

International approaches to quality in career guidance

Report prepared for Skills Norway

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Executive summary

This report explores the issue of quality and quality assurance in career guidance. It is based on six case studies which look at how different countries quality assure their career guidance provision. The aim of the study is to use these international examples to inform the development of a quality system for career guidance in Norway.

The report draws on Hooley & Rice's (2018) six domains of quality which argue that quality assurance can variously focus on: (1) career guidance *policies*, seeking to monitor, evaluate and check their effectiveness; (2) defining what kinds of *organisations* should be allowed to deliver career guidance and how those organisations should function; (3) considering what *processes* should be followed in quality career guidance provision and ensuring that these processes take place; (4) specifying what *people* can practice career guidance, what qualifications and skills they should have and defining how the profession should be organised and governed; (5) clarifying what *outcome or outputs* should be produced through the career guidance process and setting out how this can be observed and recognised; and (6) recognising the experience of the *consumers and users* of career guidance and finding ways to capture their perspective. The existing literature on quality in career guidance, along with the study design, are discussed in *chapter I*.

The case study countries are discussed in detail in *chapter II* with a full case study provided on each country. Each case study explores the countries quality system in relation to the six domains of quality. The following table provides a brief summary of some of the key issues and elements in each case study.

Country	Quality system	Key strengths	Key challenges
Australia	Well established career guidance system. Quality assurance is focused on the development and implementation of professional standards (the people domain).	The quality system has been driven by the profession and has endured across different policy regimes.	Much of the system is voluntary and so there are challenges in ensuring its adoption and consistency across the country.
England	Well established career guidance system. Quality assurance is complex and	Comprehensive set of quality assurance tools	Complex and fragmented, with the potential for both

	managed through a range of overlapping mechanisms.	covering all of the domains.	confusion and redundancy.
Germany	Well established career guidance system largely devolved to the country's 16 federal states. There is a major initiative to develop a national approach to quality assurance, but in practice most quality assurance is done at the local level.	A range of quality assurance tools exist at both local and national levels. The Be-Qu-Concept provides a clear road map to a national quality system.	A decentralised system makes it difficult to establish a consistent national approach to quality.
The Netherlands	Well established career guidance system. There are a wide range of different quality assurance tools available.	Clear regulation and policy support in the education system. The development of new approaches to the quality assurance of people through the coming together of professional associations.	Fragmentation between the education and labour market elements of the career guidance system. Much of the quality assurance on the labour market side of the system is voluntary in nature leading to challenges with adoption and consistency.
Scotland	Strong career guidance system and quality assurance approach focused around Skills Development Scotland as the main delivery agency.	Skills Development Scotland acts a guarantor of quality in the country and is in turn overseen by an independent inspectorate.	The elements of the system that are outside of Skills Development Scotland are weakly quality assured.
South Korea	Emergent career guidance system. Quality assurance is largely focused around government regulation.	Rapid development of a clear and coherent system for quality assurance in the education system. Ongoing initiatives to improve quality assurance in the labour market.	A largely top down system, which may have limited sustainability in the case of policy changes.

Taken together these six countries provide a wealth of quality assurance ideas in each of the domains of quality. These are discussed collectively in *chapter III*. The following table sets out the collected key ideas that are used to quality assure each of the domains.

Domain	Quality assurance ideas
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committing to regular review of career guidance policy. • Establishing research and evaluation agencies or departments to monitor and support the implementation of career guidance policy. • Commissioning independent evaluations of policy. • Monitoring policy implementation against key indicators. • Scrutinising career guidance policy through public and parliamentary committees. • Providing organisations and resources to support the translation of policy into practice. • Publication of an annual report on the implementation and impact of career guidance policy.
Organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing internal quality assurance processes within organisations. • Providing organisations with resources and tools for benchmarking their provision. • Monitoring the performance of organisations in the delivery of career guidance against agreed criteria or outcomes. • Formal inspection of career guidance provision by an external inspectorate. • Including career guidance in wider inspections and quality assurance processes. • Awarding quality marks to organisations that are judged to be fit to deliver career guidance, sometimes linked to being able to bid for government contracts. • Awarding quality marks that denote the outstanding delivery of career guidance. • Providing dedicated funding to help establish career guidance within new organisations or develop existing organisations provision.
Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a range of internal processes within organisations to quality assure guidance processes.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of national or best practice advice on career guidance processes. • The development of standardised resources or career assessments around which career guidance should be organised. • Observation of practice as part of inspections.
People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing professional and ethical standards. • Specifying an approved list of qualifications that can lead to professional status. • Providing opportunities for continuing professional development. • Creating a register of professionals to allow post-qualification conduct to be regulated. • Linking professional status to employment in certain roles or to access to government funding.
Outputs and outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying skills frameworks to describe the anticipated outcomes of career guidance. • Measuring student destinations after they leave education • Using payment-by-results systems linked to either career management skills or destinations.
Users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring usage and user satisfaction with services. • Conducting large scale follow-up surveys. • Conducting research into user needs and perspectives. • Requiring customer feedback and recommendation in the accreditation of careers professionals. • Involving user representative bodies in the development of career guidance policies. • Using payment-by-results systems which link payment to customer satisfaction levels.

In addition to this description of the quality assurance options that exist in each of the quality domains there were also five overarching findings about the nature of quality assurance in the case study countries. These are discussed in detail in *chapter III* but are briefly summarised below.

Fungibility. Each country has assembled its own patchwork of quality approaches. In most cases some of the domains of quality are ignored or only weakly evident. While there are some

advantages in attending to multiple domains, it is less clear that the benefits associated with quality assurance stack up the more domains you attend to. Quality assurance domains might more accurately be thought of as fungible (or interchangeable) where the benefits accrued through quality assuring the different domains can be achieved through multiple means and transferred from one domain to another.

Decentralisation. No country has developed a single framework through which the quality of career guidance across all sectors and jurisdictions is quality assured. This is particularly challenging in federal countries, but the divisions that exist between career guidance practice across different sectors also create challenges. The lack of a single national quality system does not mean that quality assurance is absent in the case study countries. Many of the participants in this research see value in devolved and decentred approaches to quality assurance that allow sectors, jurisdictions or even individual providers or professionals to define quality.

Embedded systems. A key challenge in all countries is the fact that career guidance is embedded in wider systems which often have their own quality assurance processes. The embedded nature of career guidance means that a key design question is whether it is better to create bespoke quality assurance systems for career guidance or to embed an awareness of career guidance in wider systems.

How systems develop. With the sole exception of South Korea, all of the case studies focus on career guidance systems which are the result of a long history of development. In these cases, the quality system could be said to have evolved rather than having been designed. South Korea offers an important example for Norway as it shows how a system can be quickly established. In this case the establishment of a robust policy framework and clear structures to support implementation are critical to the rapid progress that the country has made. In all other countries the quality system has developed through political debates around the nature, importance and future of career guidance. While the existence of multiple stakeholders seeking to define and influence quality can mitigate against the coherence of the system, it often leads to richer frameworks for quality that are capable of sustaining beyond a particular policy agenda.

Implementation and governance. A quality system is not just a framework that can be documented and then assumed to be in place. In order to successfully influence practice a

quality system needs to have the following features: clear reasons to engage; consequences for failing to engage; advocacy and support; and clear and effective governance.

Questions for Norway

The findings in this research suggest several important areas that Norway needs to attend to as it develops its quality in career guidance system. These are discussed in detail in *chapter IV* but can be summarised through the following questions.

- What are the aims of Norway's quality system for career guidance?
- Is it realistic to create a single, lifelong, national quality approach?
- How should the career guidance quality system relate to wider, existing quality systems?
- Who should own the quality system or framework?
- What governance structure is needed for the quality system?
- How will the quality system be implemented?
- What is the role of the county careers centres in the implementation plan?
- What data is currently monitored and what new forms of monitoring are needed?
- What information about quality should be made public?
- How far can destination measures be seen as a useful measure of the quality of career guidance?
- What is the role of the CMS framework in quality assurance?

Reflections

The best approach to the design and implementation of the quality system will need to be defined by Skills Norway and other stakeholders. However, *chapter V* offers some reflections based on this research that may be useful in guiding the development of the system in Norway.

Start by clarifying objectives. It is important for Norway to be very clear on what it is trying to achieve by implementing a quality system. Key objectives that it may be useful to focus on include enhancing the user experience, maximising the impact of career guidance on individuals' work and ensuring some degree of consistency across the country and between sectors.

Limit the number of domains that are addressed initially. At present the bulk of the thinking about quality in Norway has focused on the people domain and the output and outcomes domain. These seem good places to start, but there may be value in considering how the overall policy should be quality assured.

Build a system that will sustain. There is value to both the sustainability and legitimacy of a quality system if it is able to operate independently of government or at least to view government as only one amongst a range of stakeholders in the system. Skills Norway's status as a directorate reporting to the Ministry of Education and Research helps to ensure this, but there would also be value in considering how wider stakeholders could be made more central to the development and governance of the quality system.

Consider the role of professional bodies. Internationally careers professional associations play a critical role in the development, implementation and operations of quality systems. There may be value in seeking to strengthen the Norwegian careers associations as part of the implementation of the quality system.

Continue to keep a lifelong focus, but recognise the need for sectoral focus and prioritisation. As the quality framework is finalised it is important to test it with the full range of sectors. There may be a need to produce additional documentation and translation for each sector to ensure that the framework is relevant and easy to use. There may also be a need to prioritise where efforts should be directed during the first year of implementation.

Implementation is at least as important as design. There is a need to identify an infrastructure and resources for the implementation of the quality system and then to ensure that this infrastructure has sufficient authority to lead a wide range of other organisations in the adoption of the quality framework. One option would be to view the careers centres as the quality champions in each of the counties. If this approach were to be adopted it would also be important to have a national body, most likely Skills Norway, overseeing and quality assuring the careers centres themselves.

I. Introduction

The term ‘quality’ is a slippery one and includes within it the sense of something done well as well as the ideas of consistency and reproducibility. When we start to apply these ideas to an activity such as career guidance we are faced with a wide range of choices about exactly what we mean by quality, how it can be measured, benchmarked and assured in practice. The development of a quality framework for career guidance in Norway provides a useful opportunity to reflect on these issues and opens up questions about what the implications, both positive and negative, are of instituting a new definition of quality and a quality assurance process on the emergent Norwegian guidance system.

Norway is engaged in a long-term and systematic project to develop a world-class career guidance system. The development of this career guidance system was given focus in 2014 following the OECD’s (2014a; 2014b) skills review. This provided further policy support and impetus to efforts taking place within the country to develop career guidance and create a lifelong guidance system drawing on evidence and practices from the rest of the world. Key efforts have included establishing a national co-ordinating group within Skills Norway and investing in postgraduate level training for careers professionals. These interventions contain within them implicit understandings of quality, suggesting for example that both some degree of national consistency and a minimum level of professional skill are important components of quality career guidance in Norway.

As the system has developed there has been a need to make the definition of quality more explicit. This has led to the creation of a major project by Skills Norway which brings together career practitioners, academics and policymakers to develop a framework for quality in career guidance (Skills Norway, 2018). This current report is intended to supplement and inform the findings of this project by reviewing the approaches taken by a range of international comparator countries.

A key aspiration of the current project is to establish a national, lifelong quality system for career guidance in Norway. This is a laudable aim, but one which this report will show does not really exist in full in any other countries, where both regional and sectoral fragmentation are common. While this helps to clarify the size of the task it should not lead to despondency. Norway is uniquely placed to build on the lessons from other countries and to capitalise on a

national consensus in policy and practice that career guidance is important and needs to be made into a more important component of the countries education and employment systems.

Given this is it useful to begin by exploring further what the literature has to say about quality in career guidance.

What is quality in career guidance?

This report draws on Hooley and Rice's (2018) review of quality and quality assurance in career guidance. Hooley and Rice review the existing literature on quality and use it to propose a conceptual framework for thinking about quality within the field. They argue that the term 'quality' belies a wide range of ideas and approaches about what is being sought, who it is being sought for, what strategies might be used to achieve these aims and how we can be sure that they have been achieved. They note that in other fields the term 'quality' is used in wildly divergent ways to describe professional standards, organisational features, processes and outcomes. They also argue that within education the practice of quality assurance has a troubled history which is ultimately bound up with what you think education, or career guidance, is for and whose interest you want it to work in.

The question about why we are concerned with quality is not one that should be skipped over. Does quality seek to ensure fidelity of practice to policy, consistency (between what?), an enjoyable or useful experience for users, the maximum impact (on what?) and so on? Considering what quality systems are really trying to achieve is likely to have a big effect on the way that they are conceived, monitored and assured. Each different aim and conception will serve different stakeholders, open up different possibilities and raise different challenges. I will return to these issues when I look at the different domains that can be quality assured.

Hooley and Rice outline three main challenges that are immediately presented when thinking about how to define and assure quality in career guidance: (1) that career guidance is lifelong and so typically exists across a range of different contexts (schools, public employment services and employment); (2) that career guidance is the concern of multiple areas of government, meaning that policy makers in different departments and jurisdictions need to be simultaneously engaged to create any kinds of national consensus around what constitutes quality in the field; and (3) that career guidance is typically embedded within wider educational and employment processes, meaning that attempts to quality assure it as a specific activity have

to vie for time and space with wider forms of quality assurance that exist in the systems in which it is embedded. These issues are critical in defining the quality systems that are described in the six countries that participated in this research and all are likely to be critical areas of concern for the development of a quality system for Norwegian career guidance.

Previous work has looked at how career guidance can be conceptualised and addressed within career guidance (e.g. Almeida, Marques, & Arulmani, 2014; Bimrose, Hughes, & Collins, 2006; Simon, 2014). Much of this work addresses similar issues to those already raised in relation to wider conceptions of quality and quality assurance. Quality, in career guidance, as in other areas, is a contestable concept where definitions matter as do questions of power and control. Plant (2001) summarises many of these questions as follows.

Who “owns” the standards or guidelines? How are they put to use? With which sort of consequences? How are they interpreted, maintained, developed, and enforced? Who has the power in the process of developing and adapting such standards or guidelines? Do they attempt to cover all guidance settings across sectors? In cases of clarification, who can appeal on the interpretations, to whom, and with which consequences? (p. 7)

Hooley and Rice extend these questions asking how far we can be sure that different approaches to quality assurance deliver service improvement and how far they have the potential to distort existing activities in unexpected ways? All of these questions remain relevant in considering how the Norwegian system develops.

This paper will draw on two frameworks proposed by Hooley and Rice to aid in the consideration of quality in career guidance. Firstly it will make use of their six domains of quality which argue that quality assurance can variously focus on: (1) career guidance *policies*, seeking to monitor, evaluate and check their effectiveness; (2) defining what kinds of *organisations* should be allowed to deliver career guidance and how those organisations should function; (3) considering what *processes* should be followed in quality career guidance provision and ensuring that these processes take place; (4) specifying what people can practice career guidance, what qualifications and skills they should have and defining how the profession should be organised and governed; (5) clarifying what *outcome or outputs* should be produced through the career guidance process and setting out how this can be observed and recognised; and (6) recognising the experience of *consumers and users* of career guidance and

finding ways to capture their perspective. This framework is descriptive rather than prescriptive and there is no evidence to suggest that one of these domains is more important than any of the others. Indeed, as Hooley and Rice argue, confirmed by the research undertaken for this report, many countries combine a number of these approaches together to create their quality assurance system.

The second framework which I will refer to from Hooley and Rice is their four approaches to quality assurance. While the domains of quality describe *what* is being quality assured, the approaches describe *how* this is being done, and how it relates to wider questions of power and control. They argue that quality assurance processes can be: (1) *regulatory* which assures quality through mandatory requirements often backed up by legal or other forms of sanctions; (2) *advisory* where quality is defined and specified but there are limited or non-existent sanctions; (3) *organic* where quality is controlled internally by the sector, the profession or the users of career guidance services; and (4) *competitive* where market mechanisms and league tables are used to drive quality improvements. Again, this typology is descriptive rather than prescriptive and different approaches are often combined in practice.

These different approaches to quality highlight the fact that quality is not a fixed set of standards but rather a series of social practices. Whatever domain is focused on and whatever approach is taken there is still a need to implement, evaluate and ultimately develop the quality approach to take account of both internal and external changes. Some approaches have foregrounded this dynamism by talking about ‘continuous quality improvement’ and recognising that quality is as much a journey as a destination. In this paper I will explore how quality systems operate and how various social, regulatory and professional practices can interact with formal documents and statements of what constitutes quality.

About this study

This study is based on six case studies of quality in career guidance in Australia, England, Germany, the Netherlands, Scotland and South Korea. It is important to exercise some caution in drawing conclusions from international comparator countries. The lending and borrowing of policies is something that should always be done with careful attention to the cultural and political context from which the policy is borrowed and into which it is inserted (Sultana, 2011). As Maze, Yoon and Hutchison (2018) note the quality and nature of career guidance is

not simply a technocratic policy design question, but rather one which emerges out of national wealth, history, culture, citizens' expectations of government, politics and governmental structures.

The aim of this study is primarily descriptive. It seeks to draw out what happens in each of the case study countries and to use this to explore what is constituted as quality and how quality is assured. It is hoped that some of this exploration may be of use to the countries which have contributed and even more widely to other countries concerned with quality in career guidance. The rationale for this study has been to inform current developments in Norway, but it does not present an in-depth discussion of the situation in Norway. In the chapter IV several questions are posed, based on the research, which are designed to aid the development of the Norwegian system and in chapter V I offer some reflections on possible directions for the Norwegian system. However, the design, development and implementation of the Norwegian quality system must remain as a question for Skills Norway and the other stakeholders involved.

The case studies are presented in chapter II of the report and were gathered through a common methodology. In each case an interview was conducted with one or two key informants asking them to describe their countries approach to quality assuring career guidance. They were asked questions about each of Hooley and Rice's domains of quality and approaches to quality assurance to see whether this model provided a good description for their system. In addition to providing interview data all participants also provided key documents and literature to inform the case study.

Following the initial interview(s) I created a country paper for each country and then sent it to the original informant for feedback. I also engaged other key contacts from the countries to review the paper and provide additional feedback. The country paper was then iterated with feedback from all participants. In some cases, this resulted in up to seven drafts as there was not always agreement by all participants on how the quality assurance system in the country worked. This helped to reveal the political and contested nature of quality systems. However, in all countries I eventually arrived on a draft of the country paper that all participants could accept.

The country papers are presented in *chapter II* of the report. *Chapter III* then considers the findings from all six countries and draws out some key themes and issues. *Chapter IV* poses

some questions that may inform the development of the quality system in Norway and then *chapter V* offers some reflections on possible ways forward for career guidance in Norway.

II. Country papers

This chapter sets out six country papers. They are presented in alphabetical order and broadly follow a common format as defined by Hooley and Rice's frameworks. At the start of the project a longlist of countries was drawn up between the researcher and Skills Norway to identify where good practice might exist. The case studies were then selected based on: (1) a review of existing literature to identify where interesting practice might exist; (2) the existing knowledge of the researcher; and (3) the interests of Skills Norway. The case studies were exploratory and so were not intended to be representative of the full range of quality approaches available. In the future there would be value in using a similar methodology to explore the quality systems that exist in additional countries.

Australia

Australia is a federal country made up of 6 states and 2 territories. Most of the career guidance systems¹ are organised at a state level, with different jurisdictions taking different approaches on career guidance and quality assurance. In addition to jurisdictional differences there are also important differences in the approach to quality in career guidance in schools (which in turn are divided into state, Catholic and independent sectors), technical and further education (TAFE) institutions, higher education, adult services and the private/independent sector. All of these differences can make it difficult to discuss 'Australian career guidance' when each state has a different system, each with its own complexities e.g. in South Australia responsibility for career guidance is divided across two government departments.

The Federal government has periodically intervened in career guidance policy and has contributed quality assurance elements that are adopted in the various Australian jurisdictions such as the Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners (Career Industry Council of Australia (CICA), 2011). However, such national interventions impact in different ways across the various jurisdictions and sectors.

¹ General the terminology of 'career development' is used in Australia rather than that of 'career guidance'. However to aid comparison between different case studies a consistent terminology has been utilised.

Practice in the domains of quality

Policy. Career guidance policy emerges at national, state and sectoral levels. Many of these policies are accompanied by approaches to monitoring their implementation and effectiveness and sometimes by formal evaluations and review (e.g. see Rainey, Simons, Pudney & Hughes, 2008). However, such formal evaluation of policy initiatives is not required and does not always happen.

Organisation. There is little formal definition or regulation that exists around what kinds of organisations can deliver career guidance. In some cases, federal or state career guidance programmes require organisations to employ staff who comply with the CICA professional standards, but this varies across programmes.

Where organisations deliver a wider variety of services than career guidance external regulation typically comes in the form of wider regulations e.g. the requirement on schools to safeguard children is a general regulation rather than one which is specific to the practice of career guidance within the school. Such general regulations also have an impact on the delivery of career guidance, however they are rarely concerned with the specific elements of quality related to career guidance.

The Career Industry Council of Australia (CICA) (2014) has produced a *Benchmarking Resource* which specifies the way in which career guidance in a school can be organised and provides a quality enhancement process through which this can be implemented. At present this remains as a voluntary and self-administered quality enhancement process. A similar approach can also be seen in the New South Wales' school to work reporting (NSW Government, 2016) and Victoria's Transforming Career Education programme which both monitor government schools' performance against a number of key criteria related to the school's delivery of career guidance and related services.

At present there are no formal badges or awards that recognise and signal organisations that deliver career guidance to an adequate, or high, quality. Although, some discussions have taken place under the aegis of CICA which have explored this as a future possibility.

Process. There is no clear national framework for the quality assurance of career guidance processes. Within some organisations approaches exist which quality assure process (e.g. peer

observation and supervision), but these are locally driven and patchy in implementation. In some cases, state governments create policies and frameworks which specify the delivery of certain types of career guidance. For example, recent initiatives in Victoria have provided resources and guidance to support schools to deliver quality career guidance, but this is not generally supported by any kind of systemic inspection or observation of practice.² This is in line with all education practice in Australia where, for example, there is no national systematic school inspectorate nor widespread external higher education oversight after providers are registered every 7 years. For example, there is no system of external examiners in higher education although informal peer-review is growing in importance.

People. The quality assurance of professionals and professionalism is well developed in Australia and is driven by CICA and the professional associations. CICA originally published *Professional Standards for Career Development Practitioners* in 2004 in response to the OECD's (2002) review of career guidance in the country (McIlveen & Alchin, 2017). This document has gone through several subsequent iterations. The standards address: terminology; membership of the profession; professional ethics; entry-level qualifications; continuing professional development and guidance on competency (CICA, 2011). These standards are currently being reviewed and updated with the revision expected to be implemented from 2019 (CICA, 2017). The standards are then supplemented by a list of endorsed qualifications (at both Australian Qualification Framework level 4 [Certificate IV] and level 8 [Graduate Certificate]) and a register of practitioners.

The register of practitioners provides a formal, but voluntary, mechanism for practitioners to align themselves with the standards and to make their professional status publicly transparent (CICA, 2015). Some professional associations offer an equivalent status to registration as part of their membership with some practitioners choosing to take out dual registration. The list of approved qualifications helps to ensure standardisation and consistency in the training of professionals (McIlveen & Alchin, 2017).

The professional standards are managed by CICA with the co-operation of the individual career development professional associations. The professional standards were

² See <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/transforming-career.aspx> for further information on the Victorian Transforming Career Education programme.

developed as part of a purposeful professionalisation process by the careers sector to provide reassurance about quality to policy makers and the general public (McMahon, 2004). They went through extensive consultation with stakeholders and have continued to evolve in response to changes in the landscape (Miles Morgan, 2005). As a result, CICA now provides a cross-sectoral and cross-jurisdictional framework for quality which is delivered through the professional associations quality assuring the people who deliver career development through their education and training programmes and organisational standards.

At present the professional standards remain voluntary with limited and inconsistent sanctions for those who choose to stay outside of them. In contrast careers practitioners who are psychologists (e.g. organisational psychologists and general psychologists engaged in career development) are regulated by the federal government's Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Authority. They may also be members of the Australian Psychological Society which is not part of CICA. Another important group engaged in careers work are human resource specialists working within organisations. These HR specialists may be a member of the Australian Human Resources Institute or the Institute of Management, neither of which have a relationship with CICA. Such professionals will vary both in the amount of careers work that they are engaged with and in the extent to which they associate their professional identity with the career guidance field.

The implementation of the CICA standards is therefore dependent to a large extent on professional buy-in and this in turn is dependent on professionals associating themselves with the career guidance field, which many careers workers do not do. The main external drivers for the adoption of the CICA professional standards comes from funders (e.g. jurisdictions commissioning career guidance programmes) and employers. There has been a growing engagement with these standards with an increasing number of contexts requiring practitioners with professional qualifications and incorporating the professional standards in job descriptions and management practices, but there is still some way to go to make adoption of the framework universal.

Output or outcome. There are three main frameworks which exist to specify the outcomes or outputs that are expected of career development in Australia. These are the Core Skills for Work (transferable and employability skills); the Australian Blueprint for Career Development (career management skills), and the Australian Curriculum (the countries broader curriculum framework

which includes a number of career and employability related learning outcomes for year 9 and 10 students) (McIlveen & Alchin, 2017). These various frameworks provide some useful clarification of what outcomes are expected, but policy support for them has waxed and waned. Consequently, the level of assessment of whether these outcomes have successfully been achieved varies considerably by contexts. Given this, these frameworks offer potential tools for quality enhancement rather than a consistently implemented quality system.

Careers work in the welfare to work sector and public employment services is focused on job matching and uses versions of payment by results (linked to an employment outcome) to drive practice (Cumming, 2011). Providers in this sector are less likely to insist on practitioners being qualified or registered than those in the education system. Consequently, the outcome related payments serve as the only real quality assurance beyond the initial selection of providers by government.

Users. User involvement and the monitoring of satisfaction varies across different sectors and jurisdictions. One of the best developed approaches is New South Wales' *Student Pathways Survey*. This survey measures students' self-efficacy in a range of areas including employment-related skills, goal setting, job choice, career information and support, pathway options, career and transition planning, and intended school exit destination and timing (see Bell, Smith & Bright, 2005). On completion of the survey, students receive a personalised report which reflects their current thinking and offers ways to improve their confidence and capacity to self-manage their personal career and transition pathway. The survey therefore serves the dual purpose of providing career development support to young people and data that can be used to monitor the impact of services and drive quality enhancement.

Within higher education the Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT) initiative brings together destinations data and student experience surveys to provide insights on higher education institutions.³ While this does not directly measure the outcomes of university careers services, the data has the potential to be used for this purpose. Some similar data is also available for the VET system (e.g. see NCVER, 2014).

³ For more information about QILT see <https://www.qilt.edu.au/>.

Approaches to quality assurance

There are a range of different quality approaches in evidence within Australia. The most strongly developed and implemented initiatives are centred around the quality assurance of the people who deliver career guidance through the definition of professional standards, registration processes and endorsed qualifications.

Neither the market, via consumer pressure, nor the federal nor state governments currently serve to make quality assurance in Australia consistent nor mandatory. Psychologists working in the careers field provide an important exception to this as they exist under a regulatory framework provided by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Authority. However, for the rest of the profession, the quality of career guidance largely assured through a range of voluntary standards and frameworks (the *advisory approach*). The profession and the wider careers sector have played an important role in the development of the quality systems for Australian career development and continue to be critical to the development and implementation of quality. This suggests that the country is also strongly influenced by *the organic approach* to quality assurance which emphasises professional autonomy, self-regulation and iterative development of services.

England

England is part of the United Kingdom, but in most respects has a distinct career guidance system from that which exists in the other UK countries. The country has a well-developed career guidance system, but one which has received inconsistent policy support from governments during its history (Hughes, 2017; Watts, 2013). The country's career guidance system is fragmented with essentially distinct systems existing in schools and colleges, higher education, adult community services, the public employment service and the private sector.

Career guidance in the country has benefitted from several initiatives to enhance quality. These provide some useful and effective approaches to quality assuring different aspects of quality, but do not cohere together into a single quality assurance system. The closest the country has to an over-arching document designed to set a national quality assurance approach is the Department for Education's (2017) *Careers Strategy* although this is largely focused on career guidance for young people. This document commits the country to 'high-quality career provision' and endorses a number of different approaches to ensuring and

assuring this. However, it does not provide an over-arching framework for quality across all of the country's youth and adult careers services.

Although career guidance in England is strongly sectorially-divided and there is no single national approach to quality, many of the quality assurance approaches are in use across multiple-sectors. However, in most sectors the role of career guidance specific quality assurance plays a secondary role to wider quality assurance processes. For example, within schools and colleges, the inspectorate, Ofsted, serves as a guarantor of quality. Within Ofsted's (2015) *Common Inspection Framework* there is a requirement that learners are provided with 'choices about the next stage of their education, employment, self-employment or training, where relevant, from impartial careers advice and guidance' (p.14) and, where relevant that they should be provided with 'employability skills so that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education, employment, self-employment or training' (p.14). This provides a basis for some quality assurance of career guidance as part of these broader quality assurance processes. However, in practice it can often be challenging to get inspectors to pay sufficient attention to career guidance when they are inspecting more broadly. Ofsted is also directly responsible for the inspection of the National Careers Service which will be discussed in the next section.

Practice in the domains of quality

Policy. The Government provides guidance on the appraisal and evaluation of policies in *The Green Book* (HM Treasury, 2018). This specifies that policies should be assessed on five cases: the strategic; economic; commercial; financial; and management. Policies should include a plan for both monitoring and evaluation at the point of development. In practice, the implementation of monitoring and evaluation is often patchy in part due to the speed and political nature of much policy development, implementation and reform. However, policies are regularly evaluated by the Department responsible for implementing them. The usual process is to commission an independent evaluation, often after the policy has been implemented (e.g. Bowes et al., 2013). Another tool that is available to government for policy evaluation is the National Audit Office which exists to scrutinise government spending. The National Audit Office has periodically been involved in the review of career guidance policies (e.g. National Audit Office, 2014). Finally, monitoring of careers policy also happens at the political level through the House of Commons Education Select Committee which holds key

government agencies to account and conducts occasional reviews of whole policy areas including career guidance.

Organisation. As discussed earlier the inspection agency, Ofsted has a remit for inspecting the provision offered by schools and colleges and reaching a judgement on the fitness of purpose of those organisations. In most cases career guidance is a minor aspect of these inspections, but Ofsted also has the remit to inspect and pass judgement on organisations that deliver the National Careers Service. In these cases, the focus on the quality of career guidance is to the fore and the judgement that is made is primarily one about the fitness of the organisation to deliver career guidance. In addition to the activities of Ofsted there are two main standards that quality assure organisations as being fit to deliver career guidance.

The first is the matrix Standard (Assessment Services Ltd., 2017) which is owned by the Department for Education and used to quality assure all providers of information, advice and guidance services, including, but not limited to, providers of career guidance. The Standard has been in existence since 2000 and built on pre-existing quality standards. The Standard is voluntary, but in some cases (such as the National Careers Service) organisations are required to hold the Standard if they wish to access government funding. The Standard requires organisations to demonstrate effective: leadership and management; resources; service delivery; and continuous quality improvement. The matrix Standard requires organisations to establish clear outcomes and monitor themselves against them, rather than specifying particular benchmarks for service delivery.

The framework for quality provision in schools and colleges is established by the Department for Education's (2017) *Careers Strategy*. This in turn draws on the Gatsby Charitable Foundation's (2014) benchmarks for effective practice. These set out eight areas (the 'Gatsby Benchmarks') which schools and colleges should focus on when providing 'good career guidance'. The Gatsby Benchmarks are focused on concrete activities that must be delivered e.g. young people should have the opportunity to meet an employer or working person in every year that they are in the education system. Institutions are provided with a self-

assessment tool (Compass⁴) which allows them to relate their own provision to the Gatsby Benchmarks and identify areas for improvement.

There is also an externally assessed national standard which schools and colleges can use to assure the quality of their careers provision and relate it to the Gatsby Benchmarks (The Quality in Careers Consortium, 2018). The Quality in Careers Standard⁵ has existed in various forms since 1992 and has now evolved to be a single national quality award delivered by a number of local, regional and national awarding bodies (Andrews & Chubb, 2017). The Standard is governed by a Consortium⁶ uniquely comprising the leading professional associations for school and college leaders as well as the leading careers professional bodies in England. The Standard is currently held by around a quarter of English schools and colleges and is ‘strongly recommended’ by government in its statutory guidance to schools, although it remains voluntary. Institutions pay to be assessed against the Standard and this is commonly connected to some consultancy provided alongside the accreditation process. The Standard has recently been fully aligned to the Gatsby Benchmarks to the extent that no organisations will be able to hold the Standard without meeting the Benchmarks.

Process. Many organisations in England have internal quality assurance approaches which define and ensure the process of career guidance, however there is little standardisation. Recent work by the professional body, the Career Development Institute (CDI) (2018a) has developed a quality framework for observation and self-reflection for one-to-one career counselling interventions. It describes how observations should be organised and then provides a framework for feeding back how far careers professionals work within the framework set out by the National Occupational Standard (see next section). This framework is not formally required, but the CDI advise that it can be used in conjunction with the Quality in Careers Standard.

People. Professional standards have been driven by the UK-wide professional association, the CDI. The current approach to professional standards has its roots in the report by the Careers Profession Task Force (2010) which was commissioned by government to set out a ‘vision for

⁴ More information about Compass can be found at <https://compass.careersandenterprise.co.uk/info>.

⁵ More information about Quality in Careers can be found at <http://www.qualityincareers.org.uk/documents/the-guide-to-the-standard.pdf>.

⁶ More detail on the Consortium and its Board can be found at <http://www.qualityincareers.org.uk/about-us/consortium-and-board/>

a transformed careers workforce in England' (p.2). This argued that careers work should be professionalised, that at least a degree level (level six) qualification should be achieved by those in professional practice and that professionals should commit to continuing professional development.

These recommendations have been broadly endorsed by government and the CDI has driven their implementation. Key areas of work have been the creation of National Occupational Standards accompanied by Blueprint of Learning Outcomes for Professional Roles, a Code of Ethics, the establishment of a list of approved and regulated qualifications which offer both an academic and a work-based route to professional status and the development of a publicly accessible professional register. The professional register includes a requirement for CPD for all registered professionals.⁷

Taken together this approach offers a comprehensive approach to the definition of quality and quality assurance of careers professionals within England. However, this framework only applies to CDI members and there are relatively weak sanctions on practitioners and organisations that choose not to engage with the CDI. Recent guidance from government to schools and colleges (Department for Education, 2018a; 2018b) provides some advisory support for this professional framework by suggesting that practitioners should hold a relevant qualification, but it is not mandatory. Some government contracts also recognise the value of qualified professionals, but this does not extend to all relevant contracts, for example the public employment service does not normally require that staff advising clients about career and employment issues hold qualifications at level six or above.

There are no sanctions on practitioners who do not have any qualifications but continue to practice. The professional association hope that the existence of the register can provide a basis for some market regulation of the field e.g. clients actively choosing professionally qualified practitioners over those without qualifications. However, at present public understanding of career guidance and the quality arrangements that govern it is low.

⁷ See the Careers Development Institute's websites for resources on professional qualifications (<https://www.thecdi.net/GettingQualified>) and professional registration (<https://www.thecdi.net/Professional-Register->).

Output or outcome. There is very little formal definition of the learning outcomes expected from career guidance in England. There are several useful frameworks which provide some possible definition of career management and employability skills outcomes e.g. CDI (2018b) or Enabling Enterprise (2018). However, none of these frameworks have a clear statutory basis and none have achieved clear market dominance.

There is more interest in destinations measures. The government has invested in developing a first destination measure which covers the school and vocational education system and published guidance on how this can be used to enhance career guidance (Department for Education, 2018c). This is already being enhanced by new longitudinal data created by linking school data with tax data (Department for Education & Office for Students, 2018). There is also an established destinations measure for higher education which measures both six month and two and a half year destinations (HESA, 2018a). This survey is currently being reformed and relaunched and will focus on outcomes 15 months after graduation (HESA, 2018b).

While destinations data is frequently used to judge the performance of institutions it is not used explicitly as a measure of the quality of career guidance. However, attention to destinations data, especially in higher education where such data drives university ranking systems, has often resulted in both investment in career guidance and the performance management of career guidance services.

The National Careers Service, which works with adults in England, provides an example of how a range of outcomes can be used as part of the quality assurance and management of a career guidance service. The government provides funding for National Careers Service providers based on both career management outcomes, defined as taking an action to develop your career, and jobs or learning outcomes, defined as finding a destination, (Education & Skills Funding Agency, 2018). Payment is made for providers based on the achievement of these outcomes for individuals using the service.

Users. Many providers of careers services are interested in capturing client satisfaction, however there is no single or standardised measure. Probably the most developed customer satisfaction measure is the research undertaken by the National Careers Service which examines customer satisfaction levels (e.g. Ipsos Mori, 2016). In recent years the measurement

of customer satisfaction in the National Careers Service has been linked to a payment by results system.

Approaches to quality assurance

Quality assurance in England draws on a range of different approaches. There is some statutory regulation and requirements for particular approaches demanded by funders (*regulatory*), but most government guidance is optional for organisations and professionals (*advisory*). The professional association has been important in driving quality assurance and professional support and feedback is common in practice (*organic*). There is also a strong interest in the use of league tables, payment by results and other market mechanisms (*competitive*).

There is much to learn from the approach to quality assurance of career guidance that is currently in use in England. However, there would be value in considering whether the various innovations that are in evidence in the country could be more effectively brought together into a more cohesive system.

Germany

Germany is a federal country in which education policy is devolved to the 16 federal states (länder). The level of interest in career guidance and quality assurance varies across these states with some (e.g. Northrhine-Westphalia) having stronger systems than others.

The public employment service works across all of the federal states and plays an important role in the delivery of career guidance in both the labour market and the education system (Klueger, 2015; nfb 2014). The organisation has a tripartite structure which means that it is funded and governed by employers, trade unions and government representatives from national, regional and local level.

Universities are autonomous organisations which manage career guidance services for their students. A number of other organisations (e.g. trade unions, VET colleges) also deliver career guidance with minimal formal regulation. The federal nature of the country, combined with the multiple sectors and locations in which career guidance is delivered makes for a complex quality assurance landscape.

Career guidance is well established in Germany although it is typically divided between ‘educational guidance’ which is concerned primarily with individuals’ engagement with the education system and ‘vocational guidance’ which is concerned with their relationship with work (Euroguidance, 2018a, nfb, 2014). The National Guidance Forum for Education, Career and Employment (nfb), which is an independent network which brings all of the key stakeholders in career guidance together, has been an important force in developing national approaches to quality assurance.⁸ However, other bodies, including state governments and local companies and associations that have been involved in defining and supporting quality in career guidance have arguably had more of an impact on the way quality in career guidance is practiced. Such arrangements are typically local in nature and confined to a particular sector.

The BeQu-Concept is the key framework that has been established by the nfb and the University of Heidelberg to support the development of quality in career guidance in Germany (nfb & University of Heidelberg, 2016). The development of the framework was funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research but this support has not resulted in the framework being required by policy makers across the country (ICCDPP, 2017a). The framework is seen as a ‘bottom up’ initiative that has provided an important organising structure for conversations about quality in the country. However, at present its implementation is patchy with many competing approaches to quality assurance existing in the federal states.

Practice in the domains of quality

Policy. There is no clear national policy on career guidance. Policy in this area is often fragmented across a range of different levels of government, departments and agendas. The federal states have a lot of control over guidance policy and each of them will establish their own programmes and, if desired, approaches for monitoring and evaluating these programmes.

Organisations. The BeQu-Concept includes several elements that relate to the quality assurance of organisations. It suggests that organisations should have a mission statement, setting out the purpose, strategy, goals and ethical principles of its guidance services; that the organisation should have clearly defined processes, workflows and responsibilities, which promote guidance as a communicative social service; that there should be a constructive and

⁸ See <http://www.forum-beratung.de/english/index.html> for further information on the National Guidance Forum in Education, Career and Employment (nfb).

participative culture of communication and collaboration within the guidance organisation; there should be adequate human and material resources for the specific guidance service offers; and that the organisation should build good collaboration with its partners and other relevant actors in the social environment.

In practice the BeQu-Concept is not fully operationalised, although it has been influential in the development of the internal practices of a number of organisations. Organisations that have attended a BeQu workshop can formally self-assess themselves against the BeQu-Concept and place the BeQu-Label on their organisation.

The public employment service has a range of internal quality assurance and enhancement procedures for their guidance services. However, these are internal and not fully transparent. Similarly, university student counselling and careers services will typically devise their own internal quality assurance processes rather than seeking quality assurance from outside.

Private providers of careers services need to be quality assured and certified if they are going to seek government funding or funding by the public employment service. This is done by issuing a certificate following a robust process of investigation which typically include the completion of self-reports, visits, interviews and inspections. This certificate usually has to be renewed every three years or so. Certification is usually defined at the federal state level with accreditation processes being provided by acknowledged private certification institutes.⁹

Process. The BeQu-Concept includes a number of elements focused on process such as encouraging the development of a good relationship with clients; a focus on the co-definition and co-production of the outcome of guidance and an emphasis on careful analysis of the clients' needs and development of solutions which empower the client.

In practice there is little formal quality assurance around such process dimensions although approaches like manager, peer observation and external supervision are frequently used within careers services.

⁹ For example see Kos (<https://www.kos-qualitaet.de/>) or Weiterbildung Hessen e.V. (<https://weiterbildunghessen.de>).

People. The BeQu-Concept provides a strong statement of the expectations on clients in terms of professional behaviour, ethics and standards. It notes the importance of professionals being appropriately qualified but does not specify a particular level of qualification.

The BeQu-Concept has informed the professional associations which cover career guidance practitioners. Each of these has a set of standards and guidelines which regulate professional qualification and behaviour. The BeQu-Concept has helped to align these, but they remain diverse.

Additional specification on professional standards are provided sectorally and within some of the federal states. In some cases, adherence to such standards may be specified as a condition of government funding (e.g. Berlin, Hessen, Baden-Wuerttemberg).

Outputs and outcomes. The outputs and outcomes of career guidance are understood, but not specified in detail. The public employment service is expected to deliver education, training or employment outcomes for all of its clients. There is considerable political pressure on the public employment service to deliver this, and successful labour market integration or enrolments in VET are part of the PES' steering indicators. Schools are expected to ensure that young people are clear about their career plans. Again, this is not formally measured. There is no clear national framework for career management skills although some frameworks exist at the state level.

Users. Several providers of career guidance seek user feedback and monitor customer satisfaction. But this is not standardised and there is no clear and consistent approach. The public employment service runs an annual survey looking at customer satisfaction. The findings from these surveys are used as part of the evaluation and accountability of the public employment service. There is also some research data which provides further insights into user experiences and "job readiness" after using the career guidance service of the public employment service (e.g. Shore & Tosun, 2017).

Approaches to quality assurance

Viewed from one perspective quality assurance in Germany in career guidance is fragmented. However, the important role that is played by the federal states means that the picture varies considerably across the country with some states having more developed approaches than

others. Such an approach is in tune with the countries federal and decentred approach to policy marking.

The nfb has played an important role in creating a national framework for standardisation through the BeQu framework. However, this is best seen as a work in progress and one which has limited influence in many federal states. As such the quality system in the country can best be described as being a mixture of *advisory* systems through which quality is specified, but with limited or no sanctions and *organic* systems which are driven locally by professionals and organisations.

The Netherlands

The Netherlands has a strong tradition of career guidance. Career guidance can be found in the education system, the public employment service, employers and trade unions and in the private sector (Euroguidance, 2018b). Guidance in education and in the labour market are largely organised separately with minimal cross-over in terms of quality assurance processes.

The Ministries of Education, Culture and Sciences, and of Social Affairs and Employment are both involved in shaping the policy environment in which career guidance is practiced in the Netherlands. Policy in the Netherlands is typically characterised by a liberal approach, a limited willingness to regulate and faith that market forces will ultimately resolve issues of poor quality. However, within this broadly liberal approach there is a greater involvement of public policy in the education system than in the labour market. Career guidance remains weakly professionalised but in the private market the Dutch Association for Career Guidance Professionals (Noloc) has been a key driver of quality assurance processes, particularly in relation to the quality assurance of people and professional skills and has recently begun the process of merging with the Career Management Institute (CMI) which is another body which oversees the quality of career guidance in the country.

Practice in the domains of quality

Policy. There are a range of government policies which seek to manage the quality of career guidance in the Netherlands. These include both the provision of funding and regulatory policies, particularly in the education system. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science has funded the continuation of an initiative led by the Dutch Secondary Education Council

(VO-raad) and the Netherlands Association of VET Colleges to establish the Career Education and Guidance Centre of Expertise (Euroguidance, 2018b). This organisation exists to aid in the translation and implementation of policy into practice.

There is no systematic approach for monitoring the quality of career guidance across all sectors. However, many policies are accompanied by a commissioned evaluation or other monitoring systems. For example, the quality of career guidance in secondary education and the VET sector is legally monitored by the Educational Inspectorate. This results in the publication of an annual report.

Organisation. Schools and VET colleges have a legal responsibility to deliver career guidance. This responsibility is quality assured through the Inspectorate of Education who inspect provision in education and report on the quality of provision (including career guidance provision). The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science also encourages schools and colleges to draw up their own career guidance agenda and to pursue a strategy of self-reflection and self-improvement.

Career guidance in higher education is less clearly defined and regulated, but career guidance will sometimes be addressed in reports by the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO) which has a broader remit for quality assuring provision in higher education.

Provision of career guidance services in the labour market functions as a quasi-market with government awarding contracts following a tendering process. Two formal quality awards have been created to assure the quality of organisations. One of these (Oval) is focused specifically on career guidance service providers, while the other is a broader quality mark aimed at a range of advisory services in labour market guidance. These are not mandatory but are often used to help to differentiate between bidders during the tendering process. It is also hoped that the existence of these quality marks will help citizens to differentiate between different providers, but in practice this is limited in impact.

Process. Within the school and VET system, policy has defined the requirement to provide career guidance services. Since 2017, the Inspectorate of Education are involved in quality assuring this and will observe practice as part of inspections.

There is more limited regulation of the processes on the labour market side. Some providers of career guidance in the labour market have internal monitoring systems for practice, but there is no consistent national approach. The Ministry of Social Affairs has begun the process of implementing ‘career-checkups’ which establish a standardised career assessment to be used in work with older workers to assess their labour market potential. The Ministry requires that the ‘career checkups’ can only be administered by NOLOC-certified-professionals.

People. There is no legal protection for the title and professional status of career guidance practitioners in the Netherlands. Anyone is entitled to set up as a careers professional and to practice without qualification or regulation. However, qualifications and registration are likely to be a clear advantage in gaining employment within labour market services and career guidance providers. Careers teachers in schools and the ‘studieloopbaanbegeleiders’(education and career guidance professionals) in VET and HE are usually qualified subject teachers, but are not required to have any specialist expertise in career guidance. Recent policy has made more training available to careers professionals in the school and VET system as part of a strategy to improve the quality of career guidance in the education system. However, the Code of Conduct for teachers does not make any reference to career guidance.

There is limited formal training for careers professionals in the Netherlands. Careers professionals come from a wider range of different professional background and normally take any qualifications once they have begun to practice. While some universities of applied science offer degree programmes these are typically broader in nature (e.g. in human resource management) and offer limited options for specialisation in career guidance. There are also some opportunities for continuing professional development for job coaches and for career teachers and a more detailed, academic programme in career management run by the Open Universiteit.

Two quality marks/professional registers currently exist (Noloc and CMI) to provide quality assurance of professionals. The two quality marks are being brought together into a single quality mark, to be hosted by Noloc. The development of this new, national quality mark is designed to strengthen the standing of the profession with citizens, organisations and policy makers and has been driven by the professional association.

The quality marks do not cover school-based careers teachers and school-based career counsellors or the education and career guidance professionals in VET or HE and so their use is largely confined to the labour market side of provision. Euroguidance (2018b), at the behest of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, has drafted a framework for careers professionals in the education sector which outlines qualifications and what career education and guidance practitioners at differing levels within schools should ideally know and be able to do. But, at present this document has no process for monitoring compliance.¹⁰ This has been supported by relevant professional associations e.g. the Netherlands Association of School Guidance Practitioners (NVS-NVL) and the Association of Career Guidance Practitioners in Secondary Education (VvSL), but it remains optional and advisory.

Most careers professionals other than careers practitioners in the educational sector register themselves in the professional register of Noloc or CMI (Euroguidance, 2018b). The new combined quality mark will require careers professionals to pay a fee and seek reaccreditation every four years. To achieve the quality mark professionals have to submit their CV, show that they have a relevant qualification and training in career counselling, that they have at least three years general work experience and at least one year of careers practice. They then they have to produce a commentary reflecting on their experience and their practice. To achieve reaccreditation they have to show they are keeping up with CPD. Noloc also has a tribunal process that can hear cases of malpractice and potentially discipline members or strike them off of the register.

The public employment service, Uitvoeringsinstituut Werknemersverzekeringen (UWV), requires all employees to sign up to a Code of Conduct. This regulates the management of information, customer service, integrity and professionalism. However, the career guidance component of the UWV is limited and the service is typically more focused on the administration of the benefits system.

Outputs and outcomes. There is no clear common statement of the outcomes that an individual should expect from career guidance. Many careers practitioners will seek to agree

¹⁰ See <https://www.expertisepuntlob.nl/> for further information on this framework.

desired outcomes with clients during the guidance process but these will be individual and are not typically monitored.

As discussed already, the country does not have a defined curriculum for career guidance which specifies learning outcomes. However, within vocational schools the career competencies defined by Kuijpers, Schyns and Scheerens (2006) are built into the curriculum: motive reflection; quality reflection; work exploration, managing career and networking. Outside of the education systems there is also a career management skills framework which is owned by Noloc.

Within the school system schools are sent data by National Cohort Research (NRCO) which keeps track of pupils and students after they leave school.¹¹ However it can be difficult to use this kind of destinations data as a clear quality assurance process for career guidance.

Users. There are a range of ways in which the user perspective on career guidance is gathered but these vary by sector. In the VET sector there is a biannual survey which monitors student satisfaction including their satisfaction with career guidance. While in other sectors monitoring the satisfaction or perceived usefulness of career guidance is less formalised.

For practitioners in the labour market there is no formal monitoring of client satisfaction, but some practitioners and organisations will offer feedback forms and follow up surveys. The CMI does ask for letters of recommendations from clients as part of its certification of careers professionals, so this provides another way in which the user voice can be heard.

Bodies which represent the user voice such as the Association of Secondary School Pupils (LAKS), the Association of Students in Senior Secondary Vocational Education (JOB), the Dutch National Students' Association and the National Student Union have also often been involved in campaigning on career guidance and are regularly consulted by government.

Approaches to quality assurance

The Netherlands is a liberal country which generally seeks agreement among stakeholders (sometimes described as the *polder-model* of economic and political consensus building) and

¹¹ For further information on NCRO see <https://nationaalcohortonderzoek.nl/over-ncro/>.

avoids compulsion in policy making. This means that much of the activities around the quality assurance of career guidance are advisory in nature. However, within secondary education and VET career education and guidance is mandatory, without further guidelines. Within the labour market quality is reinforced by market mechanisms which incentivise engagement with quality through the awarding of contracts where those holding quality awards may be advantaged. Within the education system, particularly the vocational schools, there is more of a willingness to take a regulatory approach through a combination of specifying requirements and then inspecting against them.

At present there is limited awareness of quality assurance systems from the clients and students who benefit from career guidance. This means that end uses are rarely driving the quality of career guidance through making active market choices.

Scotland

Scotland is a part of the UK and shares some systems and approaches in common with England and the other UK countries. However, Scotland has always had a distinct education and qualification system from England. Since political devolution in 1997 the Scottish career guidance system has become increasingly distinct from England's system as the two countries have pursued distinct policies.

The creation of Skills Development Scotland in 2008 marked an important point in the evolution of the careers system in Scotland. This new service brought together Careers Scotland, elements of Scottish Enterprise's skills function, elements of Highlands & Islands Enterprise, the Scottish University for Industry (learndirect Scotland, learndirect Scotland for business, ILA Scotland and The Big Plus), training for work, Skillseekers and the Modern Apprenticeships system. The creation of a comprehensive skills and careers agency has had an important influence on quality in the career guidance system in the country. The fact that Skills Development Scotland is able to exert a strategic influence on the career guidance system as well as having direct responsibility for a large proportion of delivery, especially when combined with the organisations proximity to policymakers, means that it is able to drive the national understanding of quality.

Higher education and the career guidance provided in the public employment service and wider welfare to work services sit outside of the purview of Skills Development Scotland. The welfare to work area has recently been devolved from the UK level to Scottish government.

Although Skills Development Scotland's internal policies and partnership activities imply a number of informal benchmarks for what constitutes quality careers provision, this is not backed up by a formal national framework on quality in career guidance which covers all providers of guidance. Various policy documents have signalled Scottish Government's commitment to a high-quality career guidance system (e.g. Scottish Government, 2011; 2014) and led to the further definition of quality. But, as of yet, these have not been drawn together into a single all-age, all-stage national quality framework. The country's career education, information, advice and guidance strategy is due to be refreshed in 2019 and so this will likely lead to further developments of the system described in this section.

Practice in the domains of quality

Policy. Scottish Government has introduced a National Performance Framework¹² which offers citizens an easy way to monitor the performance of Scotland against defined outcomes in key policy areas including children and young people, the economy, fair work and business, communities, education and policy. Beneath this top-level framework there are a range of other national quality monitoring and assurance tools. Within education the *National Improvement Framework for Scottish Education* (Scottish Government, 2016a) includes a number of top-level measures on the performance of Skills Development Scotland and the wider career guidance system.

The National Performance Framework is illustrative of the way Scottish Governments aims to create integrated policy. Consequently, career guidance rarely emerges as a distinct policy area and it is more typical for wider education, employment and skills policies to include some elements that apply to, or impact on career guidance. In such cases the career guidance elements of policies are rarely monitored or evaluated as distinct elements. A recent example can be seen in The Wood Commission (Commission for Developing Scotland's Young Workforce, 2014) which recommended a series of initiatives around developing the young

¹² See <https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/>.

workforce many of which were bound up with career guidance provision. These were accepted by Scottish Government and brought into policy (Scottish Government, 2014). They have subsequently been monitored and evaluated through a series of reports which include some high-level evaluation of the quality of career guidance provision in the country (Education Scotland, 2016; Scottish Government, 2015, 2016b, 2017).

In addition to formal evaluation and review processes such as those established around the implementation of the Wood Commission, policy initiatives around education, employment and skills receive scrutiny in parliamentary committees (usually the Education and Skills Committee). However, again career guidance is typically addressed as an embedded feature of provision rather than as the primary focus of inquiry.

Skills Development Scotland, as the primary delivery agency, for career guidance produces an annual report which sets out its main activities and achievements (e.g. Skills Development Scotland, 2018a). This provides a clear basis for the activities of the organisation to be monitored and held to public account.

Organisations. Most career guidance activities in schools are delivered by Skills Development Scotland and governed by the organisations' internal quality assurance processes. These include complaints and feedback procedures and internal evaluation processes. A key process adopted by Skills Development Scotland is its Business Excellence Framework which all local teams are required to self- assess themselves against every two years. This leads to the creation of a continuous improvement action plan which is then used to help manage the development of that team and to monitor the improvement of quality across the organisation.

In addition, SDS is inspected by Education Scotland on an area by area basis. The approach to review is set out in formal document and backed up by guidance for external reviewers (Education Scotland, 2018a; 2018b). These reviews are focused around a series of key questions as follows.

- How well are customers progressing and achieving relevant, high quality outcomes?
- How well does the organisation meet the needs of its stakeholders?
- How good is the delivery of key services?
- How good is the management of service delivery?
- How good is the strategic leadership?

- Does the service have the capacity to improve further?

Local services are reviewed every six years through a robust five-day inspection. This is then followed up 18 months later by Education Scotland to ensure that recommendations have been put into practice. Review teams are typically comprised of professional inspectors but may also co-opt career guidance specialists where appropriate. In addition to detailed formative feedback services are provided with a summative grades against each of the key questions on a six point scale (excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; weak; and unsatisfactory). Reports are made publicly available on the Education Scotland website.¹³

Most higher education institutions use the matrix Standard and other similar quality approaches to English higher education providers (see the section on England).

Within the vocational education system, Skills Development Scotland play an important role in delivering career guidance and disseminating good practice. This is supplemented by the work of the College Development Network which provides some advisory resources on career guidance within colleges and also runs a practice enhancement network for college guidance.¹⁴

Process. As part of their inspection of career guidance provision Education Scotland undertake observations in schools and careers centres of one-to-one career counselling¹⁵, group work and other common career guidance activities.

Within Skills Development Scotland there is a requirement for observation of practice to take place against the organisations' observation framework. Observations are undertaken by both peers and managers as part of performance management processes. Practitioners also have regular circles of peer support where practice is discussed and ideas for improvement are suggested. Practitioners are also encouraged to engage in structured self-reflection.

¹³ See <https://education.gov.scot/other-sectors>.

¹⁴ See <https://www.cdn.ac.uk/networks-projects/guidance-development-network/> for further information on the College Development Network Guidance Network.

¹⁵ Usually described in Scotland as 'coaching guidance or career coaching'.

People. The overarching framework for professional qualification is common with England and overseen by the Career Development Institute (CDI) as the professional association.¹⁶ This includes adherence to the national occupational standard, recognised qualifications endorsed by the CDI and adoption of the CDI's code of ethics.

A key difference from England is the requirement set by Skills Development Scotland for all careers advisers to hold postgraduate level qualifications and for paraprofessional staff to hold relevant vocational level qualifications. This requirement serves to clearly establish what the required level for professional practice is and to incentivise the careers workforce to acquire this level of skill if they want to work within Skills Development Scotland. Staff working for Skills Development Scotland are also expected to complete a minimum of 21 hours of continuing professional development every year.

There is no formal training or qualification requirement for teachers who are involved in career education in schools. However, Skills Development Scotland have developed a suite of optional self-study modules to support the continuing professional development of teachers who are involved in career education. This is supported with lesson plans and resources which can be accessed by the organisation's website.

Careers advisers working in higher education will also typically hold relevant postgraduate qualifications although there is some more flexibility about this within this sector. Outside of Skills Development Scotland and higher education there is no requirement to hold a professional qualification meaning that practitioners in the third sector are far more mixed in terms of their qualifications and those in the welfare to work sector are unlikely to hold equivalent qualifications.

Outputs and outcomes. Scotland has established a career management skills framework which helps to clarify the expected outcomes of career guidance (Career Development Scotland, 2012). The CMS framework underpins the countries career education standard (Education Scotland, Skills Development Scotland & Scottish Government, 2015) and is also used to underpin other service development.

¹⁶ This is discussed in more detail in the section on England. See the Careers Development Institute's websites for resources on professional qualifications (<https://www.thecdi.net/GettingQualified>) and professional registration (<https://www.thecdi.net/Professional-Register->).

The career education standard is accompanied by a work placement standard (Education Scotland, 2015). Taken together these documents provide some guidance on process, but clearly define the outputs and outcomes that young people can expect through their participation in career guidance activities. These are framed in terms of an entitlement for young people and other key stakeholder groups (parents, schools and employers) and accompanied with a series of expectations about what different stakeholders are required to contribute to these activities. Skills Development Scotland include the delivery of these standards in the partnership agreements that they establish with schools. These standards are expected to inform provision and are inspected as part of Education Scotland's wider inspections of schools and other activities. Although the CMS frameworks and the associated standards define the expected outcomes for students, these are not usually formally assessed in the way that learning outcomes for other subjects are.

The CMS framework was developed alongside the implementation of a new curriculum (Curriculum for Excellence) that seeks to create a more inter-disciplinary and life-relevant form of learning within Scotland's schools. The importance of career education to this is acknowledged in some policy and curriculum documents e.g. Scottish Government (2009). However, the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence has been problematic for a range of reasons that are largely outside of the scope of this paper (see Priestley & Drew, 2017), albeit instructive for countries considering major change to their curriculum. This has meant that in practice the implementation of career education through Curriculum for Excellence has often not lived up to the potential that is offered by the new curriculum.

There is also an interest in destinations data as a measure of the outcomes of career guidance. In higher education destinations surveys are used in the same way as in England. Outside of higher education career guidance is also expected to have an influence on destinations with a strong focus on reducing unemployment and the level of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET). There is strong political pressure on Skills Development Scotland to manage NEET levels. A recent innovation has been the development of a new youth participation measure which looks at young people's education and employment status over time rather than just at a single census point (Skills Development Scotland, 2018b). This provides a constant metric on which Skills Development Scotland report annually. This is also supported by the creation of the 16+ Data Hub (Skills Development Scotland, 2018c) which allows for data sharing between different government departments and

agencies to form a more complete picture of the issues experienced by young people in transitioning to the labour market.

Users. Skills Development Scotland regularly conducts research on user needs and seek feedback from users of its services. The organisation has a dedicated evaluation and research team who lead on this work. User perspectives are gathered through regular evaluation processes embedded into the organisations' operations (e.g. (online) feedback forms with school students, unemployed adults and users of face-to-face and online services. The organisation also conducts research activities such as its annual survey of 16-19 year-old students, focus groups with adult clients and an annual survey of Head Teachers. Skills Development Scotland are also able to analyse data that is gathered through the organisations' website My World of Work.¹⁷

Education Scotland inspections of career guidance also involve actively seeking the perspectives of a wide variety of user groups, typically through focus groups.

Within higher education similar systems exist, as in England, and include annual student satisfaction survey, but career guidance forms a very small part of this.

Approaches to quality assurance

The definition and enhancement of quality in career guidance in Scotland is based around the strong link that exists between Skills Development Scotland, as the dominant provider, and Scottish Government. Strong policy support and a commitment to professionalism in practice mean that the country has a highly developed approach to ensuring quality. This is further enhanced by role of Education Scotland as a body driving improvement across the education sector and directly involved in quality assuring careers provision through inspections. Taken together this suggests that the *regulatory* approach is strongest in Scotland.

The approach to quality assurance outlined above is stronger in the education sector than it is in career guidance that exists within the employment and welfare to work sectors. However, it is possible that the devolution of these areas to Scottish Government may allow them to be brought into the dominant quality approach that exists in the country in the future.

¹⁷ My World of Work is available at <https://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/>.

South Korea

South Korea has had some career guidance practice, particularly in the education system, since the 1950s (Lee, 2017). Until the late 1990s career guidance in the country was limited, but following an economic crisis in 1998 and a subsequent period of reform, interest and investment in career guidance began to grow (Koh & Chapman, 2013; Yang, Lee, & Ahn, 2012; Yoon & Pyun, 2018). The passing of the Career Education Act (2015) instituted a formal public career guidance system for the country and created the National Career Development Centre to drive the implementation of this new system (ICCDPP, 2017b).

Recent reforms have mainly focused on career guidance within the compulsory education systems, but career guidance can also be found in higher education and in a network of local career and labour market centres which are overseen by the Ministry of Labour.

Practice in the domains of quality

Policy. The Career Education Act specifies that the career guidance policy should be reviewed every five years and its focus and aims revised in order to reflect educational and social change.

The Act also include research and evaluation as a clear part of the implementation of the countries career guidance system. The National Career Development Centre based within the Korea Research Institute for Vocational Education and Training (KRIVET) has lead responsibility for this (ICCDPP, 2017c). One key activity is an annual survey of career education with students and teachers every year. The survey results provide data which allows for ongoing monitoring of the implementation of the Act and the career guidance policy.

Organisation. Most career guidance is provided by existing educational providers (schools, VET colleges, universities etc.). These organisations have pre-existing quality assurance processes and no additional quality assurance is undertaken at the organisational level to ensure that these organisations are competent to deliver career guidance.

Schools are required to have a Dedicated Career Teacher and to deliver Careers and Occupations as a subject within the National Curriculum. Within schools there is an annual award process run by the Ministry of Education and the National Career Development Centre which recognises best practice in career development and awards schools with a

commendation. This process is designed to recognise the best schools rather than those that provide a minimum standard and quality assurance to it.

Some dedicated funding has been allocated to universities to establish career centres by the Ministry of Labour (Yang, Lee, & Ahn, 2012). However, despite national funding the higher education careers services remain largely autonomous with no agreed upon definition of quality or standardised quality assurance processes. Recently, the Ministry of Education has added whether career guidance is provided to the university evaluation index. This means that universities are now assessed on whether they have the right people, services and programs to provide a quality career guidance service. The results are used as a basis for judging universities' financial support from the Ministry of Education. This has driven a growth in the delivery of career guidance services in the higher education sector.

Process. The current policy sets out a detailed curriculum framework that specifies how career guidance should be taught in the South Korean compulsory education system. This is overseen by the National Curriculum Committee under the Ministry of Education which ensures that all curricula are compliant with the Career Education Act and framework.

Clarity about the delivery of career guidance is lower outside of the compulsory education system. Despite policy and economic imperatives for stronger career education within higher education, there is still a lack of clarity about how this is best delivered. This has led to calls for the establishment of clearer guidance for careers work in higher education (Drolet & Anderson, 2016).

People. Career guidance in the education system can be only provided by a Dedicated Career Teacher. This post is required to be appointed within each school and the skills and duties of the post are specified through the Enforcement Regulations of the Teacher Qualification Test. Dedicated Career Teachers must be a qualified teacher and also to have completed an additional training programme (lasting around 600 hours) (Yoon & Pyun, 2018). This training is focused on the implementation of the career education frameworks associated with the Career Education Act and is delivered by existing teacher training organisations in line with a national training specification set out by the National Career Development Centre. Additional professional development is provided by the professional association (the Association of Career Education). The professional association is also an important stakeholder which is

consulted as part of policy development processes. However, the professional association does not have a direct role in the registration nor accreditation of professionals.

Career guidance in higher education is less clearly regulated than that in schools. Research has found that qualifications and professional standards within this sector are mixed with many staff being transferred into the careers service from other university functions rather than recruited as specialists (Ahn, 2014; Yang, Lee, & Ahn, 2012).

Career guidance outside of the education systems was been characterised by a wide array of job titles (Koh & Chapman, 2013) and there has historically been weak professional regulation for career guidance and other counselling professionals (Lee, 2017). This has led a range of problems and malpractices. However, addressing this was difficult due to large number of professional bodies as well as divisions between public and private sector practice. Taken together this led to a fragmented professional and delivery infrastructure.

In recent years there has been an attempt to tighten up regulation in careers work in the labour market. There have been various attempts to create a more formal licensing system, such as in 2008 when the government formally recognised the role of ‘job counsellors’ and then set out minimum requirements (in 2010) for those individuals who are employed in the public employment service (Yoon & Pyun, 2018). This was then followed up with regulation through the Employment Security Act in 2015 which regulated the qualifications and professionalism of those working in private employment services (Yoon & Pyun, 2018). More recently, in 2017 multiple professional bodies have come together to create a unified licensing system. This has also been accompanied by a campaign for counselling, including career guidance, to become a legally regulated profession (Lee, 2017). This has aligned well with wider reforms to the South Korean skills system (the development of the National Competency Standards) which have resulted in the development of new licensing systems for careers professions in the country (Yoon & Pyun, 2018).

Outputs or outcomes. The career education framework specifies the outcomes that learners can expect from participating in career guidance. This is focused around four areas: self-awareness and social skills; understanding the changing world of work; career exploration; and career design and planning. These four areas are described as the career education goals and are followed by every level of the education system. It is expected that this curriculum will

lead to individuals who are able to solve their own career problems and successfully develop their careers once they leave the education system.

The career management skills defined by the career education framework are currently more clearly embedded in the school system than they are in wider society. The National Career Development Centre is currently working to extend engagement with these outcomes across different sectors. Notably, work is currently underway in implementing career exploration skills within the higher education system.

Within higher education the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology publishes the employment statistics of different universities. This has been used to exert pressure on universities to establish or expand career development services (Yang, Lee, & Ahn, 2012). However, this has led to concerns that universities view career guidance solely as an employment service. To counter-balance the focus on employment outcomes some actors have argued that there is also a need to measure the development of career development competencies to ensure a more complete measure of the outcomes of career guidance.

Users. The National Career Development Centre conducts several surveys and other research projects to capture the experience of users and other stakeholders. These are then used to inform policy and practice through reports and other forms of feedback.

Approaches to quality

The approach to the quality assurance of career guidance in South Korea is *regulatory* in nature and driven by government. Within the education system The National Career Development Centre and KRIVET are key intermediaries between policy and practice and provide a lot of detail and support for implementation of policies. Their work can generally be described as being more *advisory* in nature and aimed at supporting educators to implement the Career Education Act. Outside of the education system there have been some recent moves to increase the regulation of professional practice, but there is less advisory support for professionalisation within this sector.

III. Key themes in international practice

Taken together the case studies presented in chapter II provide a rich picture of how different countries address issues of quality assurance in career guidance. This section will begin by synthesising the key ideas and practices that emerged in each of the domains of quality. It will then move on to draw out some broader findings.

Techniques used in the domains of quality

The previous chapter explored the six case studies against Hooley and Rice's (2018) domains of quality. In this section I draw together the key techniques used within each domain.

Policy

Policy is one of the weakest domains in terms of quality assurance. While all case study countries develop career guidance policy, there is a mixed picture in terms of how these policies are monitored, evaluated and quality assured. Approaches utilised include: committing to a regular review of career guidance policy (South Korea); establishing research and evaluation agencies or departments to monitor and support the implementation of career guidance policy (Scotland, South Korea); commissioning independent evaluations of policy (Australia, England, Germany, the Netherlands, Scotland); monitoring policy implementation against key indicators (England, the Netherlands, Scotland); scrutinising career guidance policies in public and parliamentary committees (England, Scotland); providing organisations and resources to support the translation of policy into practice (the Netherlands); and the publication of an annual report on the implementation and impact of career guidance policy (the Netherlands; Scotland).

Organisation

The organisations that deliver career guidance are often multi-function with career guidance offered as a secondary function. However, in all countries there are also organisations where the delivery of career guidance is their primary function. Establishing quality assurance systems that can work with a variety of different types of organisations with different relationships to career guidance is one of the key challenges for quality systems as will be discussed in the next section of this chapter.

Case study countries deploy a range of strategies to quality assure organisations. A key approach that is used within all organisations to some extent is the existence of internal quality assurance procedures. In some cases these can be highly developed (e.g. in the public employment service in Germany or Skills Development Scotland) while in others they are more minimal. These internal approaches are particularly important when a substantial proportion of the career guidance in the country is delivered by a large public body or other kind of monopoly provider.

Other strategies which are used to create greater alignment in quality between organisations include providing organisations with resources and tools for benchmarking their provision (Australia, England, Germany, the Netherlands, Scotland); monitoring the performance of organisations in the delivery of career guidance against a number of key agreed criteria or outcomes (Australia, England); formal inspection of career guidance provision by an external inspectorate (England, Scotland); including career guidance in wider inspections and quality assurance processes (England, the Netherlands); awarding quality marks to organisations that are judged to be fit to deliver career guidance, sometimes linked to being able to bid for government contracts (England, Germany, the Netherlands); awarding quality marks that denote the outstanding delivery of career guidance (England, South Korea); and providing dedicated funding to help establish career guidance within new organisations or develop existing organisations provision (South Korea).

Process

The quality assurance of career guidance processes can be challenging as it requires detailed attention to the activity itself rather than the use of proxies to ascertain whether quality is present. As with the organisational domain many of the case studies suggested that there were a range of internal and informal processes such as manager or peer observation or supervision that attend to the quality of career guidance processes. Again, these internal processes are particularly important when a single organisation is responsible for a large proportion of career guidance in the country.

Where quality assurance is formally addressed to processes it takes the form of the provision of guidance on processes (Australia, England, South Korea), the provision of standardised resources or career assessments (the Netherlands) or observation as part of inspections (the Netherlands, Scotland).

People

The people domain is the most developed in most of the case study countries. It is also the area that has received the most attention in the wider literature. For example, a recent and highly useful supplementary resource to the materials presented in this report is Yoon et al.'s (2018) *International Practices of Career Services, Credentials and Training* which explores issues of training, professionalisation and professional credentials in a wider range of countries.

The people domain has received the most focus in part because it has been strongly bound up with wider movements to professionalise the career development field. One of the consequences of this is that the profession and professional bodies then have a strong self-interest in advancing this approach to quality as it places the profession at the heart of this debate and increases its legitimacy.

Case study countries use the following approaches to quality assure the people domain: establishing professional and ethical standards (Australia, England, Germany, the Netherlands, Scotland); specifying the approved list of qualifications that can lead to professionals status (Australia, England, the Netherlands, Scotland, South Korea); providing opportunities for continuing professional development (Australia, England, Germany, the Netherlands, Scotland, South Korea); creating a register of professionals to allow post-qualification conduct to be regulated (Australia, England, the Netherlands, Scotland, South Korea); and linking professional status to employment in certain roles (Australia, the Netherlands, Scotland) or to access to government funding (Australia, Germany).

Outputs or outcomes

The outputs and outcomes domain focuses on approaches which seek to verify quality based on what comes out of the career guidance process. In order to do this it is necessary to first define what a likely or desired outcome is and then to measure whether such an outcome takes place. While there is some variation most of the countries identify both learning outcomes (based around the acquisition of career management skills) and progression outcomes (based on the achievement of employment or educational destinations).

Key approaches that are used by countries to quality assure the outcome dimension are: identifying skills frameworks to describe the anticipated outcomes of career guidance

(Australia, the Netherlands, Scotland, South Korea); measuring student destinations after they leave education (England, the Netherlands, Scotland, South Korea); and using payment-by-results systems linked to either career management skills or destinations (Australia, England).

Users

The final domain is concerned with using the experience and perspectives of the users of career guidance services as a definition and measurement of quality. Countries are using a variety of techniques to quality assure in the user domain. These include: monitoring usage and user satisfaction with services (Australia, England; the Netherlands, Scotland); conducting large scale follow up surveys (Australia, England and Scotland); conducting research into user needs and perspectives (Germany, Scotland, South Korea); requiring customer feedback and recommendation in the accreditation of careers professionals (the Netherlands); involving student representative bodies in the development of career guidance policies (the Netherlands); and using payment-by-results systems which link payment to customer satisfaction levels (England).

Key findings

The previous section of this chapter demonstrates that all of the quality domains are in use in at least some of the countries and that different countries build their quality system in different ways by emphasising the different domains. In each country, different domains and approaches are used to achieve similar objectives. So, in Australia the focus is strongly on the people domain with professionalisation viewed as a guarantor of quality provision, whilst in England the focus is more clearly on quality assurance at the organisational level.

Across the case studies the most common focus is on the people domain. The countries have all developed a professionalisation agenda and an approach to defining and regulating who can be seen as a professional. After the people domain the next most common approaches are regulating organisations e.g. through the matrix Standard or the Quality in Careers Standard in England or seeking to measure the outputs and outcomes through the definition of career management skills and the measurement of satisfaction and progression (employment and learning) outcomes. In some cases (England, Australia and the Netherlands) these outcomes can be linked to government payments to the provider.

In this section I will move on to draw out some broader over-arching findings which I will discuss under the following headings.: (1) fungibility (2) decentralisation; (3) embedded systems (4) how systems develop; (5) implementation and governance.

Fungibility

Each country has assembled its own patchwork of quality approaches. In most cases some of the domains of quality are ignored or only weakly evident. While there appear to be some advantages in attending to multiple domains (for example ensuring that professionals are appropriately qualified and observing how they do their job in practice), it is less clear that the benefits associated with quality assurance stack up the more domains you attend to. Quality assurance might more accurately be thought of as fungible (or inter-changeable) where the benefits of different approaches can be achieved through multiple means. Fungibility is a term borrowed from economics and describes the ability of a good or asset to be interchanged with other individual goods or assets. Assets that are fungible are exchangeable for each other and simplify the exchange and trade processes, as fungibility implies equal value between the assets.

Quality in career guidance can therefore be said to be fungible because the benefits that can be gained from quality assurance can be achieved by a range of different means. A technique within one domain can be swapped for a different technique within a different domain to achieve a similar outcome. So, an organisation that is staffed by qualified professionals is likely to exhibit many of the features of a quality organisation. Similarly, the quality assurance of processes or outcomes will place demands on the people who do the job, which will lead them to seek professional development. A key decision is therefore how to ensure that the overall quality system is both parsimonious and that it offers mechanisms to enhance quality in the desired areas.

Decentralisation

No country has developed a single framework through which the quality of career guidance across all sectors, jurisdictions and domains is quality assured. This is particularly challenging in federal countries, but the divisions that exist between career guidance practice across different sectors also drive decentralisations. No country has really solved this, but Scotland as a small state with a strong central infrastructure (Skills Development Scotland) offers one

model for a highly coherent national system, whilst South Korea as a new adopter of career guidance with a strongly interventionist state offers another.

It is important to recognise that the lack of a single national quality system does not mean that quality assurance is absent in the other case study countries. Many countries have a huge array of different approaches that they use to quality assure different aspects of their countries career guidance systems. The case study countries all have an approach to quality assurance, with each emphasising different domains of quality and each has a different balance between the regulatory, advisory, organic and competitive approaches to managing quality.

Norway has been working to develop a single framework for quality in career guidance and so this has framed the line of enquiry in this study. The finding that no other country has been able to deliver this may therefore be concerning. However, it is important to recognise that the countries in the case studies were not necessarily seeking this aim. Many of the participants in this research see value in devolved and decentred approaches to quality assurance that allow sectors, jurisdictions or even individual providers or professionals to define their own sense of what constitutes quality. As ever there is a balance to be struck between more centralist systems (like Scotland and South Korea) and more decentred systems (like Germany and Australia). However, even where quality assurance is devolved, there are still important decisions about what lines the devolution should be organised on with geographical/jurisdictional and departmental/sectoral being two of the most common ways to devolve responsibility for quality.

Embedded systems

A key challenge in all countries is the fact that career guidance is embedded in wider systems which often have their own quality assurance processes. This is particularly the case for the school system which often has well established systems of inspection and quality assurance that are not primarily focused on career guidance. However, the same issue can also be found to a lesser extent in the VET system, higher education and the public employment system.

The embedded nature of career guidance means that a key design question is therefore whether it is better to create bespoke quality assurance systems for career guidance or to embed an awareness of career guidance in wider systems. The more a country moves towards embedded approaches the more challenging it is to create cross-sectoral and lifelong

frameworks for quality in career guidance. Embedded approaches to quality assurance have the positive effect of making attending to quality in career guidance more central to an organisations' main activities. However, they can also reduce the amount of time devoted to career guidance in quality assurance processes.

How systems develop

Norway is in a unique position of being able to design a career guidance system with an almost clean sheet. Of the case studies in this research only South Korea offers a comparable example. All of the other countries discussed have much more developed systems which have existed for a long period and have often been through a variety of ups and downs in terms of policy support and funding. In all of these cases the quality system could be more accurately have been said to have evolved rather than having been designed.

South Korea, offers an important example for Norway as it shows how a system can be quickly established. In this case the establishment of a robust policy framework with clear requirements is critical to making rapid progress. The identification of Krivet as a driver of policy implementation has also been critical as has the establishment of the National Career Development Centre within Krivet as a centre for expertise. These initiatives align strongly with the role that Skills Norway has taken.

In all other countries the quality system has developed more clearly as part of political debates around the nature, importance and future of career guidance. In such cases quality assurance is sometimes used by the government to seek to control the profession and the delivery of public services. This is the case England with the matrix Standard. Alternatively, professional associations and other careers sector bodies have viewed developing a quality system as part of an attempt to increase the status of the profession and career guidance as an activity (to some extent this is true of all of the case study countries).

While the existence of multiple stakeholders seeking to define and influence quality can mitigate against the coherence of the system, it often leads to richer frameworks for quality that are capable of sustaining beyond a particular policy agenda. Nonetheless, policy support is very useful in establishing new quality frameworks and in ensuring their effective implementation. Where policy support is not evident progress is often slow and those who choose to stand outside quality frameworks can do so.

Implementation and governance

A quality system is not just a framework that can be documented and then assumed to be in place. For example, Germany's BeQu-Concept offered one of the best developed frameworks in the case studies, but despite this, was weakly implemented and had limited impact on the ground. In order to successfully influence practice a quality system needs to have the following features.

Reasons to engage. Quality systems need a clear engagement strategy. Professionals and organisations will not spontaneously adopt them without a clear reason. The main drivers of engagement are (1) legal compliance; (2) providing access to funding; (3) governmental and political encouragement; and (4) professional or sectoral good citizenship leading to a movement within the careers field to align with the quality framework. Many participants also talked about the way in which publicly understood quality marks could improve user confidence and drive consumer decisions. However, there was not much evidence that such market pressure was actually having an impact as public understanding of career guidance was generally felt to be low.

In general, professionals and organisations engaged with quality systems either because they had to, or at least were strongly encouraged by policy makers to do so, or because they had a moral and political commitment to quality in their field. It is arguable that regulatory approaches were more effective in yielding rapid change, but that more organic approaches led by the careers profession or careers sector were more sustainable and capable of riding out policy change.

Consequences for failing to engage. The flip side of having a clear reason to engage with quality is having some consequences for failing to do so. This needs to include both sanctions for failing to engage with the quality process (such as legal sanctions, loss of funding or naming and shaming) and consequences for failing to meet the requirements of the quality framework e.g. being struck off of the professional register, made publicly accountable or served with a notice to improve. Where no systems exist to ensure compliance, the quality framework can easily be ignored, misinterpreted and misused.

Advocacy and support. Quality systems need advocates who can argue for their value and support individuals and organisations to engage. Such advocacy organisations can be dedicated

to this purpose such as the National Career Development Centre in South Korea or nfb in Germany. Alternatively advocacy can come from a wider agency such as Skills Development Scotland which leads by example and works closely with other elements of the education system to improve their engagement in quality; from a professional association or sectoral body like the CDI in the UK, Noloc in the Netherlands or CICA in Australia; or from a range of market players with business interests in advancing the position of a quality mark such the Quality in Careers Standard and matrix Standard providers in England and similar private sector certification bodies in Germany.

Such advocacy bodies have a dual role to build the case for engagement and to provide resources and support that make engagement more straightforward. In some, but not all, cases these bodies are also involved in accrediting and certifying quality and policing infractions and malpractice.

Governance. Finally, it is important that quality standards have clear governance. Quality is often a slippery concept which needs constant refinement as it is challenged and issues exposed in practice. Where quality systems have existed for a long period of time they have often gone through multiple revisions (e.g. CICA standards in Australia, matrix Standard in England).

I have already highlighted the challenges associated with decentred quality systems. In many countries initiatives have emerged to try and address this by fusing together multiple pre-existing quality standards, often associated with different sectors or jurisdictions (England, Australia, Germany, the Netherlands). In all cases the success of any such initiatives is essentially a governance question, with issues of control of the future of the quality standard and its legitimacy at stake.

There are a range of approaches that exist for governing quality systems. One approach is for the quality system to be viewed as an instrument of public policy and for its governance to sit with the government. This is essentially the approach that is emphasised in Scotland and South Korea. An alternative is for the quality system to be governed by either the professional association or a sector body (as is emphasised in Australia and Germany). All of the countries use some kind of a mix between these different governance strategies, with England combining both in fairly equal measure, due in part to its highly complex and fragmented career guidance system.

IV. Questions for Norway

In this final section I will try and draw out some of the key questions that are raised by this research for the future development of practice in Norway.

What are the aims of Norway's quality system for career guidance? The case studies show that quality frameworks can be used to achieve a wide range of different ends and objectives. At present it is not fully clear what the problem is that Norway's quality system will solve. It will be important to clarify this further as the system develops as the objectives that are set will have a range of key design implications?

Is it realistic to create a single, lifelong, national quality approach? All of the case study countries have multiple quality systems rather than a single, lifelong, national approach. They are organised by local jurisdiction and by sector. As the Norwegian system develops it will have to consider how important maintaining the single, lifelong and national approach is as there are likely to be tensions that emerge between such a comprehensive approach and making rapid progress within a single sector or jurisdiction. For example, is it more important to develop a quality system that works in the school system or to make sure that quality systems in schools, universities and the public employment service are well aligned?

How should the career guidance quality system relate to wider, existing quality systems? It is important to strike the right balance between engaging with existing quality systems and developing new systems dedicated to the quality assurance of career guidance. Where existing quality systems exist within the education and employment system it may be possible to adapt them and insert elements that help to assure quality in career guidance. However, such approaches are likely to offer limited space to career guidance. On the other hand the development of bespoke career guidance systems are likely to offer more precision and detail in quality assuring career guidance, but may be more difficult to implement within systems that already have a wider quality assurance framework.

Who should own the quality system or framework? The case study countries reveal a range of possibilities about how quality systems can be governed. At one end of the spectrum are approaches that are owned by the profession and at the other end are approaches that are owned by the state. In the middle, particularly in more corporatist countries, there are a range of mechanisms that exist to allow for joint ownership by multiple stakeholders. At present Skills

Norway effectively owns the nascent Norwegian system with consultative input from key stakeholders, a key question is whether ownership needs to be shifted as the system develops.

What governance structure is needed for the quality system? Quality is both contentious and in continual evolution. Because of this it is important that a governance structure is developed to allow the system to change and develop and for disagreements to be resolved. Such governance structures will need appropriate resourcing to allow for development, review and the resolution of difficulties. It will also need legitimacy in the eyes of both the government and the profession. At present Skills Norway is responsible for governance, but it is important to consider whether this is the right structure going forwards and how the professional association and other voices of the profession along with voices of users could be involved in future governance.

How will the quality system be implemented? Quality needs to be understood as a process that is ongoing rather than a single framework. The construction of a published framework or approach is only the start of the process. The case studies reveal that the implementation of the quality system will be extremely challenging. There are a wide range of roles that will be critical to implementation which will include raising awareness, the provision of support and challenge and the policing of adherence to the system. Once the quality system is designed it will be important for Skill Norway to develop a detailed implementation plan and to consider what resources are required to make it happen.

What is the role of the county careers centres in the implementation plan? The implementation of a quality system requires an infrastructure. The county career centres are at the heart of the Norwegian career guidance system. This raises the question of both how the career centres should be quality assured and what role should they play in the quality assurance of other organisations? For example, should the careers centres be charged with supporting the development of quality in all relevant organisations in their jurisdiction and how far should they be transformed into an inspectorate or quality assurance agency?

What data is currently monitored and what new forms of monitoring are needed? Quality assurance is closely intertwined with the collection and analysis of data. As the quality system in Norway takes shape it is important to review what data is currently collected and to consider what additional monitoring is required.

What information about quality should be made public? An important rationale for developing a quality system and quality assurance mechanisms is to increase public confidence in the career guidance system. This raises the question about how far summative judgements about the quality of different aspects of the career guidance system should be made public. Should people know when they are accessing sub-standard or excellent provision and what should they be expected to do with such information? At the macro level should Skills Norway be expected to publish an annual report on the progress of the career guidance policy and the quality of delivery?

How far can destination measures be seen as a useful measure of the quality of career guidance? The focus on outcomes is appealing to policy makers as it seems to offer a simple and meaningful measure. In practice linking career guidance interventions (or indeed any other kind of intervention) to destinations can be very difficult? Furthermore, there are important definitional questions about what constitutes a good and bad destination and whether the system should encourage the achievement of good outcomes or the avoidance of bad outcomes.

What is the role of the CMS framework in quality assurance? One of the areas of focus in the current quality project in Norway has been the development of the career management skills framework. However, as the case studies show this is easier to develop than it is to implement and is very challenging to use as a tool of quality assurance. A key question is therefore how far the CMS framework is expected to be able to define and evidence quality and how this will be assessed, monitored and reported against.

V. Reflections

This project has drawn together the experiences of six countries in implementing quality systems for career guidance. It has not focused in depth on the Norwegian career guidance system, nor on the progress that has been made within the current project led by Skills Norway to create a new quality system. However, it may be useful to conclude by offering a few reflections on the direction that the Norwegian system should take. These reflections are offered cautiously and are based on what seems to work effectively elsewhere and on some of the issues and pitfalls raised through the research. Skills Norway and other actors in the Norwegian system are free to make use of them or ignore them as they see fit.

Start by clarifying objectives. As I have discussed, quality in career guidance can be used to describe a wide range of different things. It is important for Norway to be very clear on what it is trying to achieve by implementing a quality system. Key objectives that it may be useful to focus on include enhancing the user experience, maximising the impact of career guidance on individuals' work and ensuring some degree of consistency across the country and between sectors.

Limit the number of domains that are addressed initially. The six domains are useful in conceptualising the possibilities for a quality system. However, it is unwise to attempt to implement initiatives across all of the domains simultaneously. The Norwegian system will need to grow, develop and mature over time rather than be imposed overnight. At present the bulk of the thinking about quality in Norway has focused on the people domain, through the professionalisation agenda, and the output and outcomes domain, through the development of a career management skills framework. These seem good places to start, but there may be value in considering how the overall policy should be quality assured. Once these initiatives have been implemented it will be important to consider what is not working well and where new initiatives in different domains might be useful.

Build a system that will sustain. While support from government and public policy is essential for the establishment of a quality system, there are dangers in tying quality processes too closely to government agendas. There is value to both the sustainability and legitimacy of a quality system if it is able to operate independently of government or at least to view government as only one amongst a range of stakeholders in the system. Skills Norway's status

as a directorate under the Ministry of Education and Research helps to ensure this, but there would also be value in considering how wider stakeholders could be made more central to the development and governance of the quality system.

Consider the role of professional bodies. Internationally careers professional associations play a critical role in the development, implementation and operations of quality systems. Such arrangements are particularly appropriate when considering initiatives within the people domain, but can also extend beyond that. The relevant professional associations in Norway are relatively weak at present, but there may be value in seeking to strengthen these as part of the implementation of the quality system.

Continue to keep a lifelong focus, but recognise the need for sectoral focus and prioritisation. The aspiration to build a lifelong, all-sector quality system in Norway should be applauded. All of the countries studied reported variation and inconsistency between the different sectors and it would be good if this could be averted. As the quality framework is finalised it is important to test it with the full range of sectors. It is also important to recognise that the challenges of implementation are likely to be particularly to each sector. There may be a need to produce additional documentation and translation for each sector to ensure that the framework is relevant and easy to use. This may also mean that there is a need to prioritise where efforts should be directed during the first year of implementation, for example by focusing on schools and the public employment service.

Implementation is at least as important as design. Most of the focus in Norway so far has been around the design of elements of the quality system. As these come together it is important to shift the focus towards implementation. There is a need to identify an infrastructure and resources for the implementation of the quality system and then to ensure that this infrastructure has sufficient authority to lead a wide range of other organisations in the adoption of the quality framework. One option would be to view the careers centres as the quality champions in each of the counties. This would require them to be given new resources and powers, for example giving them the capacity and right to review career guidance provision in local schools and colleges. If this approach were to be adopted it would also be important to have a national body, most likely Skills Norway, overseeing and quality assuring the careers centres themselves.

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