



Italian Network University Training in Vocational Guidance

Joint Document for the enhancement and recognition of career counselors' professionalism and training

Following a three-day study meeting organized by La.R.I.O.S. (Laboratory for Research on Vocational Guidance, University of Padua), under the patronage of G.E.O (an Italian inter-university center for Youth, Education, Vocational Guidance) and of SIO (Italian Society for Vocational Guidance), a group of University Chancellor delegates who have founded the **Italian Network - University Training in Vocational Guidance**¹, have agreed that:

1. the social and economic conditions and the critical times we are experiencing call for vocational guidance practitioners fully qualified to respond to the increasing requests for help and support in making choices about the future and in the professional planning of youth, students and workers;
2. vocational guidance actions must be conducted by practitioners with specific post-graduate university training. Practitioners must possess at least the basic competencies recommended by bodies and organizations recognized at international level (IAEVG - Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance; SIO - Italian Society for Vocational Guidance) and declare their commitment to a specific deontological code;
3. training in vocational guidance must be public and university-based and must be achieved through attendance of at least one of the following: a post-graduate *Master course* (60 CFU) to develop core and specific competencies as recommended by the NICE (University Network for Innovation in Guidance) and the SIO; *Specialization courses* (8-12 CFU) to allow access to the profession to graduates who, although not holding specific qualifications, have carried out verifiable vocational guidance activities; *In-service training courses* (4-6 CFU) for those who wish to increase their professionalism and get their specific vocational guidance competencies either certified or credited;
4. vocational guidance actions are directed to both individuals and groups, but can also be directed to contexts and to the individuals that characterize them socially, economically and politically.

¹ The content of the present document has been agreed upon by the Board of Directors of SIO, the Directors of La.R.I.O.S. and the representatives from the Universities that are members of the Centro Inter-universitario GEO (Catania, L'Aquila, Lecce, Modena, Pavia, Siena, Torino, Udine). Furthermore, the content has been approved and supported by the delegates from the following Universities: Bari, Bologna, Bolzano, Cagliari, Camerino, Chieti-Pescara, Foggia, Genova, Lumsa di Roma, Kore di Enna, Macerata, Messina, Milano-Bicocca, Padova, Palermo, Parma, Pisa, Sassari, Roma 'La Sapienza'. And also by the delegates from Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore di Milano, Seconda Università degli Studi di Napoli, Università "Magna Graecia" di Catanzaro, Università "Vita-Salute San Raffaele" di Milano, Università degli Studi di Roma "Foro Italico", Università degli Studi Europei di Roma, Università del Salento, Università della Basilicata, Università della Calabria, Università Mediterranea di Reggio Calabria, Università Pontificia Salesiana, Università Telematica "E-campus", Università Telematica Giustino Fortunato di Benevento, Università Telematica Unitelma La Sapienza di Roma, Università del Piemonte Orientale 'A. Avogadro'.

Based on these premises the network members further believe that:

- joint training actions that involve a number of Universities, also from other Countries, are desirable and necessary in order to favor scientific and cultural exchanges and facilitate teacher and student mobility;
- training initiatives should plan both for shared elements and for elements specific to the needs of the territory and make reference, as much as possible, to teaching innovations (distance learning);
- such training initiatives, in consideration of the heterogeneity of the places involved and the diverse career actions, should contemplate access to different degree courses within a credit system and with the possible personalization of training actions. Access to university training in vocational guidance, whether through Master's or Specialization Courses and In-service training Courses, should therefore be opened to holders of current Master's degrees (and of the 4- and 5-year degrees awarded under the former university system in Italy). Access should also include the possibility of verifying the necessary access requisites via specific analyses that the SIO will make available to the Universities activating the training initiatives mentioned above;
- Degree programs in the field of guidance and counseling should involve multidisciplinary activities covering education, economics, psychology, communication, philosophy and other disciplines. *Special attention should be paid to vocational guidance issues in multicultural contexts, to the school and work inclusion of people with disability, and to prevention of social discomfort.*

From the methodological point of view:

- university training in vocational guidance should favor as much as possible the active participation of the trainees who will be encouraged and invited to plan their own training projects, which will have to consider both previous training and the competencies that will need to be developed. To favor that, the universities involved should make the following available to the network: access to distance training activities (no more than 50% of the entire training package); specific seminars and group works; possibility of sharing research projects, even cross-cultural ones;
- the training actions should involve tutors and vocational guidance experts especially trained to carry out this very delicate support role and should organize personalized targeted practice periods in organizations and agencies where at least one vocational guidance operator has the competencies listed by the IAEVG and the SIO;
- SIO (Italian Society for Vocational Guidance) is willing to make available to the universities that request it the list of the credited services and the vocational guidance experts possessing the characteristics set out in the previous point;
- training in vocational guidance, besides implying some sort of verification of competencies 'on entry' to facilitate recognition of educational credits and 'personalization' of training, should also involve checking competencies 'on exit', which the SIO will be able to certify and recognize, if needed.