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ABSTRACT

This report presents an overview of current provisions for guidance and counseling services within higher education institutions in the United Kingdom. The report was prepared as part of the UK's contribution to a project on New Skills for Vocational Guidance in Higher Education in the European Union. It was written by counseling and guidance specialists in three areas within higher education: career services, counseling, and disability services. The aims of the project were to: (1) provide an overview of guidance and counseling services; (2) identify the extent to which training exists within the European Union to meet skills and changes for the future; and (3) explore the extent to which post-graduate education and experience might be available across Europe. Following a summary in Section 1, Section 2 outlines the structure of the UK's higher education system and the status of counseling and guidance services. Section 3 lists the occupational roles, number of people served, and the focus of the services described in Section 2. Section 4 analyzes the nature of training for each of the three main guidance counseling services. Conclusions in Section 5 indicate that guidance practices in higher education are extremely uneven across the UK. A great deal more work needs to be done to strengthen educational guidance and student learning support. (Contains 1 figure, 4 tables, and 32 references.) (JDM)

NICEC PROJECT REPORT

New Skills for New Futures: Higher Education Guidance and Counselling Services in the UK

Val Butcher
Elsa Bell
Alan Hurst and
Rose Mortensen

CRAC

This report provides an authoritative overview of the current provision of guidance and counselling services within higher education institutions in the UK. It was prepared as part of a FEDORA project on 'New Skills for Vocational Guidance in Higher Education in the European Union', funded by the Commission of European Communities under the Leonardo da Vinci programme.

The synthesis report of this study – *New Skills for New Futures: Higher Education Guidance and Counselling Services in the European Union*, by A.G. Watts and Raoul Van Esbroeck – is available from VUB University Press, Waversesteenweg 1077, B-1160 Brussels, Belgium, price £12 including postage and packing.

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NICEC

The National Institute for Careers Education and Counselling is a network organisation initiated and supported by CRAC. It conducts applied research and development work related to guidance in educational institutions and in work and community settings. Its aim is to develop theory, inform policy and enhance practice through staff development, organisation development, curriculum development, consultancy and research.

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The Careers Research and Advisory Centre is a registered educational charity and independent development agency founded in 1964. Its education and training programmes, publications and sponsored projects provide links between the worlds of education and employment. CRAC has sponsored NICEC since 1975.

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Preface

The collaborative work which has produced this report is a tribute to the close personal and professional links which can often be found between the different counselling and guidance professions in higher education in the UK. This is particularly notable since, as this report will illuminate, there have been no central government initiatives and often few institutional strategies to draw together the work and training of professionals engaging in key activities for student support and progression.

Specifically, this report was written by counselling and guidance specialists in three main areas of provision within higher education institutions: Careers Services, Counselling Services, and Disability Services. The lack of reference to educational guidance services reflects the reality of the situation within higher education institutions in the UK at the time of writing, although institution-based pastoral and teaching quality developments of relevance to guidance are described.

We would like to acknowledge the support of all those professional colleagues who contributed to and reviewed our work, especially the experienced colleagues in SKILL: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities; in the Association for University and College Counselling (AUCC); and from the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS) Training and Development Sub-Committee. In all, 25 counselling and guidance specialists directly influenced this work.

Careful attention was paid to the project guidelines which were designed to enable comparisons to be drawn between all EU Member States. But this inevitably produced some gaps and 'nil returns'.

Finally, enormous support was given by Professor Raoul Van Esbroeck (Cöordinator Onderwijsbegeleiding, VUB) and Professor Tony Watts (NICEC) who drew together the reports for all of the European member states into a significant synthesis report (*New Skills for New Futures: Higher Education Guidance and Counselling Services in the European Union*).

1 Summary

This report is the UK contribution to the FEDORA (*Forum Européen de l'Orientation Academique*) project on 'New Skills for Vocational Guidance in Higher Education'. The New Skills Project has been funded by the European Commission under the Leonardo programme. Its aims have been:

1 To provide an up-to-date overview of the current structure of guidance and counselling services within higher education, the roles of those who work in these services, and the training for such roles.

2 To identify the extent to which training provision exists within the European Union to equip those in guidance and counselling roles in higher education with the new skills they require to meet the changing needs of an increasingly diverse student body within a European labour market.

3 To provide a basepoint for exploring the extent to which postgraduate and post-experience training modules might be made available across Europe, possibly leading to a European Master's degree in guidance and counselling in higher education.

The structure of the report follows a uniform pattern for all the country studies in order to facilitate a coherent synthesis covering all of the EU member states.

First, in *Section 2*, there is a brief outline of the structure of the UK higher education system and the place of counselling and guidance services within higher education institutions. Educational, vocational and personal guidance services – both general services and those aimed at particular target groups (in particular, students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties) – are reviewed, and special attention is given to the funding, management and focus of these services and systems.

Section 3 describes, for each of the services/systems listed in Section 2, the main occupational roles, the number of people currently occupying these roles (where these data are available) and the focus of the roles. For each occupational role, a detailed analysis is provided of the tasks performed, indicating in some detail what is involved in particular tasks in particular roles. Comment is also given on how far and in what ways the nature of these tasks, and the balance between them, are changing.

A more in-depth analysis is offered for three occupational roles: Careers Adviser, Head of Counselling Service, and Adviser for Students with Disabilities and/or Learning Difficulties. The first two of these were chosen because of the universal provision of such services in higher education and the strong professional identity which influences their roles and training. The work of the Adviser for Students with Disabilities and/or Learning Difficulties is examined as an example of one of the significant emerging guidance and counselling professions within higher education institutions which is still at an early stage of formulating professional networks and of developing a clear professional identity underpinned by recognised training.

Section 4 analyses the nature of training for each of the three main guidance and counselling services and offers a detailed 'training profile' of each of the three occupations: Careers Adviser, Head of Counselling Service, and Adviser for Students with Disabilities and/or Learning Difficulties. Comparatively limited data are available for the latter at the time of writing since training for this role is at an early developmental stage.

The conclusions in *Section 5* indicate that the UK has extremely uneven guidance provision in higher education, which is currently in a state of transition. Some areas of counselling and guidance (e.g. Counselling Services and Careers Services) are

world-class and are often used as exemplars by countries in the process of developing such systems, but much good work in other areas is still comparatively unrecognised and under-resourced.

A great deal more work needs to be done to strengthen educational guidance and student learning support, which is too reliant in many institutions on the preferences of individual academics. There are often insufficiently strong relationships – and structures to build relationships – between academic staff and counselling and guidance specialists.

The work of the new Quality Assurance Agency (Higher Education) (QAAHE) and the recommendations of the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education (the Dearing Report) are, however, beginning to address some of these issues.

2 The Structure of Guidance and Counselling in Higher Education

Introduction: The System of Higher Education in the United Kingdom

The Dearing Report on *Higher Education in the Learning Society* – the long-awaited review of higher education by the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education (1997) – recommended far-reaching changes in the funding and structure of higher education in the UK. Amongst other areas of activity, it addressed the guidance and career progression of students and made a number of recommendations relating to this. These are currently being progressed by the QAAHE, the Department for Employment and Education, and the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). A brief background to the existing higher education systems and the place of guidance within them may, however, be helpful.

Prior to 1992, the higher education system comprised three main types of institution:

- universities, ranging from the old-established and internationally famous through to the large Victorian civic and the more modern green-field 1960s locations;
- polytechnics, so designated in the late 1960s, whose origins were in science, engineering and technology but which had diversified into most areas of the curriculum;
- colleges of higher education, whose main focus was on teacher education but which had also diversified, especially when the numbers entering teacher training were cut by the government.

In 1992, the Further and Higher Education Act brought greater unity to the system. Most polytechnics chose to change their names and to call themselves universities; the colleges of higher education described themselves as being 'university sector' colleges. Whilst in 1960 there were just 25 universities, by 1995 there were 89 universities, plus 75 other colleges (of higher or further education) receiving funding for higher education courses.

Despite the changes, there is still a recognised status ranking of institutions and courses which was reinforced by the 1996 Research Assessment Exercise. A major effect of this hierarchy is that students have to compete for places, especially on the more popular courses at the high-status institutions.

When looking at the undergraduate student population in 1997, there is virtually the same percentage of students aged over 21 entering higher education as there are students entering higher education around 18 years of age after completing their secondary education. The basic entry/matriculation requirement is five General Certificate in Secondary Education passes and two passes in the Advanced ('A') level examinations (which are held annually in May/June) or recognised equivalents, e.g. the Business and Technical Education Council National Diploma, and National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 3. Since entry is competitive, students must secure the best A-level grades possible, usually in three subjects. Admission to universities is by a central system using a single application form. Applicants list six courses/universities on the form and universities choose whom they want. Sometimes applicants are interviewed but increasingly offers are based on the information given in the application form and on the GCE A-level (or equivalent) grades. Entry qualifications vary, depending on subject choice etc. Many mature students do not use this route to enter higher education but may, instead, continue

their studies following successful completion of special access or foundation courses devised either by the institutions themselves (or other further education institutions) or by studying some Open University foundation courses. The undergraduate first-degree courses in England and Wales are usually three years long (four years at some Scottish universities) although some have one-year work placements in addition. A recent trend has been to organise courses on a modular basis within a credit accumulation structure. One of the most significant developments which has impacted on higher education provision is the massive expansion of student numbers: in 1960/61 there were 92,000 full-time first degree students in the UK; by 1995/96 there were 860,500 as well as 174,100 part-time first degree students. The proportion of 21-year-olds with degrees rose from 3.5% to 23% during this period. There was also a large increase in the number of mature students: the proportion of first-year full-time undergraduates who were aged 21 and over rose from 25% in 1989/90 to 35% in 1993/94 (figures cited in Watts, 1997).

A major concern for both students and institutions is funding. Looking first at students, the course tuition fees have, in the past, been paid directly to the institutions by the students' Local Education Authority in the case of full-time courses. However, with the large growth in student numbers, the government has taken the view that the country can afford this no longer. Accordingly, from the 1998 entry, many students will have to make a contribution of £1,200 per annum towards their fees on a means-tested basis. In the United Kingdom, it is common for younger students to use entry to higher education as the opportunity to move away from home. Students had previously been able to apply to their Local Education Authority for a means-tested grant to cover their daily living costs, but in 1998 these grants were replaced by student loans repayable once graduates are in full-time employment and earning a salary at a specified level. Part-time students do not have access to any of these sources of money and so have to support themselves and pay their own fees.

Student fees are a major source of income for institutions. Until recently, many strove to admit as many students as they could in order to maximise such income. However, entry to the different subjects is now controlled more tightly and there are penalties both for over- and under-recruiting.

The money for higher education comes from the government. Prior to the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, it was distributed to the institutions via two different routes. The universities were the responsibility of the University Grants Committee which tried to allow its members as much freedom and autonomy as possible. The polytechnics and colleges of higher education received their funds first via Local Education Authorities and later via the Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council, both of which were much more directive and interventionist than the University Grants Committee. The 1992 Act introduced a single funding body through the establishment of the Higher Education Funding Council for England. There are also similar councils in Scotland and Wales. The arrangements in Northern Ireland are different again, given the very small number of higher education institutions located there.

In 1997 the former Higher Education Quality Council was replaced by the Quality Assurance Agency (Higher Education) which took on responsibility for ensuring quality of delivery within higher education.

2a Main Guidance and Counselling Services and Systems

Development of counselling and guidance in higher education institutions

McNair (1997) points out that 'the notion that guidance should be considered as a coherent whole is a relatively new one, reflecting changes in the labour market and the emergence of the interest in life-long learning in the mid-1980s. Before then, "educational guidance" was seen as a minor interest of adult educators; "careers guidance" was seen as a service ancillary to the educational processes, with a strong role in placing graduates in jobs, and delivered separately by specialists who were perceived as "helpers" rather than educators; student support, including counselling, was seen as a set of emergency services to handle exceptional crises; and finally "tutoring" – often divided into "academic" and "personal" – was seen as a proper role for academics in many institutions but without much formal training or support, and in many places was felt to be in decline' (p.6).

As a result, development work in the field has tended to be concentrated in the hands of a relatively small group of committed individuals within the specialist professions – especially in careers guidance – while the elements of guidance which are closest to teaching and learning have been relatively neglected. This pattern has brought concentrated professional expertise to bear on thinking and on the development of some aspects but has yet to engage the majority of academic staff. Its penetration to most students has been weak.

In the 'old' universities the guidance services are usually self-standing departments reporting directly to Council, to a Pro-Vice-Chancellor or to the Registrar. In the newer universities (the old polytechnics) and in colleges of higher education they are found most often within the Student Services department. These departments include aspects of advice, guidance and general student welfare within their brief. Often the individual functions have their own head of section but all report through the Head of Student Services. For example, a Head of Careers, a Head of Counselling and a Head of Accommodation Services each manages their own services and finances, but within a framework devolved through the Head of Student Services. Both of these structures have their strengths and weaknesses. The considerable and often envied autonomy of services in the old universities can lead to isolation, whilst in combined Student Services departments a declared model of integration and co-operation can be undermined when heads of sections compete openly with each other for funds within the limited Student Services budget.

Changes in higher education

All counselling and guidance services have felt the impact of the dramatic increase of student numbers in higher education (see page 6) which has brought a high proportion of students into universities from backgrounds with little or no tradition of study at higher education level. The additional need for support in orientation plus the additional financial hardship caused by changes in funding policy have brought demands on counselling and guidance services far in excess of the already significant increase in student numbers.

Increased use of technology, particularly for the provision and updating of information, has ameliorated this pressure to some extent (more so in heavily information-oriented guidance services than in therapeutic counselling services) and higher education institutions in general offer their staff and students above-average access to the Internet.

Whilst these are additional tools which counsellors and guidance workers increasingly feel the need to learn how to apply, the current limitations on resources

and funding for training have had an effect, particularly for counselling and guidance staff in the less well-recognised and less well-resourced professions.

Client focus

Regardless of the internal structure and reporting systems of higher education guidance services, their remit is focused primarily on students currently registered for degree programmes rather than on the needs of those at the pre-entry or post-exit stages. The exception to this is, of course, those guidance services provided by Access Offices and Admissions Tutors although, when institutionally based, they will only offer support to individuals who have already shown some interest in courses within that institution. Careers Services occasionally liaise with other guidance providers in feeder schools and colleges, and there is encouragement in the Dearing Report for such liaison and feedback of graduate destinations to be strengthened. All guidance services may be involved in induction and on-course support, and may relate in some degree to student exit decisions, although this latter is generally considered to be the remit of the Careers Service.

Whilst the UK considers itself to be a multi-cultural society, there is only occasional evidence of particular attention being paid to this through the professional networks of counsellors and guidance workers. When specifically designated guidance workers are appointed by higher education institutions (as is occasionally the case with, for example, Access workers with ethnic-minority groups) this will be the result of institutional policy (perhaps because of geographical location or community mission) rather than being based on a perceived guidance specialism. Indeed, most UK counsellors and guidance workers feel that they would wish to deal with all students as individuals, although it is recognised that cultural differences might be of key significance at certain points. AGCAS has, however, established a Race Equality Working Group and has introduced a Code of Practice for Equal Opportunities and runs specialist training courses (see page 48).

The same general thinking applies to provision for work-based, part-time, mature and distance students. Externally-funded development projects (supported by, in particular, the Department for Education and Employment) have encouraged an awareness of appropriate provision for these groups, but it is institutional policy rather than professional priority which will influence how far and in what ways special provision is made available. Institutions with a high proportion of part-time and non-standard students (particularly the new universities and colleges) are more likely to be pro-active in addressing the needs of these groups than are traditional universities.

Counselling and guidance occupations explored in this report

In the main body of this report, we will examine the tasks and training of guidance workers through the major occupational groupings for which substantial data on professional activity and training are available. Other emerging guidance occupations in higher education will be referred to where appropriate, but central data are often limited or non-existent.

The main guidance occupations in higher education in terms of numbers of practitioners and consistency of purpose and training are Careers Services, Counselling Services and Disability Services – the latter being a small but rapidly developing occupation. Educational guidance and support services tend to be fragmentary, often not differentiated from Personal Tutors' general pastoral roles.

Table 1 gives more detailed information about the structure and content of the main guidance and counselling services and systems. Most of the descriptive categories used in Table 1 are self-explanatory but the term 'Level' may need some explanation.

Table 1 – Main guidance and counselling services and systems

Service/system	*Funding/administrative control*	*Location*	*Extent*	*Level*	*Target-group*
Careers Services	funded by institution and government, controlled by institution	inside	all	3 [1]	all students (in some cases also pre-entry/post-grad/academic staff) [2]
Student Support & Development Systems	funded by institution and government, controlled by institution	inside	all	1	some students [3]
Counselling Services	funded by institution and government, controlled by institution	inside	all universities; most other institutions	3	all students and staff [4]
Services for Students with Disabilities and/or Learning Difficulties	funded by institution and local authorities, controlled by institution	inside	most higher education institutions	2	students with disability or learning needs
Admissions and Access Services	funded by institution and government, controlled by institution	inside; access guidance also provided by feeder institutions and adult guidance	most higher education institutions	2	all potential students

Notes

(1) Careers Service: normally level 3, but where heavily involved in curriculum development may be rated level 2.

(2) Some Careers Services do pre-entry and/or post-graduation guidance. An increasing number are engaged in staff development, e.g. as part of the Concordat for Research Staff.

(3) Teaching and Learning Quality Unit staff and academic staff offer guidance to 'some' students since much will depend on which faculties or departments are willing to develop a curriculum that enhances skills and career management abilities.

(4) Available to all staff for consultation with regard to student difficulty. Personal counselling for staff is available in most institutions but often for a limited number of sessions.

This concept is part of the holistic model which is being used as a descriptive model in the survey of which this report is a part (see Van Esbroeck, 1996, 1997; Van Esbroeck and Watts, 1997). It indicates whether the service is:

- *First-in-line* (Level 1): part of the formal teaching function.
- *Second-in-line* (Level 2): linked to the formal teaching function but with some degree of specialisation.
- *Third-in-line* (Level 3): separated from the formal teaching function and offered by specialists.

'Guidance' is defined for the purposes of this survey as support for students' educational, vocational and personal decisions and transitions. It may also be included as part of the work of the following:

- *Student Advisers (Financial and Legal Advisers) and Student Hardship Officers.* These are often employed by the Students' Union as permanent staff. Their availability rests with decisions of the individual Union in each institution.
- *Students' Union Sabbatical Officers (e.g. Education Officer/Welfare Officer/Students Officer).* Whilst most Students' Unions appoint officers to cover these responsibilities, and there is some degree of cohesion and national training through the National Union of Students, the 'guidance and counselling' elements of their role is still emerging.
- *Accommodation Advisers.* Whilst the role of such officers may well involve dealing with students' personal or even educational problems, they are more likely to be focused on informational and organisational tasks than on the provision of what is recognised in this report as 'guidance'.
- *Chaplaincy/Student Nightline Network.* Both these provisions are available in all higher education institutions and have counselling and guidance responsibilities. They are not usually in the direct employ of the institutions and would not see themselves as counselling or guidance professionals except in very specific contexts. Indeed, Nightline services are adamant that they are not counsellors but 'befrienders'.
- *Others.* In addition, McNair (1997) identified Librarians, Managers of Learning Resource Centres, Technicians, Work Placement Organisers and Supervisors, and other students offering peer support, as potential sources of guidance.

2b Commentary

2b.1 Careers Services

Careers Services in all universities and other institutions of higher education are now funded through the institution's block grant system and are managed and resourced at the discretion of the institution. For some institutions this has involved a significant change since 1992. Before then, polytechnic Careers Services were usually resourced by and accountable to Local Education Authorities. The management and accountability systems up to the time of writing remain within the individual institution although in recent years the Quality Assessors visiting university departments as part of the national Teaching Quality Assessment system have, as part of their overall assessment, paid increasing attention to the extent to which departments make use of their Careers Services. In the Dearing Report (NCIHE, 1997) there was a recommendation that 'institutions of higher education, over the medium term, integrate their Careers Services more fully into academic affairs and that the provision of careers education and guidance is reviewed periodically by the Quality Assurance Agency'. Quality standards for this are currently being developed by

AGCAS and the QAAHE. Almost all Careers Services are part of their institution not only organisationally but also physically, although some small colleges may have contracted arrangements with larger institutions or local Careers Service Companies (responsible for providing a statutory service at school/college and to other young people). In large and multi-campus universities, students may have considerable difficulty in accessing Careers Service provision if they are not based in certain parts of the campus.

The roles of higher education Careers Services and their functions are changing dramatically. This has been described in detail by Watts (1997). He outlines the major transitions in activities from those described in the Heyworth Report of 1964 which defined three major roles: advisory interviews; the provision of information about careers, employers and jobs; and placement activities, including notifying vacancies to students and arranging selection interviews between students and employers.

Expanding student numbers, a radically changing graduate employment market and increasing professional training have brought a shift in philosophical approaches. This has been operationalised by the pressures of expediency, which have moved Careers Services towards more 'self-help' open-access approaches and, in many cases, towards careers education programmes designed to equip students to manage more effectively their own decisions and progression through learning and work.

The management role of Directors of Careers Services has changed significantly over the years due to increasing pressures created by larger student numbers, a changed graduate employment market (which is not always understood by academic colleagues and university management), and debate about 'what universities are for'.

Unlike many continental counterparts, UK Careers Services have, at the time of writing, only minor involvement in pre-entry guidance, although AGCAS (their professional body) has an Education Liaison Sub-Committee. Furthermore, the Dearing Report commented that 'the representatives of schools and sixth-form colleges ... indicated the importance they attached to knowing the success of their former pupils in gaining employment when offering guidance to current pupils on subject and institutional choice' (NCIHE, 1997, para. 8.44). (There are currently no systems which readily provide feedback on learning achievements and employment destinations of students in particular institutions or which might enable those institutions to set that sort of information against pre-entry educational provision.) Involvement in induction and on-course programmes is, however, developing rapidly in some universities. This process has been supported by targeted funding from the Department for Education and Employment, a recent example of which has been a two-year development programme on Career Management Skills in the Academic Curriculum, which has supported exemplars in eight pilot institutions.

There are 710 professional Careers Advisers and Information Officers in the Association of Graduate Careers Services throughout the UK and Ireland. Unlike many other counselling and guidance professions in higher education, the staff/student ratios for Careers Services have been closely monitored, especially over recent years, and have been the subject of several (unimplemented) recommendations. In 1964, the Heyworth Report recommended one 'Appointments Officer' for every hundred final-year students. In practice, the 1994 AGCAS Resources Survey (an unpublished report circulated within AGCAS) indicated a staff/student ratio ranging from 1:1,000 to 1:7,251 full-time students. These figures exclude part-time students who are now a substantial proportion of the student body (see page 6 above): this could effectively almost double the ratios if full services were made available to them. The 1994 survey of traditional universities (not including polytechnics) which assessed

universities' expenditure on Careers Services per full-time-equivalent student (drawn from Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals/University Funding Council data) found that this varied from £16 to £43 per student per year. Since 'new' universities (ex-polytechnics) are on the whole more poorly resourced than traditional universities, it is reasonable to assume that such an exercise conducted in 1997 would indicate an even greater range of provision (figures from Watts, 1997).

Despite this disparity in resourcing, it is very uncommon for any university Careers Service in the UK to charge students for its services. Payments are not infrequently levied to employers who use Careers Service facilities for recruitment purposes, and sometimes specific additional provision (e.g. psychometric tests) carries a charge. Some services charge small reclaimable payments of around £5 to students booking workshops, which are returnable when they attend – a device to ensure that scarce staff resources are not wasted by low attendance. A few services, notably that at the University of London, levy modest charges to students and graduates from other institutions for use of information provision, for short interviews with duty Careers Advisers, and for full guidance interviews. Up to the time of writing, Careers Services have successfully resisted institutional managers' pressures to introduce 'payment for guidance', and in view of the emphasis placed on the importance of these activities in the Dearing Report, such pressures are now unlikely to succeed.

Careers Services offer very different degrees of specialist resourcing to meet the needs of particular target groups. AGCAS has a Disabled Graduates Sub-Committee; and the University of Lancaster co-ordinates a specialist CANDO service which offers a technologically based careers information service to higher education students with disabilities. Five universities have a specialist Careers Adviser for disabled students. The extent to which economically disadvantaged students, ethnic-minority students, and work-based, part-time, mature and distance-learning students are catered for depends, however, entirely on the priority attached to these groups by the institution and on the resourcing of the Careers Service. Overseas students can use the Careers Services, but unless they are EU nationals, can rarely be offered help in seeking UK employment because of work permit regulations.

Placement Officer posts are still rare, but they are increasing as higher education institutions develop work placements of varying lengths and types in the academic curriculum, whether traditional one-year sandwich course placements or shorter vacation opportunities. At the time of writing, these posts are to be found more commonly in the new universities and in colleges of higher education. In the more traditional universities they are likely to be closely linked to science and technology courses which in some cases have a long history of such placements. In the wake of the Dearing Report, which has strongly advocated work experience for all students, this activity is likely to accelerate in the immediate future. Placement Officer posts are not always based in the University Careers Service but may be part of departmental activity or the university's External Affairs department.

Increasingly, in response to student poverty, higher education institutions are also developing 'Job Shops'. These are very new agencies on the higher education scene and are often not considered to be a guidance function since their designated task is to help students find part-time, casual employment whilst undertaking their degree programme. Until very recently, UK higher education institutions discouraged students from taking such employment, but they have had to accept its realities in the face of growing financial need as the grants system is phased out. In some universities, these agencies are part of the Careers Service; in others, they are Students' Union initiatives.

The new emphasis in the Dearing Report on the value of work experience and the consequent need to define 'work experience' very broadly, given the limitations on expanding traditional work placements, is likely to mean that there will be more 'guidance' underpinning casual employment. This will be developed to enable students to identify and draw upon the personal skills of time management, team work, communication and so on which can be developed in even the most menial of casual jobs.

Outside Student Services departments (see page 7 above), there are rarely any organisational links which compel Careers Services to interact with other guidance and counselling services or with other student welfare services, although in most institutions there are networks of different degrees of formality ranging from lunch-time groups to joint management. In general, it would be true to say that the realities of day-to-day linkages are very much based on the personal relationships and priorities of the senior staff involved.

The same is true of higher education Careers Services' relationships with other services providing careers guidance and placement in the community, notably the newly privatised Careers Service Companies, and the government Employment Service and Jobcentres. Again, the Dearing Report, the work of the National Advisory Council for Careers and Educational Guidance (the Guidance Council) and reports by the National Institute for Careers Education and Counselling are all creating a climate in which higher education Careers Services will be encouraged (or compelled) to become more closely involved as one part of a network of guidance services which support lifelong learning and the constant progression through learning and work that is becoming part of the portfolio society. As McNair (1997) observes: 'There is likely to be increased pressure ... to increase the degree of integration between guidance processes and standards inside and outside HE. This reflects the development of national frameworks for occupational standards for staff and service standards for guidance agencies, and increasingly complex student career paths, as well as the development of local and national guidance networks. Training and Enterprise Councils are playing an increasing role in promoting such network developments' (p. 17).

2b.2 Student Support and Development Systems

In the UK to date, learning support and guidance on course choices has been individually and patchily delivered, usually by academic staff who often have 'Personal Tutor' or other pastoral titles. In 1995, HEFCE, in devising their criteria for the assessment of quality of teaching and learning in university departments, made 'Student Support and Guidance' one of six criteria for assessment.

The role of the Personal Tutor is currently in a state of transition. Traditional educational and personal guidance may well still be an official part of the role, but Personal Tutors' ability (and, sometimes, their willingness in research-oriented institutions) to deliver this has, in many areas, collapsed under the weight of student numbers, the greater diversity of the student body, and the effects of modularisation. The result is that students are rarely taught by the same tutor or even in the same department throughout their course.

At the present time this traditional system has not been replaced and educational guidance and support within higher education institutions is therefore often the weakest area of guidance provision. Pre-HE educational guidance agencies for adults are often excellent but very patchy. Only in smaller and more 'teaching-oriented' higher education institutions are systematic guidance and learner support systems being developed. Vocationally-orientated courses with strong links to particular occupational areas (such as social work or engineering) may designate Careers Tutors to maintain and develop employer links, and sometimes work experience.

In some institutions Careers Tutors are the departmental links of the Careers Service and may well be the first point of contact for students on work-related decisions, referring students to, and liaising with, the Careers Service. Despite the large numbers of such tutors, the role is rarely formalised nor is it in any way consistently applied. There is, for example, no national professional network of Careers Tutors.

The Higher Education Quality Council recognised the need to strengthen academic and personal guidance and encouraged the development of guidance and learner support through a series of publications which set standards and demonstrated good practice. Presumably this approach will be continued by its successor, the QAAHE. Since Teaching Quality Assessments began focusing on this area, many universities have undertaken internal reviews, with varying degrees of success. The Dearing Report, however, has again targeted this area for further action: '... given the width of choice afforded by modularisation, it is important that students should not be left to find a pathway through the matrix of opportunities open to them without adequate guidance' (NCIHE, 1997, para. 8.42). 'We propose that the Quality Assurance Agency should develop a code of practice related to student support and guidance ... Institutions could either adopt the national code or develop their own ...' (para 8.43).

In parallel with this, staff drawn into Teaching Quality Assurance activities which are developing in universities may well have a guidance remit which previously did not exist, indirectly ensuring that, alongside learner autonomy, learner-managed progression skills are developed through a range of curricular interventions and self- and peer-help systems. McNair (1997) notes that 'students can play an important part in providing support and guidance to each other, given appropriate training and support' (p.2).

A new phenomenon in United Kingdom higher education which has emerged during the past ten years has been the agencies and institutional departments or units developed through the Enterprise in Higher Education (EHE) programme, funded by the Department for Education and Employment. The intention was to bring about change in the curriculum and to implement a range of strategies aimed at developing student autonomy in learning and career progression. Whilst these initiatives were initially intended to help UK graduates develop the skills needed for a changing labour market, their wider impact and their implications for guidance have been significant. By 'putting learners at the centre', by enabling them to gain greater conscious ownership of their personal skills, and by helping them to acquire more work-related experience, the individual student may now arguably be better equipped for lifelong learning and its related series of decisions – the constant decisions and transitions through learning and work in a portfolio society. Guidance, whether educational, personal or vocational, is reaching a stage where it can become part of the ethos of the institution rather than being seen as an 'add-on'. Furthermore, curricular changes are now giving students greater ownership of their learning and a heightened awareness of the contribution that guidance can play in their development. The EHE programme made the most tangible contribution to this, but the focus of the Teaching Quality Assessment exercise on student skills and autonomy, and the work of the Higher Education Quality Council on student support and guidance, have also encouraged this major cultural change.

2b.3 Counselling Services

There is no statutory obligation for institutions to provide therapeutic counselling services for students within their institutions but almost all do. The term 'therapeutic counselling' is used in the UK to distinguish these services from those where counselling skills are used as an aid to decision-making about external issues, e.g. in

Careers Services. Most counsellors belong to the Association for University and College Counselling (AUCC), formerly the Association for Student Counselling (ASC), but a number are, instead, members of the British Psychological Society or the United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy. This range of therapeutic professionals – each with their own professional affiliation – coupled with the lack of statutory provision, means that there is no central collation of data. The numbers in Table 2 (page 19 below) have therefore been estimated on the basis of one Head of Service per institution and an average of three full-time-equivalent counsellors. In reality, the number of counsellors ranges from one (usually in smaller institutions) to the equivalent of six. AUCC (undated) recommended a ratio of counsellors to students of 1:2,000 and the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education (1979) recommended 1:750. Neither of these recommendations has been achieved and even in the better-resourced services the ratio is likely to be 1:3,000.

Most services have some form of secretarial help, varying from one person who operates as secretary/receptionist to others where there is an office manager with additional secretaries and receptionists; but however the office is structured, the support personnel are an essential part of the service. Office staff are the first point of contact for students, staff and the public and, as will be seen in Table 3 (page 22 below), are often relied upon to make a first assessment of urgency.

The provision of medically qualified practitioners linked to Counselling Services is variable. In the early days, Student Counselling Services were often placed within university health services, with referrals coming through physicians. With the development of counselling as a separate profession, most services are now independent of health provision, with a subsequent lessening of contact with medical practitioners. Some services employ their own psychiatrist on a part-time basis and s/he will be a fully integrated team member. Most contract with National Health Service provision for sessional use of a consultant. In some places there is little access to consistent medical support despite the perceived increase nationally in the numbers of disturbed students and in the level of disturbance *per se* (Association for Student Counselling, 1995).

In all institutions, counselling services are free to all students, whether undergraduate or postgraduate, and whether classified as 'home' students (which includes those from the EU) or 'overseas' students. This confidential service operates within an equal-opportunities policy and thus should not discriminate in relation to race, culture, religion, sexual orientation, disability, etc. Services are predominantly used by full-time students although they are also available to those who are part-time. Most services are open from 9.00am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday. They operate a full service during term. Although in some cases the hours are reduced during the vacation period, it is now rare for a service to close completely for any length of time during vacations. These services are not seen as emergency services and those who are in crisis outside normal working hours will be directed to other services (often the health services) that are structured to meet that need. Thus it can be seen that the prevailing ethos is one of therapeutically oriented services where counselling is a thoughtful and regular activity and where students can reflect in a consistent way on those concerns that impede their personal, academic or vocational progress.

The increase in student numbers in British universities and the opening of access to those from non-traditional routes has not changed in any fundamental way the basis on which counselling services are constructed and delivered, although the move towards briefer therapy has been prompted, largely, by the increased demand for counselling. Established posts in counselling services have not increased commensurately with the student population. In addition, because of the increase in British students from

Asian and Afro-Caribbean backgrounds (who may be from second- and third-generation immigrant families), counsellors have had to broaden their understanding of how cultural issues impact on counselling work. This has built on understanding already gained from working with what are termed 'overseas' students, who have traditionally attended British universities in considerable numbers. Lago (1990) has shown how this knowledge gained through counselling can be disseminated to academic staff. McDevitt (1994) applies this understanding to working with a German student and shows how cultural differences can be powerfully present even when working with those with whom we believe we are familiar.

The change in personal funding for students has also had an impact on counselling work in a number of institutions (particularly those located in inner cities) where students are distressed because they can no longer continue with their studies due to lack of finance. But even when faced with this seemingly entirely practical issue, counsellors look under the surface to see what it means for the particular student. This does not mean that they deny the reality of the situation, but it is a matter of interest to counsellors that some students can live with being poor in a material sense without feeling impoverished at a deeper level. Counsellors would see that, for many students, reactions to practical issues have a basis in personal and psychological histories and would attempt to help students to a greater understanding of this through counselling.

Because of the therapeutic nature of the work, little of it is carried out through the new technologies. However, the beginning of counselling services on the Internet (usually emanating from the USA) and students' familiarity with e-mail provides a challenge to British counsellors. At present the limited use of new technology is confined to counsellors sharing general information about their work. Colin Lago of Sheffield University has formed a small group of Heads of Counselling to look at the ethical and practical issues of delivering counselling through these newer and more public routes.

2b.4 Services for Students with Disabilities and/or Learning Difficulties

Again there is no statutory provision for this area of guidance although in practice there is customarily provision, if not always in a special designated section. The services provided by Advisers for Students with Disabilities and/or Learning Difficulties can be grouped under three headings:

- *pre-entry* – production of information and publicity, organising visits and open days, accompanying applicants to interviews, transition arrangements;
- *academic issues* – diagnostic assessment of needs, acquisition of assistive technology, guidance on finance, negotiation on teaching, learning and academic assessment;
- *non-academic issues* – living accommodation, personal assistance, obtaining funding, specialist careers advice, supporting leisure pursuits and social life.

Almost all services are a part of institutional provision. For some items, services of external groups and organisations have to be used. (Blind students, for instance, can have mobility training provided by the local social services; dyslexic students can have their equipment needs assessed by an Access Centre.) Some of these have to be paid for whereas others are free.

The ratio of staff to students is very variable and it is impossible to provide meaningful information for the sector as a whole. In most institutions, staff are located within the Student Services Office. However, there are many examples where responsibilities are divided and other sections of the institution are involved (for example, the library and learning resource centre). In those institutions characterised by a policy of high

quality provision, there are systems in place which work to ensure that a service is provided in an integrated, effective and efficient way. For example, there need to be close links between the Adviser for Students with Disabilities and/or Learning Difficulties and the Admissions Office.

Finance for these activities is shared between institutions and the students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties. The latter can claim additional financial support in the form of the Disabled Students Allowance as long as they meet certain qualifying conditions. The funds are provided by central government but administered by the Local Education Authorities. (In Scotland, the system is centralised using a simple, standard application form). Some of the money can be used to pay for costs incurred by the institutions, such as provision of interpreters for deaf students or the loan of assistive technology. (In 1998/99, the rates are: up to £1,315 per annum for general expenses, up to £10,000 per annum for non-medical personal assistance, and up to £3,955 for special equipment.)

Institutions receive no financial recognition for the work they do in encouraging students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties to take up places on courses. However, since 1993 the national funding councils for England, Scotland and Wales have introduced some measures aimed to provide financial incentives to institutions to support such students.

Many higher education institutions recognise the value of a holistic approach to meeting the needs of students with disabilities and learning difficulties. However, few if any have made great progress towards this objective. Those where significant developments have occurred operate according to a number of fundamental principles which are based around a social/educational model of disability rather than an individual/medical one. They recognise the rights of students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties, for example in terms of having choices and taking decisions which affect their own lives. Recent evaluation of national policy in connection with the Dearing Report has indicated characteristics associated with high-quality provision. These include: genuine interest and commitment from very senior management; experienced specialist full-time staff in post; appropriate allocation of funding to support this work; policies and procedures built into/embedded within normal operating practices; clear lines of responsibility and clear procedures; flexibility and creativity in approaching constantly changing demands; good planning, especially for the longer term; opportunities for staff development; and strong links with local, regional, national and international networks.

A number of recent national policy developments and changes have had a particular impact on work with students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties. One is the move by the majority of both old and new universities to modular structures and a two-semester system. This has introduced additional difficulties, for example in relation to making special arrangements for academic assessments/examinations.

The encouragement of wider participation by means of rewarding institutions for meeting increased student intake targets and penalising those who do not has brought into the system many individuals who have 'special needs' but who do not have disabilities and/or specific learning difficulties. For example, their educational background and experiences may not have equipped them for study in higher education and they might benefit from an initial programme of study skills. In the absence of this facility, many are referred to Advisers for Students with Disabilities and/or Learning Difficulties.

New technology has an important and, for the most part, a positive impact. For example, equipment to support blind and visually impaired students is now more

readily available. For some students though, for example those who are deaf, technology is unlikely to offer a solution to met their needs. It is also essential to assess the student's needs accurately and at an early stage, to obtain equipment which best meets the needs both of the individual and of the course, to offer appropriate training, and to arrange for maintenance of equipment.

The Dearing Report's findings and recommendations are likely to have an impact on the size, structure and financing of higher education well into the next century. Whilst students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties did not appear specifically on the Committee's agenda, many of those working with this student group submitted evidence and persuaded the Committee that there was a need to address its needs. This resulted in some specific recommendations about students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties. In particular, attention was given to issues of funding, especially for those excluded by the existing arrangements. The Dearing Report recommended:

- 'to the Funding Bodies that they provide funding for institutions to provide learning support for students with disabilities;
- to the Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education that it includes the learning needs of students with disabilities in its research, programme accreditation and advisory activities;
- to the Government that it extends the scope of the Disabled Students Allowance so that it is available without a parental means test and to part-time students, post-graduate students and those who have become disabled who wish to obtain a second higher education qualification' (NCIHE, 1997, p. 112).

In late 1995 the Disability Discrimination Act was passed. Whilst education was excluded in the main from this Act, there have been some changes to existing education legislation. All higher education institutions are required to devise and publish a Disability Statement and to revise and review it at regular intervals. Students are also likely to benefit from changes which the institutions have to make in order to comply with the Act as a consequence of being large employers and providing access to goods and services (for example, using their buildings for conferences).

The latest HEFCE Special Initiative for Students with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities which runs from late 1996 for three years is starting to gather momentum. It involves financial support for 31 projects. In addition, HEFCE has appointed a National Disability Co-ordinator and Development Team to monitor and evaluate the projects and to advise the Council about disability issues.

2b.5 Admissions and Access Services

Whilst all institutions have individuals carrying out these roles on a full- or part-time basis, amounting to one of the largest groups of 'guidance workers', there is no distinct professional grouping, role definition or prescribed training. This, however, is being addressed by the publication of Quality Standards by the Guidance Council. Local and regional funding agencies such as Training and Enterprise Councils (one of whose roles is to develop links between education and the world of work) are increasingly likely to make it a requirement that such provision conforms to the standards, and is objective and learner-centred. 'Guidance Networks' are being encouraged on a local community basis. Where these are established, they can offer Admissions and Access Officers mutually supportive links with guidance workers undertaking similar tasks in other institutions and in the community.

3 Roles and Tasks

3a Introduction

The task analysis applied in this section is based upon a student-centred holistic guidance model (Van Esbroeck, 1996, 1997; Van Esbroeck and Watts, 1997). This model (see Figure 1 on page 20) distinguishes three types of guidance:

- *Educational:* guidance on choices of educational options, and learner support.
- *Vocational:* guidance concerning choices on, and placement into, occupations and work roles.
- *Personal:* guidance and counselling on personal and social issues.

The focus of each guidance service/system has been analysed on a 7-point scale. The allocation of the 7 points is based on a combination of several variables – time spent, and how the focus is perceived by the counsellor, by the client and by the institution. The results are given in Table 2.

The occupational roles within each of the five services/system listed in Table 2 have been analysed using a task classification devised by Watts and Van Esbroeck (1998). The results are set out in Table 4 on page 22. (The identifying letters are also used in the task analysis in Section 3b.)

1 *General management:* general administrative management, including service/programme planning and evaluation. Includes managing guidance activities within the institutional setting, and general liaison with external bodies, e.g. educational institutions, guidance agencies, social services, official bodies, and employers. [A]

Table 2 – Main occupational roles and focus

Service/system	*Occupational roles*	*Number*	Focus		
			E	V	P
Careers Services	Director	97	2	3	2
	Careers Adviser	389	2	3	2
	Information Officer	224	2	4	1
	Placement Officer	29	0	6	1
	Job Shop Manager	56	0	7	0
	Lecturer in Careers Education	(25)	3	3	1
Student Support and Development Systems	Careers Tutor	(2,000)	3	3	1
	Personal Tutor	(4,000)	2	2	3
	Enterprise Manager	(50)	3	3	1
	Student Development Officer	(50)	3	2	2
	International Student Adviser	(200)	2	1	4
Counselling Services	Head of Counselling/Director	180	1	1	5
	Counsellor	540	1	1	5
	Secretary/Receptionist	180	0	0	7
	Medically Qualified Practitioner (Psychiatrist)	50	0	0	7
Services for Students with Disability and/or Learning Difficulties	Students with Disability and/or Learning Difficulties Adviser	(150)	3	1	3
Admissions and Access Services	Access Officer/Tutor	(300)	3	2	2
	Admissions Tutor	(4,000)	4	2	1

Key: E – Educational; V – Vocational; P – Personal

N.B. Brackets ( ) indicate estimated numbers

2 *Information management:* the collection, production and display of information in relation to education and training opportunities, and/or careers, occupations and the labour market. [B]

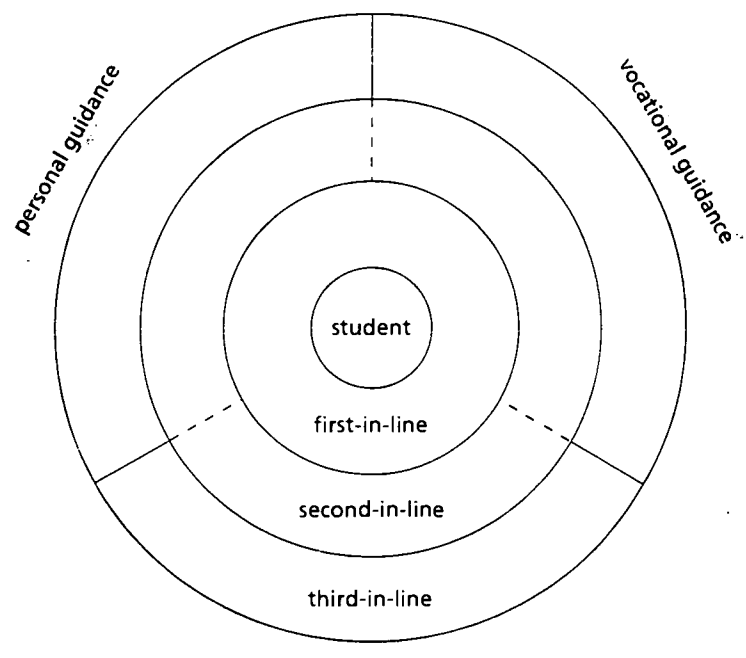
3 *Information-giving:* providing relevant information to individuals or groups in relation to education and training opportunities, and/or careers, occupations and the labour market. [C]

4 *Counselling:* helping clients to explore their own thoughts and feelings about their present situation, about the options open to them, and about the consequences of each option.

- 4.1 *Short-term individual counselling:* helping clients on a one-to-one basis in a single or limited number of sessions. [D]
- 4.2 *Long-term individual counselling:* as 4.1 but representing a planned programme over a longer period and more sessions. [E]
- 4.3 *Short-term group counselling:* as 4.1 but on a group basis. Tends to be in smaller groups than teaching, to be composed of individuals who share some common characteristics, to focus on their expressed needs rather than on predetermined learning aims, and to be organised to encourage active participation by all the individuals involved. [F]
- 4.4 *Long-term group counselling:* as 4.3 but representing a planned programme over a longer period and with more sessions. [G]
- 4.5 *Facilitating self-help groups:* encouraging individuals to form themselves into ongoing groups to share experiences and to support each other. [H]

5 *Advice:* making suggestions based on the helper's own knowledge and experience and on assessment results. [I]

Figure 1 – Holistic model of guidance



Source:
Van Esbroeck, 1996, 1997;
Van Esbroeck & Watts, 1997

6 *Assessment:* making judgements about individuals' suitability for certain options, based on inventories, tests, observations, interviews, etc.

6.1 *Facilitating self-assessment:* supporting individuals in choosing their own assessment devices and drawing conclusions from them. [J]

6.2 *Diagnostic assessment:* selecting assessment devices, interpreting the results and making appropriate recommendations. [K]

7 *Referral:* referring individuals to services better equipped to deal with their problem. [L]

8 *Teaching:* programmes of planned experiences designed to develop the skills, concepts and knowledge that will help individuals to manage their educational, vocational and personal development. [M]

9 *Placement:* into educational or training programmes and/or into employment.

9.1 *Liaison with providers:* liaison with employers and with education and training providers to obtain information on the opportunities they offer. [N]

9.2 *Coaching:* helping individuals to present themselves effectively on application forms and in interviews, etc. [O]

9.3 *Vacancy information:* providing individuals with information on particular vacancies in education, training or employment. [P]

9.4 *Pre-selection:* pre-selecting individuals for particular vacancies in education, training or employment. [Q]

10 *Advocacy:* negotiating directly with institutions or agencies – within and/or outside own institution, on behalf of individuals – especially those for whom there may be particular barriers to access. [R]

11 *Supporting other guidance sources:* providing training sessions and disseminating information materials to teaching staff and other guidance providers. [S]

12 *Feedback to providers:* collecting information on the unmet needs of particular groups, and encouraging providers of opportunities to respond by adapting and extending their provision. [T]

13 *Follow-up:* contacting former clients to see what has happened to them. Its purposes may include data for use with subsequent clients, evaluating the effectiveness of the guidance given, and offering further support needed. [U]

For each of the tasks listed, a rating on the importance of the task is given on a scale of 0 to 4 based on the work normally carried out within the role:

0 – no involvement
1 – minor involvement
2 – some involvement
3 – considerable involvement
4 – major involvement

The ratings were originally made by counselling and guidance specialists working in Careers Services, Counselling Services and Disability Services and were reviewed with their own practitioner groups. The results are given in Table 3 on page 22 where all tasks listed are identified by the appropriate letter code (see above). Where there are variations within a role, the ratings reflect the modal score. (These variations are sometimes very large and can range for certain tasks from major involvement to none.)

3b Commentary

3b.1 Careers Services

Director of Careers Service

Some Directors of Careers Services in large universities do not attempt to have a student 'case load' but devote themselves full-time to management [A]; others believe that it is not possible to keep track of student need without active personal involvement.

Devolved budgets in many universities have also shifted the pattern of work, although this will vary depending on whether the service is autonomous or part of an integrated Student Services unit (see Section 2a).

Management responsibilities depend very much on the size of the Careers Service, the institution's perception of its function, and the personal priorities of the Director. Individual Directors may choose to be involved in information management [B] or the development of vacancy information [P], or may choose to support individual students in appeals for funding or course changes [R]. Some will wish to take a leading role in community guidance networks, feeding back graduate destinations to feeder schools and colleges [T]; others may choose or be required to be directly engaged in the follow-up of graduate destinations [U]. Depending on institutional priorities, some Directors may invest time in curriculum development, others in developing overseas links. This is also true for the nature and extent of local and institutional guidance links. Some feel it more important to liaise with local guidance providers both outside and within the institution than do others [S].

Whilst there is also a range of views on the key 'client' stakeholders of Careers Services – student, employer, and institution – the vast majority of Careers Services in the UK would consider the main 'client' to be the student. This means that pre-selection for employers [Q] is rare. Recent initiatives to help small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in graduate recruitment processes, including pre-selection, are being piloted in some parts of the country, but the 'selectors' in these cases do not also undertake careers advisory work with the same students.

Careers Adviser

Careers Advisers similarly may undertake some or all of the tasks outlined [A–P, R–T] but this will depend on the priorities of the Careers Services and whether or not individual Careers Advisers adopt directive or non-directive guidance approaches. Typically, therefore, they may orientate their interaction with students towards 'advice' [I] or 'facilitating self-assessment' [J] as a general approach.

It is also possible to distinguish some differences in the perception of their roles expressed by Careers Advisers who have been recruited from industry, commerce or the public sector on the basis of their experience of the 'world of work' compared with those who have moved from other guidance occupations, often preceded by full-time training in careers guidance.

The degree of involvement in group work [F–H] and especially in curriculum development varies enormously. Even in the traditional guidance tasks of individual counselling [D,E] there is now a great disparity of provision. Some Careers Services only offer extended individual interviews in exceptional circumstances and deal with student need by self-help and group approaches and by engaging in departmental activities. For many, the 'interview' is a core aspect of the work. To define the process of the 'interview' is very difficult since much will depend on the practitioners' background training and individual perceptions of the guidance process, and their perceptions of the needs of the student at any particular time. 'Interviews' are normally used to describe individual interactions and can involve information giving

Table 3 – Tasks performed in the main occupational roles

	General management	Information management	Information-giving	Short-term individual counselling	Long-term individual counselling	Short-term group counselling	Long-term group counselling	Facilitating self-help groups	Advice	Facilitating self-assessment	Diagnostic assessment	Referral	Teaching	Liaison with providers	Coaching	Vacancy information	Pre-selection	Advocacy	Supporting other guidance sources	Feedback to providers	Follow-up
OCCUPATIONAL ROLES	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U
Director, Careers Service	4	2	2	2	1	2	1	2	2	2	1	1	2	3	2	1	1	1	2	1	2
Careers Adviser	1	2	3	3	2	2	2	3	3	3	2	2	2	3	3	2	1	2	2	2	2
Information Officer	1	4	4	2	0	1	0	1	2	0	0	3	1	4	3	4	0	1	1	3	2
Placement Officer	1	3	4	0	0	1	0	2	2	0	0	1	0	4	3	4	2	2	0	2	2
Job Shop Manager	3	3	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	4	2	4	2	1	1	0	0
Lecturer in Careers Education	2	1	2	0	0	1	1	2	0	1	1	3	4	2	3	0	0	0	2	0	0
Careers Tutor	2	3	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	4	2	3	2	1	2	2	2	2
Personal Tutor	0	0	2	4	4	0	0	2	4	4	3	3	0	0	1	0	0	3	1	2	2
Enterprise Manager	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	4	3	4	2	0	0	0	3	0	0
Student Development Officer	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	3	0	2	0	4	2	3	2	0	0	2	1	1	1
International Student Adviser	0	3	4	3	3	1	1	2	3	1	0	4	0	3	2	0	0	4	1	3	2
Head of Counselling/Director	4	1	1	4	4	2	2	2	1	4	4	4	2	4	0	0	0	2	3	4	3
Counsellor	2	1	1	4	4	2	2	2	1	4	4	4	1	3	0	0	0	1	2	3	2
Secretary/Receptionist	2	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	1	3	0	3	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
Med. Qual. Practitioner (Psychiatrist)	2	0	1	3	3	1	1	0	3	3	4	4	1	3	0	0	0	1	4	4	3
Students with Disability and/or Learning Difficulties Adviser	4	3	3	3	1	0	0	2	4	2	4	4	2	2	1	1	0	3	3	3	1
Access Officer/Tutor	1	3	4	4	0	2	0	2	4	3	1	3	0	4	0	3	0	3	3	3	2
Admissions Tutor	1	2	4	3	0	2	0	1	3	2	2	2	1	4	0	3	0	1	2	3	0

[C], individual guidance of either a one-off or developmental nature [D,E], offering advice [I], making referrals [L], providing vacancy information [P] or engaging in advocacy [R]. Much has been written about the nature and processes of the guidance interview and there is a general consensus that the interaction should be student-centred. There is, however, little agreement among practitioners about the role of information giving and how directive or not the interaction should be.

In the UK, Careers Advisers would not normally refer to such processes as 'counselling' but neither is the interaction always at the level of information giving or advice. Careers Advisers need highly developed counselling skills and ethics in their general approach, although they do not offer a therapeutic relationship. Ali and Graham (1996) clarify this: 'Effective careers guidance ... cannot be given in a vacuum. It must take into account the life circumstances in which the next phase of a person's career will be set. It is this approach to the whole person which distinguishes the work of the skilled guidance practitioner from that of givers of information on careers. In order to function in this way, a careers adviser will find it helpful to focus on an individual client's needs by using a counselling approach to guidance which is built upon a highly developed, inter-related set of communication skills. Used appropriately, these skills can help free a client from unhelpful patterns of thought and facilitate progress towards a solution both within and beyond the time spent together in the interview. The counselling approach also distinguishes careers advisers from other professionals who are concerned with the interface between people and work (e.g. personnel officers, recruitment consultants and occupational psychologists)' (p. 5).

Follow-up [U] is usually undertaken by all Careers Services in the sense that they must comply with the first-destination survey of the Higher Education Statistics Agency. All universities have to complete a first-destination survey of the situation of graduates six months after the date of their graduation. These are published as 'league tables', although they are very unreliable indicators of the true graduate destination position. Careers Advisers will be involved in this to varying degrees: in some cases it may be the Director who undertakes the job; in other cases a designated Careers Adviser or a team or an Information Officer.

Diagnostic assessment [K] in the form of psychometric tests to assess aptitudes and personality attributes are used variably. Some Careers Advisers do not use them, and may indeed not be qualified to administer them: test publishers require that they are administered by someone with British Psychological Society accredited status and additional training in the specific test. Since such tests are increasingly used by larger graduate recruiters in selection, they are often provided to offer students a taste of this experience as part of preparation for job search.

Increasingly, technology is supporting the guidance role of the Careers Adviser, not only through ready access to information by adviser and student alike, but also through self-help 'guidance' systems which move students through various stages of self-reflection and action-planning [J]. These are increasingly available on CD-ROM and through the World Wide Web.

Internal and external links [S] are likely to be determined by the role and priorities of the Careers Service, although there is scope for individual Careers Advisers to develop personal professional orientations: work with mature students, for example, or with the disabled; guidance by distance learning provision; information provision; or developing specialist knowledge of European opportunities.

As has previously been mentioned, 'educational' guidance, if interpreted as support on learning choices, is not as well resourced by departmental staff in the UK as in some other European countries. However, helping students to understand the career implications of course decisions could be a significant aspect of a Careers Adviser's

work in some institutional settings. It would be true to say, though, that the UK 'any discipline' graduate job market means that many course-related decisions do not make substantial differences to the career opportunities a student can later access.

Information Officer

The main role of an Information Officer is to provide students and sometimes Careers Advisers with detailed and up-to-date information on occupations, companies, courses and vacancies both permanent and temporary [C]. More significantly, they manage the information room(s) [B] which involves planning the layout and accessibility of information, providing attractive displays, developing self-help materials, and direct student contact in person or by telephone in response to enquiries. Diagnosis (though not usually in a psychometric sense) [K] and referral [L] are important parts of the work of the Information Officer but will again vary depending on the priorities of the Careers Service. Some Information Officers have degree, librarianship or guidance qualifications but some come from clerical and secretarial backgrounds. Their salaries are usually lower than those of Careers Advisers although for well-qualified and senior Information Officers this is not necessarily the case.

In a small number of Careers Services, Careers Advisers have direct roles in the information room as individual contact with students moves from longer counselling interventions to brief diagnostic and information discussions.

If 'advice' [I] is interpreted as advising on further sources of information, then this is a key part of the job. The extent to which an Information Officer engages in advocacy [R] depends on the priorities of the service and the personal style of the Information Officer. It is not unknown for Information Officers to ring awarding bodies on behalf of students but such activities are rare.

Involvement in 'feedback' to providers [T] depends on whether 'unmet need' is interpreted as 'information needs': Information Officers provide information to fill gaps, and this requires contacting the providers of employment or training.

The Careers Information Room is often the centre of technological development and increasingly occupational, employer and vacancy information is accessed through the Internet or local databases. More detailed information on course and work opportunities may also be accessed through the Internet.

Placement Officer

The role of Placement Officers may vary from the purely administrative (obtaining information on placement possibilities and dealing with logistical arrangements including health and safety) to advising students on the nature of the placement and how it might fit into their learning objectives. In either case, information giving [C] is likely to feature heavily in their activities. Individual interactions with students are unlikely to be of a nature that could be described as counselling [D,E,G] but group sessions which give advice on practical issues of the placement may be undertaken [F]. The key focus of a Placement Officer's activities, however, is more likely to be the providers of the placement and communicating their requirements, so liaison with providers [N] and dealing with vacancy information [P] are central concerns. Preparing students for selection for the placement [O] may be part of the remit; sometimes this may involve pre-selection, identifying 'suitable' students to meet the employers' needs [Q].

Depending on the background and level of the Placement Officer's role and the extent to which it is focused on providing support for students, s/he may negotiate the nature of the placement, conditions, accommodation etc. with the employer [R] and have follow-up/feedback sessions to improve the nature of future placements [T,U].

Job Shop Manager

Job Shop Managers may or may not have other staff for which they are responsible [A]. Some such initiatives are so small that there will be a single member of staff undertaking information management [B], information giving [C], and clerical and administrative duties.

The main task of a Job Shop is to facilitate students in their search for part-time casual employment whilst undertaking degree programmes. This involves liaising with local companies and other organisations seeking casual workers [N] and making such vacancy information readily available [P]. There may, at this casual and often unskilled level of work, be some form of pre-selection [Q], although this will not be common.

In some cases, Job Shop staff will work with other areas of the university, such as the Careers Service [S], to develop self-help materials [J] to enable students to reflect on what skills and other experience they have gained from what might be very mundane work undertaken primarily to earn money.

Lecturer in Careers Education

This role may be combined with that of Careers Tutor, particularly in institutions where career development in the academic curriculum is high-profile, but it will have a greater teaching and group-work focus than that of the Careers Tutor. Facilitating self-assessment [J] and diagnostic assessment [K] may be part of the role in so far as this is undertaken within the teaching process to aid individual self-awareness.

3b.2 Student Support and Development Systems

Careers Tutor

Academics' official role in relation to careers and educational guidance may vary from a complete rejection of any function at all to designated responsibility as 'Careers Tutor' or 'Studies Adviser'.

Whatever the official position, there is no doubt that academic tutors can exert, consciously or unwittingly, enormous influence on students' perceptions of and decisions about learning and work. Whether or not this is a designated role, there is virtually no relevant training for these staff, with the result that their efforts – however well-intentioned – can be misinformed or inaccurate.

The role of departmental Careers Tutors can vary from pinning up vacancies and careers events information on notice boards to undertaking a wide range of guidance tasks [C–I]. Much will depend on the role of the careers tutor vis-à-vis the institution's Careers Service and, to some degree, the extent to which the course is vocational in nature. In some universities, notably where the Careers Service is small and there are a large number of vocational courses, many of the Careers Service's responsibilities are handed over to the department. Departments may, for example, be responsible for accredited careers education modules, or placement preparation and follow-up. Assessment [K] would normally be part of the role if 'assess' means assessing academic or project work or diagnosing a need for study skills. Only in rare cases would Careers Tutors be likely to administer diagnostic psychometric tests.

Liaison with providers of further study and employment [N] can vary from direct contact (especially in vocational courses) to having these relationships and information resourced by the Careers Service. A range of relationships with the Careers Service is likely to obtain, and this will influence the tasks of both practitioner groups (Watts and Hawthorn, 1992).

Pre-selection [Q] on behalf of future employers is more likely to be undertaken by academic guidance practitioners than by professional guidance specialists, possibly

because the nature of what constitutes 'student-centred' guidance is not so clear to this group of largely untrained guidance workers and Careers Tutors may feel that this is a genuine attempt to 'help the students'. Follow-up [U] is increasing because the Teaching Quality Assessment procedure now requires this from departments being quality-assessed.

Personal Tutor

It is impossible to identify with any great precision the tasks of a Personal Tutor since the system is in a process of decline in many institutions due to pressure of numbers (see Section 2). However, where such roles are not only designated but also undertaken, both short- and long-term individual guidance [D–E] would certainly be provided although therapeutic counselling would not. Personal Tutors would expect to deal with issues such as learning difficulties, study skills, examination difficulties and sometimes the effects of disrupted personal relationships on the student's health or learning. They would generally see themselves as a source of information [C] on course options, but often have insufficient knowledge of changes in, for example, funding or course transfer regulations. They would certainly advise [I] students on the options open to them in terms of course choice and learning support, and if undertaking the role effectively would also be well networked with other guidance providers within and outside the institution [S] and have sufficient understanding of their resources to make appropriate referrals [L]. They would also facilitate self-assessment [J] in order to help students to identify learning support needs or choose courses in line with their interests. In some cases they may well support a student when appealing against examination results or negotiating with agencies providing fees or loans [R]. The above description, however, presents a traditional ideal and it is increasingly unlikely that this range of guidance activities would, in reality, be undertaken by Personal Tutors in most institutions. Smaller institutions and new universities and colleges are more likely at the present time to place priority on these activities than are large traditional universities.

Enterprise Manager

All of the 56 universities involved in the Enterprise in Higher Education (EHE) initiative appointed an Enterprise Manager, often designated 'Director of Enterprise' or given a similar nomenclature. They were often recruited from other academic or academic-related areas of the university – three were seconded from Careers Services – or were recruited externally (often from business and commerce) for the period of the post – usually five years.

Institutions interpreted the nature of EHE very differently, but the most enduring role for this practitioner group has been (post-EHE) supporting developments in departments to enhance the quality of teaching and learning by developing students' personal and transferable skills as well as their discipline-specific knowledge, and to draw employers into the academic curriculum. Where they have survived, they are often designated Teaching and Learning Quality/Development/Support Units.

The job title 'Enterprise Manager' is likely to be misleading. In practice, its aim is to bring about change in the culture and curriculum in a higher education institution, often supported by external project funding – from the Department for Education and Employment, HEFCE and local Training and Enterprise Councils – in order to enable the university to interact more effectively with the world of work and to equip students more thoroughly for lifelong learning and career progression in a changing labour market. The implications for guidance, and in particular for equipping students for 'self-managed career progression', are clear, but Enterprise Managers must work through intermediaries – academics, students and employers – and progress is often

slow. Organisational management is therefore a large part of the task [A] and involves considerable investment in awareness-raising in staff and students alike.

Facilitating self-assessment [J] is a key aspect of the work in order to enable students to identify and articulate the attributes they are developing from their degree programme in addition to academic knowledge, and to understand how to apply these to further decisions about learning and work. The assessment and accreditation of these new areas of learning, the setting of academic standards and learning outcomes, and convincing the academic community of their credibility when set alongside academic programmes, are also major aspects of this work and, if successful, can raise the profile of guidance with staff and students.

Encouraging links between academic departments and other providers of student development, and encouraging links with employers, are further key tasks. Referral [L] and liaising with providers [N] are therefore pre-eminent.

Student Development Officer

Student Development Officers work directly with students, usually in groups. This role, again, often developed from the EHE programme when it became clear that in order to equip students to progress successfully through learning and work in a changing world they need learning skills – often described as study skills – and the skills of understanding the changing nature of opportunities, whether course options or jobs. Student Development Officers have often outlived the EHE initiative and are now concerned largely with facilitating student self-help [H] and self-assessment [J], referring students to appropriate support systems both internally and externally [L] – usually as part of a workshop programme rather than individually – and contributing to the 'skills-related' academic curriculum [M] if their qualifications and experience allow.

International Student Adviser

This role can vary from the purely administrative to one that includes offering counselling support and provision. All International Student Advisers are likely to have substantial involvement in giving information on anything from accommodation and financial matters to work-permit availability and local social events [C]. Referral [L] is correspondingly a regular activity, since overseas students may need more specialist support on matters such as the regulations relating to long-term employment in the UK. Good networks with other guidance and counselling provision both within and outside the university are therefore of paramount importance [S]. Advocacy [R] may be undertaken quite frequently when problems relating to entry permits, residence status, acceptability of overseas entry qualifications, etc., are causing difficulties.

If the International Student Adviser has a guidance or counselling background or training, s/he is also likely to offer more in-depth personal support to overseas students and their families [D,E] and may deal with a wider range of advice themselves [I] rather than referring immediately to other agencies. In some cases the International Student Adviser may also participate in marketing the university's courses to potential students, which may involve alerting feeder institutions to previous successes [T].

3b.3 Counselling Services

Counselling Services have as their main focus the psychological and emotional well-being of students. How far this is seen to be a central or external task of the institution is a matter of continued debate. The Association for University and College Counselling – a Division of the British Association for Counselling (BAC) – has maintained from its inception in 1970 (as the Association for Student Counselling) that a counsellor should work preventively and developmentally within the organisation as well as

with the range of problems presented by individual students. It also argues that the psychological well-being of individuals is central to the educational task – that students cannot succeed if their emotional and academic needs are in conflict. Thus the personal is inextricably bound up with the educational.

The degree to which individual organisations accept this analysis varies across the country but all Counselling Services are involved in contributing at some level to the educational task. This can be through, for example, study skills programmes, or seminars and participation in induction programmes for students and academic staff.

Similarly, the personal cannot easily be divorced from the vocational so that all counsellors at some time find themselves working therapeutically with the psychological aspects of a student's career choice. It is recognised that this is not the main focus of the work but it is an inevitable part.

Since the principal aim of counselling services is to provide a creative, therapeutic relationship for clients, its members of staff need to be skilled at a variety of levels. Good assessment skills are central to the work [K]. This is rarely achieved through the use of psychometric testing, but rather through an understanding of the client's personal history and the dynamics of the relationship between client and counsellor. Clients are also encouraged to self-assess [J] and the capacity to do this will be a diagnostic indicator. At the earliest stage of contact, often by telephone, it is the receptionist who will be the first to make an assessment of whether the potential client is showing exceptional signs of distress. Counsellors rely on this assessment to decide whether an urgent appointment should be made outside the usual timetabled spaces for counselling.

Within the confines of the counselling room, each counsellor exercises a considerable degree of autonomy in deciding how, and for how long, the work should proceed. This will be governed by a service policy that is usually decided by the Head of Counselling in consultation with the counselling team [A]. All staff liaise (with the student's permission) with those who have made the referral or who have responsibility, for example, for the academic progress of the student [A,S,T]. Feedback to, and liaison with, academic staff and university managers [T] is seen to be a vital part of the work of the service – constrained, of course, by the limits of confidentiality. The psychiatrist, in particular, in conjunction with the Head of Service, will often work with medical practitioners and academic staff to decide on appropriate support for, and the management of, disturbed students [S,T]. Secretaries usually manage the timetable, availability of rooms, allocation of assessment sessions to counsellors, and the database that provides statistics for feedback to providers [A,T].

Although counsellors often define themselves as not giving advice [I], they engage in a limited amount of this – for example, when dealing with a study skills or financial issue. Often, as in the case of financial difficulties, they will refer [L] to another more appropriate agency either within or outside the university. Secretaries act as signposts [L] to other services when clients make first contact, and frequently manage the information bank that will allow themselves and counsellors to pass on information about allied services [A–C]. Psychiatrists often give specific advice [I] or information [C] on medical management and resources. In a few services, the functions of counsellor and adviser are contained within the same role (usually still designated 'counsellor'). A small number of Heads of Service manage [A] a combined counselling and advisory service, with different personnel carrying out the two functions [B,C,K]. The greatest amount of information management is through the managing of personal and dynamic information gleaned through counselling sessions. This is the core of the work, but as it does not come strictly within the definition provided within the notes on the task classification, the score for this [B] in Table 3 has been kept low.

There is a clear division between therapeutic counselling services and careers guidance services. Despite the fact that an influential source for the development of student counselling in Britain was the combined careers and counselling service at Keele University (Newsome, Thorne, and Wyld, 1973), careers guidance and counselling have each developed their own professional identity and there are currently few formal links between the two professions. This is despite general agreement that there are common issues, not least the ethical framework within which each work (cf. the Lead Body for Advice, Guidance, Counselling and Psychotherapy – see page 41 below). Counsellors, however, will not engage in activities under O, P or Q.

The main focus of the work is the provision of personal, therapeutic counselling [D–G]. The trend is towards brief therapy [D,F] but longer-term work [E,G] is considered to be equally important, and essential for some students. The move towards briefer work is often resource-driven but, more positively, is seen to be in line with the developmental needs of a population predominantly in late adolescence. In those universities where the number of mature students is high – in some cases as many as one-third are aged over 25 at the beginning of their undergraduate degree – there is a marked need for more longer-term work. Mature students and graduate students often come to counselling when their problems are of longer duration and are more entrenched.

Group counselling [F,G] is increasingly used. These may be long-term therapeutic groups, particularly for graduate students who feel isolated in their research projects. The purpose of these groups is to deal with developmental needs and they will therefore rarely be based on a single issue, although long-term groups for those with, for example, eating disorders do exist. As in individual work, a more radical approach through short-term group therapy is gaining currency. In addition, there are short-term groups to deal with specific issues such as examination anxiety or stress management.

In line with AUCC policy that counsellors should work with the institution, all counsellors engage to some degree in supporting other guidance sources [S] and giving feedback to providers [T]. This is often done through telephone or face-to-face consultancy with colleagues within the university who are concerned either about individual students or about the development of the institution's welfare provision. Counsellors have developed a particular understanding of the impact of university life on those who work within it. From this perspective they are able to advise committees on those aspects of the structure that help or hinder psychological, and thus academic, development. In this way they advocate [R] on behalf of all students and staff. In a more particular sense they often, with the student's permission, liaise with tutors and examination boards [R] when academic progress has been hindered by psychological difficulties caused by internal or external pressures. Services are usually named in the list of available help for those who feel discriminated against or harassed. Any work then carried out with an individual is by nature confidential but general issues learned in the process can be fed back to the institution [R,T]. Most services offer seminars to academic staff on issues of mutual concern, such as identifying students under stress or the conflicts in implementing an equal-opportunities policy. They frequently offer courses in basic counselling skills for students and staff and run workshops on, for example, study skills [M].

3b.4 Services for Students with Disabilities and/or Learning Difficulties

As can seen from Table 2 on page 19, there is no consistent approach to the job titles given to those who work with students with disabilities. Much depends on the particular institution. That said, all such advisers/co-ordinators are involved to some

extent in the responsibilities associated with management of the service [A], although usually with few staff line-management roles. Those occupying the post also provide guidance on disability issues within their institutions and liaise with a wide variety of external agencies – schools, colleges, other higher education institutions, Local Education Authorities, national groups. A major responsibility is the creation, production and dissemination of a range of information in relation to what is available in the institution [B]. In the past this might have been publicity relating to student recruitment; more recently, a major task is to write and publish the institution's Disability Statement, now a requirement under current educational legislation. Much of the day-to-day work involves the giving of information – to those interested in becoming students, to students on courses about issues linked to their programmes of study, and to staff. Giving information specific to careers and job opportunities is less prominent [C].

Advisers/co-ordinators provide counselling, although most have not had special training for this. A lot of time is spent with individuals on a one-to-one basis [D], but only rarely is long-term individual counselling provided since concerns requiring this level of support will be referred to trained counsellors [E]. Sometimes group meetings do occur [F], although there is some concern about bringing together those whose only unifying feature is their disability since this seems to be moving against an inclusive approach to policy and provision. Often such events occur once per semester and take the form of reviews of provision for particular groups, e.g. blind students. Given that attendance is voluntary and varies, it is difficult to describe this as long-term group counselling [G]. In effect, it is often the precursor to the establishment of self-help groups [H].

The provision of appropriate advice [I] is based around an accurate assessment of needs and is a major activity. In many instances, students arrive at the institution with considerable experience of academic work and their self-assessment can be relied upon; in other instances, they are unrealistic in their aspirations [J]. Many students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties can benefit from the support of assistive technology: for this to have its maximum effect, there has to be good diagnostic assessment – a main area of expertise [K]. Several higher education institutions are now members of the National Federation of Access Centres, which means that they have credibility and are recognised as competent to undertake diagnostic assessments and to make recommendations about special equipment. Some students (for example, those claiming to have a specific learning difficulty – such as dyslexia) might need a more specialist assessment and so are put in touch with the appropriate providers, e.g. educational psychologists [L].

Advisers/co-ordinators will also refer students to other guidance specialists, notably the Careers Service and any learning support systems which may exist [L]. This area of guidance is possibly one of the best networked within institutions to support the varied needs of the students.

Most advisers/co-ordinators have no major role in teaching although they are often invited to contribute to a range of programmes designed to develop skills, concepts and knowledge which will help students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties in their educational, personal and vocational development [M]. Within some programmes, students have to spend time on a work placement. If the student has a disability, academic staff sometimes involve advisers/co-ordinators in identifying a suitable placement – as with a placement overseas, for example, where the international guides produced by FEDORA in Europe and the University of New Orleans in North America provide useful information about facilities [N]. An extremely small number of higher education institutions have appointed specialist

careers staff who work with individual students on skills associated with applying for and securing employment, such as writing a CV, taking part in interviews, etc. [O]. Occasionally, advisers/co-ordinators are aware through their networks of particular opportunities which disabled graduates might wish to take up; certainly all should know of the CANDO links on the computer network (CANDO is a service organised from the University of Lancaster which advertises job opportunities for students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties) [P]. In this limited sense only, it can be said that there is some pre-selection [Q].

A major role of advisers/co-ordinators is to empower students with disabilities and learning difficulties. So, whilst it is necessary on occasion to act in an advocacy role, they prefer it if students are their own advocates [R]. However, through their professional networks, they are in a position to work with other systems both within and outside the institution and thus can be called upon for training sessions etc. [S]. All advisers/co-ordinators see it as a normal part of their duties to provide information about their services and to evaluate practice, identifying that which is good and those areas needing further attention [T], a process that involves existing students. Currently, there appear to be few institutions which track their former students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties [U], although this might be more a reflection of time limitations than a lack of recognition of its importance.

It is not easy to specify the relative importance of the tasks, since the needs of each student are different even though they may share the same kind of disability or learning difficulty. The approach is always to start with the individual student and to operate according to principles embodied in the 'social model' of disability. This suggests that any problems faced are the result of society's attitude towards disability rather than resulting from inadequacies on the part of the individual with the disability.

3b.5 Admissions and Access Services

Admissions Tutor

Admissions Tutors deal with the processes of admitting all students, both standard and non-standard entrants, to their department's courses. Some of this may include organising administrative arrangements and making policy [A], but information provision to potential students, including developing prospectuses, course leaflets and attending higher education recruitment events, probably make the greatest demands [B]. Information-giving to individuals [C] is likely to be a major part of this role, covering information to school staff and careers advisers as well as to the potential student. Liaison with feeder institutions [N] will be important and will be handled in different ways depending on whether the department is over-subscribed or finds it difficult to recruit. Similarly, some departments or universities have explicit links with schools, further education colleges and adult education provision which may include 'compacts' to support disadvantaged students more effectively in the transition into higher education [S]. Whether individual discussions with potential students are confined to confirming whether or not there are still vacancies in the department [P] or extend to more general advice [I] or counselling [D] – for example, about the desirability of taking a year off, or the suitability of the courses on offer – will depend very much on the background and priorities of the individual Admissions Tutor. Their role, by definition, will not include any long-term guidance or counselling support [E,G] nor would a university-based Admissions Tutor be likely to follow-up the subsequent progress of an applicant if s/he did not enrol at the Tutor's own university [U].

Access Officer/Tutor

Universities, particularly those which as part of their mission wish to attract mature non-standard entrants and part-time and work-based learners, are increasingly developing Access Services. Many of these are not staffed by personnel with guidance training, and in some cases they are seen largely as a marketing arm of the institution. However, the development of standards of good practice by the Guidance Council and local guidance networks is clarifying and professionalising their role. All Access Officers give information about the courses available within their institution, the entry requirements and acceptable alternatives [C], and where appropriate will refer enquirers for further information to departments [L]. In most cases the information will be accompanied by 'advice' [I] which, depending on the background of the Access Officer, might either be designed to support the potential student in thinking through their learning needs and where these might best be served, or might take the form of more directive suggestions based on knowledge of the departments and previous experience of non-standard entrants.

Intimate knowledge of the course provision, learner support and assessment procedures of departments is very desirable, and liaison with departmental providers of courses [N] should be a high priority. In some cases, even institutionally based Access Officers have a clear ethical stance which ensures that they also offer information about provision in other institutions [S], but this is by no means universal.

3c Detailed Task Profiles

A detailed task analysis is given in this section for three major occupational roles:

- *Careers Adviser.* This is the largest occupational group in guidance in higher education, and also a profession which is in a period of radical review and transition. It has been the focus, directly or indirectly, of a number of surveys in recent years.
- *Head of Counselling Services.* This occupation has been selected because it offers the broadest possible spectrum of tasks for Counsellors, since Heads of Counselling Services invariably participate in the full range of counselling tasks as well as fulfilling their management duties.
- *Adviser for Students with Disabilities and/or Learning Difficulties.* This role has been chosen as an example of an emerging guidance profession, whose functions are addressed in different ways and to varying degrees in all higher education institutions but are only partially designated to discrete professionals with coherent tasks and training.

3c.1 Detailed Profile: Careers Adviser

Careers Advisers are at the centre of major debates about the purposes of higher education in the UK concerning the fitness of its graduates to contribute to the demands of a changing labour market and the significant moves towards more 'learner-managed learning' in a lifelong learning culture. Higher education is increasingly seen less as a solid block of experience, preceding a lifetime of employment. This poses significant challenges to the traditional role of Careers Advisers in supporting graduates seeking their first job – usually in their early twenties – and is compelling higher education institutions to review the role of Careers Services and their resourcing against a background of pressure for greater clarity about what a university is offering to its students.

A number of surveys and reports into employer satisfaction with UK graduates have been produced over the past few years (Confederation of British Industry, 1989, 1994; Association of Graduate Recruiters, 1993, 1995; Harvey and Green, 1994; Harvey, Moon

and Geall, 1997, 1998). All have emphasised the need to ensure that UK graduates gain skills as well as knowledge during their academic career, plus a greater understanding of the world of work.

However, work undertaken by Ball and Butcher (1993) indicates that for students, the development and ownership of the personal and cognitive skills desired by employers – information technology, communication, numeracy, interpersonal skills like teamwork, negotiation, time management and so on – do not in themselves necessarily enable graduates to understand how to apply these to inform choices of employment or further study, either at initial entry into employment or during subsequent decisions and transitions.

This surge of awareness coincided with the continued growth within AGCAS of the careers education movement, and the establishment of a Careers Education Working Party in 1993. Although this was, and is still to some extent, considered to be a marginal activity in a fair number of Careers Services, the Employment Department commissioned a report from Watts and Hawthorn (1992) which identified five possible Careers Service roles in the development and delivery of careers education: sole deliverer; demarcated deliverer; joint deliverer; contributor; and consultant.

The Higher Education Quality Council also produced a series of reports and recommendations on guidance quality and practice in higher education (Higher Education Quality Council, 1994, 1995, 1997).

In 1996 the Executive Committee of AGCAS commissioned a survey of strategic directions for careers services (Watts, 1997). This offered seven hypothetical models of potential directions for Careers Services. Four of these – the Integrated Guidance Model, the Integrated Placement Model, the Curriculum Model, and the Learning Organisation Model – are based on the assumption of stronger embedding of Careers Services in the institution. The other three options – the Extended Support Model, the Lifelong Guidance Model, and the Alumni Model – are based on delivering careers services post-graduation.

The Dearing Report added its weight to a changing role for the Careers Service, mainly moving in the direction of Watts' Curriculum Model: '... we recommend on careers guidance that institutions of higher education ... integrate their Careers Service more fully into academic affairs and that the provision of careers education and guidance is reviewed periodically by the Quality Assurance Agency' (NCIHE, 1997, p. 124). Dearing also flagged the need for Careers Services to feed graduate destination information more effectively into schools and other pre-HE institutions, to encourage graduates to set up their own businesses, and to engage in the development and support of student work experience.

With the imminent publication of Quality Standards for careers education and guidance provision within universities, it is evident that a Careers Adviser, even when not a Head of Service, needs to develop greater management skills [A] in terms both of heightened sensitivity to institutional politics in day-to-day practice and of changing individual (often long-established) work patterns in order to accommodate new student, institutional and employer expectations. In a recent survey of student views on their experience in higher education and expectations of their future career commissioned by AGCAS (Purcell and Pitcher, 1996), it was suggested that Careers Services might be the most appropriate vehicle to introduce students to some of the enterprise and personal development skills which are particularly relevant to job seeking and employment.

Both the 'pull' into the academic arena and the 'push' from impossibly high individual student caseloads are likely to orientate the work of many Careers Advisers towards group or departmental delivery, including group sessions which fulfil some of the reflection and reviewing purposes of individual interviews [F,G]. This may include the provision of self-help materials and the bringing together of groups of students with similar needs, such as those embarking on a year abroad, those with interests in particular occupational areas, etc. Increasingly, Careers Advisers have the opportunity to be involved very directly in the teaching process [M] through the delivery of career development modules or career development sections of other modules (an example of the latter would be a module on 'Geographers in the Workplace'). Developing negotiating skills, and the effective communication of the scope and parameters of their changing roles, will also be imperative since Careers Advisers have never been more at risk of trying to be all things to all people and of being seen to fail by everyone [S].

All Careers Advisers will need to review their information-management and information-giving functions [B,C] since one-to-one 'word of mouth' information through individual interviews is increasingly challenged by student numbers and made redundant by information technology. Information management will now involve ensuring the dissemination of relevant information on a whole-campus basis, initiating student self-help materials and strategies, and making increasing use of the Internet to deliver information directly to the individual student outside the Careers Service.

Whatever the role in the institution, follow-up of graduate destinations [U] by more sophisticated and meaningful surveys than the present statutory First Destination Survey will mean that construction, administration and, most importantly, dissemination of alumni destination data – at a range of years beyond graduation – will be increasingly needed to meet the requirements of academic departments and pre-HE student providers as well as for individual student awareness-raising. The need to update academics' perceptions of the world of work is crucial, and ways of attracting their interest and involvement in this, including through staff development, will be very important [F].

Similarly, the long-established isolation of higher education Careers Services in relation to other guidance providers in the community is likely to change to some degree. The Dearing Report recommends a 'dual provision' careers guidance service for higher education (as for schools and further education) with institutionally based advisers and a free-standing community-based service. This makes sense in terms of lifelong movement between learning and work and the current lack of specialist provision for graduates outside higher education. Whatever its form, there is likely to be a greater degree of communication between institutionally-based and community-based careers services, and in the future, no doubt, increasing movement of staff between them [L,S]. It is hoped that this will enhance the quality of referrals between a range of guidance providers and will increase mutual sharing of information and understanding of the similarities and diversities in provision.

Within higher education, it may be assumed that unless greater central regulation of institution-based guidance services is introduced, Careers Services, whilst reviewing and changing their role, are likely to emerge with a similarly varied pattern of functions (as articulated through individual tasks) as they perform today, although the emphasis on the key competencies, as has been demonstrated above, is already being seen to change.

3c.2 Detailed Profile: Head of Counselling Service

This role is usually divided into three equally important functions – clinical, management and institutional. All Heads of Service carry a caseload of clinical work. Usually this consists of around twelve direct contact hours (although many do more, especially at times of high demand) and at least twenty minutes per contact hour for writing notes. Additionally there is often the need to liaise with referrers [S,T] or to refer on to other agencies [L]. The caseload will include a spread of short, medium [D] and longer-term [E] work, and may well include both short [F] and long-term [G] groups. They need to understand, and be skilled at, the process of assessment [K]. This includes being able to identify signs of psychiatric disorder, profound psychological distress, the client's capacity to work within a psychological framework, and the support systems that are already in place. In addition, there will be an assessment of whether the client is able to work within a short-term therapy model or whether longer-term work is necessary. This is done through gleaning the level of disturbance from the client's psychological history and the evidence of the relationship as enacted with the counsellor. Group work may be identified as the treatment of choice.

As the work progresses, even if it is short-term, it requires competencies in helping the client to understand what issues there might be in addition to those presented at assessment. In many of these cases, clients will be unaware of these. For example, a student who is in a panic about examinations may unconsciously be afraid of success because this would mean doing better than a parent who is ill or unemployed. When these issues are identified, the competencies then required are those which will help the client to own them not just intellectually but also at a deeper psychological level.

The process of ending is always delicate and is governed by the length of therapy, the client's experience of earlier losses, and the quality of the relationship that has developed between client and counsellor.

Although this is but a brief outline, it demonstrates that this is complicated and sensitive work which must be done in an atmosphere of trust and confidentiality. At the same time, a counsellor in this setting is aware that there are many others who are interested in, and have responsibility for, the student's welfare. Skills have to be developed in conveying, if appropriate and with the student's permission, information that aids the student in relationships with others and in their academic progress.

Throughout, all counsellors take into consideration the context of the work. What is the impact of the institution on the life of the student? How does the point reached in the academic year, examinations and the stage and level of the course influence both therapeutic and academic work? What needs to be done to enable the student to achieve his or her academic and personal goals?

Although the number of contact hours with students may be less than for those counsellors for whom they have management responsibility, the fact that Heads of Service are engaged in clinical work is considered to be of major importance. It defines them as continuing and experienced clinicians as well as managers.

As well as the more traditional forms of management functions, such as budgeting, staff recruitment and managing human resources, Heads of Service are involved in the management of the clinical work of the service [A]. For some, this means that they allocate students to staff after the initial assessment and have regular work-in-progress meetings. In other services, staff members are responsible for managing their own cases from assessment through to ending. The Head's role is then to monitor this work in an appropriate way. Issues of competence are dealt with through hearing about the work in case discussions during staff meetings, by regular meetings

with individual counsellors and through, for example, the protocols (either written reports or face-to-face discussions) for dealing with those at risk. Most counsellors in university settings are highly qualified and experienced practitioners. This, combined with the intensely personal nature of the work, calls for considerable skills on the part of Heads of Service in allowing the appropriate level of autonomy in their counsellors' work whilst at the same time recognising the need for a service-wide view of quality, competence and content.

In addition, management of the secretarial staff is shaped by the particular nature of the setting. Most office staff come with little or no experience of working in a therapeutic environment. They often have to be helped to change their previous working practices. For example, a missed or changed appointment in other settings may not be considered to be significant other than the inconvenience caused. In this setting, however, a missed appointment may be directly related to the content of the therapeutic work in progress. The secretaries are the ones who receive the call to cancel the appointment. They will not know the detail of the work with the counsellor but they have to be aware that how they respond to the communication from the student could have a major impact on any future work with the counsellor. They also need to be helped to manage their own level of anxiety and distress. They are the first point of contact, often when the student is most distressed. They need to be trained and continually monitored so that they can identify cases that are definitely urgent – when it can seem that all students are expressing an urgent need – and how to go about making that decision so they can notify the Head of Service. At the same time, they need to be shown how to guard against being drawn into an inappropriate counselling relationship. All of this creates a level of stress rarely found in other secretarial posts and one that requires particular and careful management.

Psychiatrists manage their own caseload, but the Head of Service meets regularly with the psychiatrist in post to monitor the level of disturbance (both in the numbers of disturbed students and in the level of disturbance per se) presented to the service; to identify whether some counsellors refer to the psychiatrist more than others and what this might mean about the counsellor's caseload or ability to cope; and to agree what needs to be communicated to the institution [U].

All settings have their own characteristics and call for specific management skills. One of the specific skills required of a manager of a counselling service is to monitor, and manage, the psychological implications for staff and the service as a whole arising from the service's therapeutic work with students.

The Head of Service's institutional role covers all the activities that convey the reality of the work of a counselling service to those who work outside it [A,C,I,L,M,R,S,T,U]. This has special significance because of the way that services can be viewed: not all perceptions of a counselling service are founded on reality.

The presence of a counselling service in an institution produces organisational responses akin to those who come for counselling (Bell, 1995). Some idealise it, thinking it is the answer to all their needs. Some denigrate it because it reminds them of the things they would prefer not to know about themselves. Others have a realistic notion of what can and cannot be achieved. Whilst all counsellors have a responsibility to convey what the service actually does through regular contact with other people within the organisation, the Head of Service carries the greater part of this work and is also responsible for the quality of communication between those whom s/he manages [A] and the wider institution. This calls not just for good communication, feedback and organisational skills but also for skills in and understanding of organisational dynamics. It is this understanding that allows the manager to present reports [T], to contribute to committees [R,T] and to publish the results of service evaluation [U] etc.

in a way that can be accepted and heard by the institution. It also ensures that the manager views the institution itself in a realistic way and recognises that it, too, has its strengths and weaknesses, its creative and less-than-creative structures.

These institutional activities are also carried out through, for example, staff development workshops [M], liaising with tutors [L,N], providing support for Student Union welfare workers [S] and giving information and advice to all members of the university on appropriate models of welfare support [C,I].

Through all this it is the manager's task to identify and convey to the institution how the service aids the main educational task of the institution [T]. A prime example of this is showing, at a time of concern about university finance and its implications for student drop-out rates, how a well-resourced counselling service that is allowed to comment on the structures of the institution can contribute to retention rates (Rickinson and Rutherford, 1995).

3c.3 Detailed Profile: Adviser for Students with Disabilities and/or Learning Difficulties

The task profile of this small but rapidly emerging group of counselling and guidance specialists must be seen in context. As a result of the work of HEFCE and its evaluation of the special initiatives directed towards encouraging greater participation in higher education for disabled people, it has become possible to identify institutional features associated with good practice for disabled students. These are:

- genuine interest and commitment from staff at very senior level
- experienced specialist full-time staff
- appropriate financial support
- policies and procedures embedded within normal operating practices
- clear lines of responsibility
- flexibility and creativity to meet constantly changing and unpredictable demands
- good planning, especially for the long term
- opportunities for staff development
- strong links with local, regional, national and international networks.

The above are important when contemplating the context within which Advisers for Students with Disabilities and/or Learning Difficulties work. As a first step towards good quality provision, many have seen the appointment of specialist staff as being the key (Johnstone and Hurst, 1992). However, even now, responsibility for students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties is only one aspect of the duties of some individuals in some institutions. In those where there is a full-time appointment, the post involves the following:

- information [C] – for example, about the support available and the opportunities offered by the use of assistive technology
- advice [I] and guidance [D,E] to students at a number of stages in their academic career (pre-entry, on-course, and post-qualification) and on a range of matters (academic, non-academic, personal, financial)
- guidance to staff (academic and non-academic) [D,E] on a range of issues relating to students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties, e.g. methods of academic assessment and examinations
- guidance to the institution on policy and provision for students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties [A] – a key focus here being on access and equal opportunities.

In many institutions, supporting students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties involves many different sections and services, so there is a need for co-ordination of what is available [S].

Within the formal structure of institutions, there is often a committee / working group with responsibility for disability issues. The Adviser/Co-ordinator will be a member of this group and will be expected to identify issues for discussion and submit regular reports about the work in hand. This is linked to the monitoring and evaluation of policies and provision [U].

Many institutions set aside a budget for this work, so a major responsibility is for the spending of this money in appropriate and effective ways [A] – for example, supporting those students who do not get funded from other sources, or purchasing items of equipment. Also, Advisers/Co-ordinators work with students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties to ensure that they receive the additional financial support to which they are entitled from their Local Education Authority (the Disabled Students Allowance) which can be used to pay for some of the services provided by the institution that are seen as necessary for the student to study effectively.

One aspect contributing to successful policy is a high level of disability awareness amongst staff throughout the institution [S]. Advisers/Co-ordinators initiate and participate in a number of events designed to raise awareness. Equally important is the staff development of the Advisers/Co-ordinators themselves. Apart from attending training courses relevant to their professional needs, time is spent attending regional and national meetings and conferences in order to become aware of practices elsewhere and developments at the level of national policy. Membership of SKILL: the National Bureau for Students with Disabilities, is very important for this.

Despite a lack of research into the roles and tasks of these guidance workers, a scrutiny of vacancy requirements may give some indication of what they do. Staff recruited to the posts of Adviser/Co-ordinator usually have:

- education to first degree level or equivalent
- knowledge of disabilities and disability issues
- prior experience of working with disabled people, preferably in an educational setting
- knowledge of the education system, especially higher education, and of related agencies
- experience of financial management and budgeting
- effective presentation skills
- efficient organisational skills
- well-developed interpersonal skills.

Table 4 – Training and qualifications

Service/system	*Occupational roles*	*Minimum educational qualification for entry*	*Initial training in guidance and counselling*	*In-service training in guidance and counselling*
Careers Services	Director	1st degree	None required	Cert. CGHE*, Dip CGHE*, MA CGHE*
	Careers Adviser	1st degree	None required	Cert. CGHE*, Dip CGHE*, MA CGHE*
	Information Officer	1st degree	None required	Cert. CGHE*, Dip CGHE*, MA CGHE*
	Placement Officer	1st degree preferred	None required	Cert. CGHE*, Dip CGHE*, MA CGHE*
	Job Shop Manager	Studying for, or obtained, 1st degree	None required	None
	Lecturer in Careers Education	1st degree	None required	Informal training by Careers Service*
Student Support and Development Systems	Careers Tutor	1st degree	None required	Informal training by Careers Service*
	Personal Tutor	1st degree	None required	Institution-based short courses*
	Enterprise Manager	1st degree	None required	None
	Student Development Officer	1st degree preferred	None required	None
	International Student Adviser	None specified as essential but normally 1st degree expected	None required	None
Counselling Services	Head of Counselling	1st degree or equivalent	Diploma in Counselling 1 year full-time, 2/3 years part-time	4 days per year
	Counsellor			
	Secretary/Receptionist	GCSE + secretarial training	Often, basic counselling	None
	Medically Qualified Practitioner (Psychiatrist)	1st degree and postgraduate medical training plus specialisation in psychiatry	Placement in Health Service Psychotherapy Department	Continuous
Services for Students with Disability and/or Learning Difficulties	Students with Disability and/or Learning Difficulties Adviser	None specified as essential but normally 1st degree expected	None required	Almost none (only University of Central Lancashire and University of Plymouth)*
Admissions and Access Services	Access Officer/Tutor	None specified as essential but usually 1st degree or equivalent	None required	Certificates and Diplomas in adult guidance at both further and higher education level, including NVQ and university-accredited qualifications*
	Admissions Tutor	1st degree	None required	Institution-based short courses*

*these courses are optional.

4 Training and Qualifications

4a Introduction

A summary of training and qualifications (either required or optional) for the different occupational roles within the five main services/system is given in Table 4.

4b Commentary

In the UK, the training of the different occupations in counselling and guidance in higher education has developed quite separately both from one another and from training for comparable guidance roles in other education sectors. As a result, training provision and professional accreditation differ greatly between different counselling and guidance occupations, and workers with extensive experience in one field are not able, at present, to gain exemption from training in other counselling and guidance specialisms or to be accredited on the basis of their existing expertise. However, the Standing Conference of Associations for Guidance in Educational Settings (1988-93) and more recently the National Advisory Council for Careers and Educational Guidance (which was established in 1994 and is commonly known as 'The Guidance Council') have offered a forum for dialogue and strategic planning between different counselling and guidance professions (on a cross-sectoral basis and not only for professionals working in higher education). The Lead Body for Advice, Guidance, Counselling and Psychotherapy published its first draft of occupational standards for these professions in 1995, offering a single 'map' of the relevant occupational competencies and knowledge and how these might be demonstrated by a wide range of practitioners in these areas. The standards are designed as a basis on which more specific training delivery can be developed, and work on professional standards and qualifications is progressing. The Lead Body has now bid to become a National Training Organisation which will, for the first time, consider the tasks and training for these occupations cohesively in order to ensure the relevance and quality of future provision.

4b.1 Careers Services

Careers Service Staff (Director, Careers Adviser, Information Officer)

Careers work in HE is an all-graduate profession, though there is no preferred degree subject and entrants may have obtained their degree through full-time or part-time study. Traditionally, careers staff in HE have been recruited from a variety of backgrounds: some guidance/counselling, some educational, some industrial/commercial and some information/data-based. The result of this mixed recruitment is that no directly relevant initial training or qualification is required. Thus a recent survey (reported within AGCAS in March 1996) found that 39% of careers staff had come into the profession with a Diploma in Careers Guidance; a further 34% had some other postgraduate/post-experience qualification, most frequently in Librarianship or Teaching; and another 24% had postgraduate degrees in a range of academic disciplines such as Chemistry.

AGCAS, the professional body to which all Careers Services belong, has, via a full-time Training Manager and a voluntary Training and Development Sub-Committee, provided in-service training on both a national and a regional basis for many years. This training is well supported, with 60% of the membership having taken part at some time in their careers. Access to training within AGCAS is, however, effectively limited at present to its membership under the terms of its charitable status. Thus academics who become involved in the delivery of careers guidance, careers staff in non-HE institutions and private practitioners are all excluded from this specialist

training at present. Consideration is being given to creating opportunities for their inclusion in relevant training.

Most AGCAS training is carried out by practitioners who receive additional training for this role, their time being donated by their individual institutions. Courses are individually budgeted, with all costs being recovered from the fee charged to participants. Most Careers Services will have a training budget as part of their funding from their institution. They may therefore choose to 'buy' AGCAS national or regional training, to use outside providers and/or to use institutional staff development provision. In some cases, Careers Advisers will take their university's teaching course for academics. Some institutions will not fund further academic study for their own staff, in which case MA candidates may have to be self-funding.

There is a post-experience professional qualification for both guidance and information staff which is administered by AGCAS and assessed and accredited by Reading University. The Certificate in Careers Guidance in Higher Education is the first level of this qualification and provides initial training in the core knowledge and skills of careers work. The second level of the qualification, the Diploma in Careers Guidance in Higher Education, develops core knowledge and skills to a professional level and offers training in a range of optional specialist areas. A third level, an MA, was introduced in 1997. This provides an academic rather than a professional qualification and has a research focus.

The qualification is optional and to date about 20% of the membership are engaged in or have completed the programme. Entry to the qualification is open to all who meet the entry requirements but non-AGCAS members are charged the 'true cost' of the training which can be prohibitive. Candidates are accepted on to the Certificate without formal entry requirements. Diploma candidates must either have three years' experience of careers work in an HE setting or have completed the Certificate before being admitted.

The recent introduction of national practitioner standards for guidance, and the development of NVQs based upon them, are influencing training and qualifications. A mapping exercise has been carried out between the DipCGHE and the Guidance NVQ level 4 (approximately to degree/postgraduate level), identifying the additional work that needs to be covered for candidates to obtain both qualifications.

In addition to these qualifications, a wide range of non-accredited training is provided. Most induction training takes place within the separate institutions and is organised and carried out by the individual Careers Service. AGCAS offers some regional and national 'overview' courses for staff with up to two years' experience. Introductory interview/counselling training is available to new careers advisers within three months of their start date.

The most significant recent development in training has been the introduction of national management seminars. There is considerable pressure on senior careers staff to manage people, budgets, strategy, etc. and to play a part in the policy formation of the institution. The seminar programme is still developing to meet those needs in an acceptable format, using a mix of internal and external resources.

AGCAS also has a system of Regional Training Co-ordinators who organise an annual programme of events for the services in their geographical area. Traditionally these sessions were knowledge-based, including employer talks/visits, information 'swap shops' and so on. Although these kinds of events still make up a proportion of the programme, there is a trend to incorporate more skill-development courses, particularly for administrative and other support staff who are less likely to be given the chance to attend national training events.

Work is at present being carried out on the development of a portfolio system for continuing professional development. It is yet to be determined how this would be accredited, for with a large proportion of the profession having no recognised professional qualification, it is necessary to provide a way of recognising experience and expertise, and encouraging continued personal development. There is, in general, an increasing need for careers staff in HE to demonstrate their professional credibility both internally, to academics and administrators, and externally, to sponsors, government agencies and other guidance professionals.

Job Shop Manager

Training and qualifications for these staff are very variable. Some may have recruitment agency training and qualifications; others may be part of a Careers Service and therefore have access to AGCAS training. Where the Job Shop is part of the Students' Union, students with no qualifications or experience or any access to formal training may staff it.

4b.2 Student Support and Development Systems

Careers Tutor/Personal Tutor

At present there is no formal training in guidance and counselling for staff in academic departments. In some institutions, some elementary counselling training will form part of any course provided for new lecturers. Any training in careers guidance is likely to be provided internally by the Careers Service. This may consist simply of the lecturer observing a session taken by a careers practitioner before running it themselves, generally using materials supplied by the Careers Service. The issue of training for academic staff is one that AGCAS is beginning to address. The Institute of Learning and Teaching, currently being established on the basis of a Dearing Report recommendation, may well offer a further vehicle to deliver this training to academics.

Enterprise Manager

Once again, there is, in general, no formal training in guidance and/or counselling available to these staff. Where units are closely linked to or even part of the Careers Service, they may have access to the AGCAS provision. Other sources of training may include Staff and Educational Development Association and Universities and Colleges Staff Development Association events. Both organisations offer training and materials predominantly concerned with teaching and learning techniques, including the development of transferable skills.

Student Development Officer

There is no required training for Student Development Officers although an informal network exists, based mainly on attending regular conferences mounted by, for example, the Society for Research into Higher Education. Student Development Officers may participate – or contribute to – institutional staff development as a basis for acquiring specific expertise, but this is more likely to focus on the pedagogic aspects of their work rather than any guidance activities they may undertake.

International Student Adviser

International Student Advisers are not required to undertake any formal pre-entry training or continuing professional development. However, the United Kingdom Overseas Students Association runs a well-established series of courses, both regionally and nationally, and there are a number of international networks which provide the opportunity for networking and professional development through conferences and summer schools – for example, the European Association for International Education.

4b.3 Counselling Services

Head of Counselling; Counsellor

The pattern of qualification in counselling in the UK is in a process of change. There are two distinct routes to qualification and accreditation. The first draws on the established identity of counselling as something that is learned 'on the job'. Organisations (particularly those in the voluntary sector) recruit and train their own staff and thus people build their qualifications incrementally. Through this route, academic qualifications are not seen as a pre-requisite; the quality of the person is considered to be a more important indicator of potential to train and qualify as a counsellor. A small number come through this route to student counselling. The second route is through formal training courses in universities and colleges or in private institutions (often validated by universities). It is this latter route (the most usual way into student counselling) that is most evidently in a process of change.

Until recently most of these courses were at Diploma level, in line with other professional diplomas within the British educational system. As the system as a whole has moved towards Master's degrees – which in the past were seen as appropriate only for those who wished to pursue an academic career – so counselling diplomas have become, or are in the process of developing into, Master's degrees. Most recently we have seen the advent of a limited number of doctoral programmes in counselling. Thus we have the interesting situation that newly qualified people coming into student counselling will hold a Master's degree but the more experienced people (including some Heads of Service) may be less academically qualified in this area.

An important feature of the British system, in contrast with most other European countries, is the acceptance that the first degree does not have to be linked with the professional diploma/Master's degree. It is not unusual for a historian to become an accountant or a scientist or a lawyer. Thus the first degree set as the usual minimum requirement for entry into student counselling does not have to be in psychology or a related field. If we add to this that counselling has traditionally been a second profession, i.e. people come to it later in life, we often find that newly qualified counsellors already have a first degree, Master's or PhD in their original field. These features have implications for any proposed European Master's degree. A further complication is that some who come into student counselling are qualified psychologists, while others are psychotherapists with postgraduate training ranging from two to four years' part-time study depending on their theoretical orientation (but not necessarily with a degree in psychology).

An additional issue is the necessary recognition by the professional associations. AUCC (formerly ASC) has had an accreditation system since 1979, and in 1997 this was subsumed into that of the BAC. Both these systems recognise that professional competence comes not just from initial training but also from the continuous process of supervised practice, a minimum period of personal therapy, evidence of continued professional development, and a requirement that the practitioner works within the BAC Code of Ethics and Practice for Counsellors. The minimum requirements for accreditation are 450 hours of training (showing a balance between theory and practice) and 450 hours' supervised practice. Accreditation must be renewed every five years, showing evidence of casework, continued supervised practice within an ethical framework (with a report from the supervisor) and continued professional development. It is usual for posts advertised for student counsellors to stipulate that the applicant must be an accredited practitioner.

The most recent development has been the advent of the UK Register of Counsellors, which is a voluntary, self-regulating system, recognised by the Government, that aims to protect the public and to give assurances of safety and accountability. The route to

Independent Practitioner status (the level at which most university counsellors would operate) is initially through the accreditation schemes of BAC and the Confederation of Scottish Counselling Agencies. It is expected that within the next five years all eligible counsellors will be registered. Advertisements are already appearing for student counsellors who are registered either with the UK Register of Counsellors or with the United Kingdom Council of Psychotherapy or who are Chartered Psychologists. There is considerable feeling that these registers should move towards statutory registration, thus further protecting the public by making it more difficult for inadequately trained people to practise. There are also moves within the European Association for Counselling and the European Association of Psychotherapy to develop European diplomas and accreditation/registration schemes. Whilst these will be in generic counselling or psychotherapy, those who work in university counselling settings will find their positions influenced by these moves. With respect to the developments within the European Association for Counselling, it is worth noting that the Irish Association for Counselling and Therapy and BAC already keep in close contact and their criteria for individual accreditation are similar. There is a strong possibility that mutual recognition of these schemes will be achieved, leading to greater mobility and easier registration and employment in either country. First reports from the working group within the European Association for Counselling suggest that its criteria may well exceed those of these two established schemes.

A parallel process has been the development of nationally agreed standards of competence (NVQs) in counselling and psychotherapy through the work of the Lead Body for Advice, Guidance, Counselling and Psychotherapy. This work is in its final stages and is moving towards the establishment of competence-based qualifications in counselling and psychotherapy. Student counsellors have been actively involved in this process and expect it to have an impact on the field. Although this route to qualification will appeal most to those who have developed their skills 'on the job', this work is already influencing more traditional, academically oriented courses which are adopting the language and methodology of competence to practise. It has also been an avenue through which the core of competencies common to advice, guidance, counselling and psychotherapy have been identified, with particular emphasis being placed on the competencies that give evidence of the ethical approach shared across all these fields. It will also appeal to secretaries/receptionists who will find through this process a way of validating, at a national level, the basic counselling skills they have learned through their work in a university counselling setting. The essence of this qualification framework is that people can start at a basic level and progress eventually through further levels to a full professional qualification by giving evidence of skills they have learned whilst doing their job.

Both the traditional routes to counselling qualification and the newer NVQ systems are costly, and since most people finance their own training, considerable attention has been given recently to how these routes to qualification might be made accessible to financially disadvantaged groups. Distance learning, which can be equally expensive, is not seen as a real option because of the emphasis on supervised practice and the fact that theory must be learned in conjunction with practice.

Secretary/Receptionist

In addition to secretarial and clerical qualifications, secretaries and receptionists in counselling services may receive some in-house training in basic counselling processes.

Medically Qualified Practitioner (Psychiatrist)

These fully qualified medical practitioners undertake practical placements as part of their post-registration specialisation in psychiatry and engage in the continuous updating which would be expected of a Specialist Medical Consultant. This embraces

therapeutic counselling approaches, where this is the area in which they practise. It would be unlikely, however, to address wider issues of guidance, multi-cultural problems, the changing nature of employment, etc.

4b.4 Services for Students with Disabilities and/or Learning Difficulties

Adviser for Students with Disabilities and/or Learning Difficulties

As seen in Section 3c.3, staff working within the specialist field of supporting students with disabilities and learning difficulties are not required to have formal qualifications. Until recently there were no specialist qualifications available for either experienced practitioners or beginners coming new to the work. Some attention is now being given to this, although even now all training is optional. The most comprehensive programme has been developed and validated at the University of Central Lancashire and so further details will be given about this. There is also a module within the University of Plymouth's integrated Master's programme.

The programme at the University of Central Lancashire can be delivered using a range of strategies. For those just starting out on this work, the initial qualification/course involves regular attendance of around 30 hours over a period of a year at the university. The other more advanced courses, given their national recruitment, are delivered at a number of residential weekend sessions. It is also possible for more experienced staff to apply for and be granted accreditation for prior learning and exemptions from some modules. In Spring 1998, the initial course was delivered on an intensive basis to Advisers from universities in Sweden.

The programme lends itself to some degree of distance learning although this has not yet been considered in any detail. Distance learning (and also franchising) could help to reduce the costs of the course (given the current delivery in residential weekend schools using local hotels, costs have to be high in order to cover expenses). Furthermore, the introduction of the programme has coincided with financial cutbacks. It is therefore becoming less likely that institutions will pay unless they give a very high priority to this work; and it will be difficult for institutions to cover costs from their own resources.

The programme was developed by a team of experienced staff from many institutions and organisations outside the University of Central Lancashire. The University took the lead and progressed the programme through the necessary stages towards validation. During the meetings of the development group, a number of structures were discussed including a competence-based model. After much debate it was decided to subsume competencies into a more open-ended model.

The programme links with SKILL: the National Bureau for Students with Disabilities, and with the National Federation of Access Centres. Other organisations, such as the Royal National Institute for the Blind, are aware of the programme. Currently, strategies are being investigated to seek the involvement of and recognition by organisations whose interests lie in more general staff development in higher education, such as the Universities and Colleges Staff Development Association and the Staff and Educational Development Association.

4b.5 Admissions and Access Services

A growing range of certificates and diplomas in adult guidance at both further and higher education level is becoming available to support Access Officers and Tutors and this may be supplemented by informal networking within a local community or region through adult guidance networks. The 'Wider Entry to Higher Education' Sub-Committee of AGCAS has prepared a resource pack for admissions staff to alert them to the

changing needs of non-standard and mature learners. Quality standards for pre-entry guidance are being developed, both nationally and locally, and this is likely to be an area in higher education which will see training development over the next few years.

Admissions Officers and Admissions Tutors are not required to undertake any initial training or continuing professional development and are likely to have access mainly to courses mounted within their own institutions or by the Universities Central Admissions Service. In the case of administrative staff, courses for university administrators which deal with admissions procedures and registration are available through Universities and Colleges Staff Development Association.

4c Detailed Training Profiles

4c.1 Detailed Training Profile: Careers Adviser

Until relatively recently, training for Careers Advisers in HE was informal, was not assessed and carried no accreditation. As noted in Section 4b.1, a post-experience professional qualification was introduced by AGCAS in 1992 in collaboration with Reading University. This qualification, although still optional, has provided professional training and accreditation. There were initially two levels – a Certificate and a Diploma. A third level, an MA, has now been introduced. All levels of the qualification are modular in format.

The Certificate seeks to give inexperienced Careers Advisers a clear basis, both theoretical and practical, for their role. They are required to undertake four modules from a menu of six. There are two compulsory or core modules that are considered fundamental to careers work: one covering theories of guidance, and the other a 'context' course looking at how Careers Services operate and the issues they are facing at present. Candidates then choose two further modules from 'Foundation Guidance Skills', 'Group Work', 'Liaison with Employers' and 'Working in the Information Room'. These optional modules provide development in the basic skills most relevant to their particular role.

The Diploma is designed as the professional qualification for Careers Advisers in HE. It is a post-experience qualification and registrants will therefore have been working in an HE Careers Service for at least three years, or will have completed the Certificate.

The Diploma structure has recently been updated in view of the increasing diversity of roles within Careers Services. Registrants are required to pass four modules – two core, one role-related and one optional. As with the Certificate, the core comprises a 'theories' module and a 'context' module. The third module is selected from a restricted list and provides training in the main skill component of the particular role of the registrant – Guidance Skills, Group Work, Information Management, Employment Liaison, etc. The content of the final module is entirely optional and is selected to meet individual and service needs.

It is envisaged that the new MA will go some way to meeting the recognised need for research into HE careers work by encouraging practitioners to undertake substantial dissertation projects. The course is again in a modular format with a 'taught' element of four or six modules, together with the dissertation. Entry to the MA is unrestricted, with holders of the DipCGHE receiving some exemptions from the taught modules, and an accelerated route being provided for holders of the DipCG, the professional qualification of Careers Advisers outside HE. The taught element will comprise the modules offered at the Diploma level. Three modules will be compulsory, these being the guidance skills module, the theories module and the independent research project. The completion of the taught element will gain the award of Post-Graduate

Diploma in Careers Guidance in Higher Education (PGDipCGHE). The addition of a dissertation will lead to the award of an MA in Careers Guidance in Higher Education.

The modules are already offered in a variety of modes and this is being expanded at present. Each module is designed to meet a list of learning outcomes which are then used as the basis for assessment. The learning outcomes are reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that they meet current training needs and reflect the changing demands being placed on Careers Advisers in HE.

Members of AGCAS who have not registered for the qualification, or have already completed it, can and do undertake individual Diploma and Certificate modules as part of their continued professional development.

This range of training modules provides training to meet most of the tasks outlined in Table 3, in particular individual and group counselling, facilitation, coaching, teaching and liaison. The information-related tasks, whilst being covered within the qualification modules, are significantly augmented through regional training events and employer visits. The general management task, although forming only a small part of most Careers Advisers' job description, is one that is potentially growing. Some Careers Advisers now take on responsibility for the management of projects, whilst other more senior staff aspire to or already assume management roles within their service. An annual programme of management seminars covering skills development, strategic awareness and planning is meeting these needs.

Additional specialist training courses are developed and run by expert groups within AGCAS. Thus, training is available on issues of sex and race awareness, on the needs of students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties, on use of computer guidance software and on collecting and using statistical data. One such group, the European Sub-Committee, provides particular information and training events to do with Europe (recent events have included a workshop on 'Education and Employment in Northern Europe' and a study trip to Israel). A minimum of two such events are held annually. Informal networking is also facilitated by the acceptance of international Careers Advisers as correspondent members of AGCAS and the organising of an additional international day as part of the AGCAS Biennial Conference.

Due to the wide range of training on offer and the ability to review and adapt this training on an annual basis, there are few clear gaps in the current provision. For those enrolled on qualification courses, the wide choice of modules may well mean that an individual does not receive training for all tasks within their job description. However, as modules are also available to non-registrants, an individual may participate in more than the minimum number of modules necessary to obtain the qualification. Nonetheless, the number of Careers Advisers choosing to study for the AGCAS/Reading University qualifications still represents a small percentage of the total workforce. It is possible that the Quality Standard for careers education and guidance in higher education currently being developed by QAAHE in consultation with AGCAS may stimulate greater interest in acquiring a professional qualification.

4c.2 Detailed Training Profile: Head of Counselling Service

BAC's directory of training courses (BAC, 1996) lists 547 courses. Not all of these lead to a qualification that enables individuals to apply for accreditation or work in a university setting. Nevertheless, this plethora of courses indicates the degree of complication, and even confusion, in the field.

In an attempt to clarify this for potential student counsellors, ASC developed a guide to training courses. In this they asked established course providers to identify the features of their curriculum that would be in line with what ASC described as essential

and desirable features of a training in student counselling (it was never the intention of ASC that courses in the guide would be assessed).

BAC used the early ASC guide to inform the development of its own course accreditation scheme. Because this scheme is still relatively young and seen by some to be expensive, not all courses have opted to join the scheme, although there has been a marked increase in applicants recently. Those who have completed an accredited course are automatically accepted for the training element of individual accreditation. Those from other courses have to fill in lengthy forms so that the content of the course can be evaluated by the accreditation assessors.

For many years, Birkbeck College in the University of London ran the only Diploma course in Student Counselling in the country and that course has had considerable impact on student counselling. The diploma joined with other courses in the same department to form an MSc in Psychodynamic Counselling, with a first intake in 1996. Although this means that the specific Diploma has disappeared, there is a commitment that regular intakes to the MSc will concentrate on work within educational settings. The course was designed so that participants could reflect on their experience of being a student, in the present as well as the past. Each part, including the examinations process, gave members an opportunity to be, and to think about being, a student, which then informed practice in the institutions from which the members came. There was also a commitment to the organisation of the course itself, thus furthering the members' understanding of groups within an organisational context. This organisational component would suggest that it is not a coincidence that a large number of heads of services were members of the course. The fact that a high proportion of the Chairs of ASC/AUCC were graduates of the original diploma course might be seen as further evidence that it gives people confidence to take on challenging national roles on behalf of counselling.

The Birkbeck course, as its title suggests, has its theoretical framework firmly within the psychoanalytic tradition (based on the work of Freud, Klein and Winnicott) and this is true for a large number of other courses. Others have as their focus the theory of person-centred counselling (based on the work of Carl Rogers). In 1993, BAC carried out a survey of its members. Included in the questions was one on theoretical orientation. The two most frequently cited models were psychodynamic and person-centred counselling. The membership of AUCC contributed to the survey and we must assume that the balance of theoretical models within AUCC mirrors that of BAC as a whole. A small number of people will have trained within other theoretical models, such as gestalt, transactional analysis and cognitive behavioural, and an increasing number are becoming qualified in group therapy. Although the numbers of those trained in cognitive behavioural therapy is small, this model has had an impact on student counselling, particularly in work with study and examination anxiety. Usually practitioners who have trained in, and identify themselves with, the main models have added some skills in cognitive behavioural therapy, either by attending workshops or by learning from more experienced practitioners.

Despite this well-developed framework for training and accreditation for what is now an established profession in the UK, there are a number of gaps which have particular relevance for those in student counselling:

1 Most courses in counselling and psychotherapy train people to work with long-term clients or patients. They have not caught up with the need to develop skills in short-term therapy that go beyond dealing with the superficial or with clearly identifiable problems.

2 The emphasis on practice has meant that empirical study and research has only recently attracted attention. The new Master's degrees are beginning to address

this to some extent, but there is still a need for opportunities to research and evaluate the process of counselling. This is particularly relevant to those working within university settings where the culture has moved much more to one of 'value for money'. Where there has been attention to research, most courses and practitioners in this country look towards the USA where counselling is even more established. However, the setting and cultural implications of the research mean that it is not always applicable to the British setting. Very little attention is paid in the UK to research carried out in other European countries, probably because of the language difficulties, and this needs to be addressed.

3 Courses are generic in nature, i.e. they attempt to train people to work in a multiplicity of settings. This means that there is little reference to the specific issues of working with a student population.

4 Courses are practitioner-based, which usually means the practice of counselling with individuals or with groups. Student Counsellors need to understand and be able to work with the dynamics of organisations as well as with individuals.

5 There is little in the courses that formally prepares people to manage counselling services and most who move from practitioner to manager have to acquire the relevant skills as they go along. There are specific issues to do with managing a group of therapeutic practitioners that cannot be learned from the general canon on management practice.

4c.3 Detailed Training Profile: Adviser for Students with Disabilities and/or Learning Difficulties

The training available for Advisers/Co-ordinators working with higher education students with disabilities and/or learning difficulties can take many forms. For example, staff might work in association with a range of groups and organisations offering disability awareness training. It is widely accepted that disabled people themselves should be closely involved in this. There are many groups which can provide such training and any list could only identify a small sample. With regard to professional development, however, there is only one well-established course and a detailed profile of this is the best indicator to date of training provision in this area. The programme at the University of Central Lancashire, already mentioned in Section 4b.3, has the following structure:

- Introductory module – an overview of issues affecting students and institutions and aspects of national policy and provision. Successful completion of this is recognised by the award of a University Certificate. For those with experience of working with students who have disabilities and/or learning difficulties, it is likely that exemption can be granted. (This is the programme followed by the Advisers from Sweden: see page 46 above.)
- Four modules covering: (i) Disability, Society and Education; (ii) Students with Disabilities and/or Learning Difficulties; (iii) Institutional and National Policies and Provision; and (iv) Developing Interpersonal and Professional Skills. Successful completion of some or all of these leads to different levels of award. Again, experienced practitioners can seek exemption from two of these modules if they are registered for a more advanced award.
- The Post-Graduate Diploma in Professional Development is awarded for successful completion of the four modules plus a lengthy research-based investigation. Should the individual wish to make further progress within the University of Central Lancashire's system based on the Post-Graduate Diploma, this achievement is regarded as being half-way towards the completion of a Master's degree.

5 Conclusion

It can be concluded from this report that guidance provision in higher education in the UK is comparatively well developed in some areas of specialism but is patchy or non-existent in others. In addition, an increasingly wide range of staff in higher education do, in fact, deliver some aspects of guidance work, often without conscious awareness that this is part of their activities. Related to this is an urgent need for a more generally accepted definition of guidance in relation to lifelong learning. The definitions developed for this report (see pages 19-21 above) would appear to offer a sufficiently broad and flexible definition of the duties involved, but there are also other definitions of guidance which need to be more widely communicated throughout education and work.

The Counselling Services and Careers Services in higher education are becoming more highly professionalised, with their own distinct accreditation which is in the process of becoming linked to the National Vocational Qualification framework. In other areas, even the comparatively well-resourced and professionally-staffed Disability Services for example, there is not yet a strong professional body fully underpinned by accreditation.

Educational guidance and student learning support is, perhaps, one of the weakest areas, in part because it is only recently that this was recognised as a discrete professional activity. Particularly in the more traditional higher education institutions, it is seen as one of the roles of the academic who will decide how far and in what ways to accept this responsibility.

The dramatic growth in student numbers and the new requirements for students to pay part of their fees is likely to see rapid growth in student development provision as the learner becomes much more overtly a 'client'. Up to the time of writing, guidance has not been a high priority on the agenda of most universities. It is of particular importance, perhaps, in the new universities which may be supporting large numbers of part-time, work-based and non-standard entrants, and in all universities which operate an effective credit-transfer system.

There are, however, significant indications of change. 'Guidance and Learner Support' has become one of the six criteria for the Teaching Quality Assessment exercise; while the Dearing Report proposes that all universities adopt a framework for quality standards in guidance based on that published by the former Higher Education Quality Council. Change is also implied in the recommendation that careers guidance should become more fully integrated into academic affairs.

There need be greater efforts made by guidance workers within universities to establish good networks with each other and with related processes within the community. This is already happening in some institutions. The University of Derby, for example, has established a Centre for Guidance Studies which supports research, networking and the dissemination of good practice, although this is not confined to guidance in higher education (the Centre also supports work which covers areas such as guidance in schools, in further education colleges, and for those in employment). McNair (1997) predicts: '... with a move towards more lifelong learning, with individuals moving between educational institutions and employers more frequently, co-ordination and sharing of expertise becomes more important. This matters if individuals are to receive a consistent quality of service, and since similar changes and pressure have been affecting all guidance agencies there is much to be gained from learning together' (p. 22).

A major issue to be addressed within higher education institutions in the UK is clarifying the roles and responsibilities of 'first-in-line' guidance staff – academics who often have a powerful influence on plans and perceptions, but virtually no training or conscious awareness of the guidance process – and 'third-in-line' guidance specialists. It is also essential to ensure that the 'first-in-line' and 'second-in-line' providers have a greater understanding of the processes of educational guidance in particular, in order to fill what is currently a major gap in provision.

Perceptions of the need for a European Master's degree in Counselling and Guidance in Higher Education to address changing issues and challenges for guidance workers in higher education across Europe elicit, in the UK, different responses, depending on the present infrastructure for guidance and professional support within each of the counselling and guidance professions. For therapeutic counsellors, with their strong professional accreditation, such a development would only be attractive as an initial training if it were to allow practitioners to register with UK professional associations. Furthermore, it would need to take cognizance of developments on accreditation/ registration within the European Association for Counselling and the European Association for Psychotherapeutic Counselling.

For Careers Services, a European Master's degree in Counselling and Guidance in Higher Education may be able to offer an acceptable course to an often highly experienced but largely 'unqualified' group of professionals. This group requires a means of accrediting their knowledge and experience coupled with a chance to assess and, if necessary, to update their skills without diminishing their self-esteem or challenging their status.

For staff working in Disability Services, and in the other counselling and guidance services outlined in this report, the lack of UK training provision may well attract practitioners to a European course which is focused generically on the needs of higher education students. However, this should be balanced against the likelihood of rapid growth within the UK of generic and specialist guidance training.

If a European Master's degree in Counselling and Guidance in Higher Education could be acquired in a modular fashion, this would add to its marketability since it would enable counselling and guidance practitioners in all specialisms to add modules which are not readily available within their own professional accreditation system or within current UK provision.

Whilst the likelihood (indeed necessity) of distance and open learning delivery as the major approach of such a course may have appeal to hard-pressed practitioners who may prefer to undertake professional development in their own time, there will be difficulties in gaining credibility unless it is linked firmly to day-to-day practice. In the UK, there is an increasing move across all professions for theoretical and conceptual learning to have this practical base.

Finally, there is the issue of cost. At present, availability of institutional funds to support the initial or continued professional development of counsellors and guidance workers is extremely limited, especially where courses are not a requirement to practise. In addition, a Master's degree is generally considered to be an academic qualification rather than evidence of professional training, and within many universities, internal funding is rarely available to support employees in academic study. Thus most participants in the UK may have to be self-financing.

It is indisputable, however, that more developed and consistent initial training and continuous personal development must be made available as a matter of urgency if the most highly qualified members of the European workforce are to be adequately supported in their progress through learning and work, not just for their personal satisfaction but also for the economic health of the European Union.

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List of Abbreviations

AGCAS	Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services
ASC	Association for Student Counselling
AUCC	Association for University and College Counselling
BAC	British Association for Counselling
EHE	Enterprise in Higher Education
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
NVQ	National Vocational Qualification
QAAHE	Quality Assurance Agency (Higher Education)

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