

Career Guidance Policy for Schools

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A Career Guidance Policy and Strategy for Compulsory Schooling in Malta

October 2007

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28th September, 2007

Hon Louis Galea, B.A. LL.D., MP
Minister of Education, Youth and Employment
Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment
Great Siege Road
Floriana, CMR 02

Dear Minister,

A Career Guidance Policy and Strategy for Compulsory Schooling in Malta

We enclose herewith a Report following a review we have carried out of the situation and relative policies and services in the field of career guidance in schools, in accordance with your letter and terms of reference.

The Working Group is available to meet with you to discuss this Report at your convenience.

We wish to thank all those who made their views known to us, and who helped us to progress with our deliberations.

Yours sincerely,



Manwel Debono
Chairperson



Stephen Camilleri
Member



Joseph Galea
Member



Dorianne Gravina
Member

Acknowledgements

On behalf of the career guidance working group I would like to thank several colleagues for the feedback and support given in the preparation of this report.

Mr Manwel Debono
Chairperson of the Career Guidance Working Group

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List of Acronyms	
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
SCOOPS	Co-Ops in Schools Project
DVD	Digital Video Disc
EO	Education Office
ETC	Employment and Training Corporation
CEDEFOP	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
EC	European Commission
ECDL	European Computer Driving Licence
ETF	European Training Foundation
GCS	Guidance and Counselling Services
ICT	Information Communication Technology
NCGC	National Career Guidance Centre
NMC	National Minimum Curriculum
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PSD	Personal and Social Development
PSCD	Personal, Social and Career Development
QRIC	Qualification Recognition Information Centre
QAS	Quality Assessment System
QSC	Quality Service Charter

Executive Summary

This document intends to re-launch career guidance within the Maltese compulsory education system by clarifying the role of career guidance, offering recommendations on the setting up of an adequate career guidance infrastructure, and describing how these services can be carried out in a more professional way. The document is based on various sources including secondary data and quantitative and qualitative empirical research.

Career guidance can be defined as “services and activities intended to assist individuals of any age and at any point throughout their lives, to make educational, training and occupational choices and to manage their careers” (OECD & EC, 2004, p.10). An analysis of the present career guidance system reveals that many useful services are being offered within the Maltese educational system. However, several structural and procedural weaknesses are also apparent.

The policy proposals in this document are collected under the three headings of organisational structure, career education, and quality standards.

Organisational Structure - The career services should be composed of two main complementary mechanisms, one operating within the educational system, and one complementary of it. Within the educational system, a new structure for career professionals should be developed. At the highest level, this system should be administered by the head of the Career Guidance Services. At College level, there should be College Career Coordinators who integrate within multi-disciplinary teams to offer support services to schools. At the school level, there should be Career Advisors who coordinate guidance provisions and organise career-oriented activities.

A National Career Guidance Centre (NCGC) responsible for sustaining career guidance services in Malta should be set up complementary to the educational system. The NCGC should include a research unit, a career information unit, and a quality audit unit. The centre should become the centre of excellence for career guidance in Malta.

Career Education - There should be a developmental career education programme beginning in early childhood and continuing throughout life. Career education should be delivered in all primary and secondary schools, starting in Year 4. It should be a subsumed programme included in Personal and Social Development (PSD), which should be transformed into Personal, Social and Career Development (PSCD). The PSCD lessons in the Third, Fourth and Fifth Forms should be increased to 2 lessons per week per form.

Quality Standards - High quality standards are needed to ensure that clients get the best possible service. In order to achieve this, there needs to be adequately qualified and experienced staff possessing professional competencies. Career service providers should develop and maintain a Quality Assessment System (QAS). NCGC should regularly monitor career-related services at national level. This document can only be effective if it is complemented and sustained by other related policies and strategies. The proposals in this document should be connected to a lifelong learning policy that directs all education and training.

section **A**
Current Scenario

chapter 1

Introduction

Over the last two decades, industrialised countries including Malta have faced substantial labour market developments due to technological, economic and demographic changes.

1.1 Rationale and aims

The phenomenon of globalisation has led to increased competition and threat to the survival of work organisations. All types and levels of employment have been affected to different extents. Many traditional jobs have been replaced by new ones or have been radically transformed. Increasingly flexible employment contracts (Buchman, 2002) and a greater heterogeneity of the workforce are important features in the current labour market.

The growing complexity of the world of work has been coupled by the massification of post-secondary education and training opportunities. There has been an expansion of provision at all levels of the educational system resulting in greater numbers of students of all ages, institutional diversity, and academic heterogeneity. When compared to some years ago, students today have a broader range of educational opportunities. At the same time, students today face a tougher, competitive and more complex labour market. The European Union is a fervent promoter of lifelong learning as a tool that enables citizens to adapt to the rapidly changing world of work (Council of Europe, 2001). Citizens today have to learn to assess myriad information systems so as to map out their education, training and employment routes that fit one's interests, skills, competencies, qualifications and evolving labour market opportunities. This implies further educational choices which must be made in the light of this scenario and labour market demands.

In view of the continuous developments in employment and education, access to high quality career guidance is important for creating and maintaining a competitive knowledge-based economy and ensuring social inclusion.

The Maltese educational system has been providing career guidance services since the 1960s. However, today's career guidance services need to be further developed and strengthened so as to effectively match citizens' interest, needs and potential, within the context of the challenges presented by the society we live in. Career guidance services need to be further professionalized and their identity strengthened as they currently tend to be marginalised in favour of personal counselling. Sultana (2003a) remarks that the "Maltese guidance scene suffers from a lack of clear policy steering" and thus "it is unlikely that educational and vocational guidance will register any progress in any coherent, organised and holistic manner if the several initiatives of guidance teachers in schools remain fragmented" (p.110). A career guidance policy and strategy is therefore needed to improve both qualitatively and quantitatively the career guidance services within the Maltese educational system.

In its publication "For All Children To Succeed" (2005), the Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment explicitly states that career guidance is one of the main areas which needed to be reviewed as part of the on-going reform in the education sector. With this clear aim in mind, the Ministry responsible for Education commissioned a working group with the specific terms of reference to:

Part 1 – Current Scenario

1. Describe the current career guidance provisions within Maltese primary and secondary schools. These provisions will be examined in view of their contribution to labour market goals (whether provisions are geared towards the world of work) and to social equity goals (whether provisions support equal opportunities and promote social inclusion). Data will be gathered from existing literature and through qualitative and quantitative research.

Part 2 – Policy

2. Propose a policy to the Minister of Education that will aim to enhance the strengths and diminish the weaknesses of the existing career guidance structure. It will be in line with European and international career guidance policies.

Part 3 – Strategy

3. Outline and describe a proposed strategy that will set the direction to reach the objectives set out in Part 2. It will take into consideration the current culture in Maltese schools and the socio-economic conditions in Malta. Recommendations will also be made regarding further policy development needed in this area within a lifelong learning context.
4. Consult in all phases of the review with the major stakeholders in the field of career guidance.

Aims

Sultana (2003b, p.70) identifies the following five major challenges that guidance and counselling services in Malta must strive to address:

1. The formulation of a national strategy that integrates services and creates new synergies, with a well-stocked national guidance resource centre;

2. The development of standards and quality charters;
3. A shift towards a view of guidance as a lifelong process and the creation of structures and strategies to support the implementation of a lifelong service;
4. Optimising the use of ICTs in addressing individual and community needs;
5. The establishment of closer and more open links between the social partners.

This document intends to review career guidance within the Maltese compulsory educational system with a view to:

Clarify the role of career guidance

This document aims to establish a career guidance policy framework which clarifies the role of career guidance. It intends to introduce the basic common language of the discipline. The working definitions highlight the differences that exist between guidance, career guidance and counselling.

Professionalise career guidance

The document highlights the basic professional competences needed in career guidance practice. It also gives prominence to quality assurance to ensure that career services are delivered effectively.

Provide an adequate career guidance infrastructure

The document seeks to address the existing challenges and opportunities within the organisational setup. It also proposes the development of tools and services to enhance the guidance practice and the development of stronger links between the educational sector and the social partners.

The document also aims to complement the other reforms currently being carried out by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment and should also serve as a catalyst for the formulation of a national strategy for lifelong learning and guidance.

In order to achieve the above aims, the document will first outline the theoretical and policy background of career guidance. It will review the strengths and weaknesses of career guidance practice in Malta, dealing with issues such as the present organisational structure, guidance activities, programmes and resources, and maintenance of quality standards. The document will propose several policy measures. These will be divided into three parts, namely the Organisational Structure, Career Education and Quality Standards. Finally, the way forward will be outlined as a conclusion to the document.

The next section will present the methodology used to gather data which supports this document.

1.2 Methodology

Policy can provide a strong starting point for strategic planning (Blair & Tett, 1998). For policies to be useful and acquire legitimacy, they need to be formulated with the direct input of key stakeholders including the guidance teachers, the school counsellors, students, employers and other guidance personnel (Camilleri, 2005). Blair and Tett (1988) emphasise the importance of stakeholders' ownership of policies, without which, plans would never materialise as intended. The involvement of different stakeholders will help to spread awareness, focus attention on the improvement of cooperation and increase commitment from all concerned (Blair & Tett, 1988). These notions guided the working group during the writing of the report.

The working group reviewed relevant documentation about career guidance in Malta and abroad. Apart from secondary evidence, the group also gathered extensive qualitative and quantitative primary data. Questionnaires, individual interviews and focus group interviews were carried out. Such triangulation was used in order to overcome the weakness or intrinsic biases of the different methodologies when used separately, thus giving greater completeness to the report.

The career guidance field is a complex one that can easily be inadequately portrayed when viewed from a unidimensional perspective. Therefore, the working group sought a variety of perspectives including those of students, guidance teachers and school counsellors, and other stakeholders.

A questionnaire was distributed among 800 secondary-school students. The sample consisted of fifth form students coming from State, Church and Independent schools. Schools were selected from different geographic localities to represent various socio-economic realities. The questionnaire aimed to elicit students' perceptions, attitudes, expectations and use of the guidance service provided to date. Responses from the 602 students who replied (response rate of 75%) were examined with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) programme. Henceforth, results from this questionnaire will be referred to as Study 1.

Another questionnaire was distributed among nearly all guidance teachers from State, Church and Independent schools. Most (80%) of the guidance teachers responded. The questionnaire aimed to collect data relating to guidance teachers' carrying out of guidance work, the time allocated to career guidance issues, resources and funds available, contacts with employers, parents and other stakeholders, and the training needed in this area. Questionnaires were analysed using the SPSS programme. Henceforth, results from this questionnaire will be referred to as Study 2.

Three focus group interviews were carried out with 15 school counsellors working in State schools and 8 school counsellors working in Church schools. Counsellors from both primary and secondary schools participated in the sessions. The interviews aimed to get qualitative insights from these practitioners about the current career guidance provision being offered to students within Maltese schools and to examine their perceptions, opinions and attitudes regarding career guidance. The focus group interviews were audio taped and transcribed verbatim for subsequent analysis. The results will be referred to as Study 3.

Another meeting was organised with a number of Gozitan guidance teachers of both secondary and postsecondary schools. The meeting included a discussion of the specific difficulties faced by Gozitan students, the career-related activities being organised in Gozitan schools and feedback on the proposals of this policy document.

Individual interviews by one or more members of the group were carried out with the following officials and experts:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Designation</i>
Mr. Carmelo Abela	Shadow Minister for Education
Ms Josephine Baldacchino	Assistant Director, Student Services within the Education Division
Mr John Bencini	President, Malta Union of Teachers
Mr Brian Borg	Projects Officer, Euroguidance Malta

Mr Felix Borg	Manager Operations, Employment and Training Corporation
Mr Joe Camilleri	Chairperson, National Commission for Persons with Disability
Mr Albert Debono	Student Advisor, University of Malta
Ms Ruth Falzon	PSD Coordinator, University of Malta
Mr Alfred Mallia	Director Operations, Education Division
Mr Mario Mallia	Deputy Chairperson, Alternattiva Demokratika
Dr Janet Mifsud	Commissioner for the Promotion of Equality for Men and Women
Ms Mary Rose Mifsud	(at the time) Director of Student Services and International Relations, Education Division
Mr Lawrence Muscat	(at the time) Education Officer Personal and Social Development, Education Division
Mr Charles Spiteri	Education Officer of Design & Technology, Department of Technology in Education, Education Division
Ms Christianne Sullivan	Lecturer, University of Malta
Prof Ronald Sultana	Director of the Euro-Mediterranean Centre for Educational Research, University of Malta
Mr Lawrence Zammit	(at the time) Director of Technology in Education, Education Division

A draft copy of the document was forwarded to officials representing various institutions on the National Career Guidance Forum, including Euroguidance Malta, the Employment and Training Corporation, the Malta Employers' Association, the Union Haddiema Maghqudin, the Students' Advisory Services of the University of Malta, and the Information and Support Services of MCAST for their comments. Prof Ronald Sultana was consulted during various stages of the drafting phase. Dr Deborah Chetcuti and Mr Joseph Gravina reviewed this document before publication.

chapter 2

Theoretical & Policy Background

2.1 What is career guidance?

The concept of career guidance is often misunderstood and confused with other related concepts such as counselling. This section attempts to clarify the definitions of 'career', 'guidance', the difference between 'guidance' and 'counselling', and 'career guidance'.

2.1.1 Defining career

In order to comprehend career guidance, one can start by defining the words 'career' and 'guidance'. The Collins Cobuild English Dictionary for Advanced Learners (2001) defines 'career' as "the job or profession that someone does for a long period of life" (p.222). Similarly, Statt (1999) defines 'career' as a "line of work that a person expects to pursue for his or her foreseeable working life, though it might include changes in job or employer" (pp20-21). However, such traditional interpretations of 'career' have been increasingly dismissed as they no longer fit into contemporary patterns of work-related behaviours.

Driver (1982) formulated a theory of career patterns which has strongly influenced contemporary definitions of career. He identified four patterns of employment:

1. Transitory - where a person changes employment frequently, without any periods of stability;

2. Steady-state - where the individual selects an occupation early in life and follows it consistently;
3. Linear - where a field is chosen early in life and a plan for upward movement is developed and carried out;
4. Spiral - where the individual develops in a given field for a length of time and then moves on to another, related or unrelated area on a cyclical basis. (p.24)

This model recognises the existence of a range of patterns which influence not only one's working life but also one's private life. Drivers' (1982) career patterns provided the inspiration for the more accepted contemporary definitions of the term 'career'. Thus, Arthur, Hall and Lawrence (1989) define career as "the evolving sequence of a person's work experiences over time" (p.8). Similarly, according to Arnold (1997), career is "a sequence of employment-related positions, roles, activities and experiences encountered by a person" (p.21). This may even include periods of sabbaticals, study leave, phases of unemployment or phases where the individual may not be involved in seeking an occupation¹.

2.1.2 Defining guidance

'Guidance' is a multidimensional activity established in different contexts (Sultana, 2004) with varying meanings to different practitioners. In some literature, the terms educational, vocational, career guidance and career counselling are used interchangeably. The problem of definition is also compounded by the fact that different countries refer to persons performing guidance duties in different terms. Thus, we find reference to guidance counsellors (eg. Flemish speaking Belgium, France, Greece, Iceland and Ireland), career education officers (Iceland), study counsellors (Finland), career path counsellors and school godmothers (Czech Republic), guidance teachers (Malta) and others (Sultana, 2004).

Watts and Kidd (2000) define guidance broadly, as a "range of processes designed to enable individuals to make informed choices and transitions related to their educational, vocational and personal development" (p.489). Within this definition, a distinction needs to be made between personal, educational and vocational guidance. Watts and Kidd (2000, p.490) argue that while educational and vocational guidance are highly personal, they involve helping students make choices related to learning and work. Thus, personal guidance tends to refer to issues that are neither strictly educational nor vocational. The European Commission defines guidance more comprehensively as "a range of activities designed to assist people to make decisions about their lives (educational, vocational, personal) and to implement those decisions" (EC, 2002, p.57).

Hui (2002) suggests that guidance in schools can have remedial, preventive and developmental goals. He argues that whereas remedial guidance aims to meet the immediate needs of the students' personal and social problems, preventive guidance is more proactive, focusing on anticipating 'critical incidents' that students may experience, by teaching them effective coping skills. Such activities may include providing information, assessing, advocating, counselling and referring students (Millar & Brotherton, 2001). Developmental guidance has an educative function, complementing guidance interventions. Developmental guidance programmes can take various forms and deal with topics of self-awareness, decision-making and subjects related to the

1 Some contemporary authors have started using the term 'career' even more loosely. Sharf (2002), for instance, views the term as referring to how individuals perceive themselves in relationship to what they do. Thus, career may refer to various stages in one's life, be this primary education, training, child-rearing at home, employment, self-employment, unemployment, underemployment and retirement.

development of self. In some countries work related topics, work visits, work shadowing and work experiences are also included in such programmes, linking school with the world of work (OECD, 2004a).

According to Camilleri (2005) such programmes focus on the individual as a person in constant interaction with his peers and teachers. The importance of such interaction is significant because as argued by McIntosh, “life career development” programmes must “recognise the interrelatedness of personal and career identity and the individual’s struggle to integrate multiple roles simultaneously” (p.622). Thus, guidance is concerned with helping individuals “make the most appropriate decision in the immediate situation and to develop the skills to make such decisions wisely in future” (Unit for the Development of Adult Continuing Education, 1998, p.97).

2.1.3 The relationship between guidance and counselling

There is considerable similarity and overlap between guidance and counselling since “counselling skills underpin good guidance practice” (Watts & Kidd, 2000). However, the two concepts are not the same. Hui (2002) describes ‘guidance’ as helping students in their whole-person development and ‘counselling’ as helping students to cope with distress and confusion. Counselling in fact denotes a more therapeutic and personalized intervention, whereas guidance “embraces a larger range of activities” (Herr, Cramer & Niles, 2004).

There is insufficient knowledge about the dynamics of emotions and the role they play in career development. According to Watts and Kidd (2000), “feelings like worry, hurt, anger and enthusiasm are rarely discussed in the career literature, yet many guidance practitioners work regularly with clients who are rendered incapable of moving forward by emotional difficulties to do with their work or learning” (p.497). Certainly, knowledge of lifeskills and basic counselling skills can determine the outcome of career guidance interventions. Indeed, while guidance and counselling may be viewed as two separate fields, there should be strong links between them. Watts and Kidd (2000) suggest that counselling skills should be one of the ranges of activities through which the aim of guidance is achieved.

2.1.4 Defining career guidance

As with the term guidance, career guidance is defined in various ways across different countries. However, the term is generally used to refer to a set of interrelated activities that have the goal of assisting individuals to manage their educational and vocational life paths. “Career guidance refers to services and activities intended to assist individuals of any age and at any point throughout their lives, to make educational, training and occupational choices and to manage their careers” (OECD & EC, 2004b).

Career guidance is embedded in different contexts such as in schools, universities, training institutions, public employment services and workplaces. Activities may take various forms, individual or group based, face-to-face or at a distance. Career guidance can be complemented with career education, which may tackle issues such as self awareness in relation to others and employment, the exploration of job opportunities, the development of career decision-making, and the application of knowledge and skills. Career guidance enables students and individuals to use the knowledge and skills they would have acquired and developed within a particular setting, to make the best possible decisions about learning and work. It can be delivered through different media, such as printed literature, counselling interviews, group interviews, career management learning, ICT-based information and assessment tools and taster programmes.

2.2 Career guidance policy from an international perspective

This section outlines career guidance policy developments abroad, with examples of career guidance practice within compulsory schooling.

2.2.1 Policy developments abroad

The Lisbon Strategy aims to make Europe the most dynamic and competitive knowledge based society in the world by 2010. While this goal is arguably unrealistic, it has served to put pressure on European governments to enhance their educational systems and strengthen their lifelong learning frameworks. The Council of the European Union (2001) endorsed a report which identified the following issues as priority areas for development in the implementation of the Education and Training 2010 work programme within the European lifelong learning framework:

1. the role of guidance in human resource development,
2. guidance to facilitate mobility for learning and employment in Europe,
3. access to guidance services, and
4. quality assurance of services.

Guidance was identified by the European Commission (2004) as one of the four key actions to create open, attractive and accessible learning environments by “support[ing] learning at all ages and in a range of settings, empower[ing] citizens to manage their learning and work, particularly making it easier for them to access and progress through diverse learning opportunities and career pathways” (p.26). EU member states “believe that easy access to good quality information and guidance about learning and working opportunities is important for constructing a competitive, knowledge-based economy, to ensure active employment and social inclusion” (Sultana, 2004, p.13).

Since then, an important body of information has been gathered from different countries from reviews carried out by several international organisations such as the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), the European Commission, the World Bank, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) and the European Training Foundation (ETF) (Sultana, 2003b). Though many examples of good practice exist in the different countries that were reviewed, there are also a lot of deficiencies in the way career guidance is delivered (OECD, 2004b, p.3). The studies show that, “in many countries, policies, systems and practices for guidance in Europe do not match the demands of knowledge-based economies and societies and call for a reform of policies and a rethinking of practices in this area” (Council of the European Union, 2004, p.6). Among the main issues are the mismatches between public policy goals and the organisation and delivery of services, limited access to services, inadequate training and qualification systems for service providers.

According to the OECD (2004b), countries view career guidance “as a key element of lifelong learning policies, active employment policies, of social equity policies, and of strategies to attain the Lisbon goals” (p.9). Guidance has an important role to play in improving lifelong learning and can be considered as both a private and a public good, since it contributes to both personal and social gains.

Sultana (2003b) states that career guidance can improve labour market efficiency. It can also support economic development goals. Policy makers are increasingly looking at guidance for support in addressing labour market shortages, tackling mismatches between labour supply and demand, reducing the effects of labour market destabilisation, dealing with unemployment, and improving labour mobility. Guidance has a strategic role to play, particularly if it provides wider access to information which is more transparently and coherently organised.

The OECD (2003b) campaigns for countries to have a steadfast formal career guidance system as this sustains the development of human resources while acting as a means to improve education systems. OECD reports from Denmark, Finland, Germany and the Netherlands state that guidance can support the attainment of high rates of educational qualifications by youth and adults. Reports from Austria, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway and Spain argue that it can help to reduce dropout rates and improve graduation rates. According to experts from Australia and the United Kingdom, the career guidance policy of their countries was able to assist the promotion of equal opportunities. Other countries have benefited in other social and economic aspects due to the set-up of formal career guidance. Experts from Denmark, Finland, Germany and the Netherlands concluded that career guidance assisted in reducing early retirement. On the other hand, experts from Austria and Spain said that career guidance facilitated labour mobility. Experts from Canada, Germany, the Netherlands and Spain reported that a properly functioning career guidance system can assist other policies meant to reduce individuals who depend upon unemployment benefits.

2.2.2 Career guidance practice within compulsory schooling

Career guidance programmes in schools have largely focused upon helping students when important decisions need to be taken. Consequently, information provision and immediate decisions have predominated over the development of career management skills (OECD, 2004a). The delivery of guidance services tends to be “tied to immediate decisions that must be made, rather than being seen as a seamless process accompanying students throughout their stay at school and beyond” (Sultana, 2004, p.24). Career guidance is therefore still concentrated around the completion of compulsory schooling and is not sufficiently developed in the earlier years, especially in the primary schools.

Career guidance is provided both to individual students and in group settings. Face-to-face guidance is the predominant mode of delivery, resulting in an expensive service which does not ensure guidance entitlement for every student. The service is generally delivered by teachers who are distant from the labour market and thus are not knowledgeable enough to offer adequate guidance that reflects changing trends in the labour market situation.

The main emphasis of guidance is on the individual development of students, and thus, career guidance tends to be marginalised in favour of personal counselling. Many guidance practitioners in different countries admit that most of their time is taken up by personal crisis counselling. For example, in Canada and Norway, 61% and 80% respectively of the time of the guidance practitioner is taken up with personal and social matters (Sultana 2004).

On the other hand, in countries such as Denmark, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, where schools’ funding is linked to the recruitment and retention of students, career guidance services at times prioritising schools’ needs over those of students. Pressures to increase the recruitment rate of the educational institutions can override students’ and countries’ interests. To minimise such pressures, external organisations supply career guidance to the educational systems of some countries (for example, Germany, the Czech Republic and the United Kingdom). Such initiatives by external organizations complement rather than substitute guidance programmes inside the schools (OECD, 2003).

2.3 Related policy trends in Malta

The Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment (2005) has been steering a significant reform process in the Maltese educational sector in a bid to strengthen the “education system by transforming

it into a new framework that will make it respond in a more relevant, effective and timely manner to the needs of our children, our families and our country” (p.xii). Various dimensions of the education sector have been reviewed and restructured, while others are on the way.

The policy and strategy proposals of this document must be consistent with and complementary to the other elements of the broad reform process. Otherwise, these proposals will not be effective and might even hinder other efforts in the field of education. The following policy documents are among those which directly or indirectly, touch the issue of career guidance:

National Minimum Curriculum (NMC) (Ministry of Education, 1999)

NMC is a key educational policy which seeks to provide an educational vision for all schools. The document emphasises self-understanding and emotional development, with reference to skills in creativity and team work. It puts the onus on the educational system itself to develop into a system that caters for lifelong education. NMC identifies as one of the educational objectives, the effective and productive participation in the world of work. It states that students should be exposed to direct work experience.

The National Consultation Process on Lifelong Learning (2001)

This document presents the strengthening of lifelong learning as a way of improving educational levels in Malta. The government’s intention is to promote quality lifelong education for all in order to improve Malta’s competitive edge (Government of Malta, 2005). Referring to the guidance and counselling services offered by the Education Division, it states that they need some rethinking to be able to face up to the challenges of lifelong learning.

Inclusive and Special Education Review (2005)

The document emphasises the significance of the ‘right to work’ for all, with particular attention to people with special needs. This policy elucidates how one of the most important purposes of education is to prepare all students for the world of work. The document reveals that up till now, the inclusive and special education process is leading to an “employment desert”.

School Attendance Improvement (2005)

Among other things, this policy identifies the consequences of school non attendance. These include less stable career patterns, low status occupations, unemployment in adulthood which leads to poverty and even homelessness. School non attendance results in a greater dependence on welfare and involvement in the justice system.

MATSEC – Strengthening a National Examination System (2005)

Among other things, the policy points out views from employers, who reported that although young applicants do possess the qualifications, they lack confidence, seem passive and find difficulty demonstrating their competences.

Code of Behaviour and Discipline in Government Schools (1999)

This policy identifies a number of standard actions that should be followed by school communities in order to ensure good behaviour and discipline. Importance is given to issues such as dress codes, punctuality, property, behaviour in common areas, all matters that will prepare students with the right attitudes in their transition to the world of work.

For All Children to Succeed – A New Network Organisation for Quality Education in Malta (2005)

This is probably the most significant education-related policy in recent years. It comprises a radical plan to reform the management of school systems in a bid to increase the efficacy of the system. The reform is leading to the networking together of schools into Colleges that will work with increased autonomy within a framework of accountability.

chapter 3

Career Guidance in Malta

Formal provisions of guidance in Malta began in 1968 (Degiovanni, 1997). The Guidance and Counselling Services (GCS) Unit within the Department of Education was set up on recommendations by UNESCO in order to strengthen and expand Malta's educational system (Degiovanni, 1997).

3.1 Historical overview

In this initial phase of development, career guidance services in Malta were slower to take off when compared with other countries because of the limited resources, the limited choices for individuals and because people were more preoccupied with economic survival than with economic growth and development (Sultana, 2003a). Initially, the main task of the GCS was that of creating an infrastructure for the proper functioning of guidance in the state education system. From its inception the unit had also the task of establishing guidance as an integral part within the whole system (Degiovanni, 1997).

When compulsory secondary education was introduced in 1970, the main role of the guidance officers, as they were known at the time, became that of carrying out "assessment and evaluation work linked to the streaming and channelling of students towards particular schools" (Degiovanni, 1997, p.35). The guidance officers were therefore actively involved in the admission procedures and were responsible for the collection and redistribution of record cards, which recorded children's educational and personality development year after year. The guidance officers discussed the content of the cards with the Head of Secondary School where the students had been transferred. This was done to facilitate the students' transitions (Degiovanni, 1997).

Between 1972 and 1974, the Guidance Unit was dissolved. The Guidance and Counselling Services (GCS) unit was officially introduced in the Education Division in 1974 when a reorganisation agreement was reached between the Government and the Malta Union of Teachers. Through this agreement the posts of guidance teachers, school counsellors and an education officer were introduced. The guidance teachers were to be assigned a reduced teaching load equivalent to half the normal load, so that they could dedicate the other half to guidance duties. While vocational guidance was to be catered for by guidance teachers, the GCS was entrusted to continue developing this area by organising talks and seminars for school leavers. The GCS Unit had also the task of organising and launching a Careers Convention with the aim of promoting different occupational opportunities available in Malta. These services were originally confined to the secondary and post-secondary schools (Degiovanni, 1997). The post of school counsellor for the primary schools was created through another reorganisation agreement struck twenty years later (Sammut, 1997).²

The services of the GCS unit continued to expand with the introduction of day career seminars for all school leavers, the publishing of a prospectus of all post-secondary courses (sent by post to all school leavers), the development of Careers Information Rooms in secondary schools and the organisation of an annual Career Convention. Guidance and counselling was strengthened with the introduction of Personal and Social Education (PSE) (currently known as Personal and Social Development – PSD) as a subject in the National Minimum Curriculum (Sultana, 2003a). The subject complemented the guidance teachers' role because it contained themes related to guidance and counselling which became embedded in the formal curriculum. According to Sammut (1997), P.S.E "can in many ways be considered an extension of Guidance: while the latter deals with issues in a one-to-one situation, the former meets students in a small group setting" (p.47). In time, PSD was separated from the Student Services section and fell under the responsibility of the Curriculum Management Department.

The subsequent agreements with the Malta Union of Teachers led to the formal separation of roles between the school counsellors and the guidance teachers, with the former focusing more on personal and developmental issues while the latter dedicating more time to the vocational and career issues of their students (Sultana, 2003b).

3.2 The Present structure

This section will describe the present organisational structure, the role of the guidance and counselling personnel, and the targeting of particular issues.

3.2.1 The organisational structure

Presently, the Guidance and Counselling Services (GCS) fall under the aegis of the Department of Student Services and International relations, one of six Departments in the Education Division, each of which is headed by a Director. This Department has three main responsibilities, the provision of (a) student services, (b) special education, and (c) international relations. The GCS is located within the Student Services Section, which is headed by an Assistant Director. An Education Officer should be in charge of the Guidance and Counselling Services. However, the post has been vacant for a number of years. The legal mandate for the provision of vocational and career guidance services is to be found in the newly amended Education Act (2006) which states that one of the functions of the Directorate for Educational Services is to: "*ensure the supply and the coordination of vocational and career guidance services, including the implementation of programmes aimed at achieving improved school-workplace correlation and assist in the transition stages, including those from school to work;*" (p.8)

2 Some counsellors complain that the current five counsellors for all primary schools is too small for them to make a substantial impact (Study 3).

A Guidance Service Manual published by the Education Division in 2000 provides guidance teachers and counsellors with a framework regarding their role and required competences.

3.2.2 The roles of the guidance and counselling personnel

The roles of school counsellors and guidance teachers differ in a number of ways. School counsellors focus more on personal and developmental issues and liaison with heads of schools, guidance teachers, form teachers and teachers in the schools to which they are assigned. They offer counselling to individuals, groups of students and parents, facilitate referrals of students to other agencies, and monitor the work of the guidance teachers. The school counsellors are attached to a central unit, have no formal teaching duties, and spend a minimum of three days per week in one or more schools (Sultana, 2003a). The filling of vacancies in the grade of school counsellor is by selection, following a call for application open to guidance teachers who are in possession of a recognized qualification in counselling, and who satisfy the conditions stated by the latest collective agreement for the teaching profession.

The guidance teachers within a school setting are assigned to one secondary school along a pre-established ratio of 1:300 students. In particular circumstances, schools are allocated additional guidance teachers. Guidance teachers spend half of their normal teaching time in classes teaching the curricular subjects in which they specialise. They spend the rest of the time leading individual and group sessions with students and parents, running a careers and further education information room and fulfilling other duties associated with their role as guidance personnel, including organising orientation visits to work places (Sultana, 2003b) and managing a cumulative record card system. Guidance teachers are responsible for ensuring smooth educational transitions and education-to-work transitions.

The post of a guidance teacher is renewable every two years through an interview and no formal qualification is required. Guidance teachers can eventually be promoted to school counsellors if they are in possession of a Diploma in School Counselling or have a higher degree related to counselling, and have been working as teachers for ten years, five of which must have been spent as guidance teachers.

About 44% of students make use of guidance or counselling (Study 1). The most common reason for making use of the counselling and guidance services by Form 5 students is to learn more about the study and work opportunities that exist after Form Five (31%), followed closely by school/class difficulties (27%) and to learn more about the choices of the different subjects (26%) (Study 1).

3.2.3 Targeting particular issues

Several initiatives have been set up to deal with specific issues and subgroups of students. Unit Ghozza was set up with the aim of providing a support service and an educational programme to pregnant minors, leading them to adopt a positive attitude towards motherhood while empowering them to pursue their career path or continue with their education.

Within the Guidance and Counselling Services, another special section focuses on day career seminars for State, Church and Independent School Leavers. These seminars deal with self-awareness, self-assessment and self-presentation skills. Academic and vocational opportunities available in Malta and abroad and the economic trends are also dealt with during these seminars.

Between 1999 and 2001 three important national policies related to 'Child Abuse', 'Bullying', and 'Substance Abuse' were launched. Subsequently, guidance personnel were assigned to special units in order to help with the implementation of the three policies within the schools (see Appendix 1 for the distribution of all guidance personnel). Initiatives in the guidance field have focused more on personal issues rather than career guidance ones (Sultana, 2003a).

As yet, guidance and counselling services are not offered to the special schools. It is to be noted also that career guidance services to students with individual educational needs who are in mainstream schools needs to be improved, with specialisation in this particular area. No special training is provided to guidance teachers and counsellors regarding career guidance for students with disability. The Education Division employs an official in special schools who is responsible for school to work transitions.

Recently, ETC organised a pilot project in Cottonera for 9 students who were taught life skills and literacy skills. The project was carried out by Aġenzija APPOĠĠ in collaboration with ETC and the Cottonera College, and co-funded by the European Social Fund (ESF). During the summer of 2006, ETC also organised a training programme called Basic Employment Training (BET), a project also co-funded by ESF. This project is intended for youth who have just finished compulsory schooling and have no formal qualifications. Until now, 242 persons participated. BET will be repeated during the summer of 2007.

3.3 Career guidance resources

Effective career guidance requires the availability of up-to-date resources. This section outlines the situation in the Maltese educational system regarding the delivery settings, information in traditional and ICT formats, and the role of other institutions.

3.3.1 Delivery settings

Schools usually have a guidance room in which guidance teachers can hold one-to-one interventions with students, organise and prepare for talks, seminars and visits the students will be engaged in. Such rooms include information boards about the different opportunities available to students after they leave compulsory education.

As the guidance room may be used by the visiting counsellor and other visiting staff, such as social workers from different agencies, psychologists, and teachers attached to the Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) unit and other units within the Education Division, many career guidance teachers (42%) believe that they do not have sufficient space to carry out career guidance (Study 2). Some guidance teachers argue that as the guidance rooms are also used by counsellors, they might be perceived negatively, as a place where “problem” students are dealt with, thus inhibiting students from using them.

Nearly all students know about the guidance and counselling services offered (98.5%) (Study 1). Whereas 9% of the students feel uncomfortable discussing their problems with the teachers available (mainly because of lack of trust in the teachers’ professional abilities), the other 45% do not feel the need to use the service (Study 1).

3.3.2 Information in traditional formats

The available career-related information for students tends to be in the form of information leaflets, brochures and booklets. These are often produced by guidance teachers or by individual schools (especially, post-secondary ones). Since 1990 the Guidance and Counselling Services have been organising a series of tracer studies both at school and at the national level. Such research provides helpful information to educational planners as well as the personnel at the Guidance and Counselling Services.

As will be seen below, the role of other institutions in the production and dissemination of career guidance information for school students needs to be further extended. The information is normally distributed free of charge in schools. Some of the available information is issued yearly, but other material is updated less frequently. Some material can also be found in school libraries, in guidance

rooms and also in some community libraries. However, 81% of guidance teachers say that there aren't useful career-related books in their school library (Study 2). The large majority of guidance teachers believe that there are no funds available for career resources at school level (Study 2). The existing career-related information is not always sufficiently reliable and comprehensive (Study 2 and 3). There are insufficient career guidance resources for groups with specific needs such as students with disabilities. School counsellors complain that it is harder to guide students in a situation where different sources of information describe the same profession in different ways (Study 3). The need is felt for a database of job descriptions. A group of career guidance practitioners from various entities are currently developing such database with the help of Euroguidance Malta and ETC. Once finished, the database would require regular updating to remain relevant.

3.3.3 Information Communication Technology

The Maltese Government has in the past years developed the notion and practice of e-Government. In the educational sector, Government's emphasis on ICT resulted in better teacher training in the use of computers (through courses such as ECDL) and the setting up of substantial numbers of computers in all state schools. All primary school teachers are provided with a laptop.

The Department of Technology in Education within the Education Division developed a web portal³ with information about and links to education and training opportunities in Malta. There are also several other websites like that of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment that contain education and work-related information. Among them, there is a website about Guidance and Counselling Services⁴ which provides access to information on various topics related to guidance and links with other useful websites.

Despite the improvement of web facilities, 73% of guidance teachers state that there is no computer connection in their guidance rooms (Study 2). Out of those guidance teachers who have a computer in the guidance room, due to lack of internet connection, only 30% said it is accessible to students. As can be seen from the table below, half the guidance teachers never use computers for career guidance purposes, almost 44% use it occasionally and 6% stated that they use it regularly (Study 2).

Table 1. Guidance teachers' use of computers for career guidance

	Males		Females		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Regularly	3	7.1	4	5.7	7	6.3
Occasionally	19	45.2	30	52.9	49	43.8
Never	20	47.6	36	51.4	56	50
Total	42	100	70	100	112	100

Source: Study 2

3 <http://skola.gov.mt/skola/home/>

4 This website was developed on the personal initiative of a school counsellor within the Education Division. Website: <http://schoolnet.gov.mt/guidance/>

The use of ICT in guidance tends to be restricted to the provision of information about further education opportunities (Sultana, 2003a). The CD about tertiary-education courses developed by the Students' Advisory Services within the University of Malta is an example of such information. Computer-aided career guidance systems in schools on mainland Malta, which help in analysing the aptitudes and interests of students and match them to possible careers, have not been developed as yet. Indeed no self-assessment instruments, psychometric tests, business games or other decision-making aids are currently available in any format.

On the other hand, in October 2005, a working group was set up within the Gozo branch of the Education Division to manage the development of a career room. Software packages for career exploration and vocational testing were bought. The software is planned to be used among all fifth formers during sessions about enhancing critical thinking for career planning during the scholastic year 2006-2007.

Most guidance rooms also lack the more basic telephone connection, making it very difficult for guidance teachers to contact other professionals and make appointments with parents.

3.3.4 The role of other institutions

The private sector is hardly involved in the production or dissemination of career-related material. Due to the country's small population, there is little market for private businesses investing in career guidance within compulsory schooling.

Some of the major employers in Malta produce information leaflets about their own occupational sector. Such information is at times exhibited in the careers and information rooms that some schools have.

ETC develops considerable data regarding employment (such as the Employment barometer). In 2004, ETC published a very useful 'Manual for Gender Sensitive Vocational Guidance' that was distributed to guidance teachers. Besides, ETC organises occasional half-day seminars for guidance teachers, at times in connection with the launch of new services. However, ETC's regular and direct involvement in the career guidance of students within the compulsory school system is rather limited. It has an employee who is in charge of giving talks to fifth form students about the role of ETC. The effectiveness of such work is not formally appraised.

3.4 Guidance activities and programmes

Career guidance in schools has largely focused on helping students make important educational decisions at particular points in time, especially during the last years of secondary schooling, when students make choices on subject clusters and start seeking information on post-secondary educational institutions or job opportunities (Sultana, 2004). School counsellors acknowledge that they do not have a comprehensive career guidance programme for all the secondary education years (Study 3). Throughout the years, in line with what happened in other countries (OECD, 2004), information provision and immediate decisions have predominated over the development of career-management skills. As Sultana (2003b) observes "service delivery is tied to immediate decisions that must be made, rather than being seen as a seamless process accompanying students throughout their stay at school and beyond" (p.19).

This approach reflects a common assumption that the key career-related decisions are only taken within the schooling environment and only at certain points in the life of a student and does not take into account the developmental nature of career decisions. Such assumptions might have had some validity in the past, when higher educational opportunities were limited and when many workers were ensured a job for life. However, it does not hold through in the contemporary world in which post secondary educational opportunities are increasing at a fast rate and occupational

mobility is becoming more common. Nowadays, students need to develop skills that will help them throughout their life and not just within the school environment (Brown & Associates, 2002).

The following subsections briefly review the main career-related interventions being carried out among primary and secondary school students, namely, transition talks, one-to-one interventions, career seminars, and career education.

3.4.1 Transition talks

The following are the three key points at which students are provided with specific guidance to facilitate their transitions throughout their compulsory education and beyond:

a. Transition and Option Exercise in Year 6

The transition exercise is carried out during the third and fourth week of January each year when the school counsellors and the guidance teachers visit the primary schools to hold meetings for parents and all Year 6 students⁵. The objectives of these meetings are to:

1. make parents and students aware of the educational implications of transition from primary to secondary;
2. inform parents and students about the role and function of the Guidance and Counselling Services in schools and other student services within the Education Division;
3. inform parents and students about the subject choices available and give them relevant information about all subjects, so that students make informed choices.

During the scholastic year 2005/2006, 1,354 parents and 1,768 students attended such meetings (unofficial data obtained from the Guidance and Counselling Services). Most secondary schools also invite students from primary catchment areas to visit and familiarise themselves with the new environment of the secondary schools. Students are generally addressed by the guidance teachers and sometimes by senior students. Students are also given the opportunity to see the workshops or facilities of the different subjects.

b. Option Exercise in Form 2 Junior Lyceum and Form 3 Area Secondary

During Form 2 in Junior Lyceums and Form 3 in Area Secondary schools, students and their parents are given the opportunity to consider subject choices in relation to students' interests, abilities and attainment so far in the curriculum subjects, and the career implications of their choices.

Sex stereotyping is tackled to combat attitudes of students and parents which inhibit choices of certain subjects. This is a long process involving subject teachers who explain the syllabus content; individual interviews when needed; talks to students by guidance teachers; and talks to parents by school counsellors.

c. Transition from Secondary to Post-Secondary Education or Work

During Forms 4 and 5, students make very important decisions leading to entrance in the job market, enrolment in vocational courses or attendance in other post-secondary institutions. The task of explaining different courses available and qualifications needed is basic to career choice planning. During this period of transition to young adulthood, guidance teachers help students to assess their strengths, weaknesses and interests and to choose educational career plans that are compatible with these characteristics. The transition from structured secondary school lifestyle to an often less structured post-secondary school life is smoothed through talks by guidance practitioners from Malta College for Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST), Junior College, Institute for Tourism Studies (ITS), Giovanni Curmi Higher Secondary and other post-secondary

⁵ Some Colleges are developing a different form of transition exercise from primary to secondary schools.

educational institutions. Visits to these institutions are also organised. The Education Division's guidance teachers also organise talks relating to the world of work with speakers from trade unions, industries and the ETC.

3.4.2 One-to-one interventions

To further assist students in choosing their career path, guidance teachers in Maltese schools conduct one-to-one helping interventions with students with special emphasis to the second students who need to make subject related choices, and with fourth and fifth form students who seek to clarify their thoughts about their future career plans. The aims of such interventions include those of helping students explore their feelings and concerns, reflect on the information they have collected, and work on any emotional difficulty which students may experience in making career decisions. However, one must point out that, for various reasons⁶, a number of students do not feel the need to make contact with their guidance teacher to discuss their future career plans.

According to Watts (2003), career guidance in schools tends to be marginalized because very often, the pressing nature of the personal and behavioural problems of students are given priority at the expense of the help needed by all students in relation to their educational and vocational choices. This is corroborated by Maltese guidance teachers, 74% of whom devoting more time to students' personal issues at the expense of career guidance (Study 2).

During the summer months (July-August 2005/2006) one-to-one career guidance was offered by school counsellors and guidance teachers on specific days at the Guidance and Counselling Unit to provide students with information about different courses offered by post-secondary schools. Around 203 students, mostly accompanied by parents, made use of this service.

3.4.3 Career seminars

Career Seminars organised by the Guidance and Counselling Unit for school leavers give students an opportunity to understand better the choices they have to face when they reach the end of their secondary education (see Appendix 2 for the programme details). This programme is only compulsory for state secondary schools and runs on a 'first come first served' basis for independent and church schools. During the scholastic year 2004-5, 3,434 students have attended a Career Seminar (unofficial data obtained from the Guidance and Counselling Services).

3.4.4 Career education

Career guidance and career education tend to be marginalised in the Maltese educational system. It is indicative that only 25% of guidance teachers stated that career guidance is part of the School Development Plan (Study 2). Indeed 57.3% of guidance teachers do not feel that the students' career guidance needs are being sufficiently tackled (Study 2).

Career education is not a stand-alone subject in the Maltese curriculum. It is not formally allocated space in the weekly timetable as in the case of countries such as Austria, Cyprus and Greece. Other countries, like Malta, adopt a different kind of system and do not offer career education as a subject on the timetable (see Appendix 5). However, all subjects within the primary and secondary school syllabi impart (even if often indirectly) the acquisition of skills or information necessary for the individual to function in the world of work. Besides learning the technical aspects of subjects (eg. language proficiency skills) which are indispensable tools in today's knowledge based society, students are also exposed to creativity skills (eg. through Languages, Music, Drama, Art and Design), problem solving and decision making skills (eg. through Mathematics, PSD, Technical

⁶ Including the following: the students might know exactly what they need; they might not be interested in getting more information; they feel that they have received adequate information (Study 1).

Design, Computing, Science subjects), and ICT skills (eg. through ICT). Other skills imparted within educational settings include social skills such as the ability to work in teams (eg through PSD, Social Studies, Business Studies), communication skills (eg. through Languages, PSD) and cooperation skills (eg. through PSD, Social Studies). Such skills form part of the repertoire of the needed transferable skills and competences in today's dynamic work environment.

Primary syllabi

An analysis of the new primary syllabus for State Schools⁷ which came into force in September 2005 reveals that the topic of 'work' features more specifically in the Years 5 and 6 of the Social Studies Curriculum. Issues such as the existence of different types of work in the primary sector of the economy are tackled. Year 5 topics relate to fishing and the working conditions of fishermen while Year 6 topics relate to agriculture and the working conditions of farmers. Year 5 topics include the Tourism Sector and deal, among others, with the types of work generated by this sector and the implications of working in the sector. Students are introduced to the Industrial Sector in Year 6.

Secondary syllabi

The topic of 'work' features directly in the PSD Secondary syllabus, specifically covering the theme 'Rights and Duties of Workers' in Form 4. The syllabus explores issues such as why work is considered a right, why people work, and the rights and responsibilities of employees and/or employers. The theme of 'Gender Equality' is discussed in the fifth form to help students recognise that gender roles influence the various work roles taken on in life. Issues relating to the world of work are also directly covered in the subject Business Studies. Examples of topics include 'Factors and Stages of Production', 'The Basic Business Function' and 'Marketing' in Form 3; 'Business Ethics' and 'The Economic Environment' in Form 4; and 'The Business Structure and Organisation' in the fifth form. The subject 'European Studies' includes topics such as 'The Economic Development and Changes in Europe', 'Demographic and Social Realities' tackled during the third, fourth and fifth form. The Religious Studies fifth form syllabus has a section which discusses employment choice ('Liema xogħol nagħzel'). The Geography syllabus exposes students to themes such as 'The Industrial System and Industrial Locations', 'The Tourism Industry' and 'Employment Structures' during Form 4. The History syllabus includes work-related topics such as 'The Maltese Industry of the 19th and 20th centuries', and 'Economic and Social Issues' tackled in the fourth and fifth form. Throughout the Social Studies third form syllabus, students are exposed to themes such as 'Ix-Xogħol, in-Nuqqas ta' Xogħol u l-Ħin Liberu' (Work, Unemployment and Leisure Time). Other work related issues are also discussed for the first to the fifth form during Geography, History and Social Studies as general subjects.

3.5 Links with the outside world

Career guidance is most effective when strong links are established by schools with the world of work. This section reviews the existing situation in Malta and includes brief descriptions of career orientation visits, opportunities for students' work experience, career week/days, the CHOICE Programme, and SCOOPS.

3.5.1 Career orientation visits

Introductory work place visits are organised by guidance teachers in order to encourage direct exploration which helps students to make some tentative choices about particular interests and investigate those choices more thoroughly before making commitments.⁸ It is often argued (e.g.

⁷ www.curriculum.gov.mt

⁸ The following are the places of work visited by students during the scholastic year 2004-5: Methode Electronics, ST Microelectronics, Mosta Techno Park, Malta International Airport, St.Philip's Hospital, Incubation Centre, Blood Transfusion Centre, Education 22, Capua Palace Hospital, Campus FM, Mount Carmel Hospital, ETC, Drydocks, Lufthansa Teknik, Fire Fighting Unit (Luqa), Farsons Brewery, Qormi Health Centre, different hotels, St.James Hospital, Police Headquarters, Kindergarten School (Marsa).

Borg, 1997) that employers and the educational system cannot work independently of each other and follow their own separate agendas. However, at the moment there is not an optimal level of interdependence between the two spheres. Only half of the guidance teachers say that they regularly take students for visits to workplaces (Study 2). The other half does so occasionally. Half of the guidance teachers state that it is not easy to find enough places of work to take students on a visit (Study 2). Many employers might not be willing to accept students' visits.

While each school has its own career guidance programme to cater for the specific needs of its students, a programme of Career Orientation Visits is organised by the Guidance and Counselling Services to complement the Guidance provisions in secondary schools (see Appendix 4). Such visits help the students to better understand the world of work and the existing post-secondary training opportunities.

Many students believe that they can be helped by discussions held at the school about post-secondary opportunities (59%), work places visit and school visits (56%), and the one day career seminars that are organised by the Guidance and Counselling Unit (42%) (Study 1).

3.5.2 Work experience

Although there is no formal requirement of work experience during compulsory schooling, some guidance teachers also organise work placements or job shadowing experiences for fifth formers. These activities motivate students to become more accustomed to working realities and provide a firmer basis for career decisions. These activities are however rare and depend on many factors including the willingness of the guidance teachers. For example: the Gozo State Secondary Schools organise a three-day practical experience at MCAST in Xewkija and Xaghra; the Cottonera College secondary Schools organise a work-shadowing week for a number of fourth form students, and one of these Schools organises a two-week work experience during the summer months in various entities; one of girls' secondary Schools in College 4 also organises work experience schemes. A number of schools also organise "mock interview sessions" to help students get accustomed to prepare for and attend interviews.

3.5.3 Career week/days

The aim of Career Week/Days is to raise awareness among fifth formers who are at a key decision-making point in their life on issues relating to careers and the world of work. Unfortunately, only 30% of guidance teachers regularly invite people from the world of work for talks about aspects of their working lives including the influences that the job has had upon themselves as persons and upon their lifestyles (Study 2). It seems that many (56.9%) find it difficult to find people from different work spheres who are willing to talk to students during Career Week/Days (Study 2).

3.5.4 Parental involvement

Parental support is particularly critical to adolescents' career choice. Research shows that young people seek career advice and approval from their parents (Whiston and Keller, 2004). Thus, it is important that parents are involved in the career choice process of their children. In fact, three fourths of the guidance teachers organise talks for parents both on topics of a personal nature and on topics related to careers (Study 2). Occasionally, schools invite parents and alumni to address students on career-related topics.

3.5.5 The CHOICE programme

Since 2001, the Malta Tourism Authority has been organising the Choice programme in several secondary schools in Malta and Gozo. The main objective of this programme is to promote careers in tourism and raise awareness among secondary school students about the careers that exist

within the tourism industry. The programme entails visits to hotels, restaurants, travel agents and historical places to obtain experience of work practices in these sectors.

3.5.6 SCOOPS

A further initiative which tries to link school to work is an initiative outside the formal guidance sector, namely the Co-Ops in Schools Project (SCOOPS) which was launched in October 1995. This activity is part of the extra-curricular educational programme and emphasises entrepreneurship and self-employment. The three aims of the Scoops project are to:

- Enhance co-operative awareness among students and educators;
- Build entrepreneurial skills among students; and
- Enhance students' personal and social skills.

As mentioned above, employers are also often invited to address students in order to provide first hand information about their particular enterprise. The Guidance and Counselling Services also used to organise a national Careers Convention on an annual basis. The initiative was discontinued in 2003.

3.6 Maintenance of quality standards

The maintenance of quality standards is an essential component in the provision of any professional service, including that of career guidance. This section will briefly examine the present Maltese situation regarding four different facets of quality standards namely, regulations and infrastructure, continuous professional training, standards on guidance material, and evidence base.

3.6.1 Regulations and infrastructure

There is no formalised quality auditing procedure that ensures that guidance services in the education sector are achieving their objectives (Sultana, 2003b). The 'Description of Services Manual' published by the Guidance and Counselling Unit in 2000 deals with the practice of Guidance and Counselling within the compulsory educational system in Malta. The manual was mainly intended "to describe what students/pupils and their parents can expect from the Guidance service at this point in time" and "help guidance teachers and schools evaluate the service they are offering, and to decide on priorities for change and development" (p.2). However, the career guidance part is biased towards curricular guidance, focusing on the transitions from one educational level to another. Nearly nothing is related to occupational guidance. The manual includes among others, a useful checklist with potential areas of evaluation which, unfortunately, has not yet been used in any formalised quality auditing instrument.

A Quality Service Charter (QSC)⁹ for the Guidance and Counselling Services (GCS) was published in 2005. The QSC, which was only intended for the services offered from the Guidance and Counselling Services in Floriana, gives among others brief descriptions of the main areas of work of GCS. The QSC was drafted on the lines of the Service Manual and little is mentioned about career guidance. The section dealing with the monitoring of QSC performance only states that the unit's standards of performance are to be assessed and improved by communicating with clients and giving importance to queries and complaints filed by clients. This is insufficient to ensure a high quality career guidance service. The Quality Charters section on the government website states that "normally organisations are required to report annually on their performance against

9 "A Quality Service Charter is a written statement of the commitment of an organisation to provide its customers with a quality service. Service Charters inform the public about the services that are available and how they can be accessed and sets out the standards of service customers can expect". Website: www.servicecharters.gov.mt

their Charter objectives and are also expected to conduct an external audit of their performance.... Customers, too, are involved in the evaluation process. Users of services are encouraged to give their feedback on the quality of service provided by being asked to give their feedback on the level of service provided.”¹⁰

Sultana (2003a) asserts that throughout the years, “[q]uality assurance in the education sector has generally been maintained through passive measures, i.e. through the employment of inspectors/ education officers” (p.101). On a positive note, school audits have recently been introduced.

School counsellors are responsible for the coordination of guidance in schools, and as such, should monitor the quality of work done by guidance teachers. Some counsellors carry out evaluation meetings with guidance teachers in order to assess performance and establish areas of improvement. However, since their interests and qualifications are more geared towards personal counselling, this tends to be prioritised over occupational guidance.

The internal school audit is meant to ensure that certain key areas within the school development plan are regularly evaluated and developed. One of the key areas directly related to guidance is the pastoral care section, which emphasises the caring experience within the school ethos, with direct reference to the guidance and counselling services offered within the school. However, there is no direct reference to the career guidance activities within the school, although reference is made to guidance teachers’ advice to both curricular and vocational matters (Education Division, 2004).

The performance appraisal of the guidance teacher is the direct responsibility of the Head of school and focuses both on the guidance work carried out by the teachers and also on their work related to the subject they teach. Guidance teachers are also required to write a bi-annual report on their activities, which is, in theory, evaluated centrally at the Guidance and Counselling Services. The performance of the school counsellors should be monitored by the Education Officer. In the absence of an Education Officer, the responsibility falls upon the Assistant Director assigned to the area.

3.6.2 Continuous professional training

Another, albeit more indirect aspect of quality assurance is the continuous professional training of persons involved in career guidance. Guidance practitioners within the educational system tend to lack qualifications in career guidance. A number of school counsellors are in possession of a Diploma in Guidance and Counselling. Others are in possession of a Diploma or Post-Graduate Diploma in School Counselling. Holders of the latter two diplomas have little training in career guidance as their courses focused almost exclusively on counselling. The counsellors interviewed feel that due to lack of continuous training, they have insufficient knowledge about career guidance and its developments (Study 3).

Most guidance teachers do not have career-related qualifications. Only about 6% hold a Diploma in Sociology (Occupational guidance and career counselling). Another 4% are reading for the Post-Graduate Diploma in Lifelong Career Guidance and Development. Almost all guidance teachers (98%) declare that they need more training in the area of career guidance to carry out their work better (Study 2). Indeed, as can be seen from the table below, a fourth of all guidance teachers declare that they would prefer to have a Certificate or Diploma level qualification while another fourth would prefer having a Master’s level qualification. The need for higher level qualifications in the field is higher among female guidance teachers (Study 2).

¹⁰ www.servicecharters.gov.mt

Table 2. Type of training Guidance Teachers would choose

	Males		Females		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Wednesday guidance meetings	9	22	7	10.1	16	14.5
In-service summer courses	15	36.6	24	34.8	39	35.5
Certificate/ diploma level	7	17.1	19	27.5	26	23.6
Master level	10	24.4	19	27.5	29	26.4
Total	41	100	69	100	110	100

Source: Study 2

Guidance teachers and school counsellors attend regular work-related meetings held at the Guidance and Counselling Services Unit on Wednesdays. While the content of the meetings is varied, it often deals with career guidance (see Appendix 5). On the other hand, since 2000 only four voluntary in-service courses related to career guidance were organised (see Appendix 3).

In some foreign countries, continuous professional training is promoted or required by professional associations of guidance providers. In Malta, most guidance teachers and counsellors in the education sector belong to the Malta Union of Teachers (MUT). The union tends to be involved in issues concerning work conditions and work-roles of counsellors, guidance teachers and other members. The union also serves as a pressure group regarding policy making in the education field (for example, the debate on the formulation of the College system). Arguably, due to its trade union role, the MUT is at times impeded from serving as a professional body. The Malta Association for the Counselling Profession (MACP) does not focus on career guidance, but is an association aimed at promoting the counselling field.

While no Masters Level course on career guidance exists in Malta, some teachers have started enrolling in Masters courses by correspondence with British universities. Until some years ago, the University of Malta used to offer a Diploma in Guidance and Counselling, which, as was noted above, in time changed its focus and became almost exclusively counselling-oriented. Between 2002 and 2004, the university organised a Diploma in Occupational Guidance and Career Counselling. In 2005, a Post Graduate Diploma in Lifelong Career Guidance and Development was offered.¹¹

3.6.3 Standards for guidance material

As was seen above, the Guidance and Counselling Services Unit and other organisations (including employers) produce various information leaflets and other publications aiming to help in the career decisions of students. Several internet sites are also providing considerable career-related information. However, “there is no government legislation controlling the classification, distribution and storage of such information” (Sultana, 2003a, p.89). No organisation is in charge of examining the quality of such information before it reaches the users. “No standards or formal guidelines have yet been developed nationally for the production of career and education-related information, that ensure validity, reliability, accuracy, objectiveness, comprehensiveness, relevance to target group, timeliness, user-friendliness, and so on” (Sultana, 2003a, p.102).

¹¹ Unfortunately, despite their declared need to pursue further education in career guidance, very few guidance teachers applied for the Postgraduate Diploma. Several of these teachers complained of the fact that they would invest considerable time and money into a course that might not enhance their employment position.

3.6.4 Evidence base

High quality standards can also be achieved and maintained through appropriate data indicators adopted to evaluate the impact of the services. In Malta, there are no formal established procedures meant to build a comprehensive evidence base that captures the real situation of career guidance practice. Such evidence base would include detailed information on issues such as:

- a. the number of users of services, as well as their characteristics (including age, gender, religion, socio-economic status, educational level and ethnic origin);
- b. the different needs of different types of clients;
- c. client satisfaction rates, and variation in these rates by client characteristics (Sultana, 2003a, p.103).

There is no research available that provides an insight into the impact of career services on students' career aspirations and choices. The present system does not include sufficient resources that are able to provide such service. However, there exist some important sources of information. For example, schools are required to keep data on the number of students who use the services of guidance teachers. Besides, as was mentioned above, the Guidance and Counselling Services Unit, has been carrying out a tracer study since 1990 on the career trajectories followed by students after completing their compulsory education.

3.7 Conclusion

This section highlights the strengths and the weaknesses that characterise career guidance in Maltese compulsory schooling. It is evident that much work is being done by the counsellors and the guidance teachers. However, this is mainly tied to transitional periods in the students' lives and does not take into account the developmental nature of career decisions. This weakness stems from the fact that guidance in Malta has not managed to develop and transform itself to keep up with the changes that are happening in the spheres of education and work. The lack of clear policy steering, an infrastructure that needs re-organising and the fact that the post of EO has remained vacant for several years, has not helped to keep career guidance relevant for today's needs.

Career guidance in Malta must adopt a life-long perspective. There must be a conscious and a gradual shift from an approach largely focused upon helping students to make immediate decisions, to a broader approach that encompasses the development of skills that will help individuals make effective career decisions throughout their whole life.

section **B**
Policy Proposals

chapter 4

Organisational Structure

4.1 General structure of career guidance services

This chapter outlines the proposals for a revised general structure of the career guidance services.

4.1.1 Rationale

- The ever increasing educational opportunities and a fast-changing labour market demand more professional career services for students;
- At the moment, career services are inconsistent and not cohesive;
- There needs to be a functioning standards and quality assurance system in order to ensure effective service provision.

4.1.2 Overview of structure

The career services should be composed of two main complementary mechanisms, one operating within the educational system, and one independent of it. Within the educational system, a new structure for career professionals should be developed. At the highest level, this system should be administered by an officer coordinating career guidance services in Colleges and schools. At College level, there should be Career Coordinators who integrate within an multi-disciplinary team context to offer support services to schools. At the school level, there should be Career Advisors who coordinate guidance provisions and organise career-oriented activities.

A National Career Guidance Centre (NCGC) responsible for sustaining career guidance services in Malta should be set up. The Centre should have several functions including research, distribution of career information and a quality audit.

4.1.3 Aims

Career guidance services should equip all individuals with the necessary skills and knowledge to make effective lifelong career decisions. The following will be the main aims of the new structure:

- to widen access to career guidance services and to ensure coherence of provision across education and employment sectors;
- to establish a clear guidance structure outlining the roles and functions of guidance practitioners;
- to ensure a smooth transition from childhood to adolescence to adulthood through a guidance structure that promotes lifelong learning;
- to shift from a service supply to a service demand focus;
- to offer a wide range of delivery options;
- to gather, compile and publish research in the field of career guidance;
- to ensure more accountability so that career guidance services result in effective outcomes.

4.2 Setting up of a National Career Guidance Centre

4.2.1 Overview

Aims

The National Career Guidance Centre (NCGC) should be the centre of excellence for career guidance in Malta. It should facilitate the educational, training and employment transitions of all the population, with particular emphasis on students. It should offer its services to career guidance providers, including those within the educational system, the Employment and Training Corporation (ETC) and social partners. It should also reach out directly to persons in need of career information or advice.¹² More specifically, the following will be the roles of the NCGC:

- Promote and ensure high quality career guidance services;
- Provide advice to government on policy developments;
- Manage national career-related initiatives;
- Complement, assist and integrate career guidance services;
- Liaise with the ETC and the social partners;
- Increase the interaction between the educational and occupational sectors;
- Develop and distribute guidance support material for practitioners;
- Research, compile and disseminate career related information;

¹² Most European countries have agencies that are not attached to schools but work to promote and deliver career guidance in a professional way. Although the aims of such centres might vary from country to country, most of these agencies are meant to support and develop guidance practice in all areas of education. To name a few, Ireland has the *National Centre for Guidance in Education* which provides support to the Department of Education and Science, and to guidance practitioners in education. In England there is *Connexions* which brings together all the services and support that teenage youths will need to choose the right career. *Connexions* offers advice and guidance on learning and career options, helping 13-19 year olds prepare for their progress to further education or work. The *Professional career counselling state agencies* in Latvia target youths and adults who are either studying or working. These agencies also target individuals who are looking for work or are planning to further their career. The agencies organise and deliver various seminars related to vocational and career planning. In Finland, the *Centre for International Mobility* targets group guidance and counselling professionals working in education and the labour administration. It also collects, produces and distributes information, organises in-service training courses about education and opportunities in Finland and abroad. The *National Resource Centre for Vocational Guidance* in Slovenia has the aim of promoting co-operation between various entities in the field of guidance at national and transnational level. It also has the task of establishing quality standards and make sure that these are adhered to. It takes care of updating information and trains guidance personnel within its centres. In Denmark the *Regional Guidance Centres* target students in the education system by organising a wide variety of careers education and careers guidance activities within the schools. They also target young people and adults outside the education system. The centres are obliged to co-operate with relevant partners in the region to ensure a coherent guidance system and a regular exchange of experiences, knowledge and best practice. These agencies tend to be affiliated with the Euroguidance Network. (Data derived from: <http://www.ncge.ie/>, <http://www.connexions.gov.uk/>, <http://www.cimo.fi/>, <http://www.ess.gov.si/eng/Nrcvg/nrcvg.htm>, <http://eng.uvm.dk/guidance/>)

- Promote and sustain effective lifelong learning;
- Provide advice on good practice;
- Support innovation and pilot projects;
- Encourage gender equality;
- Prevent social exclusion through greater accessibility;
- Coordinate career-related European funding.

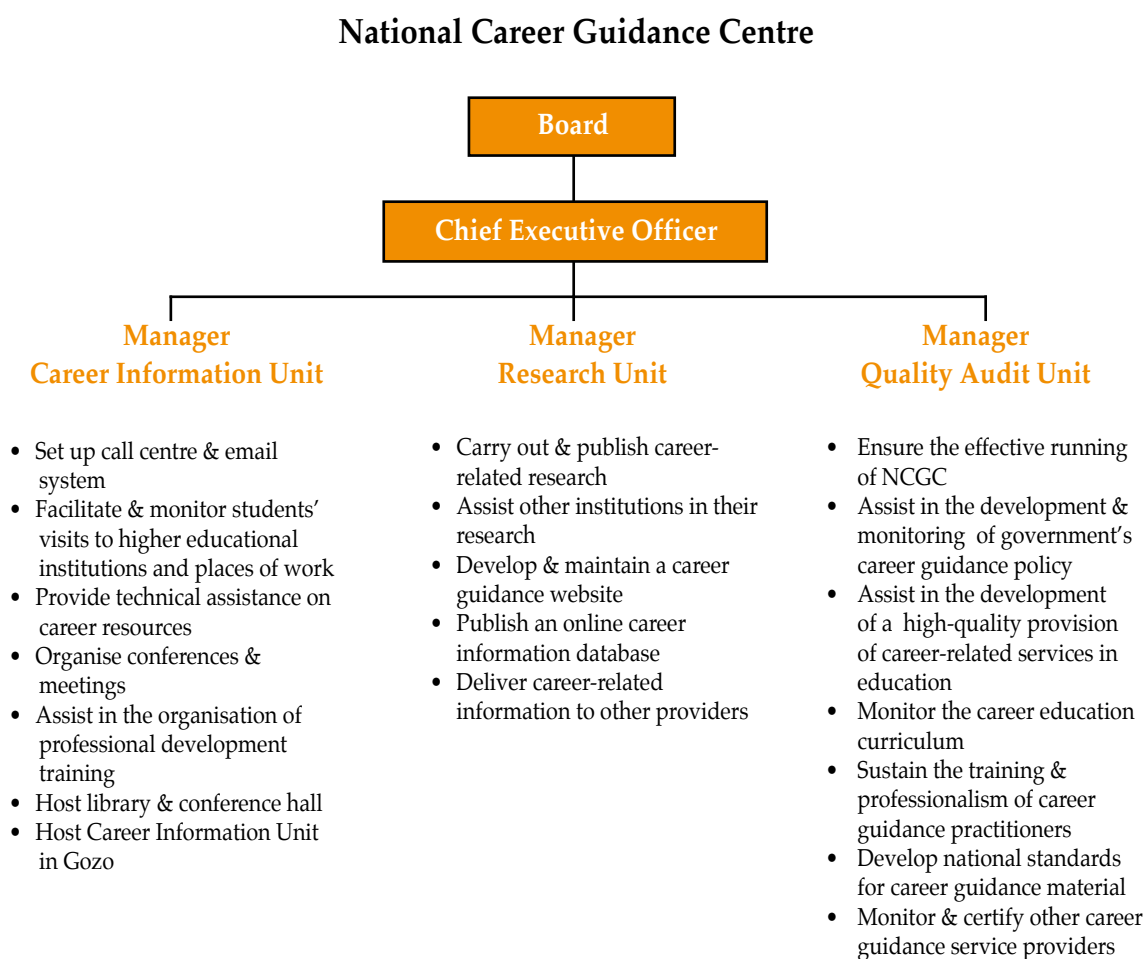
Complementary nature

The Centre should appertain to the portfolio of the Ministry responsible for education. It should be governed by a Board. The Board members should be appointed by Government and the social partners and should include representatives from the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education and the Directorate for Educational Services.¹³

Three main operating branches

The Centre should consist of three main operating branches, namely, the Research Unit, the Career Information Unit, and the Quality Audit Unit (See Figure 1). Each unit should be led by a manager and should include a team of professionals supported by administrative staff.

Figure 1. Structure of the National Career Guidance Centre



¹³ The Board will take up the role of the National Career Guidance Forum which was set up a few years back with the aim of developing career-related agendas and steer policy making.

Human resources

The basic requirements for the managerial and professional grades within NCGC should be professional qualifications in related subjects such as education, management, social policy, economics, sociology and psychology, and preferably a university qualification such as Diploma or Masters in career guidance. A variety of skills and qualifications should direct NCGC to take a multidisciplinary approach. All employees should ideally be recruited on a fixed-term contract (for example 3 year contracts) in order to maintain high quality standards.

Clients

The centre should cater for the lifelong career guidance needs of individuals. It should help career professionals and service providers to become more effective. It should also target students and other persons (including parents/guardians) who can influence students' careers. The centre should develop a life-long dimension and cater for adults who need career advice or information.

Orientation of service

The centre should adopt a client segmentation model by using the appropriate method of intervention according to the clients' needs. The interventions can vary from promotion of and support to self-help initiatives, group or individual sessions. The centre should maximise the use of its limited resources by keeping to a minimum the number of individual sessions. It should also ensure that there is no duplication of work carried out by other service providers.¹⁴

Affiliation with Euroguidance Network

NCGC and Euroguidance Malta should be integrated to make better use of the resources and funding available.¹⁵ Euroguidance Malta should give a European dimension to the operations of NCGC. The Centre should also promote EU opportunities for learning and for employment through links with Ploteus and EURES.

4.2.2 Career Information Unit

Ensure accessibility to centre

Services should be advertised to as wide a variety of users as possible. They should be client-oriented, transparent and accessible to all strata of society. Outreach activities should be carried out to increase the use of the Centre's resources by disadvantaged groups. The Centre should be open all year round and have family friendly hours.

Set up a call centre and email-based information service system

Accessibility can be increased if the Career Information Unit sets up a call centre and an email-based information service system that impart career advice and information.

Facilitate and monitor accessibility to higher education institutions and places of work

The unit should facilitate and monitor students' visits to higher education institutions and places of work. It should assist in the organisation of other forms of course and work tasters. The unit should carry out these tasks in collaboration with College Career Coordinators and Career Advisors.

Assist career guidance providers with guidance resources

It should provide technical assistance to career guidance providers who want to buy guidance resources and instruct them on their use.

Organise conferences and public meetings

Conferences and public meetings should be organised on the topics of education, the labour

¹⁴ The experience of other countries such as Ireland shows how an optimal use of ICT can result in the better utilisation of limited human resources.

¹⁵ Currently, Euroguidance Malta lacks the necessary resources to be fully effective in its role. 87% of guidance teachers have never used its services (Study 2).

market and career guidance. These activities should be planned and carried out in collaboration with educational and work related institutions.

Assist in the organisation of professional development training

The Unit should aid other institutions in the organisation of professional development training for formal and informal career guidance providers.¹⁶ Maltese and international experts should be invited to these activities.

House a library and a conference hall

The Career Information Unit should have the facilities of a library and a conference hall, as follows:

a. The Library

The library should be the main Maltese depository of career-related information. It should consolidate information and present it in ways that are useful to career guidance and development. The library should include resources for all ages and levels of education, consisting of books, research papers, self-assessment tests, multimedia career packages, career games for children, career related media (such as videos and DVDs), and others. It should gather, among others, all relevant data from Maltese institutions. It should host ancillary information about topics such as social services, NGOs, legal issues, health and safety issues, and migration issues which may affect career choice. It should also host material relating to the promotion of educational and employment mobility within the European Union and beyond. The library should offer a permanent interactive exposition of career material. Such exposition should be fairly represented. Resources should reflect the current situation and needs. All information should be dated. It should also include access to computers installed with multimedia career packages and internet connections. All material should be ergonomically designed to promote individual initiative.

b. The Conference Hall

The hall should be used for conferences and meetings targeted at children, youths, and adults.

Host a Career Information Unit in Gozo

A smaller, but similarly equipped unit should be set up in Gozo. This will enable Gozitans to have easy access to these services.¹⁷

4.2.3 Research Unit

Be the lead career research unit in Malta and Gozo

The Research Unit should gather primary and secondary career-related information and make it available to its clients. It should endeavour to close the gap between the collection of labour-market information and its transformation into usable learning material for career guidance. This will make research easily understood and reduce the fragmentation of career information.

Carry out and publish career-related research

The unit should undertake mapping exercises of the existing career-related information and its utility for diverse target groups in order to develop a coherent strategy for the delivery of career information. It should evaluate the effectiveness of existing career information. It should fill in research lacunae by, among others, focusing on the needs of specific groups such as women, young children, early school leavers, persons with special needs, immigrants, returned migrants, and persons living in disadvantaged localities including Gozo. The Unit should also focus on the specificity of services in small states, including the challenges of developing career guidance for workers in SMEs. It should make use of existing EU funding opportunities.

¹⁶ Informal career guidance providers include trade unions, employers' associations and NGOs

¹⁷ As was mentioned in Section 3.3.3, in Gozo there is an ongoing ICT project aimed at helping students in their career choice. The proposed resource centre should complement this project.

Assist other institutions to carry out professional guidance research

The unit should assist other educational and work-related institutions in the development of high-level guidance research. It should encourage more university-based research on the topic.

Develop and maintain a career guidance website

The comprehensive guidance website should serve as Malta's main portal on the subject. The website should cater for the needs of students, policy makers, practitioners, trainers, researchers and other stake holders. In order to be more user friendly, the website should be presented in both Maltese and English. It should include databases of research and good practice. All information collected and generated by NCGC should be published online. Career information should be updated regularly. The website should link European and international career information systems with national information systems.¹⁸ It should be used to publish information regarding evolving work opportunities from local media.

Publish an online career information database¹⁹

The website should contain, among others, a much-needed career information database. The database should consist of detailed information about the main occupations in Malta (such as potential career patterns, job trends, entry requirements, personal qualities needed, intrinsic job rewards, working conditions, main tasks of the job, typical working day, video clips about workers doing the job etc.). The database should be updated regularly.

Deliver career-related information to other providers

The unit will provide information (through emails and other media) to formal and informal career guidance providers on education and job-related trends.

4.2.4 Quality Audit Unit

Ensure the effective running of the NCGC

The Quality Audit Unit should design a Quality Service Charter for the NCGC. It should set up a system of 360 degrees feedback, where the efficacy of the NCGC services is monitored not only internally, but also by clients, social partners, NGOs and the educational institutions.²⁰

Assist in the development and monitoring of government's career guidance policy

The unit should monitor government's career guidance policy and contribute to policy development for the Ministry of Education's Directorate for Policy Development and Programme Implementation.

Assist in the development of a high-quality provision of career-related services in educational institutions

It should develop guidelines for the maintenance of high-quality career guidance services in educational and employment institutions. It should monitor all forms of career guidance in the country.

Monitor the career education curriculum

The unit should monitor the quality of the curriculum relating to careers. Emphasis should be placed on the impartation of core knowledge and skills needed to manage careers throughout life.

Sustain the training and professionalism of career guidance practitioners

It should liaise with the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education, the Directorate for Educational Services, the University of Malta, the Malta College for Arts, Science and Technology

¹⁸ For example, the website could be linked to the Ploteus and Eures portals.

¹⁹ The role of the Research Department with regards to this proposal might have to be adapted according to what is carried out by the group of career guidance practitioners mentioned in 3.3.2.

²⁰ A system based on the "Matrix Quality Standard for Information Advice and Guidance Services" could be used. <http://www.matrixstandard.com/>

and other educational institutions so that career guidance courses are of optimal quality. It should contribute in the establishment and maintenance of a system of continuous professional development for career guidance practitioners. The unit should work towards the recognition of the guidance profession in Malta, by among others, setting up a register of career guidance practitioners.

Develop national standards for career guidance material

The unit should develop guidelines for the collection, production and dissemination of career information by the public and private sectors. It should encourage social partners to adopt such guidelines. It should ensure among others, that career-related material is comprehensive and fair.

Monitor career guidance service providers and practitioners

It should keep a register of all the formal and informal career service providers and of practitioners. A system should be developed where providers need to obtain the quality mark of the NCGC.

4.3 Career guidance within the educational system

4.3.1 Establishment of Career Guidance Services within the Directorate for Educational Services (DES)

Career Guidance services should be established within the Directorate for Educational Services. This service should be led by an official in possession of a university level qualification in the subject, as well as experience in the field of career guidance. He or she should be responsible for the development of career guidance within the educational system. The roles of the Manager should include the following:

- Ensure that the policies laid down in the 1988 Education Act and the amendments made to this act in July 2006, as well as other related policies of the Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education and the Directorate for Educational Services are adhered to;
- Contribute towards the implementation of the National Curriculum Framework, according to the particular needs and levels of attainment of the students;
- Supervise the work of the Career Co-ordinators and Career Advisors;
- Advise the School Management Team on policy, priorities and resources needed for career education and guidance;
- Assist the School Management Team in developing the school's career guidance policies and activities as articulated in their school development plans;
- Collaborate with the Education Officer responsible for Personal, Social and Career Development PSCD (EO PSCD)²¹ and work towards integrating programmes with other Education Officers (or equivalent);
- Ensure high quality standards in all career related activities;
- Be responsible for the organisation and running of continuous professional development (CPD) activities for career guidance personnel;
- Collaborate and work closely with the NCGC on quality standards and other issues;
- Perform administrative work related to the area of his/her responsibility;
- Develop programmes to ensure that teachers are well trained to support the work of career guidance personnel through and across the curriculum;
- Embark in continuous professional development activities including participation in career guidance conferences, courses and in-service training.

21 See Section 4.3.3

4.3.2 Career guidance at college level

Career guidance should form part of the services offered by colleges

Career guidance should be coordinated at college level similar to other services such as social work, psychological services and school counselling.

Appointment of College Career Coordinators

The role of College Career Coordinator should be developed so as to manage career-related services carried out at college level. The College Career Coordinator should assist in the external support of career services in order to ensure their efficiency and effectiveness. College Career Coordinators should be in possession of a university qualification and experience in career guidance. The roles of College Career Coordinators should include the following:

- Assist the official heading the Career Guidance Services within the DES and EO PSCD²² in planning, designing and revising the scheme of work for those involved in career education;
- Assist the personnel involved in the development, coordination and implementation of the college's guidance and career education programme;
- Supervise the work carried out by Career Advisors;
- Assist students with the transition to post-secondary education, training and the workplace;
- Establish and maintain links between the college and post-secondary educational institutions;
- Provide career guidance interventions and assistance for individuals and small groups;
- Use vocational instruments to help pupils make critical choices;
- Establish and strengthen links with diverse work organisations to facilitate students' work-related experiences, workplace visits, work shadowing and other related activities;
- Facilitate referrals of students to other specialists and services;
- Facilitate the ongoing review of the college's career guidance and education programme;
- Report on the effectiveness of career programmes to the school management team and to the Career Guidance Services within the DES and present strategies for further improvement;
- Collaborate with the National Career Guidance Centre;
- Embark in continuous professional development activities including participation in career guidance conferences, courses and in-service training.

4.3.3 Career guidance and education at school level

Career guidance and education should form part of school development plans

Career guidance and education should be integrated in the school development plans of both primary and secondary schools. Schools should allocate part of their budget towards career guidance resources. Career guidance and education should be tied to a lifelong learning approach starting from early childhood and continuing throughout one's working life. The basic career skills (including personal development) should be instilled in all school children to sustain their decisions throughout their life.

Introducing the Personal, Social and Career Development subject

The existing Personal and Social Development (PSD) subject should be reviewed to include a greater component of career education and should be renamed Personal, Social and Career Development (PSCD) (Refer to Section 5.2 for further details). Thus, there needs to be a review of the job description and job title of the EO PSD and PSD teachers. This document suggests their titles to be changed to EO PSCD and PSCD teachers.

²² See Section 4.3.3

Training of PSCD Teachers

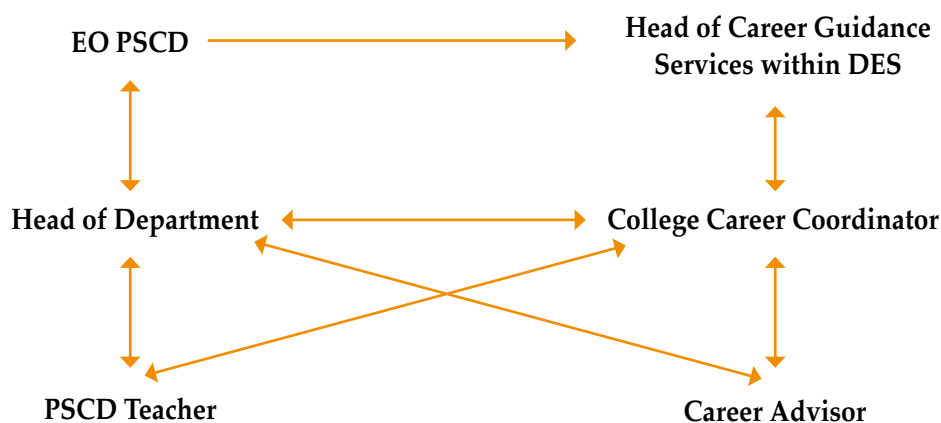
PSCD teachers should have adequate career-related training.²³

Appointment of Career Advisors

Each school should have a number of Career Advisors (See Figure 2), depending on its size, to take care of the career guidance programme and career activities. Career Advisors should be in possession of a university qualification in career guidance. The roles of Career Advisors should include the following:

- Coordinate all career guidance activities at school level;
- Assist and guide students in groups and individually in educational and vocational development;
- Organise and/or deliver meetings, talks, workshops, discussions, seminars and other activities for students and parents in consultation with the school management team, Career Coordinator and other stakeholders;
- Provide students and parents with the necessary information for subject options and career choices;
- Use vocational instruments to help pupils to make critical choices;
- Organise visits for students to educational institutions and career related establishments;
- Organise guidance spaces and facilities at school in consultation with the school management team;
- Establish and maintain a comprehensive, up-to-date and readily accessible provision of career information for students;
- Participate in the ongoing review and evaluation of the school's guidance and career education programme;
- Facilitate referrals of students to other professionals as appropriate;
- Embark in continuous professional development activities including participation in career guidance conferences, courses and in-service training.

Figure 2. Structure of Career Guidance and Education within Compulsory Schooling



²³ Newly graduated PSD teachers are already in possession of a number of credits in career education. However, a number of PSD teachers have no such training.

Physical resources

All secondary schools should have a guidance office, a small career library within the main library or guidance rooms, and space for group or individual interventions. Counselling and other interventions should be carried out in separate rooms, where possible. All guidance suites should be equipped with the necessary resources, namely: a telephone line, a computer with broadband internet connection, and other necessary equipment. Part of the school budget should be dedicated for the purchase of materials related to career guidance, including vocational instruments, career books, videos, CD-ROMs and DVDs, and other relevant equipment.

chapter 5

Career education in school settings

5.1 Career education in school settings

This chapter outlines career education provision for all students across the primary and secondary phases of schooling (Year 4 – Form 5).²⁴

5.1.1 Rationale

- Career education ensures that students work towards attaining the knowledge, skills, attitudes and qualifications in order to embark on the career of their choice.
- Career education helps students to feel positive about themselves, improve their motivation and be responsible for their career plans.
- Career education guarantees students' entitlement to guidance and facilitates the dynamic interaction between the personal and the social decision making process.
- Career education complements and reinforces the distinctive contributions of PSD.²⁵

24 According to the OECD (2004a) in many countries such as Austria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Spain, the U.K., Norway (in principle), in many parts of Germany, and in some Canadian provinces, career programmes are mandatory. In the case of the Canadian provinces, career education credits are needed for graduation. However, in other cases such as Ireland, Korea and Luxembourg, it is left to the individual school to decide whether to offer it or not.

25 According to Sultana (1997), PSD provides the curricular space that offers opportunities for critical work education. PSD encourages dialogue, democratic learning, experiential learning and critical thinking, providing the right context for the teaching of career education.

5.1.2 Aims

Career education should give students the opportunity to:

- understand themselves and the influences that affect them;
- investigate opportunities in learning and work;
- learn about change and transition;
- explore issues about stereotyped images related to jobs;
- be exposed to experiential learning;
- understand the importance of continuing their education throughout life.

5.2 General structure

Career education as a developmental programme

There should be a developmental career education programme beginning in early childhood and continuing throughout life (see Appendix 7 for a sample of programme).²⁶

Career education to be taught in all schools

Career education should be delivered in all primary and secondary schools.

Career education in the curriculum²⁷

Career education should be delivered as a subsumed programme²⁸ included in the Personal and Social Development (PSD) subject, which should be renamed Personal, Social and Career Development.²⁹

Career education to be inclusive

Career education should be gender sensitive and should also take into consideration diverse cultural backgrounds, special needs and other potential differences in the community.

26 In countries such as Finland, Spain and the United Kingdom, career education is included in the secondary school years whilst in other countries such as Canada (for example British Columbia) and Denmark it begins in primary schooling. According to the OECD (2004a), the foundations of career self-management skills (for example, decision-making, self-awareness, and self-confidence) are laid at an early age. In this context, the case for starting career education in primary schooling is strong.

27 Career education programmes vary in structure across different countries. OECD (2004a) speaks about a choice of three broad patterns of such programmes - stand alone programmes, subsumed programmes and the infused programmes. The programme choice depends largely on the type of educational system adopted by the country or, sometimes, by the schools themselves. Where the career education programme is offered as a separate or stand alone subject, space is allocated in the weekly or semester timetable (eg. Austria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Finland, Greece and Romania). The embedded or subsumed model makes it possible for career education to be included within a more broadly-based subject, often social studies or personal and social education (eg. Hungary, Latvia, Poland and in some cases in Australia and the U.K.). Finally, career education can appear across the curriculum (i.e. infused programme) by formally addressing work-related issues in different subjects (eg. Denmark and Greece) (Sultana, 2003b). See Appendix 6 for more details.

28 The quality of career education is easier to monitor when taught in the stand-alone or subsumed forms. With the infusion model, provision can be patchy, disconnected and often invisible to students. Experience in Austria and Norway shows that the infusion model requires a high level of co-ordination and support to be effective. It also needs some separate provision where the student is helped to understand meaningfully separate chunks and pull them together.

29 In schools where PSD is not currently offered, PSCD should be introduced.

Year 4 - 6 hours
Year 5 - 8 hours
Year 6 - 10 hours
Year 7 - 10 hours
Form 1 - 10 hours
Form 2 - 12 hours
Form 3 - 22 hours
Form 4 - 22 hours
Form 5 - 15 hours

5.3 Delivery of career education at primary and secondary levels

Time dedicated for career education

Career education should start at the primary level in Year 4.³⁰ The PSCD lessons in the Upper Forms (Form 3 - 5) should be increased to 2 lessons per week per form. The following minimum hours of career education per year are being suggested³¹:

A number of the above-mentioned hours should be delivered as workshops, seminars and other activities under the responsibility of Career Advisors.

Collaboration with other professionals

PSCD teachers should liaise with the College Career Coordinator, the Career Advisors and other professionals in the guidance field, to ensure that career education lessons complement the other guidance provisions in the school (eg. post-secondary talks, work placements, work visits, etc.). PSCD teachers should also work closely with the subject teachers to ensure continuity between career education lessons delivered within PSCD and other lessons.

30 This is the same time that PSD lessons are currently introduced in the primary years.

31 The following are a few examples of countries that provide career education at the primary level:

- In the British Columbia, 60 hrs must be devoted to career education each year from kindergarten to grade 12;
- In Denmark, educational, vocational and labour market information is mandatory from grades 1 to 9;
- At the primary level in Hungary, 2-3 hrs per week (i.e. 72 hrs annually) are dedicated to career education. 20 of the 72 hours are dedicated to occupational choice and career guidance:

The following are examples of countries that provide career education at the secondary level:

- In the U.K. career education is compulsory, although schools are free to deliver career education in any way they wish. Suggested minimum times per annum are the following: 11-12 years - 12 hrs; 12-13 years - 15 hrs; 13-14 years - 24 hrs; 14-15 years - 24 hrs; 15-16 years- 20 hrs; 16-17 years - 20 hrs; 17-18 years - 12 hrs.
- In Norway, teaching about the working life is included in the subject syllabi for each grade throughout primary and lower secondary schools. But more focus is given in the following years: Grade 8 – 8 to 6 hrs; Grade 9 – 9 to 10 hrs; Grade 10 – 12 to 10 hrs.
- In Austria, in Grades 7 and 8, 32 hours are dedicated to career education each year.
- In the Czech Republic career education is delivered to all students from Grades 7 to 12.
- In Finland, career education is compulsory from grades 7 to 9. Two hours per week of lessons are provided and one hour per week in the optional tenth grade and in upper secondary education.

Whole-school approach to career education

The College Career Coordinator must promote the idea that career learning can take place in other areas of the curriculum such as Maltese, English, Religion, Home Economics and others.

Students' portfolios

Students' portfolios, where students record their career related skills as part of their career education curriculum, should be introduced in Primary settings and continued at Secondary level.³² PSCD teachers should be responsible for the development of portfolios.

Work experience

The Career Advisor in collaboration with the College Career Coordinator should be responsible for career-related activities such as work shadowing, visits and experiences that complement the career education programme at the secondary level. These activities should help students develop insights into the world of work and their own occupational orientations.³³

Input by different stakeholders

A developmental programme of career guidance and education should focus on different experiences and make use of members of the community (such as parents, alumni, representatives from the business community, trade unions, etc. as well as the teachers in schools) to offer relevant inputs.

³² An important aspect of the 'developmental approach' to career education (Super et al. cited in Evans & Herr, 1978 and Savickas, 2002) is the keeping of records of relevant skills or competencies developed throughout the school years which may be important for future work. These help students identify their strengths and plan their career accordingly. In countries such as the Netherlands, students keep a portfolio from their primary school years. In Australia, students keep an Employment Related Skills logbook. Similar systems are adopted in Canada (Ontario) and Denmark (OECD, 2004a). In England, the 'Progress File' is used with all levels of students.

³³ Successful career education programmes such as those used in Denmark and Norway (OECD, 2004a) also emphasise the importance of providing students with relevant work experience.

chapter 6

Quality Standards

6.1 Quality standards in career services

This chapter outlines the policy and strategy proposals regarding quality standards in career services.

6.1.1 Rationale

- The quality of career services should be measured in order to justify the service, and to provide trends and benchmarks which help organisational development;
- High quality standards are needed to ensure that clients get the best possible service;
- Career services are an investment which is expected to pay off on a long term basis and in broader social terms.³⁴

6.1.2 Aims

Complement and fit with other government policies

The focus on quality issues in career guidance should be linked with other government policies.

Quality versus quantity

Quality standards should ensure that quality of service is always prioritised over quantity.

Lead towards the professionalisation of career guidance services

Quality measures should aim to upgrade competencies and establish the boundaries that delineate professional career guidance. Career guidance services must be constructed in a way as to promote trust among clients and other professionals in the professionalism of career guidance.

³⁴ The direct effects of career education and guidance are often not easily measurable

6.2 Human resources

Qualifications of career practitioners

In order to practice career guidance, one needs to be adequately qualified and experienced.³⁵ Qualifications in related fields (such as education or psychology) should not be regarded as necessarily sufficient for career guidance practitioners. NCGC should give advice to the relevant authority on the adequacy of qualifications and experience.

Availability of training

There should be undergraduate and postgraduate training courses available for career guidance practitioners. These courses should be based on clear objectives and outcomes. Guidance staff should be granted permission to attend related short training courses within their hours of employment. Foreign experts should be asked to contribute to fill lacunae in skills and knowledge of career practitioners (for example, with regards to career guidance issues related to students with disabilities). The existing Postgraduate Diploma in Lifelong Career Guidance and Development should be offered on a regular basis. Government should ensure that career guidance training at Masters level is available for guidance practitioners. The PSD syllabus covered at University should be modified to PSCD and reflect the emphasis made on career education within the subject in the compulsory education system.

Monitoring of career-related training

Regular national reviews must be carried out by NCGC. The centre should monitor career-related training courses and give feedback to the relevant ministerial authorities and training providers.

Career Practitioners should possess certain competencies

Career practitioners should possess and demonstrate the following 11 core competencies:³⁶

- Appropriate ethical behaviour and professional conduct in the fulfillment of roles and responsibilities;
- Advocacy and leadership in advancing clients' learning, career development and personal concerns;
- Awareness and appreciation of clients' cultural differences to interact effectively with all populations;
- Integration of theory and research into career guidance practice;
- Ability to design, implement and evaluate career guidance programs and interventions;
- Awareness of his/her own capacity and limitations;
- Skills to communicate effectively with colleagues or clients, using the appropriate level of language;
- Knowledge of updated information on educational, training, employment trends, labour market, and social issues;
- Sensitivity towards social and cross-cultural issues;
- Skills to cooperate effectively in a team of professionals;
- Knowledge of lifelong career development processes.
- Professional development

Career guidance practitioners should demonstrate a commitment in continuing professional development (CPD). CPD activities should be carried out regularly and should involve, among others, updating of skills, the use of new technology and opportunity for networking. Practitioners who repeatedly demonstrate lack of interest in CPD should not be left working in the field.

³⁵ See Section 4.3

³⁶ These competencies were adapted from a list approved by the International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG) (2003).

Code of ethics

A code of ethics must be devised for career guidance practitioners. The code of ethics should set minimum standards for professional conduct. It should contain ethical principles and ethical decision making guidelines. The code should protect clients against discrimination and misconduct and serve to strengthen clients' confidence in the service and in the profession.

Adequate staffing

There must be enough human resources to carry out duties. Career guidance practitioners should have clerical and administrative support appropriate for the activities under consideration. In particular, there should be enough staff to manage activities related to quality standards. Workload must be allocated in a rational way among the existing staff.

Community Resources

Community resources should be tapped for the benefit of students. The following persons should be among those encouraged to participate in career activities for students: representatives from local employers; parents; former students; employees; ETC personnel; trade union representatives; employers' representatives; voluntary organisations; post-secondary guidance personnel; other community members.

6.3 Physical resources

Resources required by career service providers

The objectives of this policy document can only be met if there is adequate funding that ensures that all the necessary resources are utilised for the benefit of the students. Career service providers should have sufficient physical resources to enable them to reach their aims.

Standardisation of career information

Information should be regarded as a critical element of career guidance, serving to meet the needs of clients and assisting them by increasing their self-awareness and their awareness of the work environment. A set of guidelines for career information should be drafted. These standards should be followed by all those who develop career information. They should include elements such as: dating, author, target group, information objectives, sequential contents, formatting, and accessibility by diverse groups. There should also be content guidelines including, among others: reference to duties and nature of work; work setting and conditions; preparation required and methods of entry; special requirements or considerations; earnings and other benefits; advancement possibilities; employment outlook; related occupations; and sources of additional information.³⁷ Career information should not discriminate against any social group.

6.4 Delivery of career guidance

Quality Assessment System

Career service providers should develop and maintain a Quality Assessment System (QAS). The school administration and the College Career Coordinator should be responsible for carrying out the QAS at school level. QAS activities should be included in the schools' development plan. The College Career Coordinator should carry out the QAS at college level. National monitoring should be the main responsibility of NCGC. Feedback from the QAS should be communicated to career guidance practitioners and higher authorities. Such feedback needs to be examined regularly against strategic targets which the service providers have to reach.

The QAS should be an ongoing process and should complement the annual review mentioned below.

³⁷ Adapted from the American National Career Development Association's (NCDA) Guidelines

Annual review of school career education and guidance

School career education and guidance should be reviewed annually.³⁸ The review should focus not only on procedures and outcomes, but also on human and physical resources. The review should assist school management and staff to identify career needs of students, the effectiveness of services and resources the school uses to meet those needs; gaps and problems in the delivery of services, and how the school can respond to them. The review should create mutual awareness of the complementary roles that all school staff play in delivering career guidance.

Development of quality standards and practice

Stakeholders should be consulted in the development of quality standards, and measures should be negotiated. There should be ownership of the measures. Measures should be incremental and developed gradually. Measures should be appropriate to the organisational and work circumstances and should fit their purpose. There should be collaboration with other countries at a national level in developing common indicators, benchmarks and approaches to data collection and methods for cost-benefit studies. Career practitioners must actively seek innovative ideas in order to improve the service.

All career service providers should adhere to a set of quality standards based on the following principles:³⁹

a. Impartiality

Career guidance should be impartial. Professional objectivity should precede external pressures. Any factors which might limit the impartiality of the service must be declared.

b. Confidentiality

Career services should be confidential and this should be made clear to the clients. Personal information should not be passed on without the client's prior permission except where there is evidence of serious risk to the welfare of the client or others. Any limitations on confidentiality should be made clear at the first encounter.

c. Person focused

Career services should always focus on the needs and interests of the clients.

d. Equality of opportunity

All individuals, irrespective of their personal or social characteristics, should be exposed to all possible career options.

e. Transparency

The procedures of career guidance services should be open and transparent. Providers should explain in clear language appropriate to the individual how they will deliver the service and any links they have to other agencies and services.

f. Promotion of services

Career guidance services should be publicised and promoted among all potential clients. The proper media must be used to reach all eligible users. Marketing should generate enough requests to make full use of the existing resources.

g. Accessibility

The services should be accessible to any eligible user, irrespective of gender, disability or other potential barriers. The service providers must consider all communication channels.

38 The Operations Department within the Education Division is introducing an annual external audit of all schools. The career guidance review should form part of this audit.

39 Several of these standards were adapted from the Code of Practice of the Association of Graduate Career advisory Services, UK. Website: <http://www.agcas.org.uk>

Information should be freely available so that clients from families with low income still benefit from it.

h. Accountability

Career guidance service providers and practitioners should be accountable for their work to higher authorities.

i. Coherence and integration

Career guidance services should be consistent with the existing policies. There should be proper coordination among all service providers so that human and physical resources are used as effectively as possible. Any useful information must be shared among other career guidance practitioners. The exact nature of the services should be tailored to meet the demand.

j. Networking

There should be regular communication among career practitioners operating at school, college and NCGC levels. Practitioners must have strong links with parents, other career services providers, employer organisations and other stakeholders in the field.

k. Implementation support

Career-related activities must be supported by other persons such as parents and teachers to be effective. Guidance practitioners must ensure that all persons who influence the daily lives of students are aware of the ways in which their attitudes affect students' choice of careers.

l. Maximisation of resources

Service providers must make the best use of all resources, including career material and ICT. Service providers should make best use of time, thus preferring guidance action and activities that are quick, clear and striking.

m. Client complaint system

A functional and fair system handling client complaints should be set up and maintained.

n. Referral system

An adequate referral system should be in place. All career guidance practitioners should have updated reference contacts for referring clients when there is need for interventions that cannot be carried out by the particular practitioners. Any feedback resulting from the referral must be recorded by the referring practitioner and passed on to the College Career Coordinator.

chapter 7

The Way Forward

This section includes the main priorities related to the proposed changes within the educational structure and to the National Career Guidance Centre (NCGC).

7.1 Overview

Both groups of priorities are listed in three sets according to their importance and are accompanied by the designated institutions responsible for their execution. The section ends with a conclusion linking this policy document to its context.

7.2 Career guidance and education within the educational structure

1st Set of Priorities	Responsibility
<p><i>Appointments:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head of Career Guidance Services • College Career Coordinators • Career Advisor 	Directorate for Educational Services
<p><i>Disseminate information</i> regarding new roles of Head of Career Guidance Services, College Career Coordinators, Career Advisors, PSCD teachers, school counsellors and guidance teacher</p>	Directorate for Educational Services
<p><i>Training:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PSCD teachers 	Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education and the University of Malta/ and or other higher education institutions

Career Education

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draw up a career education curriculum for primary and secondary schools | <p>Career Guidance Services within DES, E.O. PSCD (or equivalent) and College Career Coordinators in consultation with the National Career Guidance Centre</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PSCD lessons in the Upper forms (3-5) to be increased to 2 lessons per week. One lesson to focus on career education | <p>Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce career education lessons as part of the PSCD curriculum in primary and secondary schools | <p>PSCD teachers</p> |

Work experiences:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce work experience to all students in the higher forms | <p>Career Guidance Services, College Career Coordinators, Employment and Training Corporation and social partners</p> |
|---|---|

Resources:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All schools should allocate part of their budget towards career resources. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. guidance suite 2. office equipment 3. materials related to guidance, eg. career tests, career books, CD-ROMS, etc | <p>Directorate for Educational Services, Principals and Heads of Schools (in consultation with College Career Coordinators, Career Advisors and PSCD teachers)</p> |
|---|--|

Quality Standards:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure regular updating of career guidance practitioner skills | <p>Directorate for Educational Services, National Career Guidance Centre and University of Malta and /or other higher education institutions</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure availability of training both at undergraduate and postgraduate levels | <p>Directorate for Educational Services, National Career Guidance Centre, and the University of Malta and /or other higher education institutions</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor career-related training | <p>Career Guidance Services, College Career Coordinators, and National Career Guidance Centre</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up a code of ethics for career guidance practitioners | <p>National Career Guidance Centre in consultation with Career Guidance Services and College Career Coordinators</p> |

1st Set of Priorities

Responsibility

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draw up a set of guidelines for career information | National Career Guidance Centre in consultation with Career Guidance Services and College Career Coordinators |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a quality assessment system at school, college, national and NCGC level | Career Guidance Services, College Career Coordinators, Directorate for Quality and Standards in Education, in collaboration with National Career Guidance Centre |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct an annual review of school career education and guidance | Directorate for Educational Services in Collaboration with National Career Guidance Centre, College Principals, Heads of School, College Career Coordinators, Career Advisors and PSCD teachers |

7.3 The National Career Guidance Centre

1st Set of Priorities

Responsibility

Appointments:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board | Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment and Social Partners |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEO • Manager Career Information • Manager Research • Manager Quality Audit | Board |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appointment of professional and administrative staff | Board |

2st Set of Priorities

Responsibility

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up an adequate working space for the Centre. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment • Board • CEO and Managers of NCGC |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Furnish Centre with resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEO and Managers of NCGC |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify, develop and start the implementation of strategic objectives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board • CEO and Managers of NCGC |

3st Set of Priorities

Responsibility

59

- Disseminate information about Centre
- Establish links with strategic partners

CEO and Managers of NCGC

- Assist in the organisation of professional development training

Manager Career Information

- Start the gathering of career related information

Manager Research

- Develop and maintain a career guidance website containing a career information database

Manager Research

- Set up guidelines for career guidance and education quality standards in educational institutions

Manager Quality Audit

7.4 Conclusion

This policy document can only be effective if it is complemented and sustained by other related policies and strategies. It can achieve better results if it is linked with a career guidance policy for post-secondary students and for the labour force that still needs to be carried out. The role of the NCGC should expand from catering mainly for young students to catering for older students and the general public. ETC should divest more of its training role and increase its guidance work. It should cooperate with and complement the NCGC.

The objectives of counselling in schools must be reviewed in order to avoid unnecessary duplication of work and friction. Such revision should lead to a narrowing and specialisation of their roles. There must be coordination at all levels in the educational system between career professionals and other professionals and administrators. In particular, the reviewed roles of school counsellors and guidance teachers must include regular coordination with career professionals to ensure that students receive a holistic service. There must be a widespread dissemination of information on the occurring changes. Notwithstanding this, it is envisaged that many teachers and students may initially still misinterpret the competencies of the new roles. Thus, all professionals must be particularly sensitive to such circumstances.

A greater coordination between the educational system and the higher education institutions must take place. Courses involving school counselling, career guidance and PSCD must be adapted to arising needs. Students in these specialisations should ideally have common units so that they understand and appreciate more each other's roles before they start practising in their field. All career guidance practitioners should avail themselves of any training possibilities to keep abreast with the changes in the field of career guidance, thus ensuring their continuous professional development.

A wider career guidance policy would require to be connected to a clear lifelong learning policy that directs all adult education and training. While the enhancement of structure, capacity and goals of public sector institutions should achieve considerable results in helping individuals in their career paths, one should not forget the potentially growing role of private guidance and placement agencies that must also be better regulated.

The Maltese educational system is passing through major restructuring exercises. The application of this document's policy measures will greatly depend on the speed and direction of the current reforms that are decentralising the public educational system into a college system. Thus, it is envisaged that this document will not be used as a static set of suggestions, but will be adapted in order to match and complement the other developments happening in its environment.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Questionnaire for secondary school students

Immarka l-kaxxa t-tajba:

1. Skola Area Secondary Church School
 Junior Lyceum Independent School
2. Sess: Maskil Femminil
3. Is-sena li għaddiet, bejn wieħed u ieħor, kemm il-darba mort tkellem lill-guidance teacher / counsellor?
 Qatt Ftit (bejn 1 u 3 darbiet) Hafna (aktar minn 5 darbiet)
4. Jekk mort tkellimhom, għal liema raġuni?
Tista' timmarka aktar minn kaxxa waħda
 (a) diffikultajiet fl-iskola / fil-klassi
 (b) diffikultajiet id-dar
 (c) biex tkun taf iktar fuq l-għażla tas-suġġetti
 (d) biex tkun taf iktar fuq opportunitajiet ta' studju jew t'xogħol li jeżistu wara l-Form 5
5. Is-sena li għaddiet, jekk mort tkellem lill-guidance teacher / counselor, kemm il-darba mort biex titkellem fuq opportunitajiet ta' studju jew xogħol wara l-form 5?
 Qatt Ftit (bejn 1 u 3 darbiet) Hafna (aktar minn 5 darbiet)
6. Minn dawn l-attivitajiet ta' career guidance, x'taħseb li l-aktar jista' jgħinek?
Tista' timmarka aktar minn kaxxa waħda
 (a) Tkellem lill-guidance teacher b' mod personali / individwali
 (b) Laqgħat li jsiru fl-iskola fuq opportunitajiet post-sekondarji (ez. MCAST, ITS, Junior College eċċ.)
 (c) Żjajjar li jsiru fuq postijiet tax-xogħol, skejjel post-sekondarji, etc.
 (d) Esperjenzi ta' xogħol organizzati mill-iskola
 (e) Seminars ta' ġurnata fuq il-karrieri organizzati mill-guidance unit
7. Hemm xi attivitajiet oħra li lilek jistgħu jgħinuk fl-għażla tal-karriera ?

8. Jekk qatt ma mort tkellem lill-guidance teacher / counsellor, x'kienu r-raġunijiet?
Tista' timmarka aktar minn kaxxa waħda
 (a) għax inhoss li ma għandix bżonn
 (b) għax nisthi / ma nħossnix komdu inkellimhom
 (c) għax ma kontx naf li jeżisti dan is-servizz
 (d) Oħrajn (spjega)

Appendix 2. Questionnaire for guidance teachers

Please answer the questions as genuinely as possible
Strict anonymity is guaranteed throughout the whole process

1. Sex: Male Female

2. What is the main focus of the Wednesday guidance meetings?
 personal topics (such self-esteem, bullying etc) career guidance topics

3. Do you feel that your guidance work is appreciated by the following?

Students	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Teachers	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Parents	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Head of school	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
School Counsellor	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Employers	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

4. If you could choose whether to focus more of your time on one of the following, what would you choose?
 Career guidance issues Personal counselling

5. Is career guidance within your school part of the school development plan or is it only owned by the guidance teachers?
 Part of school development plan Only owned by guidance teachers

6. How often do you involve other teachers in guidance activities?
 Regularly Occasionally Never

7. Do other teachers want to get involved?
 Regularly Occasionally Never

8. Are you satisfied that students' career guidance needs are being sufficiently tackled?
 Yes No

9. Why do you think that students who need guidance might not always search for it?

10. Do you have sufficient space to carry out guidance at school?
 Yes No

11. Are there useful career related books in your school library?
 Yes No

12. Are there funds available for career resources at school level?
 Yes No

13. Have you ever used the services offered by Euroguidance in your work?
 Yes No
14. Is there computer connection in your guidance room?
 Yes No
15. Is it accessible to students?
 Yes No
16. Do you use computers to guide students for future careers?
 Regularly Occasionally Never
17. Do you invite people from the world of work for talks in your school?
 Regularly Occasionally Never
18. Is it easy to find people from the places of work to come and talk to students?
 Yes No
19. Do you take students for visits to work places?
 Regularly Occasionally Never
20. Is it easy to find enough places of work to take your students for a visit?
 Yes No
21. Do you ever invite parents for career talks at school?
 Regularly Occasionally Never
22. If you invite parents, which are the main topics dealt with?
 Topics of a personal nature Topics related to careers Both
23. Why did you choose to become a guidance teacher?

24. Did the half load of teaching encourage you to apply for the post of guidance teacher?
 A lot Little Not at all

Appendix 3. Guidance Personnel in Different Sections

Sector	Category	Total
State Primary/Secondary/ Post Secondary Schools	Counsellors	20
Post Secondary Schools	Guidance teachers	8
State Secondary Schools	Guidance teachers	98
Unit Ghozza	Guidance teachers	3
Safe Schools Programme	Guidance teachers	8
Careers Seminars	Guidance teachers	5
Church and Private Schools	Counsellors	9
Church and Private Schools	Guidance teachers	31

Data obtained from the Guidance and Counselling Services, Education Division

Appendix 4. Career Seminars Programme

Time	Topic
8.30 – 10.30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-awareness and self-assessment skills • Identifying personal skills • Skills in using sources of information
11.00 – 12.30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of vocational opportunities both locally and abroad • Presentation of post-secondary courses • Occupational trends awareness
13.00 – 14.00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-presentation skills (including C.V. application and interview skills) • Awareness of the services and information provided by ETC

Data obtained from the Guidance and Counselling Services, Education Division

Appendix 5. Career Education In The School Curriculum

Country	Compulsory	Starting From Primary	Stand Alone	Subsumed	Infused Programme	Number of Hours and Comments Australia
Canada				✓	✓	No national patterns. Decisions taken at school level but generally career education is located in personal development, health and physical education or social studies. In other cases integrated in a number of subjects across the curriculum.
Br. Columbia	✓	✓				Wide variation in Canada: - 60 hrs devoted to career educ and personal planning from kindergarten to Grade 12.
Saskatchewan	✓					30 hrs of career education required in grades 6-9.
Ontario	✓	✓				Optional career education in primary schooling. However a half credit course in career studies is mandatory in Grade 10.
Alberta	✓					Course in career and life planning mandatory in Grade 11.
Austria	✓		✓		✓	All grade 7-8 students must receive 32 hrs of career education each year.
Czech Republic	✓		✓		✓	Career education included for all students from grade 7 to grade 12. Schools decide whether to teach it as a separate subject or integrated into other subjects.
Denmark	✓	✓			✓	Educational, vocational and labour market orientation from grades 1-9.
Finland	✓		✓			Career education is compulsory in Grades 7-9 and new curriculum guidelines require it to be included in the full basic education. Two hrs/ week of lessons for grades 7-9. One hr/ week in the optional 10th grade and in upper secondary education. Vocational students receive 1.5 weeks of career guidance and counselling.
Germany	✓			✓	✓	Career education is included in the last 2 yrs of compulsory school but may start earlier.
Ireland				✓	✓	In Upper secondary education 2 programmes which together account for around 24% of students, i.e. the Leaving Certificate (Vocational) and the Leaving Certificate (Applied) include career education modules.
Korea			✓			Extra curricular subject for 2 hrs/ week for one semester (i.e. a total of 68 hrs) both in junior and senior high school.
Luxembourg						Career education included in grades 7,8 and 9 for 2 hrs/ week as part of school projects. Approach is curriculum based, experiential and developmental.

Country	Compulsory	Starting From Primary	Stand Alone	Subsumed	Infused Programme	Number of Hours and Comments Australia
Netherlands	✓		✓		✓	Included in the upper forms of all general subjects and in vocational subjects. However it is optional in general education.
Norway	✓	✓		✓	✓	Teaching about working life is included in the subject syllabuses for each grade within the national curriculum for primary and secondary schools but it tends to be phrased in very general terms. In practice the main focus is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 hrs in grade 8 • 8 hrs in grade 9 • 10 hrs in grade 10
Spain	✓					One hr /week included in secondary education and last 2 yrs of baccalaureate upper secondary education.
United Kingdom	✓	+		✓	✓	Compulsory although schools have the freedom of delivering career education how they wish. Often included as part of PSHE and Citizenship. Minimum times are the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11-12 yrs 12 hrs • 12-13 yrs 15 hrs • 13-14 yrs 24 hrs • 14-15 yrs 24hrs • 15-16 yrs 20 hrs • 16-17 yrs 20 hrs • 17-18 yrs 12 hrs
Hungary		✓		✓	✓	Primary Level – 2/3 hrs/week , i.e. 72 hrs annually is dedicated to career information. 20 of the 72 hrs are dedicated to occupational choice and career guidance. Secondary level – students receive career counselling and guidance from their form teacher during form teach time – 2hrs/week
Latvia		✓		✓		One or two lessons annually from grades 1 to 9 devoted to guidance related themes integrated within Social Sciences curriculum. Special lessons by class teachers provide guidance re career pathways.
Cyprus		✓	✓			9th graders attend sessions throughout one semester at Guidance Centre (Nicosia) 11th graders receive guidance in choice of study pathways.

+ Although not labelled as career education, many primary schools include aspects of career education and guidance in the curriculum. (Careers Education and Guidance in England – A National Framework, 11-19; Dfes /0163/2003, Annex A, p. 39)

N.B. As can be noted at times more than one way of delivering career education can be observed in the same country. Often this is because of the autonomy that schools are given to decide which model to select.

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Appendix 6. Orientation visits organised by Guidance & Counselling Services 2005/2006

Places visited	Students
Malta Stock Exchange	300
Central Bank	390
Heritage Malta	600
Middle Sea Insurance	600
Institute for Tourism Studies	1190
Armed Forces of Malta	405
University of Malta	500
Swatar Computer Training Centre	750

Compiled by the Guidance and Counselling Services, Education Division

Appendix 7. Topics of Wednesday Meetings

Career Guidance	Personal/ Social Issues	Others
Subject choice in Form 2 or Form 3 (Mar-04)	Working together – psychiatrists, psychologists, counsellors, guidance teachers and teachers (Nov-04)	Students Services (Nov-04)
The European dimension of guidance and counselling (Oct-04)	Mental health issues in children and adolescence (Apr-05)	Data protection (Nov-04)
Careers development and management in a changing society (Dec-04)	Maternal depression and its effects on children – how we as educators can help (Apr-05)	E-Twinning (Apr-05)
Special course requirements for 2007 and services offered by the Students Advisory Services within the University of Malta (Apr-05)	Eating disorders (Jan-06)	
Career guidance issues – a practical approach (Dec-05)	Death and its implications? Parental separation and its effects on children (Jan-06)	
Opportunities for guidance practitioners (Oct-05)		
Subject choice and transition exercise for year 6 pupils (Jan-06)		
Eures promotion and information Jan-06)		

Data obtained from the Guidance and Counselling Services, Education Division

Appendix 8. In-service Courses Organised by the Education Division

Date	Topic
July/Sept 2000	Scoops: a project imparting cooperative experiences to those teachers who are already involved or may be interested in becoming involved as managers of the Scoops activity at their school.
July/Sept 2001	No in-service courses relating to vocational guidance.
July/Sept 2002	No in-service courses relating to vocational guidance.
July/Sept 2003	Conveying Democracy Through Entrepreneurship: Show how Scoops bridges the world of work and education: Acquire the basic skills to help students set up a business: entrepreneurship, planning, marketing, finance in a cooperative setting.
July/Sept 2004	The Tourism Industry for the Influencers: Give an overview of the Tourism Industry: educational tour for participants to visit establishments; explain the CHOICE programme – aimed at school leaving students so as to encourage them to take the industry into consideration when preparing themselves for the world of work.
July/Sept 2005	The Tourism Industry for the Influencers (done in July and September)

Data obtained from the Guidance and Counselling Services, Education Division

Appendix 9.

A Sample of Careers Education Programme – Year 4 to Form 5

The following is a school-based career educational programme which centres on a career and life planning curriculum primarily addressing the needs of students of that particular year.

Overall Goals

- Become aware of personal characteristics, interests, aptitudes and skills.
- Develop an awareness of and respect for the diversity of the world of work.
- Understand the relationship between school performance and future choices.
- Develop a positive attitude toward work.

Primary Schooling (Competencies)

Year 4 students will be able to:

- Evaluate the importance of various familiar jobs in the community
- Describe workers in terms of work performed
- Identify personal hobbies and leisure activities

Year 5 students will be able to:

- Identify ways that familiar jobs contribute to the needs of society
- Compare their interests and skills to familiar jobs
- Compare their personal hobbies and leisure activities to jobs
- Discuss stereotypes associated with certain jobs
- Discuss what is important to them

Year 6 students will be able to:

- Identify tentative work interests and skills
- Discuss how their parents' work influences life at home
- Consider the relationship between interests and abilities and Form 1 option subjects
- Identify their own personal strengths and weaknesses
- Prepare for transition from primary to secondary schooling

Secondary Schooling (Competencies)

Form 1 students will be able to:

- Know what is expected from them in secondary schooling.
- Recognise the connection between school performance and related career plans
- Identify tentative career interests and relate them to future planning

Form 2 students will be able to:

- Identify specific career interests and abilities using the results of assessment instruments
- Consider future career plans in making educational choices
- Describe their present skills, abilities and interests and relate them to subject options in Form 3
- Identify sources of educational and career information (eg. the Internet, Job Centres, the community)
- Use resources for career exploration and information

Form 3 students will be able to:

- Recognise positive work habits
- Refine their knowledge of their own skills, aptitudes, interests and values
- Know about possible careers and the world of work
- Identify general career goals
- Know how being male or female affects their career choice
- Use career resources in goal setting and decision making

Form 4 students will be able to:

- Clarify the role of personal values in career choice
- Distinguish educational and skill requirements for areas or careers of interest
- Recognise the effects of job career choice on other areas of life
- Begin realistic assessment of their potential in various fields
- Develop skills in prioritising needs related to career planning
- Clarify their own values as they relate to work and leisure
- Know what employers expect of applicants and employees

Form 5 students will be able to:

- Develop job seeking skills
- Refine future career goals through synthesis of information concerning self, use of resources, and consultation with others
- Identify specific educational requirements necessary to achieve their goals

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