
EXPLORING THE ROLES, QUALIFICATIONS AND SKILLS OF CAREER GUIDANCE PROFESSIONALS IN SCHOOLS



An international review

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About this report

This report explores the practices in five comparator countries in relation to the regulation, qualification, skills and quality assurance of career professionals in schools.

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Executive summary

This report explores practice in school-based career education and guidance in five comparator countries. It examines the following questions.

- What kinds of training and qualifications are required to lead career guidance in a school?
- What skills does it require to undertake these roles effectively? How are these skills usually developed?
- Does the existing National Quality Framework for Career Guidance provide a sufficient framework for the development of professionalism in Norwegian schools or is there a need to supplement it with additional guidance and specification.¹

These questions are explored through five international case studies of career guidance systems.

- England
- Iceland
- New Brunswick (Canada)
- The Republic of Ireland
- Sweden

Key findings include:

- It is common for governments to place a legal expectation on schools to deliver career guidance. This frequently includes detail about how career guidance should be delivered and requirements for the training and qualification of careers professionals.
- Qualifications for career guidance professionals working in schools are typically at either the Bachelors degree level or at the Masters level. In some countries the requirement for professional practice is built on through a formal certification or registration process.
- There are a relatively common set of skills and competences which are identified by the case study countries. These broadly align with the Norwegian National Quality Framework for Career Guidance framework.
- Most countries have developed forms of quality assurance for career guidance in schools. Quality is assured across a range of domains including policy, organisation, process and people.

Based on these findings the following recommendations are made.

- 1) Ensure that schools have a strong and unambiguous requirement to deliver career guidance to pupils.
- 2) Include requirements for appropriately trained careers professionals to appointed as part of the regulations that are given to schools.
- 3) Produce a school specific articulation of National Quality Framework for Career Guidance framework.
- 4) Clarify whether career guidance is a separate profession in schools or a function performed by school counsellors.
- 5) Develop and articulate the mechanisms that can be used for quality assurance of career guidance in Norwegian schools.
- 6) Strengthen the professional association(s).
- 7) Develop a strategy for continuing professional development (CPD).

¹ Norwegian Directorate for Higher Education and Skills. (2021). National Quality Framework for Career Guidance. Norwegian Directorate for Higher Education and Skills.
<https://www.kompetansenorge.no/globalassets/kvalitet-i-karriere/report-national-quality-framework-for-career-guidance.pdf>

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1) Introduction

Career guidance in schools is a multi-professional activity that can variously involve teachers, psychologists, counsellors, support staff and, of course, careers professionals. But the nature of careers professionalism varies from country to country and even from school to school. In many cases it is best understood as a hybrid professionalism enacted by an individual who combines their role as a career professional with other roles such as teacher or counsellor.

As Norway seeks to strength the position of career education and guidance within the school system it is important to think through what kind of professional model is desirable. Existing research has established what career guidance in Norwegian schools looks like.² But as the country looks forward it will be important to answer the following questions.

- What kinds of training and qualifications are required to lead career guidance in a school?
- What skills does it require to undertake these roles effectively? How are these skills usually developed?
- Does the existing National Quality Framework for Career Guidance provide a sufficient framework for the development of professionalism in Norwegian schools or is there a need to supplement it with additional guidance and specification.³

Ultimately these are questions that will have to be answered by Norway in a way that works for the country, its education system and the policy goals that inform the development of career guidance. However, there is much to be learnt from the experience of other countries. This report will explore what can be learnt from the literature and from case studies in other countries which can inform developments in Norway. In particular it will ask:

- Have other countries developed and implemented competence standards for those involved in the delivery of career guidance in schools?
- What do these standards consist of or contain?
- What kind of status do they have? Are they statutory, backed by an inspection regime, supported by professional certification or are they voluntaristic in nature?
- How established are these standards and what approach has been taken to implementation?

Five countries have been chosen for in depth case studies. These are England, Iceland, New Brunswick (Canada), the Republic of Ireland and Sweden. The selection of these case studies was based on a review of literature in the area and expert input which identified that all five countries have developed practice in this area, they were also selected because they have cultural, educational and political similarities to Norway, which helps to ensure the relevance of any lessons learnt. New Brunswick was selected as the Canadian case study because the province has been going through a recent process of renewal and development of its school-based career guidance. Canada's provinces all have distinct policy and practice in education, but there are other provinces that may also be worthy of further study. These five countries all represent well developed and relevant international examples, but no claim is made that they are the

² Norwegian Official Report 2016 (NOU 2016:7).

³ Norwegian Directorate for Higher Education and Skills. (2021). National Quality Framework for Career Guidance. Norwegian Directorate for Higher Education and Skills.

<https://www.kompetansenorge.no/globalassets/kvalitet-i-karriere/report-national-quality-framwork-for-career-guidance.pdf>

'best in the world'. There are a range of other countries with well-developed career guidance systems which also may provide further insights for Norway in the future.⁴

The report will begin by reviewing each of the countries in turn. It will then summarise findings, offer some reflections and propose some recommendations for Norway to consider as the country takes forwards its work on career guidance in schools.

2) England

England has a long tradition of delivering careers education and guidance in schools.⁵ For most of that history career education was delivered by the school, and remained relatively unprofessionalised, while career guidance was delivered by an external body (the Careers Service and then Connexions), which employed career guidance professionals. However, from 2010/2011 England moved to a new paradigm for the delivery of career guidance in schools.⁶ This placed responsibility with schools and has led to the development of a new role (the careers leader) who has responsibility for the management of the school's careers programme but does not necessarily deliver one to one career counselling.⁷ Careers leaders can be full-time, but more usually this role is combined with another role in the school such as a teaching role.

This puts England in an interesting position where it has two distinct professional roles involved in the delivery of career guidance in schools; the careers leader and the careers adviser. While in some cases these two roles are combined, they are conceptually distinct and are more usually undertaken by two people.

Legal basis

Schools have a legal duty to provide career guidance for pupils.⁸ This act does not specify the competence or qualification of the practitioners involved in delivery. However, the Department for Education issues further statutory guidance which recommends, but does not require, that career advisers are qualified to level 6 (equivalent to Bachelor's Degree or level 6 in the European Qualification Framework).⁹ The statutory guidance also requires all schools to have a careers leader to manage the development of careers programmes in the school. The government has taken the decision to pay for a range of training

⁴ There are various entry points to the literature on career guidance provision in different countries including Mussett, P. & Kurekova, L.M. (2018). *Working it out: Career guidance and employer engagement*. OECD. <https://doi.org/10.1787/19939019>; Cedefop. (n.d.). *Inventory of lifelong guidance systems and practices*. <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/country-reports/inventory-lifelong-guidance-systems-and-practices>; ICCDPP. (2019). Country and organisation paper. <https://www.kompetans norge.no/iccdpp2019/key-outcomes/country-papers/>

⁵ Andrews, D. (2019). *Careers education in schools* (Second edition). David Andrews; Peck, D. (2004). *Career services: History, policy and practice in the United Kingdom*. London, UK: Routledge Falmer.

⁶ Watts, A.G. (2012). False dawns, bleak sunset: The Coalition Government's policies on career guidance. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 41(4), 442–453. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03069885.2012.744956>

⁷ Andrews, D., & Hooley, T. (2017). '... and now it's over to you': Recognising and supporting the role of careers leaders in schools in England. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 45(2), 153–164. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03069885.2016.1254726>

⁸ UK Government. (2011/2022). *Education Act 2011*. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/21/contents>

⁹ Department for Education. (2022). *Careers guidance and access for education and training providers*. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1103188/Careers_statutory_guidance_September_2022.pdf

for all careers leaders (some of which is accredited at level six or seven), but, so far, they have neither specified nor recommended a minimum level of training or experience for the careers leader role.

Qualifications

There are three main pathways to qualify as a careers adviser in England.¹⁰

- The Qualification in Career Development (QCD) is a university-based training pathway which is usually offered at Masters level (EQF level 7). Many students study this as part of a full Masters degree.
- The QCF Level 6 Diploma in Career Guidance and Development is a work-based training pathway. It is usually taken by students who are already working in career guidance related roles as a way to upskill and qualify whilst continuing to work.
- The higher apprenticeship for career development professionals which offers another work-based training route through which those working in the careers sector, or who are newly employed onto an apprenticeship, can qualify to EQF level 6.¹¹

All three of these pathways are overseen by the professional association (the Career Development Institute) who also maintain the National Occupational Standards with Skills Development Scotland.¹² The National Occupational Standards define the key functions someone should be able to carry out in an occupation and are used to define the core elements of initial training as well as to inform the creation of job descriptions and other competence descriptions. The CDI also makes use of the European NICE framework in the specification of programme requirements.¹³

Careers leaders can also choose to pursue either university based or work-based pathways towards level 6 and 7 qualifications. These are also mapped to the National Occupational Standards. However, there is no requirement to be qualified to practice as a careers leader.

Skills and competences

The National Occupational Standards were developed by government and have been maintained by the Career Development Institute and Skills Development Scotland. They describe the 17 key competences that are the basis of all roles in the career development sector. Not all roles are necessarily expected to have all 17 competences, but the National Occupational Standards provide a complete description of the skills that are needed within the sector.¹⁴ They are as follows:

1. Develop and apply understanding of theory and effective practice in career development
2. Reflect on, develop and maintain own skills and practice in career development
3. Build and maintain relationships with individuals to ensure a client-centred approach to career development

¹⁰ Career Development Institute (CDI). (n.d.). *Training as a career development practitioner*. <https://www.thecdi.net/Training-as-a-Practitioner>

¹¹ Career Development Institute (CDI). (2019). *Higher apprenticeship standard: Career development professionals*. <https://www.thecdi.net/Higher-Apprenticeship-Standard>.

¹² Standards Council Scotland. (n.d.). *Career development NOS*. <https://cldstandardscouncil.org.uk/resources/standards-and-benchmarks/national-occupational-standards/career-development-nos/>

¹³ Schiersmann, C., Ertelt, B., Katsarov, J., Mulvey, R., Reid, H. & Weber, P.C. (2012). *NICE handbook for the academic training of career guidance and counselling professionals*. Heidelberg University.

¹⁴ National Occupational Standards. (n.d.). *National Occupational Standards for Career Development*. <https://cldstandardscouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/CareerDevelopmentNOS2021.pdf>

4. Support individuals to identify and explore their career development needs and aspirations
5. Enable individuals to set appropriate goals and career development objectives
6. Plan and deliver individual and group development through career-related learning
7. Enable individuals to use and apply information for career development
8. Provide ongoing support to help individuals achieve their career goals and development objectives
9. Help individuals evaluate their progress and achievement and plan for the future
10. Lead and manage career development work
11. Improve provision to individuals by collaborating with others
12. Enable individuals to access referral opportunities
13. Represent individuals' needs to others
14. Plan and design the career development offer
15. Promote the availability, value and effectiveness of the provision
16. Monitor, evaluate and improve the effectiveness of the provision
17. Plan and undertake research

There is considerable detail which sits under each of these competences including information about how and where they should be used as well as more detailed sub-competences. This results in a full document running to 88 pages.

The Gatsby Charitable Foundation and The Careers & Enterprise Company have also published a detailed role description for careers leaders.¹⁵ This divides the roles of the careers leader into four main areas: leadership; management; co-ordination; and networking. For the most part these competences map onto the NOS but they give greater emphasis to the competencies related to the management of programmes, and the engagement of external stakeholders such as employers and post-secondary providers.

Finally, the professional association also provides further advice and commentary on professional roles and competencies in the sector. This includes the publication of an ethical framework which provides further guidance to careers professionals on how their roles should be enacted.¹⁶

Quality assurance

The provision of career guidance in schools is defined by the eight Gatsby Benchmarks and this approach to delivery is strongly endorsed in the government's statutory guidance.¹⁷ Schools can self-assess their own compliance with the Gatsby Benchmarks by using the online Compass tool.¹⁸ This provides schools with an individual report on their provision as well as providing data that allows for national policy evaluation. This includes questions that ascertain whether schools are using appropriately qualified staff to deliver career counselling.

¹⁵ The Careers & Enterprise Company & Gatsby Charitable Foundation. (2018). *Understanding the role of the careers leader*. The Careers & Enterprise Company. <https://resources.careersandenterprise.co.uk/sites/default/files/2021-11/Understanding%20the%20role%20of%20the%20Careers%20Leader%20%28schools%29%20Updates%202021%20V1.pdf>

¹⁶ Career Development Institute. (2019). *Code of ethics*. <https://www.thecdi.net/Code-of-Ethics>

¹⁷ Gatsby Charitable Foundation. (2014). *Good career guidance*. Gatsby Charitable Foundation.

¹⁸ The Careers & Enterprise Company. (n.d.). *Compass: Career Benchmarking Tool*. <https://compass.careersandenterprise.co.uk/info>

In addition to Compass, schools can assure the quality of their careers programme on a voluntary basis by using the Quality in Careers Standard.¹⁹ The Quality in Careers Standard demarcates those schools which have high quality provision, and which have put themselves forward for assessment. The Quality in Careers Standard is principally focused on the process of delivery but it would be unlikely that a school could be awarded the standard without appropriately qualified professional staff in place.

The government's educational inspectorate (Ofsted) also inspects career guidance provision as part of the inspection of schools.²⁰ Ofsted will comment on the quality of education provided by the school, the behaviour and attitudes of pupils, the opportunities for personal development and the leadership and management of the school. All these areas can potentially include scrutiny of career guidance provision although this will not be a focus of all inspections. While the qualifications of the individuals delivering career guidance are unlikely to be commented on directly, where staff are not qualified it is likely to contribute to an overall picture of inadequate provision. Following an Ofsted inspection schools are given a grade (outstanding, good, requires improvement, inadequate). Receiving either of the two lower grades has considerable consequences for schools and school leadership and is likely to trigger more regular scrutiny from the inspectorate.

Practitioners can also sign up to the Career Development Institute's professional register.²¹ Practitioners who registered are listed on a national database and can describe themselves as 'registered careers professionals'. Registered professionals are required to keep their knowledge and skills up to date through appropriate continuing professional development. They are also bound by the code of ethics and potentially subject to malpractice suits which would be heard by the professional association and could result in the individual being struck off of the register.

Summary

England has a complex system of professional specification, regulation and quality assurance which involves a mix of government, devolved government bodies, professional associations and non-governmental organisations. In some ways this results in a fairly robust system for ensuring that high quality career guidance is delivered by appropriately qualified careers professionals, albeit one which can be punitive, particularly in relation to school inspections. However, in practice there are quite a few loopholes and blind spots which mean that the overall quality and level of professionalism remains variable across the country.

¹⁹ Quality in Careers Consortium. (n.d.). *Quality in Careers*. <https://www.qualityincareers.org.uk/>

²⁰ The Careers & Enterprise Company. (2022). *Education inspection framework guide*. The Careers & Enterprise Company. https://resources.careersandenterprise.co.uk/sites/default/files/2022-11/1276_Ofsted%20Guidance-digital%20V6.pdf

²¹ Career Development Institute. (2021). *UK register of career development professionals*. <https://www.the CDI.net/Professional-Register->

3) Iceland²²

Career guidance in Icelandic schools began in the 1950s and went through a period of rapid development in the 1980s and 1990s.²³ Those involved in the development of the system in Iceland were influenced by Nordic, European and North American influences, meaning that the approach to guidance in the country is somewhat different from other Nordic countries.

The Icelandic career guidance system is now well established in the education system with the career counsellor role in schools particularly well established. Some in the profession argue that despite its formal position within the school system and relatively long history, the role still does not have sufficient visibility amongst the public or the education system.

In recent years there has been further investment in the system to improve access to labour market information and tools. This has seen the development of a career information website²⁴, an Icelandic interest inventory system²⁵ which is now used at all school levels. These resources have been well used both by individuals and by career counsellors.

The Icelandic Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance define the goals of career guidance in Iceland as follows.

The main goal of study and career counselling is to increase individuals' awareness of their abilities, attitudes and interests so that they can enjoy their studies and work.

The counselling is intended to make it easier for people, of any age and in any situation, to realise their strengths, skills and interests in order to make it easier for them to decide on a course of study and work.²⁶

The Association then goes on to describe a range of approaches that guidance counsellors use to achieve these ends such as supporting self-reflection and development, goal setting, research into educational pathways and the labour market, job search, interview preparation and career management. In schools this takes a range of forms including one-to-one and group counselling work, career education and work with employers and post-secondary providers. There is no formal specification of what kind of career guidance a school should provide or how much of it, which leads to local variation in provision.

Legal basis

The tradition of guidance counselling has a longer history in upper secondary schools, with counsellors being present from the 1970s and the government formalising the requirement to provide this from

²² Thank you to Guðbjörg Vilhjálmsdóttir (University of Iceland) and Jónína Ólafsdóttir Kárdal (Icelandic Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance) for their help in writing this case study.

²³ Vilhjálmsdóttir, G. (2020). The making of a profession. The development of the careers profession in Iceland. In E. Hagaseth Haug, T. Hooley, J. Kettunen, & R. Thomsen (2020). *Career and career guidance in the Nordic countries* (pp.147-162). Brill.

²⁴ Næsta Skref. (n.d.). <https://naestaskref.is/>

²⁵ Bendill.is. (n.d.). <https://bendill.is/>

²⁶ The Icelandic Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance. (n.d.). *Study and career counselling*. <https://fns.is/n%C3%A1ms-og-starfsr%C3%A1%C3%B0gj%C3%B6f>

1990.²⁷ Guidance counsellors then began to be more consistently seen in compulsory schools from 1995 with this being formalised in 2008. It continues to be the case that access to career counselling increases as pupils get older.²⁸

The provision of career guidance is now a legal requirement for both compulsory schools and upper secondary schools. Guidance counsellors have to be appropriately qualified (at Masters level) and certified by the government.²⁹ Schools are not allowed to permanently appoint guidance counsellors who are not certified, although it may happen occasionally on a temporary basis due to skills shortages. A study conducted in 2018-2019 found that 71% of schools nationwide have a professional guidance counsellor in place, with provision weaker in rural areas.³⁰ The schools that were unable to appoint a guidance counsellor reported that this was either due to skills shortages or because the school was too small to sustain a guidance counsellor.

Qualifications

The role of 'Educational and vocational guidance counsellor' needs to be fulfilled by a professional who is licenced by the Minister of Education. Certification is granted to applicants who are qualified to Masters level (European Qualification Framework level 7). The law defines the certification process and the government appoints an evaluation committee made up of three representatives, one from the Association, one from the coalition committee for higher education, and an independent chair. The committee sits for four years to oversee the process of certification and deal with any disagreements.³¹

This Masters level qualification is only delivered domestically by the University of Iceland. It is a specialist qualification focused on career guidance counselling, although in practice many graduates of the programme also undertake wider support and counselling roles in addition to their career counselling responsibilities.

Government devolves all responsibility about the composition of the qualification to the University. The Masters is designed as one third practicum and two thirds theory. There is a one semester thesis which is taken by all the students (to gain a 120 ECTS qualification)

Skills and competences

There is no national framework for competence in career guidance produced by either the government or the professional association. This means that the programme taught by the University serves as a de facto articulation of the professional competencies of career counsellors in Iceland.

The Masters programme covers the following areas.³²

- Addressing personal and social difficulties

²⁷ Vilhjálmssdóttir, G. (2020). The making of a profession. The development of the careers profession in Iceland. In E. Hagaseth Haug, T. Hooley, J. Kettunen, & R. Thomsen (2020). *Career and career guidance in the Nordic countries* (pp.147-162). Brill.

²⁸ RHA. (2020). *Study and career counselling in elementary schools in Iceland*. Ministry of Education and Culture.

²⁹ Althingi. (2009). *Act on study and career advisers*. <https://www.althingi.is/lagas/nuna/2009035.html>

³⁰ RHA. (2020). *Study and career counselling in elementary schools in Iceland*. Ministry of Education and Culture.

³¹ Ministry of Education and Children's Affairs. (2010). *Regulation on the evaluation committee of study and career advisers*. <https://island.is/reglugerdir/nr/0160-2010>

³² University of Iceland. (n.d.). *Career counselling and guidance*, MA, 120 ECTS.

https://ugla.hi.is/kennsluskra/index.php?tab=nam&chapter=namsleid&id=100435_20226&kennsluar=2022

- Addressing special needs
- Career assessment
- Child protection
- Counselling theories
- Education in the multicultural society
- Educational pathways
- Information technology in guidance and society
- Research methods
- Understanding context, lives and societies
- Vocational rehabilitation

In addition, the Icelandic Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance has defined a code of ethics for practitioners.³³ This code is designed to *'be a moral guide for study and career counsellors in their work, to inform the public about the ideals and professional duties of study and career counsellors, and to be a measure of quality work practices within the profession.'* The ethical code goes beyond the kinds of things that are typically included in ethical frameworks and represents a broader code of conduct for practitioners. Digital guidance was added as a major new area of focus in 2022. It focuses on the areas set out in figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1. Key areas of conduct highlighted in the Icelandic Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance code.

Advisory relationship	Professional responsibility	Digital guidance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autonomy of the individual • Non-discrimination, • Professional integrity, • Honesty, • Use of career assessments and tests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of laws and regulations • Reflexivity • Continuing professional development • Referral • Supporting the public image of the profession • Appropriate sexual behaviour • Collaboration and cooperation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of the digital environment • Use of appropriate tools • Appropriate use of social media • Writing skills • Informed consent

The Association also encourage members to be mindful of the International Association of Educational and Vocational Guidance's code of conduct.³⁴

³³ The Icelandic Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance. (2021). *Code of ethics of the Association of Study and Career Counsellors*. Association of Study and Career Counsellors.

³⁴ International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (n.d.). *IAEVG code of conduct*. <https://fns.is/si%C3%B0areglur-iaevg>

Quality assurance

The requirement for Masters level qualification provides a high bar for students entering career guidance practice in Iceland. This means that counsellors are all highly trained and competent when they enter practice. But this high bar may also contribute to some of the skills shortages that are faced by schools.

Once they are in practice there are very few checks on guidance counsellors' practice. There is no national inspectorate or other kind of quality assurance process. However, there is a strong culture of head teachers being interested in career guidance and overseeing the work of the school's guidance counsellor.

The majority of guidance counsellors practicing in Iceland are members of the professional association. This association provides continuing professional education and development for careers professional on a voluntary basis and convenes the profession into a community of practice. The government provides a small grant to the professional association to support some of its activities.

All members of the Association must sign up to the ethical code.³⁵ Adherence to the code is policed by the Association's ethics committee which can hear cases of malpractice and make sanctions up to and including the dismissal from the Association. However, this kind of approach to quality assurance represents a 'nuclear' option and is rarely used in practice.

Summary

Iceland has a strongly professionalised approach to the delivery of career guidance. The requirement for a Masters level qualification which includes a substantial practicum means that career professionals in the country are highly trained and expert when they enter practice.

This provides the basis for a system which is strongly based on trust and where there is minimal formal quality assurance of the work

4) New Brunswick (Canada)³⁶

New Brunswick delivers career guidance through a school counsellor model. School counsellors are responsible for a wide range of counselling activities of which career guidance is one element. This is designed to deliver a holistic approach to pupil development where there is frequent crossover between career, academic and personal issues. Key aims of school counselling are to support young people's wellness, ensure good mental health and allow pupils to build on their strengths whilst at school and as they develop their career.

Guidance programmes in schools address career connected learning, socio-emotional learning, mental health and academic development.³⁷ Counsellors are involved in providing support, advocacy, in intervening in more intensive ways with pupils where necessary and in providing leadership to individual

³⁵ The Icelandic Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance. (2021). *Code of ethics of the Association of Study and Career Counsellors*. Association of Study and Career Counsellors.

³⁶ Thank you to Tricia Berry and Andrew Culberson (Department of Education & Early Childhood Development, New Brunswick) for their help in preparing this case study.

³⁷ Culberson, A. (2022). School counselling. New Brunswick Anglophone sector strategy. Unpublished presentation.

pupils and to the school. Some counsellors might also be involved in delivering in curriculum, usually as part of the 'personal wellness' curriculum.

Legal basis

It is a legal requirement for schools to provide pupils with access to school counsellors. The policy and regulations require guidance counsellors hold a Masters level counselling degree. This law was introduced recently and is still working through the system, but in the future all school counsellors will be trained to the same level.

Qualifications

School counsellors should be qualified to Masters level (equivalent to level seven in the European Qualifications Framework). Counsellor training programmes typically prepare pupils for both private practice as a (therapeutic) counsellor and as a school counsellor. As such these degrees are typically broad and cover a wide range of counselling theories, issues and approaches. Career counselling is likely to be the focus of one module in the course, but career-related issues will also be important in the practicum and feature as a cross-cutting theme in a range of modules.

The universities make the final decision about what is included in counselling degrees, but the province's government has been working with local universities who offer Masters degrees to influence provision in line with the needs of schools and the current policy.

Students who complete a Masters level qualification can become certified as a counsellor. This certification is awarded by the government and will normally only be awarded to someone who has three years of teaching experience and holds a Masters degree in counselling.³⁸ Certification as a school counsellor is permanent and does not have to be renewed.

In addition to certification as a school counsellor, the New Brunswick Career Development Association encourages people to become formally certified as career development practitioners.³⁹ There are a range of pathways to becoming a certified career development practitioner with the system designed to be inclusive of a wide range of educational and employment experience. In addition to some education and employment, certified practitioners also must be a member of the Association, abide by the code of ethics and reside or work in the province. Certification as a carers practitioner must be renewed every three years.

Skills and competences

The province's certification process sets out the key and optional courses that school counsellors must have completed as part of their Masters. These courses provide a picture of the key areas of competency that school counsellors are required to have, demonstrating the province's focus on a holistic school counselling model.

Figure 4.1. Courses required to be completed by school counsellors prior to certification

³⁸ New Brunswick. (n.d.). *New Brunswick school counsellor certification*. <https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/ed/pdf/K12/new-brunswick-school-counsellor-certification.pdf>

³⁹ NB Career Development Association. (n.d.). *Benefits of certification*. <http://www.nbcdag-gadcnb.ca/>

Figure 4.2. The Pan-Canadian Competency Framework for Career Development Professionals

Professional practice	Career development	Specialised career development	Outreach and leadership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional responsibility • Ethics and regulations • Client-practitioner relationship • Diversity and inclusion • Evidence-based practice • Professional development • Health and wellness • Communication • Digital literacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foundational knowledge and applied theories • Service delivery processes • Learning and job readiness • Awareness of diverse worldviews • Career resources • Client work search strategies • Referrals to professional services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and delivery of group sessions • Research • Assessment and evaluation instruments and processes • Career guidance in educational settings • Career management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer outreach and relations • Community capacity building • Policy and advocacy • Strategic delivery of career development services • Career development leadership

The New Brunswick Career Development Association and the Competency Framework for Career Development both endorse the importance of professional ethics. The Canadian Career Development Foundation have produced a national articulation of ethics which is adopted as the ethical basis for Canadian career development.⁴¹ This ethical framework is expansive in nature and includes sections on professional responsibility, client-practitioner responsibilities, diversity, research and professional development, assessment and evaluation, electronic and other technologies and outreach and leadership. As such it really goes beyond the bounds of an ethical framework and constitutes a more holistic description of good and appropriate professional conduct and practice.

Quality assurance

New Brunswick does not have a formal school inspectorate. However, school counsellors, like other teachers, will receive a formal developmental review from the school board every two or three years. This may include observation of practice and is normally likely to result in the creation of new developmental goals for the counsellor, rather than in sanctions for bad practice.

There is a strong continuing professional development (both online and face-to-face) offer for school counsellors provided by the province’s government. This means that school counsellors have a lot of opportunities to keep up to date and upskill.

Summary

New Brunswick has a highly qualified school counsellor workforce. The school counsellor role is designed to be holistic and generalist, with career counselling as an important focus within the role. Once

⁴¹ Canadian Career Development Foundation. (2021). *Code of ethics for career development professionals*. CCDF. https://ccdp-pcdc.ca/en/pdf/Code_of_Ethics_2021_EN.pdf

counsellors are qualified, the provinces approach to quality assurance is based on trust and the idea that professionals will proactively keep up to date and develop their practice.

School counselling effectively functions as a profession with associated ethical standards and communities of practice. However, there is also a strong overlap with wider career development practice which also offers a secondary professional context for those school counsellors with a strong interest in career development.

5) Republic of Ireland⁴²

The Republic of Ireland has a well-established guidance system embedded into its schools.⁴³ The system can be described as a guidance counsellor system, meaning that career guidance is provided by a school employee who also has responsibility for the wider personal and pastoral care and development of pupils in the school.

Guidance in schools refers to a range of learning experiences provided in developmental sequence that assist pupils to develop self-management skills which will lead to effective choices and decisions about their lives. It encompasses the three separate, but interlinked areas of personal and social development, educational guidance and career guidance.⁴⁴

Legal basis

Pupils have a legal entitlement to access guidance. This is set out in the Education Act (Section 9) which states that schools should provide guidance to assist pupils in their educational and career choices.⁴⁵ The government also specifies that guidance counsellors in schools must be a qualified and registered teacher *and* be qualified for school guidance work.⁴⁶ In practice, some guidance counsellors in schools qualify through alternative pathways that do not include teaching, but the requirement to hold a valid guidance qualification is critical.

Qualifications

The Department for Education maintains a list of officially recognised qualifications and issues a Programme Recognition Framework specifying what should be included in these programmes and how they should be delivered e.g. they must include a placement.⁴⁷ This includes the specification that they should be at NQF level 8 (equivalent to a European Qualification Level of 6).

⁴² Thank you to Bernadette Walsh (Careers Portal / Maynooth University) for providing helpful information and insights in the drafting of this case study.

⁴³ Indecon. (2019). *Review of career guidance*. Indecon.

⁴⁴ Department of Education and Science. (2005). *Guidelines for Second Level Schools on the Implications of Section 9 (c) of the Education Act 1998, relating to students' access to appropriate guidance*. The Stationery Office, p.4.

⁴⁵ ISB. (1998). Education Act. <https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1998/act/51/enacted/en/html>

⁴⁶ Department of Education. (2022). *Working as a post-primary Guidance Counsellor in Ireland 2022*. Department for Education.

⁴⁷ Department of Education and Skills. (2016). *Criteria and guidelines for programme providers*. Department of Education and Skills.

Skills and competences

The Department for Education's Programme Recognition Framework specifies eight main areas of competence for guidance professionals as follows.

- Guidance theory and professional practice
- Counselling skills
- Labour market, learning and career-related information
- Teaching and learning
- Psychometric testing
- Communicating, collaborating and networking
- Research and evidence-informed practice
- Leading and managing the guidance service

Further detail is provided on what should be covered in each of these areas. For example, in the area of guidance theory and professional practice initial education programmes for guidance counsellors need to cover theoretical frameworks and philosophical debates concerning the provision of guidance to individuals and groups, lifespan approaches to guidance to meet diverse service-user needs, guidance policy and practice guidelines, and theories and methodologies relating to exclusion, marginalisation, unemployment and the criminal justice system, as well as ethics. This is then translated into a range of observable learning outcomes which students should demonstrate by the time they reach the end of the course. All of the other areas have a similar level of detail.

In addition to the specification found in the Department of Education's Programme Framework, there is also additional requirements for those guidance counsellors who are members of the professional association (the Institute of Guidance Counsellors).⁴⁸ This framework highlights the competences that are needed to practice in the field. Many of them overlap with the areas developed in the government's framework (e.g. counselling skills, assessment and various forms of professional practice), but they give a stronger emphasis to professional ethics, professional development, and self-care.

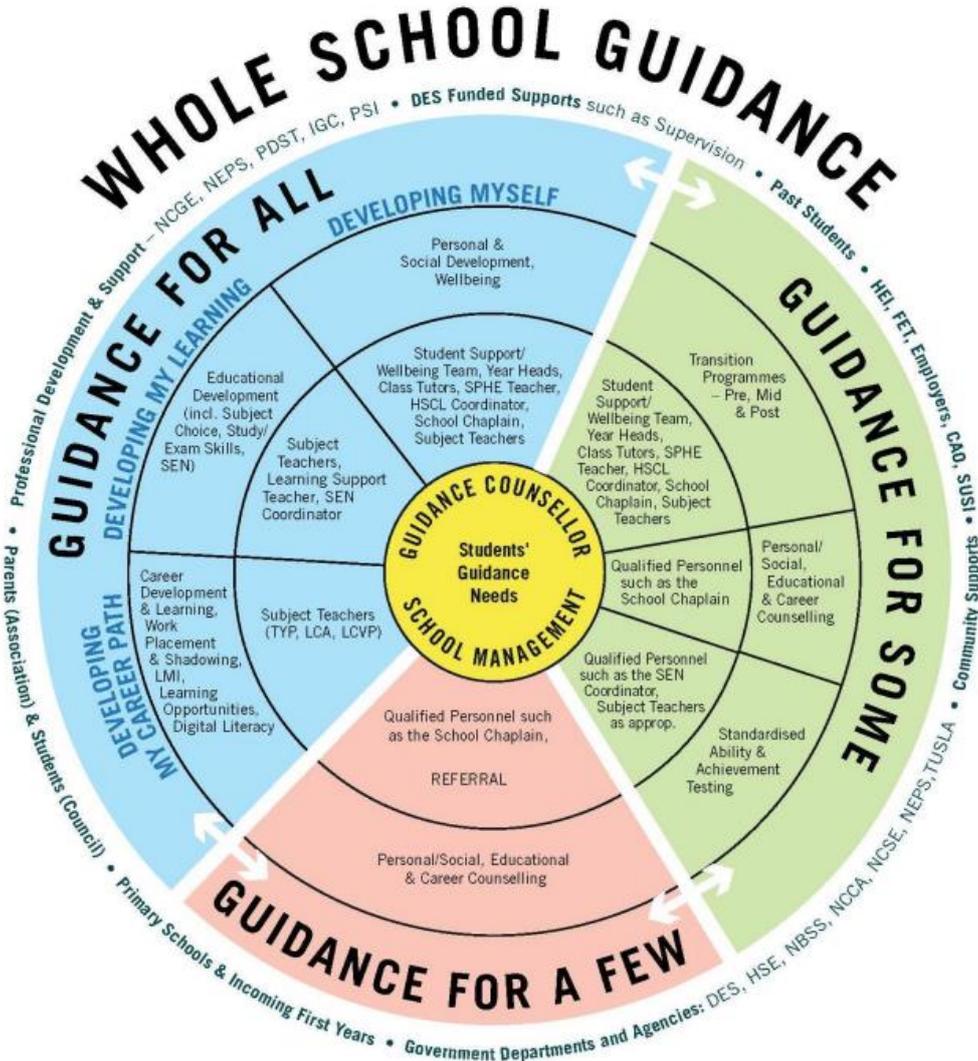
Quality assurance

There is clear guidance on what careers provision in schools should look like set out in the National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE) Whole school guidance framework.⁴⁹ While this is not primarily articulated as a framework for the competence of practitioners, the fact that it defines the key activities and components that should be included in school guidance programmes, *and* that it places guidance counsellors at the centre of this process does mean that it creates a demand for a wide range of career competences that guidance counsellors need. The vision is summarised in figure 5.1.

⁴⁸ Institute of Guidance Counsellors. (2016). *Guidance counselling. Core competencies and professional practice*. IGC.

⁴⁹ National Centre for Guidance in Education (NCGE). (2017). *NCGE: A whole school guidance framework*. NCGE.

Figure 5.1. NCGE framework for whole school guidance



While the NCGE framework is not legally required it does provide a key starting point for the work of the work of the Inspectorate who inspect and quality assure guidance provision in schools. The Inspectorate’s guidance emphasises both what is provided (e.g. guidance provision based on the NCGE framework) and who is providing this (e.g. qualified guidance professionals).

Summary

The Republic of Ireland takes a regulatory approach to the qualifications and competences of guidance practitioners in schools. Guidance is clearly defined, a model of practice recommended and practitioners involved in its delivery are expected to be appropriately qualified. The nature of guidance practitioner qualifications are specified by government and only those that conform are recognised. Finally the provision is inspected and quality assured by an independent inspectorate external to the school who are empowered to comment on the qualification and competence of the professionals delivering provision.

6) Sweden⁵⁰

Sweden has a well-established guidance system with good access to guidance across the life course including in higher education and adult education.⁵¹ The system has been developed over many decades with considerable involvement from a range of international experts. For young people career guidance is mostly delivered in school, with the school responsible for the delivery of services alongside the municipality.⁵²

Career guidance in Sweden has a particular focus on addressing socio-economic inequalities and in supporting young people to make pathway choices. Career guidance should take place continuously during schooling, throughout the school year and be embedded into curriculum. However, in reality provision is often more episodic and concentrated in the years prior to key educational transitions. It is typically focused on educational choices, rather than on progression directly into the labour market. Career guidance in Swedish schools takes a variety of forms which have been described by Loven as *narrow* guidance (mostly one-to-one interviews) and *broad* guidance (encompassing career education and forms of organisational development).⁵³

The system is based on a guidance counsellor model, with most schools employing a specialist guidance counsellor to lead on career education and guidance as well as a range of other forms of pastoral support. It is also common for two or more, usually smaller, schools to share a guidance counsellor between them. On average there are around 520 pupils per guidance counsellor at compulsory school level and 380 pupils at upper secondary level.⁵⁴

Legal basis

Schools have a legal requirement to provide career guidance to their pupils.⁵⁵ But, because schools and municipalities have a great deal of independence in Sweden it can be challenging to ensure a common approach to the implementation of career guidance. To address this, the Swedish National Agency for Education (Skolverket) supplements the legal requirement with more detailed guidelines on the provision of career education and guidance.

The guidelines provide recommendations on how schools should run and organise career guidance provision, the professionalism of those delivering guidance services, requirements for high quality,

⁵⁰ Thank you to Katarina Petersson (Uppsala University) for her support in writing this case study.

⁵¹ Cedefop. (2020). Inventory of lifelong guidance systems and practices - Sweden. *CareersNet national records*. <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/country-reports/inventory-lifelong-guidance-systems-and-practices-sweden>

⁵² Loven, A. (2020). The context for career guidance in Sweden. In Haug, E., Hooley, T., Kettunen, J., & Thomsen, R. (Eds.) *Career and career guidance in Nordic countries*. Brill.

⁵³ Loven, A. (2020). The context for career guidance in Sweden. In Haug, E., Hooley, T., Kettunen, J., & Thomsen, R. (Eds.) *Career and career guidance in Nordic countries*. Brill.

⁵⁴ Euroguidance. (2021). Guidance system in Sweden. <https://www.euroguidance.eu/guidance-system-in-sweden>

⁵⁵ Sveriges Riksdag. (2010). Skollag 2010: 800 (The Swedish Education Act). https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/skollag-2010800_sfs-2010-800

impartial information provision, and how career guidance should be delivered.⁵⁶ The guidelines are well used by practitioners and school leaders and emphasise the importance of having appropriately qualified career guidance professionals. It is effectively illegal for anyone to work as a career counsellor in a school for more than two years without having qualified. In reality this is often difficult to police, particularly as there is currently an undersupply of career counsellors, but, as will be discussed in the section on quality assurance the existence of the school Inspectorate ensures a level of compliance.

Qualifications

There is a well-established professional pathway for guidance counsellors in Sweden, with most training via a Bachelors degree in career guidance. The specialisation at Bachelors degree level is an important feature of the careers profession in Sweden and is relatively unusual internationally.

Swedish Bachelors degrees in career guidance address both the theory and practice of career guidance and normally include three placements in schools whilst counsellors are training. There are also postgraduate courses in career guidance and some shorter courses designed for students who already have some relevant work experience.

There is an ongoing debate within the profession as to whether it should seek to become a certified profession, and what that would mean for the autonomy, independence and self-regulation of the profession. However, there is no ongoing certification process and so gaining an initial qualification effectively serves as a license for life.

Skills and competences

The guidance for schools issued by Skolverket does not set out a competency framework for career professionals. However, it does highlight several key competencies which provide a de facto description of the competencies required to do the jobs.⁵⁷ These include:

- knowledge of educational routes and systems, labour markets, work life and vocations;
- an understanding of career theory and career decision making;
- the skills needed to deliver career guidance in both its 'narrow' (one-to-one) and broad (group work and systems) forms;
- the competence to work with pupils to help them to transcend ambitions which are limited by social identities such as gender, social class and ethnicity (social justice or social mobility work);
- an ability to work with and develop colleagues (e.g. teachers) to help them to support pupils' career development;
- the capability of building connections with working life;
- an understanding of current research and evidence that supports professional work in the field; and
- a commitment to continuing professional development.

⁵⁶ Cedefop. (2020). Inventory of lifelong guidance systems and practices - Sweden. *CareersNet national records*. <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/country-reports/inventory-lifelong-guidance-systems-and-practices-sweden>

⁵⁷ Nilsson, S., & Hertzberg, F (2022). On the professionalism and professionalisation of career guidance and counselling in Sweden. *Nordic Journal of Transitions, Careers and Guidance*, 3(1), 1–15.

The universities that are involved in the training and development of careers professionals build on the framework above and supplement it with international standards such as the NICE standards⁵⁸ and the IAEVG standard⁵⁹, as well as their engagement with the research evidence. While there is no single framework that all careers professional educational programmes work with, most educational programmes for careers practitioners in Sweden will focus on the development of the following competences.⁶⁰

- **Social science** focused on developing practitioners understanding of how society, working life and education are organised.
- **Behavioural science** focused on developing psychological, pedagogical and sociological understanding of human behaviour which can inform practice as a career guidance practitioner.
- **Career theory** focused on engaging practitioners with the theoretical tradition, concepts and research evidence associated with career development theory and practice.
- **Practical guidance skills** focused on carrying out guidance sessions with individuals and/or groups, teaching and giving information and often developed through experiential learning and placements.

In addition, the professional body has developed an ethical framework for career guidance professionals in practice.⁶¹ This adds additional competences which practitioners need to be mindful of, but at present, this framework is advisory rather than binding.

Quality assurance

The Swedish Schools Inspectorate (Skolinspektionen) inspects all schools to ensure that they are meeting legislative requirements. This includes reviewing career guidance provision and addressing issues of quality and legal non-compliance. This may include checking whether staff who are involved in career guidance are appropriately qualified.

Where schools are found wanting in the delivery of career guidance the Inspectorate will engage in discussions with the municipality and school leadership to develop a plan for improvement. In extreme cases it is possible for schools to be fined, or in the case of independent schools, for their licence to be revoked.

Nilsson and Hertzberg critique the existing system as being 'characterised by professional accountability rather than professional responsibility'.⁶² Broadly the distinction is between one of trust, where the professions are viewed as being capable of exercising professional judgement and self-regulation, and one of mistrust where professionals are viewed as requiring discipline. This sets out different approaches to professionalisation and quality assurance that may be useful for Norway to reflect on.

⁵⁸ Schiersmann, C., Ertelt, B., Katsarov, J., Mulvey, R., Reid, H. & Weber, P.C. (2012). *NICE handbook for the academic training of career guidance and counselling professionals*. Heidelberg University.

⁵⁹ International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG). *International competencies for educational and vocational guidance practitioners*. <https://iaevg.com/competencies>

⁶⁰ Euroguidance. (n.d.). *Career guidance and counselling Sweden*. <http://www.dokumenten.se/Publication/education-work-guidance-in-sweden/Chapter/5>

⁶¹ Sveriges Vägledarförening. (2020). *Etisk deklARATION*. <https://www.vagledarforeningen.se/deklaration/>

⁶² Nilsson, S., & Hertzberg, F (2022). On the professionalism and professionalisation of career guidance and counselling in Sweden. *Nordic Journal of Transitions, Careers and Guidance*, 3(1), 1–15.

Summary

Sweden's system has some highly regulatory features such as a legal entitlement to access career guidance, a requirement for professionals to be qualified and a powerful school inspectorate. On the other hand, while Swedish careers professionals receive a strong general education in career guidance and related theories and approaches, the exact details of professional competence and conduct remain flexible, with limited specification from government or any other party. This leaves considerable room for individual judgement by professionals about what the key areas for competence development are.

7) Findings

As the case studies show, there is considerable variation in the organisation of school-based career development systems, even when we only look at relatively established and high performing countries. In this section I will summarise some of the key findings before moving on in the next section to reflect on the issues raised and consider what this might mean for Norway.

Legal basis

It is common for governments to place a legal expectation on schools to deliver career guidance (England, Iceland, New Brunswick, the Republic of Ireland). This frequently includes some level of detail about how career guidance should be delivered. As part of this specification governments either legally require that careers professionals in schools have a minimum level of training (Iceland, New Brunswick, Republic of Ireland, Sweden) or strongly recommend this (England).

Qualifications

Qualification for career guidance professionals working in schools are typically at either the Bachelors degree level (England, Sweden and the Republic of Ireland) or at the Masters level (Iceland and New Brunswick). There are also additional questions about what pathways it is possible to follow to qualify. All case study countries offer university-based routes, but some also supplement this with work-based routes for those who are already in practice but do not meet the requirements (England and Sweden).

In the Republic of Ireland, government has an active role in specifying the areas that should be included in guidance counsellor training by linking compliance with the Programme Recognition Framework with funding. In England, the professional association provides the guidance that underpins the training of careers professionals within a framework set by government. While in Iceland, New Brunswick and Sweden the specification for what is included in qualifications is largely left up to the universities.

In England, Iceland and New Brunswick the requirement for professional practice is built on through a formal certification or registration process. This process can add additional requirements that professionals must fulfil before becoming formally certified e.g. a work experience requirement. In England registration is viewed as an ongoing process which requires professionals to provide evidence that they are keeping up to date in order to maintain.

Competences

Different countries organise the role of school-based careers professional in a range of different ways. So, in England the role is split into two (the careers advisor and the career counsellor), while in the Republic

of Ireland and New Brunswick the focus of the role is on holistic counselling with career counselling as one pillar of practice, whilst in Sweden and Iceland career guidance is placed more centrally within the role.

Despite the variations in professional identities, a common set of skills and competences are identified by the countries which those responsible for delivering career guidance in schools should have. In figure 7.1 these are mapped against the competencies in the Norwegian National Quality Framework for Career Guidance framework.

Figure 7.1. Competencies identified for careers professionals in schools

National Quality Framework for Career Guidance	Competencies identified in the case studies	Competencies identified in the wider literature⁶³
Guidance processes	Counselling skills (Iceland, New Brunswick, Republic of Ireland, Sweden) Referral (England, Iceland, New Brunswick) Group counselling (New Brunswick) Relationship building (England)	Counselling practice including interventions with individuals and groups. Placement and transition support Social-emotional counselling Technology in guidance
Ethics	Ethics (England, New Brunswick, Republic of Ireland, Sweden) Professional conduct (Iceland, New Brunswick) Professional development (England, Iceland, New Brunswick, Republic of Ireland, Sweden)	Ethics Reflexivity Professional development
Career theories and methods	Guidance theory and professional practice (England, New Brunswick, Republic of Ireland, Sweden) Understanding underpinning social and psychological theories (Sweden, Iceland) Career assessment and psychometric testing (Iceland, New Brunswick, Republic of Ireland) Digital guidance (Iceland, New Brunswick)	Career theory Career assessment
Career learning	Curriculum and programme planning (England) Teaching and learning (England, Republic of Ireland, Sweden) Developing career management skills (England, New Brunswick)	Curriculum planning Delivering career-related learning Understanding of wider curriculum
Education and work	Labour market, learning and career-related information (England, Iceland, Republic of Ireland, Sweden) Career exploration (England)	Labour and learning market information Search and research skills
Target groups and context	Addressing personal and social difficulties (Iceland, New Brunswick)	Diversity and inclusion Multi-cultural approaches

⁶³ More detail on this list is given in Bakke, I.B., Haug, E.H., Hooley, T., Kjendalen, H., Paulson, O.N., Sandlie, L., Saur, H., & Schulstok, T. (2022). *An examination of education and further education offers within career guidance, with a particular focus on offers aimed at school employees*. Norwegian Directorate of Higher Education and Skills.

	<p>Child protection (Iceland)</p> <p>The active development of aspirations and ambitions (Sweden)</p> <p>Mentoring (England)</p> <p>Working with pupils with special educational and behavioural needs (Iceland, New Brunswick)</p> <p>Working with pupils from different cultural backgrounds (Iceland, New Brunswick)</p> <p>Working with LGBTQ+ pupils (New Brunswick)</p> <p>Vocational rehabilitation (Iceland)</p>	<p>Policy awareness</p> <p>Social justice and empowerment</p>
<p>Development, networking and policy making</p>	<p>Advocacy (England)</p> <p>Communicating, collaborating and networking (England, New Brunswick, Republic of Ireland)</p> <p>Community outreach (New Brunswick)</p> <p>Developing the capacity of other school colleagues (England, Sweden)</p> <p>Engaging employers and other stakeholders (England, New Brunswick, Sweden)</p> <p>Leading and managing guidance services (England, New Brunswick, Republic of Ireland)</p> <p>Research, evaluation and evidence-informed practice (England, Iceland, New Brunswick, Republic of Ireland, Sweden)</p>	<p>Advocacy</p> <p>Communication skills</p> <p>Community capacity building</p> <p>Co-ordination and negotiation</p> <p>Inter-professional working and referral</p> <p>Leadership</p> <p>Networking</p> <p>Programme management</p> <p>Research and evaluation</p> <p>School development</p> <p>School leadership</p> <p>Staff development</p>
<p>Other areas</p>	<p>Child development (New Brunswick)</p> <p>Health and wellness (New Brunswick)</p> <p>Marketing and advocating for services (England)</p> <p>Self-care (Republic of Ireland)</p>	

This suggests that the Norwegian National Quality Framework for Career Guidance framework provides a strong basis for the articulation of the role of career development professionals in schools. However, it also provides a range of additional areas which could be used to develop that framework as it is articulated for schools.

Quality assurance

Most countries have developed forms of quality assurance for career guidance in schools. Quality is assured across a range of domains, which to use the framework that I have set out previously, can be described as⁶⁴:

- **Policy.** This domain is focused on the scrutiny of the whole public policy framework and includes mechanisms to identify whether it is working. The national dataset gathered through the Compass self-evaluation tool provides a good example of an approach that is seeking to quality assure the whole system, rather than the provision of individual schools. This includes the gathering of information about the number of qualified professionals within the system.
- **Organisation.** By specifying the nature of career guidance provision in schools, as we see in the England and the Republic of Ireland, the nature of the task is clarified, which in turn raises the need for high quality and well-trained people.
- **Process.** The use of school inspectorates to quality assure career guidance provision is also common (England, Republic of Ireland, Sweden). Such inspectorates are usually tasked with examining how education is delivered in the countries, but may also comment on the organisation, people and outputs and outcomes. However, there is a danger that generalist school inspectorates may lack the time and expertise to quality assure career guidance when it is only looked at as part of overall school performance. The Quality in Careers Standard (England) provides a more specialised mechanism for examining the delivery of career guidance in schools.
- **People.** Most of the case study countries strongly recommend (England) or require (Iceland, Republic of Ireland and Sweden) careers practitioners to hold particular qualifications at Bachelors Degree level or above. In Ireland the nature of these qualifications is directly shaped by the government, while in England the professional association plays this role. While in other countries universities are largely trusted to specify the main areas of competence of the profession. Some countries formalise qualification with a certification or registration process which gives a license to practice. This can be on a voluntary basis as in England, or on a compulsory basis as in Iceland and New Brunswick. In some countries ongoing regulation and quality assurance of the profession is undertaken by the professional association (England, Iceland, Republic of Ireland). While in New Brunswick the ongoing quality assurance of the professional is undertaken by the school board through a professional review process. In addition many countries also provide a continuing professional development offer either through the professional association or through government.

None of the countries are strongly focused on the 'output' or 'user' domains to quality assure their provision, although elements of outputs and pupil experience are sometimes included in other processes such as school inspection.

A recurrent theme across the case studies is the importance of professional associations in both specifying and quality assuring aspects of professionalism. Most commonly this is focused on ethics and on related issue of professional conduct and professional development. In some cases (England and Iceland) the professional association has the role of managing professional's adherence to professional

⁶⁴ Hooley, T. (2019). *International approaches to quality in career guidance*. Oslo: Skills Norway; Hooley, T., & Rice, S. (2018). Ensuring quality in career guidance: a critical review. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 47(4), 472-486. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03069885.2018.1480012>; Rice, S., Hooley, T. & Crebbin, S. (2022). Approaches to quality assurance in school-based career development: policymaker perspectives from Australia. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 50(1), 110-127. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03069885.2021.1919860>.

standards and forms of certification. In extreme cases this can lead to professional bodies overseeing malpractice suits and potentially dealing with the removal of professionals status.

8) Reflections

At the start of this report I suggested that there were three principal questions that Norway needed to answer as it moves provision forward in the country. In this section I will reflect on these questions in the light of the research.

- What kinds of training and qualifications are required to lead career guidance in a school?
- What skills does it require to undertake these roles effectively? How are these skills usually developed?
- Does the existing National Quality Framework for Career Guidance provide a sufficient framework for the development of professionalism in Norwegian schools or is there a need to supplement it with additional guidance and specification.

What training and qualifications are needed?

The five case studies suggest that it is important for countries to set minimum standards for the delivery of career guidance in schools. There are differences about whether such qualifications should be at the Bachelors or Masters level, but a strong consensus that such qualifications are essential and that they should be formally endorsed in law. This is a key area where Norway may wish to strengthen its regulatory requirements for schools-based careers professional.

The differences that exist between holistic school counselling models (New Brunswick and the Republic of Ireland) and more career focused models (England, Iceland and Sweden) also offers an important decision for Norway. Should the country view the development of the role as a requirement to strengthen the careers component of a broader holistic school counselling model or as a (new) role which is professionally distinct from traditional school counsellors and which sits alongside and works with more pastorally focused counsellors. Both models have strengths and weaknesses, but the particular danger with more holistic school counselling models is that the focus on career guidance becomes secondary to more acute pastoral needs within the school.

There is also an important question as to how government and the profession can influence the nature of qualifications. The Irish model in which universities must comply with government guidance on the composition of programmes offers a strongly regulatory approach. The use of certification processes avoids the need for government to directly influence training providers, whilst also providing a quality assurance mechanism, whereby any necessarily additional requirements can be layered on top. There is some attraction to the English model which requires professionals to continue to engage in professional development and keep up to date.

It is also worth noting that there is some trade off between those systems which ensure quality through requiring a high level of certification and those systems which have lower levels of entry to the profession but then utilise stronger forms of quality assurance later. Where the requirements on the qualification and training of the *people* are high, it seems more possible to trust them to deliver the required *processes* and to create *organisations* that can deliver high quality programmes.

The critique made by Nilsson and Hertzberg of the quality assurance system in Sweden is useful to reflect on. They argue that it is possible to make a distinction between ‘professional accountability’ and ‘professional responsibility’ with the difference primarily being the level of trust and autonomy that is accorded to professionals.⁶⁵ This issue of trust is very important, with the key issue being whether once professionals are appropriately trained they need any further scrutiny from the state and if not whether an individual or collective (e.g. scrutiny by the professional association) approach to professional self-regulation is taken.

What skills are required?

Each country specifies the skills that are required in different ways, variously using initial training syllabi, programme framework, personal specifications and professional standards. However, when you look at the skills and competencies that are required by each country, there is a strong degree of agreement. Figure 7.1 maps these onto the National Quality Framework for Career Guidance and demonstrates that Norway’s approach is strongly in tune with international practice.

There would undoubtedly be value for Norway to review the variety of skills and competencies surfaced through the case studies and the wider literature and use these as a tool to consider how the National Quality Framework for Career Guidance could be developed. This may include both the addition of additional competences whether they are viewed as useful and consideration of whether there are any areas that should be given greater emphasis. For example, the way that the English system emphasises the importance of leadership is a reaction to the organisational challenges of trying to integrate a new area into an already busy institution life a school. Such a perspective recognises that careers profession do not just need to be able to do their jobs well, they also need to be able to engage the rest of the school and bring others with them.

There is also an important question about how skills are developed over time, particularly in response to a changing context. Initial training can never develop all of the skills that a professional is going to need across a career. Given this it is important that there is a strong framework for continuing professional development. It is notably that in many countries professional associations play an important role ensuring that such an offer is available.

Is the National Quality Framework for Career Guidance standard sufficient?

Some countries view the question of skills and competencies primarily through the lens of school counselling, while others have developed lifelong approaches. Broadly the question is whether careers professionals are being trained and developed specifically to work in schools or whether they are trained as lifelong careers professional who then choose to apply their skills within the context of schools. The Norwegian approach is currently a lifelong one, but there may be value in considering how it can be made more school specific.

National Quality Framework for Career Guidance compares well with other frameworks and approaches that are used by other countries. As discussed above there may be value in learning from the frameworks

⁶⁵ Nilsson, S., & Hertzberg, F (2022). On the professionalism and professionalisation of career guidance and counselling in Sweden. *Nordic Journal of Transitions, Careers and Guidance*, 3(1), 1–15.

set out by other countries as the framework develops. In addition, there may be value in producing a school specific iteration of the framework to help training providers, schools and careers professionals to think through the specifics of what all of these competencies mean in the context of a school.

9) Recommendations

Following on from the findings in chapter (7) and the reflections in chapter (8) I would like to propose a series of recommendations that may be useful in considering how the situation develops in Norway.

- 8) **Ensure that schools have a strong and unambiguous requirement to deliver career guidance to pupils.** All of the case study countries place a legal requirement on schools to provide career guidance. In many cases this requirement goes further and sets out some key components of what school's careers programmes are expected to be.
- 9) **Include requirements for appropriately trained careers professionals to appointed as part of the regulations that are given to schools.** All of the case study countries expect careers professionals to be trained to at least Bachelors degree level or higher in a school counsellor or careers professional qualification. While achieving this may take a number of years, it is important to publicly signal that there is a clear trajectory of professionalising the field. This may move beyond simply requiring qualifications towards some kind of certification or registration process.
- 10) **Produce a school specific articulation of National Quality Framework for Career Guidance framework.** Such a framework could take the existing framework and provide detail and examples about what some of the competences might look like in the context of a school. It could be used to inform the work of training providers, schools as they specify and recruit to roles and individual practitioners as they engage in professional development. The range of additional competencies highlighted in figure 7.1 could be used to inform the development of this school specific articulation of the framework.
- 11) **Clarify whether career guidance is a separate profession in schools or a function performed by school counsellors.** This decision is one about professional identity, but also has huge implications for training, CDP, progression within the field and many other issues.
- 12) **Develop and articulate the mechanisms that can be used for quality assurance of career guidance in Norwegian schools.** The development of the National Quality Framework for Career Guidance provides a clear articulation of what good quality provision looks like. But at present it is less clear how this quality framework is implemented in practice. Attention needs to be given to thinking about how the framework shapes initial training and CDP, school inspection, the management of careers professional, certification and registration processes and another other form of quality assurance that is developed.
- 13) **Strengthen the professional association(s).** The professional associations play an important role in all of the case study countries and form a 'third leg' for the careers field alongside government and the universities. It would be valuable to strengthen the professional association in Norway and to consider what roles they may play in quality assurance and continuing professional development.
- 14) **Develop a strategy for continuing professional development (CPD).** Initial training cannot be sufficient to ensure that all professionals have all the skills that they need over the long term. It is important to communicate to professionals what amount and types of CPD they can and should participate in. This could take the form of a professional development framework which highlights key skills areas and typical progression pathways. It is also important to think about how CPD is funded and delivered.

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