



European Competence Standards for the Academic Training of Career Practitioners

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Latest Version – September 9, 2015

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Goals of European Competence Standards

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- Help to **establish career guidance and counselling** as a recognized profession around Europe; a common **professional identity** of career practitioners
- **Assure the competence** of career practitioners around Europe, including people in supportive roles, as well as the **quality of (initial + further) training**
- Support the **mutual recognition of qualifications** and the **recognition of prior learning** in the field of career guidance and counselling, and **improve basis for international cooperation** and mobility in training and practice



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For the development of competence standards, which will be accepted and used in practice, training and policy, we need a **consistent framework** of high quality.

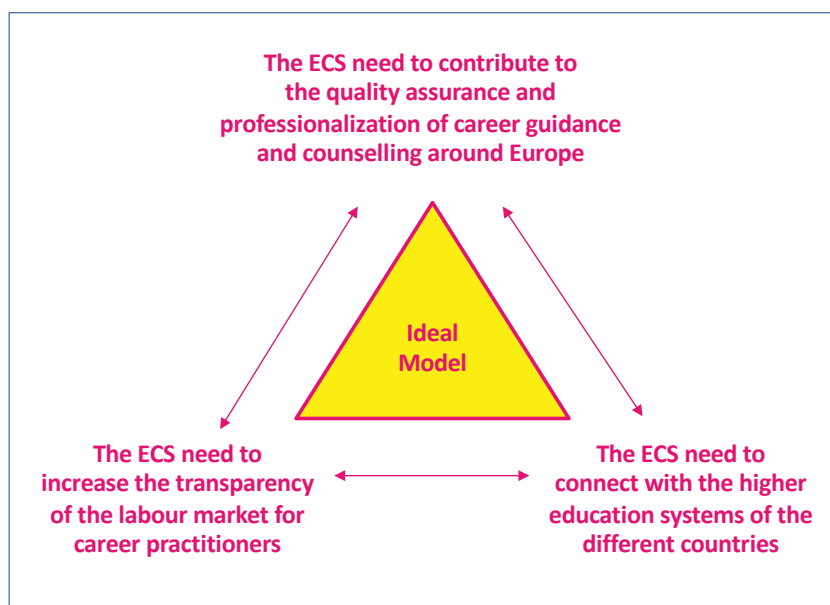
- The **major challenge** lies in developing a model, which is relevant for the labour market for career practitioners, which links to the logic of higher education systems, and which fosters quality and professionalization in CGC.
- These three dimensions can be understood as the corners of a **perfect triangle**: It is very challenging to define a model, which relates to all of them in a balanced way.



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- We need a **comprehensive and concise statement** about the **core tasks** of career practitioners, which can be communicated well to lay-persons
- We need a system which can offer a **sensible differentiation** between fully dedicated *Career Professionals*, people dealing with career-related questions as part of other roles, and people in “specialist positions”
- We need a **transparent and coherent framework** of **measurable** and **comparable** competence levels
- The competences need to be **meaningful** in relation to the most central professional challenges related to the practice of career guidance and counselling and focus on **performance** in dealing with such challenges



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Three Types of Career Practitioners

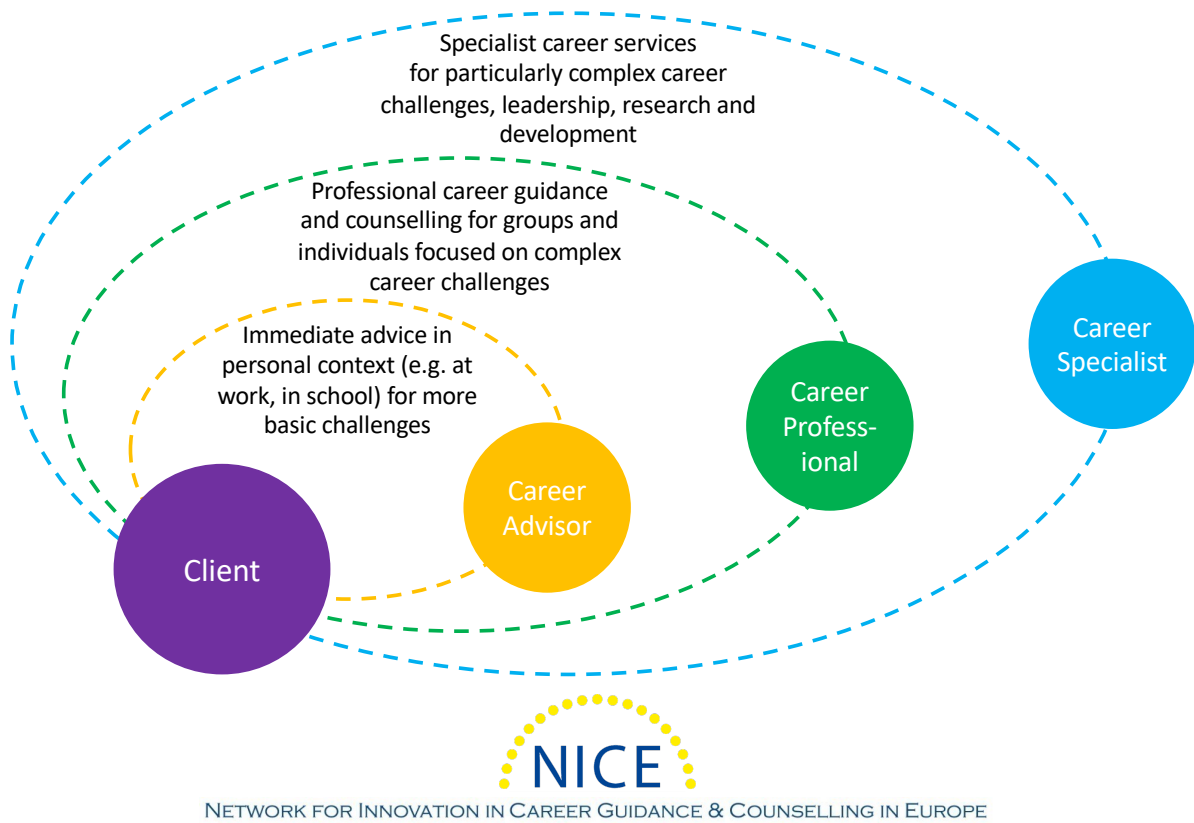
A combination of different types of career practitioners is needed, in order to satisfy the needs of all citizens appropriately. To satisfy this need, we have developed ***distinct task profiles for three types of career professionals***, based on different needs of clients:

- **Career Advisors** are teachers, placement managers, psychologists, social workers or public administrators (among others). They are often the first people who clients come to for advice in career-related matters, although their area of specialization is not in career guidance and counselling, but in another field.
- **Career Professionals** are the people, who are dedicated to career guidance and counselling and who see it as their vocation to support people in facing complex career-related challenges through career counselling, career education, career assessment & information, career systems development and by managing their career services professionally.
- **Career Specialists** are specialized in one (or more) of the five professional roles and work towards the advancement of career guidance and counselling in different ways. Some of them concentrate on more practical matters, e.g. the management of career services, policy-making or the supervision of other career professionals. Others primarily engage in research, academic training and developmental activities as academics.



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All types of career services are important for citizens – depending on their specific needs:



NICE Professional Roles and Competence Domains

We distinguish between two aspects in our basic framework:

5 Professional Roles* which Career Professionals work in:



6 Domains of Competence** which they need for this:



*The Professional Roles together represent the central activities of career practitioners.

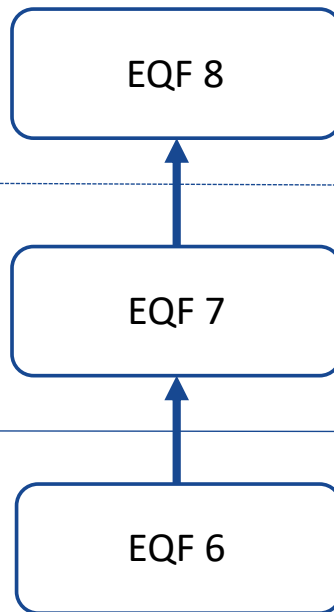
**Competences are measurable learning-outcomes relating to the performance of tasks; hence we don't speak of "core competences" anymore, but of competence domains.

The EQF offers clear reference points, which types of activities require which level of competence. All professionals tasks have been translated into relevant competences of a particular EQF level.

The supervision and training of career practitioners and the development of approaches to serve large numbers of clients, requires the **most advanced competence and knowledge in a particular field of action (EQF 8)**.

Challenging career problems require competences at EQF level 7, due to multi-faceted problems and unpredictable situations, where decisions will have a heavy impact and require the development of strategic approaches.

Basic career challenges can often be solved with the help of some more general advice. This needs to be informed by a **critical understanding of some important theories and principles** though, which is why many relevant competences relate to EQF 6.



Many professional tasks of **Career Specialists** require competences at EQF level 8. Therefore, it is recommended for career practitioners of this profile to undergo doctoral training or highly specialized postgraduate training.

Many professional tasks of **Career Professionals** require competences at EQF level 7. Therefore, it is recommended for Career Professionals to be trained in Postgraduate Certificate and Master Degree programs – at the lowest via specialized BA programs.

Many professional tasks of **Career Advisors** require competences at EQF level 6. Therefore, it is recommended to integrate training for this profile into degree programs for other professionals at Bachelor or Undergraduate level, or as a specialization at Master level.



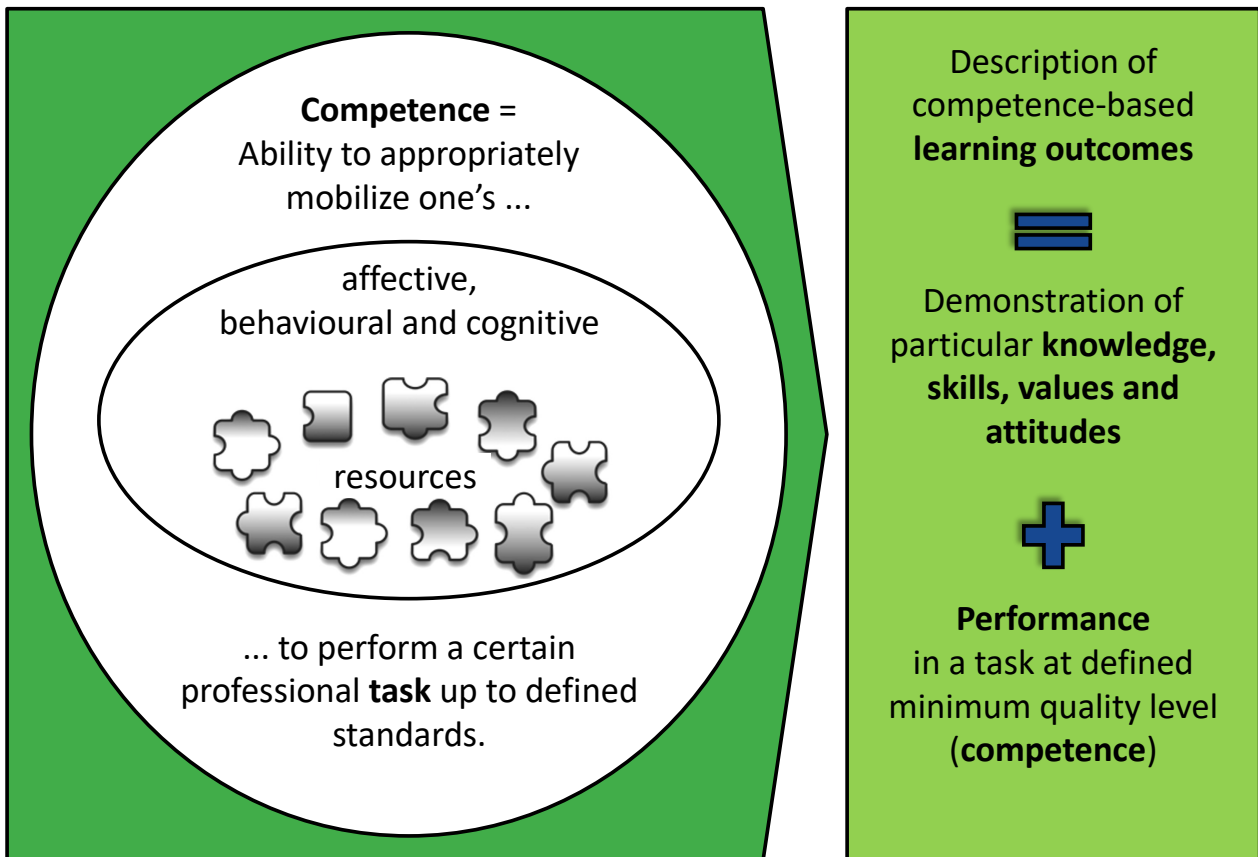
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Definition of Realistic Profiles and Competences

1. **For each of these three types of career practitioners, we have identified tasks, which they need to be able to perform**, as a basis for a performance-based definition of competences. Each of the tasks refers to one of the NICE Professional Roles. The question was: What do people primarily do when they fill this profile in the relevant NICE Professional Role? (see slide 8)
2. **For each task, we have defined a measurable competence standard**, using the Dublin/EQF descriptors and the Bloom taxonomy, as well as Moon's instructions for developing level descriptors, and located it in one of six "competence domains".
3. **In the definition, which tasks career practitioners should be able to perform, we had to consider the level of competence required for the particular tasks, based on the levels of the EQF.** Therefore, the definition of the three types strongly depended on the matching of particular tasks needed by clients of career services with necessary competences and their level according to the EQF (see slides 9-11).
4. **In the definition of the three types, it was additionally assured that the competences they need for their career services build on each other**, i.e. that Career Professionals need all of the competences, which Career Advisors need, but that no competences are defined for Career Advisors, which Career Professionals don't need.



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Principles for Defining a Competence

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Following Jenny Moon (2002a, p. 64), a competence definition always includes **three parts**. The first two of them refer to the *general activity (observable behaviour)*:

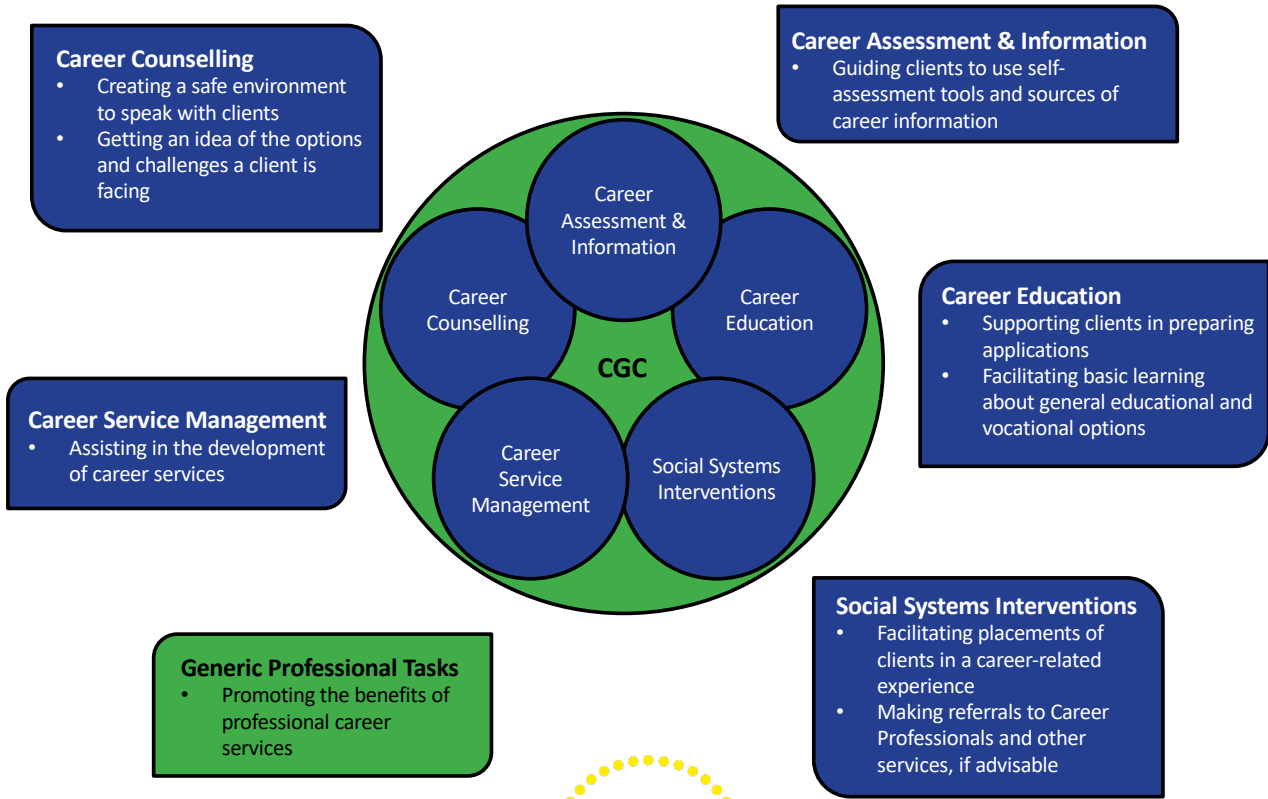
1. An **action verb** that describes *what a learner should be able to do* at the end of a study process;
2. A word or words that indicate *how a learner does this*. The question is how a professional function is actually performed?

The third part refers to the *defined quality level (standard)* of the performed activity. Here we need to describe a **minimum threshold**: the minimum acceptable behaviour for someone to be considered competent at the given level (Moon, 2002b, p. 10). Typically, minimum thresholds are defined by expressing the **context/ circumstances** of an activity and/or which **measurable outcomes** are required. Thus, the third component of a competence definition is:

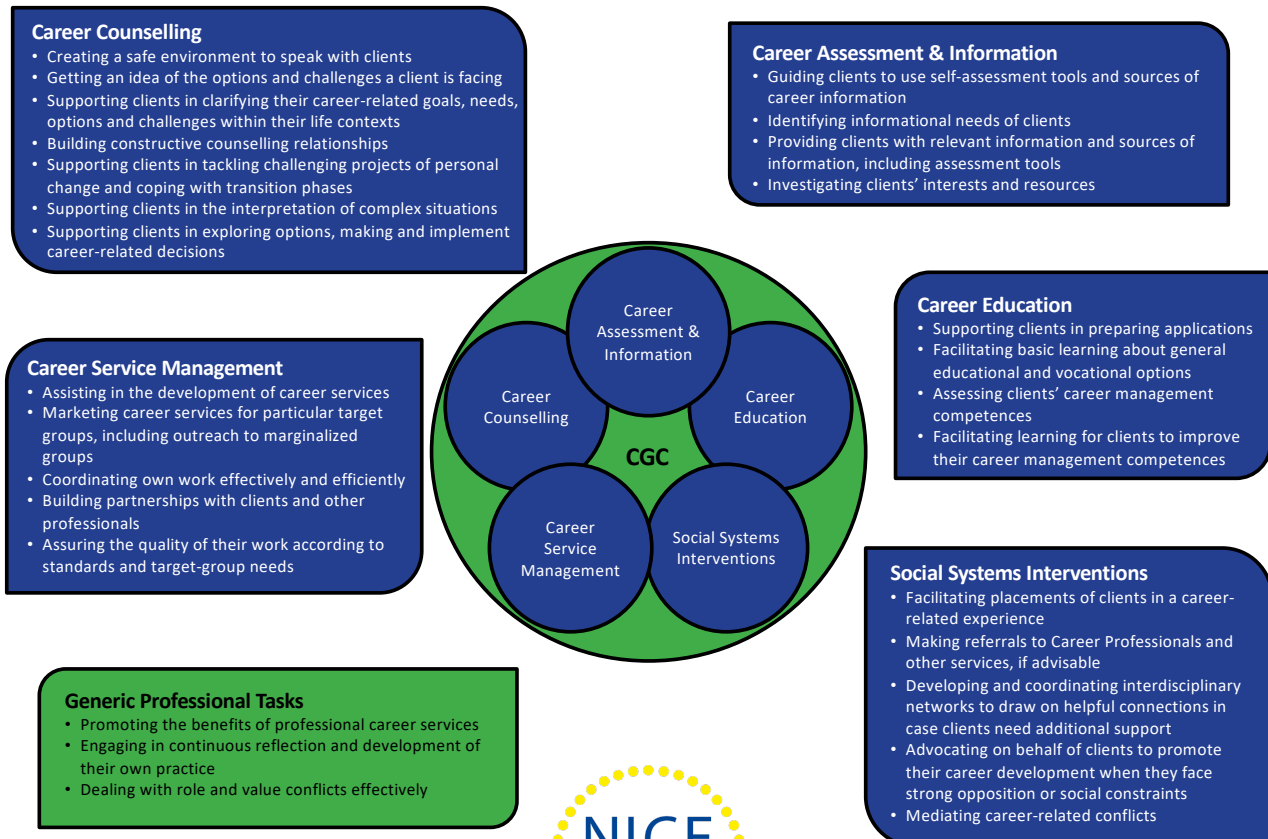
3. A word or words that indicate the *conditions under which the activity is performed* (e.g. expectations of clients, superiors, complexity of a problem etc.)



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Generic Professional Tasks (All Career Specialists)

- Training other career practitioners in the role of their expertise
- Conducting and disseminating research and developing fundamental theories
- Promoting specialized research and training in career guidance and counselling

Career Assessment & Information

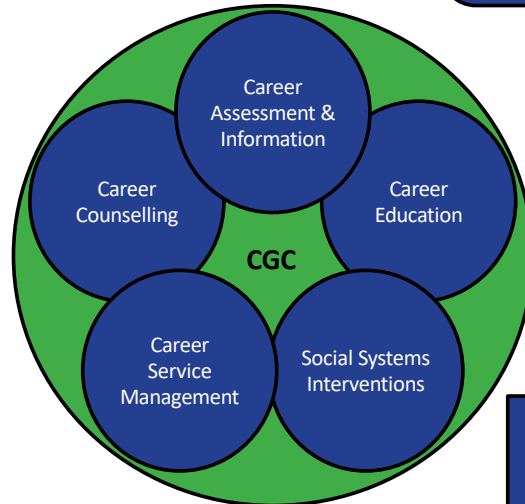
- Developing assessment approaches and instruments
- Developing career information systems and systemizing information on developments in labour markets, education and training systems

Career Counselling

- Developing, validating and sharing effective and innovative practices in career counselling
- Providing supervision to career practitioners

Career Service Management

- Managing career service centres, departments and networks and ensuring their sustainability
- Innovating career services and practices and developing their quality
- Evaluating the quality of career services for their further development



Career Education

- Developing tools to assess people's career management competences
- Improving existing and developing innovative career education approaches and training programmes

Social Systems Interventions

- Developing social systems (e.g. schools, enterprises) for them to provide better career development opportunities
- Coordinating career-related policies and cooperation schemes between policy-makers, career services and other stakeholders



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