

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

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Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancias



FEDORA Project

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

With the support of
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under the LEONARDO DA VINCI programme



Exemplar

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in
Spain**

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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

This report is a contribution to a joint European project aimed at providing the basis for the FEDORA synthesis report on “*New Skills for Vocational Guidance in Higher Education*” in Europe. As such, it has to comply with a certain pattern, homogeneity in the presentation of information being essential. Although this facilitates the compilation process, providing a uniform structure and helping the authors reflect on their reality from a different perspective, it is also a drawback, as systems differ greatly, and it is difficult to follow a pattern in describing a situation which is not easily frameable. Moreover, it is not static: services and roles are constantly undergoing important changes, so what we describe today in detail, might be quite different tomorrow in certain aspects.

In Spain, there is very little written information on guidance in general at the university level, and none at all in the non-university higher education (HE) sector. Studies on one particular university or annual reports from some of the guidance centres are available (not easily), but no organisation centralises the information on guidance at the HE level. The methodology in collecting the information has been diverse: a questionnaire sent to university guidance centres in January/February; use of Internet to browse their pages; open-ended interviews with guidance workers and academics involved in this field; reviews of the few publications on the subject; visits/telephone calls to some centres and non-university HE institutions; and the contributions of the experts regarding the detailed profiles and/or guidance systems. There were also visits to official organisations (such as *Secretaría de Estado de Universidades, Investigación y Desarrollo, Centro de Investigación y Documentación Español - CIDE, Consejo de Universidades*), in which we found no useful information on guidance, though the latter (the University Council) had recent statistics regarding university students.

In spite of all the obstacles, the work carried out has been very satisfactory. We hope that this report, which gives a very general overview of the Spanish higher education guidance reality, serves the purpose of providing the basis for the synthesis report.

We are grateful to the many guidance workers who have contributed to this report (filling in the questionnaires and answering our questions). As we cannot mention them all, we would especially

like to thank those who have worked closest with us and those who have collaborated in the description of their role/system:

Belén Ballesteros and **Mari Fe Sánchez** whose support has been essential in the data-gathering process, and in the production of a Spanish synthesis.

M^a Jesús Alvarez, U. Politécnica de Madrid (placement officer)

Sofía Gallego, Ramón Lull University (tutorial system)

José Nieto, University of Salamanca (personal counsellor)

We would also like to thank Tony Watts and Raoul Van Esbroeck for their valuable suggestions and the editorial work carried out.

Elvira Repetto & Beatriz Malik

September, 1997

1. Summary

This report is part of the FEDORA (Forum Européen de l'Orientation Académique) project on "*New Skills for Vocational Guidance in Higher Education*", carried out under the LEONARDO programme of the European Commission. Its aims are:

1. To provide an 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 provision exists within 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, within 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 across Europe, possibly leading to a European Masters' degree in guidance and counselling in higher education.

Being part of a European-wide project, it is based on a common structure and methodology, following a similar pattern in order to facilitate comparability. One of the major difficulties of such an approach, which all countries will probably have encountered, is to describe a system in such a way that readers from other contexts can understand it. When the system is not even well defined in its own context, a further obstacle is added. Some terms for which we have found no satisfactory translation have been kept in Spanish, although in general we have tried to use the terms in English which might best describe a system/role/task.

Section 2 describes the main guidance/counselling services in higher education in our country, starting with a description of the HE system in Spain, both the university sector and the less-known non-university sector. Our report will deal mainly with the guidance services in the university sector, being the only sector with an established guidance system, although we will make some references to the non-university sector. A table summarises the main services related to guidance and counselling in our country, as well as other services included because of their relation to European / international matters, and is followed by a commentary on these services. Aspects covered include the main sources of

control and funding, links and referral practices, the stages at which the student is given support, the counsellor:student ratios, guidance for special groups, the use of new technologies, guidance provided to international students, and the extent to which the European dimension is present in our guidance systems.

Section 3 deals with the roles and the tasks performed by the staff working in the guidance centres, based on a task analysis. First, a table shows the main roles within the guidance services, these being further described in the commentary section. The tasks carried out within each role are then analysed in a table. In Section 3c we describe three of these roles in more detail.

Section 4 covers the training and qualifications of the staff, which is very heterogeneous. A table shows these qualifications in a brief way; they are then further explained in the commentary. The commentary is not very extensive, as the usual initial qualifications are not specifically related to guidance, except in a few cases, and although there are many continuing training opportunities, there is not a common programme related to guidance in HE.

We end our report with some conclusions derived from the previous sections, commenting on those aspects which affect our guidance system.

2. Structure of Guidance in Higher Education

Introduction: The Structure of Higher Education in Spain

Higher education in Spain encompasses both university studies and non-university studies, of which some lead to university-equivalent degrees. We will describe each sector separately.

University sector

At the moment of writing there are 44 publicly-funded universities, and 10 private ones, including those run by the Catholic Church. Students have to pay tuition fees which vary accordingly to the nature of the studies (social sciences/technical studies/experimental sciences). In the case of State universities (*universidades públicas*) these fees are set by the Autonomous Communities in which the university is located, or by the State itself in those Communities where the transfer of educational powers to the regional authorities has not yet been completed. However, they cannot exceed a maximum established by the Ministry of Education and Culture. There exists a scholarship system whereby students with low family incomes can have free access to tuition, and a system of financial aids for transportation, text books, or both. The fees at the private universities are much higher: as an example, the average fee *per year* in a public university can be around 100,000 pts., whereas in a private one, this amount might represent the fee *per month* (depending on the university it can be somewhat lower, or even higher). The total number of students registered in the 1996-97 academic year was 1,551,969¹, of which 1,478,279 belonged to the public universities and 73,690 to private ones. The number of graduates in the previous year (1995-96) was 173,298: 164,107 from public universities, and 9,191 in the private ones.

The *Ley de Reforma Universitaria* (LRU) or University Reform Act, passed in 1983, restructured the university system and is the law currently in force. It is based on three basic constitutional principles: the right of all Spanish citizens to education (*derecho a la educación*), academic freedom (*libertad de cátedra*) and university autonomy (*autonomía universitaria*). Universities have the right to approve their own curricula, following the general guidelines laid down by the *Ministerio de Educación y*

¹In 1992/93 the total number was 1,291,996: 1,250,153 in public universities, and 41,843 in the private ones.

Cultura (MEC) (Ministry of Education and Culture) for each university degree. There has been an increase in the number of courses offered, especially *first-cycle* and *two-cycle-only* degrees (see below). The creation of new state and private universities has also been established (RD 557/1991). One of the major changes has been a more flexible structure of the curriculum, the universities having the academic freedom to introduce some differentiation into the design of the official curricula. The subjects (*asignaturas*) can be organised by credits, and there is a great deal of “optionality” (the only options available previously were the two-year “*especialización*” (major), after the first three-year cycle). Students can now even take up 10% of the total credits from a different degree. These changes have not been adopted yet by all universities, so the two systems currently co-exist. This flexibility in the structure of the degrees has clear implications for guidance, as it means students will have more options from which to choose, and decision-making will be a continuing process.

The institutions responsible for organising the studies within each University are the Faculties (*Facultades*) for two-cycle Humanities, Social and Legal Sciences, and Experimental Sciences; Higher Technical Schools (*Escuelas Técnicas Superiores*) for two-cycle technical studies; and University / Technical Schools (*Escuelas Universitarias y Escuelas Técnicas*) for first-cycle courses (non-technical and technical). The *LRU* defines these institutions as “bodies charged with the administrative management and organisation of university education leading to the award of academic degrees”. Prior to the *LRU*, a Faculty or School could only teach one degree, its name having to coincide with the name of the institution. The new model introduced by the *LRU* breaks this rigid bond and provides for the possibility of courses leading to different official degrees being taken at one and the same university institution (CIDE, 1996).

The university degrees are structured by cycles:

- * First-cycle degrees (*carreras de ciclo corto*) which last three years, require 180 credits and are the only degrees offered by *Escuelas Universitarias*, though they also exist within the other institutions. The qualifications earned are *Diplomatura*, *Arquitectura Técnica* or *Ingeniería Técnica*. They do not lead directly to admission into a second cycle, but they enable the student to access a second-cycle degree in a similar field. For some options there are no restrictions on the transition, while for other options complementary courses, called *pasarelas y complementos de formación*, are required.

* Second-cycle degrees, in which are distinguished:

- Long-cycle degrees with no intermediate qualification (*carreras de ciclo largo, sin titulación intermedia*): these consist of a first and second cycle, last four to five years, and require at least 300 credits (500 in the case of Medicine). No intermediate qualification is gained upon completion of the first cycle. The final qualifications are the *Licenciatura*, *Arquitectura Superior* or *Ingeniería Superior*. This type of programme is only offered in *Facultades* and *Escuelas Técnicas Superiores*.
 - Long-cycle degrees with intermediate qualifications (*carreras de ciclo largo, con titulación intermedia*) also consist of two cycles, but they lead to an intermediate qualification at the end of the first cycle (see above) and a second qualification at the end of the second cycle. These programmes are offered by *Facultades* and *Escuelas Técnicas Superiores*.
 - Second-cycle-only degrees (*carreras de sólo segundo ciclo*) exist at *Facultades* and *Escuelas Técnicas Superiores* and are accessed after a first-cycle degree in a similar field, or after a long-cycle degree.
- * Third-cycle programmes (*tercer ciclo o doctorado*) which are accessed after a long-cycle or a second-cycle degree.

Non-university sector

Higher education is currently represented by both the university sector and the non-university sector; but traditionally it has not been this way. Non-university HE is regulated by the *LOGSE (Ley Orgánica de Ordenación del Sistema Educativo)*, the General Educational System Reform Act of 1990, being included within the chapter of *Enseñanzas Especializadas* (along with language teaching); they are also called *estudios superiores*, some leading to university-equivalent degrees. The institutions which nowadays represent the non-university sector have either been created recently, or the studies which they offer have existed at a lower level and have only recently been extended to the higher education level. Some of these studies are still at an experimental stage. They can be provided for both at public and at private institutions and the creation of new studies is possible, once approved by the academic authorities (Ministry of Education and Culture - *MEC*).

It is difficult to give a reliable estimate of the number of students in this sector, as the statistics given by the MEC refer to the *enseñanzas especializadas* in general, without specifying the proportion at the higher education level. According to the *Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE)*, the estimated number of students enrolled in 1993/94 was 51,733, but they also include those students in the *Modulos de Formación Profesional de grado Superior*, a form of vocational training. In the academic year 1997/98, the fees for one of these institutions (*Escuela Superior de Conservación y Restauración de Bienes Culturales*) were 45,000 pts. per year. The MEC sets the fees for each year, or the Autonomous Community does so where it has taken over the educational powers.

In Spain, we tend to identify higher education only with the university sector, even if now this should not be so, and is gradually changing, at least in the official documents. It has been very difficult to obtain information on the non-university sector, and even more so in the guidance field, where there is a more limited tradition. The guidance provided is very basic, usually vocational (information on the different possibilities in their field, support in choosing a specialisation, etc.) and linked to the teaching functions. There are no specialised guidance workers nor services. The work experience (*prácticas*), mandatory in most studies, is considered as a vocational guidance activity, giving students in-depth knowledge of their field of work, and helping them in their vocational decisions. Most institutions provide a service called *bolsa de trabajo* (which we will see in the university sector as well), whereby students are informed of the job vacancies in their field (usually posted on the institution's bulletin board).

2a. Main Guidance and Counselling Services

The provision of guidance in Higher Education in Spain has not been backed up or supported by any official education regulations. The 1983 University Reform Act, *Ley de Reforma Universitaria (LRU)*, currently in force, makes no reference whatsoever to guidance or counselling at this level. Only the 1970 General Education Law (*Ley General de Educación - LGE*) has explicitly mentioned guidance related to the university sector. It recommended the establishment of a *tutorial system* in the universities, whereby a *profesor-tutor* (tutor) would be in charge of a small number of students; and the provision of vocational guidance services, focusing on employment. It also led to the creation of the *Curso de Orientación Universitaria (COU)*, a preparatory year after the completion of secondary education (*BUP*), aimed at students who wanted to gain access to university, in which guidance should have been the core activity in order to help students choose their subject studies, understand what university life is like, etc. In practice, however, the tutorial system was only implemented in the very few universities which assumed responsibility for doing so on their own; due to the increase in the number of students entering university, not many of them did this, particularly as such action was not supported by any further regulations. As to *COU*, it became a course mainly aimed at preparing students academically for the *selectividad* (university entrance examination), and even though there was some experimental provision of educational and vocational services, they never became a reality, soon being discontinued. At the most, guidance activities provided for in *COU* have been information sessions, run by undergraduate and graduate students from the nearest university, about their degrees and the possibilities they offer. When the guidance centres at the universities began to be created, some included *COU* students among their target groups. However, in general, and with a few exceptions, the *COU* has never really met the purpose for which it was initially created. With the new educational reform (*Ley Orgánica General del Sistema Educativo - LOGSE*), this preparatory course is disappearing, whereas a Guidance Department (*Departamento de Orientación*) is being created in every secondary education institution (*Instituto de E. Secundaria*). We will not elaborate this point any further as it is prior to higher education. The following table shows the main services/systems in which some kind of guidance provision is given.

Table 1 : Main guidance and counselling services and systems - structure and content

Service/system ¹	Funding/administrative control	Location	Extent	Level	Target-group
Guidance Centre (COIE, SOU, SIE, SOPP, DISE, CIDU)	institution, specifically one of the vice-rectorates; in some cases, external organisations and/or alumni associations	inside	most universities	3	all students
Employment Centre (GIPE, SIPE, FUNDECOR)	institution and external organisations	inside	some	3	final-year students and graduates
Counselling Service (UAPSMU, SAOP, SOE, SAP, SAT) ²	institution	inside	few	3 ³	all students
European Information Centre <i>Centro de Documentación Europea</i> (CDE)	initially funded by the EC; controlled and funded later by institution	most inside; some outside but in univ. premises	most universities	3	students and staff
Foreign Relations Office <i>Oficina de Relaciones Internacionales</i>	institution, usually the Vice-Rectorate for Foreign Affairs (<i>Vicerrectorado de Relaciones Internacionales</i>)	inside	most universities	0	students, staff and other universities
Tutorial System	institution	inside	few	1	On-course students

¹ The name of these services in Spanish varies greatly from one university to another. These are the ones most frequently used.

² These services are usually referred to by their full name or by part of it, not by their abbreviations. We have included them in the table for the sake of simplicity.

³ Even though the service is not part of the formal teaching function, in many cases the staff are academics from the Psychology or Medicine Faculty. However, it is delivered as a specialised service.

Most of the categories in Table 1 are self-explanatory, except for the category “level” which refers to whether the service is:

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

Second-in-line (2): linked to the formal teaching function, but with some degree of specialisation.

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

This concept is part of the student-centred holistic model (see Van Esbroeck, 1997a, 1997c) which is used as a descriptive model in this survey.

2b. Commentary

It is very difficult to describe guidance provision in Spanish universities in a general way. The creation of guidance services has not followed a common pattern, and this has led to a great diversity of centres and names. Guidance centres and counselling services are to a great extent autonomous in establishing their objectives, the activities carried out, their target groups and their staff. A survey carried out by Sebastián *et al.* (1996) showed that there was some confusion among university students regarding what these services had to offer them in practice (brochures do not always reflect the real situation) and the kind of activities carried out. We have included most guidance centres under the same heading, in spite of the differences between them, except for those which only deliver guidance and/or information related to employment. A first attempt to classify them under different headings led us to do so according to the words used in their names, considering these would be key to understanding their main goals. Thus, services with the words guidance, information and/or employment - *COIE* (*Centro de Orientación, Información y Empleo*) - would presumably carry out tasks related to these aspects; services with only the word information in their name - *SIE* (*Servicio de Información al Estudiante*), *CIDU* (*Centro de Información y Documentación Universitaria*), etc. - would be expected to provide information only, and so on. However, when analysing the functions and activities carried out by each service, their names do not always correspond to the functions performed. In some cases a *COIE* might be only providing information to the students and no other guidance activities, whereas an information centre might be delivering guidance in different ways. The main focus of their activities (whether educational, vocational or personal) is not a valid criterion to classify them either. Even though a few

centres are very specific in the type of service they provide (e.g. the *SIPE - Servicio de Información y Promoción de Empleo* - at the University of Navarra, the *GIPE - Gabinete de Iniciativas para el Empleo* - at the University of Alicante or *FUNDECOR - Fundación Universitaria para el Desarrollo de Córdoba* - at the University of Córdoba; in which guidance, information and other activities carried out are mainly related to employment), most of them cover a wide range of topics, regardless of their names. For instance, the *SOPP (Servicio de Orientación y Planificación Profesional)* at the Carlos III University would seem to focus mainly on vocational guidance and career planning, however, it also provides personal counselling. Some services have a more holistic approach to guidance, such as the *SOU (Servicio de Orientación al Universitario)* at the University of Salamanca, which is structured in different “units” covering all aspects of guidance (educational, vocational and personal), and offering a great variety of specific programmes (for disabled students, for women, family planning and sexual information, social services, etc.). In Section 3b, we will further explain the similarities and differences between these services, regarding their goals and the main activities carried out.

COIEs and other guidance centres

Guidance, Information and Employment Centres (*Centros de Orientación, Información y Empleo*) within universities in Spain are relatively recent and have grown over the past twenty years. The lack of official regulations may account for the great diversity of services, which have developed in different ways in each institution. Only the initial services were created with a certain degree of homogeneity, as they were subject to agreements signed between *INEM (National Institute of Employment)*, and the University Vice-Rectorates, thus being to some extent regulated by the Ministry of Labour (to which *INEM* belongs). Even so, the consolidation and structure of each *COIE* was different (Sánchez, 1997), although the functions were primarily the same. The first service (*Céntrico de Orientación e Información de Empleo - COIE* - at the *Universidad Politécnica de Madrid*) was established in 1975, as a pilot experiment, followed by two more in other Madrid universities in the following year. Their creation was fostered by the *Fundación Universidad-Empresa* - an institution born in 1972 with the aim of enhancing the links between the university and the entrepreneurial world - together with the rectorates of the universities in Madrid. Two university lecturers were sent on a one-year visit to the Placement Office at the University of Indiana, USA, to learn how such offices worked. This was the basis for the creation of the first *COIE*, which was therefore established with clear placement goals. Other universities all over Spain followed the example and by 1982 there were 10 of

these Guidance Centres, expanding quickly throughout the eighties (Rivas & López Quero, 1983; Sánchez, 1997). The main function of these initial services was the insertion of the recent graduates into the labour market, although they tried (usually without success) to incorporate other guidance elements. Their main objectives, in the words of their promoters, were “guidance, information, liaison with potential employers¹, and insertion of students into the labour market according to their training, abilities and personal interests ” (Rivas & López Quero, 1983). However, they were primarily placement offices, serving as a bridge between potential employers and students graduating from university in search of their first job. Seeing the benefits of these centres regarding the labour market, the Ministry of Labour and Social Security soon supported the initiative. Legally, only its Employment Department (*INEM*) could carry out placement tasks, and thus agreements (*Convenios*) were signed between *INEM* and the university rectorates to support the *COIEs*, giving them the status of “delegate offices” (*oficinas delegadas*). A placement officer (*Técnico de empleo*) was appointed to each *COIE*, and sometimes one or two administrative workers were added. The universities could also appoint their own staff, depending on their resources. Gradually, however, these *convenios* expired and the control shifted to the universities themselves. The most recently created *COIEs* have appointed their own staff from the outset.

The eighties and nineties were a period of expansion of the *COIEs*, and of guidance centres with other names. Some were created independently of *INEM*, whereas other still signed agreements with it. When in 1995 the Temporary Job Placement Agencies (*agencias de trabajo temporal*) were legalised, the *COIEs* that were still functioning as *INEM*'s “delegate offices” changed this status, and became dependent solely on the university. Actually most *COIEs* and the other centres depend on the university, though a few are financed or supported by external organisations (such as the *Diputación de Córdoba* and *Cajasur* - a bank - in the case of Córdoba University; the *Instituto de Fomento Aragónés* in Zaragoza; the *Asociació de Amics* in the Autonomous University of Barcelona).

At the time of writing most universities have a specific service aimed at delivering guidance and/or counselling in some way (although a few only have information services and/or *bolsa de trabajo* - job vacancies). The administrative control stems from the university itself (usually one of its vice-rectorates), and in very few cases from other external organisations, so that *COIEs*, as well as the other

¹ The Spanish term used by the authors is *prospeccionar*, explained by them as: visiting potential employers and establishing links with them, finding out what basic training is required of future employees by the organisation.

centres, do not depend on *INEM* any longer, although a few maintain forms of collaboration with this organisation.

These services have been created with similar general aims, but each one is different. In some cases, services adopting the same name do not have the same functions, whereas services with different names might be carrying out very similar tasks. The most common one is *COIE*, but there are many other names. *COIE* stands for *Centro de Orientación e Información para el Empleo*; or *Centro de Orientación, Información y Empleo*. One university uses the same capital letters (*COIE*), but the name of the service is *Centro de Orientación e Información al Estudiante*. Other names are: *SOU*, *SIE*, *SOPP*, *DISE*, *SLAE*, *DIPE*..., all of them having one of the words *información* or *orientación* in them. Some of these are based on a holistic view of guidance, and as such provide integrated services for their students: this is the case with the *SOU* (*Servicio de Orientación al Universitario*) at the University of Salamanca, where a very complete service has been developed (covering the educational, vocational and personal aspects of guidance). Others only provide information on administrative procedures, available courses, and/or job vacancies for graduates; some also offer support in other aspects such as accommodation.

As we can see, there is a great diversity of names. In a recent survey (Ballesteros *et al.*, 1997), carried out for this report, the names were grouped according to the key words in them, and the results were the following: 16 (33.5%) were called *COIEs*, 14 (29.1%) had the word information in them (*SIE*, *CIDU*, *SEI*, *DISE*, *Oficina de Información*, etc.), 8 (16.6%) included the word guidance - *orientación* - (*SOA*, *SOPA*, *OA*, *SOPP*, *SACU*, *SAPE*, etc.), 3 (6.25%) had both guidance-related words - *asesoramiento* or *asistencia* - and information in them (*SLAE*), and the rest had different names which did not include any of the latter. However, when speaking of these services in general, they are usually referred to as *COIEs*.

As to their structure and staff, these also differ. Some may have up to 18 professionals working in them, whereas others only have two (see Section 3a). The training is very heterogeneous. There is no specific guidance training required (except in a few services), and those who are qualified are so usually because they have undergone some continuing training. In Section 4 we will go into further detail regarding this aspect.

Employment-related centres

Even though most guidance centres include the insertion of their graduates into the labour market among their goals, for these centres it is their main concern. The activities carried out are all aimed at this objective. Educational guidance is not covered, except for training opportunities or professional courses aimed at getting a job. They assist students in their job search, and provide a *bolsa de trabajo* (information on job vacancies and assistance in getting a job). There are of course differences in the extent to which vocational guidance is provided: some centres organise workshops and courses, while others are just limited to providing information on job vacancies.

Examples of these services are: *GIPE (Gabinete de Iniciativas para el Empleo)*, *SIPE (Servicio de Información y Promoción del Empleo)*, *FUNDECOR (Fundación Universitaria para el Desarrollo de Córdoba - formerly a COIE)*, *UNIVERSA: Universitarios en la Empresa*, or *Treball Campus (Bolsa de Trabajo)*.

The staff are similar to those in the other guidance centres, differing according to the universities and to the activities carried out. However, an employment expert is available in all of them (*técnico de empleo, técnico especialista or sociólogo de empleo*).

Personal guidance and counselling services

The establishment of these services has been much more recent than that of the *COIEs*, and far fewer universities have a Counselling Service. As in the case of the *COIEs*, the names vary; in fact few are called the same. Examples are *Unidad de Atención Psicológica y Salud Mental al Universitario (UAPSMU)*, *Servicio de Asesoramiento y Orientación Personal*, *Servicio de Orientación al Estudiante*, *Servicio de Atención Psicológica* and *Servicio de Asistencia Terapéutica*. Such services are primarily concerned with the psychological welfare of the students, and deal with those problems that affect them, especially those that interfere with their academic work, or are caused by it (stress, anxiety before exams, eating and sleeping disorders, etc.).

Those universities that do have a service of this type differ greatly in the form it takes, although usually it is linked to the *Acción Social* or other type of social services at the university. In the case of Salamanca, for instance, the *Unidad de Atención Psicológica y Salud Mental al Universitario* is based within the general Guidance Centre (the *SOU*), which covers several aspects of the students' life organised in different areas. The *UAPSMU* deals with the prevention and diagnosis of emotional and behavioural problems, promoting mental health awareness and providing training not only to the staff involved in the service, but also to the academics in order to enhance this awareness. When needed (e.g. complex personal problems) students are referred to a specialised psychologist in the Faculty of Psychology or to a psychiatrist in the Faculty of Medicine.

In most cases, however, the counselling service is independent of the Guidance Centre. The student is referred to the service by the general guidance centre (if it exists) by an academic or by someone close to the student. Some universities (University of Almería and Carlos III University) offer the possibility of a 24-hour telephone number, where students can leave their messages; they are then called back by one of the counsellors, and an interview is arranged if necessary. The Carlos III University has established the *Servicio de Asistencia Terapéutica*, hiring a full-time psychologist to provide psychological assistance to its students, even though the guidance centre at this university (*SOPP - Servicio de Orientación y Planificación Profesional*) also covers personal counselling.

European Information Centre (CDE)

This is not a guidance centre, but we have included it here due to its relationship to European matters. It is responsible not for managing the European programmes, but for gathering and disseminating all kinds of documents concerning the European Union to all those who need them. It is usually staffed by a head/director of the service, and one or two information officers (*documentalista*).

Foreign Relations Office

This comes under the *Vicerrectorado de Relaciones Internacionales* and is responsible for international matters: exchange programmes, links with other higher education institutions, European programmes, etc. In some universities, it is responsible for ERASMUS and SOCRATES students, assisting them (through their university) in the application procedures before they come, and once they are here

providing assistance in several respects: finding accommodation, obtaining the student card, choosing the courses, placing them in a Spanish course according to their level and giving them information on the city/town where they will stay. Some universities offer a welcoming reception, visits to museums, theatres or other touristic places and a farewell party when the students leave (this is usually called *sistema de acogida*). However, not all foreign relations offices provide this support. Most only give information on these programmes and on the procedures for admission and registration.

Tutorial system

A tutorial system (from a guidance perspective) exists in only a few universities, usually those with a small number of students, and some of the private ones. The underlying principle is to form a closer relationship between the academic staff and the students. We will later describe the case of one particular university: a private university where this system is well developed (although there is hardly any specific training for the tutors) in the absence of other guidance services, except for a *bolsa de trabajo* where information on job vacancies is provided. We should note that there are some academics in many universities who perform the duties of a *tutor*, supporting their students in various respects, even if they do not have that function formally assigned to them.

Control and funding

Most guidance centres are financed through the university budget, although some receive additional financial support from an external source (a local or regional authority, e.g. the *Diputación de Córdoba*; or the *Instituto Aragonés de Fomento* and *INEM*, in the case of Zaragoza). They are usually controlled by one of the University Vice-Rectorates and in a few cases are also supported by other external sources related to the university: the University's Friends Association - *Asociación de Amigos* - at the Autonomous University of Barcelona, or the Fundación Carlos III (in the Madrid university with this name).

The personal counselling or mental health services also depend on the university, but usually upon a different vice-rectorate. In some cases, it is more closely linked to the Faculty of Psychology and/or Psychiatry, or to the *Acción Social* of the university.

The European Information Centres were initially created with the support of the European Commission, but once established their control shifted to the universities themselves. The Commission provides information and some publications but does not control the centres any more. It is supposed to provide training for the staff, but this is rarely done, except for the meetings which are held every two or three years in Brussels, with all the directors.

Links and referral practices

The links between the services vary according to the university. There is usually only one guidance service at the university (the information office, or the *COIE*), but of course referral practices can exist to an external service. Those universities with a well-established guidance and personal counselling system usually have links within them as well as referral practices. A student who comes to the guidance service with a problem which is not merely vocational or educational is referred to the *Servicio Psicológico*, and if the problem is too complex, to a psychologist or a psychiatrist in the respective faculties.

There is hardly any link with the academic staff, although there are exceptions in a few universities where the guidance centre is implementing on-course programmes (in study techniques, career planning, etc.) in some of the degree programmes.

Tutors refer their students to the information/guidance services at the university for administrative matters and matters related to university life.

Stages at which the student is given support

As seen in Table 1, most guidance and counselling services are aimed at all students, and thus in theory operate at all stages. However, not all stages are taken into account to the same extent. Pre-entry activities cover career information provided mainly in secondary schools (final-year students), and in career fairs, related to those studies that can be pursued at the university. Support at the induction stage is quite limited, usually consisting of reception meetings held with first-year students at the beginning of the academic year. In general, private universities and some of the small public ones pay more attention to this stage, as they have a stronger *in loco parentis* function (even if the students live off-

campus), and they want to make sure their students feel at home. On-course services are the most neglected ones, except in those universities with an established tutorial system, in which students are assisted throughout the academic year. Guidance centres usually do not carry out activities at the on-course stage, although some universities are trying to implement career planning and development programmes in some classes, co-ordinated by the guidance centre. Most guidance services do not provide their services outside the centre, and students come seeking advice at times of change: when they have to choose a certain course, because they want to carry out *prácticas*, or when they feel they are ready for a job and seek help in finding one. Support at the exit stage is provided for, as most universities have some kind of *bolsa de trabajo* (which can range from merely providing information on job offers, to actually placing a student with a specific employer).

The employment-related centres are only aimed at final-year students and graduates, usually from the same university, but some also provide support to those from other universities.

Counsellor-student ratios

The ratios vary between the universities, but it is not possible to give an exact ratio, or even an average one, as we do not know the exact number of guidance workers. A recent survey carried out among the university guidance centres (Ballesteros *et al.*, 1997), in which only half of them (approx. 20) provided exact information on staff numbers, showed that there were 131 persons working in those guidance centres. Extrapolating this number to all the universities, we could say there are around 300 people working in the guidance centres and personal counselling services. We must remember that this is a very rough estimate, and includes many different types of professionals, including *directores*, *técnicos*, *documentalistas*, *orientadores*, *becarios*, and *auxiliares administrativos* (see Section 3b). These 300 people service around 1,500,000 students. The average number of staff in each guidance service is 7 (some services have 18 persons, whereas others have only 2). As an example, one university with a well-established guidance system (including a personal counselling service), and for which we have accurate numbers (18 people), had a total of 33,646 students registered in the academic year 1996/97: i.e. 1,869 students per staff member. This example gives an idea of the high counsellor/student ratios.

Attention to special target groups

Usually there is no special attention to particular target groups: disabled students, those from diverse cultural backgrounds, etc. There are no specific services for such groups. Some guidance centres, however, have set up special programmes aimed at particular groups. Unfortunately, there are very few of these, and they are fairly recent, so the programmes are either not well established yet, or students are not aware of their existence. At the University of Salamanca, for instance, the *SOU*, within its Social Services unit, has set up a specific programme for the disabled - *Programa de normalización de discapacitados* - in order to facilitate their integration into the university life. It also has a programme on equality of opportunities aimed at women students.

Some well-known organisations working with disabled people (i.e. *ONCE - Organización Nacional de Ciegos Españoles*) are negotiating some agreements with the universities, through the *COIEs*, to hire disabled graduates, but this is not yet very common.

International students

In the academic year 1996/97 there were a total of 11,247 foreign students enrolled in the Spanish universities (we have no information on the other HE institutions, although there is probably a small percentage there as well), 10,523 in the public ones, and 724 in the private ones. There are usually no specific guidance services aimed at them, except in a few universities. Most universities have an office for foreign affairs or international relations (*Oficina o Servicio de Relaciones Internacionales*), which is linked to the *Vice-Rectorado de Relaciones Internacionales*; and/or an office responsible for European programmes (such as ERASMUS or LINGUA), which can also be linked to the former, or to the *Vicerrectorado de Investigación* (Vicerectorate for Research). These services are responsible for gathering and disseminating information on international programmes, studies abroad, postgraduate studies, grants and internships (*prácticas*) for students who want to go abroad. Most also provide information to those who want to come to Spain from other countries, mainly on administrative matters (admission and registration, financial support, student card); some also offer support on welfare aspects such as health insurance, accommodation, etc., and academic matters. In those institutions with a system of *acogida al estudiante* support is given to foreign students to a greater extent, but unfortunately this is not common practice.

In order to analyse the support provided, we can roughly classify the students into two types: those students who live in Spain, and are following the mainstream education system; and those who come on an exchange programme, for a specific period of study. In the first case, they are considered just like the rest of the students, and will have the same access to guidance services, receiving the same support. As with all students (Spain has a great variety of “cultures”), their diverse cultural background is not taken into account. In the second case, some universities have an information office specifically for foreign students on exchange programmes; a few also offer a system of reception and support - *sistema de acogida al estudiante* - assisting them in the search for accommodation, services available, courses, etc., at the pre-entry or induction stage. However, in most cases there is only an information service at the university aimed at all students - both foreign and national - and students who come from abroad may (like some Spanish ones) find themselves initially quite “disoriented”, especially in the large universities.

The European dimension

The European dimension is mainly limited to information giving on educational and training opportunities in other Member States and on labour market opportunities. Most guidance workers feel they do not have the necessary competencies to deliver their services with a European perspective (Malik, 1997).

As we have seen above, most universities have some kind of service responsible for European exchange programmes, providing information and support in applications. Some also have a system of *acogida* (see above) for students coming on these programmes, but not all do.

The use of new technologies

The use of information technologies and the development of technology-driven career programmes in our country has been quite slow, and has only recently begun to expand. Fortunately, the infrastructure is progressing rapidly, and the costs are being increasingly reduced, thus facilitating access for more people. Many services are already using the Internet to provide information on their services and facilities (through their own Web page, or their university's), and some use e-mail to

answer queries. The use of computer programs as a tool to deliver career guidance is growing in all higher education institutions in Spain. Some programs have been adapted from those of other countries, and some have been developed here. Many university guidance centres are involved in the design of new programs adapted to their contexts. We will describe briefly some of the currently available programs, which are widely used, if not in all universities. There are many more programs developed or used in certain universities, but since this is not the main concern of this report, we will list only a few.

One of the most complete careers guidance databases has been developed by the private company *Círculo de Progreso*: the *Programa de Información al Universitario (PIU)* (Information Program for the HE Student). It is used in many guidance centres, aimed not at the students directly (although it could be used by them), but at the guidance workers in order to have a quick and regularly updated source of information. It is constantly being upgraded, and offers all kinds of information regarding higher education: degrees and courses, studying abroad, postgraduate courses, fellowships and grants, work experience (*prácticas*) and awards, among other things. It provides information on all HE institutions, both in the university sector and in the non-university sector, and on institutions abroad (EU and non-EU countries). Another program developed by *Círculo de Progreso* is *Elige tu Futuro* (Choose your Future). The aim of this program is to serve as a tool for the student when choosing a career or subject of study. Thus, it offers information and guidance to support the student in the decision-making process. It covers the following sections: self-awareness, university and/or college courses (degrees), “things you should know”, vocational training and private institutions. *BANCOEMPLEO* (*Círculo de Progreso*) is a database which offers information on the labour market. Its weekly upgrading enables access to interesting and up-to-date information. *DECIDE 1.0* (Autonomous University of Madrid) aims to meet the needs of students faced with the problem of choosing a career or higher education course. After going through the program, a final report provides a personal assessment on the courses that the student could follow, appropriate to the personal and educational data, and relevant to the choice of career. It also offers a description of the courses suggested, their syllabus, where they can be taken, the minimum average grade required to be admitted, and grants for which the student could apply. In the detailed profiles (Section 3c), we offer some further information on the use of new technologies in guidance.

Trends and expected changes

The adoption of modular courses and credit transfer system has clear implications for guidance (Watts *et al.*, 1994). Spanish universities are changing from a rigid structure to a more flexible one, with a wider range of subjects and “optionality” within a degree. This calls for a better educational guidance provision and learning support, which should be achieved with the enhancement of the tutorial system and the support of the guidance centre at the on-course stage. Many academics are in favour of this tutorial system, but due to the large numbers of students in the universities, it is not feasible in all departments. On-course guidance will have to be reinforced, and this will require closer co-operation between the guidance centre and the academic staff, integrating career planning programmes, for instance, or study techniques, into the curriculum.

Regarding the transition to the world of work, we should remember that unemployment rates in Spain are among the highest in the European Union (according to the statistics, the *highest* of all). Levels of unemployment are growing among the graduate population, which is finding it more difficult to get a job in the field they are prepared for. Just a few years ago, an university degree was almost an open door to the labour market. Today, the scene is much less optimistic. The following figures of the unemployment rates by educational level (National Institute of Statistics - *INE*, 1995), give an idea of the situation:

EPA Labour Force Survey (*Encuesta de Población Activa*) 1995.

<i>Field</i>	<i>Percentage (Total)</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>
Engineering and Technology	11.6	10.3	25.6
Medical and Health Sciences	8.9	4.1	11.9
Humanities	20.1	14.6	23.9
Social and legal sciences	18.9	12.3	23.7
Maths and natural sciences	17.2	11.5	24.9
Non-university HE	21.7	14.9	28.1
PhD	4.9	2.4	9.8

Source: *INE* (National Institute of Statistics)

As we can see in these figures, the Humanities sector is the most seriously affected. Regarding the

types of population, we can see that the highest unemployment takes place among graduate and post-graduate women. Unfortunately there are no data on other special target populations.

This situation has a clear effect on guidance and counselling. We have seen that the main focus of guidance activities at the HE level is vocational; however, it does not seem to be very effective. Guidance at this level is considered important only by a few university authorities, and by a number of experts who are making great efforts towards developing a better system. No change is expected in the near future regarding the educational authorities and policy makers. Hopefully, however, growing demands from students, from society in general and from the professionals involved, together with increasing research work carried out in the field (there is little research concerning higher education students' needs, or guidance in general at this level, although it is gradually becoming an important issue), will contribute to the enhancement of the existing guidance systems and to the development of better ones. The importance of targeting special groups is also evident, as they are usually the most seriously affected by unfavourable circumstances.

University guidance centres are expanding quickly, but they are not following a common trend. There is a gradual shift from a mere information system on jobs and training opportunities to a more holistic model encompassing educational, vocational and personal issues. The process is very slow, and as yet, very few universities can be completely satisfied with the guidance services they are giving to their students.

The National Institute for Employment (*INEM*) is receiving financial aid from the European Social Fund, aimed at different non-profit organisations (Trade Unions, associations, etc.) interested in establishing a *SIPE* (*Servicios Integrados de Promoción para el Empleo* – different from the *SIPE* at the University of Navarra) or job centre. Some university guidance centres are applying for this financial aid to become a specialised placement agency or job centre.

As to the non-university sector, it is even more under-developed. Due to the practical nature of the studies, there is usually a higher degree of contact with the “outer” world, and this is one of the arguments used when justifying the current situation. Further exploration and research in this sector will be necessary to analyse the implications for guidance services of future trends and expected changes.

3. Roles and Tasks

3a. Introduction

In this section we will analyse the main roles and tasks performed by those professionals working in the field of HE guidance and counselling. As in the other country reports, the analysis is based upon a student-centred guidance model (Van Esbroeck, 1997a, 1997c). This model distinguishes the following types of guidance:

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.

Table 2 shows the focus of each occupational role within the guidance service/system, according to the above-mentioned types, allocating 7 points across the three. This allocation is based upon a combination of several variables: time spent, and how the focus is perceived by the counsellor, by the client and by the institution. All the numbers are approximate, and those in brackets are particularly rough estimates.

The staff at the European Information Centre and the Foreign Relations Office, as well as the clerical staff in the guidance centres, are not included in Tables 3 and 4. The tasks they perform have not been rated as they are not directly concerned with guidance or counselling, and therefore their training and qualifications have not been analysed either. The clerical staff at some Foreign Relations Offices may provide some guidance-related tasks such as giving information on courses, but this is not very common. Any discrepancies between the ratings given in Table 3 and the description of the tasks performed (Section 3b) are due to the differences that exist in these roles from one university to the other. Those ratings do not apply to all workers, even within the same role. We have tried to keep them as representative as possible, but considering them valid for all practitioners would not reflect the Spanish reality. For instance, careers advisers from different *COIEs* perform many similar tasks, but they also differ in many others.

Table 2 : Main occupational roles and focus

Service/system	Occupational roles	Number	Focus		
			E	V	P
Guidance Centre	Director (<i>Director / Coordinador</i>)	50	1	6	0
	Careers adviser (<i>Técnico / Orientador</i>)	50	2	4	1
	Placement officer (<i>Técnico "relacionado con empleo"</i>)	{25}	1	6	0
	Information manager (<i>Experto en información / Técnico de prensa/ Documentalista</i>)	{50}	3	4	0
	Graduate and undergraduate students (<i>Becarios</i>)	{75} also included in all the previous roles (except Directors)	**		
Employment Centre	Clerical staff (<i>Personal administrativo</i>)	{75}	NA*	NA	NA
Counselling Service	Same as above but related to employment	30	0	7	0
	Counsellor/Psychologist (<i>Psicólogo</i>)	{10}	1	1	5
	Graduate and undergraduate students (<i>Becarios</i>)	{10} same as above	1	1	5
European Information Centre	Director (<i>Director</i>)	50	NA*	NA	NA
	Information manager (<i>Documentalista</i>) They are usually <i>becarios</i> .	75	NA*	NA	NA
Foreign Relations Office	Coordinator (<i>Jefe de Servicio / Coordinador institucional</i>)	{50}	NA*	NA	NA
	Clerical staff (<i>Personal administrativo</i>)	{75}	NA*	NA	NA
Tutorial System	Tutor (<i>profesor-tutor</i>)	not even a rough estimate is possible	3	1	3

** The focus depends on the role assigned to these students

• NA = not applicable. The involvement of these staff in guidance and counselling is so minimal that they are not covered in detail in this report and will not be included in tables 3 and 4.

For each of the occupational roles listed in Table 2, a task analysis has been carried out (results in Table 3), using the following classification (Watts & Van Esbroeck, 1996):

1. **General management** : general administrative management, including service/programme planning and evaluation. 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.
 - 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 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 services 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. **Preselection** : preselecting 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)

The rating has been carried out according to the following scale:

- 4 major involvement
- 3 considerable involvement
- 2 some involvement
- 1 minor involvement

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	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	4	0	1	2	1	3	2	1
Careers adviser	3	2	4	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	2	1	0	4	2	0	0	0	0
Placement officer	0	3	3	0	0	1	1	2	3	3	0	2	1	3	0	1	2	3	0	0	1
Information manager	3	4	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Counsellor / Psychologist	2	3	1	4	4	3	2	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
Tutor	0	1	3	2	2	3	0	1	2	1	0	2	4	1	4	1	0	0	3	1	0

- An important distinction must be highlighted here: whether the director is a full-time role or not. When it is full-time the scope of activities widens, whereas on a part-time basis the tasks are obviously reduced, usually encompassing only A, sometimes B, and N. For the purpose of thoroughness, the ratings given here relate to the tasks usually performed by full-time directors/co-ordinators.

3b. Task Analysis: Comments

Staff and their roles

The staff in the HE guidance services are very heterogeneous; there is no uniformity (Ballesteros *et al.*, 1997). The roles specified in Table 2 & 3 are not so well defined in reality; their tasks overlap, and their names in Spanish vary a great deal. There are many different workers in the guidance centres, and names do not always coincide: *director*, *co-ordinador*, *jefe de sección* and *jefe de negociado* all refer to the head of the service; *técnico especialista*, *técnico superior*, *orientador* and *técnico* more or less refer to the role of careers adviser; *técnico de información y prensa*, *experto en información y comunicación* and *documentalista* refer to information manager/officer; and other roles include *informático*, *programador* (computer analysts/scientists), *auxiliar administrativo*, *puesto base de administración* (clerical staff), etc.

Furthermore, the role of the guidance worker/counsellor is not professionalised in higher education, complicating the task of classification. The staff are usually selected from the existing personnel: *técnicos* and *personal administrativo* are usually *funcionarios* (civil servants) working in some other department or service at the university; while the head/director might be a lecturer/professor from one of the faculties, with part-time responsibilities for the guidance service (although this is not always the case).

The usual staff consists of a director, *técnicos especialistas* (careers advisers), an information officer or expert, the “*becarios*” and the administrative staff.

The most common figure in most university institutions is the *becario*, a person who is not hired on a contractual basis, but whose duties and tasks are quite similar to those of an employee (they are granted a monthly amount, similar to a salary, but lack other benefits such as the unemployment insurance, social security, extra payment, etc.). Among the *becarios*, some are social workers, computer analysts, sociologists, pedagogues, psychologists, etc. In the case of the guidance centres, they carry out very different tasks, including those of the *técnicos*. There are two types of *becarios*: students who are still studying at the undergraduate level, who receive lower wages, and perform auxiliary tasks; and *graduates*, who might be working on their PhD (but not necessarily),

and whose wages are higher, though not corresponding to their qualification. Their working hours are not equal to those of a full-time worker - they are usually approx. 20 hrs. a week (which is half of the normal working hours) - but they are committed to the service, and cannot officially work in any other place.

It is important here to draw a distinction between these *becas* and the *becas predoctorales*, which are pre-doctoral research grants awarded by the Ministry of Education and by the universities/ research organisations to doctorate students involved in a research project. Such students benefit from training/research opportunities, doing their thesis while at the same time working for the Department in which they have the grant (theoretically in the project). These have a different status, and even if not comparable to a job, give the student many opportunities for advancing within their field.

The *becas* that we are considering here seem to be based on the *becas predoctorales*, but lack the research component. The formal conditions usually state that their objective is to train the *becario* in the skills required for the job, but bluntly speaking, the *becario* either has the skills or develops them while carrying out the tasks of that job. In the past few years, this system is increasingly being adopted with no relation to research (though a little more to training): different organisations or institutions within the universities are creating *becas*, instead of jobs, with the obvious benefits for them as opposed to a work contract. Graduate students, who have no other way out into the labour market, stick to them until they are able to get a better job, according to their qualification. It may be useful for their professional curriculum (depending on the organisation, and the student's field of study), and certainly for survival, but we wonder if it is at all beneficial to the *becario* in the long term, or to the service. In the best of cases, those students who are well prepared in their field eventually find a position elsewhere, e.g. as academics or in a company, thus leaving the service.

The *undergraduate* grants give the student an opportunity for further practice in their field, while at the same time earning some money. There are also conscientious objectors who carry out their service in guidance centres.

Some universities with few staff (not necessarily the small ones) are increasingly "hiring" undergraduate students for particular guidance activities such as career fairs, for which they

consider it unnecessary to have a permanent or even part-time person available. For instance, at one big university, the staff of the *COIE* is made up of a full professor, a *técnico* and two *becarias*. They have a close relationship with the academics at the departments, who are responsible for implementing the guidance programmes elaborated by the *COIE*; they consider they do not need any more personnel, except when big events take place, such as a career fair, or at the beginning of the academic year, where many people are needed in the organisation. The undergraduates are given a short training session (one week part-time), and are paid for the activities they carry out.

In the counselling services, a psychologist can be hired by the university specifically to provide this service full-time, or he/she can be part of the academic staff, with a part-time allocation to these duties. In one of the counselling services, they have graduate psychologists, psychiatrists, and social workers, all of them *becados* (that is, holding a grant), instead of being hired on a contractual basis. They are the first point of contact for the student, who is either assisted by them or is referred to a specialist in the faculty of psychology and/or psychiatry. There are differences between the services regarding the activities carried out. At the Carlos III University, for instance, the psychologist only performs specific counselling tasks, both in group and individually. The group sessions are usually short-term (D), consisting of *charlas/coloquio* (talks/debates), in which the psychologist presents a particular subject and students are encouraged to participate actively. Individual counselling may be short-term (D) and long-term (E), depending on the needs of the student. Students can just ask for information, or arrange an interview with the psychologist, either by telephone or by filling out an application. At the University of Salamanca, the psychologist carries out other activities besides the counselling-specific ones. These include general management tasks (A), information management (B) and information giving (B), organisation of mental health awareness programmes (M), training sessions for the academic staff in order to promote mental health awareness and to detect and prevent emotional problems in their students (S), research activities, etc.

Functions of the services and tasks performed

One of the main aims of university guidance services is to provide career guidance and placement opportunities, helping students to make satisfactory decisions regarding their career planning and eventually to get a job. Insertion into the labour market is considered very important, although

increasing attention is being given to the career development of students (and staff), gradually shifting from a mere information-giving and placement service to a more supportive and developmental guidance provision. Thus, Guidance Centres undertake the following tasks: information on training and work opportunities (B & C), vacancy information (P), training in job-search and self-employment skills (M), follow-up (U), referral (L) to other places which provide more work opportunities (temporary work agencies, companies with potential to hire students), participation in career fairs, and so on. Placement is also done in many guidance centres, but it must be highlighted that in Spain only *INEM* (National Employment Institute), the *agencias de colocación* (placement agencies) appointed by it, and the private temporary employment agencies (*Empresas de Trabajo Temporal* - *ETTs*, or *Agencias de Trabajo Temporal* - *ATTs*) are legally responsible for undertaking placement into the labour market. Thus, guidance services that want to carry out these tasks need officially to turn into an agency of that kind (at the time of writing, the *COIE* of the University of Granada has turned into *agencia de colocación*); in practice, however, others do offer placement opportunities.

There is a specific service called *bolsa de trabajo*, which can range from merely giving information on job vacancies and employment-related news, to actually placing students into the labour market. Students leave their CVs, and when an opening matching their qualifications appears, they are called back. Most higher education institutions (including the non-university sector) provide this service, at different levels (some only give information, while others provide further support).

Negotiating the *Convenios de Cooperación Educativa* also plays an important role in the vocational aspect of the services. These are agreements between the university and a private company, aimed at students in the final two years of their degree, to carry out *prácticas* (work experience) in that company. Bursaries or grants may be available, covering the period of the *prácticas*, a period which cannot embrace more than 50% of the course credits (for those universities where the credit system is already implemented). Once they are fulfilled, there is no contractual obligation on the employer's side. Students are interested in these *convenios*, as they give them the opportunity of further training, and are useful as professional experience in their CV, when applying for a job in their field.

Educational guidance covers information on all the possible courses, degrees, grants or other

financial aids, awards, interest and aptitude assessment, etc. A few universities also give workshops on study techniques and work habits, though most of them do not, arguing that at this level of education students should have already acquired such skills. Universities, as is the tendency in many other countries in Europe, are gradually trying to incorporate guidance into the curriculum. This requires a close co-ordination between academic staff and the Guidance Centre, thus involving academics in the guidance process. It is a great challenge and has been achieved only in a few institutions so far, although efforts are being made and at least some career planning programmes are beginning to be introduced. The tutorial system operates in some institutions as well, mainly on an academic basis - choice of courses, advice on subjects, contents, time-tables, requirements, etc.

The Employment Centres carry out activities aimed at the insertion of graduates into the labour market, including liaison with potential employers (N), coaching (O), organising workshops and courses on job search skills, preselection of their graduates for particular jobs, and providing information on job vacancies (P). They also provide information on summer/temporary jobs for final-year students, who also take part in the job search courses and other activities aimed at enhancing their employability skills.

Personal guidance (counselling) is usually performed as a complementary task within the Guidance Centre, and only some universities have specific services (e.g. University of Deusto, Salamanca, Málaga, Carlos III and a few others). Students are referred to them or to external services, when the problem cannot be dealt with at the university service. When it is a complementary task of the Guidance Centre, only short-term individual counselling (D) is carried out. Specialised services can spend more time on the specific-counselling related tasks and thus can also counsel students over a long period of time (E). Group counselling (F & G) is only occasionally done. Referral practices (L), are common in both directions (receiving referred students, and referring them to other types of experts when needed). Depending on the university, counsellors may also be engaged in general management activities (contacts within the institution and with external bodies) (A), in the production of information materials (B), in specific courses aimed at students (M), in the training of future counsellors (S), and in research activities.

Besides the tasks outlined above, guidance centres in higher education carry out other activities which are difficult to categorise under a generic name. Thus, they may engage in research related to

different aspects, e.g. students' needs; some also have an editorial department (book and journal publishing), or provide accommodation services, or offer opportunities for social volunteer work, or training graduate students to coach other students at pre-university level (mentoring), etc.

European Information Centres are mainly involved in managing and disseminating information related to the European Communities, such as legislation, job vacancies, etc.

The Foreign Relations Offices are involved in liaison with other higher education institutions abroad, transfer of credits, and in general are responsible for the mobility of both students and academic staff (in European and other exchange programmes). In a few cases these programmes are the responsibility of the Vice-Rectorate for Research (*Vicerrectorado de Investigación*) (e.g. at UNED).

3c. Detailed Profiles

Careers Adviser (Técnico especialista, Orientador)

The Careers Adviser performs many different tasks, depending on the university. These are mainly related to information-giving on educational and labour market opportunities, educational guidance, placement, etc. The main focus of their job is on career and job information, but they also give information on educational and training opportunities. Personal counselling is done only to a very small extent.

Tasks performed are: information management (B); information-giving on education, training, work experience¹ and labour market opportunities (C); advice (I); referral (L), placement and liaison with providers (N), coaching (O), and vacancy information (P). Short-term individual counselling (D) is occasionally delivered, as when a client comes to the adviser not really knowing what he/she wants and often comes back for one or two further sessions; or when a student seeks advice on educational or career issues and at some point comes up with a personal problem that is interfering with his/her decisions. Some have problems making up their minds (for instance, whether to take up one job or another one), or personal problems, and turn for help to the Careers Adviser, who may assist the student or refer him/her to a psychologist if needed. Sometimes preselection (Q) is carried out at the request of a particular employer, searching among all the registered students for the specific characteristics required. Teaching (M) is to some extent carried out in the design and delivery of courses on study techniques and work habits, job hunt strategies, self-motivation, etc., when the service provides for this facility. Other tasks performed include research on students' guidance and counselling needs; or publishing a newsletter aimed at all the university community.

Information management is usually performed by the *experto en información y/o comunicación* or information manager (see Section 3b), with whom the Careers Adviser works closely, their tasks being in many cases interwoven and their roles interdependent and complementary.

¹ *Convenios de Cooperación Educativa*¹ are Agreements between a student and an employer regarding unpaid work experiences. The adviser refers the student to a potential employer, and then to the director and/or the administrative staff responsible for negotiating the Agreement.

Guidance delivery on a personal basis is the most common. However, an increasing number of students, including many that live in the same city or near the service, use the other methods: phone, postal mail, e-mail, and fax. E-mail is not yet extensively used because at the moment of writing it has only been recently installed at some of the Guidance Centres, and not many people have it at home. The types of inquiries are very diverse, because of the heterogeneity in age, training, educational and professional background of students. Some users know exactly what they want (specific information, to register in the *bolsa de empleo*, coaching in writing a CV, etc.) and they ask for the information in a clear and precise way. Others ask for information or assessment imprecisely, without knowing clearly what the Careers Adviser can offer them. The demands range from choice of subject, grants and awards, bureaucratic matters/administrative procedures, post-graduate studies and information on studies abroad, to information on job vacancies, possibilities for work experience, coaching in job search techniques, preparing a CV, needs and interest assessment, etc.

The Careers Adviser writes down the inquiry and registers relevant information on the student. Sometimes the student who has requested something by mail – or has left a message in the answering machine - needs to be contacted on the phone, as they leave out important information in their requests. Unless the question is very specific and has an immediate answer, the adviser usually answers by mail and/or fax, depending on the amount of information to be sent. Even though these techniques are less flexible in the flow of information and require more time (preparing the information but especially writing out the response in a clear and comprehensible way), it is also true that postponing the reply has the advantage of allowing the adviser to elaborate a more complete and well-documented response. In most cases, inquiries on a written basis (mail and/or fax) are mostly related to information-giving and less to counselling. Students do not usually express their true feelings or needs in a letter, being very telegraphic and brief in their requests or demands. This is also true of the telephone, although students are more keen to express their motivations, expectations and troublesome situations when actually speaking to the Careers Adviser.

A special case is that of the Distance University (which operates all over the country, with

centres abroad as well). Here the role of the Careers Adviser is in some respects similar to a traditional university, performing the same tasks described earlier, but in many others is different, due to the specific characteristics of the Distance University (open learning, support based on different resources, students who live far from college, etc.). Students can go the Guidance Centre and have an interview with the Careers Adviser, but they also have the opportunity to make their inquiries through different media: telephone, mail, fax, and e-mail (although many “traditional” services also use these media, in order to reach more students, their students have easier access to the service, as they live in the same city; at UNED, there are students from all over Spain - even from abroad - and thus it is essential to provide these means of access). Therefore the information or guidance provision can potentially reach all students who require it, no matter how far from the location of the service, but of course this depends on material and technical resources as well as staff and time availability.

Whereas on an individual basis the tasks performed are related to both information and personal guidance, on a group basis they merely encompass information-giving (although it is sometimes difficult to make a clear distinction between these). Except in the case of videoconferencing, the group guidance techniques used are indirect (communication is a one-way process, with no interaction between the parties). These resources are the audio-visual aids of UNED’s methodology. Via the radio and educational T.V., students receive information on courses, grants, awards, job offers and even advice on distance-study techniques. Printed materials are also used to deliver these types of information. There is a section for the Guidance centre in the University’s Internal Bulletin, which reaches all Associate Centres, and a *Handbook on Study Techniques for Distance Higher Education* has been prepared by the Careers Advisers, in collaboration with the Director. The *experto en información/comunicación* (information manager) sends periodic information to all the Guidance Centres of UNED.

So far, the videoconference (which is used for many other purposes at the university) has been used as a means of communication between the main Guidance Centre and the Associate Centres at UNED that still do not have Guidance Centres, in order to inform them about the functions and activities that are being carried out. To a lesser extent, it is also used to deliver information to students in the other Careers Services on a specific topic. It is very

useful in group counselling and information-giving, enabling the adviser to reach quite a lot of people without having to travel long distances.

Placement Officer (Técnico “relacionado con empleo”)

As we have mentioned earlier, the HE guidance services cannot officially “place” students into the labour market, since this is the prerogative of *INEM* and of the *ATTs* (*Agencias de Trabajo Temporal*). Nevertheless, most guidance services carry out employment-related activities, this being one of the services in most demand from students. There is not really one specific job representing this role: it is performed by different staff, who can range from one of the *becarios* to the coordinator/head of the service. In the *COIEs* that depended on *INEM*, a *técnico de empleo* was appointed, but since 1995 this role has ceased to exist as such (although the functions are still being performed). Thus we will refer here to the “placement officer” in general, without specifying the name in Spanish. The tasks described are not performed in all universities.

Obviously, this role is vocationally oriented. Many of the activities are information-related. The main tasks are the following: vacancy information (P); agreements on cooperative training (*Convenios de Cooperación Educativa*) (see Section 2b); follow-up (U); information management (B) and giving information on grants, bursaries, postgraduate and/or vocational training courses, state exams (*oposiciones*), etc. (C); liaison with providers (N); employers’ presentations; coaching (O); and guidance in job-search techniques and in self-employment strategies. Additional tasks may include participation in the production of news bulletins (B), audio-visual aids, and computer programs. Placement officers also take part in seminars, forums and employment-related conferences which contribute to their continuing training (see Section 4c) and to the establishment of relations/links with other professionals.

Activities carried out regarding the students, besides those related to the above-mentioned tasks, include: reception of a “standardised CV + the grades obtained”, which are filed in the service; information on the services provided by the COIE; orientation on the bibliography which they can look up concerning work legislation, employment issues, job-search techniques (CVs, interviews, directories); and information on job offers (both public and private) included in databases. Some universities have a system of linkage between their guidance centre and certain companies,

whereby the students' CVs are submitted to them. These could be considered pre-selection (Q) activities, as the students are previously selected. There is a pilot experiment at the *Universidad Politécnica de Madrid*, in which the placement officer introduces the students' data in a computer program called KIOSKO COIE-IBM, and thus the CVs are received directly by the Personnel Department at that company (IBM).

The provision of the services is mainly individual (both personal and by telephone), when related to specific user demands: information on training and employment opportunities. Group guidance is provided in the job-search techniques courses, self-employment initiatives, and presentations of potential employers.

The Tutorial Role

Tutors are part of the academic staff, with teaching and research duties, besides their tutorial function. We cannot give exact details of the time allocated to this function, but it is clearly part-time, even though integrated into their daily work. Thus, according to Van Esbroeck's model (1997a, 1997c), they are first-in-line professionals. The focus of their tutorial work is related to educational guidance (mainly information-giving and learning support), but it also involves a great deal of personal and vocational advising.

In the specific system we describe here, the tutor organises the students in a course in working groups of about 12-15, called *seminarios*. The students work towards the fulfilment of the practical credits corresponding to each subject, and they also gain some academic credits from these seminars.

There are some specific objectives to be achieved in each cycle. The first cycle aims at developing the students' group-work skills, reading skills, skills for writing essays and scientific texts, and skills in planning and scientific methodology. In the second cycle, the main aim is to create research teams, and to increase the students' knowledge in the field of study. In both cycles, the tutor's work is complemented by the individual attention given to each student.

The activities carried out in the seminars are part of the global curriculum. They are aimed at all

students in the university, and can be classified according to whether the primary focus of attention is educational, vocational or personal. Educational guidance activities encompass information-giving and learning support, related to the acquisition and development of the skills needed to be successful in their academic career. The vocational guidance focuses on information-giving (related to the labour market), and on the career planning aspects students need in order to design their career path, and prepare themselves for the transition to the world of work. These two aspects (educational and vocational) are dealt with in a way which takes into account the social context in which the student lives, so as to connect the students to reality (i.e. analysing the daily news, the latest films or plays, etc.). As to personal guidance, it is based on individual attention to all students. The basic model is the interview, but there is also group work, in which students can express their needs. The tutor is responsible for the students' welfare and must identify where their needs are therapeutic, in which case the students will be referred to a psychologist (usually outside the university).

4. Training and Qualifications

4a. Introduction

Table 4 shows the most common training of the different roles involved in guidance. As in Table 3, the staff of the European Information Centre and of the Foreign Relations Office, and the clerical staff of the Guidance Centres, have not been included. PT refers to part-time, and FT to full-time.

4b. Commentary

As in every other aspect related to guidance in higher education in our country, there is a great variety of qualifications among the staff. Very few guidance workers have specific initial guidance training, except for those with a degree in psychology or pedagogy, this latter with the specialisation in guidance (either one of these degrees constitute the basic initial training for guidance workers at other educational levels). The specialisation is a two-year major within the 5-year degree (that is, 3 years of common training in general education, and 2 years of guidance and counselling, although other subjects are also studied during these latter two years). It covers most theoretical aspects of guidance and a *practicum* is required in most universities offering this degree. With the new system based on credits, the specialisation will cease to exist, but there are both core and optional subjects related to vocational, educational, and personal guidance. The European dimension is being considered in some universities, with optional subjects related to educational and guidance systems in the other Member States.

Other workers have initial qualifications related to guidance (e.g. social work), but most have no qualifications related to this field. There are sociologists, historians, journalists, computer analysts, etc. In some cases these qualifications correspond to the work they are carrying out, but not always.

Thus, in-service guidance-related training is the most common, but again, it is very diverse. There are many courses available at the universities: these are not only aimed at HE

Table 4 : Training and qualifications

Service/system	Occupational roles	Minimum educational qualifications for entry	Initial training in guidance and counselling	In-service training in guidance and counselling
Guidance Centre and Employment Centre	Director	University degree	Diverse; may be included in a pedagogy or psychology degree, or other courses related to guidance; some have none	Diverse, some have none
	Careers adviser	University degree or secondary education. In a few cases, the degree must be in pedagogy or psychology.	None required; may be included in pedagogy and psychology degrees	Short courses (PT) on educational and vocational guidance, employment, job-hunting skills; seminars, professional meetings
	Placement officer	University degree or secondary education with experience in the field		Same as above, also short courses (PT) on insertion
	Information manager	Secondary education; or 3 yrs. <i>Biblioteconomía</i> degree*; or 5 yrs. degree in journalism		Usually none, but depends on the worker; professional meetings
Counselling Service	Counsellor / Psychologist	5 yrs. psychology degree (FT)	Psychology	Short courses in counselling aspects; masters degrees; professional meetings
Tutorial System	Tutor	University degree		Seminars; short courses (1 week)

* *Biblioteconomía* is a 3-year university degree that covers information management, cataloguing, etc., skills related to library work, or other information centres. It is not yet mandatory in order to work in a library, but is increasingly so.

guidance, but are for guidance workers in general (*Orientación Profesional, Inserción en el Mercado de Trabajo*, etc.). There are both short courses which do not require a degree, and postgraduate courses on several aspects related to guidance. These cover topics on employability skills, knowledge of the economic system and of the different occupational clusters, insertion into the labour market, job-search techniques, etc. Such courses are available throughout the year, except for the postgraduate ones which usually start around October/November. They are usually aimed at people working in the field of guidance and/or employment, and can range from one week to 3 months. Some are free of charge (only the short ones), while in others a small amount has to be paid (except for postgraduate programmes which are more expensive).

All counsellors in the Counselling Services hold a 5-year degree in psychology, with courses related to guidance. There is no specific training regarding psychologists who work in university settings (there is specific training for work-place settings, hospitals, work with students with difficulties, and schools, but not for the higher education level in particular).

There are also seminars, conferences, professional meetings and other events which allow experts in the field and practitioners to exchange their work, concerns, common projects, etc. These are increasingly being held in the field of university guidance. The *Asociación Española de Orientación y Psicopedagogía (AEOP)*, a professional association in the guidance field, plays an active role in the organisation of annual conferences and other activities related to guidance. It is also responsible for the edition of a leading journal in the field: *Revista de Orientación y Psicopedagogía (ROP)*.

4c. Detailed Profiles

Careers Adviser

In the case of UNED, the basic initial training to become a Careers Adviser at the central *COIE* is a 5-year degree in psychology or in education, this latter with specialisation in guidance and counselling. Knowledge of distance-learning methodology is useful. The *experto en información y/o comunicación* (expert in information and communication) has a 5-year degree in journalism. At the time of writing, both roles are being performed by *becarias* (with the aforementioned degrees). Negotiations have been going on to turn these *becas* into contracts, which would give the workers (and the centre) greater stability, but this has not been achieved so far.

In the rest of the *COIEs* and guidance centres, as well as at UNED's associate centres, workers usually hold a degree not in education or in psychology, but in some other field (sociology, history, etc.). There are no *orientadores* (guidance workers), but heads of the service/coordinators, or *técnicos especialistas* with a very diverse background. Some of the auxiliary staff are *becarios* - undergraduate students. Qualifications are also gained from courses on job search techniques, career development, etc., as well as skills in using computers.

Placement Officer

As to the *placement officers*, when they were *técnicos de empleo* appointed by the INEM, they were also trained by this institution, through short courses related to vocational guidance and insertion into the labour market. In the case of the *placement officer* described in Section 3b, the qualifications are the following: university degree (in history), employment-related training in the US, visits to placement offices in that country, participation in a cooperative training programme, and continuous training in the field of guidance and employment.

Tutor

The *tutors'* qualifications are those that correspond to their teaching subject. At the moment, there is no specific guidance or counselling training for them. Each one plans his/her own continuing training according to his/her criteria.

5. Conclusions

As we have seen throughout the report, there is increasing guidance support in the higher education level in Spain, but it is not uniform across all institutions. Non-university institutions have not yet established any guidance system; but they do inform the students about job vacancies at the exit stage, and during the final years of their degrees. Universities have a more established system, but again, there are great variations from one university to the other, regarding size, staff, etc. Their services are accessible to the students in their university, as they are located within the premises of the institution, but not all students make use of these services, and most services do not have the potential for reaching all students. We have seen that the proportion of guidance workers per student (counsellor:student ratio) cannot by any means cover all the student population. This can be compensated where the service has close links with the academic staff (which is very rare), or where the tutorial system works (in few universities). However, in general the guidance/counselling centres cannot deliver their services adequately.

There is a need to have more Careers Advisers (actually appointing workers as such) and supporting staff, as the number of students coming to or contacting the Guidance Centre is constantly growing. Co-operation with the rest of the university staff (both academic and administrative) is essential in order to provide a better service to the students.

The focus of the services is mainly vocational. Although there is a great deal of information on educational and training opportunities, there is really not an established learning support system; most universities argue that at this level of education students should already have acquired the necessary skills to learn effectively. This idea is gradually changing, and one of the trends in our system is to enhance guidance provision at the on-course stage and to stress the importance of assisting the students in their learning process.

Even though the main focus is vocational, it is really of the informational type, regarding the world of work and other aspects related to it. Some universities do have workshops, e.g. on job-hunting techniques and self-employment strategies, but very few are implementing career development programmes. Despite all the careers information at the exit stage, the *Convenios de Cooperación Educativa*, and the *bolsas de trabajo*, we have seen that there is a high unemployment rate among

graduates. This is of course a problem which goes far beyond the guidance field, and depends on the economy of the country, but those who are involved in the field know that guidance could have an important role to play, if only the authorities would grant it more importance.

One of the major problems in Spain at the higher education level is that guidance/counselling is not supported at all by the authorities: there are no regulations regarding it and no forms of financial aid.

Another important issue, which we probably share with many of our fellow Member States, is the lack of professionalisation of our staff. First of all, there is no specific training for guidance workers at the HE level (whereas at other educational levels this does exist); and it is left up to the workers themselves, or at best to the service if it is interested in promoting the training of its staff. Second, the roles are not well defined, and the span of categories and role names is huge. This has complicated the development of this report: the roles of the workers vary a great deal across the centres, which is beneficial when they are appointed according to the centre's needs (e.g. some centres in which the new technologies play an important part have a computer analyst) but makes it really hard to describe the overall situation. Besides coming from different backgrounds, which in itself is very enriching and allows an interdisciplinary approach to guidance, there should be some kind of common training in which the necessary skills to deliver guidance can be acquired.

A European Masters degree would be welcome among some sectors, which are aware of the increasing amount of students who want to go to the rest of Europe, and the need to assist those who come from other EU countries (Malik, 1997). Competencies (skills, knowledge and attitudes) in a European dimension are very necessary in our present situation, and a training programme which developed these competencies would be very useful.

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