Training careers professionals

Underpinning research for the C-Course programme

Tristram Hooley & Torild Schulstok

Inland Norway University of Applied Science

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2.   Executive summary

This report sets out the findings of research conducted in the Czech Republic, Norway, Slovakia and Poland to underpin the development of a new professional e-learning programme for careers practitioners. The recommendations are based on a review of the literature, desk research in each of the countries, expert interviews and practitioner focus groups.

Overall, the research finds that:

1. there is a clear demand for an e-learning course for careers practitioners across the four countries.

The e-learning should:

2. be clearly articulated in a way that clarifies who should engage with it and why;
3. be flexible to ensure that a wide range of practitioners can access and benefit from it;
4. include interaction with others and foster a community of practice; and
5. make use of a range of technologies by using multi-media and interactive tools.

In terms of content, the training should include:

6. clarification of the key terminology and definitions with the field;
7. an overview different approaches to delivering careers services;
8. how to work with a range of different sectors and different client groups;
9. how to work more systemically e.g. with families, communities and organisations;
10. knowledge about the education system, labour market and the research skills required to gather this information for yourself;
11. support for those who are undergoing the training to become professionals and adopt healthy, ethical, reflective, and context-aware practice; and
12. an overview of key theories and evidence for more advanced practitioners.

3.   Introduction

C-Course is a project funded by ERASMUS+ to develop an e-learning training programme for careers professionals. The project is undertaken by participants from the Czech Republic, Norway, Slovakia and Poland and aims to make professional education and training available to the widest possible group of careers professionals (and aspiring careers professionals) in those countries and beyond.

In this report we explore the background situation in each of the four countries and ask leading experts and practitioners from those countries how they think that the e-learning training programme should be shaped.

The existing evidence base

The project also builds on the existing evidence base about what should be included in career guidance professionals' initial training and continuing professional development. Over the last few decades there have been a growing number of training programmes and routes through which someone can become a careers professional (Niles & Karajic, 2008; Patton, 2002). These programmes have adopted a variety of different approaches including both accredited and non-accredited programmes of different lengths and at different qualification levels.

Underpinning much of the training and education of careers professional are local assumptions about what practitioners should know and be able to do to be seen as qualified. In some cases, such thinking can be enshrined into a series of standards and guidelines (Hiebert & Neault, 2014). This is one of the challenges in developing a cross national training programme as it has to be mindful of the requirements for practice in a variety of jurisdictions.

Despite the importance of recognising differences in needs across multiple jurisdictions there is a growing consensus around the range of things which should be covered during the education and training of careers professionals (Niles, 2014; Pinto, 2012). This includes training in career theory, career assessment, career counselling, job-search skills, evidence-based practice and relevant policy.

In *The NICE Handbook* (Schiersmann et al., 2012) and subsequent related publications (Schiersmann et al., 2016) a group of leading trainers from across Europe have sought to synthesise a number of these frameworks and propose an over-arching European framework for the training of careers professionals. This framework recognises five 'professional roles' or

key areas of competency that should be addressed in careers professional training. These are shown in figure 1.

Figure 1. The NICE professional roles

These five roles have been influential and have sought both to consolidate the existing professional position of careers professionals and extend this into areas that are critical for professional practice. As Andreassen et al. (2019) have observed in their study of training programmes in the Nordic countries, while all of the NICE core competences are represented, there is greater focus in some programmes on developing competences for individual career guidance, than on developing competences for working at organisational and societal levels.

The NICE framework therefore provides a useful starting point for the project as it sets out a well-established summary of the key areas that careers professional training should cover.

4.   The current situation in the four participant countries

Desk research was conducted by project teams in each of the four participating countries. A standard schema was developed by the C-course research team in consultation with the whole project, which was then passed to in-country project teams. This resulted in detailed documents from each country which have been synthesised to create this section of the report.

The desk research finds that the current provision of careers professional training is varied. Some professionals are able to access Bachelor's or Master's programmes in career guidance, whilst others are mainly accessing on the job training or short courses.

Of the four countries, Poland has gone the furthest in professionalising the training and professional development of careers professionals. Norway is currently undergoing a purposeful process of professionalisation and is developing the training offer as part of this. Meanwhile the provision in both the Czech Republic and Slovakia is patchier and based on a more market driven approach to training and qualifications. Figure 2 provides a summary of the situation in each of the countries.

All of the countries have detected a need for a common online course that will offer high-quality resources to develop knowledge and skills in career guidance. Such a course could potentially provide a common point of reference and must make use of modern online learning methods that engage participants.

Figure 2. An overview of the current training and professional development situation in the four countries.

	CZ	NO	PL	SK
Minimum qualifications	Variable and unlikely to be careers specific	Variable and unlikely to be careers specific.	Either an academic qualification in career guidance or a structured internship.	Variable an unlikely to be careers specific.
Career guidance qualifications	Multiple qualifications exist. There is currently a process to draw these together.	Masters in Career Guidance.	Multiple qualifications exist delivered by universities and professional training institutions.	Only one accredited programme which focuses exclusively on career guidance.
Professional development	Provided by a range of bodies through both accredited and unaccredited programmes.	A National Quality Framework for Career Guidance includes national competence standards for professionals.	No systematic approach to professional development post-qualification.	The development of a quality standard has helped to clarify professional development.
E-learning	There is need for e-learning to support the existing training infrastructure.	There is need for e-learning to support the existing training infrastructure.	Some e-learning provision exists, usually linked to existing courses.	There are no relevant e-learning courses. An e-learning programme would support the exiting training infrastructure.

The careers profession in the Czech Republic is unregulated by legislation although there are some policies that seek to influence it. In theory this means that anyone can practice as a careers professional, but in practice employers of careers professionals are likely to stipulate minimum qualifications. These qualifications vary by sector, but are more likely to be general qualifications (e.g. having a high school diploma or a degree) than to be careers specific qualifications.

There is a National Register of Qualifications which includes qualifications for careers advisers for academic and professional qualifications, employment careers counsellors and career counsellors for vulnerable groups (National Pedagogical Institute of the Czech Republic, 2015). These three strands are being drawn together into a single careers professional qualification for 'career guidance professionals' and a professional standard. A new university based initial training qualification (at bachelor's level) will start in October 2021. However, at present, these qualifications are not widely recognised by the employers of careers professionals.

Given the limited role of qualifications much training and development of careers professionals in the Czech Republic is undertaken on an on-the-job basis sometimes supplemented by both accredited and unaccredited short courses often delivered by NGOs and professional bodies. Many training, educational and professional development opportunities are provided by Euroguidance and other European programmes and projects, the government and by NGOs, professional bodies and other advocacy organisations.

There is a clear need for an e-learning product to support and supplement the existing training infrastructure in the Czech Republic. This would be useful both to extend access and to provide more specialist training to existing professionals.

Norway

Careers professionals in Norway enter the field with a variety of backgrounds. There is no specific Bachelor's programme for Norwegian careers professionals and so many will enter the field with no qualifications and learn on the job. In the school system most will have a teaching background and may choose to take an additional certificate in career guidance once they adopt the position of school counsellor. In the public employment service, guidance counsellors have a wider range of backgrounds with sociology, psychology and social work all common. As

with the school counsellors many will then go on to study specific career guidance qualifications once they are in role.

In recent years, a Masters in Career Guidance has been offered at three universities. This programme typically recruits participants from a range of different backgrounds, with many already in practice, and then qualifies them to Master's level.

Norway is about to finalise and implement a National Quality Framework for Career Guidance (Kompetanse Norge, n.d.). One of the major outputs from this quality framework has been the creation of a set of national competence standards for career guidance practitioners. A self-evaluation tool for practitioners to measure their own competence against these standards is now in place.

The creation of an online resource for training careers professionals will be important in Norway both in extending access to training and support and in engaging professionals in the field who are currently unqualified.

Poland

In Poland careers professionals are trained through a mix of on-the-job training and postgraduate courses. The on-the-job training usually takes the form of a structured internship with a career guidance organisation.

Career guidance courses are nationally regulated and delivered by several universities and professional training and lifelong learning institutions across Poland. For counsellors who want to gain a professional certificate or those who want to improve their qualifications, such institutions offer both full-time and face-to-face courses and online courses.

Careers qualifications can be at both Bachelor's and Master's levels. The courses will typically address the psychology of human development, pedagogy, sociology, labour law and the labour market. They will also develop a range of practical skills including interpersonal communication, career counselling, group work, digital guidance and mental health.

After formal essential education there is no systemic continuation of professional development for career guidance practitioners. In public education there is a system of achieving professional promotion grades (as for teachers). Apart from that, everything is optional and voluntary. But, there is an appetite amongst professionals for further training and development opportunities.

Since the start of the pandemic most universities and provider of career guidance training have switched to remote work mode. This has led to the rapid development of a range of online career training tools and approaches. This supplements the limited number of pre-existing e-learning modules that exist for careers professionals using platforms such as Moodle.

Slovakia

Career guidance in Slovakia is provided mainly as part of a more complex set of educational, psychological, counselling, and social services. Therefore, those who can be referred to as guidance practitioners have various qualifications ranging from psychological, pedagogical, adult education, social sciences, and usually hold multiple positions simultaneously (e.g. teachers, psychologists, social workers etc.).

The role of 'career guidance practitioner' is still seen as a *function* rather than as an *occupation*. Within the education system someone undertaking career guidance will usually have a Master's degree. However, these degrees may be in any subject and will not necessarily include any training in career guidance.

In Slovakia there is a limited formal education offer in career guidance and counselling. Currently there is only one accredited academic programme offered by a higher education institution. However, multiple Slovak universities offer optional courses on counselling and vocational psychology as part of more general Psychology programmes.

As a result, access to training is often limited and the overall provision of training is fragmented. Most training and development of careers professionals is provided within sectors or institutions with much of it being delivered as 'on-the-job' training. This on the job training is often supplemented by short courses run by professional associations and government institutions.

In 2019, a quality standard for career guidance and counselling services in Slovakia was developed by the Association for Career Guidance and Career Development (as a key output of an international Erasmus+ strategic partnership). This addresses the goals and vision of career guidance, ethical standards, planning, resources, multi-disciplinarity and cooperation, using tools and methods, taking a client-centred approach, developing career management skills, and quality and continuous improvement. As of 2020, career guidance providers (both institutions and individuals) can certificate themselves against the standards and as of 2021 the new training linked to the standard will be launched.

There are currently no fully-fledged online courses on career guidance and counselling in Slovaka. An online course could help to improve standardisation and improve quality and access to resources.

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5.   Expert interviews

To explore what should be in the online training programme for careers professionals, members of the project team spoke to leading experts in each of the four participating countries. We developed a standard questionnaire to inform semi-structured conversations with experts in each of the countries. In total we spoke to 24 experts from the four countries including academics, trainers, leaders of professional associations and national programmes and senior practitioners. In this section of the report we summarise their recommendations for what elements should be included in a new career development training programme.

Theories

We began by talking about the theoretical underpinnings of the career development field. While a few expert participants were dismissive of the role of theory, most agreed that a strong grounding in theory was critical for careers professionals. They were asked to discuss the theories that were included in existing career development training and those that they felt should be included. In figure 3 we set out the most popular theories highlighted by our participants.

Figure 3. Career development theories that should be addressed in training

Theory	Mentions	Key theorists identified
Trait and factor / Matching	13	Frank Parsons / John Holland
Constructivism / Narrative / Socio-dynamic	13	Larry Cochran / Mark Savickas/ Norman Amundson/ Vance Peavy
Learning theories	7	Howard Gardner / John D. Krumboltz
Developmentalism	7	Donald Super / Erik Erikson / Marilyn Atkinson
Social justice / Sociological / Multicultural	7	Peter Plant
Social cognitive	5	Albert Bandura / Gail Hackett / Robert W. Lent / Steven D. Brown
Chaos / Systems theory / Planned happenstance	4	A. S. Levin / Jim Bright / John D. Krumboltz / K. E. Mitchell / Mary McMahon / Robert Pryor / Wendy Patton
Career anchors	2	Edgar Shein
Other theories / Organisational / Therapeutic / Neuroscience		

Approaches to practice

We also asked the experts to set out the key approaches to practice that they would expect careers professionals to be trained in. Figure 4 sets out these approaches.

Figure 4. Approaches to practice that should be developed through training

Approach	Mentions	Practitioners should be able to…
One-to-one counselling, guidance and coaching	18	Work with clients on a one-to-one basis to support them to develop their careers. This should include a variety of different approaches and how to contract, build rapport, deal with complex emotions and set goals and objectives.
Careers education	18	Deliver career learning and develop career management skills in educational settings. This was normally focused on compulsory schooling but could also include other educational settings.
Digital guidance	13	Use a variety of digital tools and platforms to deliver guidance online.
Groupwork	9	Work with clients in a group to support them to develop their careers. This should include a variety of groupwork techniques including managing peer support and group dynamics.
Use of labour market information (LMI)	8	Understand and communicate information about sectors, occupations, organisations and other actors in the labour market.
Career assessments	7	Use a variety of tools to assess candidates needs, strengths and competences.
Working within systems, organisations and families	5	Support the development of organisations and systems in ways that are conducive to the career development of the individuals who exist within them.
Working with a variety of different client or student groups	4	Recognise the specific needs of different groups and deliver specific career development services to them. This included working with people with disabilities, migrants and refugees, unemployed workers and disengaged young people (those who are Not in Education, Employment or Training)

It is possible to map most of these suggestions onto the NICE framework, although the issue of service design and management is missed out.

Professional practice

We also asked participants what elements of professional practice should be developed within training programmes. Whereas the approaches to practice focused on how careers professionals

should be trained to work with their clients and students, these professional practice issues explored broader issues of how they should behave as professionals.

Figure 5. What issues of professional practice should be addressed in training programmes

Issue of professional practice	Mentions	Practitioners should be able to…
Professionalism	16	Describe, advocate for and participate in the career development profession. This should include understanding of the history of, the skills required for, and the labour market in the profession. It should also include an understanding of the value of qualifications, professional accreditation, professional development and professional bodies and representation.
Ethics	10	Discuss and enact ethical practice with clients. This should include an awareness of boundaries and ethical constraints on practice.
Reflexivity and self-care	9	Reflect on their practice and the context within which their practice takes place and then develop in response to these reflections. Key to this is recognising your own limits and taking efforts to look after yourself as a professional and a person.
Interprofessional working	9	Work with and refer to a range of professionals to support clients. This should include the ability to identify and build multi-professional teams to address the issues faced by particular groups of clients.
Quality and evidence	8	Recognise and develop the evidence base on which their practice is based and take efforts to ensure that the services that they are delivering are of a consistently high quality. This includes making use of techniques like evaluation, peer observation, supervision and listening to user voices through feedback and dialogue.
Law & policy	4	Understand key laws and policies that interact with and shape their practice.
Networking and building communities of practice	2	Recognise the importance of building a professional community of practice for support and professional development.
Digital skills	2	Use a variety of digital skills as part of their professional practice.

Digital skills and digital guidance

Participants highlighted the importance of digital delivery of career guidance and ensuring that careers professionals had good digital skills. There was agreement amongst many participants that the pandemic had enhanced the importance of digital skills and that it was essential that

this was picked up in both the delivery approach and the content of the training programme. When we probed further to see what technologies they thought were critical for this work they highlighted the following.

Figure 6. Digital tools for use in guidance

Practitioners should be competent in…	Mentions	Platforms and applications identified
Video conferencing	17	Zoom / Teams / Click meeting / GoToMeeting / Skype / Google meet / Cisco webex
Virtual learning platforms	8	Canvas / Blackboard / Google classroom
Webinars / Online lectures / Online presentations	4	Cisco webex
Classroom technologies	3	Jamboard / Data projectors
Social networking	2	Facebook
Computer assisted guidance systems	2	My Career
Online mind mapping tools	2	
Polling, quizzing and survey tools	2	Mentimeter / Google forms / Kahoot!
Bookmarking and sharing	1	Padlet / Wakelet
Podcasting	1	
Creating video content	1	YouTube
Email	1	
Chat	1	
Virtual reality technologies	1	
Share documents / collaborative working	1	

How should an online training programme be delivered?

Participants noted that most existing training of careers professionals was conducted face to face. This kind of face-to-face delivery is important because so much practice is conducted face-to-face. So, face-to-face training delivery enables simulations of practice such as role-playing and problem solving through the exchange of experiences.

The Covid-19 pandemic has driven some training online with trainers making use of webinars, online presentations, podcasts. This has had the added advantage of allowing learning content to be stored online for people to use later. Some participants argued that this had driven changes in the way that career guidance training is delivered that were likely to endure beyond the pandemic. There was some enthusiasm for the idea of integrated and blended forms of delivery.

Participants were keen to stress the importance of online training programmes being interactive and engaging for participants (not just a load of 'talking heads'). Some wondered whether the course could make use of existing communities of practice for example those that are organised through Facebook or Linkedin groups. Others talked about the way in which digital technologies overcame problems of distance and noted that this opened up the possibility for more international collaboration.

We also asked about what technologies people felt had potential to be used more in the future for careers professional training. Some participants had experience of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and wondered whether this approach could be used in careers professional training.

Some participants highlighted virtual reality which they felt would be able to create simulations of, or facilitate, face-to-face interactions, visit and encounters. Others discussed the value of gamified learning and wondered how this could be used to support the programme.

They also highlighted the use of a wider range of multi-media content that they felt could enhance training experiences. One participant particularly emphasised the value of creating podcasts that people could listen to when they were not at their desks.

One participant raised the possibility that as well as providing training, the resource could also provide links to places where it is possible to access further or more advanced training.

Participants also highlighted a range of other resources that they had seen in other fields which offered models that should be reviewed as the new resources is developed. These included Blessabee (https://blesabee.online/en/home/).

Suggested resources

Participants suggested a range of resources that might be useful for use in the new training programme. These are set out in figure 7.

Figure 7. Resources that could be linked to or used to support career guidance training

Language	Resources
English	Career Construction Network http://vocopher.com/ ELGPN http://www.elgpn.eu/publications Europass https://europa.eu/europass/en Get a life: Work simulation https://getalife.fi/game/getalife?lang=en-US Guide my way http://guidemyway.eu/index.html

	IAEVG ethical guidelines https://iaevg.com/Resources#:~:text=The%20IAEVG%20Ethical%20Guidelines%20are,of%20ethical%20standards%20of%20conduct. Prospects planner https://www.prospects.ac.uk/planner Quality in Career Guidance: http://guidancequality.eu/ Truity Holland Code career test http://truity.com/test/holland-code-career-test Voices of the client in career guidance http://www.euroguidance.sk/cbs2020/outcomes/
Czech	20 způsobů využití technologií pro online výuku nejen po uzavření škol https://spomocnik.rvp.cz/clanek/22438/20-ZPUSOBU-VYUZITI-TECHNOLOGII-PRO-ONLINE-VYUKU-NEJEN-PO-UZAVRENI-SKOL.html EPALE https://epale.ec.europa.eu/cs
Norwegian	Arbeidsplassen https://arbeidsplassen.nav.no/ Career Centres https://utdanning.no/tema/hjelp_og_veiledning/karrieresentre Kvalitet i karriereveiledning - Kompetanse Norge https://www.kompetansenorge.no/karriereveiledning/ Profråd Karriereverktøy https://www.profraad.no/ Utdanning.no www.utdanning.no Vilbli www.vilbli.no Vip24 http://www.ifokus.as/karriereutvikling/vip24/ VR-brille kan fortelle deg hva som er jobben for deg https://www.adressa.no/pluss/nyheter/2018/09/07/VR-brille-kan-fortelle-deg-hva-som-er-jobben-for-deg-17463652.ece You portalen https://you-portalen.no/login/
Polish	Akademia webinaru https://akademiawebinaru.pl/webinaria/szkolenia-dla-doradcow-zawodowych Career Counselling Development Center https://crdz.wcies.edu.pl/ CDZDM https://www.cdzdm.pl/ Centrum https://centrumtalentow.pl Centrum Szkoleń i Promocji Zatrudnienia https://csipz.pl/ Doradztwo zawodowe https://doradztwo.ore.edu.pl/ EPALE https://epale.ec.europa.eu/pl/themes/outreach-and-guidance Eurodesk https://www.eurodesk.pl Kursy online edumach.pl Mapa Karier https://mapakarier.org O ECVET http://www.eksperciecvet.org.pl/ecvet/article/o-ecvet/lang_pl.html Perspektywy http://perspektywy.pl/portal/ Progra https://progra.pl/ Program Wspomagania Uczniów http://laboratorium.ko.olsztyn.pl/ Suplement do Dyplomu Mistrzowskiego i Świadectwa Czeladniczego https://europass.org.pl/dokumenty/suplement-do-dyplomu-mistrzowskiego-i-swiadectwa-czeladniczego/ Zintegrowany system kwalifikacji https://www.kwalifikacje.gov.pl/

Slovak	Kariérová výchova a kariérové poradenstvo https://vudpap.sk/x/projekty/standardy/vzdelavanie-a-rozvoj-ludskych-zdrojov/karierova-vychova-a-karierove-poradenstvo/ Komposyt https://www.komposyt.sk/pre-odbornikov My Career https://www.upjs.sk/pracoviska/unipoc/aktuality/e-learning-moja-kariera/ Online database for educational counsellors https://www.komposyt.sk/pre-odbornikov Quality standard for career guidance providers: https://rozvojkariery.sk/kvalita/ Webinars from Coachingplus https://www.coachingplus.org/webinars.html Webinars from the Association for Career Guidance and Career Development https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCuovdyN4ivLP3Nv9wu468mQ/videos Webinars on guidance from the Research Institute of Child Psychology and Pathopsychology https://www.youtube.com/c/VUDPaPs/videos Zmudri.sk www.zmudri.sk

6.   Practitioner focus groups

The final stage of the project was to undertake focus groups with practitioners in each of the four countries. In total 102 practitioners took part in this phase of the project (25 CZ, 35 NO, 12 PO, 30 SK).

In general practitioners echoed many of the points made by the experts in their countries. They typically described a picture of initial and ongoing professional training that was patchy and at times hard to access. This often requires careers professionals to be auto-didacts if they want to learn more and develop their professionalism.

They generally welcomed the idea of having an e-learning programme to supplement the existing training that was available in their country, although they reported often being disappointed in the existing e-learning resources that were available. Some also argued that while an e-learning programme would be useful, it could never replace face-to-face training provision as the careers profession is so centered around close interpersonal relationships.

Some spoke about the important role that observations, visits and placements had played in their own training. While it is likely to be difficult to reproduce this online it may be useful to think about how this kind of observational and experiential learning could inform the design of the programme. For example, this might manifest in the use of case studies, examples from practice and reflective exercises.

They had a range of ideas about what content should be included in this e-learning programme Key themes are set out in figure 8.

Figure 8. Key course content that practitioners would like to see

Theme	Course should cover…	Examples
The basics	the basics of the counselling process and the key techniques that are used to work with clients.	One-to-one counselling approaches, group counselling, careers education in schools, supervision, e-counselling and making use of new technologies in careers work.
Working with diverse clients	working with a diverse range of different groups, dealing with difficult clients and managing conflict.	Clients with disabilities, gifted and talented students and young people in difficult family situations.
Working with systems	working effectively with families, organisations, communities and systems.	Having an impact within a school or business, involving parents and families in career support.

Labour and learning market information	the current and future situation in the labour and learning market and how to find out more.	Information about the education system, qualifications and skills. Information about the labour market and the changing world of work. Research skills to support careers professionals to find out about these things for themselves.
Professional practice	what careers professionals need to be able to do to successfully manage their practice.	The competencies and dispositions that make careers professionals effective, the history of the profession; effective teamworking; managing workload and avoiding.
Career theory	enough theory to support practice, but leave more detailed theory as an optional extra	Career theory modules might be more effectively targeted at advanced practitioners. Theories around narratives, therapeutic approaches and social justice were highlighted.

In terms of the design of the e-learning programme practitioners highlighted themes set out in figure 9.

Figure 9. How practitioners would like the e-learning to be organised

Theme	The course should…	Examples
Clarity about the programme design	be clear about what practitioners are signing up to when they first engage with the course.	Provide learning outcomes and details of the commitment involved (in terms of both time and money) in signing up. Ideally the course should be free. Provide details about the career stage and sector (e.g. schools, employment services) that the training is aimed at.
Outcomes	lead to some clear and identifiable outcomes.	The course should be structured around learning outcomes which are assessed at the end of the programme to incentivise learning and aid reflection. Ideally the programme should lead to some form of accreditation. This might take the format of a reflective portfolio built into the system.
Flexibility	be designed to support a wide range of learners to access it at their own pace.	The programme could be modular so that participants can pick and choose what is relevant to them. It should also largely be asynchronous to support participants to use it around their day-to-day work.
Relevance	be relevant to the work that they are going.	It should include real examples and case studies and provide participants with resources like downloadable templates.

Interaction with other people	offer the opportunity to connect to human beings as well as access online materials.	Practitioners would like to be able to access a tutor or other form of support. They would also like to use the course as a way to reach out to other practitioners, make connections and form a community of practice.
Engaging content	engaging and offer a range of different forms of content.	Interest in gamified learning and multi-media content.

7. Recommendations

The following recommendations are drawn from all aspects of the research (desk research, expert inputs and focus groups) and through discussion with the project group.

Overall, the research finds that:

1. there is a clear demand for an e-learning course across the four countries. Such a course could help to clarify and unify the initial training and professional development provision within each of the four countries.

The e-learning should:

2. be clearly articulated in a way that clarifies who should engage with it, how long it will take and what they will get out of it;
3. be flexible to ensure that a wide range of practitioners with different backgrounds and job roles can access and benefit from it;
4. involve interaction with others and provide a springboard for professionals to access networks of like minds, resources, and further training; and
5. make use of a range of technologies designed to engage professionals. This means using multi-media and interactive tools (including gamification and virtual reality if possible).

In terms of content, the training should include:

6. clarification of the key terminology and definitions with the field;
7. an overview different approaches to delivering careers services. This needs to begin with the basics and cover the full range of delivery approaches. A key element of this is to increase competence in the delivery of digital guidance;
8. an introduction to working with a wide range of different sectors and different client groups within those sectors;
9. support for practitioners to think about how they work more systemically e.g. with families, communities and organisations;
10. development of practitioners' understanding of the education system, labour market and how the world of work is changing. This should also include supporting them to develop research skills;

11. support for those who are undergoing the training to become professionals and adopt ethical, reflective, context-aware practice. This also needs to include advice on managing practice in a healthy way to avoid burnout; and

12. an overview of key theories and evidence. This kind of content was generally viewed as offering additional learning opportunities for advanced practitioners.

8. References and relevant research publications

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