

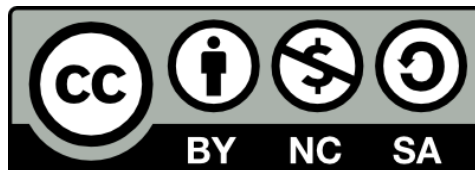


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Erasmus+ project European Standards for Peer Support Workers in Mental Health

Guide for the national implementation of the further training concept for peer support workers in the Netherlands (EQF) levels 4 and 5



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Project coordination

Grone-Bildungszentrum für Gesundheits-
und Sozialberufe gGmbH

Anna Block

Tel.: 0049 (0) 4165 80370

Mail: a.block@grone.de

www.grone.de

Developed by

Cordaan and

GGZ Noord Holland Noord

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Content

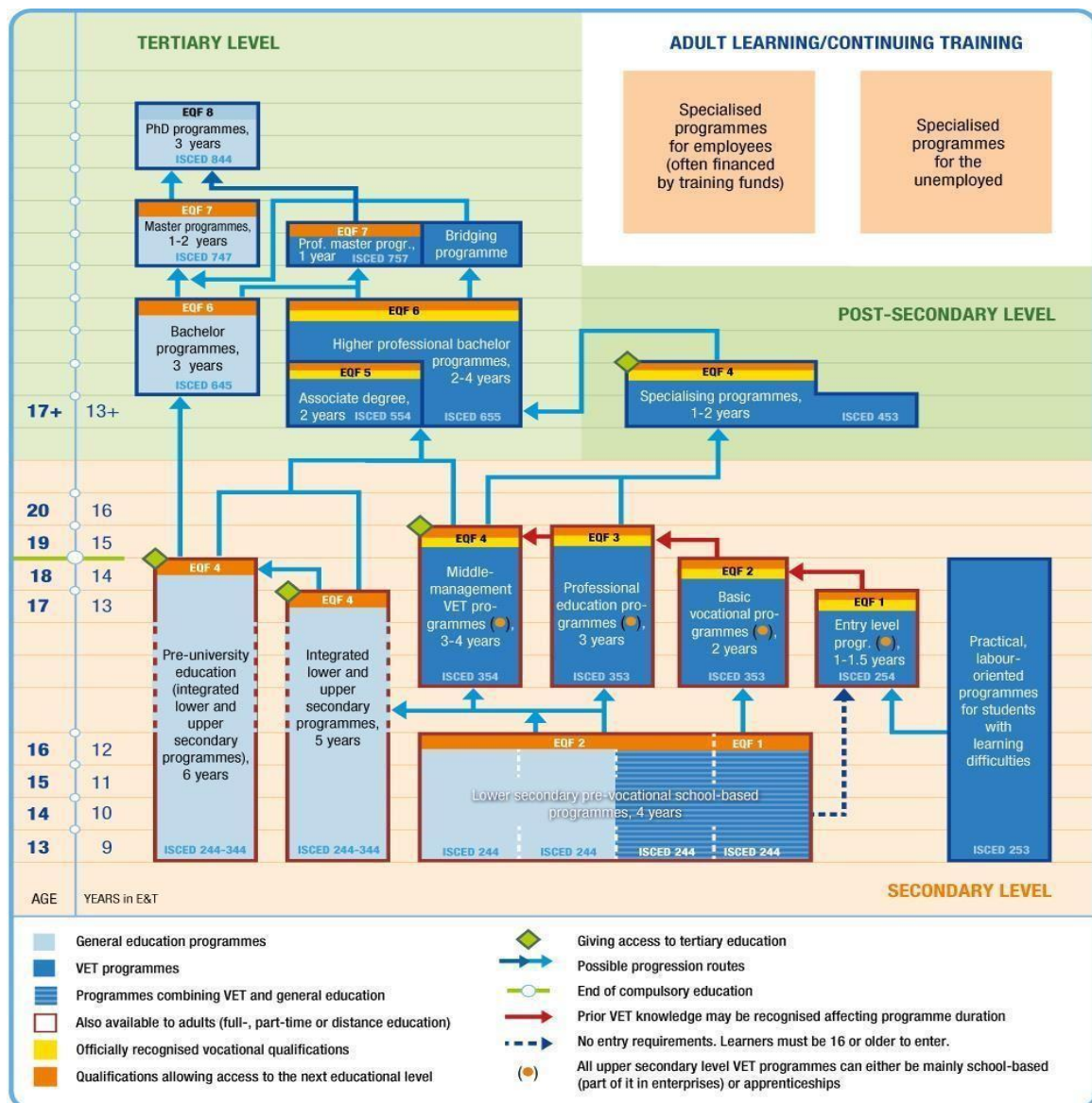
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1. Description of the VET system in the Netherlands

A brief overview taken from:

Cedefop (2016). Vocational education and training in the Netherlands: short description. Luxembourg: Publications Office. Cedefop information series. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2801/476727>

Figure 1. Vocational education and training within the Dutch educational system, 2015



NB: ISCED-P 2011.

Source: Cedefop and ReferNet Netherlands.

One of the basic principles of education in the Netherlands, guaranteed by Article 23 of the Constitution, is freedom of education. This means that there is freedom to establish schools, freedom to teach, and to determine the principles upon which education is based (freedom of conviction).

Freedom to teach means that both public and private schools are free, within the legal limits, to determine what is taught, and how. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science¹ and the Ministry of Economic Affairs² set quality standards that apply to both government and publicly funded private education. These standards prescribe the subjects to be studied, the expected learning outcomes, the content of national examinations, the number of teaching days/hours per year, required qualifications of teachers, and planning and reporting requirements. They also give parents and students a say in school matters.

Education is mandatory for students aged 5 to 16. Persons aged 16 and 17 (on 1 August of any year) without a general or basic vocational qualification at higher secondary level (in the diagram: at least VWO, HAVO or MBO-2, EQF 2) are required to continue learning, the so-called 'qualification requirement'. This regulation was introduced in 2008 to reduce early departure from education and training.

The Dutch Education and Training System consists of the following components:

- (a) basic education (PO, primary education) at ISCED 1 is for pupils aged 4 to 12. Duration is eight years;
- (b) special education at primary and secondary level (SO / VSO, special education / secondary special education) is for pupils aged 3 to 20 years with learning or behavioral problems and / or mental, sensory or physical disabilities;
- (c) special education at primary and secondary level (SO / VSO, special education / secondary special education) is for pupils aged 3 to 20 years with learning or behavioral problems and / or mental, sensory or physical disabilities:

¹ Subsequently referred to in this publication as Ministry of Education

² Only for green / agricultural education

- (i) Preparatory academic education (integrated lower and upper secondary education) (VWO, preparatory academic education) of six years, leading to EQF4 (ISCED 244 after three years; ISCED 344 after six years). This prepares students for higher academic education at universities and higher professional education at colleges. For children aged 12 to 18, also open to adults;
 - (ii) Preparatory academic education (integrated lower and upper secondary education) (VWO, preparatory academic education) of six years, leading to EQF4 (ISCED 244 after three years; ISCED 344 after six years). This prepares students for higher academic education at universities and higher professional education at colleges. For children aged 12 to 18, also open to adults;
 - (iii) the two general programs (the theoretical and mixed pathways) within preparatory vocational education (theoretical and mixed pathways) that lead to EQF 2 (ISCED 244) last four years and prepare for further study in secondary vocational education (and partly in the general secondary education of upper secondary education). For children aged 12 to 16, also accessible to adults. This type of education is discussed below as part of VET;
- (d) VMBO, preparatory secondary vocational education (managerial vocational pathway within the basic vocational pathway) leading to EQF 1 or 2 (ISCED 244). These programs last four years and prepare for further study in secondary vocational education. For ages 12 to 16. This type of education is discussed below as part of vocational education and training. In addition to these programs, there is a separate practical, work-oriented program (PRO, practical education) which caters for students who are unable to earn a diploma from a VMBO program (ISCED 253; age 12 to 18/19 years) and which is also accessible to adults;
- (e) programs in secondary vocational education (ISCED 254, 353-354) (MBO, intermediate vocational education) for students of 16 years of age and older, consisting of two to four-year vocational training programs in four areas of study at four levels (MBO 1-4, EQF 1 -4). As part of the Dutch vocational education and training system this type of education is discussed in more detail below;

(f) higher (or tertiary) education has a professional training and a general (academic) line:

(i) Higher professional education, which is open to students aged 17 to 18 and mainly offers bachelor programs (ISCED 655 / EQF 6) with a duration of four years. Since 2011, there are also two-year associate degree (AD) programs (ISCED 554 / EQF 5) and professional master degree (ISCED 757 / EQF 7) programs. Providers are universities of applied sciences. As part of the Dutch vocational training system, this type of education is discussed below;

(ii) academic / university education (WO, scientific education); it offers bachelor's degree programs of three to four years (ISCED 645 / EQF 6) and one- or two-year master's degree programs (ISCED 747 / EQF 7) to students 18 years of age and older. After completing a master's degree, students may enroll in a doctoral program (ISCED 844, EQF8);

(g) supplementary vocational education and training (CVET) includes a range of vocationally oriented or more general courses for job seekers, the unemployed, employees, the self-employed, and employers. 'Upper secondary initial' VET (IVET) programs can also function as CVET.

The Dutch education system also responds to the needs of adults without an (appropriate) qualification. There are two types of general adult education, open to students aged 18 or older (under certain conditions, 16/17-year-olds can also follow this form of education). Basic education (Basiseducatie) is for native and non-native adults with learning disabilities for whom education or training is not mandatory. It focuses on social and elementary literacy and numeracy skills. General secondary education for adults (VAVO, further general Adult Education) offers general secondary programs (VMBO, HAVO and VWO). At a higher level, the Open University provides academic programs for adult education; it offers modular courses and has open access.

The education system has two tracks (Figure 1). After the first two years of secondary education, young students can follow:

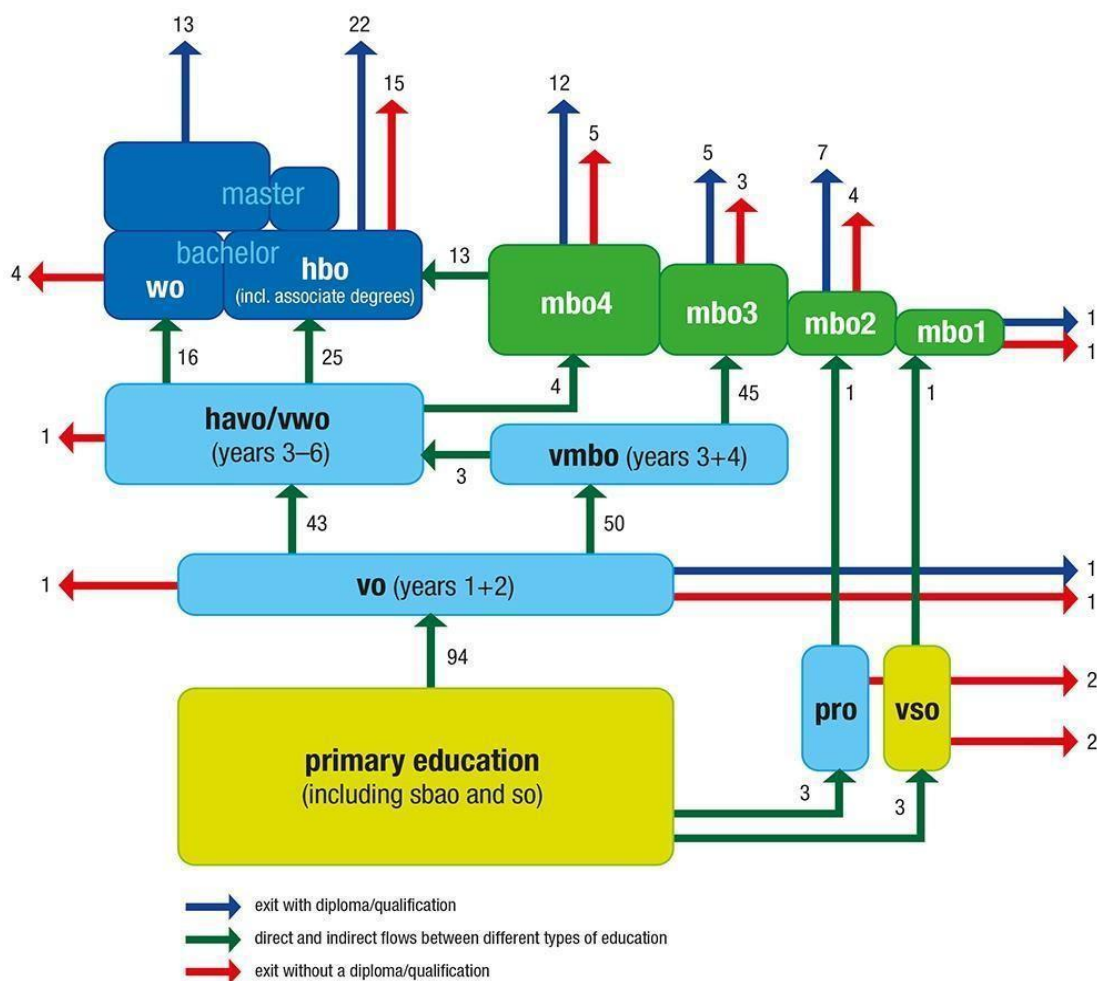
1. a general route, starting in secondary education (HAVO, VWO), followed by direct access to higher education (HBO, WO);
2. a vocational learning pathway, starting in VMBO (year 3, VMBO) with transfer options to secondary vocational education. Secondary vocational education (MBO 1-4) forms the backbone of this track. For some students, the MBO and the qualification it provides for access to the labor market is the end of their initial vocational education. MBO 4 graduates can continue with their studies in higher vocational education (HBO). Approximately 50% of Level 4 graduates continue in higher vocational education without interrupting their studies.

Figure 2 shows the estimated flows of students who transfer within the system, as well as the outflows (with and without a qualification or diploma). The percentages were calculated based on a cohort of pupils leaving primary education in 2014 (100%); estimates were taken from this single cohort. The flows show that, although not so common in practice, students from the vocational pathway can transfer to the general pathway, and vice versa.

In the third year of secondary education, 45% of learners are in general programs (HAVO / VWO), while 53% are in a lower preparatory vocational program at secondary level (VMBO) (2014/2015). Half of the VMBO students are enrolled in a vocational program; the others follow the general programs offered by VMBO schools. This implies that most students at the age of 15 (72%) are in general programs. The share of learners in vocational education and training has in fact declined over the past decade (from 34% in 2004/5 to 28% in 2014/15).

Figure 2. Transfer of pupils between different parts of Dutch education and outflow in 2015, % based on a cohort of pupils leaving primary education (100%).

Note: SBAO: special primary education; HAVO: general secondary education; SO: special education; VWO: Preparatory academic education; PRO: work-oriented practical training; MBO: upper secondary vocational education; VSO: secondary special education; HBO: higher professional education; VO: lower secondary education; WO: academic education; VMBO: preparatory secondary vocational education.



Source: Onderwijs in Cijfers (Education in Figures) [accessed 28.10.2015].

Cedefop (2016). Vocational education and training in the Netherlands: short description. Luxembourg: Publications Office. Cedefop information series. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2801/476727>

2. Implementation in the Netherlands level 4 and 5 for the training of peer support workers in Mental Health Care

Development and history

From 1998 onwards, preparations have been made to provide specific training for peer support workers in Mental Health Care. It was actually these peer workers themselves who took the initiative for their professionalization. At that early stage there was no ambition to work towards nationally recognized diplomas. However, there was a need to develop a solid basis for the implementation of the expertise they had acquired in their own field. This need was partly prompted by the great diversity in the level and quality of initiatives to achieve training at that time. Representatives of the Vereniging van Ervaringsdeskundigen (VVED: Association of Peer Support Workers), which was to be founded later, have subsequently contributed to the development.

In 2004 the first training course (level 4) at Dutch MBO level³ was created at the Regional Vocational Education Centre (ROC) Zadkine in Rotterdam. In 2006 a number of other ROCs followed and also offered this training (institutions participating in the Platform Ervaringsdeskundigheid Zorg en Welzijn (Experiential Expertise in Care and Welfare) in Utrecht, the Edasu training center for specific target groups and the Summa College in cooperation with Markieza in Eindhoven). The courses are called Guidance through Experiential Expertise⁴. In 2017, these courses were recognized by the Education Inspectorate for MBO programs. Part of that accreditation was the so-called Optional Component Experiential Expertise in which "use of experiential expertise", "supporting service users in recovery processes by using experiential expertise" and "strengthening the use of experiential expertise in the organization" were elaborated. The process of (re)accreditation implies that the Inspectorate monitors the quality of the training courses and carries out further investigation on a random basis. The Inspectorate does not carry out these activities itself but leaves the implementation to certified implementation organizations. These are not government agencies but private legal entities.

³ Intermediate Vocational Education

⁴ BGE: Begeleiden met Ervaringsdeskundigheid

From 2006 onwards, HBO⁵ Associated Degree (AD)(level 5) courses gradually became available. Since 2019, 4 of these HBO courses have been operational at the Hanzehogeschool⁶ Groningen, Fontys Hogeschool in Eindhoven, Hogeschool Saxion (Windesheim) in Zwolle and Hogeschool of Amsterdam (HVA). In 2021, this program was also realized at the Hogeschool of Arnhem and Nijmegen (HAN) so that a total of 5 HBO programs now exist. (Re)accreditation is at the discretion of the Inspectorate of Higher Education. Here, too, the inspectorate leaves the quality testing to implementation organizations. Educational institutions must periodically supply documentation, visitations take place and (re)accreditation takes place on the basis of visitation reports. Applications for accreditation are submitted to the Dutch-Flemish Accreditation Organization (NVAO).

Training results tested against learning outcomes at levels 4 (MBO) and 5 (HBO AD)

In both courses, 4 learning lines are distinguished:

1. The personal and professional development line
2. The knowledge of recovery and experiential expertise line
3. The core tasks of the experiential expert line consisting of 3 components:
 - Support in individual recovery processes
 - Organization of recovery-supportive care
 - Creating social opportunities
4. The practical learning line

In all lines of learning attention is paid to critical professional situations as they have been defined for the profession of experience expert in the professional competence profile. These are:

- Proximity versus distance
- Meaning in life versus meaninglessness and the ability to endure pain
- Strength versus vulnerability
- Pride versus shame

⁵ HBO: Higher Professional Education

⁶ Hogeschool: University of Applied Sciences

- New versus existing cultural values

The description of the learning outcomes includes a section that applies to both Level 4 and Level 5. The training outcomes that apply to Level 5 only have been separately defined.

The personal and professional development learning lines

The shared learning outcomes at levels 4 and 5 concern:

- 1 being able to share one's own experiences, exchange them and apply them in supporting service users;
- 2 being able to relate reflection on one's own experience to the intention of becoming an experiential expert;
- 3 being able to explore the roles the peer support worker can play as a professional and in the organizational and social environment;
- 4 being able to describe how one's own experience and opinions can be conducive or obstructive in the interaction with the service user, in such a way that a learning objective can be formulated on this basis;
- 5 being able to recognize the importance of national developments in the field of recovery and experiential expertise;
- 6 being able to name ethical and normative aspects that are important for good professional practice;

For the realization of the learning outcomes at level 5 the following additional qualifications have been formulated in addition to the shared qualifications:

- Learning outcome 3: being able to analyze more complicated (organizational and social) environments in order to subsequently be able to determine the role of the peer support worker within these environments;
- Learning outcome 4: being able to develop a learning objective in which the interaction on multiple organizational levels is elaborated;
- Learning outcome 5: being able to formulate the national interest in the field of recovery and experiential expertise for other organizational and social domains;

- Learning outcome 6: being able to identify the various perspectives and contradictions in handling the ethical and normative aspects for professional practice.

The knowledge of recovery and experiential expertise learning line

The shared learning outcomes for level 4 and 5 are:

- 1 Successful familiarization with the concepts of recovery, empowerment and stigma, knowledge of experience, expertise by experience and recovery-supportive care and the ability to apply these to one's own professional practice as well as within a team;
- 2 Knowledge of the history of the movement of service users and other networks of service users;
- 3 The ability to define the differences between scientific knowledge, professional knowledge and experiential knowledge.

The ability to define the differences between scientific knowledge, professional knowledge and experiential knowledge.

- Learning outcome 1: being able to apply the concepts within the entire organization or another relevant professional network;
- Learning outcome 2: being able to define potential roles of peer support workers in the various (interest) networks of service users;
- Learning outcome 3: being able to express the distinctions between the different forms of knowledge outside the organization, using examples.

The core tasks of the experiential expert learning line,

part 1: support in individual recovery processes

The shared learning outcomes of level 4 and 5 are:

- 1 Being able to demonstrate in an appealing and well-founded manner that there is hope for recovery in all cases;
- 2 Being able to demonstrate in an appealing and well-founded manner that there is hope for recovery in all cases;

- 3 Being able to provide room for emotions, feelings and the recognition by service users of their own resilience, in group activities and training sessions, and stimulating the exchange of experiences of service users;
- 4 Being able to support service users in their recovery, both individually and preferably in groups, using the individual experiences of service users in such a way that they have significant added value in their recovery process;
- 5 Being able to ask service users and colleagues for feedback on their own professional use of experiential expertise and, when indicated, being able to adjust their own way of working accordingly;

For the realization of the learning outcomes at level 5 the following qualifications have been formulated in addition to the shared qualifications:

- Learning outcome 1: being able to further concretize the well-founded vision on hope in connection with the needs and knowledge levels of service users, and to involve more (inspirational) resources in the actual circumstances of service users;
- Learning outcome 2: being able to relate the different methods of self-help to each other as well as define the similarities and differences between them;
- Learning outcome 5: being able to ask for and give feedback within a broader working practice and various parts of other networks and sectors, analyzing the feedback received and translating it to that broader working practice, those networks and sectors.

*The core tasks of the experiential expert learning line,
part 2: organization of recovery-supportive care*

The shared learning outcomes for level 4 and 5 are:

- 1 being able to indicate how recovery-supportive care can be designed within the team and what the role of peer support workers in this process consists of;
- 2 being able to critically evaluate the existing care as to the extent to which the methods and interventions used are recovery-promoting or recovery-inhibiting and to enter into dialogue about this with colleagues;

- 3 being able to involve service users in developments of care whereby the input obtained is offered as advice to colleagues;
- 4 being able to prepare a presentation using narrative elements in order to convey the essence of recovery and the use of expertise by experience.

For the realization of the learning outcomes at level 5, the following further qualifications have been formulated in addition to the common qualifications:

- Learning outcome 1: the ability to give advice concerning the use of experiential expertise on all organizational levels, specifying the advice per level or organizational unit;
- Learning outcome 2: the ability to involve the broader organizational and social context when naming factors that promote recovery or hinder recovery and to indicate the differences of opinion that exist within this context;
- Learning outcome 3: the ability to involve service users in more complex developments and to formulate advice in which the policy aspects for the different organizational levels are addressed.

Only applicable to level 5:

- The ability to analyze problems in the practice of recovery and experiential expertise in the organization on policy level, using one's own vision and showing the ability to formulate recommendations for improvement on that basis.

The core tasks of the experience expert learning line,

part 3: creating social opportunities

The shared learning outcomes for level 4 and 5 are the following:

1. being able to give examples of how methods of rehabilitation, network development and participation can be used to support social participation and emancipation;
2. being able to contribute to initiatives of service users in the field of expertise by experience;

3. being able to provide information outside one's own organization and being able to enter into dialogue with external parties about recovery support and the application of experiential expertise;
4. being able to recognize and name stigma and to contribute actively to activities on behalf of de-stigmatization.

For the realization of learning outcomes at level 5, the following further qualifications have been formulated in addition to the joint qualifications:

- Learning outcome 2: being able to initiate initiatives of service users in the field of experiential expertise;
- Learning outcome 3: being able to contribute to the acquisition of commissions for the purpose of improving expertise in the field of recovery and expertise by experience;
- Learning outcome 4: being able to initiate activities in the field of de-stigmatization.

Only applicable to level 5:

- Being able to analyze the current situation using theories in the field of rehabilitation, quartering and de-stigmatization in order to propose an agenda for improving social inclusion.

The practical learning line

The Professional Competence Profile indicates in which work settings within care and welfare workplaces can be offered, provided they meet certain criteria. This concerns workplaces in mental healthcare institutions, forensic care, youth care, organizations of service users, social services and refugee centers. More recently, there is an increasing demand for experiential expertise in prisons, debt assistance, social services, UWV⁷ and municipalities.

The criteria that work settings must meet concern:

- *the professional context*, which must include a job description, the presence of a working team of which, preferably, a peer support worker is a member; team

⁷ National Employee Insurance Agency

members must have knowledge of recovery and the role of the peer support worker in this;

- *the set-up of the work*, which must involve room for orientation in and around the workplace, contacts with other peer support workers with whom joint activities can be performed, and the opportunity to learn the various roles of the peer support worker;
- *supervision*, involving a permanent practice supervisor of sufficiently advanced educational background, the possibility of intervision, sufficiently frequent supervision interviews, and the creation of a personal learning plan; the practice supervisor must have a signaling function towards the educational institution and see to it that the student is not charged with improper tasks (including regular care assistance tasks);
- *assessment of practical learning success*, in which the learning outcomes of practical learning are related to the competencies that were identified in the previous learning lines. Assessment must take place by two trained supervisors, preferably one of whom is a peer support worker. The assessment can be supplemented with feedback from service users and other team members. Main themes in the assessment are working with service users in a recovery-oriented manner, working within and from care and welfare organizations and working towards one's own professionalization.

Study load

The number of hours to be spent on theoretical training and learning on the job is the same for both MBO training (level 4) and HBO AD training (level 5).

Theoretical training takes 2 years and amounts to a total of 80 days of 7 hours.

There is 45 hours of supervision.

Two and a half days per week (19 hours a week) are spent on the student's internship (learning on the job).

Improving the availability of MBO and HBO AD training in the Netherlands

The number of available and recognized courses in the Netherlands is still increasing. The aim is to achieve further geographical distribution of these in such a way that training becomes accessible and reachable for all students. It is projected that both forms of training will become available in every province. Deviations are conceivable if (limited) population density is taken into account. New initiatives are still needed, particularly in the province of Limburg.

Consulted sources

"Curriculum for Experiential Expertise in Care and Welfare"(October 2017) published by Akwa GGZ⁸ (Alliance Quality in Mental Health Care formed by the Phrenos knowledge center, Trimbos institute, GGZ Nederland and the RIBW⁹ Alliance).

⁸ Mental Health Care

⁹ Regional Center for Protected Living