

# Education Guide for Adults

Organisation, frameworks and programmes at adult education centres (VUCs) and vocational training institutions

## **Education Guide for Adults**

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# Foreword

There is a heightened need for more unskilled adults to take training courses, because despite more young people opting for vocational training programmes, prognoses indicate that Denmark will have a low number of skilled workers in the future. In addition, we also need to maintain the interests of unskilled adults to obtain apprenticeships. This survey maps educational guidance offered at adult education centres (VUCs) and vocational institutions for unskilled adults and those with few qualifications.

There are many parties involved and each has a primary responsibility for carrying out guidance. This requires a substantial amount of coordination and widespread collaboration. The objective of this report is to discover how the institutions enhance guidance and consequently contribute to the development of policies within this field.

Therefore, we hope that this report can be used for future discussions on boosting educational guidance for adults, both centrally and locally at the institutions.

The survey was part of EVA's plan of action for 2014 and was completed between November 2014 and September 2015. The Danish Evaluation Institute would like to thank all the educational institutions, guidance counsellors, staff at job centres and members of the public that contributed to the survey.

Mikkel Haarder  
Director of EVA





# 1 Summary

This report summarises how educational institutions offering essential adult and continuing education programmes, organise and collaborate on educational guidance for adults that have completed short education courses or have no education at all, before starting an education programme or course (so-called access to training guidance).

## **Guidance is critical in order to attain the goal of a more skilled workforce.**

It is becoming more difficult to obtain employment in the Danish labour market as an unskilled worker or a worker with few qualifications. People with few qualifications are generally in a more vulnerable position when it comes to unemployment than individuals with higher education. Therefore, it is essential for society to give this vulnerable group more opportunities and a more secure foundation on which to gain access to the labour market. More training may be the solution. However, the adult and continuing education system is complex with very little transparency. It can be very difficult for the public to gain an overview of the many paths that are available, and the ins and outs of the system. No one wants to be at a loose end. The survey conducted by the Danish Evaluation Institution (EVA) *'Fra ufaglært til faglært'* [Unskilled to Skilled] (2015) and *AMU som springbræt til fortsat uddannelse* (AMU) [Adult Vocational (Continuing) Training as a Springboard to Continuing Education] (2012) indicates that educational guidance, including more knowledge and educational choices, can strengthen the desire of the unskilled and those with few qualifications. Consequently, guidance is vital in order for the Danish workforce to continue to meet the requirements of the development and to secure flexibility in the labour market.

Many operators contribute to advising adults about training, for example, educational institutions, VEU centres (Adult and Supplementary Education Centres), job centres and unemployment insurance funds. Young people have Youth Guidance Centres (UU), however a similar comprehensive adult educational guidance service for the latter target group does not exist. Likewise, adults cannot apply for further education through a regional guidance centre (Studievalg). This report offers a transverse overview of the organisation and prioritisation of approaches towards adult guidance and associated practices at vocational training institutions and VUCs (Adult Education Centres).

The educational institutions are not obligated to offer the public access to training guidance. Similarly, a specific taximeter fee is not charged for access to training admission guidance. However, many institutions prioritise adult educational guidance. The survey shows how differently the educational institutions prioritise this task. Therefore, the survey contributes to forming the basis for future initiatives and political decisions on strengthening commitment to this type of guidance. The commitment to guidance is a prerequisite for preparing the Danish workforce to meet tomorrow's labour market in a better way.

The report is aimed at anybody involved with educational guidance for adults with little or no qualifications, i.e. educational institutions, job centres and coordination entities, such as the VEU centres. Different parts of the report will be relevant to different target groups.

### **Variation in adult educational guidance at educational institutions**

On the whole, EVA's survey shows that the prioritisation and handling of adult educational guidance varies at the institutions. Despite not being a requirement, the survey shows that some of the VUCs and vocational training institutions, and their guidance counsellors, offer institution independent educational guidance. Other institutions emphasise that it should not be/is not their responsibility to arrange such guidance. Consequently, people who need institution independent guidance may find it difficult to find out which institution to seek out in order to obtain such guidance.

### **Uniform frameworks at VUCs and varying frameworks at vocational training institutions**

In general, uniform frameworks exist for adult educational guidance at VUCs throughout Denmark. Most new learners attend a guidance interview before starting a VUC during which subjects and their ability level will be set. Hence, the meeting, which usually lasts for approx. 20-40 minutes, is necessary for most new learners before starting a course. All VUCs have open guidance and 85% organise such guidance at guidance centres. Large variation is seen amongst the vocational training institutions, where neither similar practices nor the requirement for adults to attend a guidance interview prior to admission exist, especially in connection with Adult Vocational Training Programmes (AMU). The estimated number of adults that are invited to attend a guidance interview before the commencement of training or a course varies from institution to institution. In addition, the duration of a typical guidance interview varies greatly and ranges from between 10-60 minutes. Open guidance is offered at 66% of the vocational training institutions and 55% of them organise such guidance at a guidance centre.

### **Evaluative and exploratory guidance is only carried out at some of the institutions**

When approaching vocational training institutions and VUCs to make enquires about adult educational guidance, the content and focal points tend to vary. We have identified three characteristic approaches towards course admission guidance:

- Informative guidance in which focus is placed on giving individuals specific information about the institution's own training programmes and courses.
- Course preparation guidance in which focus is placed on the best possible match between the institution's own training programmes and the competencies and life situation of the individual.
- Evaluative and exploratory guidance in which focus is placed on supporting the individual in finding the right training course to take.

The approaches are analytical categories that can be included in all guidance interviews. Obviously, the needs of each individual contribute to determining the approach(es) that are used during guidance. For example, individuals are only given informative guidance when absolutely necessary and relevant. The point is that evaluative and exploratory guidance is not offered at all institutions - this applies laterally across all the vocational training institutions and VUCs. There is a lack of transparency and individuals that need evaluative and exploratory guidance do not know where to obtain it.

### **Collaboration on guidance with job centres is not comprehensive enough**

The collaboration between job centres and educational institutions on educational guidance for unskilled jobseekers or those with few qualifications, has not been adequately developed. Therefore, 85% of the educational institutions strongly agree/disagree that there is a need for *closer* collaboration with the job centres to ensure that people are offered good educational guidance. Amongst other things, this is due to job centres and educational institutions having different prerogatives and expertise. They should supplement one another to give jobseekers comprehensive and coherent guidance. At some sites, collaboration is organised in the form of *formal and regular collaborative interfaces*, for example, in which permanent mutual guidance is offered. This type of collaboration ensures that expertise is collected in one place. In other places, collaboration is conducted on a more *ad hoc* basis. Regular contact persons and good personal relationships created by employees of the two providers (educational institutions and job centres) seem to significantly impact this type of collaboration and its success. However, personal relationships in any lateral *ad hoc* collaboration involves a certain amount of fragility.

### **Outreaching guidance is a central task if the unskilled and those with few qualifications are to be reached.**

According to the VEU centre bosses, etc. there is still a need for individual outreaching guidance. Those who need educational guidance the most do not seek it themselves - educational guidance must therefore come to them. The VEU centres have taken it upon themselves to do exactly this through initiatives on individual guidance at the workplace, outreaching guidance in the public domain and so-called open guidance, etc. For example, 69% of the educational institutions believe that their consultants/guidance counsellors have to a large/some extent given *employees individual educational* guidance in enterprises. The latter is either arranged by the VEU centre or initiated by the institution itself.

## **The educational institutions want enhanced collaboration on guidance between the institutions to be conducted through the VEU centres.**

The educational institutions believe that the VEU centres do enhance collaboration on adult guidance, however improvements can always be made. This is especially stressed by the VUCs. Of the vocational training institutions, 29% say that the VEU centres only slightly/do not enhance collaboration on guidance across the educational institutions whilst 70% of the VUCs find that they only slightly/do not enhance collaboration. This can be compared to 76% of the VUCs saying that it is important/crucial that the VEU centres enhance collaboration. According to the performance contract for 2014-15, the VEU centres (host and partner institutions) were successful in designing a joint guidance strategy. Work on this should allow for potential increased knowledge and collaboration between the institutions in the applicable areas.

## **Areas of attention aimed at strengthening adult learners careers guidance**

Based on the survey, EVA points out a number of attention areas for boosting educational guidance for unskilled adults and those with few qualifications. The areas of attention are directed at the public authorities, VEU centres and educational institutions, respectively:

- *The public authorities need to consider how adult educational guidance can be best arranged, developed and ingrained.*  
Many parties promise some guidance without defining who is responsible for what. When looking at one of the most central operators in the field, i.e. the educational institutions, the survey finds that a non-uniform service is offered across the institutions. The educational institutions are not legally bound to undertake tasks related to institution-independent course admission guidance. At institutional level, many different expectations also exist regarding the tasks that shall be performed and included in the guidance. This means that people do not know who they shall approach when they need more evaluative and institution-independent guidance interviews.
- *The educational institutions (including their VEU centre) need to strategically decide which guidance service they want to offer, and map the implications related to the competence of guidance counsellors and frameworks.*  
As mentioned, the performance contract for 2014-2015 for each VEU centre (host and partner institutions) showed that they were successful in designing a joint guidance strategy. Evaluation of the objectives of the guidance offered at the institutions is needed in connection with this work. This survey was conducted shortly after the VEU centres were assigned the new task. When the survey was conducted, we found that all the educational institutions had different frameworks for the guidance and its contents. For example, individuals are not always offered exploratory and evaluative guidance. In connection with the designing of the joint guidance strategy, it is relevant

to consider how and if indeed the task of exploratory guidance can/should be performed by individual educational institutions and, if so, which resources and competencies are required.

- *The job centres, educational institutions and their VEU centres need to collaborate much more on educational guidance for the unemployed.*

As mentioned, 85% of educational institutions believe that closer collaboration with job centres is necessary to secure the quality of such guidance for each individual. This means that the knowledge and expertise of the job centres and educational institutions, respectively, should be more coordinated and supplement one another when offering guidance, etc. The survey shows examples that illustrate that collaboration can be conducted more regularly and at a faster tempo when jointly organised. This type of collaboration focuses on the individual by making it easier to make enquiries to relevant parties - "one place for numerous questions and a coordinated response". In addition, the risk of individuals receiving contradictory information from different parties with a potential scenario of "many places with too many questions and contradictory answers", is minimised.

- *The VEU centres, including the educational institutions need to consider the potential of outreaching guidance in both enterprises and the public domain.*

Experience shows that when guidance is conducted at educational institutions, the unskilled and those with few qualifications often do not turn up for the guidance or seek out the opportunities the education system offers, especially if they are unemployed. Therefore, different outreaching initiatives are needed if the latter individuals are to be reached through educational guidance. Measures with outreaching guidance in enterprises and the public domain are also being tested by the VEU centres, but it may be possible to implement such measures in a more maintainable and adaptable way. Outreaching guidance, understood as a form of awareness building in each individual, could be an important measure that in the long-term may help spark knowledge and wants and needs amongst the target group.

## About the data

The report is based on widespread data that includes both qualitative and quantitative data:

- Questionnaires to all the VUCs and vocational training institutions (comprehensive survey).
- Interviews with guidance counsellors, including guidance coordinators and managers and educational institutions, as well as VEU centre bosses, job centre staff and individuals that have received guidance.
- Visits to three educational institutions that followed an intriguing practice for adult guidance, including group and individual interviews.

The purpose of the questionnaire was to obtain a broad picture of the frameworks and organisation of adult guidance at all vocational training institutions and VUCs in Denmark offering adult and continuing education. The intention of the interviews and visits was to obtain an overall in-depth insight into the organisation, etc. of the guidance.

## 2 Introduction

This report concerns the frameworks for educational guidance offered to adults aged 25+ when choosing courses at adult and continuing educational institutions. The report particularly focuses on the guidance given to unskilled individuals and those with few qualifications, as well as guidance on essential general and vocational education.

The Danish adult and continuing education system is complex with many different types of training programmes, educational services and courses, in addition to a broad range of schools and educational institutions. In addition to this, we have financing systems, rules for giving credits and prior learning assessments, etc. that may also seem complicated. This complex topic can be difficult for individuals to navigate around, especially the unskilled and those with few qualifications. Therefore, guidance can play a critical role in making the educational options in the system more transparent and, for example, helping the unskilled and those with few qualifications to start adult and continuing education programmes.<sup>1</sup> There is an immense need to make the Danish workforce competitive and to keep up with global developments, especially in connection with the goal to transform the unskilled into skilled workers.

No comprehensive and institution-independent guidance service for unskilled workers or those with few qualifications exists for the 25+. During this survey we focused on adult educational guidance carried out at adult education centres (VUCs), business and technical colleges and the AMU centres, i.e. the so-called course admission guidance. The educational institutions are not legally obligated to offer individuals institution-independent careers guidance, therefore it was expected that the institutions would perform the task differently.

### 2.1 Objectives and survey questions

The objective of the survey was to uncover how the educational institutions (VUCs and the vocational training institutions) facilitate and collaborate on careers guidance for adults aged 25+, as well as to

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, EVA 2012 and EVA 2015.

analyse the options and obstacles that exist in relation to the various practices linked to adult guidance. This occurs through the involvement of the perspectives of management, guidance counsellors, VEU consultants, VEU centre, job centres and the public in that the survey answers the following survey questions:

- a. How is adult educational guidance organised at the educational institutions?
- b. How do guidance counsellors approach the task of guidance and what competencies and development needs do they have?
- c. How do the educational institutions collaborate on adult guidance in relation to other institutions, including other educational sites and job centres, and what role do the VEU centres play in this?
- d. Which obstacles and options exist for securing better career guidance for adults in items a)-c)?

## 2.2 Background

As previously mentioned, no full guidance service exists for the unskilled and those with few qualifications aged 25+. However, there are many, but not always equally coordinated guidance services.

### 2.2.1 The current educational guidance for adults is not optimal.

Earlier surveys conducted by the Danish Evaluation Institute (EVA) point out that some of the educational guidance for adults with few qualifications is not optimal in that it does not reach out to the relevant individuals and motivate them to get some training.

For example, the results of EVA's evaluation *Fra ufaglært til faglært [Unskilled to Skilled]* (2015), show that 68% of the questioned adults with few qualifications had not received any educational guidance (e.g. at an educational institution, a job centre or workplace) within the last five years. It was found that those who had actually received guidance had only slightly been motivated to get some training. However, 59% of the respondents said that the guidance had to some extent increased their desire to study whilst 13% found that the guidance lessened their desire to study.

These results can be seen in conjunction with EVA's survey *AMU som springbræt til fortsat uddannelse [Adult Vocational (continuing) Training as a Springboard to Continuing Education]* (2012), points out that an active commitment to guidance on the part of the institutions can make a difference in helping those with few qualifications to get some training. EVA's results show that some providers of AMU courses have implemented measures that might help the continued training of individuals with few qualifications. More individuals with few qualifications started other courses after participating on AMU courses offered by these providers compared to other providers of AMU courses. One example of such a measure is expansive institution-independent guidance in which the educational needs of the individual form the starting point. This can also help to motivate the less qualified - even those who had negative experiences at school.



The basis for this survey is the fact that: 1) the opportunities to obtain adult educational guidance are not transparent - guidance is non-existent and 2) individuals that actually receive guidance do not necessarily find that it motivates them to study.

### **2.2.2 Brief historical outline of careers guidance for adults**

Through the years many attempts have been made to establish more coherent guidance centres that focus on adult guidance, but a fractured landscape still exists today. In this section we provide a brief outline of the developments in recent years within educational guidance for adults.

With the choice of education and career guidance reform that came into force in 2004, Youth Guidance Centres (YGCs) were established to offer guidance to young people up to the age of 25 and regional guidance centres (Studievalg), which are organised as seven regional centres, were to offer guidance on further education to both young people and adults<sup>2</sup>. See the textbox below about YGCs.

#### Youth Guidance Centres

Youth Guidance Centres (YGC) are found nationwide and offer guidance to youths on training and their future careers. The Youth Guidance Centres are aimed at pupils in Year 7-10 at lower secondary schools and young people who are not yet ready for training. They also offer guidance to other young people below the age of 25 that have started or finished secondary school or work at least 30 hours per week. In rare cases, guidance is offered to young people up to the age of 30, but only in collaboration with the job centres.

(Educational Guide on Youth Guidance Centres).

The reform proposed a similar detailed measure for adult and continuing education, however it was not until 2007 that an agreement was entered into to improve guidance and advisory services offered to enterprises and the employed. The agreement led to the establishment of 22 adult guidance networks throughout the country to boost additional training of the least qualified groups of people on the employment market. The fulfilment of the objectives of the guidance networks was tightly followed up and even though the evaluation of the networks were actually very positive, politicians decided to abolish the networks. Instead, the current 13 VEU centres were established in 2010 and they took over the task of advising enterprises and their employees, as described in the following textbox.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> EVA, 2007.

<sup>3</sup> Woller, 2008; Jessing, 2010; [www.uvm.dk](http://www.uvm.dk) on the VEU centres.

## VEU centres

The VEU centres constitute a formal collaboration between the educational institutions that offer adult and continuing education. The 13 VEU centres were established on 1 January 2010 and distributed throughout the country. The idea behind the centres is that they shall function as a single entry point for both private individuals and enterprises that want guidance on the available options within adult and continuing education.

The declared purpose of the VEU centres is to create transparency through:

- coordinating the educational institutions' enterprise-outreaching work;
- guiding and counselling individuals;
- uncovering the need for and coordinating the strategic prioritisation of the commitment to training in each region;

([www.veu-center.dk](http://www.veu-center.dk)).

Under the auspices of the adult guidance networks and the VEU centres, there has been some/much focus on reaching out to enterprises and counselling them on competence development at management level. Therefore, experience shows that it is a more complex and challenging task to reach out to and counsel the general public and individuals.<sup>4</sup> However, the VEU centres were allocated this task in their 2014-15 performance contract. The centres were given the task of completing individual guidance and the counselling of 1.5% of the skilled and unskilled workers in their catchment area. The scope of the task was extended and sharpened with a review of the VEU's performance contract in November 2014. At this time, the VEU centres were ordered to give individual counselling and guidance to 5% of the skilled and unskilled workers in their catchment area. In addition, the VEU centres were to boost their commitment to adult educational guidance through the development of guidance strategies and initiatives.<sup>5</sup> One of the reasons for the extension and sharpening was that the VEU centres were given a total of DKK 20 million over a two-year period for adult educational counselling and guidance. The additional resources were a result of a three-party agreement in May 2014 between the Danish social democratic government, the Danish Confederation of Trade Unions (LO) and the Danish Employer Association, in which DKK 1 million was allocated for more and improved continuing education.

<sup>4</sup> Mariager-Anderson and Wahlgren, 2012.

<sup>5</sup> The VEU centre contracts for 2014-15 and VEU centre contracts for 2014-15, revised in November 2014.

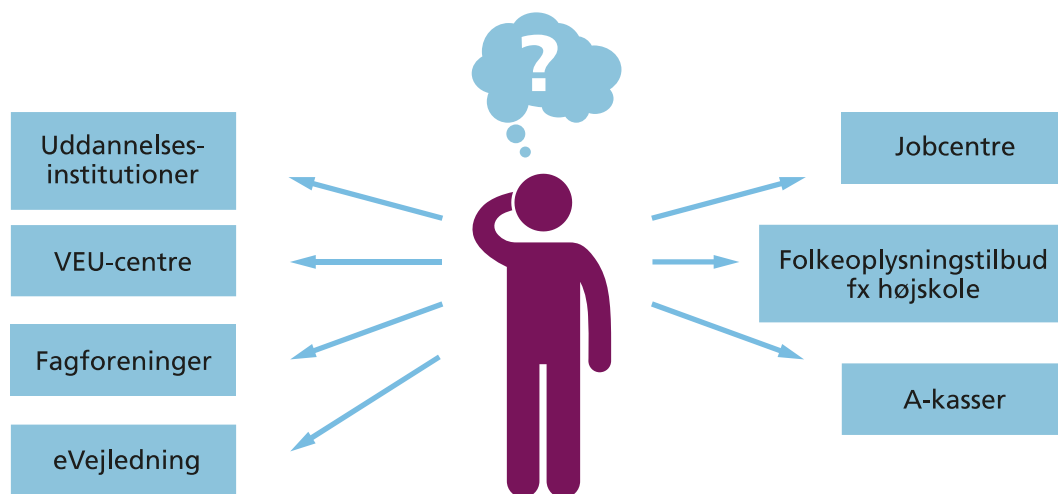
### **2.2.3 Landscape of adult guidance today**

In the landscape of guidance, many parties are now offering guidance, including adult educational guidance in some way or another, cf. Figure 1. The fact that adult educational guidance is offered at many sites can at least be accounted for in two ways: On the one hand it is positive that the public can obtain guidance at many different sites, especially because people move between different spheres according to their educational background and job situation, etc. and as such would prefer to receive guidance where they are. On the other hand it can be problematic that so many parties offer educational guidance, as the many entry points to guidance can be confusing, just as the distribution of roles between the parties can become ambiguous. At times, it can also be run based on the interests of the party concerned, e.g. sales, memberships and target figures, instead of the needs of the individual.

In terms of educational guidance for skilled and unskilled adults per 2015, the status is that the VEU centres are responsible for counselling enterprises, their employees and the public - both the employed and unemployed. The guidance at the educational institutions include both guidance under the auspices of the VEU centres, as well as institutional and course-specific guidance for the public. In addition, the public can receive guidance online via eVejledning [e-guidance], which has existed since 2011. Beyond this, guidance is offered at municipal job centres, unemployment insurance funds, trade unions and by the third sector (public information), etc.

**Figur 1**

**Opportunities for adults to obtain guidance on vocational and essential general education**



## 2.3 Topic and focus areas of the report

As described, this report concerns guidance offered at educational institutions that offer essential adult and continuing education, i.e. at VUCs and vocational training institutions. More specifically, the topic refers to guidance related to each individual's choice of training/courses. In the world of education this type of education is often called integration or course admission guidance, however in this report we have elected to use the term 'access to training guidance'. Focus on this form of guidance means that we have not looked at that which is called 'retaining, implementational or integrational guidance, cf. Figure 2. However, in practice it can be difficult to completely separate each sub-stage of the guidance.

**Figur 2**  
**Different phases of educational guidance**



#### **Access to training guidance: an ambiguous term**

We have applied a relatively broad understanding to the meaning of access to training guidance. This has been done, as it reflects the span of the understanding of access to training guidance that is found amongst the providers of such services at educational institutions and the VEU centres.

Consequently, many different types of meanings and practices are employed in connection with the term 'access to training guidance'. In this report it shall be understood as guidance that on the one hand is characterised by specific information about a training programme or course and on the other it can consist of long-term guidance interviews aimed at enlightening the individual about training. Access to training guidance can be given within the walls of educational institutions, but it can also involve outreaching guidance at job centres, in enterprises or the public domain. For example, at libraries, supermarkets and stands put up in town squares.

#### **2.3.2 Educational institutions in the survey and the adult training they offer**

In this survey, we focused on the educational institutions that offer essential adult and continuing education, i.e. the VUCs and vocational training institutions. A general description of the educational institutions and their training programmes/courses for adults is presented in the textbox on the next page.

## Vocational Training Institutions and VUCs

### **Vocational training institutions**

There are 91 vocational training institutions split into 18 technical colleges, 25 business colleges, 17 combined colleges, 16 Danish Welfare Colleges (SOSUs), nine agricultural colleges and six AMUs. The vocational training institutions offer both *vocational training* and *adult vocational training programmes*.

#### *Vocational training*

More than 100 different vocational training programmes are offered. By summer 2015, there were generally two different types of vocational training programmes for adults: 1) vocational training programmes for the over 25s, which were identical to those for young people in that the programme could be shortened due to various types of credits and 2) essential education for adults (GVU), which were adapted courses for adults with at least two-years' work experience.

In summer 2015, the new vocational training reform came into force and new vocational training programmes for adults (EUV) were introduced through this. Vocational training programmes for adults are generally shorter than the equivalent type of vocational training for young people. The educational institutions determine the specific course of training for each adult learner based on an assessment of their prior learning (RKV).

#### *AMU courses*

There are more than 3,000 different adult vocational training programmes. There are a number of short courses for both the skilled and unskilled that are intended to give more formal upgraded skills and training to meet the competence requirements of the employment market.

### **VUCs**

There are 31 VUCs. These give adults the opportunity to obtain qualifications that can lead to admission onto vocational, youth or further education programmes. VUCs have three major training courses: higher preparatory examination courses for individual subjects, general adult education (AVU) and two-year higher preparatory examination courses for individual subjects. In total, 93% of the activity at VUCs is carried out within these educational services. In addition, the VUCs offer preparatory adult education courses, supplementary examination courses at upper secondary level and teaching for those with dyslexia.

(Danske Erhvervsskoler 2014, EVA 2013, UddannelsesGuiden om euu, VUC Sekretariatet 2014).

## 2.4 Design and method

This section briefly describes the most important aspects of the design and method of the survey. A more detailed review of the data used for the survey and the methods used are found in the report's appendix on methodology.

The survey was designed as a study on how the educational institutions adapt and collaborate on adult educational guidance and was based on the following data sources:

- Pre-survey
- Questionnaires to all the VUCs and vocational training institutions.
- Interviews with guidance counsellors, including guidance coordinators and managers and education institutions, as well as VEU centre bosses, job centre staff and individuals that had received guidance.
- Visits to three educational institutions that followed an intriguing practice for adult guidance.

When finished, the report was sent for consultation comments and a finalisation meeting was conducted with a number of interested parties.

### 2.4.1 Pre-survey

The intention of the pre-survey was to create an overview of the various ways to work with adult guidance arranged by different parties: However, the pre-survey was also intended to contribute to the sharpening of the survey's focal points and to give insight into the knowledge that was sought on the topic.

At the preliminary stage, desk research was conducted by reading Danish and international studies, in addition to Danish and international literature on the topic. Following this, six explorative interviews were held with researchers and practitioners in the field. The interviews focused on identifying the conditions that the interviewees deemed as important challenges, potentialities and the knowledge that was sought on the topic.

### 2.4.2 Survey

A survey (comprehensive survey) was conducted amongst all providers of essential adult and continuing education at the vocational training institutions and VUCs, respectively. Each provider appointed a colleague with in-depth knowledge about the practices employed by the institution for adult educational guidance, who thereafter were given a link to the questionnaire. The responding group included ordinary employees and managers. The survey was conducted in March 2015.

The objective of the survey was to evaluate the frameworks for and the collaboration on educational guidance for adults at the educational institutions. Special focus was placed on the following:

- How the educational institutions organise guidance for adults.
- Prerequisites for the competence of guidance counsellors and their access to guidance
- The educational institutions' external collaboration on adult educational guidance, including their collaboration with other educational institutions, job centres, unemployment insurance funds, enterprises and the role of the VEU centres in this context.
- The possibilities and barriers linked to adult learners educational guidance.

Eighty-six per cent answered the questionnaire, which is deemed as very satisfactory for this target group. In total, 102 educational institutions participated in the survey distributed between 75 vocational training institutions and 27 VUCs.

The comprehensive survey had a high response rate and as such a significance test was not done on the cross-tabulations. However, as a reader it is necessary to note that relatively few responses were obtained from VUCs in some of the tables. Even though most of the VUCs were included in the survey, the tables with very few answers should be interpreted with caution.

### **2.4.3 Telephone interviews**

In connection with the survey, individual telephone interviews lasting for approx. 60 minutes were conducted with all the managers of the VEU centres. Beyond this, individual 30-60 minute interviews were held with 11 guidance counsellors, including guidance coordinators and managers from vocational training institutions and VUCs, three job centre employees and five members of the public that had received guidance.

The telephone interviews were held during different phases of the project and for different purposes. For example, most of the interviews with the managers of VEU centres and guidance counsellors (including managers/coordinators) were held before the visits to the institutions, and the interviews served partly to collect data on the survey's topics. In addition, they also partly contributed to enhanced focus on the questionnaire and also to the qualified selection of the institutions to visit. The interviews with the job centre employees and members of the public were held after visiting institutions and were intended to give other and supplementary perspectives on guidance practices that were described in connection with the visits.

### **2.4.4 Institutional visits**

In connection with the survey, EVA visited:

- Erhvervsuddannelsescenter Syd (EUC Syd) (Vocational Educational Centre South)
- HF & VUC FYN
- Selandia.

These three institutions were selected, as they each represent a very special and intriguing way of dealing with adult educational guidance and can be deemed as so-called '*good cases*'. The interview



data and examples of practices have been collected in sequence in the report, which states the origin of the examples.

The institutions were selected based on information from the explorative interviews during the pre-survey, as well as the telephone interviews with VEU centre bosses and guidance counsellors or other managers. In all instances, respondents were asked how familiar they were with the institutions that had a particularly intriguing way of working with adult educational guidance and/or specific guidance projects. At the same time, all endeavours were made to have a certain amount of variation in terms of institutional type and geographical location.

In connection with each visit, a group interview with the institution's management team, guidance counsellors and/or VEU consultants, job centre employees and members of the public that had received guidance at the institution was held.

The purpose of the visits and interviews with the different groups of interviewees was to obtain an overall impression of the guidance initiatives adopted by the educational institutions and type of areas of collaboration for guidance. Therefore, visits were to uncover both the thought behind the educational institution's strategic choice in relation to the initiative, the practical organisation of the initiative, the collaborative interfaces it included and the perception of individuals that had received guidance.

#### **2.4.5 Consultation and finalisation dialogue meeting with interested parties**

The report was submitted for consultation comments at EUC Syd, HF & VUC FYN and Selandia. The consultation took place in August 2015 and the educational institutions had the opportunity to specify any factual errors and shortcomings in the report.

## **2.5 Organisation and staffing**

The survey was conducted by a project group from EVA consisting of:

- Vicki Facius, Special Consultant (project manager from the middle of June 2015)
- Maria Mogensen, Evaluation Adviser (project manager from the end of May 2015)
- Ida Marie Behr Bendiksen, Evaluation Adviser
- Julie Bay, Evaluation Adviser (trainee)
- Mille Lassen, Evaluation Adviser (from August 2015)
- Sara Hach, Method Adviser
- Emilie Welcher-Ulholm, Communications Adviser
- Sofie Nohr Jakobsen, Evaluation Clerk
- Maria Riis Hedegaard, Evaluation Clerk

## 2.6 Structure of the report

In addition to summaries and the introduction, the report includes the following chapters:

The introduction of Chapter 3 provides an image of the frameworks adopted for adult guidance at the vocational training institutions and VUCs. Differences and variations are seen between the institutions, for example, in relation to who carries out the access to training guidance, where and when the guidance is organised and how long the guidance normally lasts.

Chapter 4 provides an overview of how the access to training guidance is to be understood at the educational institutions by looking at three approaches towards what the access to training guidance could and should focus on. Therefore, Chapter 4 also forms a basis for a discussion on whether the institutions and guidance counsellors are willing to give educational guidance to adults that seemingly require it.

Chapter 5 focuses sharply on the qualifications of guidance counsellors. Focus is on whether the guidance counsellors are able to transmit information and whether they do indeed have the competencies to give guidance to potential learners in general adult and continuing education when needed. The chapter also highlights different ways of understanding the term 'professional guidance' and points out that the need to build up the knowledge and competence of guidance counsellors can be met through various institutional strategies.

Chapter 6 provides insight into how and to what degree the VEU centres form the framework for work on adult guidance both cross-institutionally and in relation to guidance in enterprises. At the same time, this chapter describes the different guidance services arranged by the VEU centres and it discusses issues related to the guidance initiatives that are currently under the umbrella organisation of the VEU centres.

Chapter 7 addresses the collaboration that is held between the educational institutions and job centres. This chapter emphasises why there is a need for such collaboration and it describes two collaboration models.

### 3 Frameworks and guidance practitioners

*Guidance is, of course, arranged very differently. In my opinion, it would be nice if legislation was introduced to govern who is responsible for what. Right now, I feel that everyone does a little bit each and it's too much with too many loopholes [...] We don't have a specific guidance centre where you can go in and start from the beginning saying "I would like to have some careers guidance." There are, of course, a conglomeration of job centres and unemployment insurance funds that in reality provide this. For example, many people in the world may want to change their careers, but how should they go about it? (Adviser).*

In this chapter, we focus on the frameworks governing course access to training guidance and the individuals who carry out guidance tasks at the educational institutions. We will further address the educational guidance that individuals receive at educational institutions when making an enquiry in person, in writing or by telephone. As previously mentioned, the institutions are not bound by rules to offer access to training guidance. Therefore, it is up to each institution to make its own prioritisations and choices on how to manage the task. Subsequently, our attention was drawn to the frameworks for access to training guidance at the vocational training institutions and the VUCs. How do they work? What percentage of adults received such guidance before starting an education programme/course. Which members of staff carry out guidance tasks? The general answer is: Practices vary and resultantly there are different frameworks for the guidance the public encounters. In this chapter we shall go into more detail about the variations and indications for the advantages and disadvantages of the different practices for both the public and professionals.

We will first look at the frameworks for guidance and then look at which professionals carry out the guidance. The conclusions of the chapter are based on data from questionnaires and interviews with guidance counsellors, VEU consultants and managers.

### 3.1 Frameworks and organisation

The vocational training institutions and VUCs have different frameworks for guidance and different ways of organising it. There can be many reasons for such variation. VUCs often arrange a first guidance interview with each individual and an adviser from the relevant VUC. The intention of this guidance interview is to get the prospective learners placed at the most appropriate level and with the right number of subjects, especially if they will be attending general adult education courses or higher preparatory examination courses for individual subjects. Vocational training institutions do not employ the same practice of having a meeting with an adviser to discuss education prior to starting a course. This particularly applies to AMU courses when learners can enrol online via EfterUddannelse.dk. Both enterprises and the public use this method. People can also enrol for vocational training courses online via Optagelse.dk. That is, prospective learners do not need to meet an adviser before starting a course. However, adults will probably undergo prior learning assessments both before and after starting a course.

Therefore, differing conditions apply at these two institutional establishments that set a mark on the frameworks for such guidance. Therefore, the guidance is also organised differently at these institutional types. When looking solely at the VUCs, it is found that they have relatively uniform frameworks across the board. Amongst the vocational training institutions, the frameworks governing guidance seemingly vary more. In the following sections we will discover whether the institutions have a guidance centre, open guidance or guidance interviews with adults before starting a course and how long such a meeting normally lasts.

#### 3.1.1 Compared to the VUCs, vocational training institutions do not have as many guidance centres or offer as much open guidance.

Amongst the vocational training institutions and to a lesser extent the VUCs, some variation is seen in terms of whether they have a guidance centre or not. By a guidance centre, we mean a main, visible and centrally-located centre. More VUCs than vocational training institutions have such a centre, cf. Table 1.

**Table 1**  
**Is the guidance organised in a guidance centre at your educational institution?**

	Vocational Training Institution (n = 75)	VUC (n = 27)	Total (N = 102)
Yes	55%	85%	63%
No	45%	15%	37%

Source: Questionnaires to all the VUCs and vocational training institutions.

Note: In connection with this question, the respondents were given the following help text: "The term 'guidance centre'

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*refers to a visible and centrally located centre in your educational institution where guidance counsellors give the public guidance on educational choices in one place."*

The table shows that 85% of the guidance at VUCs is organised in a guidance centre. This applies to 55% of the vocational training institutions. A guidance centre can be organised in different ways. It can be a very defined centre that stands out, for example, with visible signs indicating the guidance offered - also outside the educational institution. However, it can also be a more anonymous centre where staff mainly share the office facilities.

The interviews with guidance counsellors and managers show that there are many benefits attached to having a guidance centre. As mentioned, one external *advantage* is that guidance centres are more visible to the public and may potentially attract more people. Having the guidance organised in and around a centre can signal the prioritisation of the guidance and its importance. An internal *advantage* is that the collection of guidance counsellors gives more opportunities for sharing knowledge and giving collegial support when task-solving. Finally, the likelihood of giving higher quality and better service to the public is also present.

When only a small number of vocational training institutions have a guidance centre, it may be connected to significant geographical distances that can exist between the different departments of a vocational college. A main centre for the institution will not necessarily benefit the public, as it may be situated far from their homes and training departments of the centre.

### **Open guidance at VUCs but not all vocational training institutions**

Another difference between the vocational training institutions is that the public has the opportunity to attend open guidance. This difference does not apply to VUCs. By open guidance we mean when one or more guidance counsellors are physically present during a certain period of time at an educational institution to accept individuals who would like guidance on educational choices, cf. the textbox on the next page.

## Open guidance

The term 'open guidance' is used by educational institutions, as well as VEU and job centres. The entities that arrange and speak about open guidance do not have a joint understanding of what it means. However, in relation to access to training guidance, most believe that open guidance is a guidance service where the public can telephone or pop in during its opening hours to get advice with or without an appointment.

However, such perceptions also varies: Whilst some consider open guidance to be a guidance service where guidance counsellors, for example, are available three times per week during which time they solely concern themselves with public enquiries, others consider that educational institutions offer constant open guidance, as a secretary or adviser always respond to public enquiries (after which, individuals often book a guidance interview).

Some VEU centres have conducted special experiments with open guidance. At these centres guidance is primarily considered as a definite guidance service within a relative limited time frame. Often it is a guidance service extending beyond that offered by the educational institutions rather than physical guidance placed in one of the VEU centre's partner institutions, cf. Chapter 6.

According to the questionnaire, open guidance is offered at least once per week at all VUCs and 66% of the vocational training institutions<sup>6</sup>.

When educational institutions do not offer open guidance, individuals must book an appointment with an adviser before they turn up. However, the right contact person at the educational institution must be found. The questionnaire does not reveal why some vocational institutions offer open guidance and others elect not to have such a service. On the other hand, it reveals that variation exists between technical colleges, business colleges, SOSU colleges, combination colleges, agricultural colleges and AMU centres. Some educational institutions offer open guidance whilst others do not.

### **3.1.2 Most adults are offered a guidance interview at VUCs, however a more distorted picture is obtained when it comes to vocational training institutions.**

A third condition relating to particularly differing practices amongst vocational training institutions and to a lesser degree VUCs, is whether individuals have a guidance interview at the vocational insti-

<sup>6</sup> Results of EVA's questionnaire distributed to the educational institutions. In total, 74 vocational institutions and 27 VUCs responded to the question.

tutions prior to starting a course or not. This is presented in Table 2. A 'guidance interview' is a one-to-one session that takes place at an educational institution.

**Table 2**

**As a percentage, how many adult learners undergo a guidance interview prior to starting a course at your educational institution?**

	Vocational Training Institution (n = 75)	VUC (n = 27)	Total (N = 102)
0-25% of learners	21%	0%	16%
26-50% of learners	8%	4%	7%
51-75% of learners	20%	0%	15%
76-100% of learners	35%	96%	51%
Don't know	16%	0%	12%
Total	100%	100%	100%

*Source: Questionnaires to all the VUCs and vocational training institutions.*

*Note: In connection with this question, the respondents were given the following help text: A 'guidance interview' is a one-to-one session that takes place at an educational institution.*

The table shows that 76-100% of the adults attend a guidance interview at almost all the VUCs (96%) prior to starting a course. A more varied picture is seen at the vocational training institutions. Over a third (35%) of the vocational training institutions said that 76-100% of adults are offered a guidance interview prior to starting a course. At the same time, approximately a fifth (21%) of the vocational training institutions said that 0-25% of adults attend a guidance interview prior to starting a course.<sup>7</sup>

The overall picture can partly be explained by the differences in the two institutional types. As previously mentioned, all prospective learners at VUCs attend a guidance interview (often called course admission guidance) for the allocation of the right subjects and level. However, a similar fixed routine has not been adopted at the vocational training institutions. When it comes to AMU courses, individuals can enrol online and then just turn up. Therefore, the difference in the practices of the vocational training institutions can be due to many things. For example, the difference can reflect the fact that some of the institutions have many individuals on AMU courses. It could also reflect a difference relating to whether vocational training institutions prioritise and advertise the availability of initial guidance interviews for adults. This shall be seen in connection with some of the vocational training insti-

<sup>7</sup> *The diversification between the educational institutions also occurs when looking at individual types of institutions. In other words, it also varies between the respective AMU centres, technical colleges, SOSU colleges, business colleges, combination colleges and agricultural colleges where, according to the respondents, a large portion of learners receive guidance.*

tutions collecting their guidance under one roof in a guidance centre and offering open guidance whilst others do not.

**3.1.3 The length of the initial guidance interviews vary immensely.**

Lastly, the length of guidance interviews on educational choices (access to training guidance) differs, especially at the vocational training institutions. This is presented in Table 3.

**Table 3**  
**How many minutes do you believe your educational institution's guidance counsellors normally spend on the first guidance interview with adults that have not yet enrolled on a course?**

	Vocational Training Institution (n = 70)	VUC (n = 17)	Total (N = 87)
Under 10 minutes	3%	0%	2%
Approx. 10-20 minutes	27%	12%	24%
Approx. 20-40 minutes	34%	82%	44%
Approx. 40-60 minutes	21%	6%	18%
Approx. 40-90 minutes	1%	0%	1%
Under 90 minutes	1%	0%	1%
Don't know	11%	0%	9%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Source: Questionnaires to all the VUCs and vocational training institutions.

Note: In connection with this question, the respondents were given the following help text: A 'guidance interview' is a one-to-one session that takes place at an educational institution.

Note: The question was exclusively answered by the 87 institutions that do not have a defined standard for how many minutes the guidance counsellors shall spend on the first guidance interview for adults that have not yet been enrolled on a course.



According to the table, 82% of the VCUs believed that guidance counsellors normally spend 20-40 minutes on the first guidance interview. Therefore, the overall picture of the practices across the VUCs is relatively uniform. More varied practices are employed by the vocational training institutions. Thirty-four per cent of the educational institutions believe that guidance counsellors normally spend 20-40 minutes on the first guidance interview. In all, 30% believe that guidance counsellors spend less than 20 minutes on the first guidance interview whilst a total of 22% believe that the guidance counsellors spend more than 40 minutes.

A total of 15 educational institutions (10 VUCs and 5 vocational training institutions) have a defined standard for the length of the discussion. All discussions shall initially last for 20-30 minutes at all 10 VUCs. Again, a more diverse picture is presented of the vocational training institutions. At two of the five institutions the length is set to 20 minutes, whilst at one of the institutions it was set to 60 minutes.

Therefore, the VUCs have a relatively uniform approach towards the frameworks governing guidance, as is presented in this section. However, it varies between the vocational training institutions. The overall difference that we found in the vocational training institutions is repeated when we look at individual types of institutions in more detail. In other words, when looking at technical colleges, business colleges, combination colleges, SOSU colleges, agricultural colleges and AMU centres individually, different practices are employed in relation to whether the institutions have a guidance centre or open guidance, whether guidance interviews are carried out and how long such interviews last. We will focus on the type of professionals that attend guidance interviews in the next section.

### 3.2 Guidance counsellors: key staff, practitioners and professionals

At most of the educational institutions, guidance/student guidance counsellors carry out access to training guidance, but other staff groups also perform guidance tasks. A large portion of guidance counsellors at most of the educational institutions have teaching duties alongside guidance tasks, especially at the VUCs. This will be addressed in more detail in the next section.

#### 3.2.1 Different staff groups carry out guidance

Most of the educational institutions use guidance/student counsellors to carry out access to training guidance. However, the institutions also use other staff groups, as presented in Table 4.

**Table 4****Which staff groups carry out initial guidance for adults concerning educational choices at your educational institution?**

	Vocational Training Institution (n = 75)	VUC (n = 27)	Total (N = 102)
guidance counsellors/study guidance counsellors	84%	100%	88%
Course secretaries	65%	7%	50%
Educational consultants	44%	37%	42%
Teachers	15%	0%	11%
Educational advisers	11%	0%	8%
Other staff groups	9%	4%	8%
Pedagogical coordinators	3%	7%	4%

*Source: Questionnaires to all the VUCs and vocational training institutions.*

*Note: Respondents had the opportunity to give multiple answers for this question. Therefore, percentages exceed 100% when added up.*

Table 4 shows that all VUCs (100%) use guidance/student guidance counsellors in connection with initial guidance. This must be seen in conjunction with VUC learners, who generally attend guidance interviews prior to starting a course, cf. section 3.1. In addition, 37% of the VUCs use educational consultants whilst a few use course secretaries, pedagogical coordinators or other staff groups.

Eighty-four per cent of the vocational training institutions use guidance/student guidance counsellors for the initial guidance of adults in connection with educational choices. Therefore, 16% of the vocational training institutions do *not* use guidance/student guidance counsellors in connection with access to training guidance. Sixty-five per cent use course secretaries in connection with the initial guidance; 44% educational consultants and 15% teachers. In addition, other groups of professionals, such as educational guidance counsellors and pedagogical consultants are used. The overall picture is that vocational training institutions use a somewhat broader range of staff groups in connection with access to training guidance than the VUCs.

**Course secretaries ensure that individuals receive information quickly**

A relatively large portion of the vocational training institutions (65%, i.e. 49 institutions) use course secretaries for guidance tasks. The course secretaries contribute to ensuring that individuals are efficiently looked after when they make enquiries about any queries they may have. That is, the survey shows that the guidance tasks performed by the course secretaries are particularly linked to giving information, disclosure and screening, cf. Table 5.

**Table 5**  
**What type of guidance do the course secretaries give at your educational institution?**

	Total (N = 51)
Answer questions about specific courses at my educational institution.	100%
Answer questions about available financial support whilst studying.	84%
Carry out preliminary interviews to assess the guidance needs of each individual.	57%
Give advice about RKV/IKV. <sup>8</sup>	31%
Advice about adult vocational training (per 1 August 2015)/essential adult learners education (GVU).	22%
Carry out interviews related to subjects and level of ability.	14%
Carry out interviews broadly focusing on the adult's development and educational options.	4%
Carry out screening tests in connection with individual screening.	2%
Other	2%

*Source: Questionnaires to all the VUCs and vocational training institutions, 2015.*

*Note: Respondents had the opportunity to give multiple answers for this question. Therefore, percentages exceed 100% when added up.*

*Note: The question was exclusively asked to the respondents that said course secretaries carried out the initial guidance of adults regarding the educational choices at their educational institution.*

The table shows that the secretaries first and foremost have an *informative role* at the institutions that use course secretaries for access to training guidance: Course secretaries answer questions on specific courses at all the institutions. At 82% of the institutions they answer questions about available financial support whilst studying. In addition, the course secretaries at 57% of the institutions carry out preliminary interviews to assess the guidance needs of each individual. According to the interviews with guidance counsellors, the secretaries carry out the interviews as a form of *screening* before having an interview with an adviser.

At 31% of the institutions, the course secretaries function as a guidance counsellor for prior learning/individual competence assessments whilst at 22% of the institutions they advise about adult vocational training or essential adult education (the course secretaries only have this function at the vocational training institutions). According to the interviewed guidance counsellors, the last two tasks may involve the course secretaries giving information about adult vocational training and prior learn-

<sup>8</sup> RKV and IKV are abbreviations for prior learning assessments and individual competence assessments, respectively. These assessments are carried out at vocational training institutions and constitute the total qualifications, knowledge, skills and competencies of the adults that are assessed, irrespective of where they were obtained.

ing/individual competence assessments and how they are executed, as well as the relevant documentation individuals need to take with them.

On the other hand, only a few of the institutions use course secretaries for important academic guidance and teaching tasks, such as carrying out interviews that broadly focus on the development and educational opportunities of adults (4%) and screening tests (2%).

As described, one of the reasons why course secretaries carry out informative guidance tasks is that efficiency and availability is secured. This is pointed out in interviews with managers and guidance counsellors. The course secretaries can answer enquires from the public immediately whilst guidance counsellors are not always available. This is considered to be an important service. The interviews addressed the fact that if individuals find it difficult to gain contact and have their questions answered, they will give up the educational pathway. Therefore, the initial guidance of the course secretaries can enable a quick response to an enquiry. As previously mentioned, course secretaries may also have more advanced guidance tasks at a small number of the educational institutions. The course secretaries must have enough competencies to solve these tasks depending on the matter at hand or they must gain qualifications as they go along in order to carry them out.

**3.2.2 Advantages and disadvantages of a full-time guidance counsellor**

One aspect, with resultant different attitudes and practices, is whether guidance counsellors shall work full-time. In this instance, by guidance counsellors we mean guidance counsellors that are out-right guidance/student guidance counsellors and not, for example, course secretaries. The different attitudes are also reflected in the practices employed by the educational institutions. Table 6 shows the differences relating to how many guidance counsellors have teaching duties alongside guidance tasks.

**Table 6**  
**How many of the guidance counsellors at your educational institution have teaching duties alongside adult guidance?**

	Vocational Training Institution (n = 75)	VUC (n = 27)	Total (N = 102)
0-25% of the guidance counsellors	41%	11%	33%
26-50% of the guidance counsellors	17%	11%	16%
51-75% of the guidance counsellors	13%	26%	17%

76-100% of the guidance counsellors	24%	52%	31%
<i>Continues on the next page</i>			
<i>Continued from the previous page</i>			
	Vocational Training Institution (n = 75)	VUC (n = 27)	Total (N = 102)
Don't know	4%	0%	3%
Total	100%	100%	100%

*Source: Questionnaires to all the VUCs and vocational training institutions.*

The table shows that more than half of the guidance counsellors have teaching duties alongside guidance tasks at 37% of the vocational training institutions and 78% of the VUCs. Therefore, it can be said that a large portion of guidance/student guidance counsellors also teach at VUCs.

The interviews with guidance counsellors, VEU consultants and managers, show that the core argument for having guidance counsellors with a teaching background that continue to teach whilst working with guidance, is that they keep in touch with teaching and their professionalism. It is believed that it provides better insight into the academic content of lessons, the developments that are taking place in education and the relevant requirements. According to the interviewees, the guidance counsellors want to continue teaching out of interest.

It was found in the interviews with guidance counsellors, VEU consultants and manager that one argument for having full-time guidance counsellors is that they contribute to the professionalisation of guidance and its execution. Guidance counsellors shall solely concentrate on guidance tasks, develop their competencies within the field and have a professional environment in which they share knowledge with other guidance counsellors. In addition, full-time guidance counsellors means that the guidance counsellors are more available, which gives them quicker contact with pupils, learners and members of the public. However, some resource-related matters must also be considered with regard to guidance counsellors, for example, it may be necessary for them to teach as well out of consideration for the finances of the institutions. Therefore, there are arguments for and against full-time guidance counsellors.

### 3.3 Summary

There are no fixed rules that state that guidance interviews must be carried out prior to admission at VUCs or vocational training institutions. However, this chapter shows that there are relatively uniform

frameworks at the VUCs, as well as relatively uniform guidance practices. This must be seen in conjunction with prospective learners frequently having an interview at VUCs to determine their level of ability and to find the right subjects for them as part of the admission process. The vocational training institutions do not employ such a practice nor do they have such a need for one. Enrolment on AMU courses is often done online in the same way as for adult vocational training courses without having to contact the applicable institution (prior learning competencies are assessed both before and after the start of courses). This chapter demonstrates the following about the frameworks governing guidance at the two different types of institutions:

- **Access to training guidance at VUCs**

Adults generally attend an initial guidance interview at VUCs prior to the start of a course, which tends to last 20-40 minutes. Open guidance is offered at all VUCs and at 85% of the VUCs guidance is organised within a guidance centre. All institutions have guidance counsellors/study guidance counsellors responsible for course admission guidance, but at some VUCs other staff groups contribute. More than half of the guidance counsellors have teaching duties alongside guidance tasks at 78% of the VUCs.

- **Access to training guidance at vocational training institutions**

The estimated number of adults that are invited to attend a guidance interview before the commencement of training or a course varies from institution to institution. In addition, the duration of a typical guidance interview varies greatly and ranges from between 10-60 minutes. Open guidance is offered at 66% of the vocational training institutions and 55% of them organise such guidance at a guidance centre. Guidance/student guidance counsellors are responsible for guidance at 84% of the institutions, however other staff groups are also involved, for example, course secretaries at 65% of the institutions. Secretaries play a special role in terms of ensuring that individuals quickly receive information when they make enquiries. More than half of the guidance counsellors have teaching duties alongside guidance tasks at 37% of the institutions.

In this chapter we have looked at the frameworks for course admission guidance whilst in the next chapter our focus is directed on the approaches used in access to training guidance at the educational institutions.

## 4 Approaches towards Access to Training Guidance

In this chapter we will shed light on access to training guidance that takes place in educational institutions despite it not being a mandatory requirement at VUCs or vocational training institutions. Our analysis shows that three different approaches are generally applied to access to training guidance: the informative, course preparatory and the evaluative and explorative approach.

As presented in the following, guidance can serve many purposes and take on different levels. An important thing to remember is that even though guidance is recipient-specific (the scope and depth of the guidance is defined by the needs of the recipient), data shows that it is critical that guidance counsellors have the ability to navigate between the different approaches towards guidance and offer more and, on occasion, something different to what is actually requested.

In this chapter we will first describe what the three approaches cover in relation to content and focal points, then we will discuss the importance of the approaches and discover whether they are used as frequently at all the institutions. We will also predict what will be needed if an institution wants to employ all three approaches.

### 4.1 Three different approaches towards guidance

The three different approaches that we identified in relation to access to training guidance deviate from one another in terms of the focal points and content in guidance interviews. The three approaches are:

- Informative guidance - when focus is placed on giving specific information.
- Course preparatory guidance - when focus is placed on matching an individual with a course.
- Evaluative and exploratory guidance - when focus is placed on supporting the individual in finding the right educational pathway for them.

The three approaches are analytical categories created on the basis of the collected interview material. In practice, the approaches are used more or less simultaneously in guidance interviews. However, in the following they are described separately to capture the special characteristics of each approach. The cardinal point of this chapter is that guidance interviews will often include both informative and course preparatory guidance; however it is relatively rare for it to be supplemented with evaluative and exploratory guidance. The elements of each approach will be unfolded in more detail in the following sections.

#### **4.1.1 Guidance approach as needed**

An important point is that guidance is only of value when all three approaches are used. As highlighted in several interviews with guidance counsellors, managers and VEU centre bosses, the value of guidance must be assessed based on the needs it is intended to satisfy. Sometimes specific information from a guidance counsellor is highly valuable to an individual, yet other times more thorough and detailed guidance is required. Example from a guidance counsellor:

*That is, when adults turn up for guidance simply to find out: "How do I apply for a course here? I couldn't find how to do it on your website." Or: "What shall I put in my application? Is this good enough?" In such instances, guidance will only last for five minutes. Others turn up and say: "I want to change my life." More time will be spent on guidance.*

As the guidance counsellor says, some individuals just want information whilst others need help in finding a new direction to take in their lives. Guidance interviews are based on these needs and the interviews are differentiated and shaped according to the individual's needs. In other words, a long and thorough guidance interview is, of course, not conducted with individuals who only need a few factual pieces of information.

#### **Guidance approach when needs are not known**

Another point is that adult learner's educational guidance also includes giving guidance to individuals who are totally unaware of what they need to know in order to move forwards. Some guidance counsellors report that they regularly advise individuals who are unsure and do not know what they want to do. These can be unemployed or individuals who want a change but do not know what they want or can do. In these instances, evaluative and explorative guidance is particularly relevant. Data indicates that some guidance counsellors do not use this approach as much as the other two approaches, which gives a potential rise to problems. We will return to this at the end of the chapter. We will now look at the three approaches in more detail.



#### **4.1.2 The informative approach to guidance - when focus is placed on giving specific information.**

The first approach is what we call *informative guidance*. It is 'here and now' guidance that stems from an individual's need for knowledge or information at a given time. The focal point of this guidance is to give specific information to individuals, for example, about the courses and programmes offered at the institution, the length of courses and when they are held, rules governing one's student financial support, application procedures, etc. This is what a guidance counsellor said about this guidance:

*Of course, some information is given during guidance, for example, someone may ask if we offer 'this or that profession' or if we offer 'this or that' course here. Some might just say, "I'd just like to know what you offer here", after which they'll be given some details and we'll take it from there.*

Guidance interviews can also be about giving individuals totally specific information. Informative guidance can be given during a conversation, as in the above example. It can also be given by e-mail or telephone when guidance counsellors answer the individual's factual questions. Course secretaries also carry out this type of guidance, especially at vocational training institutions, cf. Chapter 3. As previously mentioned, the questionnaires revealed that course secretaries are included in the initial adult guidance for educational choices at 65% of the vocational training institutions and 2% of the VUCs. The representatives of all institutions who took part in the survey stated that course secretaries answer questions on specific courses at the educational institutions.

Some may question whether this type of information and enlightenment can be considered as guidance. However, we would like to point out that many of the educational institutions and VEU centres define it as guidance. In addition, this guidance approach tends to be included as a facet of a more in-depth guidance interview.

#### **4.1.3 The course preparatory approach - focus on matching an individual with a course.**

We have called the second approach towards access to training '*preparatory course guidance*'. This guidance focuses on the situation of the individual in the here and now, but also looks ahead with realistic educational scenarios. This guidance is centred around guidance counsellors and individuals jointly uncovering and assessing whether the individual's life, interests and abilities are coherent with a given course or future job.

This type of guidance is conducted in conjunction with vocational training, AMU courses and courses at VUCs. Across the interviews with guidance counsellors from the VUCs and vocational training institutions, we noticed that there are two central points in the preparatory guidance interview.

Firstly, the guidance counsellors from both VUCs and the vocational training institutions say that some of their access to training guidance is about getting adults to reflect over whether the courses that are offered at the applicable institution suit the individual's life situation. For example, it could be about how much the individual's partner supports them, their personal finances and how these are linked to taking a course, etc. These are relevant questions, because adults in contrast to young people have already created a life with personal, social and financial commitments and expectations. For example, a guidance counsellor for a vocational training course said:

*If you have an ordinary vocational training (EUD) student from secondary school, the pupil will be similar to any other student. However, adults have very different needs when it comes to individual guidance. This is also because they have different backgrounds. Some have a different type of education, others have never taken any courses, some are single, others have a family, some have had a different career, others come without any credits - all of which we must take into account. You could say that the older one gets, the more personal the guidance will be.*

Therefore, the guidance counsellor stresses that since adults have specifically different life situations there may be an extra need to explore whether the course is the right one for them. Guidance counsellors for vocational courses that traditionally have inconvenient working hours also said that access to training guidance might include reflection over how a work placement and later job will affect the adult's family life.

Secondly, the guidance counsellors at the VUCs and vocational training institutions said that during access to training guidance they focus on informing the adults about what is required of them when taking a course. For example, requirements and expectations relating to study activities, as well as their level of ability. Guidance counsellors believe that it is important to discuss these matters, as adults can have unrealistic expectations in relation to their own abilities, i.e. their level of ability and motivation to do academic work. For example, they might think they can do a course but in reality they will not have the required level of ability. The guidance counsellors for vocational training also mentioned that they inform the adults about requirements pertaining to finding a work placement.

In addition to these two central points, special conditions apply across the educational institutions regarding access to training guidance at VUCs. This is referred to under the preparatory course guidance approach. This was also mentioned in Chapter 3. Here the guidance practice is to plan VUC courses according to the needs of the individual, and then to combine the course and the needs of the individual in the most appropriate way. VUC guidance counsellors say that the guidance and any supplementary tests forms the basis for enrolment at the right academic level, for example, general adult education, higher preparatory examination courses for individual subjects. Similarly, the guidance enables one to put together a plan that suits the individual in terms of subjects, level and number of hours.



Naturally, the individual and institution have joint interests in this respect. They also want to find a course that matches their life and competencies. Therefore, in the interviews with members of the public, we found that the receipt of in-depth initial information about the courses individuals want to start and the requirements connected to starting such a course, are important. For example, some individuals we spoke to were frustrated, because they had not been told that a particular course was not suitable for them. This is illustrated in an example from an interview with an individual that started a combined vocational training course with upper secondary school subjects (EUX course) to become an electrician:

Interviewer: *What did you want the guidance counsellor to help you with?*

Person: *I wanted to know what the course involved, but the guidance counsellor didn't know. I wanted to take an EUX course, but before EUX courses combined vocational training with upper secondary school subjects it was called HHX or HTX (higher technical examination programme), but I don't know what it's called now...*

Interviewer: *So, it feels like you didn't get the guidance you needed?*

Person: *Yes, especially because I was totally lost with the physics and chemistry that I was given on the course. When the teacher started writing the formulae on the board, I drew a blank.*

The individual was not sure what the course actually involved and he felt that he did not receive enough information about the academic requirements of the course. After starting the course, he now finds that he cannot fulfil the academic requirements and says that if he had received more information about the requirements he would have been able to improve his ability before starting the course. Therefore, the individual seeks more in-depth and preparatory guidance.

#### **4.1.4 Evaluative and exploratory guidance - focus on supporting the individual in finding the right educational pathway.**

The third identifiable guidance approach is evaluative and exploratory guidance. With this approach, the individual looks backwards and then to the future. In contrast to preparatory course guidance, this guidance is not solely about matching an institution's courses with an individual. Instead, the guidance makes the individual the main focal point. Focus is placed on what the individual has to offer and the potential suitable courses, irrespective of the institution to which the guidance counsellor belongs. According to the interview questions, one of the objectives of the guidance through its exploratory aspect, is to get individuals to consider which courses and jobs he/she could imagine doing. For example, one guidance counsellor said the following:

*For me, guidance is mainly about showing people how to get to something they didn't know about before. [...] My goal is to have individuals go out the door after guidance knowing what they should do next. It might not be the last step taken, which, of course, it won't be, but [the goal] is that they know how they can move forwards in terms of upgrading their skills or education.*

Therefore, the guidance is partly about opening up new opportunities and partly about putting individuals on the right track. The guidance counsellors say that they evaluate and explore the needs of the individual when required. A guidance counsellor told of the practices he employs:

*The guidance interview is based on the needs of the individual [...] I then ask them about their experience, what they currently do and what they are interested in. [...] We get the ideas flowing and then say "What were your dreams when you were 15? What did you say when people asked what you wanted to be when you grew up? After this, I ask them about what they would like to do. What opportunities are there in that field? We then try to put things together on a computer. We look at the AMU courses or visit [ug.dk](http://ug.dk) and search for various things. Then we visit different websites and find out what the jobs entail, the pay, etc.*

From this, the guidance counsellor describes a method of questions and dialogue with the individual to discover the individual's interests to support him/her in finding an educational path that will lead to his/her goal. A subsequent dimension is to discuss whether the desired training and later job is attainable for the individual based on his/her life situation.

The guidance offered at the workshop in the AMU Centre in Fyn (AMU-Fyn) is an example of a special initiative on evaluative and exploratory guidance. This is described in further detail in the textbox on the next page.

## Guidance workshop at AMU-Fyn

A group of advisors at AMU-Fyn have offered institution independent educational guidance to everyone between the ages of 18-65 for many years. People can telephone the counselling workshop's hotline and book an appointment everyday between 8 am-3:30 pm or just turn up without an appointment and ask for an informal chat. The initiative has five guidance counsellors, who run the guidance workshop on a rota basis.

One of the guidance counsellors said that the workshop was established when it was discovered that 'adults needed somewhere to go to discuss and to get some guidance about educational choices'. Based on the keywords 'institution-independent, equality and mutual respect', the guidance counsellors at AMU-Fyn want to address this need by offering long guidance interviews based on the individual concerned. Sixty minutes are set aside for each interview, "but if it takes longer, we will continue for as long as necessary."

The fact that guidance shall be institution-independent and broad, is highly emphasised by the guidance counsellors at AMU-Fyn. A guidance counsellor put it this way:

*It's crucial, otherwise, it isn't guidance. It's sales. If it's the case that we just sit here with our own interests at heart, we are salespeople, and we are not that! The idea isn't to fill up our courses. The point is to find out what the person sitting opposite us needs.*

Therefore, guidance interviews at AMU-Fyn bear the characteristics of the evaluative and exploratory approach that focuses on helping individuals to choose the right educational pathway, irrespective of where it leads.

The guidance workshop at AMU-Fyn does not just offer long guidance interviews, but also specific help, for example, with writing applications to colleges and employers. In such instances, the workshop provides a computer "then we come along and spar them the whole time whilst they read and write." This service was created because the guidance counsellors found that people had nowhere to go to get help.

### **Passion is the driving force**

Financing for the workshop is available, as the five guidance counsellors also work as subject teachers at AMU-Fyn. Consequently, they shall primarily follow the same teaching norms as their colleagues whilst carrying out guidance tasks. However, they receive a supplement for their guidance counsellor function. In connection with this, a guidance counsellor said that "the workshop only works because we are passionate about it." At the same time, the constellation enables the guidance counsellors to sit in the workshop and prepare lessons, so no time is wasted if no one turns up for guidance. With a weekly average of 15-20 visitors and telephone enquiries, this is often the case.

(interview with a guidance counsellor at AMU-Fyn).

From the interviews with members of the public, we also found that evaluative and exploratory guidance can have a positive effect on adults in terms of the educational choices they make.

Firstly, individuals that assumingly underwent an evaluation and exploratory interview with a guidance counsellor said that it helped them to find an educational path and they felt more secure about the decision they made. For example, one individual said that the in-depth guidance interview helped him to plunge into taking a course.

Secondly, we noted that a number of individuals in the interviews said they would like to have more in-depth and exploratory guidance. These individuals said that they would have liked the opportunity to consider other options more thoroughly before starting their course. However, they were not aware that such guidance was available and they did not know how to find out about it. For example, one unemployed individual who no longer qualified for unemployment benefit said:

*When there's no help to be had and you can't get cash or unemployment benefit, you are completely alone - you have no one to talk to! You ask, "What do I do now? What can I do? What shall I do? Help me!" At that point, I would have liked someone to have been there to help me find my way and to show me my options.*

One aspect that we noticed during the interviews with some members of the public was that their course seemed to be randomly chosen. For example, one individual said that her educational pathway was randomly chosen through 'seeing a brochure in the waiting room [at the job centre] in which it said Essential Training in Retail/Trade and Office Work for Adults (HG)'. It inspired her to start a HG course. Such an educational choice *could* be the right one for the individual, but the point is that many more people do not seem to be given any other options or challenges in connection with their initial idea. Therefore a certain amount of randomness may apply, but more qualified decisions might have been made with guidance.

## 4.2 Evaluative and exploratory guidance is not available at all institutions

Looking at all the data, it is striking that differences exist in terms of whether individuals primarily receive evaluative and exploratory guidance. This is related to the fact that there is no legislation that requires vocational institutions to offer guidance with such an approach (this does not apply to RKV/IKV assessments, as evaluation and assessment of an individual's competencies is, of course, included). Therefore, it is the inherent strategies and prioritisations of the educational institutions, and the abilities and personal flexibility of each guidance counsellor that partly play a role in deciding whether to offer evaluative and exploratory guidance. This subsequently raises the question of where it shall be held.

## **Lack of resources and strategies for evaluation and exploratory guidance**

Some types of guidance signal more likelihood of employing the evaluative and exploratory approach, for example, open guidance offered by VEU centres or outreaching individual guidance in enterprises. However, the point is that the evaluative and exploratory approach is also more visible in access to training guidance at some of the vocational institutions than at others. In the interviews we noticed that some guidance counsellors and managers stressed that evaluative and exploratory guidance is not their job. For example, a guidance coordinator at one of the vocational training institutions said:

*If someone phones and speaks to our administrative clerk, they will be asked: "What would you like to study?" What would you like to do?" If the person says "I have no idea", they are referred to the UU or job centre. We would be closed down if we also advised about animal sitters and everything else under the sun. We simply do not have the resources.*

Here, the coordinator emphasises that evaluation must be arranged by other parties. According to the coordinator, the educational institution does not have the financial or staff resources to cover this type of guidance. At the same time, the coordinator said that she believes that people may not be clear at all about what they want to study when they turn up for access to training guidance at the educational institution - even after receiving guidance at the job centre.

Moreover, other guidance counsellors said that they do not have the capacity (i.e. the resources or competencies) to "start right from the beginning", as one guidance counsellor put it. Obviously, evaluative and exploratory guidance is a time and resource-related priority and there are no formal requirements stating that educational institutions shall carry out such work, but the question is: Whose job is it then?

### **Evaluative and exploratory guidance - whose job is it?**

The question related to assigning responsibility for evaluative and exploratory guidance is still relevant with the current additional political focus on training for the unemployed, etc. Right now the educational institutions and, therefore, for example, the VEU centres, are facing new and greater challenges due to the consequences of the employment reform for the unemployed. A manager of a VEU centre said:

*The greatest challenge right now connected to the new employment reform is that we receive a large amount of enquiries from people that really should undergo evaluation and not guidance. Our guidance is, of course, primarily advice about education and we are less able to advise them if they need evaluating. We could take on the task, but when it comes down to resources, we cannot. [...] The [evaluation interviews] demand an entirely different set-up. However, if an-*



*yone comes and asks us how they can obtain a particular skill, we can, for example, refer them to courses or vocational training programmes,*

i.e. in many instances the problem lies within the educational institutions not having the resources to enable guidance counsellors to evaluate individuals in relation to their general future path. At the same time, job centre staff do not always have the necessary know-how to conduct an initial educational evaluation that uncovers all possibilities well enough (and correctly). This is presented in Table 7.

Therefore, we may ask which type of institution is expected to take on such a task? This uncertainty can have consequences for the individual. It can be difficult for individuals to know where to enquire about evaluative and exploratory guidance when they need it.

### **Institutions and the long-term benefits of challenging and evaluative guidance**

Despite the institutional viewpoint that financial considerations might be the reason for non-prioritisation of evaluative and exploratory guidance, there may be cause to think more in the long-term. This was noted in, for example, the interviews with guidance counsellors at VUCs. There were two different perspectives on just how much evaluative and exploratory guidance should be incorporated in the guidance service at VUCs.

One perspective amongst the VUC guidance counsellors and guidance coordinators was that the evaluative and exploratory guidance should not be the focal point in guidance at VUCs. According to the guidance counsellors and coordinators, the reason individuals attend access to training guidance at a VUC is because they want to attend the VUC. Therefore, it is only natural that they will be advised in accordance with this wish. For example, one guidance counsellor said the following: "Ninety per cent of the people that come here, do so because they intend to train here. As a result, we naturally advise them here in the building." At the same time, we noted that guidance counsellors at VUCs said that some individuals have undergone evaluation to establish their future educational requirements. For example, someone can start at a VUC after being ordered to study without really considering what they want to do with their qualifications or with unrealistic expectations about what they can do. That is, on the one hand guidance counsellors say that people attend access to training guidance, because they want to attend a VUC, whilst on the other the same guidance counsellors say that some people that receive guidance are not evaluated. This indicates a challenge in respect of establishing realistic future goals during access to training guidance or whilst attending a VUC.

Of course, some of these reasons form the basis for the second perspective highlighted in interviews with guidance counsellors from VUCs, i.e. that evaluative and exploratory guidance shall play a central role in access to training guidance. As soon as an individual is accepted by a VUC, a definite goal must be established to determine what the general adult education or higher preparatory examination

course for individual subjects shall lead to. For example, a coordinator for guidance counsellors at a VUC said:

*I think that one of the most important and main focal points in guidance, when someone comes in wanting to change their career, is to establish contact with a guidance counsellor, who will ask: "What type of career change would you like? Where do you see yourself? What do you see in your future?" It's important to create future scenarios at once, as soon as people walk in. It isn't a matter of just taking a single subject at a VUC, there should also be a goal at the end to prevent people from completing a subject or two-year higher preparatory examination course for individual subjects without knowing what they are going to do. I think it's very important that objectives are formulated for courses.*

The reason for this, beyond benefiting each course participant, is that it has a positive effect on motivation. It helps people to finish courses at VUCs when they have a specific purpose for taking a course in the form of potential future training and/or job. In other words, when resources are initially used for this type of guidance, educational institutions might also benefit in the long run. However, it is important to note that special prioritisation, strategies and frameworks governing guidance must be adopted by the institutions.

### **Different frameworks and competencies of guidance counsellors**

When the frameworks, described in Chapter 3, are so different, various starting points are created across the institutions when it comes to offering the different types of guidance. For example, it may make a difference if individuals are offered open guidance and if the educational institution has a policy on the length of the first guidance interview. If, for example, an individual turns up at an institution that does not offer open guidance, but offers guidance from a course secretary about relevant courses offered at the institution for max. 10 minutes, the situation will differ from that of an individual who turns up for open guidance at an educational institution where a qualified guidance counsellor spends more time on guidance evaluating and exploring potential (educational) pathways.

Another important aspect of access to training guidance is whether guidance counsellors possess enough knowledge and the right skills to offer, for example, evaluative and exploratory guidance to the public. As described in Chapter 5, it was found in the survey that many guidance counsellors lack knowledge about educational opportunities in other educational institutions, in addition to the guidance needs of adults. If a guidance counsellor primarily knows about the programmes and courses offered by their own institution and does not have enough insight into what adult guidance actually is, critical obstacles may exist in providing broad and institution-independent guidance.

## 4.3 Summary

The analysis shows that three different guidance approaches are employed by the institutions and, hence, three different focus areas. These are summarised in Figure 3. The first approach is *informative guidance* where focus is on providing specific information to the public about courses, rules, etc. The second approach is *the preparatory course approach*, which concerns matching the individual's life with a specific course. The third approach is *exploratory and evaluative guidance*, in which the objective of the interview is to evaluate the available options together with a person to discover what they have done, what they wish they had done and, especially, what they want to do. The approaches can co-exist at different levels during one guidance session, and the needs and abilities of the individual form the basis for the interview. However, evaluative and exploratory guidance is more visible in access to training guidance at some of the vocational institutions than at others.

**Figur 3**  
**Summary of the three approaches to guidance**

Informerende tilgang	Forløbsfokuserede tilgang	Afklarende og udforskende tilgang
<p>Behov for konkret, afgrænset information <i>her og nu</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• information</li> <li>• konkret hjælp</li> <li>• henvisninger.</li> </ul> <p><b>Fokus i vejledning:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• yde hurtig og korrekt service → i institutionens og borgerens interesse.</li> </ul>	<p>Behov for at se og planlægge en uddannelsesvej <i>her og nu + prospektivt</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• se på match mellem uddannelse og borgerens livssituation</li> <li>• afstemme krav og forventninger</li> <li>• teste borgerens forudsætninger.</li> </ul> <p><b>Fokus i vejledning:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sikre motivation og gennemførelse → i institutionens og i borgerens interesse.</li> </ul>	<p>Behov for at se på medbragt bagage og vejen fremad <i>retrospektivt + prospektivt</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• afklare interesse, motivation og kompetencer</li> <li>• vise muligheder og nye veje</li> <li>• vurdere realistiske muligheder.</li> </ul> <p><b>Fokus i vejledning:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• tage udgangspunkt i borgeren → interpersonel interesse.</li> </ul>

No statutory requirements have been passed ordering educational institutions to offer evaluative and explorative guidance. Some institutions and guidance counsellors prioritise this task and others do not owing to strategical and resource-related reasons. This means that individuals may randomly encounter this type of help and support when making enquiries at educational institutions. Therefore, it raises the general question of who is responsible for this type of guidance?



# 5 Qualifications of guidance counsellors

In this chapter we focus sharply on the qualifications of guidance counsellors. This chapter highlights perspectives on whether guidance counsellors of adults at Denmark's vocational training institutions and VUCs have the expertise to carry out counselling work, and we also give an insight into the qualifications that guidance counsellors possess and the opportunities available to them to acquire more/new knowledge. In addition, we also shed light over various perspectives on how competent and professional guidance can be developed. The conclusions of this chapter are based on the data from questionnaires and interviews with guidance counsellors, VEU consultants, managers and VEU centre bosses.

According to the survey, guidance counsellors that give guidance to adults at Danish educational institutions lack knowledge in a number of areas. This corresponds with the conclusion in Chapter 4 that states that if an institution wants to offer guidance that potentially navigates between the different approaches towards course access to training guidance, the institution needs to clarify the frameworks, resources and competencies it demands.

We will first look at the knowledge that guidance counsellors need and then the strategies that the educational institutions employ to professionalise the guidance.

## 5.1 What guidance counsellors need in terms of knowledge

Based on EVA's survey, a somewhat ambiguous picture is presented of whether guidance counsellors at educational institutions currently possess the necessary knowledge or whether they need to gain more qualifications. It is difficult to draw a unified conclusion on this. However, the survey also indicates that guidance counsellors shall ideally be knowledgeable in different areas.

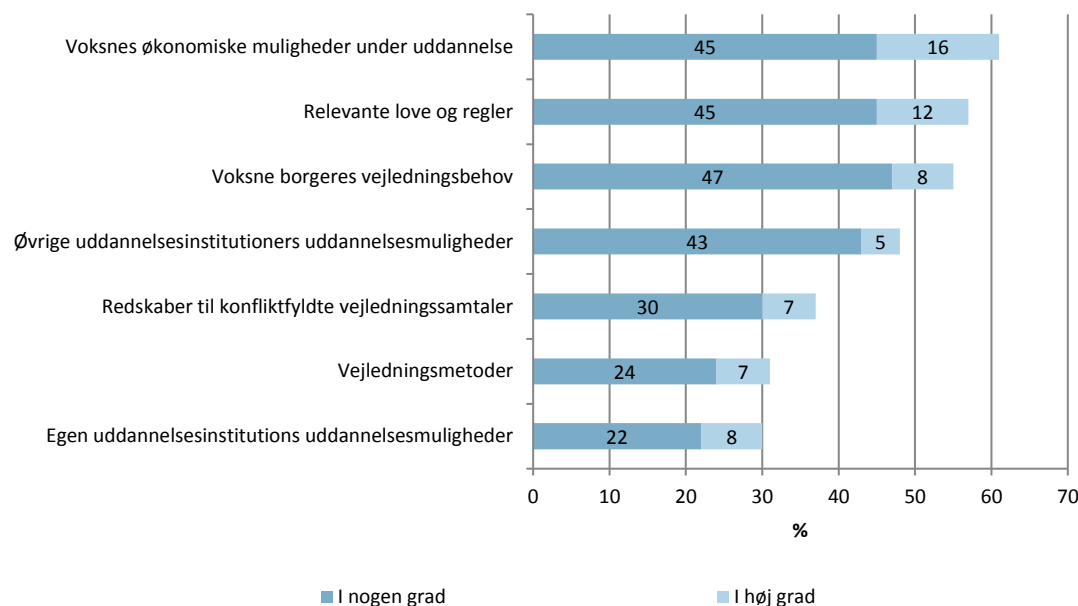
In the following, we will look at guidance counsellors and how it has been deemed that they might need additional knowledge and also highlight the knowledge that it is considered guidance counsellors should have at vocational training institutions and VUCs.

Areas in which it is considered that guidance counsellors at vocational training institutions are relatively well-equipped to give advice about the options at their own educational institution and to use the various guidance methods, include: financial support for adult learners; relevant laws and rules governing adult learner's participation in training courses; and the needs of adults in relation to guidance in areas that guidance counsellors consider themselves to be less knowledgeable about. Figure 4 illustrates this.

**Figur 4**

**Vocational training institutions (N = 73/74)**

**To what extent do guidance counsellors at your institution need to gain more knowledge in order for them to advise adults about educational choices?**



Source: Questionnaires to all the VUCs and vocational training institutions.

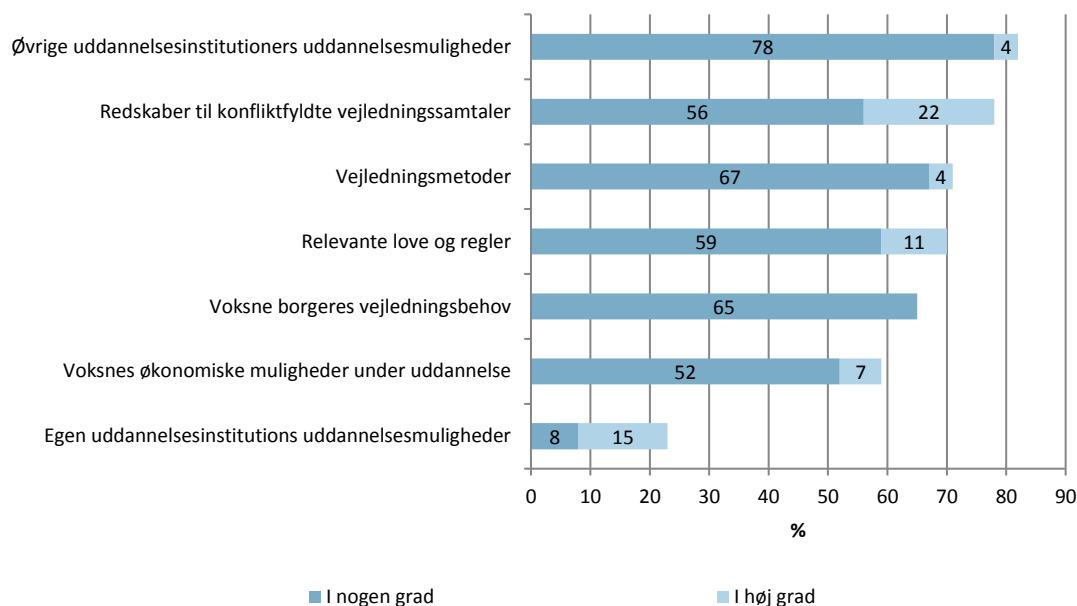
As seen in the illustration, more than half of those who filled in the questionnaire from the vocational training institutions said that the guidance counsellors greatly or to some degree needed additional knowledge about student financial support, laws and rules and guidance for adult learners. In addition, almost half believe that the guidance counsellors' knowledge on training options at other educational institutions is lacking.

However, according to the survey, guidance counsellors at VUCs need to gain additional knowledge in a number of areas. Whilst the VUCs believe that the guidance counsellors generally know about courses run by the VUCs, they feel that the guidance counsellors lack knowledge on practically all other related guidance topics. This particularly applies to knowledge about the options at other educational institutions, handling conflictful interviews, guidance methods and relevant laws and rules, cf. Figure 5.

**Figur 5**

**VUCs (N = 26/27)**

**To what extent do guidance counsellors at your institution need to gain more knowledge in order for them to advise adults about educational choices?**



*Source: Questionnaires to all the VUCs and vocational training institutions.*

For example, 82% of the VUCs believe that the guidance counsellors greatly or to some degree need to be more knowledgeable about the training options at other institutions, and 78% believe that they greatly or to some degree need to be more knowledgeable about/have tools to handle conflictful interviews.

In general it could appear that the guidance counsellors at VUCs need to upgrade their skills more than guidance counsellors at vocational training institutions in order to advise adults about educa-

tional choices. However, this is difficult to conclude based on the results of the survey. For example, it is also possible that the image presented expresses the fact that the composition of learners at VUCs in recent years has changed (with more academically and socially challenging learners), and therefore counselling work is undergoing change. In respect of this, it can only be expected that VUCs are more focused on guidance as a complex and resource-demanding task that requires guidance counsellors to continually improve their competence.

On the one hand it can be said that the guidance counsellors need additional qualifications when such a large portion of the educational institutions state that the guidance counsellors greatly or to some extent need additional knowledge in the applicable areas, as illustrated in Figure 4 and 5. For example, if one considers guidance as a profession, for instance in line with that of a doctor, it is unacceptable that the public meets professionals that have little knowledge about the core areas connected to their job - in this case guidance counsellors with insufficient knowledge about matters they shall advise others about. On the other hand though, a relatively large portion of the educational institutions answered 'To some extent' and not 'To a great extent'. This can also be an expression of a view that guidance counsellors consistently need to expand their knowledge about topics they already have some expertise on. Therefore, it can be said that the guidance counsellors are already competent, but could always acquire more skills.

In connection with Figure 4 and 5 we have noted that counselling work must be deemed as complex taking into account the number of different areas in which (according to the representatives) additional knowledge is required. This concerns knowledge about one's own courses and those of other institutions, essential rules and financial support for adult learners, guidance methods and guidance for adult learners, etc. Overall it demonstrates that the representatives believe that guidance counsellors should ideally be knowledgeable about a number of topics. When guidance counsellors need to be knowledgeable about many topics it can be asked whether guidance counsellors can indeed be extremely knowledgeable about them all or whether focus should be placed on that which guidance counsellors should know - and when, for example, collaboration with other institutions, including job centres, should be drawn on in relation to guidance.

Since the survey shows that guidance counsellors apparently need more/new knowledge in different areas of guidance, it is interesting to look at why guidance counsellors do not have enough opportunities to gain additional qualifications and take part in various forms of competence development activities. However, this does not seem to be the case.

#### **5.1.1 Relatively good opportunities for guidance counsellors to upgrade their skills**

In general the survey shows that guidance counsellors at the educational institutions have relatively good opportunities to upgrade their guidance skills. In actual fact a total of 90% (not illustrated in the tables) of the representatives believe that their institution largely or to some degree has good oppor-



tunities for guidance counsellors to receive necessary training and to take courses. The representatives include both colleagues and managers, cf. Section 2.4. Table 7 shows how the representatives assessed opportunities for upgrading skills at their institution distributed according to their function as a colleague or manager.

**Table 7**

**To what extent do you believe that your educational institution offers good opportunities for guidance counsellors to receive the training or guidance courses they want to take?**

	Vocational training institution		VUC		Total	
	Manager (n = 52)	Not a manager (n = 22)	Manager (n = 23)	Not a manager (n = 4)	Manager (n = 75)	Not a manager (n = 26)
To a great extent	56%	32%	70%	50%	60%	35%
To some extent	37%	41%	30%	50%	35%	42%
To a lesser extent	8%	27%	0%	0%	5%	23%
None	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

*Source: Questionnaires to all the VUCs and vocational training institutions.*

As presented in the table, the managers (perhaps not surprisingly) to a larger extent than non-managerial staff, believe that guidance counsellors at the educational institutions offer good opportunities to guidance counsellors to upgrade their educational skills. This is the only question in the survey that shows different responses between managers and non-managerial staff, respectively, which is quite interesting in itself. That is, ordinary colleagues do not believe that guidance counsellors have many opportunities to upgrade their skills in the same way that managers do. Yet, the representatives with a collegial background still answered that they are relatively positive towards the opportunities for upgrading skills. In other words, it does not seem that guidance counsellors do not have the opportunity to develop their competence. Consequently, this cannot be the reason for their need to acquire more knowledge on various guidance-related topics not being met.

### **5.1.2 Just over half of the educational institutions demand guidance counsellor training**

It is a statutory requirement to train employees that are employed to take care of educational and vocational guidance as part of their regular jobs at VUCs and vocational training institutions. They can either possess the three mandatory modules and a relevant optional module from the diploma programme for educational and vocational guidance, professional bachelor's degree in public administration specialising in educational and vocational guidance *or* a master's degree in guidance. In addition, previous guidance qualifications in combination with vocational experience meet the required qualifi-

cations, cf. the textbox on the next page. The educational institutions can waive the requirements upon employment if they have a plan for when the requirements will be met.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> See Executive Order No. 876, of 07.07.2010 and Executive Order No. 110, of 22.09.2014.

## guidance counsellor training qualifying one to carry out educational and vocational guidance as student retention work at VUCs and vocational training institutions

Various training programmes can make up guidance counsellor training to meet statutory requirements relating to educational and vocational guidance as a part of student retention work at VUCs and vocational training institutions. Firstly, they can possess the three mandatory modules and a relevant optional module from the diploma programme for educational and vocational career guidance. The programme has been available since 2007 and today it is offered at five Danish university colleges. The total length of the course has been standardised to one-year's work.

Secondly, guidance counsellors can hold a master's degree in guidance. The master's degree also corresponds to one-year's work.

Thirdly, guidance counsellors can hold a professional bachelor's degree in public administration specialising in educational and vocational guidance.

Furthermore, guidance counsellors can hold the general guidance counsellor certificate that was the predecessor to the diploma programme for educational, vocational and career guidance. The course could be taken between 2004-07 and was standardised to six-month's work. The programme was introduced with the aim of relieving the previous 21 sector-specific guidance counsellor programmes and courses.

Guidance counsellors can now at last hold a diploma from one of the earlier guidance counsellor programmes in combination with at least five years' vocational experience. Relevant earlier guidance counsellor programmes include: the school and/or youth guidance counsellor programme (from the Danish School of Education, etc.); the adult guidance counsellor programme (from the Danish School of Education, The Danish Institute for Educational Training of Vocational Teachers, etc.), the educational and vocational guidance counsellor programme (previously called student guidance) (The Danish Institute for Educational Training of Vocational Teachers), student guidance counsellor programme for student guidance counsellors at upper secondary schools; higher preparatory examination courses for individual subjects and adult education centres (The Danish Ministry of Education), essential training for guidance counsellors in general adult education (The Danish Ministry of Education), student guidance counsellor programmes through upper secondary school programmes - foundation courses and four modules (The Danish Ministry of Education).

(Carla Tønder Jessing 2006: *Den fælles vejlederuddannelse*, Uddannelsesguiden om Masteruddannelse i vejledning og Uddannelses-, erhvervs- og karrierevejledning).



Therefore, it is a requirement that guidance counsellors at VUCs and vocational training institutions must be qualified when involved in student retention work. However, this requirement does *not* apply to guidance counsellors linked to AMU courses.

Table 8 illustrates how many educational institutions require their guidance counsellors to have completed or started guidance counsellor training upon employment.

**Table 8**  
**Does your educational institution require guidance counsellors to have guidance counsellor training (or started such training) upon employment as a guidance counsellor?**

	Vocational Training Institution (n = 63)	VUC (n = 22)	Total (N = 85)
Yes	48%	73%	54%
No	52%	27%	46%

*Source: Questionnaires to all the VUCs and vocational training institutions.*

*Note: The question on the questionnaire was accompanied by the following help text: "With 'guidance counsellor training' is a course that immediately qualifies one to work as a guidance counsellor".*

Table 8 shows that 48% of the vocational training institutions and 73% of the VUCs require their guidance counsellors to have completed or started a guidance counsellor programme upon employment. Based on the requirements of the law, one would immediately expect all VUCs to employ the requirement of guidance counsellor training. However, we exercise caution with this interpretation, as there may be different reasons why all the VUCs did not answer that guidance counsellor training is mandatory.<sup>10</sup>

In relation to vocational training institutions, it is as mentioned earlier, i.e. that when guidance counsellors are employed as counsellors as part of student retention work on the vocational courses, they must be qualified guidance counsellors. However, this is not a statutory requirement for guidance counsellors linked to AMU courses. The fact that only 48% of the vocational training institutions in the survey answered that guidance counsellors must hold a guidance counsellor qualification upon employment, could be due to the institution's answers being based on guidance counsellors that are specifically employed for counselling on AMU courses.

This is why we exercise caution when interpreting Table 8. We *cannot* conclude that the educational institutions do not follow the legal requirements.

<sup>10</sup>For example, we cannot rule out that the respondents misunderstood the question in relation to statutory requirements. The formulation of the question gives rise to ambiguity.

### **Guidance counsellors are already competent - therefore the training is considered as redundant**

The institutions that do not require their guidance counsellors to have guidance counsellor training give various reasons for this. Seventy-six per cent of the vocational training institutions and sixty-seven per cent of the VUCs that do *not require their guidance counsellors to have guidance counsellor training stated that their guidance counsellors have the necessary competencies*. However, 15% of the vocational training institutions that do not require their guidance counsellors to have guidance counsellor training stated that a lack of resources at their institution was (also) one of the reasons why training was not required. The VUCs do not mention this as a reason.<sup>11</sup>

This is interesting when compared with Figure 4 and 5, as according to the survey guidance counsellors lack knowledge on a number of topics. Whilst a total of 74% of the participating educational institutions (the vocational training institutions and VUCs that do not require guidance counsellor training) believe that the guidance counsellors have the required competencies for their jobs as guidance counsellors. It is surprising that a large portion of the educational institutions, cf. Figure 4 and 5, believe that guidance counsellors lack knowledge on a number of guidance-related topics<sup>12</sup>.

Therefore, this does not provide a clear picture of whether the guidance counsellors at the educational institutions do indeed have the competencies and knowledge that is required to advise adults about educational choices. However, there is no doubt that the educational institutions believe that guidance counsellors could boost their knowledge and competencies on many topics, but it is difficult to say whether this is an expression of their endeavour to strive for the best standard or whether they are emphasising a lack of competence and need. Data shows that adult guidance can be practised in many different ways (see Chapter 4, etc.), and the varying scope of the task naturally demands different requirements in terms of the knowledge and competencies of guidance counsellors. Ideally, guidance counsellors shall be extremely knowledgeable and possess a long list of competencies. However, an important task for the institutions must be to define what guidance counsellors need to know in order to solve the tasks that they want the guidance to cover.

<sup>11</sup>The question was answered by 33 vocational training institutions and six VUCs. The other VUCs require guidance counsellor training.

<sup>12</sup> When looking exclusively at the 39 institutions that do not require guidance counsellors to have guidance counsellor training due to, for example, their guidance counsellors already possessing the required competencies of a guidance counsellor, the following number answered that their guidance counsellors to a large or some extent needed to be more knowledgeable about the following: financial support for adult learners (59%), knowledge about adult guidance (58%), relevant laws and rules governing adult participation in education (52%), educational options at other educational institutions (52%), tools for conflictful guidance interviews (41%), guidance methods (38%) and the educational options for adult learners at their own institution (24%).

There are different opinions on how one becomes or what a competent guidance counsellor is. In the following we will present three methods that in light of the data stand out as hazardous paths to take in offering competent and professional adult guidance.

## 5.2 Various strategies to professionalise guidance

According to this analysis there are many ways to fulfil the role as a professional guidance counsellor. Therefore, there are also many ways to boost guidance and the competencies of guidance counsellors. When looking at all the results from the survey and interviews with guidance counsellors, VEU consultants, managers and VEU centre bosses, three overall strategies for upgrading skills and the professionalisation of guidance are found:

1. Enhanced guidance: Guidance and the competencies of the guidance counsellors are enhanced by giving the institution's guidance counsellors guidance training.
2. Enhanced professional ingrainment: Guidance is enhanced and developed through solid ingrainment in the professional sectors and by guidance counsellors being very knowledgeable about the target groups.
3. Enhanced focus on collaboration: The strength of guidance is expressed in the collaboration and connection with other institutions, which enables the smooth transfer of knowledge, guidance counsellors and learners.

A central aspect of the discussion on whether different strategies contribute to the daily practices of guidance counsellors depends on the primary objective of the guidance, cf. Chapter 4. In the following, three strategies are unfolded. The latter shall not be seen as mutually exclusive, but they have been analysed separately to explicitly point out the differing underlying arguments. From the data we have also identified the tendency to commit to one of the strategies rather than all three.

### 5.2.1 Enhanced guidance: "A teacher has teacher training and a guidance counsellor has guidance counsellor training!"

The statement in the heading of this section stems from a guidance counsellor when expressing a recurring point amongst a group of our interviewees, i.e. that guidance counsellor training leads to the specialisation of guidance and contributes to higher quality guidance interviews. Therefore, the substantive advantage in the statutory requirement that applies to guidance counsellors connected to student retention work at VUCs and vocational courses, is emphasised. Managers and guidance counsellors emphasise that, for example, guidance counsellor training contributes towards:

- Giving guidance counsellors a *joint foundation* on which to offer guidance. This contributes towards uniform guidance, as members of the public will not receive different answers depending on which person he/she speaks to.

- Guidance counsellors achieve a so-called '*helicopter perspective*', i.e. the ability to draw on guidance theory and look at the individual's situation from a more general perspective.
- Guidance counsellors receive *overarching knowledge of the education system* and how it is built up. This provides the opportunity to offer broad and institution-independent guidance.
- Guidance counsellors learn to *use methods and tools*, that can help to evaluate individuals when choosing a course.
- Guidance counsellors are prepared to *handle conflictful and difficult interviews*, for example, with mentally vulnerable or aggressive people.

In the following quote, a guidance counsellor believes that guidance counsellor training is quite simply a necessity in order to advise adults about educational choices:

*Like everything else, guidance is continually improved and changed, so it is essential to have some qualifications to refresh, to build on and to find one's bearings. [...] Guidance counsellor training used to be a three-week course. That is why it is now a diploma course.*

This particular guidance counsellor believes that guidance is a separate subject that demands special competencies to carry it out. From this perspective, not just anybody can offer guidance; it should be offered by a qualified guidance counsellor.

A guidance counsellor from a vocational training institution draws on the same perspective in that she says that guidance counsellor training has contributed to giving higher level analysis when she gives guidance or enhanced guidance, if you will. She responded as follows to the question relating to the advantages of guidance counsellor training:

*As a guidance counsellor, you can address all matters and prevent worrisome situations from arising that are caused by not having the latest information. You could say that with high professionalism along with guidance theory and relevant perspectives, a guidance counsellor can offer high-level analysis to give individuals qualified guidance.*

However, not all guidance counsellors and managers perceive this the same. This is addressed in the next section. In the opinion of other guidance counsellors (and managers), guidance counsellor training may in some respects bring out a form of alienation towards guidance and its target group.



### 5.2.2 Enhanced professional ingrainment: familiarity with people "that have been in 3F for 25 years"

However, other managers of educational institutions and guidance counsellors, etc. sought competencies in guidance counsellors that in their view cannot be found in a diploma or master degree in guidance. They believe, for example, that the knowledge of guidance counsellors in relation to special academic disciplines, enterprises and the ability to be at the same level as the target group are more important - with some arguments being that the latter are not necessarily learnt through a training programme.

The advantage of possessing professional academic knowledge is accomplished in many areas by training subject teachers to become guidance counsellors and in this way enabling them to combine their competencies during guidance. In this section, we will take a brief look at the rationalisation behind this.

A VEU centre boss expressed his view on professional guidance counsellors, i.e. qualified (full-time) counsellors:

*I think a lot is lost when using professional guidance counsellors. I would also like to say that the system that we call the VEU centres can make a difference by being fully connected to the reality of the learners. It is not only the reality that is written in a book with an overview of how to gain qualifications, nor indeed a catalogue with 3,000 AMU and vocational courses. Guidance counsellors should be able to relate to those they advise.*

Later in the interview, the VEU centre boss explained that by 'relate to' he meant the following:

*If you look at the youth guidance centres or student guidance in comparison, where guidance counsellors are also found ... you will find that many of them are academics. They have an academic or teaching background and draw on their experience of the world.*

This VEU centre boss stresses that the guidance counsellors, and perhaps the VEU consultants within the area of his VEU centre, have professional work experience that corresponds to the experiences of the individuals they will advise. "It is crucial to understand where they are coming from", he said. In response to the question relating to the degree to which, for example, a diploma programme in guidance counselling cannot function as a beneficial supplement to professional knowledge, he said, "At worst it could mean that it will be too academic for the people that we deal with." Similarly, this opinion was expressed by some of the guidance counsellors at the vocational colleges. One of them said that his driving force as a guidance counsellor is to be an expert in his subject - not in guidance.

That is, the development of guidance counsellor competencies as understood here is based on the professional identity of a specific subject. A good guidance counsellor must be well-informed about what a course and subject(s) entails and have in-depth knowledge about the developments in the occupations of the subject targets. According to the respondents, legitimacy is attained.

Therefore, an unequivocal understanding of guidance counsellor training and the upgrading of skills to benefit adult educational guidance does not exist. As presented in the above, some sites have the perception that guidance counsellor training will create a distance between the counsellor and the individual, as the experiences of the two parties evolve from two different spheres.

### **5.2.3 Enhanced focus on collaboration: "The synergy effect of the collaboration benefits people."**

One of the aspects that several guidance counsellors, managers, VEU centre bosses and members of the public expressed during the interview survey, was that coherence in the adult education system could generally be improved; more specifically within educational guidance. Stronger and closer collaboration between the educational institutions (and other entities) is deemed as one area of commitment that could greatly boost the knowledge and competencies of guidance counsellors. To take this further, one perspective on the competencies of guidance counsellors is that they shall partly possess broad knowledge on courses at other institutions and partly form good collaborative relationships with guidance counsellors at other institutions.

An essential prerequisite for being able to give relatively broad guidance on the options (and limitations) the adult education systems provides, is in-depth knowledge of what other relevant entities offer. If a guidance counsellor does not have this insight, it is useful to know who does, so the counsellor can refer individuals to the relevant person or institution. A guidance counsellor at a vocational training institute had the following to say about the ways in which she would like to develop in order to give individuals relevant guidance:

*I would like to develop my knowledge even more to enable me to advise prospective applicants or individuals that visit us. For example, about other institutions and what they offer, because guidance will not always be related to taking one of our courses. Perhaps we cannot offer a course that interests them. [...] I would like to be more specific and at least give some of them a definite name and look it up.*

For this guidance counsellor, the knowledge that she is looking for is not necessarily found within professional guidance, but more as hands-on, here-and-now knowledge about current courses offered by other institutions, as well as up-to-date knowledge about relevant contact persons.

With regard to this, one VEU centre boss expressed what he looks upon as the best attribute of VEU consultants, i.e. being aware of what they do *not* know, so they can refer individuals to other relevant guidance counsellors:

*VEU consultants are not familiar with all courses and will never be able to give in-depth advice about everything. It is important that VEU consultants can secure a link between the needs of users, irrespective of whether it is an enterprise or ordinary person, and the required expertise. [...] No one must leave without having taken one step further than when they came in. [...] Consultants can ensure that individuals come into contact with someone that can evaluate them and place them on the relevant training course.*

From the data we can see that recognition of insufficient knowledge is a strategy that many institutions (managers and guidance counsellors) use. In this context, references to *specific contact persons* at other institutions is deemed as very valuable.

According to the managers and guidance counsellors, specific and personal referral to another guidance counsellor or teacher increases the probability of the individual actually making contact with the applicable educational institution. A guidance counsellor pointed out that it does not take much to throw an uncertain, busy or training-wary adult off course. Conversely, referral to a specific contact person that either telephones the individual or waits for a visit from the latter, encourages the individual to actually take the next step in the counselling process.

Some sites have quite highly prioritised collaboration between educational institutions and municipal offices in recognition of the fact that when collaboration is strengthened, the public benefits. For example, this is done at the Garantiskolen in Silkeborg, cf. the textbox on the next page, as well as at the Ungehuset in Slagelse, cf. Chapter 7, where referrals across the institutional divisions function relatively smoothly, in that guidance counsellors sit together and rapidly pass on questions and information to one another. In both these examples, however, the defining factor is that the situation has been created through a commitment to focus on young people, such a commitment for adults is not as widespread despite it being needed.

## Garantiskolen in Silkeborg

In connection with EVA's interview with guidance counsellors and managers, we came across the Garantiskolen in Silkeborg. The school is a collaboration between educational institutions, municipalities and guidance counsellors that the Municipality of Silkeborg has been involved with since 2008. The Garantiskolen focuses on youths and their commencement of youth training, but through the collaboration it also helps young adults receive an education.

A long list of educational institutions and municipal public administration services in Silkeborg collaborate on this, for example, SOSU Silkeborg (Danish Welfare College), Silkeborg Business College, Silkeborg Technical College, TH. LANGS HF & VUC, the Municipality of Silkeborg (Youth Guidance Centre (UU), the job centre, family department, school department, etc.)

A guidance counsellor/VEU consultant from the area told us about her thoughts on the concept:

*In the Municipality of Silkeborg, we have decided that under no circumstances shall an institution drop a pupil. We shall guide them to something else, for example, if we have a pupil on the foundation course who for one reason or another will be taking a different course, we shall physically hold that person's hand and take them to the other institution. The job centre also forms part of the forum. So if the job centre has a young person or adult who wants to take a course, they will be allocated a place on a training course the same day. At the minimum, they will be secured a contact person the same day, so the unemployed get started.*

## 5.3 Summary

Forty-eight per cent of the vocational training institutions and 73% of the VUCs require their guidance counsellors to have completed guidance counsellor training (or started) upon employment.

Ideally, guidance counsellors should be more qualified in a number of areas ranging from knowledge about their own courses and those of other institutions to definite guidance counsellor competencies and knowledge about essential rules, etc. This indicates that counselling work is complex and guidance counsellors must cover a very wide field.

There are different approaches and different ways of understanding exactly what a competent guidance counsellor is and how one can best professionalise counselling at educational institutions. We have pointed out that the institutions employ three strategies to provide competent counselling:

- *Enhanced professional guidance* when guidance counsellor training is seen as a pathway to professional and competent counselling.

- *Enhanced professional ingrainment*: when professional equilibrium and identity are crucial qualities, in addition to the development of expertise on the occupation(s) and the target group as a pathway to competent counselling.
- *Enhanced focus on collaboration*: when collaboration and knowledge of the institutions across the board is highly prioritised. In addition, the systematic development of networks and contact persons is seen as an effective pathway.

Overall, the results suggest that the educational institutions evaluate whether their guidance counsellors possess, or will possess in the future, statutory guidance counsellor training and which guidance counselling approach(es) (cf. Chapter 4) they want to apply. Hereunder, the institutions should evaluate the knowledge guidance counsellors should possess, the counselling service they wish to provide and the (new) competencies it therefore requires.



## 6 The Role of VEU Centres in Institutional Collaboration on Guidance

In this chapter we will look at how the vision of the current educational policy relating to VEU centres becoming a more defined framework for adult guidance - and how it works in practice. In the 2014-15 performance contract for VEU centres, they were imposed special responsibility for carrying out counselling and guidance targeted at each individual. After the revision of the 2014-15 performance contract in November 2014, these tasks were sharpened and extended. Consequently, the VEU centres were given the following tasks:

- Five per cent of the skilled and unskilled that form part of the workforce in some of the VEU centres catchment area must receive individual guidance and counselling.
- Each centre (host and partner institutions) shall create a common counselling strategy with objectives, commitment areas and coverage of the competencies guidance counsellors' must have, as well as implement initiatives based on the latter.

Therefore, at the time of collecting the data for this survey in the middle of 2015, these sharpened requirements for the VEU centres were new. Consequently, the work that the VEU centres had done to reach these objects was naturally limited.

However, this chapter will still closely examine the VEU centres' work on individual counselling and guidance of the public. We have done this for several reasons: Firstly, the new requirements for VEU centres raise general questions about the content and design of counselling and guidance that lie in the continuation of the different counselling approaches unfolded in Chapter 4, and which are further actualised through the new requirements. Secondly, some of the VEU centres already had initiatives with different types of outreaching and open guidance that met the requirements before the introduction of the requirement to carry out work connected to individual counselling and guidance. To provide a full picture of the counselling carried out at vocational training institutions and VUCs, these

initiatives must also be affected, as the VEU centres do, of course, make up the joint collaboration body for the educational institutions. Thirdly, it appears that this type of survey on collaboration between the institutions shows (in this chapter) that the VEU centres can always improve as a platform for strengthening the collaboration on guidance between the institutions. That is, it can be said that this task is further actualised through the new requirements for centres to have a joint strategy on this topic.

The conclusions of the chapter are built on data from questionnaires and interviews with VEU centre bosses, guidance counsellors and the public. The conclusions of the chapter shall, of course, be read based on the assumption that the requirement for VEU centres to offer the tougher task of individual counselling and guidance services was relatively new when the data was collected.

## VEU Centres and Guidance Work

The main purpose of the VEU centres is to function as an entrance into the adult and continuing education system for enterprises and the public. VEU centres have had the task of coordinating counselling services for enterprises based on educational needs and opportunities, etc. since 2010. However, an independent goal was introduced in the 2014-15 performance contracts stating that the VEU centres shall offer individual counselling and guidance to the public. However, this goal was extended and sharpened as a result of DKK 1 million being given to VEUs in connection with a growth plan being turned into DKK 20 million distributed over a two year period to boost adult educational guidance. This led to an extension and sharpening of the 2014-15 performance contract (revised in November 2014) for the VEUs in which the following indicators and goals for the activities of the VEU centres were determined:

**Indicator:** xx number of people that have received individual counselling and guidance.

**The goal** will be reached when 5% of the skilled and unskilled workers in the catchment area have received individual counselling and guidance (one person and one guidance counsellor).

**Indicator:** enhanced commitment to adult guidance through the development of guidance strategies and initiatives.

**The goal** will be reached when a joint strategy has been created describing the goals of VEUs for adult guidance, the organisation of the commitment and uncovering of the competencies and competence needs of guidance counsellors, and when specific new guidance initiatives included in the strategy have been implemented.

(VEU centre contracts for 2014-15, goals and indicator plan - revised November 2014).



## 6.1 VEU centres and goals for individual counselling and guidance

With the situation that the performance contracts for VEUs now include counselling and guidance work for the public, it can be said that this work has been subject to the overarching rationale linked to collaboration arranged by VEU centres. As an entity, the VEU centres form *the framework for concrete collaboration*, at the same time as they constitute *a sought after idea* for special collaboration on adult and continuing education. The framework is made up of host and partner institutions that by virtue of the performance contract have a number of joint explicit goals they must collaborate on in order to reach these goals. However, the VEU centres constitute an entity that is built on the implicit idea that collaboration between the institutions promotes a shared benefit, i.e. the overview and interaction across the institutions shall benefit both the public and the institutions.

This duality now includes collaboration on adult guidance. In the political objectives and the data of this survey, we find that the centres are expected to do two things:

- VEU centres shall form frameworks to carry out adult guidance through various commitment areas, initiatives and projects that can subsequently be measured by the number of individuals who have received guidance.
- The VEU centres shall be ambassadors for a collaborative concept that promotes institution-independent guidance that benefits the public through the expansion of a lateral and public-focused way of thought.

### 6.1.1 Target figures for individual counselling and guidance results raise discussion on definitions and content

With the revised performance contract, the aim is that 5% of the skilled and unskilled workers who enter the workforce in some of the VEU centre catchment areas must have received individual counselling and guidance. This target figure has resulted in the discussion of what is required to fulfil the goal, including the content of counselling and guidance.

Therefore, in the interviews with VEU centre bosses, we found that the heads viewed the task of advising 5% of the skilled and unskilled workers in their catchment area very differently. One viewpoint is that the goal is indeed realistic. The VEU centre bosses that held this view said they are relatively including in their definition of what counselling and guidance are when counting target figures. Another view amongst the VEU centre bosses is that the target is unrealistic. Those bosses that possess this view, question, for example, the quality of the counselling and guidance that will be given if the goal is to be reached. From the perspective of the VEU centres, this generally indicates that the goal, which is currently undergoing implementation, emphasises a central need, i.e. a definition of what constitutes counselling and guidance.

### 6.1.2 What constitutes counselling and guidance?

In other words, the interviews with the VEU centre bosses show the existence of a core challenge of creating a common definition of what it actually means to say, "The centres have given counselling and guidance." This discussion lies within the continuation of the presented approaches towards guidance in Chapter 4: Is an access to training interview, for example, with a course secretary regarding a particular course or level of ability enough to say that counselling and guidance has been carried out? Or should the content of the interview be more evaluative and exploratory? Cf. the definition in Chapter 4. Should the terms 'counselling' and 'guidance' be separated and each allocated clear definitions and separate target figures?

Therefore, the goal in the performance contract has raised an important discussion on the quality and guidance of adult guidance. One VEU centre boss put it this way:

*Is there any purpose in carrying out 15,000 guidance interviews to send people to another [educational] site or is it more purposeful to go into depth and find out if that is what people actually want? [...] I would have rather have the quality of the guidance looked at. Why carry out 15,000 guidance interviews if you can have 5,000 good ones instead that will enable people to move forwards and you can help?*

Several VEU centre bosses believe that a minimum definition of guidance is a prerequisite for preparing comparable figures for the number of individual guidance interviews carried out. When the interviews were held, the VEU centres had already started collecting information from the educational interviews in their catchment area on the number of counselling and guidance interviews they carry out, as part of their plan to reach the target figure. We get the impression that activities such as a course secretary's informative conversation with a member of the public about educational queries are also included in the aforementioned.

In addition, several centres in their aim to develop a guidance strategy have started mapping the guidance that currently takes place in their catchment area. The process was explained as follows by one VEU centre boss:

*We start by collecting the status of the guidance concepts and templates that we have: When it comes to the best practices, which are best? What is considered good guidance? What general minimum standards shall be applied to give good guidance? So, on the whole there is a lot to do ... Okay, so we have talked a lot about guidance, but what are we actually talking about? Where is it carried out and when?*

The VEU centres have an essential need to have a systematic approach towards guidance - not just talk about the importance of guidance, but a common understanding of what both counselling and guidance actually are/are not, as well as what *good* guidance is and what guidance should be/not be.

## 6.2 Initiatives on individual guidance under the auspices of VEUs

The VEU centres continually implement initiatives across all or some of the partner institutions. As previously mentioned, the VEU centres already had initiatives in place on individual guidance before being imposed this task through the revision of the performance contract of VEU centres in November 2014. We will be examining these initiatives in this section. They were partly mentioned by the VEU centre bosses in some of the interviews with guidance counsellors and also in connection with our institutional visits.

In some of the initiatives, a fine line separates the initiative on group guidance and the initiative on individual guidance for other people. Sometimes individual guidance springs out from group guidance. In this section we have solely included initiatives that constitute without any doubt individual guidance, as this is the topic of the survey. As a result, we have not included, for example, the VEU centres that work on general information related to training and group guidance that the VEU consultants carry out under the auspices of various entities<sup>13</sup>.

In this section we highlight specific initiatives on individual guidance in the following four categories:

- Open guidance
- Employee guidance in enterprises
- Other types of outreaching guidance
- Individual guidance as part of projects with temporary financing

The last category 'Individual guidance as part of projects with temporary financing', overlaps the three other categories, as the projects can, for example, be specially aimed at giving individual guidance to employees in enterprises.

<sup>13</sup> Information and group guidance is carried out in enterprises, job centres, unemployment insurance funds, by trade unions and at education fairs, etc.

### 6.2.1 Open guidance - where there's a will, there's guidance!

The open guidance service is a guidance activity that is arranged by VEU centres in which the consultants from several educational institutions are involved. Data from the interviews does not draw a consensus on what the term 'open guidance' actually covers, cf. Chapter 3, which highlights that the meaning of 'open' can vary from referring to opening hours to the availability of guidance and the formality of guidance (for example, if the individual can attend without a prior appointment) or other. However, despite the different perceptions shown in the interviews with the VEU centre bosses, VEU consultants and guidance counsellors, they generally speak of open guidance as an exemplary guidance activity. However, it is both costly and difficult to establish.

The interviews with the VEU centre bosses, VEU consultants and guidance counsellors show that the VEU centres have had success with this activity whilst other sites have had mixed experiences with the service. The challenges are partly linked to getting the service established and making the public aware of it, and partly linked to staffing such a resource-demanding open service. One VEU centre boss spoke of the centre's experience with open guidance over a 12-month period at a library. In the following quote he touches upon many of the challenges associated with the service:

*It took some time to get the message across, as it took a long time for people to find out that it was offered here. [...] As a result, the service was cancelled for two reasons: If the goals and number of visitors are compared in relation to the time we spent on it, it was not worth it as the time could have been spent doing many other things. [...] Secondly, The target group that we are here for, i.e. the unskilled and those with few qualifications, was exactly the target group that we did not target.*

This VEU centre boss is saying that on the one hand open guidance is hard to establish and therefore a resource-demanding investment and on the other the service does not reach the right people. It is difficult to pinpoint obvious explanations for why some VEU centres and educational centres have more success with the service than others, especially because the stories about different attempts at establishing the service are similar. However, at sites where the service has been successful and has a more permanent place, the following characteristics can be seen:

- Relatively good and well-integrated collaboration between the educational institutions already existed before the service was established.
- Management teams have given the service long-term priority even with a low number of visitors in periods.
- Money has been spent on marketing.
- The sites are proud of the service and believe it makes a difference.

### **6.2.2 A good example: collaboration, maintenance and prioritised commitment**

EVA visited EUC Syd (adult and supplementary education centre in the region of Southern Denmark) in connection with the survey to learn about open guidance offered at VEU-Center Syd. This service, which is essentially collaboration on guidance across all institutions, has taken shape and been given a framework. After a trial period it has now been consolidated as a permanent service (cf. the textbox below). At VEU-Center Syd (adult and supplementary education centre in the region of Southern Denmark), open guidance is an educational guidance service for the region's citizens on the available options and educational choices. It is 1) available to everyone, but particularly aimed at the skilled and unskilled, 2) available without a prior appointment and 3) available for the exploration of relevant educational opportunities.

The service is also available to all other citizens, who can walk in off the street every week and get advice. Ideally, broad and institution-independent guidance should be given, and the VEU centre boss says that a lot of energy has been spent on achieving a lateral approach:

*We spent a lot of energy making sure that the team of consultants were indeed a true team. The tasks of VEU consultants were defined as early as in 2010-11 and the goal was to give all-round guidance. They were to transition from the role of school guidance counsellors to that of institutional guidance counsellors where they were to give advice across the whole spectrum of the specific service that existed.*

## Open Guidance at VEU-Center Syd Southern Denmark

VEU-Center Syd offers open guidance that is aimed at the skilled and unskilled in all industries for two hours per week on a Tuesday afternoon.

**Activities:** In 2014, 400 people received guidance through the open guidance service.

**Concept:** It all started with a trial in 2011 with the concept that the VEU centre for the public should function as one hub - just the same as for enterprises. As a result, the service became part of the Danish Ministry of Education's performance contract with the VEU centres in 2014.

**Location:** Open guidance is conducted in four different educational institutions (SOSUs, VUCs, EUCs and the business school/upper secondary commercial college) in four different towns in South Jutland.

*Continued on the next page ...*



## Open Guidance at VEU-Center Syd (adult and supplementary education centre in the region of Southern Denmark) continued

**Target group:** 90% of those who come for open guidance are unemployed whilst 10% are in work. People can turn up without a prior appointment and receive advice about education and continuing education, plan a course of education, job and/change profession, get an individual competence assessment, etc.

**Guidance counsellors:** VEU consultants from the various partner institutions primarily staff open guidance. The advantage of this is that the VEU consultants have up-to-date knowledge on job openings and the competency requirements of enterprises.

**Collaboration with the job centre:** A consultant from the job centre is also present during open guidance at EUC Syd. The intention is that both the job centre and educational institution will be able to simultaneously clarify any questions the unemployed may have.

**Marketing:** DKK 120,000 has been spent on marketing, for example, in local newspapers, on Facebook, in addition to advertisements in the form of roll-ups and short notices on the existence of the service in enterprises. Unemployment insurance funds and job centres continually refer people to the service.

**Challenges:** The service is very difficult to establish despite relatively heavy marketing. "It will be run permanently for an extensive period of time. After all, it could take five years at least before positive results are seen in a service awareness survey," says the VEU centre boss.

(Interview at EUC Syd).

### 6.2.3 Individual guidance in enterprises: a task carried out at some VEU centres

Guidance for employees in enterprises is another area in which some VEU centres carry out individual educational guidance. However it should not be taken for granted that VEU centres offer this.

The main purpose of the VEU centres since their establishment has largely been to advise enterprises in connection with training. Counselling has primarily been aimed at management level and HR - not individual employees.

For example, this is presented in the survey. Table 9 shows the extent to which the educational institutions believe that consultants/guidance counsellors have given individual educational guidance to employees in enterprises in recent years. It must be noted, however, that the guidance given by consultants/guidance counsellors from educational institutions is not always arranged by VEU centres. It can also be carried out upon the initiative of the institution.

**Table 9**

**To what extent have the consultants/guidance counsellors at your educational institution given individual educational guidance to employees in enterprises in recent years?**

	Vocational Training Institution (n = 75)	VUC (n = 26)	Total (N = 101)
To a great extent	32%	35%	33%
To some extent	37%	31%	36%
To a lesser extent	17%	12%	16%
None	13%	23%	16%

*Source: Questionnaires to all the VUCs and vocational training institutions.*

Overall, 69% of the vocational training institutions and VUCs answered that the consultants/guidance counsellors gave individual educational guidance to either a large or some extent to employees in enterprises the foregoing year. Practically the same response was received from both the vocational training institutions and the VUCs. Thirty-two per cent have carried out individual guidance in enterprises to a lesser extent or not at all. Therefore, the survey shows that employees from a relatively large number of the institutions give individual guidance either to a large or some extent to employees in enterprises.

In comparison Table 10 shows the number of vocational training institutions and VUCs that answered that their consultants/guidance counsellors have given educational guidance or counselling to corporate managers regarding the training of their employees.

**Table 10**

**To what extent has your educational institution's consultants/guidance counsellors advised corporate managers about training opportunities for their employees within the last 12 months?**

	Vocational Training Institution (n = 74)	VUC (n = 27)	Total (N = 101)
To a great extent	57%	33%	50%
To some extent	28%	30%	29%
To a lesser extent	5%	19%	9%
None	9%	19%	12%

*Source: Questionnaires to all the VUCs and vocational training institutions.*



Seventy-nine per cent of the educational institutions answered that their guidance counsellors had either to a large or some extent counselled corporate managers about training opportunities for their employees within the last 12 months. The trend that is seen is that the vocational training institutions have counselled managers to a larger extent than the VUCs, whilst 85% of the vocational training institutions state that their guidance counsellors have either to a large or some extent done the same and 63% of the VUCs say the same.

That is, more educational institutions answer that their consultants/guidance counsellors to a large or some extent have counselled corporate managers than educational institutions that answer that their consultants/guidance counsellors to a large or some extent have carried out employee guidance. This must be seen in conjunction with some of the guidance being arranged by VEU centres and that which, as mentioned, was in the DNA of the VEU centres right from the start with focus on corporate strategies for competence development rather than the individual wants and needs of employees. One of VEU centre bosses formulated it this way: "To put it roughly, when we talk about enterprises and their management teams, it's about competence development needs in relation to corporate strategies and plans." The starting point for educational guidance that primarily and initially is carried out in enterprises across Denmark, is therefore to accommodate the competence development needs of enterprises.

#### **6.2.4 Difficult to get unskilled employed workers to consider training**

One viewpoint amongst the VEU centre bosses is that it is more difficult to get unskilled employed workers to consider training than it is the unemployed. One VEU centre boss said:

*It is extremely difficult to speak to employees in enterprises [...], so much so that it is only when the candle is really burning and their income provides no basis of support that they realise they may have to start some type of course.*

According to the VEU centre bosses, this means that extra effort must be put in if employed unskilled workers are to open up to the educational pathway. Extra effort using different types of outreaching work may be required in enterprises. However, the VEU centre bosses have different views in relation to how much VEUs shall arrange individual guidance in enterprises. One perspective is that the centres do not have enough resources to do this. Another is that the centres must also carry out this task, because there is a demand for it. The VEU centre bosses also mention other strategies for creating an interest in courses amongst employed unskilled workers, for example, to get employee representatives involved and in that way affect the motivation of the employed to attend courses.

One example of a special commitment to educational guidance for employed unskilled workers in enterprises was the 'Netværkslokomotivet' project. This is described in the textbox on the next page.

## 'Netværkslokomotivet' and 'hot-dog' stand visits

'Netværkslokomotivet' is an example of a project that has an aspect of individual guidance aimed at the employed.



The 'Netværkslokomotivet' is an association (in the Central Jutland Region) that was established to motivate people who find core school subjects, such as Danish and mathematics difficult, to participate in preparatory adult education (FVU). The association consists of a number of enterprises that have joined together, and it is financed by special government funds. The VEU centres in the region collaborate with 'Netværkslokomotivet', for example, in connection with corporate visits conducted by the VEU consultants.

For instance, 'Netværkslokomotivet' initiated 'hot-dog' stand visits to enterprises whilst VEU consultants advised employees in their morning break over a hot-dog. A preparatory adult education test can also be taken near the hot-dog stand. This initiative has probably inspired other VEU centres, who have tried similar guidance models.

(Interview with VEU centre bosses).

According to interviews with VEU centre bosses and consultants, when large enterprises close, the VEU centres can be asked to carry out educational guidance for employed workers. Consequently, quite a lot of individual guidance is carried out in these situations when incentives are also solicited by a lack of work.

Therefore, according to the interviews with the VEU consultants and VEU centre bosses, very few enterprises will support educational guidance for employees due to the fact that the guidance could actually lead to a course or training programme. One VEU centre boss said:

*We must acknowledge that not all [enterprises] look upon training as a form of investment. Some think, "If he comes back with some training, he'll probably come back and want a higher salary."*

However, the data also contains examples of individual guidance of employees having taken place in the enterprises that have made a difference. Such an example stems from EUC Syd where a group of VEU consultants connected to the educational institution regularly drive out to enterprises to meet individuals (employees) on-site, cf. the textbox on the next page.

#### **6.2.5 Other types of outreaching guidance - when the map reaches out to wayfarers**

The VEU centres also carry out outreach work in other contexts than just enterprises. Similar to individual guidance in enterprises, this type of guidance attempts to reach out to people where they are. In general, where guidance work at educational institutions is seen as a practice that ideally *fulfils the individual's needs for information on education*, outreaching guidance can be understood as an associated activity with enhanced focus on *creating the latter need*. It can also be said that outreaching guidance is a map that seeks out wayfarers, who are unaware that they need help to find their way. A discussion on the extent to which this type of outreaching guidance actually makes a difference will be addressed in this section.

Some of the interviewed guidance counsellors, VEU consultants and VEU centre bosses have hands-on experience with outreaching guidance, and they describe this activity as borderline sales and guidance. This also means that one can speak of outreaching guidance as institutional-orientated marketing in some contexts, whilst in others as more general information on education in the public domain. For example, activities with open-house events, education fairs, meetings with the unemployed at job centres and public events at shopping centres, etc. Some of these activities that are carried out by the VEU centres resemble information and educational guidance for *groups* more than *individual* educational guidance, but some of the events also provide opportunities for individual guidance.

#### **Sowing seeds**

A significant issue when speaking of outreaching individual guidance is whether it has an effect. This consideration was expressed by guidance counsellors, VEU centre bosses and VEU consultants during the interviews. For example, one VEU centre boss said the following about his experiences with outreaching guidance: "Serious guidance cannot be carried out that way. We feel it wasn't worth anything." Another VEU centre boss also expressed a certain amount of scepticism towards the real meaning of outreaching guidance, especially when it takes place in the public domain, which is something the VEU centre experienced:

*It didn't have much effect. That is, they came with their children, had a drink of juice and*

## Attracted to selling double-boosted training

Double-boosted training is a political goal and in the industrial enterprise, Danfoss, work has been conducted on creating this type of boosted training for employees. Eleven employees were given guidance, which resulted in academic education in innovation, manufacturing and products. The enterprise's management team supported the development measure. Danfoss allows its employees to take 14 days' self-elected and job-related training each year. The current competence development initiative is financed by the competence fund, and one guidance counsellor from EUC Syd and a VEU consultant have advised employees on training offered by Business College Syd.

The guidance counsellor turns up every third week on a bicycle with a folder full of VEU programmes and services and sits in the same place at the company. Employees can go up and ask him anything about education, financing and practical adaptations. According to the interviewees, the initiative is positive:

**Interviewer:**

Hvad er det, der gør vejledningen god?

**Danfoss-medarbejder:**

At vejlederen kommer her til os, fast hver tredje uge. Vi ved, at han kommer. Vi får så den frihed i vores arbejde, at vi kan gå op og snakke med ham. Havde han ikke fået lov til at komme ind på Danfoss, skulle jeg og mine kollegaer jo til at køre ud på skolerne og have vejledning derude. Men nu kommer han jo til os.

**Interviewer:**

Hvor mange ville ikke have været med på vognen, hvis de selv havde skulle tage hen til skolen?

**Danfoss-medarbejder:**

Jeg tror, at det stort set kun havde været mig, der tog den så. For det er kun, fordi vejlederen har været herude, at det har spredt sig ude på arbejdspladsen. Ellers var der ingen, der havde set, at der var de muligheder. Overhovedet!

(Interviews with VEU consultants, employees and VEU centre bosses).

*one or two hors d'oeuvres, and then they could jump in and 'sow a seed'. But, of course, we also knew that it wouldn't happen here, as people are not evaluated. Here 'seeds are sown', that may grow ...*

On this occasion, employees and course participants from the Copenhagen Hospitality College served dishes from a stand in a shopping centre. The intention was to attract shoppers to have a bite to eat and discuss training (guidance). However, as the VEU centre boss pointed out, it is more about 'sowing a seed' rather than getting people to evaluate their situation and educational options.

Some institutions make strategic choices and refuse to offer outreaching guidance, for example, because they find that their learners do not take any notice of random public meetings with educational guidance counsellors, but prefer to be influenced by the experiences of their family and friends and the educational choices they made. For example, one guidance counsellor put it this way:

*We take part in quite a lot of events in this area, but sometimes you are left feeling "How much time was wasted doing that?" Again, many of our learners do things on the spur of the moment. Actually, we've thought that since we are a VUC we shall live on our reputation built up amongst friends, mates, brothers and sisters that trained here.*

Due to its inherent nature, it is hard to determine whether outreaching guidance has an effect. There are probably many reasons why people finally decide to turn up at an educational institution and start a course. However, outreaching guidance is one of the instruments that the VEU centres and educational institutions in certain cases utilise in the hope that it will 'sow a seed'.

#### **6.2.6 Project-based guidance activities provide opportunities for individual guidance and new collaborative partners**

Some of the VEU centres' guidance initiatives are based on temporary project financing. This also applies to guidance initiatives at individual educational institutions that regularly have their own or joint projects with other educational institutions that are financed by, for example, government funds, EU project funds, TUP projects (lateral development projects) or other. Aspects of individual educational guidance in enterprises and other contexts may also be included in these projects.

From the data, we found that the interviewed guidance counsellors, VEU consultants, managers and VEU centre bosses believe that the projects give institutions the opportunity to think and act differently in terms of guidance initiatives. In addition, they often include new or extended areas of collaboration between different entities, which is considered positive. In the interviews, the heads of the VEU centres said that several of the guidance projects that the centres are involved in also create extra opportunities for individual guidance. One example is the 'Netværkslokomotivet' project described in Section 6.2.4.

Another example of a project that focuses on individual guidance for employees is SAMVIRK. This is financed by the European Social Fund and the Growth Forum of Southern Denmark. VEU-Center Syd (adult and supplementary education centre in the region of Southern Denmark) runs the project and the other VEU centres in Southern Denmark (i.e. VEU-Center Fyn, VEU-Center Trekantområdet and VEU-Center Vest) take part. The purpose of the project is to visit enterprises with up to 250 employees with the aim of obtaining an overview of their skills and to create 1,000 individual educational plans that reflect the needs and competence requirements of the enterprises, which in the long-term can be converted into individual course programmes. SAMVIRK includes guidance and the VEU consultants shall carry out individual guidance interviews with all the employees that participate in the project. One VEU centre boss said that one positive outcome of SAMVIRK has been that the VEU consultants have become acquainted through the visits to enterprises, both internally and laterally across the VEU centres. According to the VEU centre boss concerned, this strengthens the opportunity to offer uniform guidance.

A disadvantage of project-financed activities is that it can be difficult to retain and further develop the practices and collaboration that were established during the projects. This is a risk that is always present once projects end. The VEU centres should also be responsible for drawing on and continuing the good experiences gained from the projects in future activities.

### 6.3 Joint work on guidance practices under the auspices of VEU centres

As previously mentioned, one of the new tasks the VEU centres have been given with the revision of the performance contract for the centres in November 2014, is that each centre (host and partner institutions) shall create a common counselling strategy with objectives, commitment areas and coverage of the competencies guidance counsellors' require, as well as implement initiatives based on the latter. That is, institutions shall attempt to create a joint direction for guidance under the auspices of their VEU centre. The VEU centres had just started this work at the time of the interviews and, as such, it was not completed.

In the data, we found two general characteristics of this work. Firstly, the data indicates that the institutions are interested in enhanced collaboration on adult guidance across the institutions under the auspices of the VEU centre. Secondly, we found that even though it is already considered that the VEU centres have made a certain difference to the collaboration between the educational institutions, there is still room for improvement in relation to VEU centres playing a more developmental role in guidance at the institutions.

Table 11 shows the extent to which the educational institutions perceive that their VEU centre creates enhanced collaboration on adult guidance across the educational institutions. Again, it is important to remember that the data was collected only a short time after the new requirements for the VEU centres were introduced.

**Table 11**  
**To what extent do you perceive that your VEU centre creates enhanced collaboration on adult guidance across the educational institutions?**

	Vocational Training Institution (n = 75)	VUC (n = 27)	Total (N = 102)
To a great extent	31%	11%	25%
To some extent	40%	19%	34%
To a lesser extent	21%	48%	28%
None	8%	22%	12%
Total	100%	100%	100%

*Source: Questionnaires to all the VUCs and vocational training institutions.*

Fifty-nine per cent of the educational institutions perceive that their VEU centre creates enhanced collaboration on adult guidance across the educational institutions. Forty per cent believe that their VEU centre creates enhanced collaboration to a lesser extent or none at all. However, there is a significant difference between the different types of training, i.e. the vocational training institutions believe that the VEU centres contribute to collaboration on adult guidance much more than the VUCs do. A total of 70% of the VUCs believe that the VEU centres do not create enhanced collaboration. Therefore, we can conclude that when it comes to creating collaboration across the institutions, the VEU centres have new fields to cultivate, especially at the VUCs.

On the other hand, a large number of people at both vocational training centres and the VUCs agree that collaboration is indeed important. This is presented in Table 12.

**Table 12**  
**How important do you think it is that your VEU centre creates enhanced collaboration on adult guidance across the educational institutions?**

	Vocational Training Institution (n = 74)	VUC (n = 26)	Total (N = 100)
Very important	41%	38%	41%
Important	36%	38%	37%
Not very im- portant	15%	19%	16%
Not important at all	7%	4%	6%
Total	100%	100%	100%

Source: Questionnaires to all the VUCs and vocational training institutions.

The table shows that 78% of all institutions believe that it is important or very important that their VEU centre creates enhanced collaboration on adult guidance across the institutions. About the same number of the vocational training institutions and VUCs believe that it is important or very important that the VEU centres create enhanced collaboration on adult guidance.

The fact that a total of 59% perceive that the VEU centres create enhanced collaboration whilst 78% believe it to be important, can be interpreted as an expressed wish that VEU centres shall play an even larger role in lateral collaboration on guidance. In this context it is important to stress that the VEU centre within this constellation is not an external party that is to find a solution to a task; the host and party institutions constitute the VEU centre and therefore shall collaborate on the task under the auspices of the VEU centre.

The point about the VEU centres playing a larger role in connection with the guidance offered at the institutions is expanded on in the interviews. For example, we found that amongst the institutions' guidance counsellors, it is perceived that the role of the VEU centre in respect of practices, is limited. For instance, one guidance counsellor from a VUC said:

*To be honest, I don't know what a VEU centre is. I'm very familiar with the expression, but I have no idea what it does. You can probably hear that it's something we don't know much about. It's possible that our administrative manager perceives that we collaborate, but at guidance counsellor level, I don't. It can't be denied that there's no such contact, but it's not something that happens every day.*



Therefore, this guidance counsellor expresses a lack of familiarity with the relevant VEU centre and also the belief that it does not directly affect the counsellor's guidance.

This lack of familiarity with the VEU centre must be seen in relation to the structure of the collaboration arranged by the VEU centre. The VEU centres draw on, for example, VEU consultants that are employed by the individual educational institutions. Some of these consultants also carry out access to training guidance at the educational institutions. However, many guidance counsellors at the educational institutions are not VEU consultants, and during the interviews it was mainly these guidance counsellors that said they had limited contact with their VEU centre. The centres do not carry out activities that involve them and it does not appear that there is a constant exchange of knowledge between the VEU consultants and (the other) guidance counsellors.

During the interviews with the VEU centre bosses, we noted two general characteristics associated with their familiarity with the guidance counsellors at the educational institutions. One characteristic at the time of conducting the interviews was that some of the VEU centre bosses were not particularly familiar with the work of guidance counsellors at the educational institutions, either. The second characteristic was that some of the VEU centres had already started the initial mapping of the practices of guidance counsellors at the institutions at the time of conducting the interviews, consequently, they had gained a first impression of them.

According to the questionnaire and as previously mentioned, the educational institutions believe that it is important that VEU centres create enhanced collaboration on guidance across the educational institutions. This has not been focused on before, therefore a lot still remains to be done before collaboration with centres leads to the development of practices that will be noticed in each guidance counsellors daily guidance.

## 6.4 Summary

The VEU centres are focusing on expanding and sharpening their target figures for the number of people that will receive individual counselling and guidance. The target figure sets the stage for a discussion on definitions and content. The VEU centres believe that the target figure is so high that all counselling and guidance activities must be defined as counselling and guidance, including brief informational conversations, in order for the figure to be reached. A definition of the meaning of 'counselling' and 'guidance' is needed, including discussing what good guidance is or is not.

Individual guidance of individuals under the auspices of VEU centres is conducted within four areas:

- Open guidance: The VEU centres have experienced this initiative very differently, for example, regarding the number of people that have used the service. On sites where the initiative is deemed

as most successful, it has been supported by the management team and the educational institutions.

- Employee guidance in enterprises: Since its establishment, the VEU centres have focused more on counselling corporate managers, although individual guidance in enterprises is also a task that some of the centres already carry out. It is deemed important to reach employed unskilled workers through various strategies, as they are not generally very motivated to take any training.
- Outreaching individual guidance arranged by other parties: A central discussion is whether this guidance makes a difference at all. However, one viewpoint is that outreaching guidance can help to sow a seed that lays dormant until it can develop into the motivation to study.
- Project-based guidance activities in which individual guidance can be carried out in various situations. These activities increase the number of guidance opportunities and can lead to new collaborative relationships between the professionals.

The VEU centres could play a larger role in connection with the development of guidance and collaboration across the institutions. The results of the survey indicate that the VEU centres contribute to creating enhanced collaboration, but the VUCs in particular still believe there is room for improvement. This must be seen in light of both the vocational training institutions and the VUCs believing that it is important that the VEU centres contribute to enhanced collaboration between the institutions.

## 7 Areas of collaboration with job centres

In the previous chapters we have focused on educational guidance carried out in the institutions, whilst in this chapter we will focus on *collaborative interfaces* between the educational institutions and job centres for educational guidance.

The main purpose of the job centres is, of course, to help people find work. However, for some of the unemployed the pathway to being considered for relevant jobs will be bridged by courses, education and re-training, etc. People with few qualifications may be particularly motivated to start a course whilst unemployed. For example, EVA's survey '*Fra ufaglærte til faglært*' [*From Unskilled to Skilled*] shows that 21% of employed unskilled adults have extensive or some desire to get some training to become a skilled worker, compared to 36% of unemployed unskilled adults. This trend can be explained by the fact that when adults become unemployed their lifestyle changes. This may get them to stop and think, and look for new opportunities and pathways to obtain work. Amongst other things, this may include training.

In this chapter we will first highlight the double-role of the job centres to get people into work and to some extent offer educational guidance. Then we will unfold the need for closer contact and more knowledge sharing surrounding the guidance offered at the educational institutions and job centres (as perceived by the educational institutions and public) in order to create well-qualified, inspirational and coherent adult educational guidance. Two collaboration models will be referred: one that is characterised by adhoc collaboration and another that involves more formal and regular collaboration. The conclusions of this chapter are built on data from the survey, for example, the educational institutions and interviews with managers, guidance counsellors, job centre staff and the public.

## 7.1 Role of job centres in connection with educational guidance

According to the regulations, the primary task of job centres is to help the unemployed to get work. They shall also inform people about education and training.<sup>14</sup>

In addition, there are some adult groups that job centres (or other parties the task could be out-sourced to) must *advise* about training. These are first and foremost young unemployed and unskilled adults, who may be ordered to take training courses<sup>15</sup>. With the new employment reform that was gradually introduced whilst this survey was being conducted, older skilled and unskilled workers with out-of-date qualifications are also affected, Cf. the textbox below. The new employment reform also means that the job centres hold more interviews with the public and perhaps there will be more unemployment insurance funds.

### Employment Reform 2015

The employment reform is gradually being introduced in 2015. The main objective of the reform is to make an individual and job-related commitment to the unemployed with the aim of providing transparent and boosted training opportunities along with permanent employment.

#### **Money pool for the unskilled to become skilled**

With the employment reform, DKK 150 million has been allocated per annum to boost education. The money pool gives unemployed people over the age of 30, who are either unskilled or skilled with out-dated training, the opportunity to take vocational training whilst receiving 80% of their daily unemployment benefit during the two-year benefit period. Job centres decide whether the training programme will be started, as they demand that the unemployed receive credits for the practical course and that the training is completed within the unemployment benefit entitlement period.

*Continued on the next page ...*

<sup>14</sup> Pursuant to the Danish Consolidation Act relating to Active Employment Efforts, job centres are obligated to give 'information and guidance on employment and training opportunities', (cf. Chapter 4, § 9, Clause 1).

<sup>15</sup> Mandatory training came into force in 2006, however the target group for the initiative was extended in 2009. This means that everyone who is unqualified between the age of 18-24 who receives cash benefits and unemployment benefit could be ordered to start a training course (providing they do not have any dependents) in order to keep their benefit payments. Then on 1 January 2014 mandatory training was extended to include unqualified people between the age of 25-29 on cash benefits.

## Employment Reform 2015 - continued

### **New scheme with entitlement to a six-week job-related training course**

Up until now the unemployed were entitled to a six-week self-chosen training course. However, with the enforcement of the employment reform this has been replaced with a six-week job-related training course. The scheme targets the skilled and unskilled, as well as the unemployed with limited upper secondary education, but who also have vocational training. The job-related training course is to be selected based on a so-called positive list that evaluates which courses and training programmes one can take. The positive list is based on specific job functions and positions within areas where there are job opportunities, that according to the balance of the Danish labour market, are good.

### **Money pool for regional education**

With the employment reform, a money pool to the sum of DKK 100 million per annum was allocated to education to enable a higher number of people on employment benefit to take short, job-related training programmes in areas where it is expected jobs will be opening up soon. These training programmes are placed on positive lists for the regional educational money pool.

(Danish government, 2014: *Agreement on the commitment to employment reform*).

That is, the job centres are responsible for educational guidance, especially to some target groups. There is indication that when educational guidance forms part of a discussion between individuals and job centre staff, the outcome will possibly be that the unskilled will consider training. EVA's survey '*Fra ufaglært til faglært*' [From Unskilled to Skilled], shows that 40% of the unskilled unemployed workers believe that they are more likely to start a vocational training course if the job centre encourages them to do so. However, in the interviews with job centre staff and members of the public, there seems to be some differences with regard to municipal prioritisations and training of the unemployed. Subsequently, there are also differences in how much educational guidance is actually given when job centre staff interview unemployed individuals.

## 7.2 Need for knowledge sharing and coordination between educational institutions, job centres and unemployment insurance funds

There seems to be a need for more knowledge sharing and coordination between the job centres, as well as guidance offered at the educational institutions to ensure qualified guidance for the unemployed. This was indicated in the survey by the vocational training institutions and VUCs, in addition to the interviews with managers, guidance counsellors and job centre staff.

Table 13 presents the responses of the educational institutions pertaining to the need for closer collaboration between the educational institutions and job centres to ensure that individuals receive adequate educational guidance.

**Table 13**  
**How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement? There is a need for closer collaboration between my educational institution and the job centre to ensure that individuals receive adequate guidance**

	Vocational Training Institution (n = 74)	VUC (n = 27)	Total (N = 101)
Strongly agree	36%	37%	37%
Agree	47%	48%	48%
Disagree	14%	15%	14%
Strongly disagree	0%	0%	0%
Not applicable	3%	0%	2%

Source: Questionnaires to all the VUCs and vocational training institutions.

The table shows that a total of 85% of the educational institutions agree or strongly agree that there is a need for closer collaboration. The opinions are mainly the same across the vocational training institutions and VUCs.

Overall we can identify two different reasons why it is believed that there is a need for closer collaboration, i.e. partly to give individuals *the correct information*, preferably when the first enquiry is made, and partly to *coordinate the commitment* to give individuals more support.

### 7.2.1 Collaboration needed to give individuals the right information

When analysing the data it is indicated that collaboration between the educational institutions and job centres is needed in order to give individuals the right information and insight – it is not just about training, but also rules governing training opportunities for the unemployed.

For example, during the survey the majority of the educational institutions said that there was a need for guidance counsellors from their institutions to update the skills of job centre staff to enable them to advise adults about training. This is presented in Table 14.

**Table 14**

**How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement? There is a need for guidance counsellors from my educational institution to update the skills of job centre staff to enable them to advise adults about training.**

	Vocational Training Institution (n = 73)	VUC (n = 26)	Total (N = 99)
Strongly agree	25%	23%	24%
Agree	48%	50%	48%
Disagree	16%	23%	18%
Strongly disagree	4%	0%	3%
Not applicable	7%	4%	6%

*Source: Questionnaires to all the VUCs and vocational training institutions.*

According to the table, a total of 72% of the educational institutions agree or strongly agree that there is a need for guidance counsellors from their institutions to update the skills of job centre staff to enable them to advise adults about training. The opinions are mainly the same across the vocational training institutions and VUCs.

The results must be seen in conjunction with 79% of the vocational training institutions and 84% of the VUCs, respectively, in the survey indicating that they agree or strongly agree that more knowledge is needed about training amongst job centre staff when giving advice to adults (not presented in the table).

We have interpreted these two sets of results together, as the educational institutions believe that staff at the educational institutions possess knowledge on training that job centre staff do not possess. This must be seen in relation to the guidance counsellors at educational institutions perceiving that job centres sometimes send individuals to their educational institutions with insufficient or incorrect information about training.

The interviewed job centre staff also said that it is difficult at times to go into detail and get an overview of the many training opportunities that they must advise unemployed adults about. For example, a job centre employee said:

*[During my guidance work] I see all types of unemployed individuals - from agriculture and concrete workers to academics. So there's a wide span to cover. A teacher sat opposite me this morning and this afternoon I'll be offering guidance to an illiterate person. So, we really have to deal with a wide range of abilities in the people we meet, which can be challenging, we can't go*

*into detail about everything - upper secondary education, vocational training and adult education courses with brail lessons, etc. We don't have the capacity. [...] We can only generalise. We can't do anything else. It's impossible.*

Job centre staff cannot have in-depth knowledge of everything to do with adult education. [...] Other job centre staff add that it can be difficult to possess detailed knowledge about the multitude of adult education courses, how to obtain credits and have prior learning evaluated, whilst maintaining a general overview of amendments to regulations governing education, etc. To give individuals the correct information, job centre staff said they refer people to the online education guide ([www.ug.dk](http://www.ug.dk)) and to contact the relevant educational institutions for more information or they send them to the educational institutions itself to obtain the latter. As one job centre employee said, "The experts are at the educational institutions."

### **Educational guidance counsellors do not possess in-depth knowledge on legislation governing employment.**

At the same time, of course, the guidance counsellors at the educational institutions do not have the same knowledge of job centre staff on the regulations governing the labour market and the right of adult learners to receive financial support, etc. A set of regulations have been developed and job centre staff are experts on them. As a result, the educational guidance counsellors must draw on this expertise. As presented in Chapter 5, the educational institutions also believe that their employees could be more knowledgeable about these matters. Sixty-one per cent of the vocational training institutions. That is, 59% of the VUCs believe that the guidance counsellors at their education institutions to some or a large extent need to know more about financial support for adult learners. In addition, 57% of the vocational training institutions and 70% of the VUCs believe that guidance counsellors to some or a large extent need to know more about relevant laws and regulations. That is, it is believed there is a corresponding cycle of knowledge, i.e. a lack of knowledge on the set of regulations governing the labour market, for example, relating to financial support for adult learners.

### **Skill upgrading and collaboration is essential**

The point is, in order for adults to receive adequate guidance they must first be informed about the numerous educational choices that exist and be aware of their own competencies in relation to them. Secondly, they must be knowledgeable about the rules governing periods of unemployment and training, as well as available financial support. These are complicated matters and experts are found in two different institutions. Potential exists for employees to gain better insight into other employees areas of expertise through skills upgrading. Unless the employees at the different institutions are experts in the fields of the other party, which is hard to imagine, collaboration is needed between the institutions in order to give people the best guidance. One guidance counsellor put it this way: "In order to support individual's amongst the complexity of making a choice about what they should do based on the options they have, it becomes necessary to think about adult guidance as a conversation between



three parties: a member of the public, the educational institution and the job centre." That is, three parties that should collaborate on guidance.

### **7.2.2 Need for collaboration in order to better coordinate and support people**

Another reason for needing closer collaboration is that it provides the opportunity to coordinate work and therefore give people better support.

Today, the unemployed go backwards and forwards from job centres to educational institutions to unemployment insurance funds (if applicable) in connection with educational guidance and evaluation; perhaps several times. For example, at educational institutions the unemployed are evaluated with regard to the type of educational choices they have whilst job centres or other entities decide whether unemployment benefit will be given during training courses.

Guidance counsellors from the educational institutions said that people are sometimes confused by the way tasks are distributed between the job centres, unemployment insurance funds (if applicable) and the educational institutions. They can become apprehensive about the structure of the system and find that they are pushed between two or three parties. One guidance counsellor said:

*Some people say: "The unemployment insurance fund told me to go the job centre, the job centre told me to come to the educational institution and now you're telling me that I have to go back to the unemployment insurance fund." [...] Sometimes I think people are being misled. This makes them confused and completely disorientated.*

According to the guidance counsellor, this confusion increases when the different parties tell people different things, for example, about educational choices and the available support. Consequently, the system with all its operators and various forms of authority create uncertainty and disorientation amongst some groups of people.

Furthermore, it can be very difficult for some of the unemployed to use their own initiative and overcome the potential practical hurdle of being pushed around the various operators, unless they receive special support. For example, one job centre employee said: "Some people need someone to hold their hand [...] It's hard for them to pick up the phone and make an appointment with an educational institution." Another job centre employee elaborated further on how people handle such challenges:

*If a somewhat anxious individual sits in front of me, and he/she has been in unskilled employment and possibly not had the best experience with the education system and is therefore scared of it, I will arrange a meeting with a guidance counsellor at an educational institution, as I feel that if I don't he/she never will.*

Hence, it is considered that the weakest of the unemployed can fall between the loopholes if the job centre and educational guidance counsellor do not coordinate their work. As a result, there are sever-

al reasons why closer collaboration between job centres and educational institutions will benefit the public.

## 7.3 Types of collaboration related to educational guidance for the public

The need for collaboration between educational institutions and job centres pointed out in this survey is, in some instances, met. However, there is definitely some room for improvement. Based on the interviews with the VEU centre bosses, managers, guidance counsellors and job centre staff, we can identify two general differences in the design of collaboration concerning educational guidance for the public.

- Adhoc collaboration
- Formal and regular collaboration on various topics.

These types of collaboration can co-exist. However, in the following we will address the latter separately in order to describe the characteristics of each type of collaboration and how it can be strengthened.

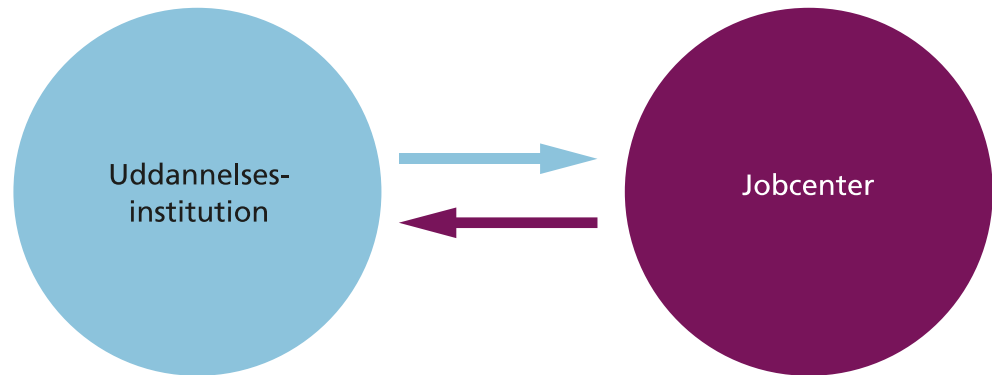
### 7.3.1 Adhoc collaboration

Firstly, in the interviews with VEU centre bosses, managers, guidance counsellors and job centre staff identified that which we can only describe as ‘ad hoc collaboration on educational guidance for the public’. This is informal collaboration that is conducted when it is deemed there is a special need for it.

For example, job centre staff or guidance counsellors may contact one another with particular questions about adult guidance. For example, according to the survey 73% of the vocational training institutions and 77% of the VUCs said that their educational institution continually have telephone conversations with job centre staff concerning guidance for unemployed adults. Moreover, job centre staff say that they contact guidance counsellors at educational institutions when they have special questions about training specific to individual cases or when special measures need to be taken for an individual.

The collaboration can also be related to other inter-institutional activities, for example, events for guidance counsellors at job centres related to training and visits to one another's organisations, etc. that are planned on an ad hoc basis. Figure 6 illustrates ad hoc collaboration.

**Figur 6**  
**Ad hoc Collaboration between Educational Institutions and Job Centres**



In the interviews with educational guidance counsellors and job centre staff, we found two keywords linked to creating well-functioning ad hoc collaboration, i.e. *familiarity* and good *relationships*. Educational guidance counsellors and job centre staff say that good personal relationships can be built up over time and through several years of forming different types of collaborative relationships, for example, regarding special projects, activity measures, etc. One job centre employee said: "I'm an old man in town, so I know the guidance counsellors at the educational institutions very well." However, this can also result in the contact becoming fragile, because employees are replaced and relationships are therefore not built up or maintained. Moreover, one perspective amongst job centre staff is that it could be useful to have lists of guidance counsellors at the educational institutions with their areas of responsibility, as well as joint tasks across the organisations to enable personal contacts to be built up and strengthened.

There is a similar need amongst the educational institutions to know who to contact at job centres. This is illustrated in table 15 and indicates the need for a permanent contact person at job centres.

**Table 15**

**How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement? There is a need at my educational institution for guidance counsellors to have a permanent contact person at job centres for collaboration on adult guidance.**

	Vocational Training Institution (n = 73)	VUC (n = 27)	Total (N = 100)
Strongly agree	25%	37%	28%
Agree	51%	41%	48%
Disagree	14%	19%	15%
Strongly disagree	4%	0%	3%
Not applicable	7%	4%	6%

*Source: Questionnaires to all the VUCs and vocational training institutions.*

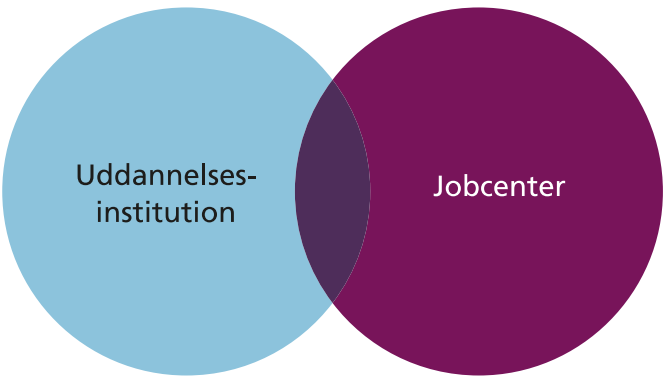
The table shows that 76% of the educational institutions agree or strongly agree that there is a need at their educational institution for guidance counsellors to have a permanent contact person at job centres for collaboration on adult guidance.

In general it can be declared that ad hoc collaboration does take place between job centre staff and guidance counsellors at the educational institutions in connection with educational guidance for the public. Such collaboration is easier when there are no ambiguities surrounding who to contact at the other institution and when a personal relationship with the relevant individuals has been formed.

### **7.3.2 Formal and regular collaboration on various topics**

Secondly, we can declare that formal and regular collaboration on various topics does take place between some educational institutions and job centres. This type of collaboration is characterised by frequent, uniform and permanent contact. Figure 7 illustrates this type of collaboration.

**Figur 7**  
**Formal and Regular Collaboration on Various Topics between Educational Institutions and Job Centres**



For example, the collaboration could be about stationing an employee from one of the institutions at another institution to carry out guidance. Guidance counsellors from educational institutions may also be regularly placed in job centres or job centre staff may carry out guidance at set times at educational institutions.

Table 16 shows how the educational institutions responded to the frequency of stationing staff in relation to the job centre(s) they *mainly* collaborate with.

**Table 16**  
**Which of the following types of collaboration have been carried out in recent years with the job centre(s) you (mainly) collaborate with?**

	Vocational Educational institution (n = 71)	VUC (n = 26)	Total (N = 97)
At my institution guidance counsellors advise unemployed adults at the job centre at least once per week.	18%	38%	24%
Job centre staff collaborate with with guidance counsellors at my institution on adult guidance at least one per week	23%	12%	20%

Source: Questionnaires to all the VUCs and vocational training institutions.

The table shows that 18% of the vocational training institutions and 38% of the VUCs have guidance counsellors that advise adults at job centres at least one per week. With regard to the opposite situa-

tion where job centre staff give advice at the educational institutions with guidance counsellors, 23% and 12% from vocational training institutions and the VUCs, respectively, responded that the practice does indeed exist. One example of this arrangement is also found in VEU-Center Syd's (adult and supplementary education centre in the region of Southern Denmark) open guidance at EUC Syd, cf. Chapter 5, where job centre staff are placed at the institution in connection with open guidance.

Overall we can include that the collaboration on joint guidance between job centres and educational institutions is carried out at some institutions, but by far not all institutions. In connection with this, it must be noted that the educational institutions responded in relation to the job centre(s) they collaborate with the most. That is, this does not necessarily represent collaboration with all the job centres in the municipalities in which the institutions are located.<sup>16</sup>

### **Advantages for the public and staff**

However, regular guidance in one place has advantages for both the public and staff. This is highlighted in interviews with guidance counsellors, job centre staff, managers and the public.

Individuals benefit from having expertise collected in one place. This means that the public only need to make enquiries at one address instead of being pushed onto several institutions in an attempt to get an answer to questions about education and job seeking. The attainment of this type of evaluation ensures that individuals will not fall through the loopholes of two institutions. In addition, the presence of a guidance counsellor from an educational institution at a job centre means that some individuals will receive educational guidance that they would not otherwise have received. This is partly due to the fact that people might not have thought about getting guidance from educational institutions and partly because the amount of educational guidance that would have been given in an interview with an administrative officer would probably have been limited, cf. the interviews with members of the public.

<sup>16</sup>In the survey, 67% of the educational institutions (69% of the vocational training institutions and 65% of the VUCs) that have branches in different municipalities responded: "There are some differences in the way we collaborate with the job centres in different municipalities."

For staff, stationing gives opportunities to share knowledge and mutual awareness. Therefore, job centre staff and guidance counsellors say that they come together and carry out joint guidance interviews to partly learn about the other party's area of expertise and partly to build up relationships that are important to secure faith in the fact that the other party is doing their share of the work for the public.

Despite the described advantages, a limited number of educational institutions, as previously mentioned, send guidance counsellors to job centres at least once per week or vice versa. According to interviews with guidance counsellors and managers, this is due to resource-related matters and the experience of few people taking advantage of the guidance service, etc. These experiences indicate relevant issues that are partly linked to what the success rate for the number of counselled people shall be and partly due to the fact that it can be challenging for educational institutions and job centres to prioritise resources for this type of guidance. As a result, it is therefore indicated that special prioritisation is required to carry out mutually arranged guidance.

One special initiative on formal collaboration on guidance that we would like to highlight is 'Ungehuset' in Slagelse. The service that is particularly aimed at individuals under the age of 30 (the 30+ are also welcome) is a joint effort between the job centre in Slagelse and educational institutions in the municipality. The concept of 'Ungehuset' is to ensure that individuals never need to enquire at more than one place about municipal and educational guidance, cf. the textbox below.

## 'Ungehuset' in Slagelse - an insight into guidance for young people under the age of 30

'Ungehuset' in Slagelse provides young people between the ages of 15-30 with combined access to guidance and help from the Municipality of Slagelse. Consequently, people can receive guidance and counselling on educational choices, finances and unemployment. They can also talk to a psychologist and get help with drug and alcohol addictions, reading impairments, etc. as well as receive support from a mentor.

On the whole, all educational institutions in Slagelse are represented by a guidance counsellor in the building. Therefore, young people can obtain educational guidance from a representative of the relevant institutions. The guidance counsellors are in place at certain times and they can also give advice about all the institutions. 'Ungehuset' in Slagelse is situated within the geographical area of the educational institutions in Slagelse. Hence, the educational institutions are in close proximity to the individuals that use the centre.

*Continues on the next page...*



## 'Ungehuset' in Slagelse - an insight into guidance for young people under the age of 30

### - continued

Individuals are first greeted by an assessor who refers them to the right guidance counsellor and consultants following an interview. The educational guidance counsellors are situated on the first floor of the centre and the municipal administrative officers, etc. on the ground floor. It is done this way to ensure that people receive the right guidance from both the job centre and educational institutions. People can then go directly from the educational guidance counsellors after an interview with their administrative officer and vice versa. In addition, this centre with multiple services provides better opportunities to coordinate collaboration on the public services between the various public offices represented at the centre.

#### **What about people over 30?**

'Ungehuset' also offers educational guidance to the over 30s. However, the municipal administrative officers take exclusive care of the over 30s.

'Ungehuset' was established in 2013 and is owned by the job centre in Slagelse.

('Ungehusets' web site: [www.slagelse.dk/borger/unge/ungehuset](http://www.slagelse.dk/borger/unge/ungehuset) and interviews with managers and guidance counsellors from Selandia, in addition to job centre staff in the Municipality of Slagelse).

## 7.4 Summary

Eighty-five per cent of the educational institutions agree or strongly agree that there is a need for *closer collaboration* between the educational institutions and job centres to ensure that individuals receive adequate educational guidance. This is due to, for example, the possible need to effectuate the knowledge and expertise of the educational institutions and job centres to secure qualified and coherent guidance for the unemployed. In addition, there is a need for coordination between the two institutions to ensure in part that no unemployed individuals shall lose their way in between the different interviews, and also partly to ensure that there is a joint platform on which to provide individuals with the right action to take.

Collaboration on guidance for the unemployed is often conducted in an ad hoc way and naturally it is easiest when there are no ambiguities surrounding who to contact at the other institution, for example, through a scheme with permanent contact persons, and also when good relationships have been

created between employees of the various institutions. Collaboration on guidance can also take the shape of regular and formal collaborative interfaces, for example, by job centres and educational guidance being conducted at set times on one site. This can help to provide combined access to guidance for the public, whilst at the same increasing opportunities for knowledge sharing and collaboration between employees of different institutions.

Moreover, the analysis indicates that knowledge sharing and skills upgrading is essential to ensure that the employees of each organisation possess the relevant knowledge that enables them to advise adults about training from their own position. This is even more relevant when guidance is not mutually arranged.

# Appendix A

## Appendix on Methodology

This appendix on methodology describes the methodical assumptions and data the survey is built on. In general, the following methods have been applied:

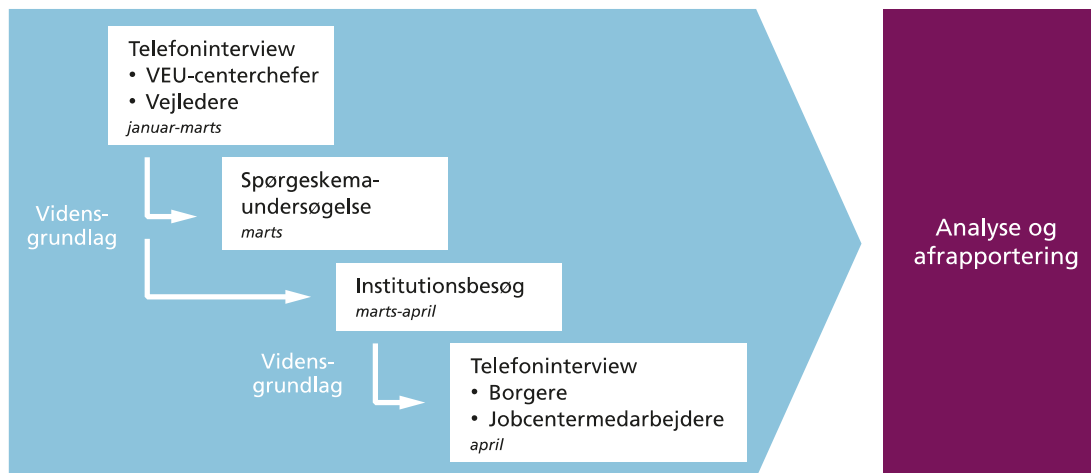
1. A pre-survey consisting of desk research and explorative interviews.
2. Questionnaires to all the VUCs and vocational training institutions.
3. Interviews (by telephone) with guidance counsellors, including guidance coordinators and managers and educational institutions, as well as job centre staff and individuals that had received guidance.
4. Visits to three educational institutions with particularly intriguing adult guidance practices. Individual and group interviews with management representatives, guidance counsellors, VEU consultants, job centre staff and individuals that have received guidance at the relevant institution.

## Dual purpose of collected data

Many of the applied methods had a dual purpose: Firstly, each method was intended to contribute with information for the final analysis and report. Secondly, it was planned that the data would be collected sequentially, so the information obtained from the data that was collected using a particular method could be used to qualify questions and focal points in connection with the data collection method that was subsequently applied. For example, we carried out explorative telephone interviews with VEU centre bosses and guidance counsellors before we created the questionnaire for the institutions. The information that was collected through interviews contributed to qualifying the focal points in the questionnaire. In addition, the interviews with the VEU centre bosses were especially used to select the institutions to visit.

Figure 8 shows the data collection methods, when they were executed and how they provided an informational platform for one another.

**Figure 8**  
**Overview of the collected data**



As the figure shows, the data was collected in several phases. The collected information in one phase then formed the basis for the collection of data in the subsequent phase.

Each sub-element of each phase will be reviewed in the following.

## Pre-survey

The pre-survey was conducted to gain an overview of the different ways in which the work on adult guidance can be carried out when arranged by different parties. Furthermore, the pre-survey contributed towards relevant perspectives for the design and focal points of the survey. The pre-survey was conducted in November-December 2014 and it consisted of desk research, and meetings and telephone interviews with researchers, management representatives and educational guidance counselors.

### Desk research

At the preliminary stage, desk research drew on various Danish and international studies, in addition to Danish and international literature on the topic.<sup>17</sup> In general, the desk research contributed to expanding the project group's familiarity with the topic and also helped to sharpen the focal points of the survey to give insight into areas where new knowledge was needed.

*Hereunder Boysen et al 2008, Christensen et al 2011, Larsen et al 2011, Thomsen et al 2015, Vilhjálmssdóttir et al 2011, Vuorinen et al 2009, Wahlgren et al 2012.*

### **Preliminary interviews with researchers and practitioners**

EVA carried out six preliminary interviews with three researchers on the topic; one representative from the Danish Ministry of Education and two guidance counsellors - one from a VUC and one from a vocational college, respectively. The preliminary interviews contributed to narrowing down the survey's focal points. During the interviews, they were asked amongst other things what they were personally concerned with when it came to guidance; what the main issues for discussion were; the associated challenges and possibilities; and more importantly where they thought knowledge was needed.

The interviews provided information that general mapping of the education institutions' practices and collaboration on educational guidance for adults was sought, etc. In addition, the perspectives of the public were highlighted as a significant focal point, as this has only previously been focused on to a minor extent. Also in connection with the preliminary interviews, focus was placed on the new responsibility of the VEU centres, i.e. individual-orientated educational guidance. Similarly, we obtained the initial impression that variations in the offered adult educational guidance existed depending on where enquiries were made.

## **Survey**

A survey was conducted as a comprehensive survey of all providers of essential adult and continuing education at the vocational training institutions and VUCs, respectively. Each provider appointed a colleague with in-depth knowledge about the practices employed by the institution for adult educational guidance, who thereafter were given a link to the questionnaire. The survey was conducted in March 2015.

### **Preparation and validation of the questionnaire**

The questionnaire was prepared by EVA's project group and it placed special emphasis on:

- How the educational institutions organise guidance for adults.
- The competence-related abilities of guidance counsellors and their approach to guidance.
- The educational institutions' external collaboration on adult educational guidance, including their collaboration with other educational institutions, job centres, unemployment insurance funds, enterprises and the role of the VEU centres in this context.
- The possibilities and barriers linked to adult learners educational guidance.

The final questionnaire was set up electronically and pilot tested based on the eight telephone interviews. The pilot test was carried out in February 2015 and included eight people: five with a managerial function and three with a guidance function.

The purpose of the pilot interviews was to identify any ambiguities in the questions that may lead to misunderstanding, as well as to investigate whether the categories of answer were sufficient. EVA's project group adjusted the questionnaire based on the comments in the pilot interviews. Several

questions were simplified and explanatory text was added. These modifications were made to ensure that the questions would be understood in the same way by all respondents and to give them enough information to enable them to answer the questions. Furthermore, some of the categories of answers were changed and new ones added when simplifying the questions.

### **Recruitment and distribution**

The questionnaire distribution list for the survey was created by EVA. All the providers of essential adult education at the vocational training institutions and VUCs, respectively, were first pulled out from the register of institutions, after which, EVA contacted all 118 institutions to get the name of a contact person to whom the questionnaire would be addressed. The educational institution was asked to provide the contact details of the person who was most familiar with the practices of the institution for adult educational guidance. Therefore, there are some differences in the function of the respondents in terms of carrying out adult guidance. The questionnaire primarily had a mapping function, however this was not considered to hinder the validity of the survey. In instances when the question was of a more general nature, the results should be interpreted with caution, as it could be pertinent whether the respondent had a managerial role or not. We prepared cross tabulations in cases when it was most relevant to do so.

The survey was conducted as an online survey, which the respondents could access through a personal link in an invitation sent by e-mail. Reminders were sent out following the same procedure. Invitations to take part in the survey were sent out on 10 March 2015, after which, two reminders were sent out on 17 March 2015 and 23 March 2015, respectively. The survey ended on 30 March 2015.

### **Response rate and non-participation**

Of the 118 institutions that were contacted, 102 completed the questionnaire, which resulted in a total response rate of 86%. Amongst the vocational institutions the response rate was 86% and amongst the VUCs 87%. This is a very satisfactory response rate for this target group.

Table 17 shows an account of the distribution between institutional types that form the basis for testing withdrawal.

**Table 17**  
**Analysis of non-participation distributed between institutional types**

	Total Population	Analysis Selection
Vocational Training Institution	87 (73.7%)	75 (73.5%)
VUC	31 (26.3%)	27 (26.5%)

*Source: Questionnaires to all the VUCs and vocational training institutions.*

As presented in the table, the VUCs are slightly over-represented in the survey, however, this is not a significantly skewed non-participation result when tested using the  $\chi^2$ -test: The non-participation analysis shows that the part of the population that answered the questionnaire constitutes a representative portion in terms of the type of educational institution, which is the only background variable we have been able to test. Consequently, we have not had any reason to doubt the representativity of the responses in the survey.

#### **Analysis of questionnaire data**

The analysis of input data is primarily based on frequency tables that were reported separately for the vocational training institutions and VUCs, respectively. Similarly, cross tabulations are included, which help identify any correlation between the respondents' answers to different questions. The comprehensive survey had a high response rate and as such a significance test was not done on the cross-tabulations.

However, in the capacity of a reader it should be noted that relatively few responses were obtained from VUCs in some of the tables. Even though most of the VUCs were included in the survey, the tables with very few answers should be interpreted with caution.

## **Telephone interviews before institutional visits**

Most of the interviews with VEU centre bosses, guidance counsellors, guidance coordinators and managers from the vocational training institutions and VUCs were conducted before the institutional visits.

#### **VEU centre bosses**

Telephone interviews with the VEU centre bosses were primarily conducted between January-February 2015, i.e. before the institutional visits. The objective of conducting interviews with VEU centre bosses was to gain better insight into the commitments of the VEU centres towards the topic and variation in practices across the VEU centres, for example, in relation to mutual collaboration on adult guidance. In addition, the interviews with the VEU centre bosses were used particularly to enable qualified selection of the institutions to visit.

### **Guidance counsellors, including coordinators and guidance managers**

The telephone interviews with guidance counsellors, including individual coordinators and guidance managers, were primarily conducted between January-March 2015. The guidance counsellors and managers were selected based on a desire to have a broad spectrum covering the VUCs, vocational training institutions, geographical location and the distribution of large and small educational institutions. An e-mail was sent to institutional managers, who subsequently sent EVA the contact details of a guidance counsellor (in some cases a manager) that had extensive experience with guidance and could represent the educational institution. The person was to have insight into how guidance was organised, guidance activities, skills upgrading and collaboration with other educational institutions, job centres and enterprises, respectively. Some of the institutions elected to allow a guidance counsellor to take part in the interviews whilst others selected an employee with a managerial role.

### **Institutional visits**

EVA visited EUC Syd, HF & VUC Fyn and Selandia in connection with the survey. These three institutions were selected, as they each represent a very special and intriguing way of dealing with adult educational guidance and can be deemed as so-called '*good cases*'. In addition, the institutional visits allowed us to gain access to the relatively inaccessible group of people that had recently received guidance. The institutions were selected based on information from the explorative interviews during the pre-survey, as well as the telephone interviews with VEU centre bosses and guidance counsellors/managers. In all instances, respondents were asked how familiar they were with the institutions that had a very intriguing way of working with adult educational guidance and/or specific guidance projects. At the same time, we wanted to have a certain amount of variation in terms of institutional type and geographical location.

The three institutional types were introduced to the project and the visit was planned in consultation with the institutions. Each visit included interviews with managers, guidance counsellors and job centre staff. Likewise, interviews were carried out with members of the public at HF & VUC Fyn and Selandia, who had received guidance at the relevant educational institution. However, this was not possible at EUC Syd, therefore the individuals from this institution were later interviewed by telephone. The purpose of these interviews was to uncover the commitment of the educational institutions towards guidance and collaborative interfaces in connection with guidance.

In addition, managerial perspectives contributed to providing information about the strategical approaches of educational institutions towards adult guidance and choices regarding the prioritisation of special initiatives on this topic. The purpose of the interviews with members of the public was to gain user insight into the guidance initiatives of the institutions, including the perception of coherent guidance received by individuals at educational institutions, job centres and enterprises, respectively. The purpose of the interviews with guidance counsellors was to obtain information on how management's initiatives on adult guidance were manifested in practice. Lastly, the purpose of interviewing job cen-



the staff was to gain insight into their perception of collaboration on adult guidance with the specific educational institution, as well as their general perspectives on adult guidance.

Initially the intention was to carry out group interviews with all interviewees at the three educational institutions to gain more perspectives, and to bring into play the possibilities and obstacles of adult guidance at the colleges. Due to practical reasons, however, it was not possible to carry out group interviews with all interviewees. Therefore, some of the interviews were carried out as individual interviews.

The interviews that were carried out during the visits were based on semi-structured interview guides adapted to each institution. The interviews included the same topics as the questionnaire, as it was necessary to complement the results of the survey with the interviews, and highlight the organisation and collaboration on adult educational guidance in detail. In addition, a number of questions were targeted at individual institutions and that made them particularly interesting.

The data that was collected during the three visits is briefly described in the following.

### **EUC Syd**

EUC Syd in Haderslev was visited in March 2015. EUC Syd is the host institution for VEU-Center Syd (adult and supplementary education centre in the region of Southern Denmark). VEU-Center Syd (adult and supplementary education centre in the region of Southern Denmark) has given immense prioritised outreaching guidance and close collaboration with enterprises, as well as focus on adult education guidance in enterprises. VEU-Center Syd (adult and supplementary education centre in the region of Southern Denmark) has taken the challenge linked to the skilled taking over unskilled jobs and has established close collaboration on employee training with a number of enterprises aimed at qualifying employees. Furthermore, VEU-Center Syd (adult and supplementary education centre in the region of Southern Denmark) has open guidance at EUC Syd with the presence of a job centre employee.

In all, four interviews were carried out - two individual interviews and two group interviews at EUC Syd. The following took part in the individual interviews:

- A management representative
- A job centre employee

The following took part in the group interviews:

- Two VEU consultants
- One guidance counsellor and two VEU consultants (of which one was from the above group).

## **HF & VUC Fyn**

HF & VUC Fyn in Odense was visited in March 2015. HF & VUC Fyn were selected, because the institution with its initiative entitled 'Den Professionelle Vejleder' (The Professional Guidance Counsellor), has special focus on upgrading skills and guidance counsellor training. In addition, HF & VUC Fyn in Odense was refurbished in 2014 and now contains a new and modern guidance centre, etc.

A total of five group interviews were carried out during the visit to HF & VUC Fyn. The following took part in the group interviews:

- Four management representatives
- Three guidance counsellors
- Three guidance coordinators, two guidance counsellors, one learning consultant and one psychologist.
- Two job centre employees
- Three course participants, who had received guidance at HF & VUC Fyn.

## **Selandia**

Selandia and 'Ungehuset' in Slagelse were visited in April 2015. Selandia was selected due to its attachment to 'Ungehuset' in Slagelse. Through 'Ungehuset', Selandia has had positive experiences with close collaboration with the job centre on guidance relating to educational choices for young people. Furthermore, Selandia has had some interesting experiences with guidance counsellor collaboration in connection with other educational institutions in Slagelse, who are also represented at 'Ungehuset'.

The visit included a tour of 'Ungehuset' and interview with the following target groups:

- A management representative from Selandia
- Four guidance counsellors, including a guidance counsellor from Ungehuset.
- A job centre employee from Ungehuset.
- Four course participants, who had received guidance at Selandia.

## **Telephone interviews after institutional visits**

The institutional visits were supplemented with several telephone interviews after the visits. Therefore, telephone interviews with five members of the public and three job centre employees were carried out.

### **Members of the public**

Telephone interviews were carried out with five members of the public after the institutional visits. Originally it was planned that the members of the public would be interviewed in conjunction with the institutional visits. As previously mentioned, however, the members of the public did not turn up for the interviews at EUC Syd. To get the individuals to talk about the individual guidance they had received through VEU centre collaboration, in which EUC SYD was the host institution, it was decided to carry out telephone interviews with the individuals later. The individuals were selected from a list that

was sent by the visited institution. The purpose of the interviews was to obtain an in-depth perspective of adult guidance, including the correlation with guidance offered at the educational institutions, job centres and enterprises, respectively.

**Job centre employees**

Job centre employees from three job centres were interviewed after the institutional visits. The purpose of these interviews was to obtain more details about the experiences and views of job centre employees, in addition to the collected information from the job centre employees during the visits. In other words, we wanted to have more job centres represented in the survey. The selection criteria for the job centres was that they had to be located in the same municipalities as one of the institutions in which we conducted telephone interviews with guidance counsellors.

**Application and combination of data sources in the report**

A wide range of methods have been used in this survey, which combined highlight the topic of adult educational guidance. Table 18 provides an overview of the data sources that have been used and contribute to the analyses in the chapters. The pre-survey was conducted with the aim of sharpening the preliminary focal points of the survey and is not included in the table.

**Table 18**  
**Data sources that were applied in the chapters.**

Chapter	Questionnaire	Qualitative data sources				
	Survey					
	Employee with in-depth knowledge on practices	VEU centre bosses	Managers	Guidance coun- sellors/VEU consultants	Job centre em- ployees	Members of the public
3. Guidance frameworks and practitioners	X	-	X	X	-	-
4. Approach towards access to training guid- ance	-	X	X	X	-	X
5. Qualifications of guid- ance counsellors	X	X	X	X	-	-
6. Role of VEU centres in institutional collaboration on guidance	X	X	X	X	-	X
7. Areas of collaboration with job centres	X	X	X	X	X	X

The analysis was thematically executed across quantitative and qualitative data sources. In instances when deemed relevant, a textbox with examples of practices has been added.

The qualitative data sources were analysed thematically in the analysis. We have read through the interviews several times and then coded them thematically according to the topic based on the problems linked to the survey, in addition to new explorative findings that have helped to shape the survey.



# Appendix B

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