

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Strasbourg, 26 March 2018  
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PC-CP (2018) 5

**EUROPEAN COMMITTEE ON CRIME PROBLEMS**  
**(CDPC)**

**Council for Penological Co-operation**  
**(PC-CP)**

**Guidelines regarding selection, recruitment and training of prison  
and probation staff**

**Scoping document**

Document prepared by the  
Directorate General Human Rights and Rule of Law

**1. Definition of prison and probation services and staff (excluded: medical staff, vocational training and workshops staff, psychologists)**

Mission: Within the criminal justice process the prison and probation services are entrusted with the execution of penal sanctions and measures.

Status: The prison and probation services are the responsibility of the public authorities independent of whether they are managed by public or private bodies or whether they are managed jointly in one department/directorate or function separately. They should be separate from the military, the police, the criminal investigation services and other criminal justice services.

The prison and probation services should have a formally approved statement of the purpose of their work and of their main tasks and duties. They should have an annually allocated budget which allows them to fulfil their work in the best possible professional manner.

Staff: The prison and probation staff should be sufficient in numbers and should have a status comparable with the status of the other criminal justice services which allows them to recruit, train and retain staff of the highest professional value needed for the efficient fulfilment of their everyday tasks and of the overall purpose of the services they belong to. Staff should function within the context of high professional ethics based on treating suspects and offenders humanely and with respect for their human dignity.

Some specialist staff like medical staff, staff working in workshops and dealing with vocational training, external perimeter guards (?) prison psychologists (?) are not included in these guidelines because there are additional requirements regarding their recruitment and selection and they do not necessarily have the same status and prison and probation staff in all countries.

**2. Training facilities**

Prison (and probation) services should have their own training facilities and their own training curricula which correspond to the role and task of the different categories of their staff and to the aim and purpose of the prison and probation services.

These facilities should be well equipped and staffed in order to offer comprehensive education and training to form highly qualified staff at the start of their career and on a regular basis thereon as necessary offer on-the job training, as necessary.

The training curricula should include: basics of general law (constitution, administrative and civil law); penal and correctional law and structures; human rights; criminology, penology; professional ethics; safety and security, self-defence, use of arms; searches, restraints, risk management; social work; managing probation files; mediation; psychology; knowledge of mental illnesses and effects of drugs; intercultural education; working in different types of penal institutions and with different types of offenders inside prison and under probation.

The training facilities should also be enabled to collect data and good practices and conduct research studies on priority issues which relate to prison and probation reform; studies related to changing profiles of offenders, most common types of offences, etc.; changes in labour market and ensuing changes in job requirements and descriptions; career development

**3. Types of posts/ positions and entry educational/professional levels**

- a) Basic grade/front line staff - starting educational level: secondary education diploma, age
- b) Middle management - BAC + 2, age
- c) Upper management - BAC + 3, age
- d) Special grades (staff working with juveniles; women; foreigners; terrorists; organised crime; emergency situation, escort and external perimeter guards) - BAC + ..., age

**4. Other criteria regarding selection and recruitment**

- a) Professional experience
- b) Personal qualities
- c) Linguistic abilities
- d) nationality
- e) Health state (fitness test, medical certificate)
- f) Other competences (driving licence; computer skills, communication skills)
- g) Professional integrity - clearance regarding family and closer environment, clean criminal record; etc.

**5. Advertising of vacant posts and contents of the advertisement**

- a) Media, printed, radio/TV, including social media
- b) Web site of the service
- c) Other means

**6. Entry exams/exit exams**

- a) Entry exams - what is included (filtering applications by tests: motivation test; oral, written, physical test)
- b) Exit exams - what is included (oral, written, practical); how skills that have been learnt are applied; feedback from their work as trainees in a prison or a probation service

**7. Length and contents of training (training always a combination between theory and practice)**

- a) Basic grade/front line staff - how many months and what content (security in the wing; admission of new prisoners; registration of information and maintaining of their files; risk management, observing and reporting)
- b) Middle management - how many months and what content (security in general ; dynamic security, work with prisoners to enhance their social reintegration; desistance from crime; mentoring, reporting)
- c) Upper management - how many months and what content (overall management; management of staff and budget; policy decisions and reforms; handling staff conflicts, and transfers, etc.)
- d) Special grades (staff working with juveniles; women; foreigners; terrorists; organised crime; emergency situation, drug addicts, escort and external perimeter guards) - how many months and what content
- e) Probation staff - how many months and what content

**8. In-service/on-the-job training**

- a) How often
- b) How long and what contents
- c) Exit exams - ?

**9. Main tasks and responsibilities by types of posts/positions**

- a) Basic grade/front line staff -
- b) Middle management -
- c) Upper management -
- d) Special grades (staff working with juveniles; women; foreigners; terrorists; organised crime; emergency situation, escort and external perimeter guards) -

**10. Career development - between groups of posts/between institutions/between prison and probation services**

- Steps within grades; passing from one grade to another - possible or not under what circumstances; switching to probation/prison

**11. Ratio staff/prisoners; staff/offenders or files**

- a) Basic grade/front line staff -
- b) Middle management -
- c) Upper management -
- d) Special grades (staff working with juveniles; women; foreigners; terrorists; organised crime; emergency situation, escort and external perimeter guards) -

**12. Professional ethics**

- a) Code of ethics of prison staff
- b) EPR
- c) CoE Probation Rules
- d) Rules for juvenile offenders