

## Pedagogical principles of the professional guidance counsellor education

### 1. Foundation

The professional guidance counsellor education expands and deepens the competence of a teacher. A guidance counsellor is required to have a strong orientation towards the future: the ability to study, research, develop and react to future demands. The guidance counsellor is the expert and developer of the educational institution's counselling, ensuring its quality. They coordinate and are able to manage cooperation in multidisciplinary networks inside and outside the organisation.

The professional guidance counsellor education of Tampere University of Applied Sciences is based on inclusive pedagogy, which involves a reflective, inquisitive and development-oriented approach. Competence can be approached through an integrative conception of knowledge. A guidance counsellor must be able to see the practical implementation of theory, but also view practical situations and solve issues using theory.

By conceptualising knowledge acquired through practical experiences, the understanding of the phenomena included in a counsellor identity, and the relationships between them, is expanded and deepened. However, the application of theoretical information into practice is not sufficient for an expert's competence. Knowledge of self-regulation and the regulation of action is developed when the person thinks about, studies and evaluates their own knowledge, actions and experiences in various operating environments.

In addition to the internal experiences of the guidance counsellor student, the foundations of the counselling-based identity process are also based on external definitions and expectations. By identifying and assessing the communal and cultural traditions, values, expectations and methods related to counselling and the entire field, the student can also understand their own experiences as a part of the general phenomena related to counselling and the work of a guidance counsellor.

### 2. The foundation of the practical implementation of studies

Professional guidance counsellor education emphasises the student's own activity, inquisitive learning, shared production and assessment of information, and development of new practices. The studies pay attention to the following cornerstones of a good learning experience:

**Individuality** allows for attachment to the studies and studying. Individuality requires that the student is consciously committed to the learning process, works actively by producing new information to be learned, and feels they are personally responsible for the results of learning. The opportunity to impact your own actions and environment, such as work that requires consideration and planning and the freedom to design your own study paths, helps students build the guidance counsellor education into a meaningful entity for themselves.

**Guidance** is the basis for interaction and goal-setting.

Guidance is a shared activity that supports and advances the learning, growth, working and problem-solving processes of the person receiving guidance in ways that strengthen their agency. Good guidance is implemented through respectful, constructive and dialogic interaction.

In the implementation of guidance, goal-oriented actions, support for reflection, emotional presence and authentic dialogue are key. The goal is to support the creation of the competence and personality growth required by both the studies and the work. In guidance counsellor education, this is a part of the practical implementation and a significant part of professional competence.

**Authenticity** is related to the realism of the activities.

Authenticity is not achieved only through the exercises or the environment being as realistic as possible.

Instead, it is required that the actions and information processing required of the student are authentic. In short, authenticity is implemented through shared interaction between the student, the exercises and the environment. The guidance counsellor studies offer opportunities of using and practising the methods, procedures, materials and cognitive processes required in authentic working contexts of guidance counsellors.

**Cooperation** directs the practical activities.

Cooperation means that students work and build new information in cooperation with each other and various parties outside the educational institutions, making use of each other's knowledge and competence. This emphasises both individual and shared responsibility, and it aims to achieve the best learning results possible for both individuals and groups. In the guidance counsellor studies, cooperation can be seen in shared planning, peer assessment, peer guidance, learning partnerships and a project-based approach.

**Plasticity** facilitates various solutions.

Plasticity means the ability to adapt the actions and plans as required by new, changing and uncertain situations. It involves the flexibility of thinking, action, exercises, plans and structures. In the curriculum of the guidance counsellor education, this is seen in future orientation and the various personalised solutions for acquiring and demonstrating competence.

### 3. Assessment

The competence-based studies are based on the recognition of prior learning, the development of required competence and the assessment of competence. The assessment is based on the learning outcomes and assessment criteria of the education programme. The learning outcomes have been developed in extensive cooperation with networks that involve the staff of vocational schools and universities of applied sciences, alumni of TAMK's professional teacher studies, students and other stakeholders. The learning outcomes are based on the international descriptions of competence for guidance counsellors published by IAEVG and NICE. In addition to this, the outcomes pay attention to research on counselling and pedagogy, future orientation and the regulations that define the education.

In the guidance counsellor education, the students are given responsibility for assessing their studies and planning the assessment. This experience strengthens their counselling competence and helps them see counselling and the work of a guidance counsellor as assessment: the counsellor supports students when the latter are reviewing their situation, existing competence, required competence, objectives and progress.

The work of a guidance counsellor takes place in various environments. The students and contexts change. Each counselling session is unique, and competence can be gained and demonstrated in highly different contexts. In professional guidance counsellor education, competence is demonstrated and assessed in ways agreed on in advance, with the uniqueness of the situation taken into consideration. In the assessment of competence, the competence

acquired by the student is compared to the learning outcomes. When the competence described in the outcomes has been demonstrated in full, the competence will be recognised and assessed as approved. According to the principles of competence-based studies, the education programme does not specify the manners of acquiring the required competence. There may be several ways of acquiring competence, and they may vary among students.