

COUNCIL OF EUROPE GUIDELINES REGARDING RECRUITMENT, SELECTION, EDUCATION, TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF PRISON AND PROBATION STAFF

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Background

- Council of Europe – Council for Penological Co-operation (PC-CP)
- Staff, Recruitment Training and Development identified as a key area by Directors of Prison and Probation Services (Norway, June 2017)

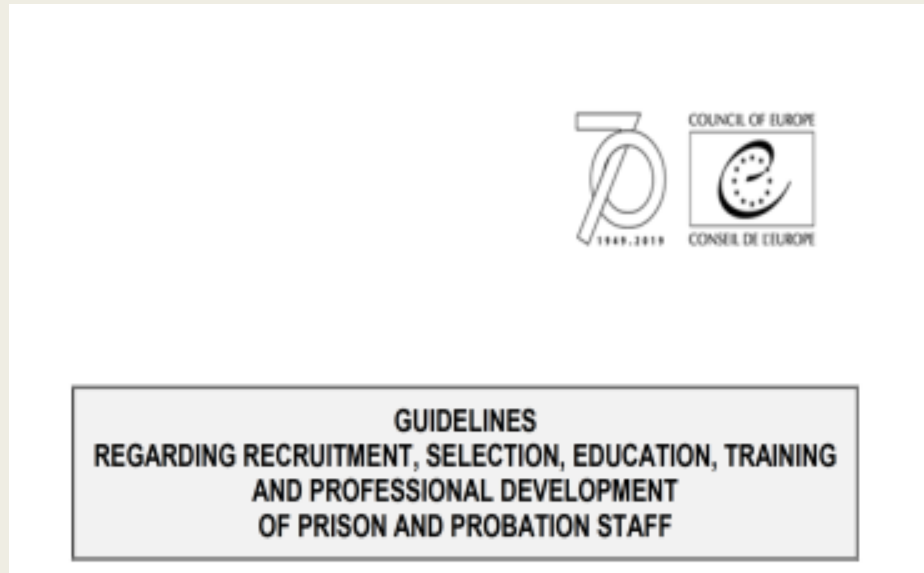


Stress that human factor is crucial for inducing positive changes in offenders and that it is therefore vital to ensure selection, education and training of staff which respond to this requirement and which help staff develop high professional qualities, personal integrity and sensitivity needed in their everyday work;

Aware of the need to agree at European level on the basic requirements regarding starting educational level at recruitment for different staff grades; training curricula; quality standards related to training and exit exams; staff status and protection:

- **Call upon** the relevant Ministries (Justice, Interior, Corrections) responsible for the prison and probation services in the Council of Europe member States to take the necessary measures in order to allow these services to recruit, train and ensure professional development of staff of highest ethical and professional quality as this is of crucial importance for contributing to public safety and to desistance from crime and enhance the accountability and transparency of these services in order to enhance public trust and understanding of the importance of their role;
- **Call upon** the national authorities to ensure good material and working conditions in the penitentiary institutions and in the probation services and sufficient staffing levels, gender-mixed staffing and service continuity to allow for providing proportionate, just and individualised treatment of detainees and of those under probation supervision and for working towards their successful social reintegration;
- **Invite the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to entrust the European Committee on Crime Problems (CDPC)** to assist its member states in developing standards agreed at European level related to recruitment and selection criteria of different levels of staff working in prison and probation services, as well as regarding their education, training and professional development in the 21st century based on the Council of Europe values and principles, including recognizing and promoting the added value of inter-agency and cross-jurisdictional co-operation in training;

Guidelines



- PC-CP and Scientific Experts:
- Torben Adams, Head of Division, Regional Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, Bremen (Germany)
- Dr Nicola Carr, University of Nottingham (United Kingdom)
- Guidelines adopted by the European Committee on Crime Problems at their 76th plenary meeting (25 April 2019)



Starting point



- Guidelines aim to provide a set of general principles regarding educational requirements, recruitment and selection and training of prison and probation staff.
- Training length varies greatly across countries – e.g. basic training for entry level prison staff ranges from 240 hours to 2 years.
- Some countries prison and probation provision integrated.
- European Rules on Community Sanctions and Measures (2017) provides a core framework.



Areas covered

- Entry educational levels of staff
- Criteria regarding recruitment and selection
- Advertising posts
- Entry assessment procedures
- Education and training
- Professional development
- Professional ethics
- Education and training matrix

Entry-Level Qualifications

- Basic grade **prison staff** in daily contact with prisoners should have **entry qualification Level 4 (EQF)**. In case they do not, they should have accomplished an (nationally recognised) apprenticeship or vocational equivalent, thus enabling them to apply for the training to become a prison officer.
- Additional educational entry criteria should be specified for other staff, especially for staff with more advanced tasks and role, including managerial responsibilities and supervision of other staff.
- Graduates in social sciences like: psychology, criminology, social work and law working in prisons should have advanced knowledge of the field of work, involving a critical understanding of theories and principles, corresponding to entry educational Level 6 of the EQF.

Criteria for recruitment and selection

- General principles about fairness, openness and transparency.
- Prior experience an asset.
- Non-discriminatory practices.
- Recruitment processes should taken into consideration personal skills an values: motivation, flexibility, assertiveness, maturity, capacity for reflection, integrity, teamwork and social and communication skills.
- Recruitment processes should aim towards encouraging diversity of staff to deal with the specific needs of diverse suspects and offenders. There may be a specific emphasis on recruiting staff based on linguistic abilities and inter-cultural skills, including an understanding of diverse religions and traditions.
- Special consideration for working with juveniles (cf. European Rules for Juvenile Offenders subject to Sanctions or Measures CM/REC (2008)11)

Advertising posts

- Advertised as transparently as widely as possible, using a range of media
- Providing a realistic perception of the work.
- Provision of information regarding the importance of the job for society, payment rights, and duties, conditions, nature of the work, training provided and opportunities for professional development. ***The aim is to attract suitable candidates and enable staff retention.***
- Opportunities for interaction and on-site visits.

Entry assessment procedures

6. Entry assessment procedures

- a) Assessment starts from the point of receipt of an application. Human resources staff should screen the eligibility, suitability and motivation of the candidates based on documents received, motivation letters, CVs, etc.
- b) Selection boards should be composed of persons with a range of relevant experience and care should be taken to ensure a proper balance of its members. Members should be adequately trained to ensure that the recruitment and selection process is fair and unbiased.
- c) Assessment processes should be tailored to the requirements of the post. In the case of prison services this may include competency-based assessment, such as written tests, oral interviews (individual and/or in a group), role-play scenarios and physical tests. The composition of the test-items should clearly lay down the required competencies according to the advertised post and institutional requirements.

Education and training

- Facilities used for education and training should be well-equipped and staffed in order to offer good quality education and training to newly recruited staff and for in-service training on a regular basis as necessary.
- Induction Training: A balanced mixture of theory, practice and experiential knowledge.
- Of 'satisfactory duration' in order to deliver relevant content.

Education and Training

7.2. Education and training should include mandatory elements namely: basics of general law (constitutional, administrative, civil and criminal law); basics of penal law and procedure (knowledge of the process of execution of penal sanctions and measures); civic education, professional ethics (including the role and mission of the prison service); general data protection regulations and human rights standards. It should also include sentence planning, risk management, safety, dynamic, static and procedural security, good order and control, use of force, as well as self-defence. IT skills relevant to the job should also be part of the mandatory training. Suggested key elements of training are to be found in the Matrix (Appendix 1).

- a) Education and training should also include, as far as the duration permits and depending on the specific tasks assigned to staff: the basics of social work, criminology and psychology. It should focus on particular approaches such as pro-social modelling and work with specific groups including: women, juveniles and foreign nationals. It should also include work with persons having committed different types of offending for example: violent extremism, sexual offending, domestic violence and economic and organised crime. Training should also include coverage of key areas such as victim awareness; working in different types of facilities; contact with families; dealing with mental illnesses and effects of addictions and adverse childhood experiences; intercultural awareness; foreign language(s); conflict resolution techniques; risk assessment and first aid, team-building and human resources management.

Education and Training Matrix

- Mission of the Service
- Practice in a legal context
- Policies, procedures, rules and regulations
- Human rights in context
- Professional ethics
- Static, procedural and dynamic security
- Safety and use of force
- Suicide and self-harm
- Psychological, social work and criminological approaches
- Risk assessment
- Sentence planning and implementation
- Report-writing
- Confidentiality, use of social media, data protection
- Use of IT
- Working with juveniles and young adults
- Gender responsiveness
- Mental health, intellectual disabilities and substance misuse
- Anti-discriminatory practice
- Staff support and development

Validation of induction training and initial employment

- Exit tests
- Successful candidates should receive recognition
- Period of protected employment (e.g. lower level of responsibilities and tutorship)
- Process for confirmation in post (subject to employment law)

Quality of education and training and long-term effectiveness

- Education and training curricula should be regularly assessed
- Training should be informed by research
- Trainers should have appropriate qualifications
- Inter-disciplinary, cross-border opportunities

Professional Development

- Annual appraisal – career advancement and professional development.
- Regular training opportunities.
- Frameworks for professional development.
- Joint-working , co-location, cross-border opportunities.

Conclusion

- Broad application
- Aspirational / Realistic
- Recruitment of staff:
 - *Perception and reality of the role*
 - *Conditions of employment*
 - *Opportunities for progression and development*
 - *Meeting the challenges of retention*

Guidelines available at: <https://rm.coe.int/guidelines-training-staff/1680943aad>

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