



Futurum

PROCERTU PROJECT

Professionalization and European Certification of Academic Tutors



WP 9: Good practices handbook in matter of academic tutoring

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1. Introduction

This handbook has been produced following the research on academic tutoring done within PROCERTU Leonardo da Vinci project. The PROCERTU project has been funded with support of the European Commission. This publication reflects the views only of the author and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

The project was developed by European partners who proved experience or expertise in matter at alternating school/company-linked training courses, academic tutoring, professionalization and skills certification.

Find the PROCERTU consortium listed below:

ISTP Saint Etienne (France)
E.N.T.E.R. (Austria)
AFAQ AFNOR Certification (France)
ENSTIMA (France)
DAA (Germany)
FUTURUM (Poland)
HIGHER VOCATIONAL STATE SCHOOL (Poland)
FASENET (Spain)
IKERTIA (Spain)
UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG (Sweden)
and a silent partner EUROQUAL (Switzerland)

The handbook draws, from one part on good practices observed in 6 different countries and from another part on testimonies from academic tutors to provide frameworks for proper academic tutoring. It shows the results of the project which are: an academic tutor job profile and its specified skills which are necessary to do the job. Finally, it introduces also the training and certification possibility for academic tutors.

The main objective of this document is to spread what was considered to be “good practices” in academic tutoring among the academic audience, principally among tutors. However, we hope it could also be valuable to students and head of departments. We would like to see it used by all those who are involved in tutoring process in order to ensure the best quality of academic tutoring. In this way, it will represent the start of the process rather than the end.

The handbook is downloadable from the PROCERTU website – www.procertu.eu.

2. The concept of academic tutor

In the monitoring process we came across different practices concerning academic guidance. We found out that although it exists and functions in all observed countries, each country has its own definition concerning a job of academic tutor and different approach to academic mentoring.



Austria

→ **the main contact person during a student's apprenticeship**

The academic tutor is the main contact person while doing a practical placement in external organization. He/she is the contact person in case of problems in the field of knowledge, organization, administration and social skills. He/she is responsible for evaluation and certification of project work, practical placement and documentation (e.g. reports). He/she is the support and motivation of the student in regards to learning experiences and vocational orientation.



France

→ **the main contact person during a student's apprenticeship**

The academic tutor is the main contact person from the school point of view while learners are doing a training period within a company / an external institution (apprenticeship, practical placement) and also during their academic period. The tutor is a counselor. He/she helps the integration of the trainee, helps the trainees to build his/ her own skills between courses and work activities during the working placement/ apprenticeship period.

He/she also assesses the skills of the trainee in relation with the tutor coming from the company. Some academic tutors can be recruited from companies in order to be able to discuss at the same level with the tutors within companies.

Tutoring represents a very interesting field of pedagogical investigations for all sorts of organizations about the role of the teacher and the pedagogical practices he/she can rely on to help students to learn their job.



Germany

→ **a part of studies (DAA) and of all e-learning programmes or a person with own status and specific qualification (University of Hamburg)**

There is no general approach for academic guidance. At some universities tutors are a real part of the studies (e.g. Distant Learning Academy for Adults). The tutor is also present in all distant learning programmes which cannot work without him/her. Such a tutor has to be absolutely competent in his/her field and to have a sure instinct for the time problems or other problems of his/her students as well as to have the ability to praise and support. The Heidelberger Model recognizes the importance of new personal competences, emphasizing the aspect of quality management for both graduates and university staff and offers them a study plan with an integrated programme for tutors. This is to compare with "European E-Tutor" Leonardo da Vinci project. University of Hamburg is the one example of universities which give the tutors their own status and define the needed qualifications.



Poland

→ a permanent employee

The academic tutor is a permanent employee with a given number of hours to realize his/her tasks. He/she is a person with master degree consistent with or similar to vocational guidance or a person with master degree different from vocational guidance but with postgraduate studies in the field of vocational guidance or human resources management with accomplished courses of vocational guidance. The working time of tutor should amount to 20 hours per week. He/she manages database of contacts to the companies and may follow the professional progress of a student. However, his/her role is sometimes limited to guidance only at the university. He/she is expected to work on his/her own work concept, basing on guidelines, law regulations and instructions, issued by Ministry of Education.



Spain

→ a part of the teachers' group or a teacher online during e-courses

There are two different levels of tutoring in Spain: a traditional tutoring and integrated tutoring. A tutor is a part of the teachers' group whose tasks are not only to solve problems of academic contents or methodologies but also to help in the process of guidance to achieve competences and professional skills. He/she should be present during all the curricula of the student. The charge of this extra work is definitely not considered.

The term "academic tutor" is also used to define a teacher online during a training course via Internet.



Sweden

→ a university teacher/researcher

The academic tutor is an employee at a university working as a teacher/researcher. He/she is in charge of several students / trainees and constitutes a kind of link between the university and working life. His/her tasks are to help students to reflect on the work they are doing during the practical placement, e.g. to understand the theoretical knowledge about the profession and the transfer from theory to practice. Academic tutors are responsible lecturers for teaching students learning and communication theories during their studies at university / college.

Summary

Having discussed differences and similarities of an academic tutor concept in six PROCERTU partners European countries, the PROCERTU consortium decided on the final definition of the academic tutor for PROCERTU project as follows: "A person who is a teacher and/or researcher employed at a university or at another academic institute and in charge of several students / trainees during the period the student is working as apprentice in a company / hospital / vocational school".

3. Principles of academic tutoring

The foundation of an academic tutor job required a thorough analysis of practices observed in different countries as well as reliable sources of information such as literature, results of compliant projects, discussions and interviews with professional tutors and beneficiaries.

The analysis showed some differences depending on national or organizational conditions and characteristics. However, in spite of these differences it became possible to decide on what an “academic tutor job profile” should be made up.

The main goal of an internship, or a practical placement, is to confront the learner with an environment and tasks that are specific to the occupation he is getting prepared to. The situations he/she meets imply that some theoretical knowledge are transferred to the practical field and articulated with know-how, attitudes and specifically adapted behaviors.

In order to make the internship a place, and a period of time, where significant learning is made, it is important that the learner should be heartened to take some distance with his/her experience. Experiences should be analyzed and recognized as part of a learning process. The learner should refer to and use his/her theoretical knowledge, and notice the limits and conditions of their application to field experience.

This process of contextualization is enhanced by and relies on the presence of a “third party” in order to help a new mediation of experiences and reflection. The tutor should naturally assume this role. Pointing out this function/role as a foundation of the tutor job is one of the main PROCERTU result and very strongly claims that a proper education and training is necessary for tutors.

The tutor’s functions

An essential competence to the tutoring function is counseling. This competence is a precious, otherwise priceless, component of every tutoring function.

Tutors assume different functions that are oriented to help/achieve/accompany simultaneously:

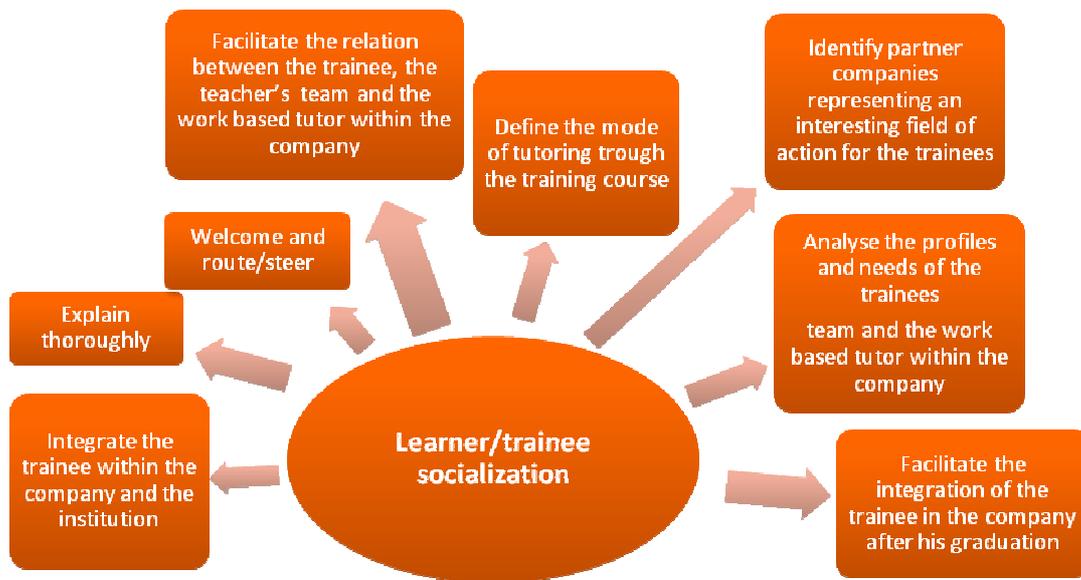
- the learner/trainee socialization
- the transmission and transfer of knowledge
- the learner/trainee qualification

Balance between these functions may vary from country, legal, organization, local or individual case parameters. The balance naturally changes through time for one specific learner/trainee during one internship.

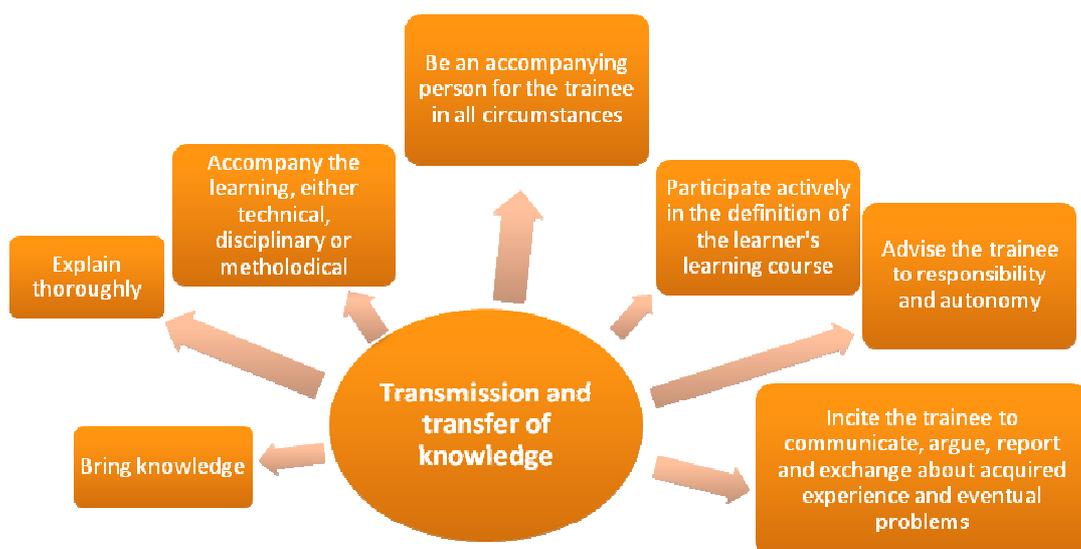
The following charts show the result of the PROCERTU research on the academic tutor profile:

Chart 1: Functions related activities and the expected results

- the learner/trainee socialization



- the transmission and transfer of knowledge



- the learner/trainee qualification.

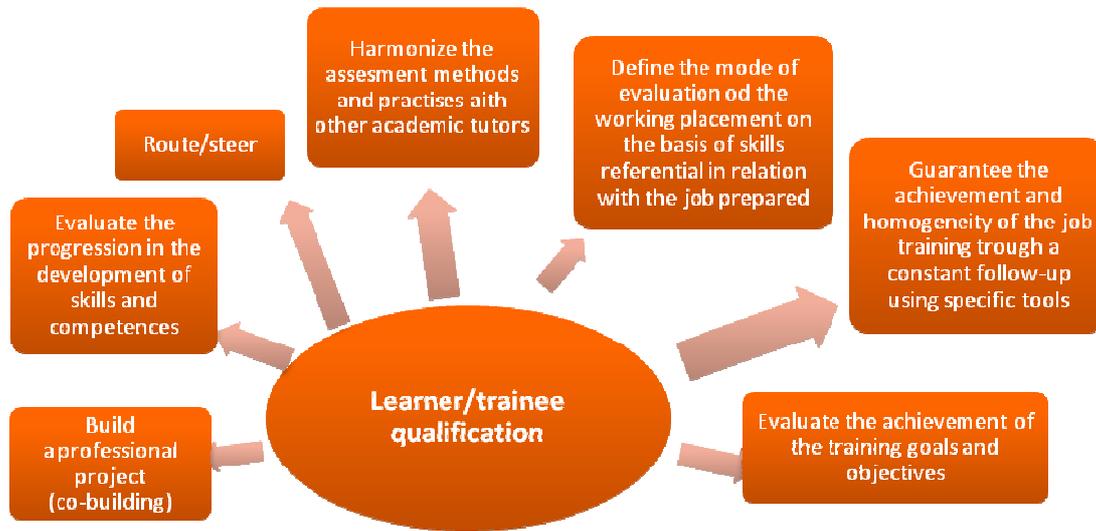


Chart 2: Essential knowledge for a tutor (specifically academic tutor)



Chart 3: Activity related skills

Social skills	Pedagogical skills	Evaluation skills	Management skills	Administration skills	Trouble shooting skills
Be capable of approaching people openly and without prejudice	Maintain the motivation of the individual learner	Evaluation of the quality of the learning	Stress handling / frustration tolerance	Establishment of a business plan /controlling items	Knowledge of potential problems
Be aware of individual differences between learner	Keep the objectives in mind	Evaluation of the student satisfaction	Coping with exceptionally high communication occurrence	Handling of organizational issues	Recognition of problems
Respond appropriately to individual personality types, national characteristics, age, etc	Managing the interaction	Responds to students Evaluation of the course	Timemanagement	Quality management	Handling of problems
Be able to understand problems and fears of participants	Giving feedback	Tracking learner progress			Prevention of problems
Balance individual and group focus appropriately	Deal with different learner profiles	Student motivation			
Provide learners with support and encouragement	Support the individual styles of learning, and learning strategies	Giving feedback to learners			

personal competences	basic personal competences	To know yourself; to identify your own strengths
		To manage your private strengths, including your health and the maintenance of your employability; to maintain your own balance, physically as well as mentally
		To feel efficient; to be confident; to show a capacity to make decisions and the ability to act within the framework of your position
		To have manual skills (to be specified according to the “Cahier des charges” if needed)
		To have artistic capacities (to be specified according to the “cahier des charges” if needed)
		To show analytical capacities
		To show synthesis capacities
		To take into account your personal interests
		To call yourself into question and agree to “let it be” if necessary
	targeted commitment	To achieve work corresponding to your “cahier des charges” with commitment, energy and tenacity
		To get organised in an autonomous way
		To manage and control your schedule; to respect the given schedules and deadlines
	responsible behaviour	To be committed and auto-motivated; to take on the responsibilities of your function
		To show perseverance within the framework of your function
		To do yourself what you expect from the other people; to have a personal discipline and respect it
		To resist the tensions and to manage the stress
		To accept or choose a deontological code and then to respect it; to respect an ethics; to be fair and honest
	transformation and innovation to maintain your employability	To show curiosity, perspicacity and an initiative mind in order to facilitate the achievement of the institutional goals
		To innovate; to show creativity in coherence with your “cahier des charges”
		To be open-minded and flexible
		To have the desire of improving and to be ready to evolve
social competences	aptitudes to communicate	To communicate in an appropriate manner with your seniors in rank, your peers, your subordinates and your customers
		To communicate in oral (in your mother tongue)
		To communicate in written (in your mother tongue)

		To be able and communicate in other languages (to be specified according to the “cahier des charges”)
		To be able to listen; to consider other points of view
	orientation customer	To have a good sense of the customer service (external or internal); to greet and offer products and services to the customers in the way which best fills their real needs; to have professional relationships; to make a follow-up of the customers
	ability to cooperate and work in team	To use the approaches and the teaching means adapted to your relationships with your colleagues and collaborators. Both to bring assistance to them if they need it and to exert a temporary substitution if needed
		To stand up for your ideas and ideals and to integrate those of the others; to show persuasion and enthusiasm
		To negotiate winning solutions for the various stakeholders
		To adapt to your environment
		To be able to integrate other cultures in your behaviour and your plans of action
		To develop and put forward partners networks

4. How to become an academic tutor?

One of the objectives of the PROCERTU consortium was to understand the mechanism by which the educational skills of teachers transform them into academic tutors. By exploring six PROCERTU partners' origin countries we could compile the practices in matter of academic guidance.

In most cases academic tutoring is covered by university teachers, lecturers or researchers who are not given a special training for this job. They usually have to work on their own work concept, find methods and tools by themselves. Once a university teacher gets involved in counseling process, either by university policies or by his/her own will, he/she has to use his/her educational skills to transfer know-how to learners. From this moment on, he/she works his/her way to become transformed into an academic tutor.

Some practices showing the paths for academic tutors:

Austria

Basically there are no requirements or any specific training to become a tutor. Tutors are professors or study assistants who work as tutors apart from their normal work. They have experience in the work with students and in the best case also in vocational field. For there is no established tutoring method, tutors have to create their work individually. Usually tutoring process takes place in meetings with the individual student or in groups. It can be in form of seminar to practical placement, direct exchange with students doing a practical placement or individual meetings.

Apart from the guidance and role as a contact person, tutors prepare the students for proper documentation of their experience which is the way to evaluate their practical placement. Finally, the tutor encourages and supports the students' reflection of activities and experiences during the practical placement. This process includes different levels:

- ✓ personal levels – to strengthen self-confidence, to make visible one's own competences, to encourage a student to look for individual way of life
- ✓ career level – to improve understanding of organizational structures and mechanisms
- ✓ qualification level – to reflect and analyze the acquirement of knowledge, skills and working techniques

Germany

Training or a standard for tutor's qualification and status is not in use with few exceptions (e.g. the Heidelberger Model, the Bologna Centre). The tutor called "work based" is present in all distant learning programmes. There are universities which give the tutors their own status and define at least the needed qualifications (e.g. University of Hamburg, study field Psychology). The Heidelberger Model shows new understanding of competences in science and research, emphasizing the importance of quality management both for graduates and the university staff. These two groups are offered modules and curricula which are a study plan with an integrated programme for tutors. The programme for tutors is focused on students of higher semesters or graduates and consists of several modules. It gives them the training for their study field and the training of "key competences".

The necessity of training competent online teachers as essential for the learning process is noticed by the Institute for the Research of Media and Competences which gives 10 trends for e-learning in vocational training.

The tutor can also work as a part of the structure of a study field, as it is at the University of Tübingen, study field Urology. The tutor is working there, mainly as a support of a professor, with small groups of students in a certain time, for example during the clinical study phase of the studies.

In some learning programmes, such as “Modular Learning System” provided by Distant Learning Academy for Adults, the tutors have to cover more than one field of study. All of them have additional jobs apart from their work for MLS or long time experience in their job. Specific and generic competences are obvious.

According to the results of the project “Requirements for Tele-Tutors in vocational training” for which BIBB (The National Institute for Vocational Learning) was responsible, for the support of the learning process, the tutors not only have to have a fundamental knowledge of their study field but they also must be able to give the students personal support and motivation. They must be up to date with current theories of education and didactics whereas the required IT competence is a real must.

France

In French academic environment some new interesting practices concerning tutoring can be observed, e.g. personalized training paths more and more professionalizing. Unfortunately they are not always supported by the necessary resources and mentoring activities are not attractively recognized. Besides, some organizations have decided to open the alternation training to all teachers and to pay them the same amount as for practical work hours. Moreover, there are very competent training centres which work on the tutoring methods, organize meetings and do research in this field. Another good practice is recruiting persons from companies to become academic tutors / mentors. The tutor accompanies the trainees or apprentices in the case of sandwich courses and also helps them to build their own skills between courses and work activities within companies. Therefore, academic tutors should know what guidance / tutoring means, what its aims, stakes but also constraints are. They should also work directly with the tutors within company in the framework of the company’s strategy. In that case the aims are to help trainees to understand their vocational environment and to assess them in relation with the tutor in the company. As for training, for example in ISTP, mentors can be trained thanks to a sort of guild from another organization in charge of apprenticeship contracts called a “CFA”. Tutors can also be trained in companies together with other tutors involved in ISTP for several years. Some organizations arrange meetings between their partners to make their tutors exchange good practices on the subject and produce specific documentation on this theme.

Poland

There is no specific training for academic tutors. They are usually recruited from academic staff. A tutor must hold the psychological qualifications such as:

- ✓ communicativeness
- ✓ respect to the student’s autonomy
- ✓ inspiring student’s trust; discretion, empathy
- ✓ ability to cooperate
- ✓ awareness of one’s own limitations

He/she cannot expect a ready recipe how to do his/her tasks but it is rather supposed to present an individual approach. At universities tutoring belongs the most often to the tasks of Academic Career Centres. There are universities, where practical training is compulsory (like for instance medical, technical or pedagogical) and the ones where it is not. Anyway even if the students are not compelled to do the training they are willing to do it because they are aware that their employment chances increase in this way.

The issue of tutoring is described in the following way:

1. Function of tutoring:

- ✓ research and diagnosis
- ✓ support
- ✓ information
- ✓ control and evaluation

2. Targets (measurable, described in a comprehensive and detailed way, scheduled, attainable and understandable for both sides of tutoring process):

- ✓ preparation of students for accurate choice of profession, working on an individual career path
- ✓ preparation of students to deal with difficult situations like unemployment, health problems, adaptation to new work conditions and mobility requirements, preparation to the role of employee, help to teachers regarding the subjects connected with professional future of students, support of actions taken by university, aiming at optimum educational and professional development of a student

Spain

A tutor is a part of the teachers' group and does not have to be especially prepared to the tasks he/she will have to develop. Basically, he/she has to help the student in the whole process of education. Traditionally a tutor was supposed to be mainly a transmitter of knowledge and a helper in matter of academic contents. In the European perspective a tutor is a person in charge of the guidance of the student's future life, principally academic, but also professional and personal life. Consequently, universities ask for people much more professional and able to speak foreign languages to work with TICs and new technologies, who will travel and interchange. To meet learners' and directions staff expectations a tutor should have some fundamental skills: to know to listen (and not to hear), be self-confident, be responsible for his/her opinions, take decisions, be related with other colleagues, be well trained in front of the changes, be auto-sufficient, take initiative, know how to work with each other. Considering his/her tasks he/she is also expected to establish contacts with companies. His/her job is to choose companies where students will go, to elaborate the training programme of the whole module, collaborating with the person in charge in the company, presentation and contracting in the companies, to present the student to the company and to deliver all the documents, to visit regularly the person in charge of the student in the company so that they can interchange opinions and control the right development of the training programme which has to fit with the training at school, to evaluate this module so that it can be part of the general programme of the studies and to elaborate details and statistics so that they will gather information of the good practices.

Sweden

Generally, there is no unique education for academic tutors. Usually they have at least a MA related to the vocation that they are tutoring in. Some also have experiences working out in companies. Other might have a degree connected to education, psychology, social psychology or psychology of tutoring and organization. In education for nurses academic tutors apart from a degree as nurses and a special degree in nursing have also a special course in (academic) tutoring. Although there is no skills' certification for academic tutors, some requirements seem to be obvious. They can be synthesized as follows:

1. Knowledge and understanding

The tutor should be able to describe:

- ✓ theoretical perspectives on learning and knowledge related to development of the profession and discuss the professional tutoring according to pedagogical models and theories and discuss the development of competence of nurses related to different theoretical
- ✓ perspectives different theories and models of tutoring

2. Skills and competences

The tutor should be able to:

- ✓ analyze and reflect on his/hers action as a tutor in a learning process between students and colleagues
- ✓ show knowledge about and insight in the importance of communication and dialogue in the learning process
- ✓ orally and in writing describe pedagogical strategies/structures and/or approaches as basis for student tutoring in the practical part of the program
- ✓ look for information and apply evidence based knowledge as a foundation for tutoring
- ✓ understand the dynamics and processes in the tutoring situation both individually and in group
- ✓ reflect and plan the process of tutoring in relation to the professional field
- ✓ communicate and apply knowledge about emotional processes in learning and the importance of pedagogic in the process of academic tutoring

3. Attitudes and values

- ✓ The tutor should be able to:
- ✓ reflect on views on knowledge and learning in professional development
- ✓ reflect on the meaning of professional attitudes and values according to student and colleagues
- ✓ reflect on the role of tutoring

It may be also worth mentioning that there exist other sources which deal with tutoring, e.g. Leonardo da Vinci project "European E-Tutor" which offer a modular oriented programme for the qualifications of E-/Tele-Tutor.

Another source is a press notice about the tutors as a "centerpiece" in the MBA distant-learning study of the Open University, the biggest British distant-learning university. One of them claims that as a tutor, one has to be absolutely competent in one's field, but also have personal competences e.g. sure instinct for the time problems or other problems of one's students, or the ability to praise and support.

Summary

Summing up, we can conclude that for the time being in most cases outwardly there are no requirements to become an academic tutor and only few opportunities to train for the job are offered. However, being aware of their mission, academic tutors need to have and develop variety of skills:

- ✓ pedagogical, social and communicative skills, e.g. to be able to inform, to listen to students, to have an attitude of openness, to manage and moderate discussions, to coach the students, to measure the students progress and to help building competences
- ✓ administrative skills and the ability to work efficiently with a great number of students and handle a lot of required documentation (agreements, requests for practices, record books of practices, mark cards etc.)
- ✓ professional skills, e.g. high professionalization in the specific field, great vocational experience, specialized knowledge, vocational experience matching the syllabus of studies in a given field of study

Apart from the essential skills, academic tutors need adequate methods and tools. On the basis of the respondents' experience the most important pedagogical methods used by academic tutors can be pointed out. One of the alternatives is "sticking out" as the most popular. "Group training of participants for the experience of exchange" is one of the three in the top of the list that focuses on the connection with experiential and workplace related issues. In the bottom of the "popularity list" we find among others "computer based learning", "individual training" and "skill training". Comments from the respondents revealed some additional important pedagogical methods, e.g. vocational conferences, meetings, case studies, instructions, portfolios and individual seminars projects.

We found tools that might be connected to education and didactics such as: face to face courses, managing student discussions and work groups and individual interviews with students. We can also mention additional tools (more traditional ones) such as rhetoric and literature. Some tools can be found in the educational technology sector as well: Internet, online learning platforms, ICT and open communication methodology. This is what one respondent said: "Tutors have to make the student applying specific tools aiming at structuring their approach of complexity. There are three main tools: "Questioning" which is a series of questions to help the student running a global analysis of problem, identify objectives, set priorities etc; "Plan of action" including the training of competence acquisition; "Justification sheet" pushing the student for a given action to analyze before, select optimum solution, assess the results, assess the competence gained in the running action". Finally, some documentation tools are to be mentioned: feedback documents, evaluation instruments, check lists, journal of reflections, portfolio and internship report supervision.

All in all, the expectations connected to Academic Tutor: job impose the requirements he/she must live up to, even if they are not formal.

5. Self-assessment

Self-assessment of one's competences is a basic element to diagnose the needs or to evaluate the effectiveness of one's performance. It can be done spontaneously most of the time by a tutor him-/herself. However, there is a risk that such an assessment will not be adequate enough to realize one's weaknesses and lacks. Contrary, a self-assessment test is a useful tool to see to what degree individual skills of a person suit the standards. Such a self assessment is one of the essential pointers deciding on learning strategies. The aptness of the self assessment has a great importance in e-learning training where the programme is not strictly imposed and a learner can direct his/her own process of learning. That is why PROCERTU suggests doing the placement test before going to train, hoping that it can be of some usefulness for present and future academic tutors:

ABILITIES	SKILLS	KNOWLEDGES	Acquired	Non acquired
Learner / trainee socialization	Integrate the trainee within the company and the institution	Group dynamic verbal / non verbal communication inter personal communication Time management Problem solving		
	Explain thoroughly			
	Welcome and route/sheer			
	Facilitate the relation between the trainee, the teacher's team and the work based tutor within the company			
	Define the way of tutoring through the training course			
	Identify partner companies representing and interesting field of action for the trainee			
	Analyze the profiles and needs of the trainees			
	Facilitate the integration of the trainee in the company after his/her graduation			
Learner/ trainee qualification	Build a professional project (co-building)	Active listening Creativity Assessment Methodology Project management techniques		
	Route/steer			
	Harmonize the assessment methods and practices with other academic tutors			
	Define the way of evaluation of the working placement on the basis of skills referential in relation with the job prepared			
	Guarantee the achievement			

	and homogeneity of the job training through a constant follow-up using specific tools				
	Evaluate the achievement of the training goals and objectives				
Transmission and transfer of knowledge	Bring knowledge	Time management			
	Explain thoroughly				
	Accompany the learning, either technical, disciplinary or methodological				
	Be an accompanying person for the trainee in all circumstances		Assessment tools /dashboard/ reporting		
	Participate actively in the definition of the learner's learning course		Vocational written works		
	Advise the trainee to responsibility and autonomy		Communication aids		
	Incite the trainee to communicate, argue, report and exchange about acquired experience and eventual problems		Problem solving methodology		
Counselling	Be independent	Be at the "state of the art" level of knowledge in his field (relative to the level of the trainees)			
	Be fair and open-minded				
	Be able to: - listen, - dialogue, - comfort, - respect, - trust, - coach, ...	verbal / non verbal communication inter personal communications Time management			

6. Summary and conclusions

On one hand the academic tutor is supposed to meet the most dependably students' expectations. But being also seen as an counselor/expert in the field of students' career he/she should be able to support a learning process at two levels simultaneously: achieving the goals which the students expect but also supporting the development of metacognitive aspects, i.e. connected with defining goals and abilities. It is a very ambitious task which requires a proper preparation. There is no doubt that the persons responsible for teaching the others should develop their own skills, knowledge and improve their competences. Moreover, there should be standards enabling to assess the quality of tutoring e.g. a commonly accepted system of certification. The skills certification should be recognized and it should influence a professional status of a tutor. As far as we could explore the approach to academic tutoring in six European countries, we can conclude that there are not – with very few exceptions – any particular courses / training programmes for these who practice academic tutoring. At this stage any certification that we could register did not exist either. However, the results of our monitoring action showed that there is an interest in certifying Academic Tutors.

Considering real needs of academic environment in that skill's field the PROCERTU consortium wants to give everybody involved in academic tutoring the opportunity to take part in an e-learning programme and to get the skills' certification. We hope that in this way we will contribute to eliminate some educational barriers and to promote an academic tutor job at European level.

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