

Job profiles and training of employment counsellors

Analytical paper findings

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RELEVANCE OF THE TOPIC

- The **skills and competences of employment counsellors are critical** to achieving successful placement outcomes, but
- Little is known about existing profiles, training and career pathways from a **structured, analytical and comparative perspective.**
- Focus on both **similarities and differences** of job profiles and competences requirements in PES in EU and accession countries with the aim to formulate **a common core jobs profiles and competences** vital for an employment counsellor.
- Focus on the **changing requirements of the role of employment counsellor** (e.g. growing importance of interviewing and counselling competences; use of ICT technologies), and their impact on job profiles, required competencies and training provisions.



JOB CONTENT, COMPETENCES AND SERVICE REQUIREMENTS

- **Job profiles** including tasks/responsibilities for employment counsellors exist in **all of the analysed countries**.
- **Degree of flexibility and autonomy** of PES in preparation of job profiles of employment counsellors **varies**, with visible trends towards decentralisation
- **Diversification** of the job profiles is to a large extent dependent on the operational PES structure, priority tasks and activation strategy used in the country.



JOB CONTENT, COMPETENCES AND SERVICE REQUIREMENTS

Existence of specialised job profiles for employment counsellors

Job profiles for:	Countries:
Employment counsellors for employers	BE FOREM, BE VDAB, HR, EE, DE, LT, MT, NL, PT, SI, AT
Employment counsellors for jobseekers	BE FOREM, BE VDAB, HR, EE, DE, LT, MT, NL, SI, AT
Employment counsellors for unemployed with more complex problems	BE FOREM, BE VDAB, HR, FR, LT, MT, NL, PT, SI, AT
Employment counsellors for young jobseekers	BE VDAB, HR, DE, LT
Employment counsellors for long-term unemployed	BE VDAB, HR, SI
Employment counsellors for older job seekers	BE VDAB, HR



KEY COMMONALITIES AND DIFFERENCES IN JOB PROFILES OF EMPLOYMENT COUNSELLORS

Tasks of employment counsellors relating to services for unemployed

Most common tasks

- Providing information on available job offers
- Job search assistance
- Information about ALMP measures
- Maintaining contact with registered jobseekers through telephone/e-mail
- Providing and up-keeping on-site and on-line information on available job openings
- Individual initial interviewing of jobseekers
- Assessment of the jobseeker's strengths/weaknesses and the adequate need for support
- Preparation of an individual action plan
- Referral to appropriate ALMP measure/ provider
- Maintaining direct, in- person contact with registered jobseekers

Common tasks

- Providing telephone/on-line job information and assistance
- Group sessions for jobseekers
- Providing and up-keeping on site and on-line information on available trainings/ALMPs
- Monitoring of implementation of IAP
- Monitoring in case of referral to another provider/ training

Less common tasks

- Registering unemployed (formal registration process)
- Use of specialized IT and other tools for assessment
- Guidance on career planning/ development
- Planning of ALMPs
- Networking with other stakeholders, providers



KEY COMMONALITIES AND DIFFERENCES IN JOB PROFILES OF EMPLOYMENT COUNSELLORS

Tasks of employment counsellors relating to services for unemployed perceived most important (red), important (green) and less important (blue)

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KEY COMMONALITIES AND DIFFERENCES IN COMPETENCE PROFILES OF EMPLOYMENT COUNSELLORS

Most common

- Knowledge of current labour market situation and trends
- Knowledge of disadvantaged groups on the labour market
- Teamwork/cooperation
- Flexibility
- IT skills
- Problem recognition and solving skills
- Assessment and matching skills
- Communication and interviewing/ counselling skills
- Ability to motivate and inspire clients
- Client orientation
- Stress resistance
- Patience, understanding and the ability to listen non-judgmentally
- Ability to work independently

Common

- Knowledge of service-specific tools/ activation practice
- Information finding and analysis skills
- Knowledge of the gender aspects
- Trust building ability/ reliability
- Knowledge of vocational structure and vocational classifications
- Planning and organizing skills
- Negotiation skills

Less common

- Innovativeness/creativity
- Group facilitation skills
- Knowledge of ALMP measures/concepts
- Skills relating to employer services
- Knowledge of human resources management
- Knowledge of social case management problems
- Knowledge of hard and soft skills assessment tools
- Knowledge of performance measurement/ controlling
- Knowledge of labour law
- Assessment of psychological and social profiles



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DIFFERENCES IN INITIAL ENTRY REQUIREMENTS FOR EMPLOYMENT COUNSELLORS

Entry requirements for employment counsellors: level of education, education disciplines and additional qualifications differentiate the country approaches

Entry level education:	Essential	Desirable	Not required
Secondary education (or equivalent at ISCED lvls 3-4)	BE VDAB, CY, LT, MT, PL, RO	BE FOREM, FI, FR	-
Bachelor's degree (or equivalent at ISCED lvl 5)	SE, PT, NL, LV, HU, DE, SI	PL, MT, FR, FI, EE, CY, HR, BG, BE VDAB, ES	-
Master's degree (or equivalent at ISCED lvl 6)	HU	CY, FR, LV, LT, LT, MT, PL	BE FOREM, HR, FI, DE, PT, AT
Postgraduate studies degree	EE	LV, MT, PL	BE FOREM, HR, CY, FI, FR, DE, LT, PT, AT



SIMILARITIES IN INITIAL AND ON-GOING TRAINING FOR EMPLOYMENT COUNSELLORS

Key inception training contents

- Basic training on PES
- Legal framework of PES functioning
- Communication and negotiations in the counselling process
- Support of jobseekers in effective job search methods
- Current labour market situation and trends, current economic trends

Key on-going training contents

- Effective activation/ motivation techniques of unemployed and inactive
- Current labour market situation and trends, current economic trends
- Support of jobseekers in effective job search methods
- Use of modern IT tools in counselling process
- External cooperation and networking
- Working with difficult clients



LESSONS FOR FUTURE PES DEVELOPMENT

- Common profile for employment counsellors on the basis of analysis of key job tasks and required competences possible to generate – so **employment counsellors' role can be regarded as an emerging occupation** combining elements of administrative, counselling, social work and human resources management tasks
- Core tasks require a **more balanced approach** when it comes to key administrative and customer service competences.
- **Increasingly important “soft” skills**, due to growing intensity of external contacts of employment counsellors.



CLEARER DEFINITION OF THE KEY TASKS AND CORRESPONDING COMPETENCES REQUIRED

In relation to **the core tasks for employment counsellors specialising in employer services in Europe**, the adequate job profile should include:

- Tasks focused on **placement** – which require a mix of administrative, assessment and human resources management knowledge and skills,
- Tasks focused on **networking** – which require strong communication and cooperation skills, as well as service specific knowledge (e.g. on ALMPs)
- Tasks focused on **organizing** – which require high level of organizational knowledge and skills.



CLEARER DEFINITION OF THE KEY TASKS AND CORRESPONDING COMPETENCES REQUIRED

In relation to **the core tasks for employment counsellors specialising in jobseeker services in Europe**, the adequate job profile should include:

- Tasks focused on **placement** – which require communication and interviewing skills, as well as client orientation,
- Tasks focused on **counselling** – which require counselling, assessment and matching skills, ability to motivate and inspire clients, stress resistance, patience, understanding and the ability to listen non-judgementally.
- Tasks focused on **information provision** – which require knowledge of the current labour market situation and trends, communication skills and client orientation.
- Tasks focused on **administration and monitoring** – which require communication and cooperation skills, and service-specific knowledge.



IMPACT OF TRAINING AND QUALIFICATIONS ON QUALITY OF SERVICE PROVISIONS AND OUTCOMES

- **Limited possibility** of obtaining the people well prepared to play the role of employment counsellors from the market in Europe, so
- policymakers should be encouraged to **strengthen institutional and legal provisions towards the development of employment counsellors' education at tertiary level.**
- Big role is to be played by **internally developed, PES-specific inception and on-going training** for employment counsellors.
- The training activities should be planned and tailored to the **needs** of the **specific country's service**, as well as **individual training needs** of counsellors.



IMPACT OF TRAINING AND QUALIFICATIONS ON QUALITY OF SERVICE PROVISIONS AND OUTCOMES

- Proper selection of the **training content is crucial**.
- More efforts to establish and upkeep **the cooperation and partnerships with external knowledge providers** needed, to provide professional expertise that may be lacking inside the PES.
- The training should be well **balanced**, comprising of **the theoretical knowledge and practical skills**.
- Need to develop further the **career paths** of employment counsellors.



Thank you for your attention!

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