

## SEEING A CAREER COUNSELOR

### What To Expect

Meeting with a Career Services counselor can be helpful in organizing and planning your future. A counselor can stimulate your thinking, ask important career planning questions to help clarify goals, provide encouragement, teach you strategies for making

meaningful career decisions and help you plan your job search.

When meeting with a career counselor, you may want to be prepared to discuss any of the following issues:

\_\_\_ Begin to look at your interests, skills, and values through discussion, assessments and related activities.

\_\_\_ Learn about printed and internet resources, as well as personal contacts, that are essential in gaining information about majors and careers.

\_\_\_ Discuss different opportunities, projects, activities and ideas that can assist you in making your college education satisfying, fun, and marketable.

\_\_\_ Engage in exercises that can help you to identify the career skills that your academic, extra-curricular, internships and part-time job experiences have developed.

\_\_\_ Talk about how to make informed decisions about college major, careers, job offers and graduate schools.

\_\_\_ Recognize personal strengths and limitations and how they affect career planning. Develop ways to use and/or improve them.

\_\_\_ Research employer leads, alumni contacts, job vacancies and other ways to put yourself in touch with employers.

\_\_\_ Create and implement a strategic job search or graduate school plan.

\_\_\_ Develop your resume, cover letter, and interview skills.

## A few words about what to expect from career counseling

Career counselors and students work together in developing career plans. Counselors can serve as a bridge between you, Penn State, and the career world. We will help to provide support as well as help you in understanding the decision making process. We can help you to learn more about yourself and help you to begin to gather information.

When possible, counselors will provide you with feedback concerning your interests and values and the career choice process. When the information is available, counselors will offer some insight concerning the nature of various majors or careers.

However, career counselors can not make your decision for you or tell you what to do in planning your career. Furthermore, we can not inform you of *all* possible careers associated with certain majors or educate you concerning *all* of the details of various careers. The career world is too complex to allow this. Ultimately, it is up to you to engage in further research and assume responsibility for making your career choices. Career counselors are here to help you to learn about the process of career planning and direct you to resources to help you

Working with a career counselor can help you find your way through the career planning steps. The career counselor will meet you where you are in your current career planning process—no matter where — and assist you in moving forward on a meaningful career path.

Where are you in your career planning? Check out the steps below to determine where you want to begin to work with your career counselor:

### Career Planning Steps

#### Increase Self-Awareness

- meet with a Career Services counselor to help identify your interests, values, and abilities
- test your interests through courses, volunteer jobs, student activities, and summer work
- interview friends and family about the nature of their jobs
- identify majors that relate to your abilities and interests

#### Explore Career Alternatives

- obtain information about occupations
- begin to identify what is important to you in a job
- attend meetings of student professional organizations
- target electives that will make you more employable
- explore relevant work experiences such as internships, externships, co-op education, and summer jobs

#### Link Self-Knowledge with Occupational Information

- relate your values, interests, and abilities to career fields
- interview people in areas that interest you about the nature of their jobs
- develop relationships with faculty and professionals
- continue to increase your skills through meaningful activities and work
- begin learning about job search strategies

#### Implement Career Choices

- if feasible, do an internship in your field to gain relevant experience
- come to Career Services early fall semester of your senior year to sharpen job search skills and take advantage of on-campus recruiting
- consider joining a job search skills group or taking a career development course
- talk with professionals in your field about job search techniques and opportunities

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