

PUBLICATION OF NICE HANDBOOK VOLUME II: EUROPEAN COMPETENCE STANDARDS

The second volume of the NICE Handbook 'European Competence Standards for the Academic Training of Career Practitioners' has just been published by Barbara Budrich International. The handbook features the European Competence Standards, which the Network for Innovation in Career Guidance and Counselling in Europe (NICE) has developed from 2012 to 2015, as well as recommendations for quality assurance and peer learning in the development of degree programmes for career practitioners.

The handbook can be bought in print or as an e-book through book stores and directly from the publisher ([Barbara Budrich](#)). Several contents of the handbook will soon be available as 'open educational resources' on the NICE Website (www.nice-network.eu). These will include the NICE Memorandum, the newest version of the NICE Professional Roles, a short version of the European Competence Standards, the Task Profiles for Career Advisors, Career Professionals, and Career Specialists, as well as the NICE Glossary. As 'open educational resources' these products of NICE, as well as their translations, may be distributed, printed, and published freely, provided that the source is acknowledged.

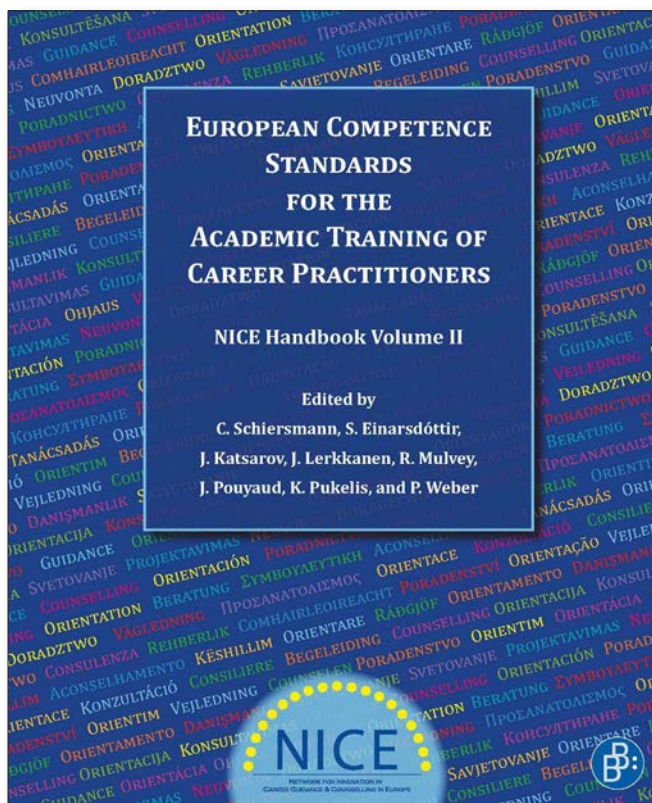
Through the competence standards, NICE wants to help establishing career guidance and counselling as a recognized profession around Europe, particularly by promoting a common professional identity and occupational profile of career professionals. The volume presents the goals of the competence standards in detail, alongside the societal challenges, which they shall be able to address.

In NICE, we distinguish between three types of career practitioners engaged in career guidance and counselling: Career Advisors, Career Professionals, and Career Specialists. Drawing on the revised NICE Professional Roles, the volume introduces distinct task profiles for each type of practice. We formulate competence standards for each type of career practitioner. Each standard defines a measurable quality level, at which professional tasks should be performed. Through these common expectations concerning the most central abilities of the different types of career practitioners, NICE aims at supporting the assurance of professionalism and high-quality career services across Europe. To underpin the European Competence Standards, they are combined with recommendations in terms of the appropriate qualification levels for the training of career practitioners.

Innovation and quality assurance in academic training massively benefit from a targeted exchange of good practices – ideally at an interdisciplinary and international level. To promote this kind of exchange, the handbook offers several tools: A checklist for the quality assurance and enhancement of degree programmes, real-life examples of how the common reference points of NICE (including the competence standards) are being used in practice, and a peer-learning framework. The peer-learning framework presents a methodology for bringing colleagues from different degree programmes, as well as practitioners and other experts together, for the purpose of quality assurance and enhancement. NICE has already supported four international peer-learning events, drawing on, and developing this method.

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European Competence Standards for the Academic Training of Career Practitioners

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The citizens of Europe are facing increasingly complex challenges to their career development nowadays. Over the span of their lifetime, they need to manage their careers, and make numerous decisions concerning education, training and employment – decisions, which seriously impact their futures and their wellbeing. To prepare citizens for these challenges, and to support them in the progress, competent career practitioners are needed. But what kinds of career practitioners are we talking about? And what do they need to be able to do? How can the quality of their training be assured?

This handbook introduces common European competence standards for the academic training of career practitioners in Europe, together with some proposals and examples, of how to implement and establish such competence standards in practice. More than 200 experts from all across Europe have contributed to the development of these shared standards of the Network for Innovation in Career Guidance and Counselling in Europe (NICE). The standards are already being used in many countries for the development of degree programmes.

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