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Vocational Guidance Education in Full-Time Compulsory Education in Europe

European Commission

VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE EDUCATION IN FULL-TIME COMPULSORY EDUCATION

SPAIN

School year 2007/08

Since the 1990 educational reform, compulsory education in Spain concerns pupils aged 6 to 16 and covers primary education with a duration of 6 years (divided into three cycles of two years' duration each) and 4 years of general lower secondary education (ESO). In the third and fourth year of ESO pupils start to take options and to form a curriculum adapted to their own interests through the election of optional subjects. The end of lower secondary education is a key moment in terms of guidance. Pupils have the possibility to go on to one of the three modalities of general upper secondary education – Arts, Sciences and Technology or Humanities and Social Sciences – to intermediate vocational training or to the labour market.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND NATIONAL OBJECTIVES

The 1990 Act on the General Organisation of the Education System (LOGSE) stated educational and vocational guidance as a fundamental right of pupils and a basic principle of education and its quality and equity. This Act required information and vocational guidance services to be provided throughout the education system.

The 2002 Act on Qualifications and Vocational Training establishes that vocational information and guidance aims at providing assessment on the different educational options and possible pathways, in order to facilitate both labour insertion and reinsertion as well as professional mobility in the labour market.

Finally, the 2006 Act on Education (LOE) includes vocational guidance among the fundamental principles of the Spanish education system as a necessary measure to ensure individualised compulsory education in terms of knowledge, skills and values. This principle is reinforced as regards lower secondary education, in which special attention is paid to educational and vocational guidance of students. The LOE stipulates that it is the responsibility of the Autonomous Communities, within their area of authority, to ensure that guidance is carried out. Therefore, the Autonomous Communities are responsible for the promotion of guidance mechanisms as essential elements of compulsory education. Thus, it is in the regulation developed by the Autonomous Communities that the specific aspects about the organisation of guidance are established: aims, governing principles, structures, composition of guidance teams, and the specific measures to meet all students´ needs. According to the aforementioned educational principle, schools must pay special attention to the guidance of both students and families in those moments when a decision about the educational future must be taken.

RESPONSIBILITIES

At central level, the Government's role is to provide the coordination and quality assurance of information and guidance services. Two different ministries are responsible for vocational training in Spain: on the one hand, the Ministry of Education, Social Policy and Sport and, on the other, the Ministry of Labour and Immigration. Both ministries have specific bodies that facilitate their coordination. The National Centre of Resources for Vocational Guidance, dependent on the Ministry of Education, Social Policy and Sport, is the body in charge of promoting vocational training in Spain, fostering the cooperation between social and educational agents and providing career guidance and information on work insertion to Spanish students who want to study or work in the European countries, or to European citizens willing to do it in Spain. In addition, and reporting to the same ministry, the National Institute for Qualifications (INCUAL) provides technical support to the General Council for Vocation Training, the body responsible for the organisation of vocational training which, in turn, is dependent on the Ministry of Labour and Immigration. At the level of the Autonomous Communities, the Regional Councils for Vocational Training coordinate the activities of all stakeholders involved (regional education and employment departments).

VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE EDUCATION IN THE CURRICULUM

Student guidance is offered all along compulsory education. The organisation and planning of guidance actions at school level are set in the Guidance Action Plan, which in turn includes the Tutorial Action Plan and the Vocational and Academic Guidance Plan.

The Tutorial Action Plan is a document that includes the organisation and functioning of all educational guidance actions carried out by form teachers in collaboration with the Guidance Department and the head of studies, mainly through the weekly hour of tutorship. In primary schools, this plan is drawn up by form teachers, while in secondary schools it is drawn up by the Guidance Department based on the proposals of form teachers and the guidelines set by the Pedagogical Coordination Committee of the school. Tutorship is considered one of the basic processes in school guidance. It consists of providing help and guidance to a student or group of students by a form teacher, who also teaches the group. This guidance is extended throughout compulsory education and its main objectives are: helping students to better in academic performance, improve self-knowledge and self-esteem, solve his/her difficulties in school, acquire the necessary skills to live in society, and how to think and take decisions. The general aim is to facilitate the students' teaching-learning processes and to contribute to their personal, professional and social development. Among the specific vocational guidance actions developed through the Tutorial Action Plan, the following can be mentioned: those promoting students' self-knowledge (as questionnaires, self-reports, activities, training in decision-making), and others consisting in giving information about the different academic paths offered by the education system and individualised attention to students.

Both in primary and secondary schools, each group of students should be assigned a form teacher who is appointed by the head of studies among those teaching the relevant group. In lower secondary education, the form teacher is responsible for the weekly hour of tutorship with his/her group, during which specific aspects related to the social and personal maturity

of students is dealt with and vocational guidance is of the utmost importance. This hour devoted to tutorship is part of the students' weekly timetable.

The Vocational and Academic Guidance Plan is a document that includes the specific vocational guidance actions to be carried out, such as training in career choice through vocational interest inventories, informative sessions with students and families, round tables, discussion sessions with professionals from different economic sectors and professions, visits to industries, etc. The aim of all these initiatives is to guide students in their future career choice and provide them with professional experiences as well to facilitate the transition towards adult life. Thus, the aim is to provide knowledge and capacity to access different educational pathways, to prepare young people to self-manage their career or professional project and to give advice on mobility possibilities in the European area.

As far as the curriculum subjects are concerned, students can choose one optional subject within those offered by the school in the third and fourth years of lower secondary education. As regards optional subjects, schools can include an initial vocational training subject related to the vocational training offered by the school or to the economic environment.

Timetable distribution of these subjects varies depending on the grade. Two hours per week are devoted to these subjects in the third year of ESO. In the fourth year, it consists in carrying out a monographic work in a subject chosen by the student with the supervision of a teacher.

Traineeships within the framework of the curriculum

Traineeships are not included in the curriculum of primary and lower secondary education. They are only part of the curriculum of the vocational training programmes.

Vocational training is organised into Intermediate and Advanced Training Programmes offered either in Secondary Education Schools or in Vocational Training Specific Schools. The main characteristics of these programmes are their organisation into modules related to the different professional fields, their variable duration (1 300-2 000 hours) and the inclusion of a compulsory training period in the workplace. To access these programmes, it is necessary to prove previous academic training. In the case of intermediate vocational training, it is necessary to have successfully completed the ESO. To access advanced vocational training, it is compulsory to hold the *Bachillerato* degree or to pass an entrance examination.

At present, there are 142 vocational cycles available – 64 for intermediate provision and 78 for advanced provision – grouped in 26 vocational families. The characteristics and curricular contents of these cycles are firstly specified by the INCUAL.

The educational institutions offering this provision count on the so-called Departments for labour-related training and guidance. Teachers of such departments teach modules of a cross-curricular nature in vocational training (Intermediate and Advanced Training Cycles and Initial Professional Qualification Programmes). The contents of these modules are on social and labour-related legislation, labour relations, job search and self-employment, business organisation and health and safety at work.

All training cycles include an on-the-job training professional module which consists of specific training where the contents are organised around practical-based activities corresponding to the specific professional profile. The most important characteristic of this provision is that it is developed in a real productive environment (the company), where students may, on the one hand, watch and carry out the activities and functions corresponding to different jobs, and, on the other, get to know the organisation of the production processes, services or labour relations, under the guidance and advise of tutors of the educational institution and the workplace.

Likewise, as a complementary measure addressed to tackle early school dropout and to favour social, educational and labour insertion, those over 16 (and, exceptionally, over 15) who have not obtained the *Graduado en Educación Secundaria Obligatoria* Certificate (certificate awarded on successful completion of ESO) may undertake Initial Professional Qualification Programmes. These programmes include both general modules (to broaden basic competences) and specific ones (regarding vocational competences), as well as a specific provision for young people with special educational needs who, even though they have an adequate level of personal and social skills to work, cannot be integrated into a mainstream modality.

OTHER TYPES OF ACTIVITY/GUIDANCE SERVICES

Contacts with the professional world

Both in primary and secondary schools, out-of-school activities are organised every year to complement students' education in different areas. These activities are designed by the schools in order to help students to develop values related to socialisation, participation and coexistence, as well as to foster relations between students and the socio-cultural and labour environment. These activities are part of the school curriculum.

Guidance services at school

Spain is a decentralised country where the transfer of power in education has recently been completed. Within this context, some Autonomous Communities are introducing some changes in the existing guidance model, although it is still possible to establish a common classification of the guidance services for all of them. These services are structured into three levels: the class level, the institutional level and the sector level (Coordination Guidance Services external to the schools).

At class level, all actions included in the school plan and developed by form teachers can be included. Guidance is part of the teaching duties and inherent to any educational process; for this reason it is developed throughout primary and secondary education. Moreover, in lower secondary and general upper secondary education there is also 1 hour per week (36 hours per year) in the school schedule to be devoted to vocational and career guidance.

At the institutional level, all guidance structures working directly with students, teachers and families can be included, regardless of whether they are located in or outside the school.

In primary education, the guidance structures prevailing are those external to schools, as the educational psychology and career guidance teams. These teams are made up of

counsellors, teachers specialised in working with pupils with special educational needs, social workers, etc. At present, a process of transition is taking place, whereby the Autonomous Communities are placing the guidance services (i.e. Guidance Units) within schools. These Units are made up of a counsellor and teachers specialised in special educational needs. Both types of services carry out functions such as providing advice to different members of the school community and families; establishing preventive, diagnostic and intervention measures as regards pupils' difficulties; and coordination with the existing agents to attend to the diversity of pupils, including teachers of the different subject matters, specialised teachers, special education teachers and Community Services Technical teachers, who serve as a link with the social services.

In secondary education, the predominant type of guidance services are those placed in schools, i.e. the Counselling Departments. They are made up of at least one counsellor, teachers specialised in working with pupils with special educational needs, teachers and social workers. A department has been set up in each secondary school. The activities of these departments vary according to the Autonomous Communities but they must be formulated at the beginning of each school year, focusing on four major areas: support for the teaching process, educational and vocational counselling assistance related to SEN and tutoring support. In some schools, school counsellors can also teach for a small number of hours.

Finally, at the level of indirect or specific intervention in schools, the structures providing support, advice and resources to those at the intermediate level can be mentioned. They do not work directly with the users, but with those structures directly working with them, namely the Counselling Teams and Units at primary education level and the Counselling Departments at secondary education level. These services are always external to schools and are usually made up either as resource centres or as specialised advisory centres.

As an element for information that may help to guide students, the 2006 Act on Education establishes two diagnostic tests to be carried out during compulsory education. These tests, which assess the basic competences acquired by students, take place in the 4th year of primary education and in the 2nd year of compulsory secondary education. On the one hand, they have an educational and guiding nature for the schools and, on the other, they provide information to families and the educational community; however, they do not have a direct bearing on the students' educational pathway even though they may be of help when decision-making.

In the employment sector

Public services for vocational guidance are aimed at the social and labour integration of those who are officially registered as applicants for a job in the Public Employment Services. Such services do not carry out measures addressed to students who are undertaking compulsory education (either primary or secondary education).

QUALIFICATIONS OF GUIDANCE STAFF

As a general rule, guidance counsellors must have a higher education degree. The type of studies they must undertake depends on the context in which they work (either educational or work-related), though the degree required is the same for all the professionals who work

within the educational field, regardless of whether they work in primary or secondary education. Guidance counsellors must have a university degree in psychology, education or educational psychology (whose content is not necessarily related to vocational guidance) and it normally lasts for five years. In addition, they must have detailed knowledge of educational and training programme offers as well as possible careers and trades, and must be able to use the techniques necessary to collect and analyse information, and to communicate and provide counselling individually or in groups. They may also participate in continuing education offered by different public and private organisations. This continuing education includes actions regarding work with families, parent-school relations, students' behavioural problems in secondary education, tutorship support, problem solving and the improvement of coexistence.

Special education teachers who take part in guidance organisation must have a short-cycle teaching degree from a university. These studies generally last for three years, with the specialisation included. In addition, they may also participate in continuing education. In the Public Employment Services, guidance staff must have a university degree or equivalent in areas such as psychology or pedagogy. Vocational guidance courses are organised internally.

COOPERATION BETWEEN SCHOOLS, EMPLOYERS, PARENTS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

The legislation related to secondary education provides for the involvement of parents' associations in guidance services. Schools encourage families, former pupils and representatives of the employment sector to cooperate in this area. An agreement exists between the Autonomous Communities, local authorities and employer organisations with respect to the involvement of companies in actions such as the organisation of on-site visits for pupils.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE

The Ministry of Education and the Autonomous Communities are involved in the production of information on possible educational and vocational pathways.

Since each Autonomous Community is free to develop its own information system, the products which give access to information on education and training are published separately by the different Autonomous Communities.

The bodies of the Ministry of Labour and Immigration periodically organise studies on the labour market or on the existing information regarding careers (www.mtas.es).

Support material exists in printed or electronic form (publications, brochures, reports, CD-ROMs, websites, etc.). Some of these resources are addressed to users such as students or young people who are trying to find a job (vocational guidance computer programs and web applications for guidance). Other resources are addressed to professionals devoted to counselling (computer resources through web portals). The abovementioned support material is designed by either educational and labour institutions or by counsellors (acting on their initiative) who share materials and ideas.

Internet references

Access to information on vocational guidance on the website of the Ministry of Education, Social Policy and Sport: http://www.mepsyd.es/educa/formacion-profesional/index.html

Ministry of Labour and Immigration: www.mtas.es

General Council for Vocational Training: http://www2.inem.es/legis/asp/ley_19.htm

National Resource Centre for Vocational Guidance:
http://www.mepsyd.es/educa/cnrop/index.html

National Institute for Qualifications: www.mepsyd.es/educa/incual/ice_incual.html

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Legislation

1. October 3rd Act 1/1990, on the General Organisation of the Education System.
2. May 3rd Act 2/2006, on Education (LOE).
3. December 7th Royal Decree 1513/2006, establishing the minimum core curriculum for primary education.
4. December 29th Royal Decree 1631/2006, establishing the minimum core curriculum for lower secondary education.
5. January 26th Royal Decree 82/1996, establishing the regulations on the organisation of pre-primary and primary schools.
6. January 26th Royal Decree 83/1996, establishing the regulations on the organisation of secondary schools
7. December 15th Royal Decree 1538/2006, establishing the general organisation of vocational training in the education system.