



Rådgivnings Danmark

QUALITY STANDARD VERSION 3.0



THE QUALITY STANDARD

The following pages review the five themes of the quality standard and the criteria for certification.

The five themes are:

1. *Service and user groups*
2. *Professional approach and methodology*
3. *Competencies*
4. *Values, ethics and legislation*
5. *Management and involvement*



It is recommended to view the document “*Guide to RådgivningsDanmark's Quality Standard and Certification Scheme*”, which can be found on The Quality Portal (Kvalitetsportalen) for *RådgivningsDanmark* members under “Documents”. The guide provides additional information on the standard's structure, answering the criteria and how the assessment is made. In addition to that, you are always welcome to contact the secretariat if you have questions related to the work around quality description.

When the quality standard refers to the counselling services or the 'counselling offer', this also covers counselling-like activities such as support and liaison schemes, assisting schemes, mentoring, self-help and networking groups, among others.

The criterion for whether an counselling-like offer can be certified according to the quality standard is that the offer is clearly within RådgivningsDanmark's current definition of counsel as, guidance, counsel and help for self-help” (see association statutes § 3.3).

When the quality standard refers to “counsellor”, that covers both voluntary counsellors and paid counsellors as well as other front staff in counselling-like activities.

The quality standard was last updated on July 1st, 2021.

Additional criteria for financial and debt-related advice are added to the standard on December 08, 2022.

Additional criteria for financial and debt-related advice

In collaboration with the National Knowledge Function for voluntary and unremunerated financial and debt counselling (Den Nationale Vidensfunktion for frivillig og vederlagsfri økonomi- og

gældsrådgivning), seven criteria have been added to the quality standard that are applicable upon certification of financial and debt-related advice. Additional criteria are included in the themes: 'Service and user groups', 'Professional approach and method' and 'Values, ethics and legislation'. Financial and debt advisory services which are not members of the National Knowledge Function are excluded from additional criterion B in the theme 'Service and user groups'.

Quality description and documentation

In the quality description, the counselling service must describe how it meets the purpose of the themes and each criterion. It is important to make clear reference to the individual criteria by writing the criterion in its full text as a title of the individual reply. Fill in directly in the word document "Quality Standard – Template to fill in" (Kvalitetsmodellen – Skabelon til udfyldelse), which can be downloaded from the Quality Portal (Kvalitetsportalen) under "Documents". Document in the quality description how the counselling meets the criteria by inserting references to annexes or links. If referring to a larger amount of material, it must be indicated where auditors may find the documentation associated with each criterion by referring to the exact page number.

The completed quality description should be uploaded on the Quality Portal (Kvalitetsportalen), where annexes are uploaded as well. Annexes are only to be uploaded once. If the same annex is referenced under several themes, the annex shall only be uploaded the first time it is referenced.

RådgivningsDanmark's auditors decide whether the description and the attachments meet the documentation requirement for this theme. The counselling service may be asked to expand the quality description work or to resubmit parts of it if the auditors deem it necessary.

Audit Visit

If the auditors assess the quality description and the documentation to be adequate, an audit visit is scheduled.

During the audit visit, the auditors will examine how the counselling service operates with what is described in practice, whether the written part and practice match, and whether practice lives up to the quality standard.

The counselling service will be contacted by auditors regarding the planning of the day, and receive an audit agenda prior to the actual visit. The counselling service is expected to make a separate room available for interviews, voting, etc.

THEME 1: SERVICE AND USER GROUPS

Purpose

The theme aims to shed light on the provider's service(s) and user group(s), as well as to strengthen the link between counselling practices and the needs of the users.

The theme focuses on documenting the results and impact of the counselling.

Criteria

1. The counselling service must have descriptions of the its service and user groups, and these must be communicated clearly to the users.
2. For counselling services making use of volunteers, the service must actively consider the role of volunteering in terms of service and user groups.
3. Through user registration, the counselling service must examine whether the users taking advantage of the counselling and the services actually provided correspond to the counselling service's descriptions of services and user groups.
4. The counselling service must examine users experience and counselling benefits through user evaluation.
5. The counselling service shall justify its choice of methods and frequency of registration and evaluation (Criteria 3 and 4).
6. The counselling service must address what effects the counselling is believed to have on the user, and these must be documented, if possible.

Additional criteria for financial and debt-related advice

- a) The counselling service must describe how users are referred to its services and how it ensures the right match between the counsellor's competencies and users' needs.
- b) The counselling service must register users on the activity indicators and user information established by the National Knowledge Function for voluntary and unremunerated financial and debt counselling. These are indicated in the guide to the quality standard.

THEME 2: PROFESSIONAL APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

Purpose

The theme focuses on highlighting the professional approach and hence the professional foundation on which the services of the counselling service are based, as well as the methods used in counselling.

The theme aims to strengthen the link between the professional approach of the counselling service, its services and methods in relation to the needs of users and the current knowledge in the field.

Criteria

1. The counselling service resources shall be based on a described professional approach adopted by the highest level of relevant counselling management.
2. The counselling service should ensure that there is consistency between the needs and prerequisites of the user groups, the professional approach and the methods used.
3. The counselling service must ensure that all advisers are trained in the professional approach and methods chosen and that these are applied in practice.
4. The counselling service shall ensure continuous development and updating of the professional approach and methodology.

Additional criterion for financial and debt-related advice

- a) The counselling service should ensure that work is done from a holistic perspective of the individual user.

THEME 3: COMPETENCIES

Purpose

The theme aims to strengthen the link between the competencies of counsellors and the competencies needed in the counselling service.

The theme focuses on requirements for the counsellors' competencies and on their training, qualification upgrading, access to professional support and opportunity for knowledge sharing.

Criteria

1. The counselling service shall describe what competencies and personal qualifications are needed to provide the services of the counselling service and how these are ensured in the counsel group.
2. The counselling service must have introductory courses for counsellors to ensure that they can carry out the counselling.
3. The counselling service must continuously consider and address the needs of advisers for professional and individual support (e.g. supervision, sparring and meeting activity).
4. The counselling service shall continuously address the need for further training/qualification upgrading of counsellors.
5. The counselling service must ensure knowledge sharing internally and both share and seek knowledge outside the counselling service.

THEME 4: VALUES, ETHICS AND LEGISLATION

Purpose

The theme aims to strengthen the understanding of values and ethics as a crucial base and foundation for the counselling in order to provide the best support to the users.

The theme also focuses on the regulatory framework for the counselling service and on ensuring compliance with existing rules.

Criteria

1. The values and ethical principles of the counselling service must be formulated in writing and its value basis must be publicly available.
2. The counselling service must ensure that counsellors have knowledge of and exert counselling according to the fundamental values and ethical principles underlying the counselling service.
3. The counselling service must continuously allow for reflections and discussions about ethical and value-based dilemmas encountered by the counsellors in practice.
4. The counselling service should make sure that any promises of user anonymity are respected.
5. The counselling service shall ensure that counselling takes place in accordance with the regulatory framework for advisory activities, such as the rules governing secrecy, notification and prevention.
6. The counselling service must ensure that the processing of personal data complies with applicable rules.
7. If the counselling service has children under 15 years of age as part of the user group(s) or in the event of interaction with children, including children's contact details, the counselling service must ensure that children's certificates are obtained from all counsellors at the time of employment and every two years.
8. If the counselling service has children and young people under the age of 18 as part of the user group(s), it must ensure parental consent is obtained or to carry out its work with parental involvement where appropriate.

Additional criteria for financial and debt-related advice

- a) The counselling service must have procedures for when and how the user's proxies are used, as well as guidelines for counsellors' contact with third parties in a case.
- b) The counselling service should have a description of how to handle counsellor responsibilities in counselling.
- c) The counselling service must ensure capacity during the counselling process, i.e. that a counsellor is not ineligible in a given advising situation.
- d) The counselling service must have guidelines for dealing with suspicion or knowledge of fraud or other misdemeanours committed by a user.

THEME 5: MANAGEMENT AND INVOLVEMENT

Purpose

The theme focuses on clearness and transparency in relation to organization and division of responsibilities.

The theme aims to support a management of the counselling service that sets goals and frameworks for the quality development of counselling services.

The theme also underscores ensuring a good working environment within the counselling service as well as the involvement of advisors and users in the quality development of counselling services.

Criteria

1. The organization's structure, management and division of responsibilities in the advisory services, shall be described, disseminated and accessible to all staff and volunteers in the counselling service.
2. Management must have taken a stand on how they wish to work with the recommendations for good governance in the voluntary social field.
3. Management shall set goals and frameworks for systematic user evaluation and registration and ensure that results are used systematically for quality development of the counselling service.
4. Management must ensure that counsellor representatives are continuously and systematically involved in processes and decisions regarding quality development of the services.
5. Management must ensure that the counselling service comply with occupational health and safety rules and provide active and systematic action to ensure the well-being of counsellors and the staff of the counselling service.
6. Management must ensure clear complaint rules for users, and the procedure for dealing with complaints must be publicly available.
7. Management must ensure that information about the counselling service and its service is easy to find, and that coherence and division of responsibilities within the organisation are communicated in a clear manner to users, partners and others.