

Box 2.1 Career guidance: Three long-standing approaches

Finland's Employment Office employs some 280 specialised vocational guidance psychologists. Each has a Masters degree in psychology, and also completes short in-service training. Many obtain further postgraduate qualifications. Their clients include undecided school leavers, unemployed people, and adults who want to change careers. Clients need to make appointments, and typically have more than one interview. Demand is very high, and it is not unusual for clients to have to wait six weeks for an appointment.

Germany's Federal Employment Office's career counsellors visit schools, run class talks, and provide small-group guidance and short personal interviews in the penultimate year of compulsory schooling. These counsellors have generally undertaken a specialised three-year course of study at the Federal College of Public Administration. School classes are taken to the Office's career information centres (BIZ) where they are familiarised with the centre's facilities; they can subsequently re-visit the centre and book longer career counselling interviews at the local employment office.

Ireland's secondary schools have one guidance counsellor for every 500 students. Each is required to have a post-graduate diploma in guidance in addition to a teaching qualification. Staffing and qualification levels such as this are quite high by OECD levels. Guidance counsellors are teachers, with a reduced teaching load to provide career advice, to help students with learning difficulties, and to help those with personal problems. Career education classes are not compulsory, but are included in some school programmes.

Box 2.2 Career guidance: Using innovation to widen access

Australia's national careers web site (www.myfuture.edu.au/) contains information about courses of education and training, about labour market supply and demand at the regional level, on the content of occupations, and on sources of funding for study. Users can explore their personal interests and preferences, and relate these to educational and occupational information. In its first seven months the site was accessed 2.5 million times.

In **Austria** three large career fairs are held each year. They cover vocational training, tertiary education and adult education. They are visited by thousands of people, involve hundreds of professional and trade organisations, employers, trade unions and educational institutions, and are strategically marketed to schools and the community.

Canada's public employment services contract many career guidance services to community organisations, which are often seen as more attuned to the needs of particular groups: single parents or Aboriginal people, for example. Some of these organisations focus mainly on career development activities, such as information services, career counselling and job-search workshops. Others have a wider range of education, training and community functions. Some have career guidance professionals on their staff; many do not.

In **England**, the career service at the University of Leicester used to require all students to make an appointment and have a lengthy interview. During the 1990s student numbers grew by 50% but staff numbers in the career service declined. This forced a rethink. Now, a drop-in, self-service system in a careers resource centre is the major initial form of contact. Career development programmes are run in all undergraduate classes with each undergraduate department having a careers tutor to act as a first point of contact. Increased use is also made of ICT-based tools.

In **Spain**, the international company Altadis has a career development programme, built around a database of employees' qualifications and descriptions of existing positions in the firm. Those taking part in the programme are interviewed regularly to assess their competencies and aspirations against future business needs. As part of a planned redundancy programme negotiated with the trade unions, Altadis offers career counselling to employees, and has contracted a specialist outplacement firm to provide this service. The outplacement firm normally employs psychology or economics graduates to deliver it.

In **the United Kingdom** call centre technology is being used to widen adults' access to education. The service, *learnirect*, provides both information and more extensive career advice to callers. The staff of the service have relevant qualifications at one of three levels, depending upon the nature of their work, and can call upon an online database of information on over half a million education and training courses. Over four million people have called the national advice line since it was established in 1998. The help line is open between 8.00 and 22.00, 365 days a year.

Box 2.4 “Guidance-oriented” schools

In Canada (Quebec), schools are being encouraged to develop the concept of the “guidance-oriented school” (*l'école orientante*). This is linked to wider competency-oriented school reforms. Personal and career planning is defined as one of five “broad areas of learning” throughout schooling. The aim is to provide support for students’ identity development in primary school and guidance in career planning throughout secondary school. This is linked to ensuring that students understand the usefulness of their studies (in languages, mathematics, sciences and so on) and why they are studying them.

To implement this concept, the number of qualified guidance specialists is being increased. In addition, the active involvement of all stakeholders is being promoted, first by encouraging discussion and collaboration between teachers and guidance professionals, and then by developing partnerships with parents and the community. Schools are being permitted considerable flexibility in determining what a “guidance-oriented school” might mean within the broad parameters provided (Ministère de l'Éducation Québec, 2001).

A similar approach, linking a broad concept of career guidance to wider school reform and to wider links between the school and its community, can be seen in the ways in which career guidance is being introduced into some Luxembourg *lycées*. There, the curriculum, which can be included in each of grades 7, 8 and 9 includes the transition from primary to secondary school, life and social skills, study methods and tutorial support in addition to career education. It teaches decision-making skills and career management skills in addition to assisting students to make specific choices. Teachers deliver this curriculum, with support from school psychologists. Employers and parents are involved by, for example, explaining occupations to students. It includes work experience or job shadowing, mentoring by students in higher grades, and personal projects. Luxembourg has commissioned evaluations of these initiatives to assess the impact upon student progression and upon operation of the *lycées*.