

New Skills for New Futures Higher Education Guidance and Counselling Services in Sweden

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FEDORA Project
New Skills for Vocational Guidance in Higher Education in the European Union

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under the LEONARDO DA VINCI programme



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A country report of a study on
“New Skills for Vocational Guidance in Higher Education”
carried out under the auspices of FEDORA,
with the support of the Commission of the European Communities
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FOREWORD

This country report is part of larger study on “New Skills for Vocational Guidance in Higher Education”. The study has been carried out under the auspices of the European Forum for Student Guidance - Forum Européen de l’Orientation Académique (FEDORA). It has been funded by the European Commission as part of its LEONARDO DA VINCI programme.

FEDORA provides a platform for counsellors and advisers in higher education to meet and exchange their experiences. Its activities have enabled practitioners to gain insight into the wide range of guidance methods and activities in Europe, and to benefit from the richness of this diversity.

In particular, the FEDORA Summer Schools have provided opportunities for practitioners to learn from each other’s experience, and to relate this experience to recent theoretical developments. The Summer Schools revealed the strong demand for more systematic training in this field, and the potential benefits of responding to this demand at a European rather than purely national level. It was felt, however, that before planning any initiatives of this kind, a clearer map was needed of guidance and counselling services in higher education in Europe, and of current training provision for practitioners. A proposal for the study was presented to the European Commission, and the Commission agreed to fund it under its LEONARDO programme.

The study is of wide significance. For the first time, a comprehensive analysis is available of higher education guidance and counselling services across the whole of the European Union. In several cases, the study has provided the first such analysis even at national level. Because it is based on a common structure and methodology, the study also enables practices in each country to be contrasted with the others.

This report, together with the 15 other national reports on all Member States of the European Union and the synthesis report written by A.G. Watts and R. Van Esbroeck, is an important one both for FEDORA and for guidance and counselling in higher education in Europe.

This resource will be invaluable for international and national policy-makers, for higher education managers, and for guidance and counselling practitioners, as well as for employers in planning their higher education recruitment links. In particular, it enables the strengths and weaknesses of the different national systems to be identified, and is a powerful source of ideas on how the services in each country might be improved. It will also give clearer direction to the work of the European Commission, FEDORA and other European bodies in supporting such development.

Joachim Klaus
President, FEDORA

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Preface

The task of providing an up-to-date survey on the structure of guidance and counselling services at universities and colleges in Sweden, and of the roles of those who work in these services, as well as the training associated with such roles, is a great challenge. If the job is to be done in such a way that the results can be compared with equivalent structures and roles in the rest of the EU countries, the challenge is even greater. It is necessary to work within a very precise, pre-established framework without distorting the Swedish system. At the same time it is important to state the obvious in order to make it understandable for international readers. In addition, there are always difficulties with terminology. How should specific, Swedish concepts and expressions that reflect local conditions be translated into English so the terms used are a correct description of reality? On the other hand, will the Swedish readers be able to recognise themselves and their activities in the chosen English terminology? I am aware of the difficulties the task involves and I can only hope that both Swedish and international readers will benefit from the contents of this report.

I would like this report to contribute to the development of guidance and counselling in universities and colleges in Sweden. In my contacts with staff from different parts of Sweden, I discovered that they are very interested in how other guidance and counselling services are organised, how they work, and what activities they offer. Many of the personnel in all the services are interested in obtaining further training, acquiring new perspectives and developing new ways of doing the job.

This report would not have been possible without all the support and help I received from colleagues all over Sweden. I want to specially thank those that gave me their valuable comments throughout the writing process and who also read the final version of the manuscript. I want also to thank Camille Forslund for her invaluable help regarding language support.

Stockholm, September 1997

1. Summary

This report is the Swedish contribution to the FEDORA¹ project “New Skills for Vocational Guidance in Higher Education“. The project comprises all the EU countries and is funded by the European Commission under the LEONARDO programme. Its aims are:

1. To provide a up-to-date overview of the current structure of guidance and counselling services within higher education, the roles of those who work in these services, and the training for such roles.
2. To identify the extent to which training provisions exist in the European Union to equip those in guidance and counselling roles in higher education with the new skills they require to meet the changing needs of an increasingly diverse student body in a European labour market.
3. To provide a basepoint for exploring the extent to which postgraduate and post-experience training modules might be made available throughout Europe, possibly leading to a European Masters' degree in guidance and counselling in higher education.

The report follows a given structure which was proposed by the project's Operational Team and agreed on by the national correspondents. It is the same for all the country reports. Consequently, the chapters, tables and methodology follow strictly a given framework, which is necessary in order to make it possible to compare all the different country reports.

Both the collection of information and the processing of data have been done after consultation with staff from several universities and colleges. The final version has been monitored by a group of experts which includes student counsellors and staff at career centres.

It is important to mention that the quantitative data presented are only approximate since no systematic, complete collection of data was possible within the scope of this project and no such statistics are available for the whole country.

¹ FEDORA = Forum Européen de l'Orientation Académique.

Chapter 2 (Structures) comprises a short description of the Swedish higher education system and a more detailed description of the four most important - and most widespread - guidance and counselling services in universities and colleges in Sweden: *Centrala studievägledningen* (student counselling on a central level), *Institutionsstudievägledningen* (student counselling at departmental or faculty level), *Arbetslivscenter* (career counselling) and *Studenthälsan* (personal and social counselling, alongside physical treatment). Matters such as funding, administration, location, functions of the service, as well as links between the services, are dealt with. The presentation consists of a table (Table 1) with comments.

The activities carried out by *Arbetslivscenter* (the Swedish version of a career centre) are described in great detail and two of the three occupational roles selected for a more in-depth analysis in section 3.c (Detailed Profiles) are from these centres. It can be argued that the career centres receive too much space in this report, especially since only seven institutions have started such a centre. The reason why I have paid so much attention to the development of these centres is that I think that the future of guidance and counselling in Swedish higher education lies there: in other words, in the development of methods and strategies for creating links between students and employers, between higher education and work. I hope that the activities and projects presented in this report inspire other universities and colleges to start similar projects.

Chapter 3 consists of a description of the most important occupational roles within the four guidance and counselling services as well as of the work normally associated with those roles. The information is presented in two tables. Table 2 identifies the different occupational roles, the approximate number of staff employed and the focus of their activity, i.e. the balance between educational, vocational and personal guidance and counselling in their contact with their clients. Table 3 refers to the work done by each occupational role. Both tables are followed by comments. Moreover, this chapter contains a detailed profile of three occupational roles: a student counsellor on a central level, a career counsellor and an employment liaison officer. The choice of these three occupational roles is based on the fact that, in my opinion, they have a key position in the future development of guidance and counselling and also because they are an important target group for a European Masters' degree in Guidance and Counselling.

Chapter 4 describes the officers' training and qualifications and the opportunities for in-service training that are offered to these professional groups today. Two aspects are considered: minimum requirements for getting a position, and initial and in-service training.

2. Structures

The Swedish Higher Education System²

The Institutions of Higher Education

There are at present six multi-faculty universities and one agricultural university in Sweden. These universities together with the universities or institutes of technology and medicine have permanent allocations for research and postgraduate education. The more than 30 colleges have research links with the universities through special government grants. In addition to the state-run institutions of higher education, there are three semi-private ones: the Stockholm School of Economics, Chalmers University of Technology and the University College of Jönköping. There are also local-government-run colleges of health sciences for paramedical professions in all the six university regions (Stockholm, Uppsala, Linköping, Lund, Göteborg, Umeå), although some of them are merging with state-run institutions.

Thus, there is no distinction between university and non-university education in Sweden. This means that all higher education is conducted within the universities, institutes and colleges mentioned above. However, there are *long-term* programmes designed to train scientifically oriented professionals and to prepare them for working with research, and *short-term* programmes designed to train professionals capable of performing or supervising tasks with a high scientific content. There are also single-subject courses that enable students to put together their own courses. The single-subject courses are mostly theoretical and prepare for research in the student's major subject.

Number of Students

The total number of undergraduate students in 1994/95 was 270,000. There was a 17% increase in the number of applicants to higher education in the autumn of 1994 and approximately 210,000 individuals applied for places in study programmes or single-

² The following section is based on "Swedish Higher Education", an unpublished text produced by Marianne Hildebrand of the National Agency for Higher Education in January 1997. The text will be a chapter in the next edition of "Guide to Higher Education Systems and Qualifications in the European Union and EEA Countries".

subject courses. The number of applicants who have not previously studied at a university, approximately 100,000, has been constant over the past three years.

Higher Education Institutions and Number of Students Enrolled³

Students Enrolled	Number of Institutions	Number of Students
18 - 499 students	15 institutions	2,660 students
500 - 3,999 students	24 institutions	29,150 students
4,000 - 9,999 students	17 institutions	99,700 students
10,000 - 38,000 students	7 institutions	182,800 students
Total:	63 institutions	Total: 314,310 students

As the above figures show, there is a wide range of institutions of higher education: from very specialised, very small schools (the College of Opera, the College of Film, Radio, Television and Theatre) to huge, multi-faculty institutions such as Lund, Stockholm, Göteborg and Uppsala Universities, with several middle-sized colleges of health sciences and professional institutes in-between.

The number of students enrolled is only one of the aspects that make the institutions different from each other. The number of faculties, the kind of studies offered, the geographical location, and the academic tradition they rest upon, are other variables that explain the differences.

International Students

Sweden has a large number of students studying abroad as "free-movers" due to a liberal student aid policy. In 1994/95 approximately 18,000 (6.6 % of the total student population) studied abroad with student aid, 14,800 of whom did not take part in exchange programmes (5.5 %). Most of the students study in Europe, followed by North America. The USA, however, is the single most popular country. During 1994/95 2,302 Swedish students participated in the ERASMUS programme (0.85 % of the total student population). They spent an average of six months in another European country, primarily the UK, Germany, France, the Netherlands and Spain.

³ The classification is based on the figures presented in *Studenthandboken hösten 97 - våren 98* (1997), Högskoleverket, pp. 242 - 253. I used these figures since there are no official statistics available for the academic year 1996/97.

The most recent survey of foreign students studying in Sweden was made in 1993 and showed that about 5 per cent of the student body, 11,100 students, were foreign. This figure included immigrants and refugees, as well as visiting students. The number of visiting students was approximately 3,900, but only 1,500 visiting students spent a full year in Sweden. Most visiting students in Sweden study social sciences, engineering, and humanities.

Higher education in Sweden is free of charge for all students except for a small fee paid to the student union for different social services. Swedish students and immigrants holding a permanent residence permit have the right to student aid through government loans and grants.

Organisation of Studies

The academic year lasts 40 weeks and runs from the end of August to the beginning of June. An average of 40 study hours a week for full-time studies includes lectures, seminars, practical exercises and independent studies. During these 40 weeks, time is allotted for examination preparation and thesis writing.

Sweden has a system of credit points ("*poäng*"), where a term of successful full-time studies with a workload of 40 hours per week is equivalent to 20 points (30 ECTS credits), making one year worth 40 points (60 ECTS credits). A "major" is normally 60 points (90 ECTS credits) and includes a thesis.

For students who have regular jobs, single-subject courses in which only one subject is studied at a time, normally during a whole semester, are often offered in the evenings and on a part-time basis, or sometimes as "*distanskurser*", i.e. courses with very limited compulsory attendance (two or three days every three weeks) and lots of independent study. Part-time studies usually take twice as long to complete as full-time studies. The single-subject courses have served one of the objectives of the 1977 reform: to make higher education a forum for recurrent education. They also allow an individually chosen combination of studies to be an alternative to the set study programmes (a pre-decided, more rigid combination of courses). The students can choose whether they want to study for a full degree (e.g. "*filosofie kandidatexamen*") or only take courses giving a certificate ("*utbildningsbevis*").

Degrees Awarded

In the 1993 Swedish higher education reform, a new degree system was introduced where only the goals, the length of courses and the right to award degrees are decided by the Government. In this system there are two kinds of degrees: general and professional degrees.

General degrees comprise:

- "*högskoleexamen*" requiring 80 points (translated as 'Diploma of Higher Education in ...' or 'University Diploma in ...'), at least 2 years of study, 120 ECTS credits.
- "*kandidatexamen*" requiring 120 points and a thesis of 10 points in the major of 60 points (translated as 'Bachelor's degree'), at least 3 years of study, 180 ECTS credits.
- "*magisterexamen*" requiring 160 points, one thesis of 20 points or two theses of 10 points and 80 points in the major (translated as 'Master's degree'), at least 4 years of study, 240 ECTS credits.

Professional degrees are awarded, among others, in the fields of engineering, medicine and dentistry, agriculture, teacher training and fine arts. There are approximately 50 professional degrees, the majority of which take longer than 3 years to complete.

Postgraduate Education

Doctoral studies comprise a number of courses and a doctoral dissertation ("*doktorsavhandling*"). It should be possible to complete the doctoral degree ("*doktors-examen*") after 4 years of full-time study, but the average time is approximately 6 years. Each student is entitled to individual supervision and the dissertation is presented in public with an opponent (external examiner), often from abroad.

Apart from "*doktorsexamen*" (doctoral degree), there is a "*licentiatexamen*" (licentiate degree), a research degree with a shorter qualifying period: a minimum of 2 years. It consists of a number of courses and a dissertation shorter than the doctoral dissertation. The licentiate dissertation is given in a seminar with an opponent.

2.a Main Guidance and Counselling Services

This section deals with the four guidance and counselling service organisations which are typical for most universities and colleges in Sweden:

- *Centrala studievägledningen* (educational counselling at a central level);
- *Institutionsstudievägledningen* (educational counselling at departmental or faculty level);
- *Arbetslivscenter* (career centres);
- *Studenthälsan* (student health centres).

Depending on the size of the institution, the characteristics of the surrounding community and the student population, these services are organised in different ways. In this report an attempt is made to reflect the most significant features of each of these services. However, a description of the great diversity of forms present in the institutions of higher education is not possible. The comments to Table 1 (see section 2.b below) are intended to partially compensate for the unavoidable generalisations.

2.a.1 Table 1

Table 1 presents the four guidance and counselling organisations mentioned above. The following aspects are considered: funding and administrative control, location, extent to which the services exist in the institutions of higher education in Sweden, degree of specialization of the staff and target groups. The degree of specialization of the staff is described under the column "Level"⁴. The figures indicate whether the service is :

1 = First-in-line: part of the formal teaching function.

2 = Second-in-line: linked to the formal teaching function, but with some degree of specialization.

3 = Third-in-line: separated from the formal teaching function and offered by specialists.

See next page.

⁴ See Van Esbroeck, 1997 and Van Esbroeck & Watts, 1997.

Table 1 : Main Guidance and Counselling Services - Structure and Content

Services	Funding/administrative Control	Location	Extent	Level	Target group
Educational Counselling at a Central Level (<i>Centrala studievägledning</i>)	funded and controlled by each university or college	always on campus	all universities and most colleges	3	prospective and enrolled students, general public
Educational Counselling at Departmental or Faculty Level (<i>Institutionstudievägledning</i>)	funded and controlled by each university or college	always on campus	all universities and most colleges	2	prospective and enrolled students
Career Centre (<i>Arbetslivscenter</i>)	funded by the universities/colleges, in some cases also by the County Labour Board, the Employment Office or other foundations, and controlled by the universities.*	always on campus	some universities and a few colleges	3	only enrolled students
Student Health Centre (<i>Studenthälsan</i>)	funded and controlled by the universities/colleges and in some cases also the student unions	on or off campus	all universities and most colleges	3	only enrolled students

Notes:

* In some career centres, some members of the staff are paid by the County Labour Board (*LAN = Länsarbetsnämnden*), the Employment Office (*AF = Arbetsförmedlingen*) and other foundations.

2.b Commentary

2.b.1 Guidance and Counselling According to the Higher Education Ordinance

The Higher Education Ordinance states that "students shall be granted access to educational and career counselling. It is the responsibility of the institutions of higher education to provide necessary information concerning higher education for those planning to pursue undergraduate studies".⁵

The ordinance does not specify in which way or to what extent the service should be offered; each institution is free to decide how to organise the guidance and counselling services and what resources to allocate.

2.b.2 No Organisational Links Between the Services

The four services/organisations mentioned in Table 1 work independently of each other, although spontaneous interactions between the members of the staff working in them occur regularly. They consult each other and regularly refer students to each other.

The student counsellors at a central level and the student counsellors working in the university departments co-operate and serve each other. They refer students to one another and have common interests regarding, for instance, up-to-date information on educational opportunities and specialised training in different aspects of their profession.

The collaboration between the student counsellors and the staff working at the career centres is not equally well developed. The organisations are still finding forms for working together towards a common goal. It is important to keep in mind that the career centres are a very recent phenomena in Sweden (some of them started in 1997).

The student health centres are independent bodies although most of them are totally financed by the universities and colleges. Until 1 July 1992, the student health centres were funded by the government and controlled by the student unions.⁶

⁵ Swedish Statute Book, SFS 1996:984, Chapter 7, § 3, my own translation.

⁶ *Ny huvudman för studenthälsovården* (1994), *SFS-rapport 1994:1*, pp. 2-4.

In smaller towns where there is no student health centre, the colleges have a social worker⁷ or a nurse employed as part of the staff.

The student counsellors at central and departmental level gather every year at a national conference which rotates between different universities and colleges. A reference group consisting of student counsellors from ten higher education institutions draws up the guidelines for the conference and decides which institution will host the following one.

There is also a new national network for counsellors involved in labour market activities. It is still finding its appropriate form.

The social workers at the student health centres and the staff working with personal guidance and counselling at institutions of higher education also have national meetings to share experiences and discuss relevant matters connected to their job.

A non-profit association, the Swedish Counsellor Association (*Sveriges vägledarförening*), includes educational and career counsellors (*studie- och yrkesvägledare*) working in secondary schools, adult education, employment offices and at higher education institutions. This association has arranged a yearly conference since it started in 1975.

There is a Nordic network of administrators within higher education: "*Det nordiska universitetsadministratörssamarbete*" (NUAS, the Nordic Co-operation of University Administrators, my own translation). This organisation held its first seminar in 1976 and today consists of a directory, a secretariat and ten "planning groups", one of which is the group for those working with guidance and counselling. A series of reports from the periodic conferences for student counsellors and study administrators have been published.⁸ Conferences for different target groups (student counsellors and credit-transfer officers among others) are arranged regularly.

A number of student counsellors also participate in international associations which, in slightly different ways, focus on guidance and counselling: FEDORA (Forum Européen de l'Orientation Académique), IAEVG (International Association of Educational and Vocational Guidance) and EAIE (European Association for International Education).

Social worker is my English translation of the occupational role which in Swedish is called '*studentkurator*' or '*konsulent*'. A '*studentkurator*' or '*konsulent*' working at Swedish universities and colleges is normally a social worker who specialises in student matters. *Det nordiska universitetsadministratörssamarbetet* (1996), p 24.

2.b.3 Public Funding Only

The four services mentioned in Table 1 are publicly funded and controlled by the universities or colleges concerned. In some institutions, the County Labour Board⁹ and the Employment Offices¹⁰ are involved in the funding of the career centres. Educational counselling as well as all the services offered at the career centres are free of charge. The services offered by the student health centres are normally financed by the universities although 30 % of the student health centres are jointly financed by the university and the student union.¹¹ At present most of the centres are controlled by the universities. The rest are either controlled by the student union, by a joint venture between the university/college and the student union or they function on a contract basis. Only enrolled, regular students are entitled to this service and small fees are charged for some of the services.

In Sweden there are no private or publicly funded guidance and counselling services for students apart from those mentioned above.¹²

2.b.4 Specialised Functions for Each Service

The name of each service indicates whether the main focus of their attention is on educational, vocational or personal matters respectively. The first two services deal mostly with educational guidance and counselling, the career centres concentrate on the vocational aspects and the labour market, and the staff at the student health centres specialise in personal and social counselling. Depending on the situation of the particular student and on the staff's personal qualification and experience, the personnel at all the services combine educational, vocational and personal guidance and counselling, in varying proportions.

2.b.5 Target groups

The main groups seeking educational counselling at *Centrala studievägledningen* are: secondary-school graduates, university students, students from abroad, adults interested in further education, and unemployed people looking for further qualification. In short, a wide range of clients: prospective students, on-course students (students registered at the institution), and the general public.¹³

⁹ The English translation for LAN = *Länsarbetsnämnden*.

¹⁰ The English translation for AF = *arbetsförmedlingen*.

¹¹ *Ny huvudman för studenthälsovården* (1994), *SFS-rapport 1994:1*, p. 8.

¹² During the last few years, some consulting firms have been established in Sweden. As far as I know, they specialise in career planning for adults.

¹³ Secondary-school study counsellors can also be mentioned as one of the target groups, although they are not "clients". A regular contact with this professional group is a

At a departmental level, the target groups are, firstly, students registered at that particular department and, secondly, prospective students interested in that specific subject.

The career centres deal only with enrolled students and mainly those in their final year. Graduate students are expected to contact the employment offices in their town.

The student health centres have enrolled students as their sole target group. To be entitled to this service, the students have to be registered as regular students.

2.b.6 Target Groups with Special Needs

All institutions of higher education under the Ministry of Education and Science have a person responsible for students with disabilities and special needs. Most of these are student counsellors with a special interest in and knowledge of the needs of this particular group of students.

The applicant with special needs indicates on the application form that he/she has a disability. The application is then processed according to special criteria. Most applicants in Sweden take the Swedish scholastic aptitude test ("*Högskoleprovet*") since competition is usually very keen. Visually impaired applicants can choose to have their test in Braille or on cassette, and dyslexic applicants can have theirs in multimedia. When students with disabilities are admitted, special assistance is offered - for example, in the form of technical equipment, personal assistants, or individual oral examinations instead of written ones.

In addition, there is a national Co-ordinator for Students with Disabilities, whose main task is to distribute earmarked government funds between all the institutions of higher education, to promote the development of this service, and to ensure that the general policies are followed all over the country.

Economically disadvantaged students, in the sense of individuals who cannot study because of lack of financial means, do not exist in Sweden. All higher education is free of charge and all citizens, including immigrants with a permanent residence permit, are entitled to student aid (consisting of a small grant and a student loan) for a maximum of six years, on the condition that they produce satisfactory study results.

The number of mature students attending Swedish institutions of higher education is rather large compared to other countries. The average age of the student population fluctuates between 26 and 28 years in most universities and colleges. This can be explained by the fact that Sweden has offered part-time, evening courses for people working full-time since the late 60s. On the other hand, until the end of the 80s, the labour market gave young people "tired of studying" the possibility of taking a job for a few years and applying to higher education later. Consequently, staff within all the services have always dealt with this group of students and there are no special arrangements for them.

Ethnic-minority students have been increasing steadily during the last few decades in higher education institutions. Sweden has received thousands of refugees from different parts of the world and a great number of these individuals are university students or graduates. A slightly different "minority" group deserves to be mentioned: "the Swedes abroad" (*utlandssvenskar*), i.e. Swedish children who have been brought up abroad and who have studied in international schools. They are sometimes culturally "foreigners" and need special attention, both as prospective students and during the induction period. Increasing student mobility within the Nordic countries, Europe and some non-Nordic countries has made the student population in Sweden more international than before. It is not possible though to present accurate figures regarding the total numbers or the country of origin of international students since the Swedish law does not allow registering individuals according to nationality. In general, it can be said that exchange students come mostly from the European countries and that foreign students living permanently in Sweden come mostly from Finland and several non-European countries. The issues involved in guidance and counselling differ for these two groups. Exchange students need mostly practical information about the study system, how to enrol at the university, and how to arrange accommodation, while "immigrant" students need, for instance, information regarding supplementary studies at schools for adult education, evaluation of foreign degrees, and counselling for job opportunities.

The guidance and counselling services normally make no special provision for international students. Most advisers have not received any special training for dealing with this group. The professionalism of the service offered to international students is totally dependent on the counsellor's interest, personal background, language proficiency and enthusiasm. This situation makes the quality of this service very uneven across the country.

Consequently, there is a clear need for professional training in the area of intercultural communication and related fields.

2.b.7 Trends and Changes

During the last few years, the counsellors in higher education have experienced changes in several areas. Some examples are given below:

- **Greater Number of Applicants per Vacancy**

Due partly to the high rate of unemployment and partly to an increased awareness among young people that higher educational qualifications may be required in the future, the number of applicants to undergraduate studies has increased constantly during the last five years.

- **Younger Student Population**

A characteristic feature of the Swedish student population since the early seventies has been its relatively high age. Mature students have regularly attended evening courses to get further qualifications. This situation seems to be changing. One explanation is the fact that fewer evening courses are being offered (due to cuts in the institutions' budgets), and that greater numbers of secondary-school graduates apply to the university directly after finishing school because there are no jobs immediately available for them.

- **More Degrees Awarded**

More acute competition in the graduate labour market acts as an effective incentive for students to get their degrees. Some years ago, many students did not bother to get a degree. They just studied for a couple of years and got jobs anyway.

- **More Explicit Concern about the Connection between Educational Choices and the Labour Market**

A greater awareness regarding the need for the "right" qualifications in order to get a job is increasing the demand for competent information and guidance in this area, especially when the students want to discuss how to combine courses towards a degree.

- **More Unemployed Adults Looking for Educational Alternatives**

More and more unemployed middle-aged people visit the student counsellors at a central level and the personnel at the career centres and ask for an education that can "lead to a job" in the future.

- **Increasing Number of Swedish Students Wanting to Study Abroad**

Inquiries on studying abroad have grown steadily during the nineties. Not only enrolled students but even secondary-school graduates and young people in general ask for information about short courses or complete educational programmes abroad.

- **Exchange Students from All Over the World Coming to Sweden**

Swedish universities and colleges have student exchange agreements with several countries inside and outside the EU. This leads to a greater number of exchange students coming to Sweden every year. Some of them want to stay in Sweden and take further courses. They need special information on how to become regular students.

- **Increasing Number of Databases**

Students can search for educational alternatives and job opportunities in several national and international databases. The enormous amount of information contained in those databases has to be selected and processed in some way. Students often turn to student counsellors for help with this.

3. Roles and Tasks

In the following pages, the main occupational roles within the four guidance and counselling services mentioned above will be described. Attention will be paid to the number of staff, the focus of their activity and the work involved in each role.

The ratings presented in Tables 2 and 3 below were developed by a small group of expert representatives of the different services (the country correspondent included). They processed the information received from 50 staff members working at different services in Sweden and agreed on the ratings that appear on the tables. The selection of experts took into consideration the size, location and kind of institution where they work (several faculties/ few faculties), and the degree of development of the service.

3.a Tables

In order to make possible a comparison between the EU countries, the description of roles and tasks is presented in tables which follow a standard pattern.

3.a.1 Table 2

Table 2 shows the main occupational roles included in the four services presented in the previous section. Since the reality is rather complex and cannot be described by means of a few columns in a table, there is no exact correspondence between every single Swedish institution of higher education and the data compiled in Table 2.

The figures under the column "Focus" express the relative weight of educational, vocational and personal counselling in each occupational role. This concept is part of the holistic student centred guidance model, which is being used in this survey as a descriptive model.¹⁴ A total of seven points are allocated across the following three categories:

Educational (E): guidance on choices of educational options and learner support.

Vocational (V): guidance on choices of, and placement into, occupations and work roles.

Personal (P): guidance and counselling on personal and social issues.

¹⁴ See Van Esbroeck, 1997 and Van Esbroeck & Watts, 1997.

The allocation of the seven points is based upon a combination of the following variables: time spent, and how the focus is perceived by the counsellor, by the client and by the institution.

As mentioned above, the ratings come from discussions with personnel in each of the services. Counsellors in the same occupational role gave different ratings on "focus". There was a larger discrepancy than expected. A possible explanation for this is that individuals within the same service carry out their job in different ways, combined with the fact that people's perceptions of what "educational", "vocational" and "personal" counselling involve is rather subjective. The figures presented under "Focus" in Table 2 are the ratings given by the greatest number of individuals within each role.

See next page.

Table 2 : Main Occupational Roles and Focus

Service	Occupational Roles	Number	Focus		
			E	V	P
Educational Counselling at a Central Level (<i>Centrala studievägledning</i>)	Director/ <i>Avdelningsdirektör</i>	(16)	4	2	1
	Student Counsellor/ <i>Studievägledare</i>	(90)	4	2	1
	Student Counsellor for Learner Support <i>Studievägledare för studievänor</i>	(4)	4	0	3
	Student Counsellor for Career Planning <i>Studievägledare för karriärplanering</i>	(10)	2	4	1
	Student Counsellor for Disabled Students <i>Studievägledare för handikappade studenter</i>	(9)	3	2	2
	Student Counsellor <i>Institutionssstudievägledare</i>	(530)	4	1	2
Educational Counselling at Departmental or Faculty Level (<i>Institutionssstudievägledning</i>)	Director/ <i>Co-ordinator</i>	(7)	2	3	2
	Project leader/ <i>Samordnare</i>	(4)	2	3	2
	Career Counsellor/ <i>Vägledare</i>	(15)	1	5	1
	Employment Liaison Officer <i>Arbetsmarknadsansvarig</i>	(4)	3	3	1
	Information Officer <i>Informator</i>	(7)	-	-	-
	Social worker/ <i>Studentkurator, konsulent</i>	(33)	1	0	6
Student Health Centre (<i>Studenthälsan</i>)	Medical Doctor/ <i>Läkare</i>	(15)	0	1	6
	Nurse/ <i>Sjuksköterska</i>	(50)	1	0	6
	Psychologist/ <i>Psykolog</i>	(9)	2	0	5
	Psychiatrist/ <i>Psykiater</i>	(5)	0	0	7

Notes:

* The director is usually not involved in guidance and counselling activities. Therefore, no figures are given under "Focus".

3.a.2 Table 3

Table 3, which shows the work done in the occupational roles identified in Table 2, was constructed from estimates presented by a number of staff and discussed later by a group of experts representing the different roles (the country correspondent included).

Each column in Table 3 (A to U) represents a task or a group of related tasks. The classification of tasks was created by Tony Watts and Raoul Van Esbroeck, both members of the FEDORA project's Operational Team.¹⁵ The ratings are based on a 0-4 scale and reflect the amount of time devoted to each task and how important it is considered to be in each occupational role:

- 4 = major involvement
- 3 = considerable involvement
- 2 = some involvement
- 1 = minor involvement
- 0 = no involvement

1. **General management:** general administrative management, including service/ programme planning and evaluation. This includes managing guidance activities within the institutional setting, and general liaison with external bodies (e.g. education institutions, guidance agencies, social services, official bodies, and employers). (A)
2. **Information management:** the collection, production and display of information in relation to education and training opportunities, and/or careers, occupations and the labour market. (B)
3. **Information-giving:** providing relevant information to individuals or groups in relation to education and training opportunities, and/or careers, occupations and the labour market. (C)
4. **Counselling:** helping clients to explore their own thoughts and feelings about their present situation, about the options open to them, and about the consequences of each option.

¹⁵ See Watts & Van Esbroeck, 1997.

4.1. **Short-term individual counselling:** helping clients on a one-to-one basis in a single or limited number of sessions. (D)

4.2. **Long-term individual counselling:** as 4.1 but representing a planned programme over a longer period and more sessions. (E)

4.3. **Short-term group counselling:** as 4.1 but on a group basis. Tends to be in smaller groups than teaching, to be composed of individuals who share some common characteristics, to focus on their expressed needs rather than on predetermined learning aims, and to be organised to encourage active participation by all the individuals involved. (F)

4.4. **Long-term group counselling:** as 4.3 but representing a planned programme over a longer period and more sessions. (G)

4.5. **Facilitating self-help groups:** encouraging individuals to form themselves into ongoing groups to share experiences and to support each other. (H)

5. **Advice:** making suggestions based on the helper's own knowledge and experience and on assessment results. (I)

6. **Assessment:** making judgements about individuals' suitability for certain options, based on inventories, tests, observations, interviews, etc.

6.1. **Facilitate self-assessment:** supporting individuals in choosing their own assessment devices and drawing conclusions from them. (J)

6.2. **Diagnostic assessment:** selecting assessment devices, interpreting the results and making appropriate recommendations. (K)

7. **Referral:** referring individuals to service better equipped to deal with their problem. (L)

8. **Teaching:** programmes of planned experiences, designed to develop the skills, concepts and knowledge that will help individuals to manage their educational, vocational and personal development. (M)

9. Placement: into education or training programmes, and/or into employment.

9.1. **Liaison with providers:** liaison with employers and with education and training providers to obtain information on the opportunities they offer. (N)

9.2. **Coaching:** helping individuals to present themselves effectively (on application forms and in interviews etc.). (O)

9.3. **Vacancy information:** providing individuals with information on particular vacancies in education, training or employment. (P)

9.4. **Pre-selection:** pre-selecting individuals for particular vacancies in education, training or employment. (Q)

10. **Advocacy:** negotiating directly with institutions or agencies, within and/or outside own institution, on behalf of individuals, especially those for whom there may be particular barriers to access. (R)

11. **Supporting other guidance sources:** providing training sessions and disseminating information materials to teaching staff and other guidance providers. (S)

12. **Feedback to providers:** collecting information on the unmet needs of particular groups, and encouraging providers of opportunities to respond by adapting and extending their provision. (T)

13. **Follow-up:** contacting former clients to see what has happened to them. Its purposes may include data for use with subsequent clients, evaluating the effectiveness of the guidance given, and offering further support needed. (U)

It is important to point out that the work included in the above classification can be interpreted differently by different individuals. It can also have a different meaning in different situations. The contents and implications of the terms vary according to the prevalent conditions. Words can never be isolated from their social context. In this kind of international project the risk of misinterpreting and distorting reality is considerable.

The term "placement officer" illustrates this. In Swedish, the equivalent term would be "*platsförmedlare*". However, in some countries a placement officer may actively look for

job or trainee vacancies, assess the students' qualifications, do the pre-selection and even advocate on behalf of the student. A Swedish "*platsförmedlare*" collects all kinds of information about job vacancies, displays it, make suggestions to some individuals about specific jobs, but leaves the rest in the students' hands. The officer never takes responsibility for the student's choice, nor for the practical aspects of the job application. Advocacy is very rare, and indeed almost non-existent, in higher education in Sweden.

The figures in Table 3 have thus to be seen as general trends or approximations more than as specific measures of the work done within each role. As in Table 2, when discrepancies emerged between the ratings given by personnel in the same occupational role, the rating given by most individuals is the one presented in the table.

See next page.

Table 3 : Tasks Performed in the Main Occupational Roles

Occupational Roles	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	
Director	4	3	4	4	4	1	4	1	0	2	2	0	3	1	1	2	2	2	0	2	1	1
Student Counsellor (at a Central Level)	2	2	4	4	4	1	0	0	1	3	0	3	0	1	1	2	0	1	1	1	0	
Student Counsellor for Learner Support	3	3	4	4	4	2	4	2	1	3	1	0	2	4	1	4	1	0	0	1	0	1
Student Counsellor for Career Planning	4	3	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	2	2	2	2	0	2	1	2	
Student Counsellor for Disabled Students	4	2	3	2	2	3	2	2	2	1	0	2	1	1	1	1	3	3	3	3	2	
Student Counsellor (at Departmental Level)	3	3	3	4	1	1	1	1	3	0	1	2	1	3	2	3	1	2	2	1	1	
Director/Co-ordinator	4	2	3	3	0	1	0	0	3	1	1	2	2	4	3	2	0	0	2	1	1	
Career Counsellor	3	2	2	4	0	0	0	0	4	3	0	2	3	2	4	3	0	0	0	0	0	
Employment Liaison Officer	3	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	1	0	4	2	4	0	0	0	1	1	
Information Officer	1	4	2	2	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	3	0	2	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	
Director *																						
Social worker	1	1	1	4	4	2	1	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	1	0	0	2	1	0	1	
Medical Doctor *																						
Nurse *																						
Psychologist	1	1	1	4	3	3	3	1	2	1	4	1	3	3	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	
Psychiatrist	1	0	0	4	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	

Notes:

* No ratings are given for the directors, medical doctors or nurses at the student health centres because their jobs do not include guidance and counselling.

3.b Commentary

3.b.1 The Services

Educational Counselling at a Central Level - *Centrala studievägledningen*

The student counsellors working at a central level are placed in different kinds of organisations: *Centrala studievägledningen*, *Allmän studievägledning*, *StudentCentrum*, *Studentservice* are the most common names of this service. The counsellors are employed by the universities or colleges and have their facilities on campus. In some cases the Educational Counselling Service is a separate unit that deals exclusively with guidance and counselling; in other cases, and in spite of the fact that the staff are guidance and counselling specialists, the student counsellors deal simultaneously with other administrative work. Examples of these other activities are: credential evaluation, processing application forms (this does not include the selection of applicants), awarding of degrees and administration of academic aptitude tests. In very small institutions one person may perform several functions, while in very large universities the counsellors can be specialised and work full-time with, for instance, disabled students or learner support programmes.

Educational Counselling at Departmental or Faculty Level -

Institutionsstudievägledning

The student counsellors are employed by the departments in many different ways. Sometimes they are explicitly appointed as student counsellors and work full-time as such. In other departments, the function rotates among doctoral students, paid on an hourly basis, who devote one or two hours a week to guidance and counselling as a part of their assignment. There are also enormous variations between the departments regarding the student ratios and the level of professionalism in guidance and counselling skills.

At the university departments the student counsellors often combine guidance with administrative work and sometimes with teaching or research. A number of student counsellors are also responsible for international matters in their department, mainly student exchange programmes.

The student counsellors in the departments are usually experts in their subject, i.e. they often have a "major" in the subject concerned. They are responsible for following up the

students and serve as a bridge between the students and the academic staff. They offer qualified advice in their specific field of study and guidance on job opportunities regarding their particular branch.

Career Centres - *Arbetslivscenter*¹⁶

With the exception of Stockholm University, which founded *Arbetsforum* (Job Forum) in 1984 and changed it to "*Arbetsforum - Career Center*" in 1996, the career centres are a very recent phenomena in Sweden.

Career guidance, to the extent it existed at all in universities and colleges, was until 1996 mostly the concern of the student counsellors. Indeed, as defined in Sweden, the role of the student counsellor includes both educational guidance and a general orientation on the usefulness of different forms of education for different occupations, as well as information about future trends in the labour market. The Swedish student counsellor is also expected to prepare students for the transition from the academic world to work.¹⁷

Since the labour market in Sweden for most university graduates has been very good during the last few decades the student counsellors have not put much energy into vocational aspects when discussing educational options with students. The amount and quality of the guidance offered regarding job opportunities was very much dependent on the counsellor's personal interest, background and competence, and they rarely had direct contact with employers.

The Swedish labour market, however, became very difficult for university graduates in the beginning of the 1990s. According to statistics produced by SACO, the Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations, 18% of recently graduated university students under 30 years of age were unemployed in June 1995.¹⁸ Due to this situation, it is increasingly important to relate educational choices to the future needs of the labour market.

¹⁶ I use the Swedish term "*Arbetslivscenter*" throughout the report although I am aware that, in some institutions, the centres have other names: *Knutpunkten - mötesplats yrkesliv högskola* or *Arbetsforum - Career Center*.

¹⁷ *Yrkesorientering och arbetsmarknadsfrågor* (1994), *Rapport från StudentCentrum*, Linköpings universitet, p. 1.

¹⁸ *Projekt - Arbetslivcenter* (1996) *Rapport från StudentCentrum*, Linköpings universitet.

The growing unemployment of university graduates made the institutions of higher education receptive to the Swedish Confederation of Professional Associations' suggestion to start career centres. The aim was to create a meeting place for students and employers and to open new possibilities for the students to get adequate, qualified jobs or to start their own businesses after graduation.

At present (September 1997), seven career centres have started and others are in the planning stage. The universities/colleges and, to some extent, the Employment Office (*Arbetsförmedlingen*), the County Labour Board (*Länsarbetsnämnden*) and other independent foundations are financing these centres, often on a "provisional" basis. Hopefully, after evaluation, all the career centres will become permanent. The centres are managed by the universities in close co-operation with the County Labour Board, the Employment Office, the student union and some professional associations. Normally they are located in the central university administration.

The staff working at these centres have a wide spectrum of professional backgrounds: experienced career counsellors (*yrkesvägledare*) financed by the Employment Office, former student counsellors with a special interest in career guidance, young unemployed university graduates who are paid through the employment offices, placement staff paid by the Employment Office, members of the student union and representatives from professional associations.

Career centres offer continuous information about, for example, job vacancies, summer jobs, trainee vacancies and companies/organisations willing to help and support students while they do their thesis work. In most career centres there are computers connected to the Internet and the students have access to several databases, information on job vacancies, support programmes for seeking jobs, and some counselling programmes. The career centres also have a library containing a wide variety of job-seeking material, and up-to-date information on jobs, jobs abroad, how to start a business etc.

Besides information about the labour market, career centres offer individual counselling on educational and career choices and support regarding job applications. Due to limited personnel resources, some centres only offer individual career counselling on a very small scale.

To reach larger groups of students, the career centres arrange different events (*program-verksamhet*). The following activities are examples of what some career centres have organised during the past year:

- "Job Seeking Seminars" (*Jobbsökarkurs*) in which groups of students receive advice and support regarding their job applications (how to write a CV, how to present oneself in a letter, how to succeed in an employment interview). These seminars are conducted by employment placement staff, personnel from companies or organisations who tell the students about the employment procedures they use, representatives from professional associations and others.
- "Entrepreneurship - Start-Your-Own-Business Seminars" in which the students receive information about what is required for starting a successful company. Individual consultations are held at these seminars so that students can discuss their own ideas with a business consultant.
- A lecture series with special guests such as personnel managers from public organisations and private companies or professionals working in different branches. Alumni often return to talk about their jobs - the specific job they do and the way they got it. The lectures are often targeted towards a particular professional group: for example, "The Physiotherapists' Labour Market", "Alternative Career Paths for Lawyers", "What You Need in Order to Work in Today's World of Finance", "Career Development for Art Graduates", or special interest areas like "Seeking a Job Abroad", "Working with Environmental Protection", and "The Future Labour Market in the Baltic Countries".
- "Career Days" are either arranged by the student union and supported by the career centre or are arranged by both working in close co-operation. On Career Days representatives from a number of companies/organisations visit the campus and present their companies or organisations in a direct dialogue with the students. Usually included is a series of seminars in which different aspects of work are discussed.
- Mentorship projects. Although they differ slightly in form, all mentorship projects aim at bringing professionals and senior students in a certain field together for a mutual exchange. The students benefit from the professionals' experience and contact net, while the established professionals receive an input of new knowledge, fresh insights and a youthful perspective on their occupational role.¹⁹

¹⁹ *Mentorprojekt för PAO-programmets studenter vid Sociologiska institutionen, projektskiss*

- “The Thesis Job Pool“ (*Exjobbpoolen*) is a database of subjects that can be treated in thesis/diploma work. Nine universities and colleges collaborate in this project.²⁰ Small and middle-sized companies/organisations are offered the chance to present research areas or problems they would like to address but for which they cannot allocate internal resources. The companies give these to the employment liaison officers who put them into the database according to certain criteria. The students then look for thesis subjects in the database. When they find something interesting, they contact the company or organisation directly, as well as the supervisor in their department. When all the parties agree, the thesis work “on site“ starts.²¹ Through this method the students get work experience at the right level of qualification. They write a thesis about “reality”, and after finishing their thesis work they may obtain a reliable reference. The database “*Exjobbpoolen*“ can be found on the Internet and students from Germany and Spain have written their theses in Sweden after consulting it.

Besides the above activities, all of which have students as their target group, the career centres turn to companies and organisations in the area and offer them the chance to recruit students on campus. The companies send job vacancies directly to the career centre and then, with the help of the career centre staff, they meet groups of interested students and make individual appointments with the ones they wish to interview.

It is important to point out that most universities and colleges lack career centres. In these cases, linking students and employers together is usually carried out by student unions and student associations (Law Students Association, Engineering Students Association, Humanity Students Association, Business Students Association, to name but a few).

Student Health Centres - *Studenthälsan*

This service has existed in Sweden since the 60s. Until 1992, it was controlled by the student unions. Since then the universities and colleges have gradually taken over the financial responsibility and control. A special directive for this service was written into the

(1997), *Arbetsforum-Career Center*, Stockholm University.

²⁰ The universities and colleges that do not participate in the “*Exjobbpoolen*“ also offer students the chance to write their thesis in co-operation with a company or organisation, but they cannot add thesis subjects to the database.

²¹ A survey carried out by the career centre at *Högskolan i Örebro* showed that 80% of the students were interested in preparing their thesis work at a company or organisation. This confirmed the importance of developing this activity at more universities and colleges. The survey is cited in Lindmark, K. (1996) *Arbetslivscenter vid Högskolan i Jönköping*, p. 5.

Higher Education Ordinance in 1996: "The institutions of higher education are responsible for offering students access to health care, especially preventive care, aimed at strengthening students' physical and mental health".²²

Consequently, the student health centres' main concern is the students' physical and mental well-being. Here the emphasis is on preventive measures and treatment as opposed to pure counselling. All kinds of ailments that stem from being a student are treated by experienced personnel. Due to the expert knowledge involved, this service is a complement to other public or private health care services but not an exchangeable alternative.²³

Most of the staff at these centres are social workers (in Swedish, *studentkuratorer* or *konsulenter*, i.e. staff trained as social workers and with student-related matters as their specialization) or nurses, although in big university towns the service also includes medical doctors, psychologists and psychiatrists. In some towns student priests are part of the student health centre although they are often employed by the Swedish church.²⁴ In cities where the larger universities are located, student priests have an organisation of their own. Besides the services offered by the student health centre, some institutions of higher education offer personal guidance to students through social workers employed as part of the staff.

The student ratios for this service vary considerably. In smaller university towns there may be one social worker or one nurse per 1,000 students. In Stockholm, the city with the largest student population, there is one employee at the Student Health Centre for every 5,555 students!²⁵

Figures from one student health centre show that the most frequent individual consultations are inquiries about contraceptives (37.8 %). Consultations with doctors come in second place (16 %), followed by visits to social workers (15.4 %) and psychologists (12.9 %).²⁶ Since there are no statistics available for the whole country, it is not possible to check if this pattern is common for all the centres. However, it is quite clear that a considerable proportion of the services offered by the student health centres

²² Swedish Statute Book, SFS 1996:568, Chapter 1 § 11, my own translation.

²³ *Verksamhetsberättelse 1/7-1995-30/6 1996. Studenthälsan i Uppsala* (1997), p. 10.

²⁴ *Studenthälsovården - organisation, finansiering, framtid* (1996) SFS-rapport 1996:1, p. 12.

²⁵ *Uppföljning av "Ny huvudman för studenthälsovården"* (1995), SFS-rapport 1995:1, pp 6 - 13.

²⁶ *Verksamhetsberättelse 1/7 1995 30/6 1996. Studenthälsan i Uppsala* (1997), p.20.

involve psychotherapeutic guidance and counselling on personal matters related to the student condition. Some examples of issues dealt with by the social workers are: difficulties after moving from the parents' home to a student room; need for support in adjusting to the freedom and individual responsibility university studies involve; unexpected pregnancies; and need for advice on living on a student budget. The staff also work with psychological assessments and diagnoses, referring individuals who need further psychological treatment to the appropriate specialists.

3.b.2 The Occupational Roles

The occupational roles presented in Table 2 are an aggregation of practice across the country, and do not correspond exactly with the situation in each institution of higher education. In some institutions the same individual is responsible for two or three roles; in other institutions certain occupational roles do not exist at all. Furthermore, the work associated with each role varies and the same job may be carried out differently at different institutions.

3.b.3 The Numbers

Unfortunately there are no statistics available regarding the number of staff working in each occupational role. The figures in parenthesis in the column "Number" in Table 2 are rough estimates.²⁷ Several officers work part-time and many people work on administrative or other activities not related to guidance and counselling. Nevertheless, some tentative conclusions can be drawn.²⁸

There are 39 institutions with less than 3,200 students (Colleges of Fine Arts, Theatre and Music, Colleges of Health Sciences). Almost none of them have counsellors at a central level, which is understandable since the institutions are very small and have a clearly defined professional profile. The staff have close contact with the students and most students have thought through their choice before applying to these schools.

There are 17 institutions with 4,000 - 9,000 students (specialised institutions such as the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, institutes of technology or medicine, and some colleges with more than one faculty). For these institutions, a rough estimate gives a ratio of one counsellor at a central level per 3,800 students.

²⁷ The figures are based on telephone interviews with staff at several institutions. They are only approximate because they do not cover all institutions and because the number of personnel is given without converting part-time workers into full-time positions.

²⁸ The student rates presented below are calculated on the basis of telephone interviews with staff at different institutions and the figures presented in "*Studenthandboken hösten 97 - våren 98*", (1997), Högskoleverket, pp. 242-253.

In the 7 multi-faculty institutions with between 11,000 and 38,000 students, the approximate ratio is one counsellor at a central level per 6,500 students!²⁹ Unfortunately it is in these institutions that the need for guidance and counselling is greatest. Because of the size of these universities the students are more anonymous and contact with the teaching staff is not as close as in smaller institutions. In addition, most students at these universities study single-subject courses, a study form which is not clearly oriented towards a particular profession and which requires a new educational choice almost every term. The above figures speak for themselves: there are too few student counsellors on a central level, especially in the huge, multi-faculty institutions.

It can be assumed that most students get a degree without ever having met a counsellor. This is not a big problem when everything goes well, but the lack of contact with a student counsellor can lead to unnecessary delays, drop-outs and high material and psychological costs for the individuals and for society because of wrong course choices, uncertainty regarding course combinations, ignorance about requirements for obtaining certain degrees or need for learner support.

Furthermore, it is quite clear that very few advisers have specialised in learner support, i.e. are able to give more than "common sense" advice regarding study skills, presentation techniques, etc. In some cities the staff at the student health centres carry out programmes for learner support. Learner support programmes may include: training for speaking before groups, short courses about how to use mind-mapping or other study techniques, classes in study skills for groups of 10-15 students, and individual counselling in cases of, for example, examination anxiety (*tentamensstress*).

The service offered to students with disabilities varies considerably between different institutions. In some universities and colleges, student counsellors are responsible for this group of students and combine the administrative work involved in, for instance, purchasing the necessary equipment and employing personal assistants, with specialised guidance and counselling. In other institutions, the person in charge of offering support to students with disabilities is an administrator who deals mostly with the practical aspects of the task and offer a minimum of guidance and counselling.

²⁹ This alarming ratio is somewhat compensated by the existence of student counsellors in the departments. In the large universities there are likely to be between 80 and 100 student counsellors in the departments.

There are also very few advisers dealing exclusively with career planning. This is slowly being compensated by the creation of career centres and by the fact that the student counsellors are gradually giving more attention to matters related to the labour market. Much is yet to be done in this field.

The counsellors in most services lack special training for dealing with international students. The knowledge of English is widespread among all occupational roles but the command of other foreign languages is quite poor. A long counselling experience, however, often compensates for the lack of systematic training.

In the last few years, a rapid expansion of information technology has taken place in Sweden and, to some extent, compensates for the limited number of counsellors. Computers are available at most universities and colleges, and all students can search for information regarding education and jobs in different databases or on the Internet. Many students have e-mail addresses and access to the Internet in their student rooms or in special computer rooms in the universities and colleges. All counsellors have a personal computer with access to the Internet in their office. The use of computer-aided testing and computer-aided guidance and counselling is, however, very limited. The only example I can mention regarding testing is the computer-aided version of the Swedish scholastic aptitude test ("*Högskoleprovet*") which dyslexic applicants can choose to take twice a year. As far as I know, some vocational tests and counselling programs have been developed in Sweden but at present, they are used rather sporadically. Computer-aided guidance and counselling is definitely not one of the methods currently used by counsellors across the country.

3.b.4 The Focus

As can be seen in Table 2, the student counsellors focus mostly on educational aspects ($E = 4$), and less in vocational and personal aspects ($V = 2$, $P = 1$). The staff working at career centres focus more on vocational aspects but not as much as expected: the three aspects of guidance and counselling are well balanced, although the ratings vary slightly between different occupational roles in the career centres ($E = 2$, $V = 3$, $P = 2$). In the student health centres the main focus is undoubtedly on personal aspects ($P = 6$) and secondly in educational aspects ($E = 1$); the vocational dimension is hardly considered at all in this service ($V = 0$ or sometimes 1).

3.c Detailed Profiles

This section provides a more detailed description of three occupational roles: student counsellors at a central level, career counsellors and employment liaison officers. The roles were chosen according to the following criteria:

- their importance for the future development of guidance and counselling services;
- the need for further training that the staff at these services experience.

3.c.1 Student Counsellors at a Central Level

In order to help students to make decisions and solve problems related to education or job opportunities, the student counsellors use a specific method: the "guidance dialogue" (*vägledningssamtal*). Counselling can never be replaced by the mere transmission of information since counselling includes so much more.³⁰

Student counsellors usually have to deal with expectations and demands from two conflicting interests: the individual students on one hand and the organisation (university or college) on the other. Some ethical guidelines have been designed and stated in one of the Declarations of Goals for the Educational Counselling Service ("*Måldokument för studievägledningen*").³¹ According to this document, the student counsellor should always:

- put the person seeking guidance first;
- see the possibilities of transformation and development that every human being has;
- observe professional confidentiality.

The Tasks

The work situation as well as the tasks performed by the student counsellors at a central level vary, depending on the kind of institution they work at and the nature of the surrounding community.

At a central level the student counsellors do a great deal of administrative management (A). Programme planning and evaluation of, for instance, Information Days on campus for final-year secondary-school students ("*Öppet hus*"), visits from student groups from adult

³⁰ See *Måldokument för studievägledning* (1995), Stockholms universitet, p. 1.

³¹ *Måldokument för studievägledning* (1995), Stockholms universitet, p. 3. Similar Declarations of Goals exist at other institutions as well.

education, or administration of in-service training for student counsellors at the departments, are some examples. In this occupational role, administrative management involves many contacts both inside and outside the institution: for example, collaborating with student counsellors and deans in the departments, with counsellors at secondary schools, and with adult education and employment office staff.

Creating written information in the form of pamphlets, brochures, posters and course catalogues as well as information through electronic media are part of the advisers' current job (B). In many cases they are responsible for the entire product, i.e. they create both the contents and the form, but sometimes they are consulted as experts and only deal with the contents while other people work on the text and lay-out. Besides producing and/or controlling information material, counsellors collect information regarding education opportunities and the labour market for display in their own libraries.

Providing relevant information to individuals and groups on educational opportunities is definitely the major task for this occupational role (C). Student counsellors receive visits, answer the phone and process correspondence (inquiries from Sweden and abroad, by mail and by e-mail). Normally there is both a "drop-in" service for spontaneous visitors and a special schedule for visits booked in advance. A programme for visits to secondary schools in connection with applications to undergraduate studies is one of the recurrent activities. Student counsellors also inform about the labour market when discussing job opportunities with prospective students and with enrolled students nearing graduation. Due to great variations between institutions regarding the number of applicants per vacancy, the extent to which information-giving is a recruitment activity varies considerably. The large, traditional universities located in the main Swedish cities have approximately three times more applicants than vacancies, while smaller, younger colleges located in smaller towns have plenty of vacancies and need to actively recruit students. The contents and implications of the information-giving activities thus differ.

Short-term individual counselling, i.e. meeting students on a one-to-one basis in a single or limited number of sessions, is also one of the main tasks performed by the student counsellors at a central level (D). The most common matters discussed are educational choices: realistic choices, "wrong" choices, changes of study field, studying abroad, and the choice of the "right" major in order to get a job in the future. It should be emphasised that in Sweden counsellors take no responsibility for the student's choices: they do not give specific suggestions nor do they give "advice" regarding course or career choices;

they simply help the students become aware of their choices and of the consequences each alternative involves.

Due to the student ratios (one counsellor per 4,000-6,000 students in large universities), the student counsellors cannot possibly work systematically with special student groups; they work with the individuals that ask for their service. For the same reason almost no planned, long-term individual counselling³² is carried out (E). If it occurs, it is aimed at special target groups like visiting students.

Short-term group counselling is done on a small scale (F). Examples of this are: learner support groups (only enrolled students) and groups of adults with a foreign education (prospective students).

Some advice - for instance, how to fill in an application form, which supplementary courses to take in adult education, how to prepare for the academic aptitude test - is often included in counselling situations (I). Normally the advice given is exclusively based on the counsellors' own knowledge and experience since assessment devices are normally not used in Swedish higher education (K).³³

The central educational counselling services receive all kinds of visits and inquiries both from students and from the general public. Therefore the counsellors often have to refer people to other universities and colleges, to a specific university department, to the career centre, to the student health centre, to adult education or to private education providers (L).

The student counsellors at a central level are not involved in teaching although pedagogy is part of their job. Teaching, as defined in (M), is done only on a very small scale, for instance where programmes for learner support are implemented.

In smaller towns, where the institutions of higher education have close contact with the surrounding community, student counsellors have good connections with employers and with education and training providers (N). In larger towns, the universities are much more isolated from the community and therefore this network tends to be less well developed.

³² This task implies meeting an individual student at least 10-15 times, according to the definition agreed for this study. The staff members at the student health centres are most likely to do this task.

³³ Psychological tests are though used very frequently in the student health centres.

Coaching occurs on a small scale and is often related to applications to postgraduate studies, improvement of study techniques and, more rarely, job applications (O).

Central-level counsellors can usually direct students to courses or schools that still have vacancies since they have access to admission statistics. However, information on job vacancies can normally only be obtained from student counsellors working in the departments (P).

Supporting other guidance resources is one of the key tasks for this group of counsellors (S). The heterogeneous group of people working with information and counselling at university departments, secondary schools, adult education and employment offices need up-to-date information about what is new in higher education in general and what is new in each university or college in particular.

As was mentioned earlier, the student counsellors at a central level usually have other jobs to do besides guidance and counselling. Examples are: evaluation of credentials to decide the applicant's eligibility for different studies, processing of application forms for admission to undergraduate studies (this does not include the selection of applicants), awarding of diplomas/degrees, administration of academic aptitude tests, production of posters, folders and brochures, and conducting specialised surveys or studies within their areas of expertise. Often student counsellors at a central level act as consultants in matters related to their competence. Educational organisations, private companies and public institutions are common commissioning bodies.

3.c.2 Career Counsellors

In Swedish the term traditionally used for this role has been *yrkesvägledare*, an occupational role normally associated with staff working at the employment offices.³⁴ In higher education there are no *yrkesvägledare* employed, only *studievägledare* (student counsellors). As mentioned earlier, student counsellors are supposed to provide guidance on both educational and job opportunities.

³⁴ In my view, the term "*yrkesvägledare*", in which *yrke* = profession or occupation and *vägledare* = counsellor, has gradually been replaced by the more general term "*vägledare*" in the 80s and 90s. The reason for this is that the old "professions", understood as the occupation a person had for his/her entire life, are gradually disappearing. Career counsellors of today are not expected to help young people to work out what occupation they will have for the following 50 years but to help them in their "career development". Consequently, nowadays it is more appropriate to use the term "*karriärvägledare*" (career counsellor).

At present there is a rapid development of career centres and a growing consciousness of the need for career planning for university students. The work associated with the role is either done by career counsellors paid by employment offices who work full-time or part-time at the career centres, or by student counsellors employed by the universities or colleges, who have specialised in career counselling and work either at a career centre or in the central educational counselling service (*Centrala studievägledningen, Allmänna studievägledningen, StudentCentrum*). The student counsellors who have gone into career counselling have very varied backgrounds. Some have previously worked in an employment office; some have experience as personnel managers in private companies or organisations. Common to all of them is their interest in labour market issues and their willingness to discover methods and organisational forms that will respond to the needs of the next generation.

The occupational role "career counsellor" is thus not clearly defined in the Swedish higher education system. There are no special positions for this occupational role, since it has been developed within existing organisations. At present the student counsellors are experiencing a growing demand for career guidance and career planning on the part of students, but it is not possible to assess to which degree the educational focus has been replaced by a vocational focus in the guidance and counselling services at Swedish universities and colleges. Furthermore, the line dividing educational and career guidance is very subtle.

An indisputable fact is, however, that the career counsellors of today must be competent in a wide range of subjects including education opportunities and the labour market, on both national and international levels, as well as having all the skills associated with counselling techniques.

The Tasks

As can be seen in Table 3, career counsellors devote most of their time and energy to counselling, giving advice and coaching individuals (D, I and O). Students make appointments with a career counsellor and have individual sessions in which they discuss educational alternatives linked to specific occupations. For example, students are shown which jobs they can apply for with the education they have received, or get help with filling out a job application. The discussions can be very similar to the ones held with student counsellors - the issues are the same - but the outcome of the dialogue can be different, due to the special knowledge regarding the labour market which the career

counsellors possess. Long-term counselling of individuals (E) and groups (G) is very rare due to the very limited personnel resources.

Career counsellors do a great deal of administrative management (A) since they are usually involved in planning the centre's activities for student groups (*programverksamhet*). Some counsellors are also co-ordinators for the entire career centre which means that they have a substantial administrative burden. Some career counsellors participate as lecturers in the "Job Seeking Seminars", which explains the rating 3 allocated to the task of "teaching" (M). However, in many centres other professionals are invited to lead these seminars. Providing individuals with information on job vacancies is also an important task that often comes up naturally when discussing future occupations (P).

3.c.3 Employment Liaison Officers

The occupational role which I have called "employment liaison officer" is not a self-explanatory concept in Swedish higher education. As far as I know, until now nobody has been appointed as such. I use the term as a general descriptor to encompass a number of people who work with the labour market and have rather similar jobs but under different titles and employment conditions. I decided to describe all these functions as one occupational role because of its importance and because I sense that the work related to this function will sooner or later be developed into an established, well-defined occupational role at Swedish universities and colleges.

One of the most important goals of all career centres is to establish a reliable network of employers in private companies and public organisations with whom to collaborate in different projects. Direct contacts with companies, organisations and employer associations are important ways for attaining this goal. These contacts are necessary in order to be able to offer students possible channels to the labour market, as well as extra and summer jobs while they study. The long-term aim is to create a network of employers who keep close contact with the universities and colleges and who turn to the career centres when they need to employ graduates. In Sweden work towards implementing this aim has only just started.

All personnel working towards this goal at the career centres are, according to the definition used in this report, employment liaison officers. The Swedish words associated with this role vary: *ansvarig för programverksamhet*, *arbetsmarknadskontaktperson*, *ansvarig för exjobbpoolen*, *ansvarig för mentorprojektet*, *informatör*. Despite the different

titles and the different projects they work with, all of them focus mainly on establishing links with enterprises and organisations for collaboration of different kinds.

The Tasks

Employment liaison officers devote a lot of time and energy to administrative and information management, especially now in the early days of the career centres. Their major effort at this initial stage is to become known among the students and employers in the region. Intensive marketing efforts are needed to establish the concept, which explains the high ratings in relation to (A) and (B).

After that, the tasks that require the most involvement and time are coaching students, informing them about job vacancies, trainee vacancies and thesis work placements (O, P), and making contacts with employers (N). Parallel with building up an adequate organisation and finding appropriate working methods, employment liaison officers serve the students who turn to the career centres and ask for help (P).

Besides the services offered to students and employers, each employment liaison officer is usually responsible for a special project: *programverksamhet*, which means putting together a programme of seminars, lectures, courses and visits for an entire semester; *mentorprojekt*, which means setting up guidelines for a mentorship programme, choosing the enterprises, recruiting mentors and then selecting the students who will participate in the project; and *exjobbpoolen*, which means finding companies and organisations which have appropriate thesis issues and which are willing to receive students, adding them to a database, and helping students to choose companies/issues for their thesis work according to their future career interests.

In their day-to-day activity, employment liaison officers need regular contacts inside and outside their institutions. Some examples are: personnel at employment offices; student union representatives who, in many institutions, have long experience of different arrangements concerning the labour market; members of professional associations who participate as lecturers in seminars and workshops; and representatives from the media (crucial for effective marketing).

A couple of "secondary jobs" necessary for attaining the main goal should be mentioned: self-evaluation and fund-raising. Since most career centres are still "provisional" and have very limited funding, the personnel working at them need to devote time to "motivate and secure the centre's existence" and to seek funding for future activities.

4. Training and Qualifications

This section deals with the educational background of the staff in the occupational roles presented in Table 2 and the training opportunities open to them. The following aspects are considered: the minimum educational requirements for entering the position, the initial training offered when the person starts working at the service concerned, and the existing in-service training in guidance and counselling.

4.a Table 4

Table 4 summarises the minimum educational requirements for each occupational role. It also specifies whether the training is a full-time (FT) or a part-time course (PT), and whether it is compulsory or optional. Optional training is marked with an asterisk (*).

See next page.

Table 4 : Training and Qualifications

Service	Occupational Roles	Minimum Educational Qualifications for Entry	Initial Training in Guidance and Counselling	In-service Training in Guidance and Counselling (1)
Educational Counselling at a Central Level (<i>Centrala studievägledning</i>)	Director (2)	3 yrs first degree (FT) (3)	* one-day orientation arranged by the student counsellors at a central level	* 2-day FT course in counselling techniques
	Student Counsellor	3 yrs first degree (FT)	* one-day orientation arranged by the student counsellors at a central level	* 2-day FT course in counselling techniques
Educational Counselling at Departmental or Faculty Level (<i>Institutionssstudievägledning</i>)	Student Counsellor	at least 3 yrs first degree with a major in the subject concerned (FT)	* one-day orientation arranged by the student counsellors at a central level	* 2-day FT course in counselling techniques
Career Centre (4) (<i>Arbetslivscenter</i>)	Director/Co-ordinator	3 yrs first degree (FT)	none	none
	Career Counsellor	3 yrs first degree (FT)	none	none
	Employment Liaison Officer	3 yrs first degree (FT)	none	none
Student Health Centre (<i>Studenthälsoen</i>)	Information Officer	3 yrs first degree (FT)	none	none
	Director	5-6 yrs (FT)	none	none
	Social worker	3,5 yrs first degree (FT)	none	none
	Medical Doctor	6 yrs (FT)	none	none
	Nurse	6 yrs (FT)	none	none
	Psychologist	5 yrs (FT)	none	none
	Psychiatrist	10 yrs (FT)	none	none

Notes:

- (1) The staff working at the four services participate regularly in seminars and conferences in which issues relevant to their job are dealt with. These seminars and conferences are undoubtedly very important for developing their competence but they cannot replace a systematically planned training oriented towards specific goals.
- (2) The directors of the educational counselling service are normally former student counsellors. Consequently, they have access to the same training as their colleagues. In some cases, because of their position, they are offered special training for dealing with personnel: 2-day FT course in leadership styles, 2-day FT course in "developing dialogues" (*"utvecklingssamtal"*) with their personnel, etc. These courses are all optional.
- (3) FT = full-time. The asterisk (*) indicates voluntary training.
- (4) The staff employed by the Employment Office receive initial and in-service training in guidance and counselling through courses arranged by the County Labour Board. This training is not included in the table because these personnel are in a minority.

4.b Commentary

Table 4 shows a very clear pattern, valid for all occupational roles in the four services.

A university degree is the minimum educational requirement for securing a position (although some individuals without an academic degree may have obtained a position because of their relevant work experience and competence) but the initial training as well as the in-service training is quite poor. All initial and in-service training is optional and consists mostly of one or two-day courses, seminars, lectures or conferences that focus on relevant topics. Very little is offered in the form of regular courses, with clearly defined goals and levels, and with a clear connection to the actual needs of the guidance and counselling staff.

The lack of systematic initial and in-service training for the staff of the career centres can be easily understood since these centres are a very recent phenomenon in Swedish higher education. However, it is more difficult to explain why student counsellors, an occupational role that has existed in Sweden since the 70s, also have such undeveloped training provisions.

At present, no IT distance training seems to take place, all financing is covered by the counselling services themselves, and there is no systematic progression in the training nor any special goals to attain.

The training that takes place at the moment consists mostly of spontaneous, non-recurrent events and is often a result of particular institutions' initiative. The national and international conferences are an important meeting point for the staff but they are not always designed to meet their practical needs for further education.

4.b.1 Student Counsellors at a Central Level

The student counsellors working in the university administration are, in many cases, the first contact that prospective students have with higher education. The advisers' main job is therefore to offer orientation on matters related to educational and career choices and to help people get an optimum basis for making decisions regarding education or work in both the short and long run. Many universities and colleges have several faculties, and students seek the central counsellors because they need a "holistic" perspective. Besides

having a comprehensive knowledge of the educational system and the labour market, the student counsellors must be good counsellors.

Despite the relatively poor training provisions, this professional group is very experienced and used to adapting to new situations. The educational systems, the labour market and the student population change continuously. To offer guidance and counselling under these changing conditions requires flexibility and imagination.

However, in the present situation, it seems that flexibility and imagination are not enough. The changes are now more drastic than ever and the staff by themselves can hardly cope. A great deal of support in the form of organised training in relevant areas is needed (see below under "Need for Further Education" in section 4.c.3).

4.b.2 Student Counsellors at Departmental or Faculty Level

For this group of professionals a degree in the subject concerned is the most important qualification. In some areas, a three-year first degree with a major in the subject concerned is enough; in other subjects, doctoral studies are required. From the department's point of view, the training in guidance and counselling is not equally important. Doctoral students are appointed as student counsellors for a semester or two; their degree of professionalism is, accordingly, very limited. The situation is totally different in departments in which the governing body decides to take this service seriously and to employ full-time student counsellors on a permanent basis. After some years and some in-service voluntary training, these counsellors develop a high degree of professionalism.

4.b.3 Career Counsellors and Employment Liaison Officers in Career Centres

Since these roles are rather new at Swedish universities and colleges, they have not found their final form yet, and there is no common practice regarding the educational requirements. The staff doing this work have a very diverse educational and professional background. Almost no-one is employed permanently and the majority work on a "project basis" which means "as long as there is enough funding for this activity". A three-year university degree combined with relevant work experience is the most widespread requirement. At present, there is no special training for this group, either initial or in-service, although they are usually invited to participate in the activities arranged for the

student counsellors.³⁵ Attendance at conferences and seminars seems to be the only existing training provision for these occupational roles. At the same time, these staff must have an extremely broad, constantly updated competence to satisfy the demands of the students.

4.b.4 Staff at the Student Health Centres

The staff working at the student health centres have very well-defined professional profiles. They have the longest minimum educational requirements, and some of the occupational roles (medical doctors, psychologists and psychiatrists) require an authorization ("*legitimation*") issued by the National Swedish Board of Health and Welfare. No special education in guidance and counselling in higher education is included in their curricula. Social workers, psychologists and psychiatrists are, however, trained in communication skills and techniques for assessing the situation and needs of their patients.

The occupational roles that concentrate on personal guidance and counselling are: social workers, psychologists and psychiatrists. The other roles deal exclusively with medical treatment. The minimum training required for these personnel is a professional degree in social work, psychology or psychotherapy respectively.

The drastic changes in the student population and the labour market affect the job of the staff at the student health centres more indirectly since they deal only with enrolled students' personal and social situations. Personal problems change concurrently with changes in society, but this does not affect this personnel's competence as directly as it affects the job done by the student and career counsellors. For this group of professionals, intercultural training and language training is a necessity (in order to offer a better service to international students), as well as general up-dating in social developments - for instance, youth culture.

³⁵ The lack of training provisions does not apply to the personnel employed by the employment offices since the County Labour Board regularly arranges in-service education for all personnel - for instance, classes in Ethics, Interview Techniques, Methodology, Foreign Languages, etc.

4.c Detailed Profiles

4.c.1 Student Counsellors at a Central Level

The minimum requirement for being appointed to student counsellor at a central level is a three-year first degree with an unspecified major (equivalent to a Bachelor's degree) and the ability to speak a foreign language, especially English. Furthermore, a good knowledge of university education, counselling experience, well-developed communication skills, the ability to show empathy and trustworthiness, the ability to co-operate, flexibility, and resistance to stress, are all also desirable.

Very few advisers in higher education seem to have taken the three-year degree in "Study and Career Counselling Education" ("*Studie- och yrkesvägledarutbildning*") offered by the Schools of Education, although the programme has existed since 1977.³⁶ The course is oriented towards educational and career counselling with both young people and adults as target groups. The course is not geared exclusively towards primary and secondary education although most graduates work in primary and secondary schools, or in adult education. The career paths to become a counsellor at universities and colleges do not seem to include a degree in "Study and Career Counselling Education" for some reason.

Once appointed to the position, student counsellors usually go through a short introduction (one or two days full-time) arranged by the student counsellors at the central administration. Some in-service training is offered every semester at most universities, normally consisting of two-hour seminars on relevant topics, 4 - 7 times per semester. Another way of improving the staff's competence is to discuss "cases" in small groups of counsellors, under the supervision of a psychologist.

All initial and in-service training is optional. National and international conferences are an important source of professional development and further specialisation. However, national and international conferences are expensive and not all the advisers that want to participate in them can do so, since there are often budget limitations.

³⁶ Since 1993, students who complete the 3-year programme are awarded a professional degree called the University Diploma in Career Counselling.

The following topics are examples of what is included in the optional training offered:

- Dialogue Methodology and Interview Techniques*
- Presentation Techniques*
- Counselling Methodology*
- Language Courses Centred on Academic Terminology *
- How to Improve Study and Work Habits*
- Professional Confidentiality
- Collaborating with the Municipality and the Employment Office
- Collaborating with the Student Health Centre
- Educational Systems in European Countries
- IT Techniques in Education

The courses marked with an asterisk aim at developing certain skills and presuppose active participation. The rest have a more theoretical content.

4.c.2 Career Counsellors and Employment Liaison Officers

With the exception of the staff employed by the employment offices, the minimum educational requirements for securing a position in the above occupational roles have not been explicitly formalised. At present almost all officers working in these positions have a three-year first degree (equivalent to a Bachelor's degree). Some of them have received further training through training arranged by the employment office and the seminars or conferences arranged by the student counsellors.

The lack of organised training does not, however, hinder the staff from using all their creativity and initiative to find its way in relatively unexplored territory.

A course which would analyse the European labour market and would include an exchange of practical experiences between personnel in similar positions from different countries would appear to have great value.

4.c.3 Need for Further Education

The trends evident in the student population and the labour market are placing new demands on student and career counsellors. They need to have a good knowledge of the educational and work opportunities not only in their own region and in Sweden as a whole but also in Europe and the rest of the world!

Due to the unemployment rate in Sweden, for many students the only way of getting a job after graduation is good contacts with representatives from industry and/or the public sector. According to a labour market survey carried out by JUSEK (an association for graduates in the fields of law, social sciences, business administration and economics) in 1996, around 40% of the graduates interviewed got their jobs through personal contacts and active marketing of their own qualifications.³⁷

Consequently, a very important task for every counsellor is to inspire students into a new way of thinking, to stimulate them to be alert and aware of the labour market's needs, to suggest possible connections between their thesis work and the labour market, and to stimulate them to take the initiative in seeking jobs.

Activities such as the systematic follow-up of university graduates and the strengthening of alumni associations are likely to be of crucial importance in the future. The limits on existing resources, i.e. the reduced number of educational and career advisers at the institutions of higher education and the amount of work they already do, are probably an impediment to managing such extensive activities. The challenge then is to find appropriate working forms and adequate funding to implement such activities.

In order to meeting the needs of counsellors working in Sweden, a European Master's degree in Guidance and Counselling should include, among other things:

- knowledge about the educational system of European countries;
- knowledge about the labour market in European countries;
- peculiarities of the Swedish labour market from a European perspective;
- different ways of using the new information technology;
- training in intercultural communication skills in order to cope with the increasing number of international students;
- language training;
- features of youth culture;
- the development of "fund-raising skills".³⁸

³⁷ Cited by Lindmark, K (1996), p. 18.

³⁸ At present, due to the shrinking university budget, some staff are compelled to seek external funding for their projects. This is a very complicated and time-consuming task for inexperienced people. Practical support and guidelines for raising funds could be an interesting topic to include in the programme.

According to some researchers, young students of today are going to be confronted with enormous demands. They will have to fit in a "C society", a society characterised by knowledge, competence, creativity, communication and culture (in Swedish, "*K-samhället*", where "K" is the initial letter of each of the five nouns). A long university education, deep scientific knowledge, supplementary courses to broaden one's education, a couple of foreign languages and lifetime recurrent education will be needed in the future. Almost no profession will last an entire life. Young people are likely to change profession five to ten times during their life time.³⁹

This future puts student and career counsellors in a totally new situation. The demands made by the young population are already pressing. The counsellors must adapt and find new methods and strategies in order to be able to guide and counsel the next generation.

³⁹ Cited in the report: *Yrkesorientering och arbetsmarknadsfrågor. Förslag till arbetsformer för studievägledare. Rapport från StudentCentrum, Linköpings universitet* (1994), p. 8, my own translation.

5. Conclusions

Swedish universities and colleges offer, in slightly different forms and to a greater or lesser extent, the following guidance and counselling services:

- Educational Counselling at a Central Level (*Centrala studievägledningen*);
- Educational Counselling at Departmental or Faculty Level (*Institutions studievägledning*);
- Career Centres (*Arbetslivscenter*);
- Student Health Centres (*Studenthälsan*).

The first two services focus on educational matters, the third is oriented towards the labour market, and the fourth deals exclusively with personal guidance and counselling, i.e. it only handles students' physical and social problems. At large universities, the students have access to all four services. In smaller colleges, maybe one or two of the services are available. There are considerable local variations. Some institutions have student counsellors in the departments or faculties, while others concentrate their resources at a central level. It all depends on the needs, existing resources and sometimes the institution's tradition.

In general, these four services keep to their main focus and function well. They respond to the students' demands. The degree of availability is quite good. However, a common feature of all four services, especially at the large institutions of higher education, is their very limited personnel resources. The present student ratios, i.e. the number of students per appointed member of staff at, for instance, the Central Educational Counselling Service, make it impossible to offer qualified guidance and counselling to a significant proportion of the enrolled students. It can be assumed that today only a minority of the total student population at large universities uses the services offered by the four guidance and counselling services. Of course, it is possible for many individuals to study for a degree without consulting any of the professional groups mentioned in this report, but in many cases, serious problems could have been avoided and their unfortunate consequences minimised if a visit to a guidance and counselling service had taken place at the right moment.

The personnel working at the four services are normally very experienced and extremely competent (most of them have been working in guidance and counselling for many years and have learnt a lot through trial and error), but they definitely need systematic, qualified training in order to cope with students' needs in a society with a rapidly changing labour market. It seems that the focus in Sweden is moving from almost pure educational guidance and counselling to vocational guidance and counselling, due not only to the creation of the career centres but also to the switch of perspective the student counsellors are being compelled to make. Furthermore, there is obviously a need for closer co-operation between the student counsellors at a central level and the staff at the career centres.

Student and career counsellors are in urgent need of further qualification. The Educational Counselling Service is organised according to the original premises established in the 70s, when the student population was smaller and the labour market for graduates relatively buoyant. New knowledge, a new approach and new methods are necessary in order to cope with a larger, more heterogeneous student population and a rapidly changing labour market. The number of advisers in higher education has either been stationary or decreasing in Sweden during the last few years, while the demands have been steadily increasing. The traditional, individual guidance and counselling on a one-to-one basis must be combined with other forms of guidance. It is necessary to find new, effective channels for disseminating huge amounts of information on education and job opportunities, in Sweden and abroad, for large groups of students and prospective students.

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Appendix: Training Providers

The following institutions offer a University Diploma in Career Counselling (180 ECTS credits):

Lärarhögskolan i Stockholm (Stockholm Institute of Education)
Institutionen för studie- och yrkesvägledning
Box 12014
102 21 STOCKHOLM
Phone: + 46 8 737 96 40
Fax: + 46 8 737 96 38

Lärarhögskolan i Malmö
Studie- och yrkesvägledarprogrammet
Box 23501
200 45 MALMÖ
Phone: + 46 40 32 52 33
Fax: + 46 40 32 52 04

Umeå universitet
Institutionen för barn- och ungdomspedagogik, specialpedagogik och vägledning
901 87 UMEÅ
Phone: + 46 90 786 65 12
Fax: + 46 90 786 65 11

The following institutions combine to arrange a 2-day full-time course in Guidance and Counselling Methodology:

Uppsala universitet
Centrala studievägledningen
Box 256
751 05 UPPSALA
Phone: + 46 18 471 17 99
Fax: + 46 18 471 19 73

Stockholms universitet
Centrala studievägledningen
Studentbyrån
106 91 STOCKHOLM
Phone: + 46 8 16 28 45
Fax: + 46 8 16 13 97

FEDORA Publications

1. Synthesis reports produced for the New Skills Project

Watts, A.G., & Van Esbroeck, R. (1998). *New Skills for New Futures: Higher Education Guidance and Counselling in the European Union*. Brussels: VUBPress

Watts, A.G., & Van Esbroeck, R. (1998). *De nouvelles compétences pour un avenir différent: Services d'orientation et de counselling dans L'Union Européenne*. Bruxelles: VUBPress.

2. Country reports produced for the New Skills Project

A Schilling, M. & Moisl, A. (1998). *New Skills for New Futures: Higher Education Guidance and Counselling in Austria*. Louvain-la-Neuve: FEDORA.

B(Fl) Van Esbroeck, R. (1998). *New Skills for New Futures: Higher Education Guidance and Counselling in Flanders (Belgium)*. Louvain-la-Neuve: FEDORA.

B(Fr) Wouters, C. (1998). *New Skills for New Futures: Higher Education Guidance and Counselling in Belgium (French Community)*. Louvain-la-Neuve: FEDORA.

DK Plant, P. (1998). *New Skills for New Futures: Higher Education Guidance and Counselling in Denmark*. Louvain-la-Neuve: FEDORA.

FIN Lairio, M. & Puukari, S. (1998). *New Skills for New Futures: Higher Education Guidance and Counselling in Finland*. Louvain-la-Neuve: FEDORA.

F Leray, N. (1998). *New Skills for New Futures: Higher Education Guidance and Counselling in France*. Louvain-la-Neuve: FEDORA.

D Rott, G. (1998). *New Skills for New Futures: Higher Education Guidance and Counselling in Germany*. Louvain-la-Neuve: FEDORA.

GR Marouda-Chatjoulis, A. (1998). *New Skills for New Futures: Higher Education Guidance and Counselling in Greece*. Louvain-la-Neuve: FEDORA.

IRL Aungier, C. (1998). *New Skills for New Futures: Higher Education Guidance and Counselling in Ireland*. Louvain-la-Neuve: FEDORA.

I Berta, L. (1998). *New Skills for New Futures: Higher Education Guidance and Counselling in Italy*. Louvain-la-Neuve: FEDORA.

- L Harsch, R. (1998). *New Skills for New Futures: Higher Education Guidance and Counselling in Luxembourg*. Louvain-la-Neuve: FEDORA.
- NL Ramaker, I. (1998). *New Skills for New Futures: Higher Education Guidance and Counselling in the Netherlands*. Louvain-la-Neuve: FEDORA.
- P Duarte, M.E. & Paixao, M.P. (1998). *New Skills for New Futures: Higher Education Guidance and Counselling in Portugal*. Louvain-la-Neuve: FEDORA.
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- S Pérez, M. (1998). *New Skills for New Futures: Higher Education Guidance and Counselling in Sweden*. Louvain-la-Neuve: FEDORA.
- UK Butcher, V. (1998). *New Skills for New Futures: Higher Education Guidance and Counselling in the United Kingdom*. Louvain-la-Neuve: FEDORA.

How to order

The synthesis reports can be ordered through:

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 Fax: + 32 00 2 629 26 94 - E-mail: kvschare@vub.ac.be

The country reports can be ordered through:

FEDORA - Forum Européen de L'Orientation Académique
 Boîte Postale 55, B 1348 Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium.