

What to Expect from a Career Counseling Appointment

Your faculty member suggested you schedule an appointment with your career counselor. You've made your appointment - it's in two days and you're wondering what to expect, and how they can help you.



"Who are these people...what's going to happen in the meeting...will they tell me what I have to do...can they really help?" If you've asked yourself any of these questions, the following should help you to better understand the role of a career counselor and how they can assist you.

What do career counselors do?

Career counselors are trained professionals. They can teach you how to decide on a career, how to match your career choice to a major, how to prepare for the job search and how to access employment opportunities. Their role is to help you help yourself, and they will provide an encouraging environment as you make your way through the process of choosing a career and finding a job. However, they do not make decisions for you, or have a handy list of all the jobs in the world, or place you in a job.

What happens in the appointments?

First of all, it's important that you arrive on time so you can take full advantage of your appointment. University career counselors are in high demand, so it's unlikely they'll be able to extend your appointment if you arrive late.

Your first appointment is an opportunity for you and your career counselor to get acquainted, discuss your concerns and establish what you would like to accomplish. Expect your career counselor to ask you questions. These

questions are a way of making it easy for you to "tell your story" – where you are and where you want to be. The first appointment will also establish "goal alignment," so there is no confusion about what the two of you will be trying to accomplish.

Each follow-up appointment will focus on a particular action that you've both decided needs to be taken. At the end of each appointment, your career counselor will review the key points covered and any steps that should be completed for your next appointment.

Will everything I need to know and do take place in the appointment?

A lot of learning will take place in your appointments, but a great deal also takes place after you leave, as you explore career options, conduct informational interviews, refine your resume, etc. It's very important that you complete all assignments given, as this will serve as the primary discussion point for your next appointment.

How confidential is the information I share with my career counselor?

Any discussion between you and your career counselor is considered confidential. In the event your information would be of value to another professional, such as an academic advisor who may also be helping you, your permission will be obtained. However, please understand that career counselors are required by law and their professional code of ethics to report to the appropriate authorities any information they possess about the possibility of harm to you or others.

How long will it take?

The number of appointments needed will depend on your goals and the amount of time you're willing to invest. Sometimes it takes only one appointment. A resume critique for a student who has already invested a lot of time writing a resume may require only one appointment. Whereas, students who are undecided about their future career may require several. However,

students who follow through on scheduled appointments, are actively engaged and do the work assigned, often average no more than 3 or 4 appointments. Planning your career does take some time and reflection...but it's ultimately worth it.

How do I know when I no longer need to meet with my career counselor?

Just as you and your career counselor will work together to identify your particular career or job search needs and the steps required to implement them, you and your career counselor will know when it's time to move on; you'll make that decision together.

How can I make the most of my career counseling appointments?

You can enhance the benefit of your career planning or job search appointments by disclosing information that will help your career counselor better understand where you are in the process, and by completing and returning any information-gathering assignments you're given.



Why take advantage of career counseling?

Professional career counselors and job search coaches in private practice charge from \$100 to \$175 an hour for their services. As a college student you have access to the same level of professional service at NO CHARGE. And everything you learn about career planning and finding a job is information that you can take with you after graduation, so you should never have to pay anyone else to do what you can do best yourself!