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Vocational Guidance Education in Full-Time Compulsory Education in Europe

European Commission

VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE EDUCATION IN FULL-TIME COMPULSORY EDUCATION

UNITED KINGDOM (SCOTLAND)

Academic year 2007/08

Education is compulsory for pupils between the ages of 5 and 16. It covers primary education lasting seven years (primary school) as well as the first four years of secondary education, corresponding to lower general secondary level. The end of compulsory education is a key moment in terms of guidance. Pupils take the first national examinations (national qualifications examinations) and must choose options (academic or vocational upper secondary education).

LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND NATIONAL OBJECTIVES

Scottish Ministers have a duty under sections 8-10 of the Employment and Training Act 1973 to provide Career Services to Young People.

The Curriculum for Excellence ensures that education better prepares young people for life beyond school. This approach aims for pupils to become: successful learners, confident individuals, responsible citizens and effective contributors.

Education Scotland Act (1996) and Education Scotland (Additional Support for Learning) (2004) refer to the provision of vocational guidance within compulsory education.

More Choices, More Chances – a key policy and strategy document in Scotland laying out vision and measure to reduce number of unemployed 16-19 year olds in Scotland. A similar challenge exists in England and Wales but the above document guides the Scottish Government and local action to help young people find and sustain positive opportunities in employment, education and training.

Central to this strategy was the set up of local authority partnerships and these brought together a range of agencies which have actively contributed to a reduction in the number of unemployed people and to support young jobseekers. Representatives include key people from Local Authorities, Jobcentre Plus, further education colleges and other training providers. Representatives also come from the health and voluntary sector.

A key challenge for the Scottish economy is the effective utilisation of the high skills and qualification levels available to employers, as outlined in the Scottish Government's recently published skills strategy **'Skills for Scotland – A Lifelong Skills Strategy'**. See link below for more details: http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/09/06091114/0.

Another challenge within the Scottish labour market and for the wider Scottish economy is the level of unemployment amongst young people which has remained relatively steady for a long period of time and above levels for the rest of the UK. Other research carried out by Futureskills Scotland revealed employers felt that many young people were not prepared for the world of work and did not have the employability skills necessary to become successful employees.

High levels of often localised economic inactivity remains a persistent challenge recognised by both the Scottish and Westminster governments. The recently published Green paper **'In Work, Better Off**' seeks to link the Skills agenda with unemployment and inactivity and to find ways of meeting this challenge 'head on'. For more information on some of the key challenges impacting on the labour market and the Scottish economy see 'Measuring Progress towards a Smart Successful Scotland' (http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/12/19161336/9).

Scottish Higher Education Employability Network (SHEEN)

Higher Education institutions are currently seeking ways in which they can integrate employability into their courses. A recent development is SHEEN, set up under the auspices of the Scottish Funding Council. SHEEN is a network of representatives from Higher Education institutions with a remit to

- support institutions in implementing, monitoring and evaluating their employability strategies, by providing a forum for Scottish HEI institutional champions;
- assist the Scottish Funding Council in taking forward its Implementation Plan for *Learning to Work*;
- provide a means for the higher education institutions to discuss and share their approaches in this area.

For more information, visit:
http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/resources/other/web0507_sheen_meetingreport_jan_2007

RESPONSIBILITIES

Ministers discharge their duty to provide career services through Careers Scotland (CS). The Careers Scotland (CS) service established in 2002 is in charge of providing information and educational and careers guidance to people of all ages. For the moment CS as part of Skills Development Scotland (Scotland's new skills body), which became operational on 1 April 2008, continues to operate under its universally recognised brand name. The service is provided via the network of local centres or via the interactive website http://www.careers-scotland.org.uk/home/home.asp.

Careers Scotland has been benchmarked against international best practice in the delivery of career guidance and employability services – which include those specifically targeted at young people. The report of this benchmarking exercise – 'Progress and Potential' – highlighted that Careers Scotland has the potential to be a world leader in this field.

All schools (public and private) are required to provide educational and vocational guidance adapted to their pupils.

Schools work in partnership with a range of opportunity providers and institutions to support vocational guidance. One example of this is School College Collaboration links, where pupils of compulsory school age, usually aged 14 years upwards, attend college on a part- time or flexible basis in order to experience vocational learning objectives. Partnership activity also

involves input to schools from the voluntary sector, youth development agencies, social enterprise networks, private training providers, employers and employer bodies such as Sector Skills Councils. This varies from school to school.

VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE EDUCATION IN THE CURRICULUM

Vocational Guidance Education in the curriculum is part of the new Curriculum for Excellence and the requirement for young people to be able to make changes for the future is found in the Health and Wellbeing section of the new curriculum.

Again, on a school by school basis, flexible approaches are taken to ensure guidance education objectives are met. This includes separate personal and social development sessions and cross- curriculum, cross subject based inputs. The introduction of the Curriculum for Excellence policy development, however, places career guidance and vocational learning firmly within the health and wellbeing aspects of delivery. This is a very welcome ambition to integrate guidance education into a holistic approach which integrates the importance of career planning into life skills and employability prospects for individuals.

Careers Scotland is working with Learning and Teaching Scotland to ensure that career planning and career education are inbuilt into the Curriculum through curricular guidance (http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/curriculumforexcellence/index.asp).

A key element of Careers Scotland's role in providing career guidance is *the understanding and interpretation of labour market intelligence* – including information about labour market shortages in our day to day work with customers of all ages, including young people. A key element of the Career Planning Journey – a tool used to support individuals to make well informed career decisions – is understanding more about opportunities and the world of work, and what it is that people themselves want from work. Labour market information is essential here. The Careers Scotland website has a whole range of information for young people and customers of all ages, including information on skills shortages and skills gaps.

Traineeships within the framework of the curriculum

The 'Enterprise in Education – Determined to Succeed' strategy of the government (Scottish Executive) commits the local authorities to organising entrepreneurial experiences for pupils. These experiences include traineeships for pupils aged 14 and over within the framework of their curriculum and guidance education.

A range of vocational learning opportunities are built into the curriculum. These include work based learning through exposure to employers and other bodies outwith school in the form of work experience placements, job shadowing, enterprise activities and specific themed events. Again, these vary depending on developed links within individual schools, their local authorities and partnerships. The Skills for Work course allows pupils to gain a recognised qualification utilising colleges and employer contacts. The involvement of schools varies and time commitments are flexible. All pupils will be offered at least one week's work experience in either S3 or S4 as an absolute minimum of input.

OTHER TYPES OF ACTIVITY/GUIDANCE SERVICES

Contacts with the professional world

Employers, employer bodies and representatives, further and higher education institutes and professional bodies all have variable input to schools in order to give information and advice about the range of opportunities, career pathways and selection and recruitment practices within their sector. The range, number and extent of input depends on such factors as the quality of partnership activity, the time and coordination of activity, which each school and the available pool of support within a local area. There are also a number of regional and national job fairs and career conventions where young people are able to meet with employers and other opportunity providers. A recent development has been to establish virtual job fairs where opportunity providers post details of their vocational area within on-line communities for prospective candidates to find out more details.

Guidance services at school

In all schools (primary and secondary level), teachers are responsible for guidance provided to pupils. In secondary education, pupils receive additional assistance provided by teachers with enhanced skills in guidance and personal coaching. These counsellors provide personal, educational and vocational guidance. They meet pupils individually and help them choose their options at the moment of transition in their education. They also organise guidance-related lessons (within the framework of the social education curriculum), often with the help of external participants.

In a large number of schools, the staff responsible for guidance cooperate with the Careers Scotland service to ensure that pupils are receiving appropriate support within career planning. These staff members also ensure a link with local industry and other schools.

In all cases, pupils make the final decision as regards educational and vocational guidance, assisted by parents and teachers/counsellors.

Guidance services outside school

The Careers Scotland service provides information and counselling regarding the labour market and career and training possibilities. Counsellors who work there provide counselling to pupils concerning their professional choices and help them evaluate their potential and their career plan.

Careers Scotland staff use a variety of tools, techniques and approaches to enable pupils to make well informed, realistic career decisions. These are available within the Careers Scotland website.

QUALIFICATIONS OF GUIDANCE STAFF

To obtain a qualification in careers guidance Careers Scotland counsellors must have a higher education degree and post-graduate qualification or equivalent.

Teaching staff undertaking a guidance role complete enhanced skill development through a comprehensive continuous professional development package of support.

COOPERATION BETWEEN SCHOOLS, EMPLOYERS, PARENTS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

Careers Scotland facilitates engagement of schools, parents, employer, employer bodies, training providers and other stakeholders by establishing a range of different partnership agreements focusing on operational and strategic objectives. These are monitored on an annual basis.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE

The Careers Scotland website is devoted to the multitude of educational options and the range of possible qualifications: http://www.careers-scotland.org.uk/Education/Education.asp

The Learndirect website contains information on learning opportunities: http://www.learndirectscotland.com

The SCQF website explains the parity between the academic and vocational education options: http://www.scqf.org.uk/

The website www.planitplus.net provides information on studies and training in a school environment, in colleges and universities and in the community, as well as information on careers and links to other useful websites.

Internet references

http://www.careers-scotland.org.uk/Education/Education.asp

http://www.learndirectscotland.com

http://www.scqf.org.uk/

www.planitplus.net

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3. Eurybase; Eurydice.
4. Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the Gap. OECD 2004.
5. http://europa.eu/youth/studying/index_uk_fr.html