



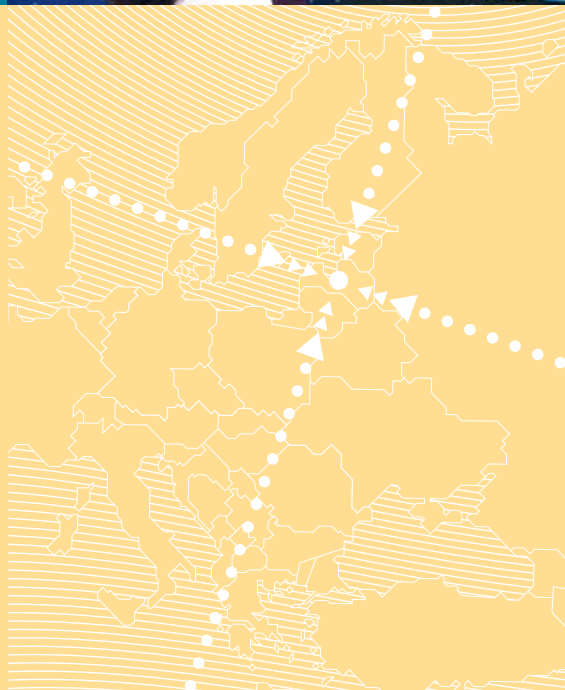
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Guidance System in Latvia



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www.viaa.gov/Euroguidance

1. Guidance system description

Guidance in Latvia is shared between the Education and Labour sectors. From primary through upper-secondary education both general and vocational schools provide careers education. National education standards determine that one of the main goals of education is to prepare students to make a conscious career choice. Career management skills are integrated into subject standards as learning outcomes. Generally there is no school staff member designated as a school guidance counsellor. Higher education institutions are autonomous by law and can determine what student services they provide. The State Education Development Agency's Career Guidance Department is devoted to developing recommendations and tools for improving guidance in schools. The Department hosts the Latvian Euroguidance centre which provides information on guidance policy and practice in Europe and promotes mobility through information on learning opportunities in Europe.

In the Labour sector the State Employment Agency (SEA) through its network of regional offices provides career guidance advice and counselling free of charge to persons starting from the age of 15.

There is no national legislation regulating guidance practitioners other than the occupational standard for guidance counsellors. The careers activities in the education sector are not subject to any specific inspection apart from the general inspections undertaken by the National School Inspectorate. Activities of counsellors within the SEA are governed by internal Agency regulations and are controlled by the SEA.

2. Training programmes for career counsellors

In 2007 the occupational standard for Career Counsellors was approved by the Cabinet of Ministers. The standard was developed through a national project funded by the European Social Fund and formed the basis for a master's degree programme for training counsellors also developed within the framework of the project. Persons with a bachelor's degree in education or psychology or in a different field, but having at least two years of relevant work experience are eligible to enrol in the programme.

The programme provides the skills, knowledge, professional values and personal awareness required to serve young people, adults and people with disabilities and learning difficulties in a wide range of work settings: education institutions, employment agencies, guidance centres and companies, as well as pursue research. The programme's modules: Career theories, Social environment and labour market, Methodology of professional activities and Research each include theory and practice in counselling methods. The entire programme requires completion of 120 ECTS points. Full-time studies take two years; part-time studies take two-and-a-half years. Graduates are awarded a MA(Ed) degree and professional qualification - Guidance Counsellor.

3. Implemented methodologies for providing guidance and counselling

Careers education at schools is integrated into subject lessons and class lessons and can be a topic for project week activities and field trips. Teachers can freely organize their lessons and choose methods as long as curriculum objectives are achieved. Careers education has been developed with the support of the 2005-2008 ESF National project KIPNIS which provided development and delivery of teacher in-service training, Teacher handbooks and student workbooks ensuring systematic and sequential classroom activities from 7th - 12th form, including vocational schools, DVD's illustrating professions in the most important economic sectors, informative catalogues of education opportunities following 9th and 12th form as well as the National Database on learning opportunities which includes online career inventories and an enquiry service. Higher education institutions may provide career guidance at student information centres. Activities generally include job fairs, CV writing workshops, information seminars, careers tests and individual counselling.

Unemployed persons and job-seekers registered with the State Employment Agency (SEA) can choose group or individual career and/or psychological counselling, career guidance, identification of suitable work goals, information and help when searching for a job, job retraining and work trials. Individuals are offered interest, aptitude, personality and psychometric testing, health profiling, role play, coaching and provision of information. Group activities involve consultations, seminars and lectures on career management issues, career motivation tests and interpersonal communication training. SEA internet services include online career interest tests, information on careers and training opportunities, storage of CV and motivation letters, as well as responses to user questions by career guidance and/or psychological counsellors. The Career Services Department of the SEA develops methodology - prepares information resources, tests, questionnaires, inventories and other methodological materials for the SEA career counsellors' work.

4. Methodologies for assessment of skills

Career counsellors of the SEA provide assessment of skills via individual and group diagnostic career counselling sessions before inclusion of clients in active employment measures, for example, enrolment in training programs. Individual and group diagnostic career consultations provided by career counsellors of the SEA can be about professional aptitude, capability and motivation assessment. The counsellors of the SEA assess the clients' professional interests and competences against specific professional profiles and evaluate personal characteristics, cognitive styles, aptitude for work and individual psychophysiological characteristics compared to job requirements.

The SEA provides their career counsellors with questionnaires, inventories and checklists to assess skills.



5. Guidance forum

The national guidance forum in Latvia is called “Karjeras attīstības atbalsta sistēmas sadarbības padome” or “Cooperation Council for the Career Guidance System”. Presently the organisation does not have a formal legal status, since the ownership and authority of the council is still under debate. However, representatives of the Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Welfare, Ministry of Economics, Ministry of Regional Development and Municipal Affairs, the Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments, the Latvian Employers Confederation, the Latvian Adult Education Association have met on a voluntary basis at least twice yearly since 2007 in order to discuss priorities in guidance. The State Education Development Agency’s Career Guidance Department has been nominated as the secretariat for this council. The secretariat convenes the council meetings when development processes in the guidance system require input from decision-makers. The forum has an advisory role

6. Financing of the system

There is no funding earmarked specifically for guidance within the subsidies that the Ministry of Education and Science pays to general and vocational schools or higher education institutions. Some municipal school boards in areas that have higher tax revenues have supported staff specifically responsible for guidance activities, however, this is not the norm. In order to support guidance in the education sector, an ESF national project was implemented for 2.27 million EUR to develop and deliver in-service training courses and materials for teachers providing careers education, careers information tools for use in schools and a training programme at master’s level for career guidance counsellors. The national education budget also supports the National Database of Learning Opportunities and partially funds other methodological development activities of the State Education Development Agency’s Career Guidance Department.

The Ministry of Welfare funds the activities of the State Employment Agency (SEA). The SEA oversees and provides information and methodological support to career guidance counsellors and psychologists who serve unemployed persons and job seekers at the SEA branch offices in 28 cities.

7. Useful contacts and relevant internet links

State Employment Agency Career Services Department

K.Valdemara iela 38 k-1, Rīga, LV - 1010
nva@nva.lv • www.karjerascentrs.lv

State Education Development Agency Career Guidance Department

Smilšu iela 8, 4th floor, Rīga, LV-1050
kad@viaa.gov.lv • www.viaa.gov.lv/Euroguidance

National Database of Learning Opportunities

Smilšu iela 8, 4th floor, Rīga, LV-1050
info@niid.lv • www.niid.lv

Professional orientation until 2006
directs people to fill the vacancies in the labour market

Career Guidance and Counselling System after March 2006
enables citizens to identify their capacities, competences and interests to make educational, training and occupational decisions and to manage their individual life path in learning, work and other settings

Paradigm

Ministry of Education and Science
Ministry of Welfare

National Guidance Forum

Policy

Information and vocational guidance providers, counsellors

Trainers of guidance counsellors

Personnel

Information
Careers counselling
Careers education

Services

State Employment Agency

Educational institutions

Providers

State Employment Agency

State Education Development Agency/Euroguidance

Support