

Career counseling

The focus of career counseling is generally on issues such as [career](#) exploration, career change, personal [career development](#) and other career related issues.

There is no agreed definition of career counseling worldwide, mainly due to conceptual, cultural and linguistic differences.^[1] This even affects the most central term *counseling* (or: *counselling* in British English) which is often substituted with the word *guidance* as in *career guidance*. For example, in the [UK](#), *career counseling* would usually be referred to as *careers advice* or *guidance*. Due to the widespread reference to both *career guidance* and *career counseling* among policy-makers, academics and practitioners around the world, references to *career guidance and counselling* are becoming common.^[2]

Related professional activities

Career counseling or career guidance includes a wide variety of professional activities which help people deal with career-related challenges. Career counselors work with [adolescents](#) seeking to explore career options, experienced professionals contemplating a career change, parents who want to return to the world of work after taking time to raise their child, or people seeking employment. Career counselling is also offered in various settings, including in groups and individually, in person or by means of digital communication.

Several approaches have been undertaken to systemize the variety of professional activities related to career guidance and counseling. In the most recent attempt, the Network for Innovation in Career Guidance and Counselling in Europe (NICE) - a consortium of 45 European institutions of higher education in the field of career counseling - has agreed on a system of professional roles for guidance counselors. Each of these five roles is seen as an important facet of the *career guidance and counselling profession*. Career counselors performing in any of these roles are expected to behave professionally, e.g. by following ethical standards in their practice. The NICE Professional Roles (NPR) are:^[3]

- The *Career Educator* "supports people in developing their own career management competences"
- The *Career Information & Assessment Expert* "supports people in assessing their personal characteristics and needs, then connecting them with the labour market and education systems"
- The *Career Counsellor* "supports individuals in understanding their situations, so as to work through issues towards solutions"
- The *Programme & Service Manager* "ensures the quality and delivery of career guidance and counselling organisations' services"
- The *Social Systems Intervener & Developer* "supports clients (even) in crisis and works to change systems for the better"

The description of the NICE Professional Roles (NPR) draws on a variety of prior models to define the central activities and competences of guidance counselors.^[4] The NPR can, therefore, be understood as a state-of-the-art framework which includes all relevant aspects of career counselling. For this reason, other models haven't been included here so far. Models which are reflected in the NPR include:

- BEQU: "Kompetenzprofil für Beratende" (Germany, 2011)
- CEDEFOP "Practitioner Competences" (2009)^[5]
- ENTO: "National Occupational Standards for Advice and Guidance" (Great Britain, 2006)
- IAEVG: "International Competences for Educational and Vocational Guidance" (2003)^[6]
- Savickas, M.: "Career Counselling" (USA, 2011)^[7]

Benefits

Professional career counselors can support people with career-related challenges. Through their expertise in career development and labor markets, they can put a person's qualifications, experience, strengths and weakness in a broad perspective while also considering their desired salary, personal hobbies and interests, location, job market and educational possibilities. Through their counseling and teaching abilities, career counselors can additionally support people in gaining a better understanding of what really matters for them personally, how they can plan their careers autonomously, or help them in making tough decisions and getting through times of crisis. Finally, career counselors are often capable of supporting their clients in finding suitable placements/ jobs, in working out conflicts with their employers, or finding the support of other helpful services.

It is due to these various benefits of career counseling that policy makers in many countries publicly fund guidance services. For example, the European Union understands career guidance and counseling as an instrument to effectively combat [social exclusion](#) and increase citizens' employability.^[8]

History

Frank Parson's *Choosing a Vocation* (1909) was perhaps the first major work which is concerned with careers guidance. While until the 1970s a strongly normative approach was characteristic for theories (e.g. of Donald E. Super's *life-span*

approach^[9]) and practice of career counseling (e.g. concept of *matching*), new models have their starting point in the individual needs and transferable skills of the clients while managing biographical breaks and discontinuities. Career development is no longer viewed as a linear process. More consideration is now placed on nonlinear, chance and unplanned influences.

Training

There is no standardized qualification for professional career counselors, although various certificates are offered nationally and internationally (e.g. by professional associations). The number of degree programs in career guidance and/or career counseling is growing worldwide. The title "career counselor" is unregulated, unlike [engineers](#) or [psychologists](#) whose professional titles are legally protected. At the same time, policy makers agree that the competence of career counselors is one of the most important factors in ensuring that people receive high quality support in dealing with their career questions.^[10] Depending on the country of their education, career counselors may have a variety of academic backgrounds: In Europe, for instance, degrees in (vocational/ industrial/ organization) psychology and educational sciences are among the most common, but backgrounds in sociology, public administration and other sciences are also frequent.^[11] At the same time, many training programs for career counselors are becoming increasingly multidisciplinary.

Finding a career counselor in the United States

In the United States, the designation, "career counselor" is not legally protected; that is, anyone can hang out a shingle and call themselves a career counselor. However, [CACREP, the accrediting body for counselor education programs](#) requires that these programs include one course in career counseling as a part of the coursework for a masters in counseling.

The National Career Development Association (NCDA), the credentialing body for career counselors provides various certifications for qualified, career counselors. For those, university trained, counselors and/or psychologists who have devoted a certain number of years to career counseling and taken specific coursework, it offers a [Master Career Counselor \(MCC\) credential](#). The National Career Development Association is the only professional association of career counselors in the United States that provides certification in career counseling.

Professional career guidance centres

There are many career guidance and counseling centres all over the world. They give services of guidance and counseling on higher studies, possibilities, chances and nature of courses and institutes. Also that these services are offered either fixing up a meeting with the Experts or having telephonic conversations with the guide or even the online guidance which is very common these days with the people getting services on click of their mouse. There are many such service providers all over the world providing online counseling to people about their career or conducting a psychometric test to know the persons aptitude as well as interests.

Career testing and Assessment

People who participate in career counseling can benefit from the use of aptitude tests, or **career testing**. Career testing is often done online and provides insightful and relatively objective information about which jobs may be suitable for the test taker based on combination of their interests, values and skills. Career tests usually provide a list of recommended jobs that match the test takers attributes with those of people with similar personalities who enjoy/are successful at their jobs. There are various ways to test an individual for which field he is suitable, psychometric testing being one among them.

Psychometric testing covers a wide range of skills, interests and values of people and can be of use in career counseling in different ways. For example, the information from such tests can be of help for the professionals who mentor, coach or counsel individuals. With psychometric testing, there is no pass or fail, but the quality of the information won from the tests can vary. Psychometric testing uses in-depth psychological profiles to assess personality and intellectual levels. Different test companies use different theoretical approaches to testing, such as the psychometric approach, the psychodynamic approach, the social learning approach and the humanist approach. Different test companies have their own methods of testing, some of them being protected with copyrights. Usually, psychometric testing uses multiple sets of questions relating to personality type, how the test taker would handle aspects of work and home life, what his or her goals are for the future and his or her strengths and weaknesses. If the test taker is honest and the employed tests follow scientific standards, the results should be fairly accurate and useful for career counseling activities.

In the United States perhaps the oldest testing tools include the [Strong Interest Inventory](#).

Challenges

One of the major challenges associated with career counseling is encouraging participants to engage in the process. For example, in the UK 70% of people under 14 say they have had no careers advice while 45% of people over 14 have had no or very poor/limited advice.

In a related issue some client groups tend to reject the interventions made by professional career counselors preferring to rely on the advice of peers or superiors within their own profession. Jackson et al. found that 44% of doctors in training felt that senior members of their own profession were best placed to give careers advice.^[12] Furthermore, it is recognised that the

giving of career advice is something that is widely spread through a range of formal and informal roles. In addition to career counselors it is also common for [psychologists](#), teachers, managers, trainers and [Human Resources](#) (HR) specialists to give formal support in career choices. Similarly it is also common for people to seek informal support from friends and family around their career choices and to bypass career professionals altogether. Today increasingly people rely on career web portals to seek advice on resume writing and handling interviews; as also to research on various professions and companies. It has even become possible to take vocational assessments online.

Becoming a career counsellor in Australia

A Diploma of Counselling is offered at a variety of TAFE colleges and other registered training organisations throughout Western Australia. Most universities in Western Australia offer relevant undergraduate degree courses. Postgraduate courses in career development are also offered at interstate universities, through distance education. The Career Industry Council of Australia (CICA) endorses career development programs in [Australia](#).^[13] The Certificate IV in Career Development is offered at TAFE colleges and other registered training organisations throughout [Western Australia](#).

Apprenticeships and Traineeships

An apprentice or trainee enters into a formal training contract with an employer. An apprentice or trainee spends most of their time working and learning practical skills on the job and spends time undertaking structured training with a registered training provider of their choice. The employers job is to assess the skills of the apprentice or trainee, and decide when they are competent in all areas. After completing an apprenticeship or traineeship, they are rewarded a nationally recognised qualification.

School based apprenticeships are offered for those who are still in school. Generally the school based apprenticeship involves attending school three days a week, spending one day at a registered training organisation, and one day at work. A full-time apprenticeship will allow the student to leave school before reaching the school leaving age.

See also

- [Industrial and organizational psychology](#)
- [Careers Advisory Services](#)
- [Career Guide](#)
- [Enneagram of Personality](#)
- [Holland Codes](#)
- [Career development](#)
- [Myers-Briggs Type Indicator](#)
- [Occupational Outlook Handbook](#)
- [Personality psychology](#)
- [Standard Occupational Classification System](#)

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Further reading

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External links

- [NC State University, Career interest inventory](#)
- [Human Metrics Test \(Jung Typology\)](#)
- [List of Occupations](#)
- [UHCC - RIASEC TEST](#)
- [Work interest quiz](#)

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Group career counseling takes a variety of forms. Career development groups include most of the components found in individual career counseling, and they have similar objectives. Group participants typically take tests and participate in a group discussion of their test results. In addition, they may be assigned to complete a computer-based activity, prepare a resume, complete a homework assignment, or interview a potential employer or a person employed in a career of interest. Career counseling is a type of advice-giving and support provided by career counselors to their clients, to help the clients manage their journey through life, learning and work changes (career). This includes career exploration, making career choices, managing career changes, lifelong career development and dealing with other career-related issues. There is no agreed definition of career counseling worldwide, mainly due to conceptual, cultural and linguistic differences. However, the terminology of Career Counseling is a process that will help you to know and understand yourself and the world of work in order to make career, educational, and life decisions. Career development is more than just deciding on a major and what job you want to get when you graduate. It really is a lifelong process, meaning that throughout your life you will change, situations will change, and you will continually have to make career and life decisions. Career counseling, also known as career guidance, is counseling designed to help with choosing, changing, or leaving a career and is available at any stage in life. One's career is often one of the most important aspects of adulthood, and embarking on a new career, whether for the first time, the second time, or any time thereafter, can be a stressful event, especially when economic difficulties such as recession are a factor. A career counselor can help by outlining and discussing one's potential career options. Career counselors are trained to help uncover all the things we need to think about, along with useful tips that will hopefully lead us to making the right choice. Would you make a good career counselor? Take our career test and find your top matches from over 800 careers. Take the free career test Learn more about the career test. What is a Career Counselor? There are moments in life when we are all faced with making big decisions. One of the biggest decisions is choosing the right career.