

research network that had developed previous groups – and examples of resulting research projects were 'showcased'. The future of ECADOC, now that the funding has ceased, was also discussed, supported by the supervisors/partners present.

11. The closing session was well managed with a very well run evaluation exercise that was engaging and productive.

Main Points

The participants' evaluations will be reported elsewhere, but it is useful to note here their five top positive comments and the five top 'areas for development':

The participants valued (1) the excellent organisation of the student presentations,

(2) the possibility to share knowledge with researchers with more experience, (3) the cross-cultural sharing amongst students and academics, (4) being able to choose workshops, and workshops that covered a wide range of topics – and the sharing of ideas and diverse perspectives, and (5) having the posters available to view throughout the programme.

At future summer schools, the participants would like (1) a session on research design, (2) more workshops in small groups, (3) more opportunities for choosing workshops, and (4) to be invited to co-organise seminars with experienced researchers. Finally, they would (5) enjoy the use of different types of presentations other than PowerPoint.

Comments on the ECADOC Programme Overall

ECADOC has been a unique experience for researchers new and experienced in the professional field, and it is a pity that a new programme has not been funded. The willingness to continue in some form was clear from those involved and the commitment from the organisers is exemplary. The three-year programme has been of immense value to the participants and throughout the week in Lausanne, both students and supervisors new to the ECADOC experience praised highly the programme and the opportunity to engage in such intensive work.

It has been a pleasure to take part and to provide this report.

ECADOC Summer Schools: Quality Assurance and Enhancement

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The European Doctoral Programme in Career Guidance and Counselling (ECADOC), financially supported by the European Commission under the Lifelong Learning Programme from 2013-2016, had two key objectives. The first objective was to formulate a joint research agenda, with the aim of inspiring cooperative trans-disciplinary research in our field in the future. The second objective was to organise a first series of annual summer schools, to support the emergence of a generation of early-stage researchers, who are dedicated to the practice of career guidance and counselling, international and trans-disciplinary cooperation. The sustainability of our efforts – building something to last – has always been at the heart of this project. Hence, questions of assuring quality and reaching excellence have guided us since we first came up with the idea of ECADOC.

The purpose of this article is to share our concepts of quality assurance and enhancement for the summer schools of ECADOC, and to illustrate some of the central lessons, which we have learned over the past three years.

Concept and Goals of the ECADOC Summer Schools

The main goal of the ECADOC Summer Schools is to promote PhD candidates from all around Europe in becoming first-class researchers and respected career specialists – valued members of the academic community and the community of practitioners dedicated to career guidance and counselling – and promote intercultural cooperation among these researchers across Europe. Research on career guidance and counselling lies at the heart of the summer schools. For participants to benefit from the summer schools as much as possible, they focus on supporting the development of a range of important competences and skills needed for a successful career at the forefront of our academic discipline and the career guidance and counselling profession. Activities are balanced to support doctoral researchers in finalizing their individual research projects, in developing their competences for state-of-the-art research using both qualitative and quantitative research approaches, in assuming a role as innovators in research, policy and practice, and in becoming

members and shaping the development of a European research community.

Quality Strategy

So far, we have organised three ECADOC summer schools (Padua 2014, Paris 2015, Lausanne 2016), involving about 100 PhD and senior researchers from more than 30 countries. To secure the quality of the summer schools, we combine several measures:

Selection of participants: We only admit people to ECADOC summer schools as participants, who are currently working on a PhD related to career guidance and counselling. No exceptions are allowed, so to ensure the common goals, status and interests of the group in this respect. To assess the relevance of the research projects, our selection committee reviews a 1-page description of the PhD research project from each participant. Our selection criteria demand a broad national diversity of the participants, and we try to offer financial support in cases, where applicants wouldn't be able to cover their costs for the summer school themselves or through their universities. We accept no more than 28



participants, to assure a good group size for networking and community building. Each member of the selection committee evaluates the applications of all applicants, who haven't been selected by ECADOC partners, so to enable fair, criteria-based judgments when there are too many suitable applicants (which has generally been the case so far).

Understanding the participants' interests and preferences: Before the first summer schools, we asked participants for feedback on the objectives of the summer schools, and on their training preferences, using online surveys. Since the second summer school, we have begun to ask for ideas, wishes and recommendations from participants regarding future summer schools via a joint Delphi evaluation at the end of the summer school, and a quantitative evaluation several weeks after the summer school. The Delphi evaluation allows each participant to stress positive aspects and points for improvement, which can then be endorsed by all other participants (so to see, how many people share the assessments). The quantitative survey then asks for feedback to standardised questions (e.g. quality of each workshop, distribution of time to different activities). Participants are also asked to specify, which kinds of workshops, contents, and activities they would enjoy in the future, allowing them to formulate their personal interests and preferences freely.

Peer review of summer school: The scientific committee puts together the summer school's programme, under the leadership of the summer school's host. Once a first draft is ready, we collect feedback from the community of all ECADOC partners, i.e., the senior academics who jointly support the programme. We try to implement as many proposals as possible to enhance the programme. At the summer schools, we invite a colleague with a lot of experience in the supervision of doctoral researchers – currently Hazel Reid from the Canterbury Christ Church University – to observe all activities of the summer schools and to speak with participants, so to provide us with critically-constructive feedback after the event. We ensure that our peer evaluators don't have a conflict of interest in terms of evaluating their own work, but we believe it to be good that they are members of our academic community, who themselves want the summer schools to be excellent.

Preparatory activities expected from contributors: All contributors, particularly

people offering workshops, methodological seminars, keynotes, and food for thought, are asked to provide an abstract. The scientific committee uses these abstracts to finalise the programme and to ask contributors for adjustments, if necessary. We expect workshops and seminars to dedicate at least half of the time to activities, which actively involve the participants, e.g., group discussions or exercises. Additionally, contributors are asked to provide literature for deepened learning, which is made available to participants via a Moodle platform. Contributors are also asked to constructively work with the diversity (age, academic disciplines, research paradigms, English-speaking competence) of the participants.

Preparatory activities expected from all participants: We are convinced that the participants' preparation for the summer school activities is just as important for the quality and enjoyment of learning, as our own preparation. All participants are required to engage in preparatory activities, including the preparation of poster presentations of their research projects (beginning with the third summer school), and the preparation of a presentation for collective academic supervision. Collective academic supervision is the point of the summer school, where the participants work together in small groups of four doctoral researchers, moderated by senior academics, where each participant shares a challenge of her/his PhD project, and receives feedback from peers.

Scientific committee monitoring at the summer school: During the summer schools, at least one member of the scientific committee is always present, so to keep an eye on the process, and intervene, if necessary. The summer school's host is relieved from any sorts of supervisory activities, to be able to focus on the management of the event. The members of the scientific committee regularly touch base to discuss the development of the summer school, and make changes to the programme, if necessary.

Community building: Developing a European research community is both a goal of our summer schools, and a means of quality assurance. We want our participants to enjoy a community spirit at the summer schools, including (but not limited to) a culture of mutual respect, openness to diversity, authenticity, and inclusiveness. At the beginning of the summer schools, we organise ice-breaking activities to evoke an ambiance, where everybody feels safe to

speak with anyone else, seeking for commonalities, but also accepting differences (in line with Scott Peck's approach to community building). As scientific committee members, we try to lead by example, and intervene, where necessary, to support a positive community-building process and the development of shared norms of fairness, respect, inclusiveness, scientific rigour, etc.

Key Insights

One of our original ideas for the summer schools was that full-day workshops, e.g., intensive training in a methodological approach, could be a central trademark of the ECADOC summer schools. From trying out different variations of such workshop, generally two per summer schools, we have learned that the participants find them too long. They generally prefer a wider variety of training options. At the third summer school, we tried offering several methodological workshops in parallel, for the first time – based on the participants' feedback from the second event: The ability to choose from four qualitative workshops on one day, and from three quantitative workshops on another day, was valued highly by the participants. Regarding the quality of the methodological workshops, we have learned that the participants' main desire is to receive practical hands-on training at the event, and consume the relevant theory beforehand. Since we want all participants to advance in terms of both qualitative and quantitative research methodology, we make sure that some of the offered workshops are at an introductory level, whereas other workshops are for advanced learners.

The participants' favourite part of the ECADOC summer schools are the collective academic supervision (CAS) sessions. We introduced the CAS method to give maximum attention to our participants' needs when presenting a piece of their dissertation projects, and to avoid the various pitfalls of human interaction, which can sabotage a meaningful learning experience. As of the third summer school, we have all begun to use this method, and almost all participants have found the experience "excellent".

Another favourite of our summer schools so far, have been few, selected keynotes on topics related to career guidance and counselling. What we have learned in this respect is that the participants particularly enjoy the ability to engage in discussion after such keynotes, e.g., using a combination of small-group and plenary

discussion. In our selection of keynote topics, we try to have contributions from different disciplinary perspectives, as well as from the perspectives of practice and policy. This diversity has been appreciated very much, so far.

A central challenge of the summer schools has been the participants' wish to get to know each other's research, to identify peers with related interests, and to develop ideas for potential joint projects in the future. At the third summer school, we tested out a former participant's proposal to organise a poster exhibition at the beginning of the summer schools, where each participant presents their research project. We opened the exhibition on the first evening with food and cocktails and exhibited the posters the full week, which worked splendidly. On the last day of the second summer school, we invited several groups from the first summer school, who had undertaken joint research projects, to present their work. Then, we invited the participants to take an hour of time to envision joint research projects together. We were amazed to see how self-organised groups emerged within a short amount of time, and how all the participants developed ideas for potential cooperation in the future. After the third summer school, where we didn't include this part in the programme, the participants urged us to reintroduce an element like this.

On a final note, we have learned that participants wish for concentrated breaks and structured networking activities during "learning hours", and for enough leisure time in the afternoons and evenings. We have experimented with different variations in the past three summer schools. At the last event, we offered the participants relatively long breaks between sessions and for lunch, but ended the summer schools relatively late in the afternoon. What our participants seem to want are breaks of 15-20 minutes every 90-120 minutes in the mornings and afternoons, and a lunch break of 60-75 minutes (depending on how near the cafeteria is). They prefer for the learning hours to end no later than 8 hours after they began, so that they have enough time for recreation in the evenings. Many participants would even favour to have one afternoon, which is completely freed from learning activities, to network, relax, and engage in cultural or recreational activities. In general, the cultural visits, e.g., of museums, and joint dinners, which we have organised at each of the summer schools so far, have been received very well, and have strongly contributed to the community spirit.

Future of ECADOC

For all of us, the experience of organising these events together has been very positive. We have learned a lot from each other, and pooling our resources into joint, international doctoral training has been very beneficial for the doctoral researchers, who have participated so far. Through our quality strategy, we have succeeded in maintaining a very high rate of satisfaction with every summer school, and even improving total satisfaction with each event. Asking the participants of the third summer school, whether they would recommend an ECADOC summer school to a fellow researcher, we received an average recommendation rating of 9.4 on a scale from 1 to 10. We are very proud of this, since exceeding the extremely positive ratings of the prior summer schools hardly seemed feasible to us.

Considering these positive outcomes, we want to continue organising ECADOC summer schools in the future. We hope to maintain our positive ratings, despite the lack of funding from the European Commission in the future. Fortunately, all of us are motivated to keep ECADOC going, and with the University of Applied Labour Studies in Mannheim, we have even found a generous host for the fourth ECADOC summer school, which shall take place from September 4-9, 2017 in Germany, organised by Scientific Committee member Peter Weber.

The European Society for Vocational Designing and Career Counseling (ESVDC) and the Network for Innovation in Career Guidance and Counselling in Europe (NICE), which have jointly supported the ECADOC project from its conception until now, are happy to continue supporting ECADOC in the future. Our challenge for the coming years will be to secure future generations of engaged ECADOC leaders, continue to organise excellent summer schools across Europe, and to identify sponsors who will help to support us in our efforts. Over the next year, the present scientific committee will undertake efforts to take ECADOC to the future. We invite interested colleagues from across Europe to join us and support future summer schools!

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Recommended Reading

Nordentoft, H. M., Thomsen, R., & Wichmann-Hansen, G. (2013). Collective academic supervision: a model for participation and learning in higher education. *Higher Education*, 65(5), 581-593. DOI: 10.1007/s10734-012-9564-x

Wichmann-Hansen, G., Thomsen, R., & Nordentoft, H. M. (2015). Challenges in Collective Academic Supervision: supervisors' experiences from a Master Programme in Guidance and Counselling. *Higher Education*, 70(1), 19-33. DOI: 10.1007/s10734-014-9821-2



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