

Learning for Jobs: career guidance Pointers for policy development

PROVIDE EFFECTIVE CAREER GUIDANCE

- Recognise that rapidly evolving jobs and careers have expanded career opportunities, but choices are becoming harder, and career guidance is therefore becoming both more important and more demanding. If young people choose the wrong career, the costs of later changes can be high.
- Provide reliable and impartial sources of guidance so that young people do not have to rely on informal sources of guidance, such as family and friends, which have their strengths, but may only offer choices that are familiar.
- Develop effective guidance services that can yield large returns by developing the career-related skills, self-awareness and self-esteem which lead to rewarding choices.
- Tackle weaknesses in existing provision, including:
 - staff providing career guidance sometimes deal inadequately with labour market issues
 - services may be fragmented and under-resourced
 - advice often lacks objectivity
 - relevant labour market information is not always available
 - career guidance initiatives are often not effectively evaluated

ESTABLISH A COHERENT, INDEPENDENT AND COMPREHENSIVE GUIDANCE PROFESSION

- Develop a separate profession of career advisors. Too often the career guidance profession is assimilated into psychological counselling, distorting and marginalising its role.
- Ensure that career advisors have:
 - a good knowledge of labour markets, careers and learning opportunities
 - the capacity to identify further relevant sources of information to provide more specific advice
 - the ability to draw out from young people their interests, aptitudes and objectives so as to help them make choices which are both realistic and fulfilling
 - the competencies to help individuals to manage their own careers
- Design training for career advisors to provide these competences
- Develop a qualification system for career advisors that covers not only those in schools but also other guidance professionals working in tertiary education and in employment offices and other services for adults. This would facilitate recognition and transferability of career advisor skills across institutions.
- Preserve their independence of guidance professionals from the institutions (such as schools) in which they are based. This could be achieved in several ways including:
 - externally managing a professional career guidance service that functions in schools
 - training teachers as guidance professionals, held accountable to standards agreed with the external guidance service, and with a fixed time allocated to guidance work
- Embed individual career guidance within a comprehensive career guidance framework, including a systematic career education programme to inform students about the world of work and career opportunities.
- Encourage an understanding of the world of work in schools from the earliest years, backed by visits to workplaces and workplace experience.

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SUPPORT GUIDANCE WITH RESOURCES, INFORMATION AND EVALUATION

- Provide adequate resources for guidance services and protect them against the risk of being squeezed because they are resourced at the margins of an activity such as regular teaching.
- Deliver key elements of guidance pro-actively to all students, so that students can be supported by one-to-one guidance by professionals when they make key career decisions.
- Regularly update information sources to identify emerging occupations and areas of skills shortage, as well as current and potential areas of skills oversupply and redundancy. An important function of guidance personnel will be to guide individuals in their use of all these information sources.
- Properly evaluate career guidance initiatives to establish the case for effective resourcing and identify how best to employ those resources.

FURTHER READING

The OECD's policy review of vocational education and training (VET), *Learning for Jobs*, comprises a programme of analytical work and individual country reviews and is designed to help countries make their VET systems more responsive to labour market needs.

Further information about the policy review and reports on VET systems in countries is available on the OECD website www.oecd.org/edu/learningforjobs.