Public Employment Service (PES). It provides information on employment prospects and opportunities or on skills-training possibilities. Furthermore, the PES provide assistance to employers, job-seekers and those in employment who wish to change jobs, through registration and placement services, provision of information on training opportunities and job vacancies. The candidate placement system performs a wide range of functions, including: registration and updating of clients' history; registration of employers and vacancies; and monitoring clients interviews with employers. The Department of Labour of the MLWSI, in accordance with the Euroguidance initiative (EUROGUIDANCE CYPRUS), provides information about private and public education and training opportunities that exist in Cyprus and in Europe in general.
- The Human Resources Development Authority (HRDA) perform each year a series of surveys and studies on labour market needs and current trends. The studies are available on the its website for further use from all interested parties and services in the field of employment guidance.

Furthermore, the Cyprus Youth Board (Organismos Neoleas Kyprou, ONEK), in cooperation with local youth organisations has information and counselling facilities targeting the young people up to 30 years old. They provide guidance and counselling through its "Youth Information Centres" (KEPLI). The Youth Information Centres operate based on European standards and provide young people with general information and counselling services on issues that interest youngsters. The information is provided in both printed and electronic form by the personnel of these Centres, through activities and by offering free access to the internet.

Finally, career counseling and guidance services are offered by other organizations as well (e.g. career centers of Universities and Colleges, private career guidance offices, non-governmental organizations etc.).

3.1.2 GREECE

Career guidance and counseling (CGC) services in Greece have been provided by a wide range of public and private entities in the fields of education, training, employment and social inclusion (Cedefop, 2020). Since the 1950s, professionals have been a very diverse group in terms of formal qualifications, knowledge, skills and competences. As a result, a wide range of people with diverse scientific backgrounds and professional capacities have been involved in CGC provision. Most are university graduates from different disciplines (psychologists, sociologists, educators, business consultants, economists, researchers) or have attended relevant in-service training, while only a relatively small percentage has completed university level education in CGC (Cedefop, 2021, Cedefop, 2023).

The competence of professionals and the professionalization of career counselors has been a central element in the systemic interventions initiated by EOPPEP (National Organization for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance). These interventions have included the creation of ethical and quality standards (Cedefop, 2020; Vlachaki and Gaitanis, 2014). However, the creation of the Career Guidance Occupational Profile in 2014 was a major effort that was linked to official accreditation (Vlachaki and Gaitanis, 2014), mapping the tasks and responsibilities of guidance practitioners in different career services, the necessary knowledge, competences and skills, as well as the relevant educational paths. This applies to all practitioners/professionals working in their particular setting. The profile defines two distinct levels of professional hierarchy and areas of competence for career guidance professional practice as following: level B career guidance counsellor (basic level) and level A career guidance counsellor (expert level) (Cedefop et. al., 2021, Cedefop, 2023). The initial occupational profile has been updated in 2024, considering the digital transformation of career guidance services as well as new emerging tasks, knowledge, competencies and skills for career guidance practitioners.

3.1.3 ITALY

The role of the Guidance Advisor is regulated in the document of the Unified Conference of the Council of Ministers "Definition of minimum standards of services and professional skills of operators with reference to the functions and guidance services currently in place in the different territorial contexts and in the Education, Training and Labor systems" (Repertory of acts no. 136/CU of 13 November 2014).

At present, as mentioned in the inventory of guidance systems and practices throughout life - Italy (Cedefop, 2020) there are no formal university programs in career guidance and initial training in this field is not yet developed or offered. Most guidance practitioners have training in psychology, economics and business administration, labor law and pedagogy.

According to new guidelines for lifelong career guidance (DM 328 of 2022), for the implementation of career guidance services in all schools, teachers responsible for career guidance activities at each secondary school attend a 20-hour training course.

3.1.4 SPAIN

Guidance professionals must achieve at least EQF level 6. A four-year degree in Pedagogy, Psychology or Social Education (240 ECTS) is required. Other employees performing guidance-related tasks also have degrees in Labor Relations, Economics or a similar field with a short training course in the field of career information and guidance.

In addition, there are postgraduate training courses (level 7 EQF and one academic year) in both public and private universities related to career guidance:

- University master's degree in vocational training and Guidance for Work (University of Seville).
- University master's degree in vocational Guidance (UNED)
- University master's degree in labor Guidance and Intermediation (University of Murcia).

The job market for the figure of the guidance counselor is made up of positions in public administrations/entities and jobs in private companies/entities (NGOs, placement agencies, temporary employment agencies...).

3.1.5 ROMANIA

The aim of guidance and counselling in Romania is to provide tailored personal development interventions and to facilitate transitions of individuals between different stages of the educational system and of working life. The current setup of the guidance and counselling services in Romania has been created in the 1990s, with successive updates afterwards. The main providers of these services are schools, universities and the public employment offices.

Two important networks provide guidance services: the network of educational services and the network of employment services. The development of guidance services is coordinated by the Ministries of Education and Research and of Labour and Social Protection. A framework methodology for lifelong guidance and counselling was approved by both the Ministry of Education and Research (Regulation 4469/2012) and the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (Regulation 1804/2012). This legislation aims to offer an overarching framework for counselling and guidance services in Romania.¹ (CEDEFOP, 2020)

In addition, the national Lifelong learning strategy (2015-2020) has aimed to expand available guidance services, especially for adults, who currently have only the option of accessing public

¹ Cedefop (2020). Inventory of lifelong guidance systems and practices - Romania. CareersNet national records. <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/country-reports/inventory-lifelong-guidance-systems-and-practices-romania>

employment offices. Over 100 centres for lifelong learning are planned to be opened by 2021, with guidance among the key services to be offered. However, there is no national level guidance forum, at present. Each branch of guidance and counselling services tends to have its own development path, while there are also occasional meetings between representatives of different services (Euroguidance, 2019).

The training and qualifications required for career guidance practitioners vary depending on the sector in which they operate. For example, in educational sector, individuals aiming to become school counsellors typically need a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology, Pedagogy, or social studies. While a Master's Degree is not mandatory, several universities (University of Bucharest, Babeş-Bolyai University from Cluj-Napoca, Iaşi University etc.) offer relevant postgraduate programs that are popular among practitioners such as provide master's level studies in counselling and guidance. (Euroguidance, 2022)²

Continuous professional development is facilitated through county centers (CJRAE/ CMBRAE) for school counsellors, as well as the network of Teacher Training Centers (Casa Corpului Didactic). These institutions offer ongoing training opportunities to enhance the competencies of guidance practitioners.

For the employment sector, career counsellors working within the public employment services are coordinated by the National Public Employment Service (NPES) under the Ministry of Labour. These practitioners often have diverse educational backgrounds, including sociology, law, economics, engineering, psychology, pedagogy, and social work. Some have pursued specialized training in career counselling, such as the Public Policy Master's program with a focus on Career Counselling offered by the University of Bucharest's Faculty of Philosophy.

The Romanian Counsellors Association (ACROM), established in 2010, aims to support the professionalization of counselling, develop and implement ethical codes, and establish quality standards. Membership is voluntary, and the association has produced an ethical code to which its members adhere. Additionally, many guidance practitioners with a background in psychology follow the ethical code of the psychology profession. Overall, while specific qualifications for career guidance practitioners in Romania can vary based on the sector and role, there is a strong emphasis on relevant educational backgrounds and continuous professional development to ensure the delivery of effective guidance services.

3.2 Existing training opportunities for career guidance practitioners

3.2.1 CYPRUS

Since 2014 Guidance and counselling courses at Master's level are taught in Cyprus Universities. These opportunities can be found below:

² <https://euroguidance.eu/guidance-system-in-romania>

- European University: Career Guidance and Counselling (Master's programme) -
- University of Cyprus: School Counselling and Guidance (Master's programme) -

Graduates of higher education in various fields, such as humanities, educational sciences, social sciences, economics, etc., are admitted to the above-mentioned postgraduates' programs.

Moreover, there are master programmes in counseling psychology:

- University of Nicosia - Counselling Psychology (Master's programme)
- University of Neapolis - Counselling Psychology (Master's programme)
- European University Cyprus - Psychology (clinical or counseling) (Master's programme)

3.2.2 GREECE

In Greece, since the early 1990s, several CGC university-level courses and programmes (mainly master level) have been offered, ranging from two to four semesters (60–120 ECTS/ EQF 7, 8). There is no undergraduate / bachelor degree for CGC available at Universities in Greece. A few undergraduate courses/programmes (EQF 6) include CGC lessons and specialisations in their curricula, mainly in programs of education/social/humanistic studies (Cedefop, 2023). Tertiary education graduates in various fields such as humanities, educational sciences, social sciences, economics etc., are admitted to the relevant postgraduate programs. Most of the master's degree holders cover mainly the needs of the private sector for skilled career guidance staff (EOPPEP, 2015). Moreover, universities, research organisations, social partners and other providers organize short training courses in several career guidance emerging subjects targeted to guidance practitioners, adult trainers and other relevant professionals.

In the fields of education and employment, the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs as well as the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and Public Employment Service D.Y.P.A. (former OAED), often in cooperation with EOPPEP or Universities, have been providing in-service training in the field of career guidance, targeted to career guidance practitioners in secondary education and other designated employees (e.g. employment counsellors working at the Greek PES KPA2 services, managers of EPAS Career Liason Offices, counsellors of University Career Liason Offices) (Cedefop et. al, 2021, 2023).

The Career Guidance Occupational Profile developed by EOPPEP in 2024 and updated in 2024, also includes a model modular CVET programme in CGC, which defines the essential knowledge, competencies and skills need to be acquired on level B (basic level), according to the requirements of the career guidance counsellor occupational profile. The training program serves as a basis for the development and evaluation of relevant trainings leading to basic level certification (B). will be a prerequisite for those who wish to be certified as level B career guidance counsellors and can be implemented by public or private CVET providers.

In 2021, the Labour Institute (INE) of the Greek General Confederation of Labour (GSEE) has developed a CVET curriculum and adequate training material, as part of an ESF part-financed project, also involving the creation of an examination thesaurus to facilitate self-assessment and official evaluation of the respective learning outcomes, as well as a training pilot for Level B' guidance practitioners (Cedefop et. al, 2021, 2023).

The National Organization for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance (EOPPEP) has been assigned the responsibility to validate the CVET programmes provided by the lifelong learning centers (adult continuing and vocational education), including those in the

field of career guidance, regarding their content, training curriculum and material, and expected learning outcomes (According to Article 57 of Law 4763/21.12.2020 (Government Gazette 254 A') National system of vocational education, training and lifelong learning).

EOPPEP, being responsible for the education and training of the career guidance practitioners, has been organizing several training courses on an annual basis, in cooperation or complementarily to the training initiatives of both ministries. For instance, EOPPEP, within its Euroguidance activities, aims to promote the European dimension in counselling and guidance and upgrade career guidance professionals' knowledge and skills on issues related to mobility for learning purposes in the EU and the latest career guidance developments.

3.2.3 ITALY

There are no specific degree courses to become a career counselor. However, there are several opportunities for Higher Education and Masters.

At the University level, there are some postgraduate programs on lifelong guidance, such as those offered by the University of Padua (Career Guidance and Orientation for Inclusion, Sustainability and Social Justice), by the Catholic University (Advanced Course on Career Guidance), by the University of Florence (Master I level - Training and career orientation: guidance models and practices), as well as others provided by other Universities (i.e. LUMSA, Unipegaso) and institutions (i.e. ESPLIEGO).

As.n.or - Associazione nazionale orientatori (National Association of Career Counselors) has developed a series of training courses designed to provide the skills to carry out the profession of Career Guidance, in line with the international and European vision of the so-called "career guidance" and which give the possibility of registering in the Asnor Career Guidance Register (Law no. 4/2013).

3.2.4 SPAIN

In Spain, the existing training option related to this professional profile is the master's degree in Career Guidance. The objective of this training is to provide students with advanced training in different areas of knowledge of career guidance to complete the training acquired in undergraduate studies.

The objectives to be achieved with this training are:

- To deepen the knowledge and application of the principles, theoretical approaches and intervention models that underpin management in professional fields, as well as their interactions with related professional and scientific fields.
- To identify and analyze the different contexts, situations, needs and dimensions in which professional counselors develop their professional practice.
- To apply the acquired knowledge on career guidance to new situations or problems that require a targeted intervention through the development of specific methodological strategies and techniques in the practice of career guidance.

- Integrate and apply the knowledge acquired in the formulation of judgments in situations that require professional guidance, from the reflection on social and ethical responsibility and the code of ethics.
- Justify and communicate the proposals and results of the activity developed to the different agents involved in a clear and rigorous way.
- Adopt attention to diversity and equity in the different contexts of guidance intervention.
- Apply research and evaluation methodologies to the understanding and transformation of the reality of career guidance using criteria of scientific rigor.
- To develop learning competences that enable them to continue studying in a self-directed, self-regulated and cooperative way, particularly using virtual environments.

3.2.5 ROMANIA

Career guidance practitioners have access to various training opportunities to enhance their skills and knowledge. Several universities offer specialized master's degree programs in counseling and guidance, including University of Bucharest, Titu Maiorescu University, West University of Timișoara, Babeș-Bolyai University from Cluj-Napoca etc. These programs are designed to provide in-depth knowledge and practical competencies for effective school and career counseling.

- University of Bucharest. The Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences offers a Master's program in Counseling and Guidance, focusing on educational and professional development. The program aims to support students in choosing their Bachelor's and Master's degree studies, as well as educational opportunities like internships and grants abroad.
- Babeș-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca. The Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences offers a Master's program in Counseling Psychology and Educational Psychology, preparing specialists in counseling and educational interventions.
- Alexandru Ioan Cuza University, Iași. The Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences provides a Master's program in School Counseling and Educational Management, focusing on developing competencies in educational counseling and management.

These programs aim to equip students with the necessary skills and knowledge for effective career counselling and guidance. While primarily offering specialized programs, the universities have a Centers for Career Counseling and Guidance that provides students and graduates with information, academic counseling, and career guidance services. For example, the Department of Counseling and Career Guidance at the University of Bucharest offers counseling services, training, and workshops to assist both students and professionals in their career development. These centers also promote networking between students and graduates to facilitate access to the job market.

Furthermore, NGO-s through European Programs and Projects offer training opportunities to attend various courses for specialists working in guidance and counselling area contributing to the broader spectrum of career guidance topics. Additionally, the Euroguidance Network organizes training sessions and workshops aimed at enhancing the competencies of guidance

practitioners. For instance, the Academia Exchange in Romania focuses on school counselling, career and guidance counselling through an active participation in different activities which are very useful for the enhancement of their professional expertise. These learning mobilities create contexts to collect best practices in career guidance and counselling, to participate at personal development activities with students in schools, to connect with new technologies in this domain.³

3.3 Existing qualification standards

3.3.1 CYPRUS

The Counselling and Career Education Service of the MECSY is part of the Department of Secondary Education. The service is staffed with qualified counsellors who have gone through specialised post-graduate education either in Cyprus or abroad. In order to be employed in the service all guidance practitioners must also have their initial teacher training completed. The guidance counsellors are appointed in each upper secondary school and provide vocational guidance to students both in class sessions and on a personal basis upon request.

Since 2006, the Public Employment Services (PES) of the MLWSI are staffed with qualified Employment Counsellors with relevant professional qualifications in sociology, psychology and human resources. Since their hiring by the PES, they have been repeatedly trained by external experts, in order to provide all necessary guidance services for the PES. The Vocational Guidance Service of the Public Employment Services, PES provides information to adults and secondary-school graduates on employment prospects and opportunities or on skills-training possibilities. The PES organises its career guidance services through a network of 4 District and 12 local offices all over Cyprus.

3.3.2 GREECE

In Greece, formal provisions for a mandatory qualification EQF 7,8 in Career Guidance and Counselling (CGC) for practitioners employed in public vocational training and (adult) lifelong learning structures have been established by the new Law 4763/2020 (Government Gazette 254 A ') as well as for the practitioners offering CGC in various ESF funded vocational training voucher programmes, implemented by the Ministry of Labour.

Guidance practitioners working at the guidance services of the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs are secondary education teachers of different specialisations, who may have received in-service training in career guidance and counselling. However, many of them also possess postgraduate diplomas or a Masters in career guidance and counselling. Law 4823 foresees that secondary education teachers specialised in CGC are appointed at the

³ <https://euroguidance.eu/international-mobility/academia-mobility-experience/national-coordinators>

Directorates of Secondary Education, which operate under the respective Regional Directorates of Education, so as to support school units in career guidance issues, as well as in Offices of Counselling and Guidance (GRASYPs) per group of neighbouring schools (Articles 27, 48).

In addition, since 2017, relevant qualification requirements have been included in the Greek PES D.YP.A (former OAED) call for recruitment (Government Gazette A.S.E.P. 34/15K 2017). Employment counsellors working at the Centres for Promotion to Employment (KPA2) are public servants - permanent employees of the DYPA (former OAED), who regularly receive in-service training in career guidance and counselling. Many of them possess postgraduate diplomas or Master's level of education in career guidance and counselling as well as related professional experience.

3.3.3 ITALY

The national guidelines for lifelong guidance published in 2014 by the Italian Ministry of Education describe the services, quality requirements and resources for the provision of guidance services. The document specifies the minimum level of competencies required to provide services for different types of career guidance activities according to national standards (Repertory of acts no. 136/CU of 13 November 2014).

The public portal on national qualifications and careers (Atlante del Lavoro e delle Qualificazioni, managed by INAPP) includes the descriptions of the main lifelong guidance activities and related professional outcomes (included in the Sector: Education, training and work services). This database is the official basis for the design of standards, competencies and career training. It also includes the job description for guidance counselors.

The description of the proposed job contents can be consulted through a tree classification scheme which, starting from the main branches, constituted by the economic-professional sectors (SEP), gradually identifies the main work processes within them, in turn divided into sequences of processes and areas of activity (ADA). The ADAs contain the description of the individual activities they constitute, as well as the expected results. In particular the qualification of the Guidance Expert is described as follows:

Economic-professional sectors: Education, training and work services

Areas of activity (ADA): 1. Training orientation – 2. Demand analysis and definition of the service agreement – 3. Guidance counseling and skills assessment – 4. Support and accompaniment for transitions and job placement

3.3.4 SPAIN

Spain does not have a specific regulation for the qualification of career guidance professionals. As mentioned above, these professionals have a general qualification of guidance specialists such as psychologists, pedagogues, social workers, and other professionals in the sector.

3.3.5 ROMANIA

The qualification standards for school counselors and career practitioners are defined by educational background requirements and professional regulations. In order to become a school counsellor it is generally required to hold a bachelor's degree in psychology, pedagogy or sociology. While a bachelor's degree provides foundational eligibility, pursuing a master's degree in fields such as school counseling, educational psychology, or related areas is highly recommended and often preferred by employers. Guidance services in schools are regulated by the Law of Education (1/2011) and by the Order of the Ministry of Education No. 5555/2011. These regulations outline the framework for providing counseling services within the educational system.

The new Romanian Education Law, adopted in 2023, introduces several changes in the structure and organization of the education system, and school counselors occupy a central role in supporting students, parents and teachers. The role of school counselors in the context of the new law:

- Increasing the number of school counselors: The new law calls for a reduction in the student-to-counselor ratio so that each counselor can work more efficiently. The goal is to reach a ratio of 1 counselor to a maximum of 500 students, whereas previously this ratio was much higher, even 1 counselor to over 1,000 students in some cases.
- Expanding Duties: School counselors are no longer limited to educational support but are also required to provide psychological and emotional support to students. In addition, they work more closely with teachers to identify and prevent problems such as bullying, absenteeism or dropping out.
- Integrating counselors into multidisciplinary teams: The law provides for the involvement of school counselors in teams made up of teachers, parents and other specialists (psychologists, social workers) to develop personalized intervention plans for students who need additional support.
- Promotion of vocational guidance: An important component of the new law is strengthening the role of school counselors in vocational guidance. They will provide students with support in choosing an educational and professional path, depending on their abilities and interests.
- Digitization and accessibility: The law also introduces digital solutions, such as online platforms, that allow counselors to interact more easily with students, especially those in isolated or disadvantaged communities.
- Continuing education for counselors: To meet the requirements of the new law, school counselors will benefit from continuing education programs that include skills related to mental health, inclusion, diversity and new technologies.

Regarding the occupational standards, The Classification of Occupations in Romania (COR) includes the occupations and presents the necessary skills/ competencies for the following jobs with attributions in the field of career counselling:

- Employment agent.
https://intern.anc.edu.ro/virtualanc/crud/standarde/standarde_ocupationale/brain/upload/Agent%20ocupare.pdf
- Counsellor for personal development.
https://intern.anc.edu.ro/virtualanc/crud/standarde/standarde_ocupationale/brain/upload/CONSILIER%20dezv%20personala.pdf
- School counsellor.
https://intern.anc.edu.ro/virtualanc/crud/standarde/standarde_ocupationale/brain/upload/Consilier.scolar.pdf
- Specialist in vocational guidance for people with disabilities.
https://intern.anc.edu.ro/virtualanc/crud/standarde/standarde_ocupationale/brain/upload/Specialist.evaluare.vocationala.dizabilitati.pdf

The Euroguidance Romania carried out various projects (2000-2010) in a wide international partnership for the development of maps of the counsellor's competences working with adults based on the Canadian Model of Competencies and Standards, ICT competences for the career counsellors, competences (MEVOC project).

Recent initiatives (2023-2024) refer to Career Counsellors Competence Framework, joint project of Association of Psychologists in Romania (APR), Association of Romanian Counsellors (ACROM), Association of Industrial and Organizational Psychology (APIO), National Association of School Psychologists (ANPS) which are ongoing.

At the National level Ministry of Education initiated a project for CJRAE/ CMBRAE within the European Program for Education and Employment (2021-2027) the project entitled Transformational practices in Guidance and Career Counselling proposes the implementation of the Whole School Approach at the guidance and counselling domain. This aims to configure the roles and responsibilities of the different school actors in the field of career counseling, especially for teachers, school counselor, parents, directors, communities.

4 OCCUPATIONAL PROFILE OF CAREER GUIDANCE PROFESSIONALS

4.1.1 CYPRUS

In Cyprus, school career counsellors provide help to students and other young people:

- To become evolutionarily aware and accept themselves with the ultimate goal of forming healthy attitudes towards life.
- To develop a positive self-image and acquire the appropriate skills to deal effectively with personal, family and/or social problems in life.
- to adapt to the school environment with a view to their educational and social progress and development.
- to develop the necessary skills to enable them to make rational decisions, whether these relate to educational/vocational or personal matters.
- To identify their individual potential, interests, skills and aptitudes, to become aware of the nature and requirements of different professions, as well as of contemporary socio-economic and cultural developments, in order to be guided in making appropriate educational choices.
- to discover and develop their abilities, to become aware of their personal needs, interests and aspirations, as well as to obtain the necessary objective information about the educational and vocational issues that concern them, and to make free decisions about their educational and vocational future.
- to deal with their personal, family and social issues or problems.

More specifically school career counselors offer the following services:

- Individual/group counseling: School career counsellors through individual/group counselling intervention help students and other young people to cope in the best possible way with their problems, whether they are professional, academic or personal/family in nature.
- Educational/career counseling: The aim of Educational/career Counselling is to help students/young people to identify and develop their abilities, to become aware of their interests, personal needs and aspirations, to acquire all the necessary objective information about the educational and professional disciplines to be able to make free decisions about their educational/vocational future.
Tools that can be used by Counselors during the course of educational/vocational counseling are the specialized Tests that help to explore the student's personality and interests in order to identify the most suitable professions for the student. Great importance is also given to the acquisition of the necessary skills in finding, processing and evaluating the necessary information, as well as the necessary skills that will enable young people to survive and effectively manage their career path in an ever-changing working world.
- Personal and social counseling: Personal and Social Counselling aims to provide specialised assistance to students/young people in dealing with the personal and social problems of a non-psychopathological nature that they face. Specifically, it seeks to help students to gain self-awareness and self-acceptance, as well as to develop the appropriate skills to solve the problems/issues that concern them. In the context of

Counselling intervention, the cooperation of the students' parents is necessary several times, as well as the referral of cases to other specialized services when necessary.

- *Educational Information:* School career counselors provide interested pupils, students, graduates etc. with information regarding education. Information is provided to both students and parents about post-secondary education and post-secondary education (either in Cyprus or abroad) so that the interested person has a complete and objective picture of the educational institutions and fields of study in order to make the best educational choice for himself.
- *Occupational Information:* School career counsellors help the interested persons to get to know the world of professions and work, what is the nature of work of a profession, what are the working conditions, what are the qualifications required to practice the profession, what are the prerequisites of studies and what are the fields of employment.

Furthermore, Career Counsellors who work in the Cyprus Public Employment Services (PES) concentrate on the following services:

- Support for unemployed and workers looking for a better job in finding and ensuring a suitable work
- Provision of guidance, advice and information on occupations and their future prospects as well as current employment opportunities available at District/local and/or National level
- Provision of information on existing opportunities of vocational training and education programs in different professions
- Provision of information on employment terms and conditions on the basis of Collective Agreements in force and employment legislation
- Provision of Individualized Service to vulnerable groups of people who have particular difficulties in finding work.
- Support for employers in the search for suitable personnel.

4.1.2 GREECE

In Greece, practitioner competence and professionalisation of the relevant domain has been a central element in the systemic interventions initiated by EOPPEP (National Organisation for the Certification of Qualifications and Vocational Guidance), including the development of quality and ethical standards. However, a flagship intervention, linked to official accreditation, was the development of the "Career Guidance Counselor" occupational profile in 2014. The initial occupational profile was commissioned, according to the relevant legal provisions, to a group of stakeholder experts, representing the Centre for the Development of Educational Policy (KANEP) of the Greek General Confederation of Labour (GSEE) and the Hellenic Federation of Enterprises (SEV). The profession of "Career Guidance Counselor" was defined as a horizontal activity, as the Career guidance counsellor functions in various levels, planning, organising, preparing, and implementing CGC actions according to the relevant career development theories, educational policies, the socioeconomic context as well as the special characteristics and needs of the target population. It also captures, evaluates, and redesigns his/her professional practice, while developing relevant career education programmes,

covering a wide range of supportive lifelong career development actions. In this scope, the CGC profession is a horizontal activity as it can be practised at different levels of hierarchy and in different sectors (education, training, and employment), while it results from the combination of various roles and learning outcomes and requires very good knowledge of the general socioeconomic context at local, national and European level'.

According to Article 155 of Law 4763/21-12-2020 (Government Gazette 254 A') National system of vocational education, training and lifelong learning the development of a system for the certification of the Career guidance counsellor qualifications, their classification into levels A' and B', and their enrolment in the relevant registers that will be maintained by EOPPEP has been foreseen. Subsequently, the Joint Ministerial Decision of the Ministers of Finance - Education and Religious Affairs published in 2022 (No. 13173/K6/7.2.2022 Government Gazette 617/B/14.2.2022) established the System for the Certification of Qualifications of Career Guidance Counsellors, defining the terms, required qualifications, conditions and all the necessary supporting documents for the participation of all interested practitioners in the candidate examinations and certification processes. In view of these developments it was deemed necessary to update the initial occupational profile with the latest developments in the field of career guidance and counseling, reflecting the ever-changing challenges in the labour market, the changing context of career guidance practice, including the new digitalised practices. The new institutional framework in combination with the updated occupational profile attempts to ensure quality of career guidance delivery, with a view to protecting the interests of career guidance beneficiaries and society, in terms of defining the necessary knowledge, abilities and skills, the qualifications required and the conditions for practicing the profession of Career Guidance Counsellor.

Levels of practice	Areas of practice	Main professional functions (Mpf)	EQF Level	Educational paths/ Accreditation requirements
LEVEL B (BASIC) MPF 1,2,3	Performs all the basic professional functions and tasks related to primary service provision in education, training or employment, in order to meet the needs of different target groups (students, young people, adults, the unemployed, vulnerable social groups) (MPF 1,2,3);	MPF 1 (Level B+A): Plans, organises and prepares the framework for the provision of CGC services.	EQF 6 NQF 6	University degree in any subject + CVET in CGC of at least 250 hours + 2 years of professional experience or 200 hours of internship in CGC public or private services + Written examinations including evaluation of a model micro-counselling session
		MPF 2 (Level B+A): Provides CGC services.		
		MPF 3 (Level B+A): Evaluates redesigns and expands access to CGC services and his/her professional practice.		
LEVEL A (EXPERT) MPF 1,2,3,4,5,6	Performs both professional functions and tasks of level B, as well as advanced professional functions with increased responsibility requirements and higher scientific expertise, such as planning, conducting and evaluating career guidance training programmes, supervising, designing and development of career guidance assessment tools, scientific research etc. (MPF 1,2,3,4,5,6)	MPF 4 (Level A): Supervises and ensures the quality of CGC services.	EQF 6,7,8 NQF 6,7,8	University, master or doctoral degrees in CGC / Tertiary Education Teachers in CGC No examination procedure is required for certification
		MPF 5 (Level A): Conducts research and provides training on CGC		
		MPF 6 (Level A): Promotes the development of CGC tools.		

Aspects that shape the updated occupational profile highlight new challenges and skills for guidance practitioners in terms of new or differentiated professional functions, activities, and tasks affected by digitization and automation, new areas of knowledge related to Industry 4.0 labour market trends and updated theoretical approaches and models suitable to address career development in transitional, digitalised and precarious working conditions, as well as career choices to promote inclusion, sustainability and social responsibility. Updated competencies defined include, inter alia, advanced digital skills, the use of modern tools and data management and archiving systems, the utilization of contemporary online communication platforms, use of ICT and CGC digital infrastructures, application of counseling theories and contemporary career development models, use of face-to-face and remote (telephone or synchronous/asynchronous online) communication tools, adherence to ethical standards, design of activities to promote lifelong career management skills, use of social

media to promote CGC services, the ability to work in a context of blended service delivery, including digital communication and cooperation, networking, and outreach approaches to target audiences, as well as critical soft skills, such as resilience, adaptability and readiness for change etc.

4.1.3 ITALY

There is no official occupational profile or accreditation for guidance professionals. Most professionals working in career guidance usually have an academic background in psychology, economics, business administration, labor law or pedagogy, sometimes complemented by a specialization or course in guidance or, more recently, a postgraduate master's degree in lifelong guidance.

Career guidance services direct people towards a path of education, training and work. They are available at local level, in various locations: Employment Centers, Municipal Career Guidance Centers, Youth Information Centers, Universities, Secondary Schools, Employment Agencies, Training Institutions, Chambers of Commerce, Trade Associations.

Since vocational training is a regional competence, information on training opportunities is available at local information services, for example on the pages of regional websites dedicated to training. In matters of orientation and training, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policies defines, together with other institutional actors, the normative and regulatory framework. These issues, in fact, are the responsibility of numerous national and local institutional actors, with different levels of responsibility: in order to promote institutional discussion, the Ministry created in 2015 a specific Committee, a place of investigation and discussion on professional training, apprenticeships, internships and the related coordination processes promoted by the European Union, in which the Ministry of Education, University and Research, the Regions and the Autonomous Provinces of Trento and Bolzano take part. Based on the committee's decisions, each region has defined a regulation for the accreditation of operators authorized to provide vocational guidance and training services.

For example, the Basilicata region has established that the person responsible for the orientation process in employment services must possess the following qualifications and levels of work experience specified below, alternative to each other:

- degree (master's or specialist degree) in legal or socio-psychological or humanistic disciplines and three years of experience in employment services with particular reference to: career guidance, skills assessment, counselling, matching of job supply and demand;
- degree (master's or specialist degree) and five years of experience in employment services with reference to career guidance, skills assessment, counseling, matching of supply and demand for work.

4.1.4 SPAIN

Nowadays, career guidance is a field that has grown in recent years under different names: employment counselor, employment technician, employment insertion technician or socio-labor insertion agent.

The professional profile of a career counselor is to contribute to programs to help the unemployed integrate into the labor market, inform, advise and help develop the necessary skills. A counselor is a facilitator and, therefore, must offer personalized guidance focused on the needs and characteristics of each person. They oversee designing personalized insertion itineraries, both for people with specific difficulties in accessing the labor market and for the general population, and they design specific actions such as providing information on the labor market, advising on job search techniques, promoting self-knowledge and positioning in the labor market, detecting entrepreneurial profiles, etc. (Andalucía Orienta, 2021).

The functions of an employment counselor are (Aprodel, 2002):

- Search for information and resources
- Labor orientation
- Information and advice for self-employment
- Intermediation and labor insertion
- Social integration
- Public dissemination on employment-related issues
- Communication and relationship with other entities and organizations related to employment.

The tasks performed by this profile are (Aprodel, 2002):

- Search, elaborate and transmit information on employment and training.
- To study the training and employment resources in the locality or corresponding geographic area.
- Promote and develop those community resources that generate insertion possibilities.
- Plan professional itineraries together with the user
- Deliver modules and workshops on skills and techniques to promote job search.
- To assist job seekers, contributing to improve their employability.
- Providing unemployed people with useful tools for job searching
- Help to make individual decisions in the labor market by adapting the information to the user, considering personal characteristics and attributes.
- To help the job seeker to have adequate management of interpersonal relationships and pressures.
- To help modify, and if necessary, extinguish, inappropriate attitudes towards job search, such as: personal problems, information deficits, skills deficits, lack of motivation or negative motivation, inappropriate behaviors, impractical verbal rules, inappropriateness or anxiety.
- To help manage time and money when investing in training, internships and employment by making choices based on the individual's abilities and circumstances.
- Help the user to know his or her skills, aptitudes and abilities in a realistic manner
- Promote disadvantaged groups in the labor market.
- To help motivate and inform the user in the realization of his business plan.
- To extinguish negative attitudes towards disadvantaged groups from family, friends, employers and society in general.
- Receive job offers, manage them, pre-select candidates, send them to the company and follow up the whole process.

- Conduct surveys in databases of unemployed people and/or companies.
- Writing professional articles for public dissemination of employment-related topics.
- Participate in the organization of events for the exchange of experiences between employment-related entities.
- Carry out basic administration, filing and data recording tasks.

The employment counselor must have a series of skills and aptitudes (Aprodel, 2002):

Skills	Aptitudes
• Listening skills • Teaching • Negotiation • Group management • Group animation • Communication skills • Teamwork • Evaluation • Analysis of the information received	• Leadership • Organization and content • Empathy • Patience • Not getting carried away by individual and social differences • Resistance to frustration

3.1.5. ROMANIA

The occupational profile of career guidance professionals in Romania reflects a growing recognition of the importance of career development services. These professionals help individuals navigate educational, training, and employment opportunities. In general, in educational and employment areas, the roles and responsibilities for career guidance professionals in Romania refer to the following tasks:

- Career Counselling: Assisting individuals in identifying their skills, interests, and values to make informed career choices.
- Educational Guidance: Advising students on academic pathways, including school programs, university options, and vocational training.
- Job Placement Assistance: Helping job seekers prepare for employment by providing resume writing tips, interview preparation, and job search strategies.
- Labor Market Information: Offering insights into labor market trends, employment opportunities, and industry demands.
- Skills Assessment: Administering tests and assessments to evaluate aptitudes, abilities, and career potential.
- Workshops and Training: Organizing career workshops on topics like professional development, networking, and skill-building.

As education and qualifications, it is compulsory a degree in psychology, pedagogy, sociology, human resources, or a related field is common followed by specialized training through postgraduate studies or certifications in career counseling, vocational guidance, or human resource management. Many professionals are members of the National Association of Career Counsellors in Romania (ACROM) or similar organizations.

Career guidance professionals in Romania operate in various work settings, including:

- Schools and Universities: Offering counseling to students and graduates.
- Public Employment Agencies: Working with the National Employment Agency (ANOFM) to support unemployed individuals.
- Private Sector: Collaborating with recruitment agencies, private career counseling firms, or corporate HR departments.
- Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's): Supporting vulnerable groups, such as youth at risk or marginalized communities.

Career/ school counsellors in Romania, like in many other countries, require a specific set of key competences to effectively guide individuals in their career development. These competences are built on a combination of knowledge, skills, and personal attributes. Here are some key competences that are essential for career counselors in Romania. The role demands a combination of technical and interpersonal skills, known as key competencies:

- Knowledge of Career Development Theories
- Psychological Knowledge and Counselling Skills
- Cultural Competence and Sensitivity
- Strong communication and active listening skills
- Knowledge of educational and labor market systems
- Career Guidance Tools and Techniques
- Empathy and ability to work with diverse populations
- Networking and Relationship-Building Skills
- Analytical and problem-solving skills for career planning
- Adaptability and Continuous Learning
- Digital Competence
- Ethical and Legal Competence

These competences help career counsellors effectively guide individuals in making informed career decisions, whether they are entering the job market for the first time, considering a career change, or seeking professional growth within their existing career. In Romania, as in other countries, continuous training and professional development are key to staying current with evolving career trends and ensuring that counselors can provide the best possible guidance.

About the Competence Profile of the school/ career counsellor the following policy documents can be mentioned:

- The joint order of MMFPS and MECTS regarding the approval of the Methodology for the use of Europass and Youthpass tools and the framework methodology regarding lifelong career counseling and guidance services (Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection, Ministry of Education and Research, Ministry of Youth and Sports, 2012)
- Higher education level. Methodology regarding the organization and functioning of career counseling and guidance centers in higher education institutions (Ministry of Education 2024) reflect the need to have career counselors employed within the Career Counseling

and Guidance Centers (CCOC), but the document does not establish specific duties and responsibilities.

- Pre-university level. Regulation Framework for the organization and functioning of the county/municipality centers of educational resources and assistance in Bucharest (CJRAE/CMBRAE, Ministry of Education, 2024) highlights the promotion of vocational/ career counselling activities, school and professional guidance of students.

5 RELEVANT CREDENTIALS AND SKILLS RECOGNITION PROCEDURES

5.1.1 CYPRUS

As mentioned in the previous chapter the Counselling and Career Education Service of the MECSY is part of the Department of Secondary Education. The service is staffed with qualified counsellors who have gone through specialised post-graduate education either in Cyprus or abroad. In order to be employed in the service all guidance practitioners must also have their initial teacher training completed. The guidance counsellors are appointed in each upper secondary school and provide vocational guidance to students both in class sessions and on a personal basis upon request.

Furthermore, as stated in the previous chapter, the Public Employment Services (PES) of the MLWSI are staffed with qualified Employment Counsellors with relevant professional qualifications in sociology, psychology and human resources. Since their hiring by the PES, they have been repeatedly trained by external experts, in order to provide all necessary guidance services for the PES.

5.1.2 GREECE

According to EOPPEP's institutional responsibilities and the Career Guidance Occupational Profile the conditions for the certification of guidance practitioners' qualifications, as well as the establishment of relevant registries have been defined. The Register of Career Guidance Counsellors Level A1 was already established in 2019, following an open call targeted to university degree holders in CGC (EQF 6,7,8) (According to the provisions of Article 21 of Law 4115/2013 and the Ministerial Decision DS/64529/27-1-2017, Government Gazette B' 317/6.2.2018.). The ministerial decision defines the conditions and examination process for the accreditation of Level B' practitioners, and their subsequent enrolment in the Level B' Register of certified career guidance counsellors. EOPPEP has been assigned the responsibility to validate the CVET programmes provided by the lifelong learning centers (adult continuing and vocational education), including those in the field of CGC, regarding their content, training curriculum and material, and expected learning outcomes (According to Article 57 of Law 4763/21.12.2020 (Government Gazette 254 A') National system of vocational education, training and lifelong learning). According to Article 155 of Law 4763/21-12-2020 (Government Gazette 254 A') National system of vocational education, training and lifelong learning. the development of a system for the certification of the Career guidance counsellor qualifications, their classification into levels A' and B', and their enrolment in the relevant registers that will be maintained by EOPPEP has been foreseen. Subsequently, the Joint Ministerial Decision of the Ministers of Finance - Education and Religious Affairs published in 2022 (No. 13173/K6/7.2.2022 Government Gazette 617/B/14.2.2022) established the System for the Certification of Qualifications of Career Guidance Counsellors, defining the terms, required qualifications, conditions and all the necessary supporting documents for the participation of all interested practitioners in the candidate examinations and certification processes. According to the relevant provisions, the Examinations and Evaluation Committee

has been set up by EOPPEP in 2022, so as to proceed with the preparation activities required (Cedefop, 2023).

5.1.3 ITALY

The strong need for qualified guidance in Italy does not correspond to an equally clear discipline of this profession, which is not recognized by law. For example, there are no ad hoc degree courses or pre-established paths. However, there are various opportunities for specialized training, and different registers (in the absence of a National Register), established on the basis of law no. 4/2013 by different private professional associations, such as the Asnor Guidance Register or the National Register of Orientators®.

Being registered in the Career Guidance Register promoted by ASNOR or by Leonardo Evangelista or others (L.4/2013) entails a series of advantages and services that can be extremely useful for professional Career Guidance Professionals, but it has no value that enables one to practice the profession of career counselor. The advantages of registering in these registers are:

- Recognisability of the professional title guaranteed by Law 4/2013
- Continuous training and digital resources
- Networking and professional community
- Support for innovative projects and initiatives
- Professional development and visibility
- Professional benefits

In Italy, individual Regions establish specific requirements (other than registration in registers or lists promoted by private individuals or private associations) for guidance professionals who work with public funding.

For example, the Basilicata region has established that the person responsible for the orientation process in employment services must possess the following qualifications and levels of work experience specified below, alternative to each other:

- degree (master's or specialist degree) in legal or socio-psychological or humanistic disciplines and three years of experience in employment services with particular reference to: career guidance, skills assessment, counselling, matching of job supply and demand;
- degree (master's or specialist degree) and five years of experience in employment services with reference to career guidance, skills assessment, counseling, matching of supply and demand for work.

5.1.4 SPAIN

The Public Employment Service has opened a call for the recognition of professional competencies acquired through work experience. This process is designed for those workers

who do not have an official accreditation to obtain it. The Autonomous Communities are responsible for the accreditation process and its certification.

Professionals can accredit the units of competence of the National Catalog of Professional Qualifications that are included in Vocational Training Titles and/or Certificates of Professionalism. Each unit of competence will be the minimum unit of accreditation.

The necessary requirements to be able to participate in this accreditation process are (SEPE, n.d.):

- Possess Spanish nationality
- To have obtained the certificate of registration of Community citizenship or the family card of a citizen of the Union.
- To be 18 years old at the time of registration, in the case of units of competence corresponding to level I qualifications, and 20 years old for levels II and III.
- Have work experience and/or training related to the professional competences to be accredited:
 - In the case of work experience: justify, at least 3 years, with a minimum of 2,000 hours worked in total, in the last 10 years it has elapsed before the call is made. For level I units of competence, 2 years of work experience with a minimum of 1,200 hours worked in total is required.
 - In the case of training: justify, at least 300 hours, in the last 10 years prior to the call for applications. For level I units of competence, at least 200 hours will be required. In those cases, in which the training modules associated with the unit of competence to be accredited contemplate a lower delay, the hours established in said modules must be accredited.

The process consists of 3 phases (SEPE, n.d.):

- Assessment: the process starts with the completion of a self-assessment questionnaire. The documentation submitted by the candidate is contrasted with the reference (National Catalog of Professional Qualifications). Assistance is provided to prepare the competence dossier, and an orientation report is issued on the convenience or not of passing to the evaluation phase.
- Evaluation: the Evaluation Commission analyzes and assesses competence dossier, and the report issued in the assessment phase. This Commission plans and organizes the evaluation, selecting the most appropriate methods and activities in each case. Participants must demonstrate professional competencies to be accredited by carrying out assessment activities and, once completed, the results of the assessment are notified. In the case of not achieving accreditation, a training plan is drawn up on the training possibilities of the competencies to be able to participate in future accreditation processes and training possibilities leading to certificates of professionalism or vocational training qualifications.
- Accreditation: If the participant passes the recognition process a partial accreditation is issued for one of the units of competence demonstrated in the process and a certificate of professionalism if competence is demonstrated in all the units of competence of the qualification for which the participant has opted. All this information is transferred to a nominal record per unit of competence. Finally, the participant is informed of the effects

of the accreditation obtained: the educational administration will validate the professional modules associated with the accredited unit of competence and the labor administration will exempt the training modules associated with the accredited unit of competence.

The advantages of participating in this type of process are (SEPE, n.d.):

- Obtain an official accreditation valid throughout the Spanish territory.
- Obtain accreditations that lead to a certificate of professionalism or a vocational training qualification and their correspondence with each other.
- To make the competences visible and to value the experience with the help of different professionals.
- To increase the possibilities of employability and improvement of qualifications
- To promote mobility in the labor market, both at national and European level.

5.1.5 ROMANIA

Recognition of credentials and skills for career/school counsellors in Romania involves specific processes regulated by Romanian authorities. While Romania doesn't have a mandatory certification system for school/career counselors, obtaining certification from recognized bodies, such as the Romanian Ministry of Education or professional organizations related to counseling, can be beneficial.

In Romania, career and school counsellors are required to have certain academic credentials and specialized skills to practice effectively. The field is relatively young but developing, with a growing recognition of the importance of counselling for student well-being and career development. Here are some the key elements for career and school counsellors in Romania:

1. Academic Qualifications	• Bachelor's Degree: A bachelor's degree in psychology, education, sociology, or a related field is generally required to begin a career in counselling. • Master's Degree: Many career and school counsellors pursue a master's degree in counselling, career guidance, or psychology. This level of education deepens theoretical knowledge and provides practical training in counselling techniques. • Specialized Training: Counsellors may also need additional specialized training or certifications to focus on career or school counselling, such as programs that focus on psychological assessment, career guidance, or educational counselling.
2. Licensing and	• Psychologists: To be recognized as a professional counsellor in Romania, especially if the counsellor intends to offer psychological services, one must be licensed by the Colegiul Psihologilor din România (Romanian College of Psychologists).

Professional Recognition	Professional Certification: In Romania, counsellors who want to work in educational settings are encouraged to undergo certification programs related to career guidance and counselling. This is often a formal process through recognized institutions, such as universities or professional bodies.
3. Core Skills and Competencies	- Communication Skills: Strong verbal and written communication is essential for interacting with students, parents, teachers, and colleagues. - Active Listening: A counsellor must be able to listen effectively and empathize with students' concerns, ensuring they feel understood and supported. - Counselling Techniques: Proficiency in various counselling techniques, including cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), solution-focused brief therapy (SFBT), and others, helps address both career and emotional challenges. - Career Assessment and Guidance: Counsellors need skills in administering career interest inventories, aptitude tests, and other assessment tools to guide students in their career paths. - Knowledge of Educational Systems: An understanding of the Romanian educational system, including higher education pathways, vocational training, and career development opportunities, is crucial. - Cultural Competence: Understanding the diverse needs of students from various backgrounds and being able to tailor counselling approaches accordingly. - Problem-Solving and Decision-Making: A counsellor must be able to help students make informed decisions about their future career paths or academic choices.
4. Continuous Professional Development	- Workshops and Conferences: Counsellors are encouraged to attend workshops, conferences, and seminars on career counselling, educational trends, and student well-being. - Supervision and Peer Support: Regular supervision by a more experienced counsellor or psychologist ensures that counsellors receive feedback and maintain ethical practices in their work. - Research and Evidence-Based Practice: Many counsellors in Romania engage in research or adopt evidence-based practices to improve their counselling techniques, keeping up with international standards.

5. Ethics and Standards	• Counsellors are guided in their work by some directions and principles related to ethical standards, but for now there is no Ethical Code of School/ Career Counselling at the national level, stipulated as legal approach. For example, CJRAE/ CMBRAE carry out its activities according to certain rules, negotiated at the level of the organisation, such as: maintaining confidentiality, avoiding conflicts of interest, and providing unbiased, professional advice. • From this perspective, the Romanian College of Psychologists is a relevant professional organisation but only for the private sector. Many guidance practitioners have a background in psychology and, as such, they have to follow the ethical code of the profession. • In 2004, research was conducted by the Institute of Educational Sciences which contributed to the development of the quality of counselling and guidance services in Romania by creating the first Code of Ethics and the first quality standards in the field.⁴ Similar documents used in different international counselling and guidance systems were analysed, specific priorities and needs for the Romanian system were identified, and finally a framework tool adapted to the needs of Romanian practitioners was created. Attempts have been made to adopt an ethical code for guidance practitioners since 2004, but these efforts were hampered by the fact that guidance practitioners are split between several services, each with its own legislation.⁵ More recent efforts by the Association of Romanian Counsellors have produced another ethical code, to which its members are bound to adhere, regardless of where they practice. Membership to the organisation is voluntary.
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⁴ <https://www.ise.ro/cod-etic-si-standarde-de-calitate-in-consilierea-carierii>

Mihai Jigău M. (coord.), Petre Botnariuc, Mihaela Chiru, Speranța Cîrlea, Cozma I., Angela Muscă, Luminița Tăsica. “Cod Etic și standarde de calitate în consilierea carierei”, Editura Afir, București, 2004, ISBN 973-7714-19-9 (publicație bilingvă RO-EN)

⁵ https://euroguidance.eu/guidance-system-in-romania?utm_source=chatgpt.com

6 COMPETENCE PROFILE FOR CAREER COUNSELORS 4.0

The Career Guidance 4.0 Provision Competence Profile is justified by the need to establish competency standards for career guidance practitioners that reflect current and future labor market demands. This framework maps the hard and soft skills essential for career professionals to adapt to structural changes in the global labor market, facilitating professional navigation and career development.

The key points that justify this framework:

- Provides a common language and shared understanding of future-oriented competencies essential for career professionals to enable effective career navigation to diverse beneficiaries.
- Addresses the lack of a common framework and unified mechanisms for recognizing hard, soft and informal skills at the EU level.
- Aligns with EU recommendations on the development of learning outcomes frameworks for key competencies.
- It combines hard (job-specific) and soft (transferable) skills, selected according to principles such as common definition breadth, transferability, relevance to future challenges, universality, impact, interdependence, malleability and measurability.
- It was developed through a comprehensive literature review and refined through focus groups with employers and vocational training stakeholders in several European countries.

The Career Guidance 4.0 Provision Competence Profile for career guidance professionals involves integrating knowledge and skills necessary to effectively support individuals in achieving their career goals in the industry 4.0. It includes the definition of specific qualification criteria, professional response criteria and learning/ employment outcomes for career guidance practitioners, trainers and relevant professionals for labour market inclusion. It will provide the basis for a learning outcome based competence profile to be used for curriculum development and training provisions and function as an index tool for acquired knowledge, competences as well as training of VET and career guidance professionals in view of the Industry 4.0 challenges and labour market transformations. The Career Guidance 4.0 Provision Competence Profile and relevant training curriculum will enhance the capacity building of VET and career guidance services, with highly skilled professionals, equipped with adequate knowledge, skills and competences as well as quality tools, as well as timely and granular labour market information to help skills adaptation, career navigation and planning in the Industry 4.0 labour market.

The profile consists of the following competencies:

Career Guidance 4.0 Provision Competence Profile for Career Guidance Practitioners

Lifelong Career Development and Future-oriented Career Management in a Digital Age

Competencies	Learning Outcomes	Employment Outcomes
• Ability to foster a lifelong learning and career development mindset in clients, emphasizing adaptability and continuous professional development. • Proficiency in guiding clients to develop STEAM and career management skills. • Ability to apply an extroverted approach and interaction with young beneficiaries (Gen Y & Z) in a digital environment. • Ability to counsel clients on entrepreneurial paths, self-employment, and freelance work in the digital economy and new emerging sectors.	• Knowledge of updated theoretical approaches and models of career empowerment, career readiness and development in transitional, digitized and precarious work conditions (e.g theory of work psychology, new approaches to self-management of change, learning and careers, as well as collaborative professional exploration (self-directed career learning, career guidance in communities, collaborative career exploration/co-careering). • Knowledge of the latest trends and dynamics and rapidly changing nature of work (globalisation, workforce generational changes, career navigation in international markets and cross-culture collaboration, technological advancements & automation/ Rapid Skills obsolesce and creation of new sectors and professions - new tasks to replace automated tasks/ displacement prospects & transition from declining occupations to new jobs • Knowledge of upskilling and reskilling pathways in response to technological change. • Understanding of the role of STEAM skills (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) in enhancing career development and personal growth and adaptability in an ever-evolving career landscape. • Understanding of digital career management skills such as digital job search, use of social media, creation of a professional digital identity, digital self-employment, digital networking etc.)	• Support clients to develop their self-awareness and self-perception by applying experiential methods (role plays, exercises etc,) utilizing modern digital technologies and tools. • Support clients to identify the relevance of digital skills and develop transferable skills relevant to multiple sectors. • Encourage clients to develop STEAM skills and digital career management skills and engage in lifelong learning to stay relevant in the evolving job market, through various opportunities (e.g., micro-credentials, digital badges, online courses, vocational training, digital job search, use of social media, creation of a professional digital identity, digital self-employment, digital networking). • Provide guidance on selecting appropriate reskilling or upskilling programs and pathways that align with emerging industry needs and facilitate transition from declining to new occupations. • Foster self-directed learning and the ability to manage career transitions effectively. • Coach clients on building their personal brand, networking, and developing skills for a dynamic, competitive job market.

	Knowledge of business start-up processes and opportunities for entrepreneurship in the digital economy.	Provide guidance on new business models, business planning, and the entrepreneurial mindset in the digital economy.
Emerging trends and technologies affecting the labour market/ Labour market intelligence and Data Literacy in industry 4.0		
Competencies	Learning Outcomes	Employment outcomes
- Ability to follow labour market trends, employment policies, and socio-economic changes at local, national, and global levels. - Ability to analyze and interpret labour market data using digital tools and analytics.	- Understanding of Industry 4.0 technologies such as automation, artificial intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT), and their impact on reshaping industries, job roles, and skill demands in the job market. - Understanding of digital transformation, sustainable development and environmental perspective (green guidance) and other contemporary factors. - Understanding of new non-standard forms of employment/work methods (e.g. gig economy, remote remote and hybrid work models, digital self-employment/crowd work, teleworking, multi-tasking and multi-employer work, job sharing, (project-to-project careers, multi-tasking /multi-agency work, interaction with AI systems). - Familiarity with data-driven tools to assess labour market needs, including analytics and forecasting. - Processing updated career information material on education, training, employment and the changing labour market trends, new forms of work, prospects for future jobs, new required skills, etc.	- Provide data-driven career advice based on labour market trends and future skills needs. - Help clients navigate non-traditional employment forms (e.g., freelancing, gig work, and entrepreneurship). - Use data analytics to predict emerging job roles and sectors in demand due to technological shifts. - Develop or provide digital career information material presenting the current labour market trends and prospects, based on digital transformation, sustainable development and environmental perspective and other contemporary factors.
Digital and Technological Competence - Digital career planning in industry 4.0 – Using Digital Career Guidance Tools and Methods		
Competencies	Learning Outcomes	Employment outcomes

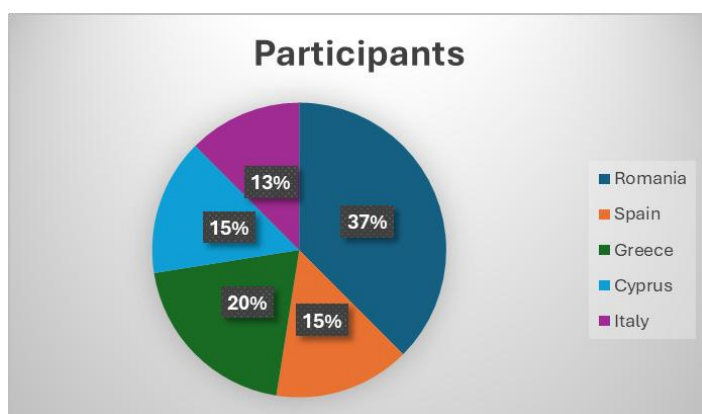
• Ability to work in a blended/ multi-channel service delivery approach. • Ability to identify, critically select, integrate, adapt, and contribute to the development of new ICT methods for career guidance. • Proficiency in using digital career guidance tools (e.g., AI-driven career assessments, virtual job fairs, online career platforms). • Ability to navigate online platforms and e-portfolios to guide clients on upskilling and reskilling.	• Knowledge of digitized methods and media, digital communication and cooperation practices, technology systems and methods related to the planning and organization of the provision of career guidance services (e.g. Blockchain & micro credentials systems). • Knowledge of the use of advanced Labour Market Information LMI & skills intelligence databases and other digital and automated tools, career chatbots, career management "games" (serious games) etc., and psychometric professional assessment (gamified assessment) • Knowledge of digitized methods and advanced technologies for career education/ exploration activities (e.g. Virtual - Augmented Reality)	• Use of technology systems and methods for organizing, classifying and sharing information (e.g. Modern electronic archiving tools and data management systems, Blockchain & micro credentials systems etc.). • Communicate with clients via virtual counseling sessions and different tools of (synchronous-asynchronous communication) (e.g. telephone helplines, video communication, email communication, live webinars with chat function, chatbots etc.) • Use of advanced Labour Market Information LMI & skills intelligence databases and other digital and automated tools to follow current labour market trends. • Support clients in exploring personal skills as well as learning and employment opportunities, using digital platforms, career chatbots, psychometric gamified assessment and job matching etc) • Organizing and using digital interactive career education experiences using advanced technologies (Virtual - Augmented Reality) e.g. virtual career days, 3D career videos, career serious games, virtual workplace simulations, user activation activities on career development &
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		management through augmented reality.
Inclusivity and Social Equity in Career Guidance		
Competencies	Learning Outcomes	Employment outcomes
• Ability to tailor career guidance provision to meet the needs of disadvantaged, vulnerable or marginalized groups. • Skills in advocating for social equity in access to job opportunities and career development resources.	• Understanding of diversity, equity, social justice and just transition, social responsibility and inclusion principles in the context of career guidance. • Understanding the importance of inclusivity in career guidance and the diverse needs, particularly for underrepresented, vulnerable or marginalized groups facing discrimination, social exclusion or other forms of inequality in terms of professional development and inclusion in Industry 4.0. (digital divide) such as (e.g. NEETs, long-term unemployed, low-skilled or older workers, migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, persons with disabilities and/or special educational needs, mental or chronic illnesses, cultural minorities or ethnic groups, Roma, LGBTQI+ communities, victims of domestic violence, single parents, juvenile offenders, ex-prisoners, ex-substance abusers, etc.)	• Design and deliver adapted and accessible career guidance services, material and tools that promote equity and inclusion according to the needs of diverse groups. • Assist clients from marginalized groups in overcoming barriers to employment, particularly in sectors affected by digitization and automation. • Work with educational institutions to promote inclusive training and upskilling opportunities. • Work with employers to promote inclusive hiring practices and support diversity in the workplace.
Professional development and Ethical Professional Practice		
Competencies	Learning Outcomes	Employment outcomes
• Enhance professional skills essential for future employability in industry 4.0 • Adherence to ethical standards, particularly with respect to client data privacy and the use of AI-driven tools.	• Learn to develop high-level cognitive abilities that are difficult to automate (critical thinking, analytical thinking, complex problem solving), readiness for change and innovation, interdisciplinary collaboration and social-emotional skills such as empathy, emotion management, diversity management, active listening	• Apply specifications and ethics for the remote and digital provision of career guidance services, as well as personal and sensitive data protection regulations. • Ensure that the use of digital tools respects client confidentiality and individual needs.

• Commitment to client-centered, impartial, and non-discriminatory career guidance. • Ability to build synergies facilitating partnerships that enhance career guidance services and labour market inclusion with employers, educational institutions, government agencies, and community organizations.	and creativity, resilience, adaptability, etc. • Understanding of ethical and quality assurance issues related to career counselling ICT-based interventions, such as cyber security and personal data protection. • Understanding ways of working across sectors to integrate insights from education, industry, and public policy into career guidance.	• Provide unbiased, transparent advice that prioritizes client welfare, informed decision-making, employability in the industry 4.0. • Develop and maintain a network of stakeholders to support career opportunities and transitions for clients to address complex labour market challenges in the context of Industry 4.0.
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7 CAREER GUIDANCE 4.0 PROVISION COMPETENCE PROFILE VALIDATION PROCESS

In response to the rapid transformations brought about by Industry 4.0, a comprehensive validation process was conducted to assess the importance and relevance of the competencies proposed in the Career Guidance 4.0 Provision Competence Profile. A structured questionnaire-based study was designed, in which **40 career counselors from partner countries participated**, providing valuable insights into their experiences, training backgrounds, and the essential competencies needed to fulfill their roles in the digital era.



The collected responses also allowed us to gain a deeper understanding of the current skill gaps and training needs among career counselors. Participants shared their perspectives on the challenges they face in adapting to new technological tools, digital service models, and automation-driven changes in career guidance practices. Additionally, they reflected on the extent to which their existing education and professional

development programs have prepared them for the demands of Career Guidance 4.0.

The analysis of their feedback has been instrumental in identifying key areas for upskilling and reskilling, ensuring that career guidance professionals are equipped with the technical, digital, and socio-emotional competencies required to support individuals in a labor market characterized by automation, AI, digitalization, and hybrid work models. The survey findings contributed to the validation of the competency framework, while also guides the design of a targeted training program to enhance the effectiveness and adaptability of career guidance practitioners in an era of continuous change.

a. Importance of Career Guidance 4.0 competences

Based on the survey results, the guidance practitioners identified several competencies as essential for effective Career Guidance in Industry 4.0, categorized by their level of importance:

High Importance Competences

The competences identified by guidance practitioners as most critical underscore the multifaceted nature of career guidance in the Industry 4.0 era, where rapid technological advancements and socio-economic changes require a proactive and adaptive approach:

Ability to Follow Labour Market Trends (Mean: 2.85): Staying abreast of labor market dynamics, employment policies, and socio-economic changes is crucial to provide timely, accurate, and relevant career guidance. The fast pace of technological innovation, such as automation and artificial intelligence, is reshaping industries, creating new roles, and rendering some traditional roles obsolete. Career practitioners must interpret these changes and translate them into actionable advice for clients navigating evolving career paths.

Inclusivity and Tailoring Guidance to Disadvantaged Groups (Mean: 2.83): As the workforce becomes increasingly diverse, there is a heightened emphasis on ensuring equitable access to career development opportunities. Industry 4.0 has the potential to exacerbate inequalities, making it essential for career practitioners to address the specific needs of underrepresented groups, such as women in STEM, low-skilled workers needing upskilling, and older workers adapting to new technologies.

Building Synergies and Partnerships (Mean: 2.83): Industry 4.0 emphasizes cross-sectoral collaboration to create pathways that integrate education, employment, and community services. Partnerships with stakeholders such as employers, educational institutions, and government agencies enhance career guidance services and promote labor market inclusion, particularly in emerging fields like renewable energy and digital technologies.

Ethical and Client-Centered Guidance (Mean: 2.80): Ethical practices are indispensable, especially with the increasing use of AI-driven tools in career guidance. Practitioners must safeguard client data privacy and ensure transparency and fairness in their recommendations. This competency reflects a commitment to upholding trust and maintaining impartiality while using advanced tools and analytics.

Medium Importance Competences

Fostering Lifelong Learning and Adaptability (Mean: 2.73): With Industry 4.0, lifelong learning is no longer optional but a necessity. Practitioners must instill a mindset of adaptability and continuous development in clients to help them remain competitive in a labor market where skill requirements are in constant flux.

Enhancing STEAM and Digital Skills (Mean: 2.73): Proficiency in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics is increasingly vital for many future careers. Practitioners must guide clients toward acquiring these competencies, ensuring they are equipped to navigate high-demand fields.

Digital Competence and Service Delivery (Means: 2.68): The blended approach to service delivery, combining in-person and digital methods, is becoming standard. Practitioners must be adept at using digital career tools such as AI-driven assessments, virtual job fairs, and online platforms to provide effective and scalable guidance.

Lower Importance:

Extroverted interaction in digital environments (Mean: 2.58). While still valuable, this competency is ranked relatively lower compared to others.

Importance of competencies: Means and Standard deviations

Competencies	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Future-oriented Career Management in a Digital Age			
Ability to foster a lifelong learning and career development mindset in clients, emphasizing adaptability and continuous professional development.	40	2.73	0.51
Proficiency in guiding clients to develop STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) and career management skills.	40	2.73	0.45
Ability to apply an extroverted approach and interaction with young beneficiaries (Gen Y & Z) in a digital environment.	40	2.58	0.55
Ability to counsel clients on entrepreneurial paths, self-employment, and freelance work in the digital economy and new emerging sectors.	40	2.60	0.59
Digital career guidance tools			
Ability to follow labour market trends, employment policies, and socio-economic changes at local, national, and global levels.	40	2.85	0.43
Ability to analyze and interpret labour market data using digital tools and analytics.	40	2.68	0.57
Digital and technological competence			
Ability to work in a blended/ multi-channel service delivery approach.	40	2.68	0.57
Ability to identify, critically select, integrate, adapt, and contribute to the development of new ICT methods for career guidance.	40	2.58	0.64
Proficiency in using digital career guidance tools (e.g., AI-driven career assessments, virtual job fairs, online career platforms etc.).	40	2.60	0.59
Ability to navigate online platforms and e-portfolios to guide clients on upskilling and reskilling.	40	2.60	0.59
Inclusivity and social equity			
Ability to tailor career guidance provision to meet the needs of disadvantaged populations, including low-skilled workers, women, PWDs, minorities, and older workers.	40	2.83	0.45
Skills in advocating for social equity in access to job opportunities and career development resources.	40	2.70	0.56
Professional development and Ethical Professional Practice			
Enhance professional skills essential for future employability in industry 4.0	40	2.73	0.51
Adherence to ethical standards, particularly with respect to client data privacy and the use of AI-driven tools.	40	2.68	0.53
Commitment to client-centered, impartial, and non-discriminatory career guidance.	40	2.80	0.46
Ability to build synergies facilitating partnerships that enhance career guidance services and labour market inclusion with employers, educational institutions, government agencies, and community organizations.	40	2.83	0.45

b. Training Needs for Career practitioners in Industry 4.0

Career practitioners identified key training areas that align with the evolving demands of Industry 4.0. These reflect a shift toward a more technologically integrated, socially conscious, and future-oriented approach to career guidance:

Soft Skills Development (Mean: 4.13): Soft skills, such as communication, adaptability, and emotional intelligence, are essential for effective interaction with clients in a digital age. Practitioners need to foster relationships, build trust, and provide guidance in environments increasingly mediated by technology.

Ethical Career Guidance and Professional Development (Mean: 4.08): Training in ethics equips practitioners to address challenges such as data privacy, algorithmic bias, and the responsible use of AI tools. As Industry 4.0 introduces complex digital tools, ethical considerations ensure that technology serves as an enabler of fairness and inclusivity rather than a barrier.

Emerging Trends and Technologies (Mean: 3.95): A deep understanding of labor market trends and the new occupational roles created by Industry 4.0 is vital. Training should focus on equipping practitioners with the knowledge to advise clients on upskilling, reskilling, and pursuing entrepreneurial opportunities in sectors driven by technological innovation.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) (Mean: 3.93): As workplaces evolve, promoting social equity and sustainability in career guidance is critical. Training in DEI prepares practitioners to support diverse populations, ensuring everyone can access opportunities in the labor market, including those traditionally marginalized.

Digital Career Management and STEAM Skills (Mean: 3.88): The integration of digital tools into career management requires practitioners to be proficient in using platforms and analytics for career planning. They must also guide clients in acquiring STEAM skills, which are increasingly demanded in innovative and high-tech industries.

Updated Theoretical Approaches (Mean: 3.60): Career guidance frameworks must adapt to address challenges such as precarious work conditions, gig economies, and digital transitions. Training in updated theories prepares practitioners to respond effectively to these complex scenarios.

Training Fields: Means and Standard Deviations

Training Fields	N	M	St.D
Soft Skills Development and essential skills for the Digital Age	40	4.13	1.11
Ethical Career Guidance Practice and Professional Development	40	4.08	1.25
Emerging trends and technologies affecting the labour market, industry 4.0 new and future occupations, job roles and sectors - upskilling and reskilling pathways, entrepreneurship and Innovation in response to technological change	40	3.95	1.18
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion/ Sustainability and Social Responsibility in accessing future careers.	40	3.93	1.10
Digital career management skills & STEAM Skills enhancing career development- Digital Career Guidance Tools and Methods for career planning in industry 4.0	40	3.88	1.11

Updated theoretical approaches and models of career development in transitional, digitized and precarious work conditions	4 0	3.60	1.19
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The results highlight the dual emphasis on technological proficiency and social responsibility in career guidance for Industry 4.0. Competences such as understanding labour market trends, fostering inclusivity, and ethical practice are pivotal for effective guidance. Meanwhile, training must focus on equipping practitioners with the skills to address technological disruptions, advocate for equity, and support clients in navigating dynamic career landscapes. These priorities align with the broader challenges and opportunities of Industry 4.0, ensuring that career guidance remains relevant and impactful.

7.1 Conclusions

The survey findings from the **Career Guidance 4.0 Provision Competence Profile Validation Process** highlight valuable results concerning the evolving landscape of career guidance and the skills required for professionals to remain effective in a rapidly transforming labour market.

Contexts

Most of the participating counselors work in educational institutions (15 responses), highlighting the importance of guidance from formal education and its crucial role in preparing students for the world of work. The public sector (11 responses) is also a common context for career guidance. This indicates a significant commitment on the part of government entities to support citizens' career development through public employment services and other initiatives. With respect to the private sector (9 responses) it shows that companies also invest in career guidance. Also, here we find freelance counselors, highlighting the trend towards customization of services and labor flexibility in this field. Community-based organizations provide a local and community focus, facilitating grassroots career guidance and strengthening local support networks.

The responses reflect the breadth and depth of the career guidance field, showing how it adapts to different contexts and needs. The diversity of settings in which the career counselors who responded to our questionnaire work underscores the versatility of this profession and the importance of an inclusive and specialized approach to serving a variety of clients. Guidance in educational institutions, social inclusion and the role of the public sector are particularly prominent, showing key areas of impact on career development.

Qualifications as career counsellor

Most career counselors have at least a master's degree, indicating a high level of education and specialization in the field. A considerable number of counselors have doctorates, suggesting that many are involved in research or have academic roles. Professional certifications are also common, highlighting the importance of formal and non-formal recognition and accreditation in career counseling. Although there are fewer, bachelor's degrees are still relevant. These results reflect that career counselors have a high level of academic training, with a majority holding master's degrees and a significant number holding doctorates. The diversity of qualifications highlights the richness of backgrounds and approaches within the profession. Continuing education and specialization are key components of career development in career counseling.

Educational background

Career counselors come from a variety of educational backgrounds, indicating a wealth of perspectives and approaches in the field. Psychology and Education are the most frequent areas, underlining their importance in understanding and guiding people in their career paths.

A large number of the participants have specific training in career guidance which highlights the need for specialized knowledge for the development of this professional profile. The presence of organizational development, human resources and social work reflects the intersection of career guidance with other important disciplines. These data provide a view of the training of career counselors in which we can highlight the diversity of training and the importance of specialization and advanced knowledge in career guidance.

Years of experience

Most career counselors have more than 10 years of experience, reflecting a solid base of knowledge and established practices in the field. Although the majority have extensive experience, there is also a significant representation of counselors between 5 and 10 years of experience and a smaller group with a maximum of 5 years of experience.

Adaptations

The use of AI-powered tools and platforms, career management applications, and the simulation of work environments through gamification show strong adoption of technology in career guidance. Virtual and hybrid counseling sessions are especially popular, reflecting the need to provide accessible and flexible services in an increasingly digital world. Although less common, innovative technologies such as AR and VR and gamification are being explored to make guidance more interactive and engaging. Orienting clients to future job opportunities and developing customized paths based on future trends are key practices to prepare clients for the future of work. Focusing orientation in these areas is essential to equip customers with the skills needed to compete in the Industry 4.0 job market. In a digitally connected world of work, helping clients build and manage their professional brand online is increasingly relevant. This analysis highlights how career practitioners are adapting their methods and tools to align with the demands and opportunities of Industry 4.0, using advanced technology and innovative approaches to improve career guidance.

Career Guidance 4.0 Provision Competence Profile for Career Guidance Practitioners

Lifelong Career Development and Future-oriented Career Management in a Digital Age:

The high valuation of the ability to foster a mindset of continuous learning and adaptability reflects the need to prepare clients for resilient and flexible careers. Competency in guiding clients to develop STEAM and career management skills is critical to prepare clients for the technical and scientific challenges of Industry 4.0. The ability to interact effectively with younger generations in digital environments is essential, given the familiarity and interactive use of technology by these generations. The ability to advise on entrepreneurial paths and freelance work is valued, underlining the importance of these areas in the digital economy and emerging sectors.

Career practitioners consider various competencies relevant for continuous professional development and future-oriented career management in a digital age. Adaptability, continuous learning, STEAM skills and the ability to mentor entrepreneurship and freelance work stand out as key areas. Interaction with younger generations in digital environments is also perceived as vital, albeit a slightly more varied perception in its importance. This analysis therefore suggests that career practitioners are focused on preparing their clients for the challenges and opportunities of Industry 4.0, using a holistic approach that combines technical development, adaptability and entrepreneurship support.

Digital Career Guidance Tools and Methods

Both competencies are valued by most participants, indicating that being well informed about the labor market and policies is essential for providing effective and relevant career guidance. The competency to use digital tools and data analysis underscores the importance of technology in modern career guidance. This skill enables counselors to provide counseling based on accurate and up-to-date data. Competence in tracking socioeconomic changes and labor market trends is vital to anticipate market needs and prepare clients for future challenges and opportunities. Analyzing and interpreting labor market data using digital tools is critical to making informed decisions and providing accurate guidance. Coaches who master these competencies can provide a more robust, evidence-based service. The results reflected by career counselors consider competencies related to tracking labor market trends and analyzing data using digital tools to be critical. These competencies are essential to stay current and provide data-driven guidance, which is critical in the dynamic Industry 4.0 environment.

Digital and Technological Competence

All the competencies identified are considered of high importance by most participants, underlining the critical need for digital competencies in career guidance. Career counselors value the ability to adapt and integrate new technologies, which is essential to provide relevant and effective guidance services in the digital age. Guidance using online platforms and e-portfolios to enhance and retrain clients is essential to ensure that clients remain competitive and prepared for changes in the labor market. The results indicate a clear valuation of digital and technological competencies among career counselors. The ability to work in a multi-channel approach, innovate with new ICT methods, use digital guidance tools and guide clients in continuous professional improvement are seen as crucial. This reflects the adaptation of guidance services to the demands and opportunities of Industry 4.0, ensuring relevance and effectiveness in career guidance.

Inclusivity and Social Equity in Career Guidance

Both competencies are well rated by most participants, indicating that inclusiveness and personalization in career counseling are essential to ensure that all clients, especially those from disadvantaged populations, receive needed support. Competencies to advocate for social equity are seen as vital, suggesting that career counselors should not only provide personalized support, but also actively work to remove barriers to equitable access to employment and career development opportunities. While the majority consider these competencies to be of high importance, there is a minority who view them as medium or low importance. This reflects differences in the contexts in which career counselors operate or in their specific approaches to work. The results show a clear valuation of competencies related to inclusion and social equity in career guidance. The ability to tailor counseling to the needs of disadvantaged people and advocate for social equity is important to ensure that all clients have access to job opportunities and career development resources.

Professional development and Ethical Professional Practice

Most participants consider it very important to develop professional competencies for Industry 4.0, reflecting the need to be prepared for the demands and opportunities of a technological and changing work environment. The importance of adhering to ethical standards and protecting the privacy of customer data is highlighted, suggesting that maintaining trust and integrity is critical in job orientation. The high valuation of commitment to an unbiased, client-centered orientation underscores the need to provide fair and equitable service to all clients. The ability to build synergies and partnerships with diverse stakeholders is seen as crucial to improving career guidance services and fostering labor market inclusion. These results show that competencies related to professional development and ethical practice are highly valued by career counselors. Enhancing professional competencies, adherence to ethical standards, commitment to unbiased guidance, and the ability to build effective partnerships are seen as essential to providing high-quality career guidance services in Industry 4.0.

Additional competences

Most participants do not consider additional competencies necessary, suggesting that they feel current competencies are adequate to meet the challenges of Industry 4.0. In contrast, 9 of the participants identify the need for additional competencies, reflecting a concern to be fully prepared for emerging changes and challenges.

Additional competencies mentioned include specific skills in career orientation, understanding of the work environment, sustainability, gender equality, teamwork, interpersonal skills, multidisciplinary work, and knowledge of individual customer characteristics.

- Career counseling skills: the need for specific career counseling skills to better adapt to changes in Industry 4.0 was highlighted.
- Clear understanding of the work environment: understanding the work environment is critical to providing relevant and up-to-date advice to clients.

- Teamwork and interpersonal skills: teamwork skills and interpersonal competencies are crucial to collaborate effectively with colleagues and clients.
- Multidisciplinary working: being able to work in multidisciplinary teams is essential to address the complex challenges of the modern labor market.
- Knowing the individual characteristics of the person: understanding the individual characteristics of clients allows you to provide personalized and effective guidance.

These areas reflect a need for a more holistic and up-to-date approach to career counseling. The need to know the individual characteristics of clients has also been mentioned. These results suggest that while most participants feel that the competencies reflected in this questionnaire are adequate, there is significant recognition of the need for additional competencies to better address the challenges of Industry 4.0.

Part of relevant training

Most of the training areas are considered of high or very high importance for most participants, underscoring the need for comprehensive or up-to-date training to meet the challenges of Industry 4.0. Although all areas are rated highly, there is a notable distribution in some responses, suggesting that participants may have different priorities depending on the context and their experience. Soft skills development and ethical career guidance practice are particularly prominent areas, reflecting their relevance to the provision of effective and fair guidance services. Emerging trends and technologies as well as updated theoretical approaches are considered critical, indicating the need to keep abreast of developments and changes in the labor market. Therefore, the responses to this question show a clear appreciation of various areas of training needed for career guidance in the context of Industry 4.0. Most participants underline the importance of white skills, ethical practices and keeping up to date with emerging trends and technologies.

Additional training issues

Most participants consider that no additional training topics are necessary, suggesting that the training topics included in this questionnaire are adequate to meet the challenges of Industry 4.0. Although a small number of participants feel that additional topics are necessary. These additional topics include the need to keep training up to date and the integration of mental health and wellness into career counseling practices. These areas reflect a need for a more holistic and up-to-date approach to training.

8 LEARNING/ EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES FOR A TRAINING CURRICULUM IN CAREER GUIDANCE 4.0

The rapid evolution of Industry 4.0 has transformed the world of work, requiring career guidance professionals to develop new skills and approaches. A training curriculum tailored for vocational education and career counselors should equip them with digital competencies, labor market intelligence, inclusivity strategies, and ethical standards to meet the demands of the modern workforce.

A key learning outcome of the curriculum is to enhance professionals' ability to use digital tools and emerging technologies in career guidance. Participants should gain proficiency in AI-driven career assessments, virtual job fairs, and blockchain-based credential verification. They should also develop skills in utilizing big data analytics and labour market forecasting tools to offer evidence-based career advice. Additionally, the curriculum should focus on integrating virtual and augmented reality (VR/AR) technologies to create immersive career exploration experiences, helping individuals better understand job roles and workplace environments.

Another critical component is career management in the digital age, where guidance professionals will learn how to support individuals in navigating digital career pathways. This includes coaching clients on digital identity management, online job searching, and professional networking in a digital landscape. The training will also focus on upskilling and reskilling pathways, enabling career counselors to help individuals transition into emerging job sectors affected by automation. Special emphasis will be placed on guiding professionals working in the gig economy, hybrid work models, and entrepreneurship, ensuring they have the necessary tools to build sustainable careers in flexible work environments.

The curriculum should also address inclusivity and social equity in career guidance, equipping professionals with the skills to provide accessible and inclusive services tailored to the needs of vulnerable and marginalized populations, including NEETs, migrants, persons with disabilities, and long-term unemployed individuals. Career counselors should be trained to advocate for social justice and equal access to career development resources, ensuring that individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds can benefit from digital career opportunities. Furthermore, strategies to bridge the digital divide will be explored, ensuring that technology enhances rather than limits career prospects for underrepresented groups.

Finally, the curriculum should emphasize ethical and professional standards in Career Guidance 4.0. Counselors will be trained to ensure compliance with data privacy regulations, cybersecurity best practices, and ethical considerations in AI-driven career services. They should also develop competencies in remote and blended career guidance, learning how to offer effective digital counseling while maintaining ethical and client-centered approaches.

Additionally, they will be equipped to build multi-sector partnerships with employers, educational institutions, and policymakers to support lifelong career development and labor market inclusion.

The above will help career guidance professionals to be better prepared to navigate Industry 4.0 challenges, integrate emerging technologies, and deliver future-oriented, inclusive, and ethical career services in an increasingly digitalized and automated world.

Career Guidance 4.0 Provision Competence Profile for Career Guidance Practitioners	
Lifelong Career Development and Future-oriented Career Management in a Digital Age	
Competencies	Learning outcomes
• Ability to foster a lifelong learning and career development mindset in clients, emphasizing adaptability and continuous professional development. • Proficiency in guiding clients to develop STEAM and career management skills. • Ability to apply an extroverted approach and interaction with young beneficiaries (Gen Y & Z) in a digital environment. • Ability to counsel clients on entrepreneurial paths, self-employment, and freelance work in the digital economy and new emerging sectors.	• Knowledge of updated theoretical approaches and models of career empowerment, career readiness and development in transitional, digitized and precarious work conditions (e.g. theory of work psychology, new approaches to self-management of change, learning and careers, as well as collaborative professional exploration (self-directed career learning, career guidance in communities, collaborative career exploration/co-careering). • Knowledge of the latest trends and dynamics and rapidly changing nature of work (globalisation, workforce generational changes, career navigation in international markets and cross-culture collaboration, technological advancements & automation/ Rapid Skills obsolesce and creation of new sectors and professions - new tasks to replace automated tasks/ displacement prospects & transition from declining occupations to new jobs • Knowledge of upskilling and reskilling pathways in response to technological change. • Understanding of the role of STEAM skills (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) in enhancing career development and personal growth and adaptability in an ever-evolving career landscape.

	• Understanding digital career management skills such as digital job search, use of social media, creation of a professional digital identity, digital self-employment, digital networking etc.) • Knowledge of business start-up processes and opportunities for entrepreneurship in the digital economy.
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Emerging trends and technologies affecting the labour market/Labour market intelligence and Data Literacy in industry 4.0	
Competencies	Learning outcomes
• Ability to follow labour market trends, employment policies, and socio-economic changes at local, national, and global levels. • Ability to analyze and interpret labour market data using digital tools and analytics.	• Understanding of Industry 4.0 technologies such as automation, artificial intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT), and their impact on reshaping industries, job roles, and skill demands in the job market. • Understanding of digital transformation, sustainable development and environmental perspective (green guidance) and other contemporary factors. • Understanding of new non-standard forms of employment/ work methods (e.g. gig economy, remote and hybrid work models, digital self-employment/crowd work, teleworking, multi-tasking and multi-employer work, job sharing, (project-to-project careers, multi-tasking /multi-agency work, interaction with AI systems). • Familiarity with data-driven tools to assess labour market needs, including analytics and forecasting. • Processing updated career information material on education, training, employment and the changing labour market trends, new forms of work, prospects for future jobs, new required skills, etc.

Digital and Technological Competence - Digital career planning in industry 4.0 –Using Digital Career Guidance Tools and Methods

Competencies	Learning outcomes
• Ability to work in a blended/ multi-channel service delivery approach. • Ability to identify, critically select, integrate, adapt, and contribute to the development of new ICT methods for career guidance. • Proficiency in using digital career guidance tools (e.g., AI-driven career assessments, virtual job fairs, online career platforms). • Ability to navigate online platforms and e-portfolios to guide clients on upskilling and reskilling.	• Knowledge of digitized methods and media, digital communication and cooperation practices, technology systems and methods related to the planning and organization of the provision of career guidance services (e.g. Blockchain & micro credentials systems). • Knowledge of the use of advanced Labour Market Information LMI & skills intelligence databases and other digital and automated tools, career chatbots, career management "games" (serious games) etc., and psychometric professional assessment (gamified assessment) • Knowledge of digitized methods and advanced technologies for career education/ exploration activities (e.g. Virtual - Augmented Reality)

Inclusivity and Social Equity in Career Guidance	
Competencies	Learning outcomes
• Ability to tailor career guidance provision to meet the needs of disadvantaged, vulnerable or marginalized groups. • Skills in advocating for social equity in access to job opportunities and career development resources.	• Understanding diversity, equity, social justice and just transition, social responsibility and inclusion principles in the context of career guidance. • Understanding the importance of inclusivity in career guidance and the diverse needs, particularly for underrepresented, vulnerable or marginalized groups facing discrimination, social exclusion or other forms of inequality in terms of professional development and inclusion in Industry 4.0. (digital divide) such as (e.g. NEETs, long-term unemployed, low-skilled or older workers, migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, persons with disabilities and/or special educational needs, mental or chronic illnesses, cultural minorities or ethnic groups, Roma, LGBTQI+ communities, victims of domestic violence, single parents,

	juvenile offenders, ex-prisoners, ex-substance abusers, etc.)
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Professional development and Ethical Professional Practice	
Competencies	Learning outcomes
- Enhancing professional skills essential for future employability in industry 4.0 - Adherence to ethical standards, particularly with respect to client data privacy and the use of AI-driven tools. - Commitment to client-centered, impartial, and non-discriminatory career guidance. - Ability to build synergies facilitating partnerships that enhance career guidance services and labour market inclusion with employers, educational institutions, government agencies, and community organizations.	- Learn to develop high-level cognitive abilities that are difficult to automate (critical thinking, analytical thinking, complex problem solving), readiness for change and innovation, interdisciplinary collaboration and social-emotional skills such as empathy, emotion management, diversity management, active listening and creativity, resilience, adaptability, etc. - Understanding of ethical and quality assurance issues related to career counselling ICT-based interventions, such as cyber security and personal data protection. - Understanding ways of working across sectors to integrate insights from education, industry, and public policy into career guidance.

9 PROPOSAL OF THE CERTIFICATION PROCESS

The European Union is actively promoting the implementation of micro-credentials as an innovative tool for the recognition of training. These certifications are designed to accredit specific competencies, knowledge and skills acquired through short-term learning programs. The initiative seeks to promote lifelong learning and improve employability in all professional sectors and stages of life.

Micro-credentials offer a flexible and efficient way to validate further training, ranging from specific courses in professional subjects to soft skills such as active listening, teamwork or creativity. This approach allows individuals to adapt their training to the changing demands of the labor market and to demonstrate their competencies in a tangible and verifiable way.

The use of micro-credentials in a training recognition process has the following advantages:

- Flexibility: it allows trainees to learn at their own pace.
- Validation of specific competencies: Helps trainees demonstrate specific competencies to potential employers, enhancing their professional profile.
- Professional growth: facilitates the development of skills necessary for career advancement and adapting to the changing demands of the labor market.
- Improved employability: professionals with micro-credentials are 27% more likely to be promoted compared to those without.
- Continuous learning: they promote lifelong learning, allowing trainees to stay up to date in their professional fields.

This is why we consider it relevant to propose a certification process for our training based on micro-credentials.

The structure of a micro-credential is as follows:

- Identification of the person receiving the accreditation
- Title of the microcredential
- Country of issuance
- Provider issuing the microcredential
- Date of issuance
- Learning outcomes
- Workload required to achieve the learning outcomes in ECTS credits)
- Quality assurance procedures supporting the micro-credential.

These elements are essential to guarantee the transparency, portability and recognition of micro credentials, ensuring that they provide clear information about the learner's learning experience and achievements (The Council of the European Union, 2022).

In the case of the training in CAREERS 4.0 project, each partner will be responsible for issuing a micro-credential certificate to training participants, including the following information:

Identification of the trainee: (name of the participant)

Proposed Title of the course: Career Guidance 4.0 Training for career guidance practitioners, trainers and relevant professionals.

Level (EQF): 6

Country of issuance: (here each country will have to include its own).

Entity: (here each country will have to include its own)

Date of issue: (here each country will have to include its own)

Learning outcomes: as defined in the profile and in each module

ECVET: 1,5

Type of evaluation: Micro Counselling session

Form of participation in training: Face to face synchronous (distance) learning -
Asynchronous distance learning

Prerequisites to enroll in the training: EQF level 6 qualification in career counselling, VET training or social inclusion & minimum of 2 years' relevant professional experience

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11 ANNEX

Country Responses to Validation Survey Questionnaire for the Career Guidance 4.0 Competence Profile

The responses obtained were as follows:

1. Select your country:

- a. Romania: 15 responses
- b. Spain: 6 responses
- c. Greece: 8 responses
- d. Cyprus: 6 responses
- e. Italy: 5 responses

2. In what context do you provide career guidance? Tick the appropriate answer

Some of the participants in the questionnaire have selected multiple options to identify their job position, which is why these results show a higher number than the total number of participants.

Context	Responses
Career Guidance Services in the Public Sector	11
Career Guidance Services in the Private Sector	9
Career Guidance Services in Educational institution	15
Public Employment Services	3
Community-Based Organizations	3
Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs)	5
Online Career Counseling Platforms	2
Professional Associations or Industry-Specific Organizations	4
Social Inclusion Services for Marginalized Groups	5
Freelance career Guidance Practitioner	6
Other: Scientific Organization of the Trade Unions	1

3. What are your qualifications as a career/employment counselor? Tick the appropriate answer.

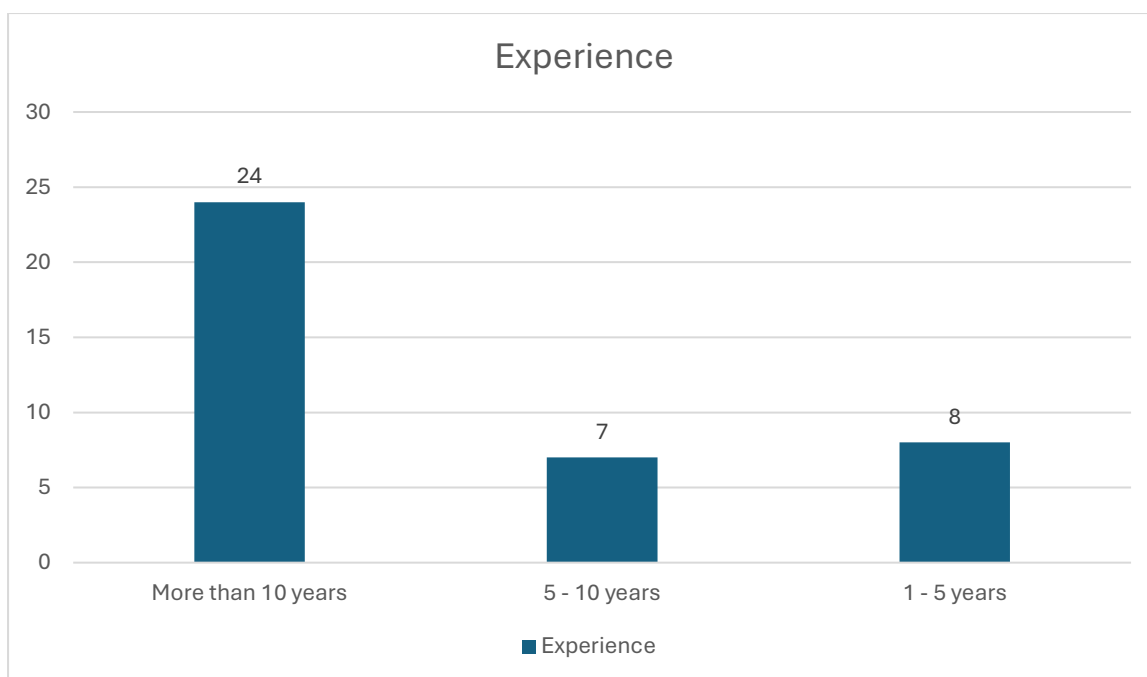
Qualification	Responses
Master's Degree	22
PhD	9
Bachelor's Degree	5
Professional Certification/Accreditation	3
Other	1

4. What is your educational background:

Some of the participants in the questionnaire have selected multiple options to identify their job position, which is why these results show a higher number than the total number of participants.

Qualifications	Responses
Psychology	14
Career Counseling	11
Education	17
Social Work	3
Organizational Development	2
Human Resources Management	2
Business Administration	1
Psychopedagogy	4
PhD (various related disciplines)	6
Organizational Psychology	1

5. How many years of working experience do you have as a career/employment counselor? Choose appropriately.



6. How do you adapt your career guidance services to address the changing nature of work, skills, and industries in industry 4.0? Choose more than one appropriate answer.

Some of the participants in the questionnaire have selected multiple options to identify their job position, which is why these results show a higher number than the total number of participants.

Adaptations	Responses
Use of AI-driven career counseling tools and platforms	11
Offering virtual and hybrid career counseling sessions	15
Utilizing career management apps and digital skills assessment tools	19
Using AR/VR for interactive career explorations	2
Simulating job environments or tasks through gamified platforms	5
Guiding clients on emerging jobs, industries with high growth potential and career paths in Industry 4.0 sectors	12
Organizing industry-specific career information webinar, or mentoring from professional in Industry 4.0 fields	4
Focusing on Stem-related career and digital literacy	8
Highlighting transferable skills like adaptability, creativity, and emotional intelligence	14

Developing individualized career pathways based on future work trends	16
Providing guidance on digital professional branding	8
None of the above	2

7. The Career Guidance 4.0 Provision Competence Profile for Career Guidance Practitioners highlights the following 5 aspects and relevant competences as necessary for effective career guidance provision in industry 4.0. Please rate the importance of each different aspect (tick as appropriate)

Career Guidance 4.0 Provision Competence Profile for Career Guidance Practitioners			
Lifelong Career Development and Future-oriented Career Management in a Digital Age			
Competencies	High importance	Medium Importance	Low Importance
○ Ability to foster a lifelong learning and career development mindset in clients, emphasizing adaptability and continuous professional development.	30	9	1
○ Proficiency in guiding clients to develop STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) and career management skills.	29	11	0
○ Ability to apply an extroverted approach and interaction with young beneficiaries (Gen Y & Z) in a digital environment.	24	15	1
○ Ability to counsel clients on entrepreneurial paths, self-employment, and freelance work in the digital economy and new emerging sectors.	26	12	2
Labour market intelligence in industry 4.0			
Competencies	High importance	Medium Importance	Low Importance
○ Ability to follow labour market trends, employment policies, and socio-economic changes at local, national, and global levels.	35	4	1
○ Ability to analyze and interpret labour market data using digital tools and analytics.	29	9	2
Digital and Technological Competence			
Competencies	High importance	Medium Importance	Low Importance

○ Ability to work in a blended/ multi-channel service delivery approach.	29	9	2
○ Ability to identify, critically select, integrate, adapt, and contribute to the development of new ICT methods for career guidance.	26	11	3
○ Proficiency in using digital career guidance tools (e.g., AI-driven career assessments, virtual job fairs, online career platforms etc.).	26	12	2
○ Ability to navigate online platforms and e-portfolios to guide clients on upskilling and reskilling.	26	12	2
Inclusivity and Social Equity in Career Guidance			
Competencies	High importance	Medium Importance	Low Importance
○ Ability to tailor career guidance provision to meet the needs of disadvantaged populations, including low-skilled workers, women, PWDs, minorities, and older workers.	34	5	1
○ Skills in advocating for social equity in access to job opportunities and career development resources.	30	8	2
Professional development and Ethical Professional Practice			
Competencies	High importance	Medium Importance	Low Importance
○ Enhance professional skills essential for future employability in industry 4.0	30	9	1
○ Adherence to ethical standards, particularly with respect to client data privacy and the use of AI-driven tools.	28	11	1
○ Commitment to client-centered, impartial, and non-discriminatory career guidance.	33	6	1
○ Ability to build synergies facilitating partnerships that enhance career guidance services and labour market inclusion with employers, educational institutions, government agencies, and community organizations.	34	5	1

8. Do you consider any additional competences (knowledge, skills) as necessary for professional providing career guidance in the context of Industry 4.0?

Yes: 9

No: 31

8a. If you answered the previous question was yes, please indicate:

- Career counseling skills
- Clear understanding of the job environment
- Ability
- Have knowledge of sustainability and gender equality
- Teamwork, interpersonal skills
- Multidisciplinary work
- To know the individual characteristics of the person

9. Which of the following issues do you identify as important as part of relevant training so you can perform your career guidance tasks successfully in line with industry 4.0 evolving challenges, opportunities and new labour market trends? Rate the following on a scale 1-5 (1= very low - 5= very high)

Training fields	1	2	3	4	5
Updated theoretical approaches and models of career development in transitional, digitized and precarious work conditions	2	7	6	15	10
Emerging trends and technologies affecting the labour market, industry 4.0 new and future occupations, job roles and sectors - upskilling and reskilling pathways, entrepreneurship and Innovation in response to technological change	3	2	4	16	15
Digital career management skills & STEAM Skills enhancing career development- Digital Career Guidance Tools and Methods for career planning in industry 4.0	2	3	6	16	13
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion/ Sustainability and Social Responsibility in accessing future careers.	2	2	7	15	14

Soft Skills Development and essential skills for the Digital Age	2	2	4	13	19
Ethical Career Guidance Practice and Professional Development	3	2	5	9	21

10. Do you consider any additional training issues necessary for professionals providing career guidance in the context of Industry 4.0?

- a. Yes –6 responses
- b. No – 34 responses
 - i. If you answered the previous question was yes, please indicate:
 1. To be updated
 2. Mental Health and Well-being into Career Counseling Practices- Understanding and addressing burnout, stress, and anxiety in job seekers and employees, prioritize mental health in career planning