



Professional Standards For College & University Career Services

Revised 2019



National Association of Colleges and Employers

62 Highland Avenue, Bethlehem, PA 18017 | www.nacweb.org | 610.868.1421

Table of Contents

Introduction	5
Application of Professional Standards in Career Services	
Glossary of Terms	
I. Mission	8
II. Program Components	10
Career Coaching, Advising, and Counseling	
Online and Distance Career Services	
Career Information and Resources	
Employment Services	
Graduate and Professional School, and Advanced Degree Planning	
Experiential Learning	
III. Organization, Management, and Leadership	17
Organization	
Management	
Leadership	
IV. Human Resources	23
Career Services Leadership	
Career Services Professionals	
Pre-professional Positions	
Student Employee and/or Volunteer Positions	
Support Staff and Technical Positions	
V. Financial Resources	31
VI. Facilities	32
VII. Technology	34

VIII. Institutional and External Relations	36
IX. Employer Relations and Recruitment Services	39
X. Legal, Policy, and Risk Management	43
XI. Access, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion	46
XII. Ethics	48
XIII. Program Evaluation, Assessment, and Research	50
Appendix: History of Professional Standards for Career Services	53

Introduction

For FY 2018-2019, the NACE College and University Professionals Standards Review Task Force was appointed to review and propose revisions to the *Professional Standards for College and University Career Services* and its companion workbook. The work of that group is reflected in this publication.

Members of the team included Kevin Gaw (co-chair, Bryant University), Kelli Smith (co-chair, Binghamton University – SUNY), Tim Harding (NACE Board adviser, University of Tampa), Kelley Bishop (University of Maryland – College Park), Adry Clark (Western Oregon University), Jeanine Dames (Yale University), Amy Feifer (Haverford College), Dana Hutchens (Wake Forest University), Arlene Kaukus (University at Buffalo, SUNY), Steve Koppi (Worcester Polytechnic Institute), Andrew Seguel (LIM College), Rita Soultanian (Saddleback College), Lori Trahan (Kennesaw State University), Cory Werkheiser (College of Charleston), and Mimi Collins and Erin DeStefanis (NACE staff advisers).

Application of Professional Standards in Career Services

The use of professional standards in career services is intended to facilitate excellence in the creation, maintenance, and delivery of programs, resources, and services. Professionally derived standards, representing the perspectives of diverse practitioners and promulgated under the aegis of a professional association, provide an exceptional opportunity for practitioners to engage in processes of self-assessment and self-regulation that are internally motivated and directed.

The philosophical position of the committee was that good methodologies:

- Promote self-assessment and self-regulation initiatives using professional standards as key factors in fostering improvement in programs, services, and processes;
- Honor institutional uniqueness and recognize that information is not always comparable across institutions because of differences in location and local economic conditions; student characteristics, abilities, and preparation; variety and quality of academic programs; and missions of the institutions and their career services units. Any analysis of data must include explanations of such qualifiers;

- Include qualitative as well as quantitative data collection and use for internal and external strategic partners;
- Lead to innovation in internal operations;
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of current market and technological trends;
- Encourage methodical, meticulous, and reliable collection and presentation of information that will provide evidence of quality and promote analysis and synthesis of information; and
- Demonstrate external and internal accountability.

The *Professional Standards for College and University Career Services* document is written broadly to reflect variations in career services provided by individual colleges and universities, e.g., four-year schools, graduate schools, community colleges, online institutions. Some standards may apply to several functional areas within career services; overlap does exist. Not every standard will apply to every career services office or school. Therefore, their use should be interpreted according to the circumstances of the individual institution.

The Standards were written to reflect an institution's responsibilities for career services. Some program components may be provided by the institution in a department other than career services. Individual career services offices may not have responsibility for certain programs or services identified as career services within these professional standards; however, the institution does bear final responsibility for delivery of career services, in whatever fashion they are administered within the institution. Evaluators may be required to collect and evaluate data from several different offices at an institution in order to conduct a thorough evaluation.

The standards pertain to programs, not staff members. They reflect dimensions of career services that affect program performance and quality. To localize the standards, individual institutions and career services units should provide examples of how they are meeting or not meeting each applicable standard.

A companion workbook, the *NACE Professional Standards Workbook*, is available for those who wish to evaluate their career services offices against the standards.

A history of the use of professional standards is included in the Appendix.

Glossary of Terms

Engagement: “Engagement” is subjective, and it is up to the individual career services unit to define what constitutes “engagement” in terms of its constituents. For example, for some, attendance may be considered a measure of engagement, others may favor use (or level of use) as a measure of engagement, and still others may consider a combination of factors to determine “engagement.”

Equity: The term “equity” refers to fairness and justice and is distinguished from equality: Whereas equality means providing the same to all, equity means recognizing that we do not all start from the same place and must acknowledge and make adjustments to imbalances. The process is ongoing, requiring us to identify and overcome intentional and unintentional barriers arising from bias or systemic structures.

Experiential learning: Experiential learning includes internships, cooperative education, apprenticeships, job shadowing, service learning, student employment, work-based learning, civic engagement, and volunteer experiences.

Must: An item designated as a “must” represents quality practice and is an essential program component or function for career services. “Must” standards are listed in bold type.

Should: An item designated as a “should” is considered aspirational.

Stakeholders: Interpretation of this term is subjective to every institution but may include constituents such as students; those within the academic realm (faculty, advising, and departments) as well as administrative and student affairs colleagues; employers; alumni; and families.

Other designated clients: Based on the service sphere and mission of each career services department, “other designated clients” is intended to be flexible and inclusive and may include alumni, staff, faculty, members of the public, and employers among others.

I. Mission

Career services' mission must align with and advance the mission of the institution as well as support academic and experiential learning programs to promote career readiness, student learning, and student development. Within this context, the primary purpose of career services is to assist students and other designed clients in developing, evaluating, and/or implementing career, education, and employment exploration, decisions, and plans.

Specifically, career services should help students and other designed clients to:

- Develop self-knowledge related to career choice and work performance by identifying, assessing, and understanding their competencies, interests, values, strengths, and personal characteristics;
- Obtain educational and occupational information on their career and educational planning and develop an understanding of the world of work;
- Select personally suitable academic programs and experiential learning opportunities that optimize future educational and employment options;
- Gain high-impact experience through student activities, community service, student employment, research projects, apprenticeships, cooperative education, internships, entrepreneurial activities, international experiences, and other opportunities;
- Develop job-search skills and ability to articulate how their competencies fit with occupational and job requirements, and organization cultures;
- Link and partner with alumni, employers, industry representatives, professional organizations, community service organizations, and others who will provide opportunities to develop professional interests and competencies, integrate academic learning with work, and explore future career possibilities;
- Leverage and optimize existing and emerging technologies to facilitate the career development process;

- Prioritize career development as an important developmental task beginning early in the college experience; and
- Encourage lifelong learning and prepare students and other designated clients to manage their careers over a lifetime.

Career services, regardless of model (centralized, decentralized, or hybrid), must consider the needs of all designated clients when designing programs and delivering services.

As career issues are addressed by different entities within the institution, career services should provide leadership to the institution on career development concerns and linkages and/or coordination among other campus career-related programs and services where appropriate.

Career services must develop, record, disseminate, implement, and regularly review its mission and goals.

II. Program Components

The key program components of the career services function must be clearly defined, designed, and implemented in alignment with:

- **The career development perspectives and needs, and the academic and occupational paths, of students and other designated clients;**
- **Current research, theories, and knowledge of career development and learning;**
- **Career services best practices;**
- **External constituent needs, economic trends, opportunities, and/or constraints;**
- **Institutional priorities;**
- **Technological advancements; and**
- **Budgets and resources.**

Career services must work collaboratively with academic divisions, departments, individual faculty members, student services, employers, alumni, and other relevant constituencies of the institution to enhance students' career development.

Career services should promote career development for students as integral to the mission of the institution and encourage students to take advantage of career services as early as possible in their academic programs.

Career services should provide information on programs and services through institutional websites, print and electronic media, publications, presentations, outreach, and orientation programs.

Career services should provide information on career and employment topics, as well as emphasizing the ethical obligations of students, faculty, employers, and others involved in the employment process.

Career Coaching, Advising, and Counseling

The institution must provide career coaching, advising, and/or counseling to assist students and other designated clients at any stage of their career development.

Career services should:

- Provide career coaching, advising, and counseling-related services through scheduled individual appointments, drop-ins, resources, group programs, career planning courses, outreach opportunities, special events, and/or any other available resources;
- Refer students to other counseling and resource agencies if assistance is needed beyond the scope of career coaching, advising, and counseling;
- Maintain appropriate records for future work with the students; and
- Educate students about the potential benefits and pitfalls of social media and the importance of a positive digital “footprint.”

Career services must help students and other designated clients make career choices based on accurate self-knowledge and information about the options available to them.

Career coaching, advising, and counseling services must be in alignment with the psychosocial, personal, developmental, and cultural attributes, issues, and beliefs of students and other designated clients.

In alignment with the [NACE Diversity & Inclusion Statement](#), career services should assist students with career issues relevant to the individual to help students:

- Assess their skills, values, and interests and understand how these relate to academic and co-curricular options and career opportunities;
- Obtain, evaluate, and apply occupational, educational, and employment information;
- Establish short-term and long-term career goals; and

- Explore career options through work-based learning, such as internships, shadowing experiences, summer and part-time jobs, apprenticeships, cooperative work experience and education, volunteerism, service learning, and/or other experiential education.

Online and Distance Career Services

Career services must provide current, valid, and reliable online resources that help students pursue their career goals.

Career services' technology (software, hardware, and online licenses and subscriptions) should be regularly updated to offer students and other designated clients appropriate and accessible online and distance resources.

Career services' online resources should include tools for career exploration, preparation, opportunities, and transition into the workplace.

Career services should regularly review and benchmark online career resources to determine what to maintain, what to add, and what to discard, ensuring up-to-date resources for students.

Career services must provide online and/or distance career services to students who are not able to access services traditionally provided on campus.

Career services should provide training and continued professional development to all practitioners who offer and provide such online and distance career services.

Career services should provide online and distance career services in a manner that maintains student and data integrity, and meets institutional policy needs, state licensing regulations, and professional guidelines.

Career services should develop policies and procedures that ensure best practices for such services.

Career Information and Resources

Career services must provide current information and resources to help students and other designated clients assess and relate their interests, competencies, needs, expectations, education, experience, personal background, and desired lifestyle to the employment market.

Career information and resources should include:

- Self-assessment and career planning;
- Occupational and job market information (local, regional, national, and global);
- Undergraduate, graduate, and professional schools;
- Employment/job search;
- Strategies on how to vet job and experiential learning opportunities;
- Resources and strategies for revising career plans;
- Job and experiential learning listings;
- Employer and industry information; and
- Guidance on using specific current and emerging tools.

Career services should provide information on current and projected employment opportunities, organizational/cultural differences, and employers to ensure that candidates have the widest possible choices of employment.

Career services should provide students, other designated clients, and staff access to wireless internet and computer resources.

Career information should be conveniently available in a variety of media appropriate for students representing different populations.

Career information resources must be accessible, organized, and up to date with an appropriate system that is user-friendly, flexible, and adaptable to change.

Career services should update web links and web resources regularly to ensure up-to-date information is available to students.

Career information facilities should be staffed with persons who have the appropriate counseling, advising, and information technology competencies to assist students in accessing and using career information.

Employment Services

Career services must help students and other designated clients to:

- **Explore a full range of career and work possibilities that match their career goals and workplace/community fit;**
- **Prepare job-search competencies and tools to present themselves effectively as candidates for employment;**
- **Obtain accurate information on employment opportunities and prospective employers and industries;**
- **Learn how to vet opportunities and identify fraudulent employment practices;**
- **Use social media effectively and build an internet presence and personal brand with regard to the job search;**
- **Connect with employers through campus interviews, job listings, referrals, direct application, networking, job-search events, publications, and information technology;**
- **Understand various employment categories and how these might impact them, e.g., part-time employment, full-time employment, contract employment, independent contract employment, commission-based employment, work-from-home employment, virtual employment;**
- **Understand the following employer types and how employment might impact them, e.g., third-party employers, home-based employers, contract employers, multi-level employers; and**
- **Make informed choices among a variety of options.**

Career services should develop and maintain relationships with employers, alumni, and other entities that provide career development and employment opportunities for students and other designated clients.

As career services engages with an increasingly global work environment, career services must consider different employment practices, laws, and regulations in other countries without prejudice.

When necessary, career services should seek out informed, valid, and up-to-date employment information from other countries to advise students appropriately.

Graduate and Professional School, And Advanced Degree Planning

Career services must help students and other designated clients to:

- Identify undergraduate, graduate, or professional school programs that match their career goals;
- Present themselves effectively as undergraduate, graduate, and professional school candidates;
- Obtain information on undergraduate, graduate, and professional school programs through a variety of sources; and
- Connect with undergraduate, graduate, and professional schools through campus interviews, referrals, direct application, events, publications, and resources.

Experiential Learning

Career services should provide experiential learning programs or help students identify experiential opportunities.

Career services should:

- Work closely with other departments that provide experiential learning opportunities;
- Help students develop strategies for finding and pursuing financial resources to support experiential learning;
- Assist students in connecting with appropriate resources, faculty, and staff to obtain academic credit where relevant;
- Help students obtain career-related experiences with organizations that provide adequate supervision and opportunities for students to reflect upon their learning and career development;
- Monitor positions posted in their offices for their experiential learning programs to ensure consistency with the NACE definition and criteria for internships; and
- Assist other departments and external constituents, such as employers, in developing or enhancing existing experiential learning opportunities.

III. Organization, Management, And Leadership

An institution must appoint, position, and empower a leader or leadership team to provide strategic direction for accomplishment of mission and goals, to manage career services, and to align and support career services with mission of the institution and the needs of the constituencies served.

If career services are offered by several units, the institution must designate a leader or leadership team that will be responsible for ensuring coordination and communication among the institution's programs and services.

Such leadership is necessary to ensure adherence to institutional and unit missions and to enhance program effectiveness and efficiency. That leadership may come from members of the management team, including the director, associate directors, and assistant directors.

The organization and management of career services, including its place within the institution, must support and align with the mission of the institution.

Career services must be organized and managed to develop positive relationships with students and other stakeholders which may include academic (faculty, advising, and departments), administrative, and student affairs colleagues; employers; alumni; and families.

Additional areas for consideration in determining structure and management of career services should include:

- Size, nature, and mission of the institution;
- Changing needs and trends affecting students;
- Number and scope of academic-related programs and services;
- Scope and intent of recruiting services;

- Philosophy and delivery systems for services; and
- Emerging trends and opportunities to use new and different delivery methods, e.g., direct contact, technology.

Career services should be coordinated with and complementary to career advising/counseling, internship administration, employment-related, and/or other designated services provided by other institutional units.

Organization

To ensure student learning and development, career services must be purposefully structured to achieve stated goals and outcomes.

Evidence of purposeful and appropriate structure must include:

- **Clearly stated and measurable goals;**
- **Defined service standards;**
- **Current and accessible policies and procedures;**
- **Written job descriptions, performance expectations, and regular reviews for employees;**
- **Clearly stated roles and areas of accountability;**
- **Functional work flow or organizational charts demonstrating clear channels of authority; and**
- **Facilities appropriate for career services functions.**

Staff titles, roles, and reporting lines should support the efficient and effective delivery of career services and programs. The unit to which career services reports should allow for efficient and effective delivery of career services while also enabling visibility and support for the mission of career services.

Management

Career services must be managed effectively to achieve stated goals and outcomes. Evidence of effective management must include:

- Strategic and operational planning processes;
- Clearly defined areas of responsibility;
- Effective communication practices;
- Decision-making and conflict resolution procedures;
- Assessment and accountability systems;
- Sound fiscal management practices; and
- Clearly defined and regularly occurring review processes for services, policies, procedures, and budgetary issues.

Leadership

Leaders in career services units must provide strategic planning, supervision, and management; advance the organization; and maintain integrity through the following functions:

STRATEGIC PLANNING

- Articulate a vision for the organization;
- Set goals and objectives based on the needs of the populations served and desired student learning, development, and program outcomes that are aligned with the vision;
- Collaborate with others in the institution to integrate career services into the broader educational mission;

- **Facilitate continuous development, implementation, and assessment of goals and outcomes congruent with institutional mission and strategic plans;**
- **Promote institutional culture that results in student learning, development, and engagement;**
- **Conduct program evaluations that not only improve programs but also ensure that programming is responsive to the changing needs of clients, evolving institutional priorities, and changes in the work force and employment/recruiting conditions; and**
- **Intentionally include diverse perspectives to inform decision making and build a culture of inclusivity.**

Key constituencies of career services should be identified and their needs reflected in the mission and goals of the unit. Priorities for services should be defined.

SUPERVISING

- **To the extent possible, manage human resources processes, including recruitment, selection, onboarding, and ongoing development, supervision, performance planning, evaluation, recognition, and reward;**
- **Influence others to contribute to the effectiveness and success of the unit;**
- **Empower professional, support, and student staff to pursue and accept leadership opportunities;**
- **Offer appropriate feedback to colleagues and students on skills needed to become effective leaders; and**
- **Encourage and support professional development, collaboration with colleagues and departments across the institution, and scholarly contribution to the profession and higher education.**

MANAGING

- Identify and find means to address individual, organizational, and environmental conditions that foster or inhibit mission achievement;
- Plan, allocate, and monitor the use of fiscal, physical, human, intellectual, and technological resources;
- Use current and valid evidence to inform decisions and frame future strategies for the department;
- Incorporate sustainability practices in the management and design of programs, services, and facilities;
- Understand appropriate technologies and integrate them into career services;
- Be knowledgeable about policies, ethical standards, regulations, and laws relevant to career services and ensure that staff members understand their responsibilities through appropriate training; and
- Assess potential risks and take action to mitigate them.

ADVANCING THE ORGANIZATION

- Communicate effectively in writing, speaking, and digital/online venues;
- Annually review, update, and communicate goals and objectives to appropriate constituencies;
- Advocate for career services' participation in divisional and institutional planning, and decisions related to career services' objectives, policies, practices, and designation of students and others served;
- Initiate collaborative interactions with internal and external individuals and agencies that possess interests and/or concerns regarding career services, i.e., may include all phases of career development, planning, and employment;

- **Facilitate processes to reach consensus where wide support is needed; and**
- **Advocate and educate all constituencies, including leadership on campus, about the value and impact of career development on student success and outcomes.**

In making decisions about students and others served, consideration should be given to the type and scope of services offered and the fees, if any, that are charged.

MAINTAINING INTEGRITY

- **Model ethical behavior and institutional citizenship;**
- **Share data used to inform key decisions in transparent and accessible ways;**
- **Ensure that all information about career services is current, accurate, appropriately referenced, and accessible to all constituencies; and**
- **Address issues of ethical nature by staff as well as constituencies in a timely and thorough manner consistent with the ethical practices of the field.**

IV. Human Resources

Career services must have an adequate number of qualified professional and support staff to fulfill its mission and functions.

Career services must be staffed by persons who, in combination, provide the knowledge, skills, and abilities to perform primary program functions effectively.

Career services must embrace employment and promotion practices that are fair, inclusive, and nondiscriminatory in order to attract, retain, and develop a diverse staff.

Career services must develop and maintain job descriptions for all staff members.

Career services must provide onboarding for new staff members.

Career services must provide regular staff performance appraisals.

Career services must provide access to professional development opportunities, including in-service training programs and professional conferences/workshops/webinars.

Career services should provide ongoing staff training and development to promote knowledge and skill development across program components.

All staff members must be trained in legal, confidential, and ethical issues related to career services.

Salaries and benefits for staff must be commensurate with similar positions within the institution, at similar institutions, and in the relevant geographic area.

Career Services Leadership

Effective and ethical leadership is essential to the success of all organizations. In career services, that leadership comes from members of the management team, including the director, associate directors, and assistant directors.

If career services are offered by several units, the institution must designate an individual or team that will be responsible for coordinating the institution’s programs and services, providing strategic direction, and aligning career services with the mission of the institution and the needs of the constituencies served.

Career services leaders must be selected on the basis of formal education and training, relevant work experience, personal skills and competencies, relevant professional credentials, and their potential for promoting learning and development in students and staff, applying effective practices to educational processes, and enhancing institutional effectiveness.

The institution must determine expectations of accountability for leaders and fairly assess their performance.

Career Services Professionals

Professional staff members must have the requisite formal education and training, relevant work experience, and personal skills and competencies to perform effectively in their defined roles with career services constituency groups and other specialized functions.

Constituency groups may include students, alumni, faculty, administrators, community members, families, and employers. Specialized functions may include various aspects of career development including career and employment advising/coaching/counseling, cooperative education, internships, work-study/on-campus employment, graduate and professional school advising, integration of technologies, and marketing/branding.

Requisite competencies should include these threads evident among most functional areas:

- Legal and ethical;
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion;
- Global issues; and
- Interpersonal.

Career services should promote the development of these professional competencies, as well as those defined in the following table in relation to the staff member’s role. They also are further delineated in NACE’s [*Professional Competencies for College and University Career Services Practitioners*](#).

Career services professionals must engage in continuing professional development activities to further develop competencies and to keep abreast of the research, theories, legislation, policies, and developments that affect career services.

FUNCTIONS	CORE COMPETENCIES
Career Coaching, Advising, and Counseling	Providing needs assessments and developing action plans
	Managing intervention, design, and implementation
	Testing administration and interpretation
	Counseling
	Partnering with individuals and groups
	Using career, occupational, and employment information
Brokering, Connecting, And Linking	Organizing information, logistics, people, and processes toward desired outcomes
	Consulting
	Consulting – students and alumni
	Consulting – employers
	Consulting – faculty/campus community
	Consulting – external community
	Consulting – parents/families
	Building and managing advisory boards
	Demonstrating interpersonal skills
	Job and experiential learning opportunity development
	Sourcing and planning for experiential learning
	Civic and community engagement
	Fostering global and diverse connections

Information Management	Organization and dissemination; storage and retrieval
	Computing systems and applications – standard software and equipment
	Computing systems and applications – career planning and information
	Computing systems and applications – career services management systems
	Data entry and analysis
	Acquisition of appropriate career resources
	Web/social media design and management
Marketing, Promoting, And Performing Outreach	Marketing principles and strategies
	Needs assessment and goal setting
	Development/fundraising strategies
	Sales and closing techniques
	Relationship development and management
	Written and interpersonal communication
	Public speaking and presentation delivery
	Effective use of print, web, and personal presentation methods
	Social media and graphic design
Program And Event Administration	Goal setting
	Program planning
	Program planning – needs assessments
	Program planning – program/event marketing
	Volunteer management
	Program implementation
	Program evaluation
	Budgets and budgeting
	Time management
	Problem solving

Research, Assessment, And Evaluation	Theoretical framework
	Best practices and benchmarking
	Program review
	Learning outcomes
	Outcome-oriented programming
	Evidence-based decision making
	Needs assessment
	Utilization assessment
	Satisfaction assessment
	Measurement and analysis
	Outcomes-based assessment
	Use of technology
	Research
Evaluation	
Teaching, Training, and Education	Needs assessment
	Program/workshop design and delivery
	Researching, evaluating, and integrating information
	Effective teaching strategies
	Coaching
	Mentoring
	Working with individuals and groups
	Working with diverse populations
	Working with people with disabilities
Use of technology for delivery of content	

Management and Administration	Needs assessment and satisfaction measures
	Program design, implementation, and evaluation
	Strategic and operational planning
	Program integration and integrity
	Staffing
	Staff onboarding, training, and mentoring
	Staff development and supervision
	Budget planning and administration
	Political sensitivity and negotiation skills
	Synthesis, interpretation, and reporting of current and longitudinal information

Pre-professional Positions

Paraprofessionals, interns, and graduate assistants must be carefully selected, trained in helping skills and institutional procedures, closely supervised, and evaluated regularly.

Degree or credential-seeking interns should be qualified by enrollment in an appropriate field of study and by relevant experience.

These individuals must be trained and supervised adequately by professional staff members holding educational credentials and related work experience appropriate for supervision.

Pre-professional staff should be provided with clear and precise jobs descriptions, pre-service training based on assessed needs, and continuing education development. Training should include customer service, program procedures, and information and resource use.

Student Employee and/or Volunteer Positions

Student employees and volunteers must be carefully selected, trained in helping skills and institutional procedures, closely supervised, and evaluated regularly.

Student employees and volunteers must be trained on how and when to refer those in need of assistance to qualified staff members and have access to a supervisor for assistance in making these judgments.

Student employees and volunteers should be provided with clear and precise job descriptions, pre-service training based on assessed needs, and continuing educational development.

Training should include customer service, program procedures, and information and resource use.

Support Staff and Technical Positions

Each organizational unit must have administrative and technical staff or support adequate to accomplish its mission.

Such staff must be technologically proficient and qualified to perform their duties, knowledgeable of ethical and legal uses of technology, and have access to training.

The level of staffing and workloads should be adequate and appropriate for program and service demands.

A technical support person or support service should be available to maintain computer and information technology systems for career services.

V. Financial Resources

Career services must have dependable sources for adequate funding to ensure achievement of its mission and goals.

Career services must demonstrate financial stewardship and strategy and fiscal responsibility consistent with institutional policies and procedures as well as local, state, and federal regulations.

Career services offices should develop and maintain a budget strategy that includes a positive outcome for the organization's mission and prepares for potential budget variations.

All career services operations have a budget, but the nature of that funding and its source(s) can widely vary. In establishing funding priorities, a comprehensive analysis of institutional resources should be conducted to determine the following elements and develop a compelling case for internal resources: relevant expenditures, current internal resources, and unmet needs of the unit and their impact on constituents and the institution. Once the unit's unmet needs are identified, a compelling storyline should be prepared.

Career centers regularly benefit from external funding to supplement institutional funds. Consistent with institutional policies and procedures, career services may develop a funding strategy that includes funding sources outside of the institution for special projects, programs, or student funding that fulfills the unit's mission. Whenever possible, these sources, or sponsorships, may include but are not limited to employers, alumni, members of the community, grant and government agencies, foundations, and professional associations. This funding strategy should include sufficient data detailing anticipated benefits and outcomes of additional funding to support needs and priorities. Such external funding should not be used as a replacement for institutional funds but can be used to supplement existing budgetary funds.

Requests for external funding should be undertaken in collaboration with appropriate institutional partners.

VI. Facilities

Career services must have adequate, accessible, and suitably located facilities appropriate for constituents served, to support the unit's mission and goals.

Consistent with the unit's goals and mission, the career services office should be accessible, located conveniently, and project a welcoming, professional atmosphere for students, employers, alumni, faculty, staff, parents and families, and the community. Parking for visitors, if available, should be adequate and convenient.

Career services facilities should be compliant with universal design principles.

If acquiring capital equipment as defined by the institution, career services must take into account expenses related to regular maintenance and life-cycle costs. Facilities and equipment must be evaluated on an established cycle, including consideration of sustainability, and be in compliance with codes and laws to provide for access, health, safety, and security.

Career services staff members must have work space that is well equipped, adequate in size, and designed to support their work and responsibilities. For activities and interactions requiring privacy, staff members must have private space that is appropriately furnished and proximate.

Career services should provide professional staff with private offices for advising, counseling, coaching, or other work situations requiring privacy; work space for support and student staff; a reception and/or student waiting area; and sufficient storage space.

Career services should provide a career resource center relevant to the populations of the unit and school.

Equipment and facilities must be secured to protect the confidentiality and safety of records. All staff members must be provided with a location to secure their own work.

For career services centers offering campus and remote interviews, facilities and technology must be available for students, alumni, and employers to interact and conduct private interviews consistent with the unit's mission and goals. The number of employment interview rooms and technology should meet employer, student, and alumni needs.

An employer lounge or flexible and accessible space should be made available.

The career services facility must have internet connectivity and access to conference rooms and large-group meeting rooms that have an appropriate level of technology to support service delivery.

Information technology specific to enhancing awareness of career resources must be available for students and staff to support career services functions.

Career services facilities must be accessible to all persons in compliance with all applicable local, state, and federal laws. Accommodations for clients with special needs must be provided by career services preferably in cooperation with the department or organization serving the client.

Career services must provide office hours at times appropriate for its constituencies.

Career services should regularly evaluate constituents' needs regarding hours, usage, and methods of service delivery.

VII. Technology

Career services staff must be well-informed about current trends and uses of technology and be able to anticipate emerging technologies for use in career services.

Career services offices must implement appropriate technology relevant to institutional and unit mission and goals for career services.

Because of rapid changes, career services must develop a strategic plan for the selection, replacement, updating, and/or integration of technologies that support career programs or services.

Career services offices should partner with the unit responsible for technology on campus to ensure that adequate hardware, software, and resources are available to support existing and new technology.

Career services must make informed choices regarding the use of available technology, including systems developed internally by the college/university; systems available through professional associations; or private, vendor-based systems.

Career services must establish a vetting process to review resources and vendors.

Career services should:

- Use benchmarking and a network of professionals to evaluate technology and assess trends;
- Provide feedback to vendors on integrity, need, and use of products to push improvement of existing products and development of new products;
- Ensure that technology within career services, including websites, is consistent with and integrated within the college or university technology infrastructure;
- Seek resources to ensure technology is ADA compliant;
- Explore methods of collaboratively funding resources on campus and/or with other institutions;

- Cultivate adequate funds through various means (grants, university funding, partnerships, consortiums, and so forth) to support technology purchases and upgrades as needed; and
- Use campus resources (funding, technology, staffing), when available, to develop or implement products and services.

Specific technology for career services that must be considered includes:

- **Career services websites that provide up-to-date information regarding mission, location, staffing, contact information, programs, and services available to students and other designated clients.** The website should be integrated within the college/university technological infrastructure and include links to appropriate sites both within and external to the institution; and
- **Computer-based and/or online recruiting and employment systems that support the career services mission for part-time, full-time, and internship employment, and, as relevant, for co-op and/or other forms of experiential learning opportunities. These systems include opportunity listings and student resume databases.**

Specific technology for career services that should be considered include:

- Computer-based assessment and computer-assisted career guidance systems that support the mission of career services;
- Social media platforms, apps, and resources;
- Appropriate tools to support virtual advising, programming, and recruiting; and
- Access to wireless internet.

Technology used by career services must ensure student confidentiality and be consistent with legal and ethical standards. Data security and privacy of student records must adhere to the institutional, legal, and technology privacy policies.

Career services should work to ensure alignment with institutional requirements meeting internet data management standards.

VIII. Institutional And External Relations

Career services must develop and maintain productive relationships with relevant institutional stakeholders and external key stakeholders and audiences.

In order to achieve this, career services should:

- Develop institutional support for career development, transition, and employment services for students and other designated clients;
- Share information with key stakeholders, including trustees and governing boards;
- Strive toward strategic long-term partnership development, tracking, and evaluation;
- Participate in relevant campus activities to communicate career services information to students and other campus stakeholders;
- Arrange appropriate programs that use alumni and employer experience and expertise;
- Establish cooperative relationships with other offices and services to support mutual referrals, exchange of information, sharing of resources, institutional priorities such as accreditation reviews, and other program functions;
- Create and effectively use advisory groups, which may include employers, alumni, faculty/staff, and students;
- Consult with legal counsel on contracts, internal documents, and policies;
- Raise issues and concerns with the institution's legal counsel regarding compliance with employment laws as they pertain to recruitment and hiring of students and alumni;
- Encourage staff participation in professional associations and community activities related to career and employment issues;

- Participate in professional staff development activities; and
- Develop and maintain cooperative relationships with vendors and other service providers.

When addressing areas of communication and information sharing, career services should:

- Inform and educate units that are responsible for communicating with external stakeholders and audiences on career-related information, topics, and programs;
- Inform and educate the administration and faculty on topics concerning employment requirements, labor market trends, specific jobs, and employment that may be related to academic planning and curriculum development;
- Provide outcomes information and reports to the academic administration, trustees, faculty, and key offices of the institution regarding career services for students, employers, and alumni;
- Provide feedback and data to faculty, administrators, and students on the preparation of graduates for employment and undergraduate, graduate, and professional school to aid curriculum development and individual career planning;
- Encourage dialogue among employers, faculty members, trustees, and administrators concerning career issues and trends for students and graduates;
- Provide families with information and relevant data on career education programs and services and key results related to employment and graduate study outcomes for recent graduates and alumni;
- Serve as an institutional resource for the media and provide key information and data related to career development, labor market trends, and employment outcomes as appropriate and in accordance with institutional policies; and
- Work with appropriate institutional offices to market the unit's services and impact.

Career services should have procedures and guidelines consistent with institutional policies that may include but are not limited to:

- Communicating with the media;
- Contracting with external organizations for delivery of programs and services;
- Cultivating, soliciting, and managing gifts;
- Applying to and managing funds from grants; and
- Safeguarding and managing student data.

IX. Employer Relations And Recruitment Services

Employers are both vital partners in the educational process and primary customers for college/university career services. Each career services unit must develop policies and practices to ensure the highest quality employer relations and services.

Within the context of these principles, career services must:

- **Develop strategic objectives for employer relations/services and job development that yield maximum and optimal opportunities for students and other designated clients;**
- **Develop, maintain, and enhance relationships with employers that may provide career development, employment opportunities, and educational programming for students and other designated clients;**
- **Enhance customer service and foster improvement by using feedback from employers;**
- **Provide employer feedback to institutional stakeholders and students on the students' preparation for jobs, the curricula, and the hiring process;**
- **Inform, educate, and consult with employers on the nature of services provided;**
- **Provide employment market and trend data to institutional stakeholders to help inform understanding of the economy and its impact on graduates in the marketplace;**
- **Promote employer adherence to professional and ethical standards that serve as conduct models for students and other designated clients; and**
- **Educate employers on appropriate policies and procedures related to recruitment and institutional relations and engagement with student populations.**

In addition, career services should:

- Develop and implement marketing strategies to cultivate employment opportunities for students;
- Optimize opportunities for employers to engage candidates for employment;
- Maximize students' exposure to employers and encourage dialogue among employers and institutional stakeholders concerning career and employment issues while respecting appropriate academic and co-curricular standards;
- Facilitate employer involvement and communication with students and institutional stakeholders;
- Encourage employer participation in evaluative processes such as surveys and rankings;
- Use employers' experiences and expertise in support of institutional activities;
- Perform research on industry and employment market trends;
- Encourage employer involvement in academic and program development; and
- Involve employers in student development.

Career services must ensure equity of access to students and maintain the integrity of that access.

Career services staff should understand the variety and diversity of needs and employment practices among small businesses, large corporations, government agencies, and nonprofit organizations.

Career services must provide employers with the institution's EEO guidelines.

Career services must define the various types of employers it will serve and articulate policies that guide its working relationships with these employers.

Career services must offer a variety of services to employers that bridge the connection between student interests and employer needs.

These should include, but are not limited to, the following types of programs and services:

- On-campus recruiting activities such as career fairs, information sessions, and on-campus interviews;
- Recruiting systems that provide students with timely access to opportunities and, in compliance with privacy regulations and related institutional policies, provide employers with access to student information;
- Employer site visits,
- Meetings with faculty members;
- Information about academic programs;
- Assistance in recruiting diverse student populations;
- Experiential learning options;
- Salary information;
- Advertising and promotional vehicles to reach students;
- Career center advisory board memberships; and
- Individual employer recruiting and college relations consultations.

Career services should:

- Provide information to employers on the institution's operations, enrollment, curricula, and interviewing logistics, e.g., policies, procedures, transportation, lodging;
- Encourage employer participation in career planning courses, career conferences, career and alumni fairs, cooperative education, internships, and other experiential learning;
- Provide information and services to assist recruiters in communicating effectively their opportunities to specific and targeted student populations;

- Encourage employers to list job vacancies on a continuing basis and provide timely information to career services staff on their job offers, salaries, and hires;
- Encourage employer support of the institution, which may include scholarships and other forms of support and engagement; and
- Develop policies for working with third-party recruiting and contract organizations. This may include requiring recruiters to disclose the identities of organizations they represent and agreeing to abide by the ethical guidelines documented in the NACE [***Principles for Ethical Professional Practice***](#).

When institutions have established learning outcomes for student engagement or experiential learning, career services should provide information to direct or educate employers to ensure understanding of learning outcomes.

X. Legal, Policy, and Risk Management

Career services must comply with federal, state, and local laws; regulations; institutional policies; and contracts that relate to their respective responsibilities and professional practices and that pose legal obligations, limitations, risks, and liabilities for the institution as a whole.

For the relevant laws, regulations, and policies, career services must take steps to be sufficiently informed and seek advice from legal counsel or other experts when questions arise that include, but are not limited to:

- **Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (U.S.) or other laws regarding disclosure of student information contained in education records;**
- **Privacy and maintenance of data and records, including those maintained in electronic form by the career services or by another entity acting at its request;**
- **Defamation law regarding references and recommendations on the behalf of students;**
- **Equal employment opportunity laws regarding employment referral practices of the career services unit and others employed by the institution that refer students for employment;**
- **Affirmative action regulations and laws regarding special programs for special student populations;**
- **Regulations and laws regarding disabilities and accessibility;**
- **Labor standards and liability issues pertaining to experiential learning programs, such as the Fair Labor Standards Act (U.S.) and other related laws and regulations;**
- **How to obtain current and accurate work authorization practices in countries other than where the student is authorized to work;**

- **Laws regarding eligibility to work in the United States;**
- **Institutional policy regarding safety standards and practices for students traveling to work or participating in university-sponsored experiential activities;**
- **Laws regarding contracts governing service provided by outside vendors; and**
- **Laws and policies regarding grant applications.**

Career services staff members must exercise due diligence and use reasonable and informed practices to protect students and limit the risk and liability exposure of the institution, its officers, employees, and agents. In this regard, the institution must provide access to risk management resources and legal advice for staff as needed to carry out assigned responsibilities.

The institution must inform career services staff in a systematic and timely fashion about extraordinary or changing institutional policies, legal obligations, and potential liabilities.

Staff members must be informed about the institution's risk and liability insurance coverage, personal liability coverage, and related insurance coverage options and must be referred to external sources if the institution does not provide coverage.

Career services must have written policies and procedures on all relevant operations, transactions, or tasks that have legal and institutional policy implications. These policies and procedures must be approved through appropriate institution processes and published in appropriate documents accessible to those affected by the policy and procedure.

Career services must regularly review policies. The revision and creation of policies must be informed by best practices, available evidence, and policy issues in higher education and the profession.

Career services must have procedures and guidelines consistent with institutional policy for responding to threats, emergencies, and crisis situations. Systems and procedures must be in place to disseminate timely and accurate information to students, other members of the institutional community, and appropriate external organizations during emergency situations.

Career services staff must neither participate in nor condone any form of harassment or activity that demeans people or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

Career services must obtain permission to use copyrighted materials and instruments.

Career services must purchase materials and instruments from legally compliant sources or seek alternative permission from the publisher or owner. References to copyrighted materials and instruments must include appropriate citations.

Career services staff must be knowledgeable about internal and external governance systems that affect programs and services.

Contracts with outside vendors must include adherence to ethics, confidentiality, security, data ownership, data management and retention, and institutional policies, and reflect support of career services' programs, goals, and standards.

XI. Access, Diversity, Equity, And Inclusion

Career services must ensure that services, programs, and resources are provided on a fair and equitable basis and are consistent with laws and institutional policy.

Career services must adhere to the spirit and intent of equal opportunity laws in all activities.

Career services' operating policies and procedures must not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, age, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, neurodiversity, marital status, veteran status, and transfer and/or distance status. Exceptions are appropriate only where provided by relevant law and institutional policy.

Career services must ensure the accessibility of its programs, services, facilities, and resources, including technology, to all students and other designated clients.

Career services should consult with institutional human resources, facilities, technology, and other experts to enhance the accessibility of its programs, services, facilities, resources, and technology.

Career services' mode of operation, including hours, customer service systems, distance education, and resources, must respond to the needs of all students and designated clients.

Career services must seek to identify, prevent, and/or remedy any discriminatory, unethical, or unlawful practices associated with the delivery of its services.

Career services must have protocols and procedures in place, including consultation with the institutional legal counsel, and, if applicable, with diversity, equity, and inclusion offices, to respond to concerns about discrimination, inequity, and fraudulent or unscrupulous activities by employers using the services.

Career services staff must inform faculty members about legal and ethical issues related to referring or recommending students or other designated clients to employers.

Career services must nurture inclusive environments where commonalities and differences among people are recognized and valued.

Career services must address the characteristics and needs of a diverse population when establishing and implementing policies and procedures.

Career services must enhance student and employer awareness and appreciation of differences by collaborating with the institution's relevant support services, experts, and programs.

Career services must provide educational programs that help students and other designated clients from diverse backgrounds or with special needs to identify and address their unique needs related to career development and employment.

Career services must engage in partnerships and cooperative programming with other offices representing diverse and special populations to ensure appropriate service delivery.

Consistent with its goals and mission, career services must proactively address significant imbalances in student participation relative to the diverse composition of its student body.

Career services must proactively address staff diversity relative to the diverse composition of its student body or designated clients.

Career services should recruit, hire, and retain a diverse staff.

Career services must proactively address changes in demographic profiles and instructional delivery methods to ensure accessible resources, services, and programs.

XII. Ethics

All persons involved in the delivery of career services to students and other designated clients must adhere to the highest standards of ethical behavior as outlined in the National Association of Colleges and Employers' [*Principles for Ethical Professional Practice*](#) as well as any additional professional standards, codes, and best practices that may apply.

In addition to adherence to these standards, leaders/managers must actively provide guidance and education on these standards to all persons involved in providing career services, including, but not limited to, entry-level professionals, support staff, student staff, interns, graduate assistants, faculty, volunteers, employers, and other administrators.

Guidance on ethical rights and responsibilities must also be provided to students and other designated clients and should be included on the career services website.

All career services staff must be aware of and comply with the provisions contained in the institution's human subject research policy and other relevant institutional policies addressing ethical practices and confidentiality of research data concerning individuals.

When handling institutional funds and funds generated through career center activities, all career services staff must ensure that such funds are managed in accordance with established and responsible accounting procedures and the fiscal policies or processes of the institution.

Career services staff must use suitable means to confront and otherwise hold accountable in a timely and thorough manner other staff members who exhibit unethical behavior.

Career services staff members must be knowledgeable about and practice ethical behavior in the use and security of technology, ensuring adherence to related legal standards and institutional policies, including policies regarding accessibility of technology.

Career services staff must be educated about and take appropriate action based on the policies and procedures of handling employers who are conducting business unethically or criminally with students and other designated clients.

Career services staff should use suitable means to confront and otherwise hold accountable employers and partners who exhibit unethical behavior.

Career services staff should be knowledgeable about the general employment market and ethically represent those realities, including any challenges around work authorization, to students and other partners on campus.

Career services staff members must ensure that privacy and confidentiality are maintained with respect to all communications and records to the extent that such records are protected under the applicable laws, regulations, and appropriate statements of ethical practice.

Information contained in students' education records must not be disclosed without written consent except as allowed by relevant laws and institutional policies.

Career services staff must recognize and avoid conflicts of interest in carrying out their responsibilities and recuse themselves whenever necessary.

Career services staff must perform only those duties that conform to the scope of their education, position, competence, and experience.

Career services staff must be educated on how, when, and to whom to refer individuals in need of further assistance.

XIII. Program Evaluation, Assessment, and Research

In support of career services' mission, goals, and student learning and development outcomes, career services must regularly conduct systematic program evaluations, using quantitative and qualitative metrics, to support and improve programs and services, adjust to changing constituent needs, and respond to environmental threats and opportunities.

Core program evaluation focus areas should include:

- Strategic plan;
- Mission;
- Staffing;
- Diversity efforts;
- Recruiting trends; and
- Other areas covered in this document.

Although methods of assessment vary, a sufficient range of measures must be employed to ensure objectivity and comprehensiveness. Data collected must include responses from students, employers, and other affected constituencies. Thorough analyses must be conducted and then applied to decisions that lead to improvement of services.

Career services should employ comparable evaluation methods by consulting and using professional association and peer institutional resources, such as NACE benchmarking surveys, to assist with industry benchmarking and to merge findings for industry wide analyses and reporting.

Career services should collaborate with institutional research units, state agencies, accrediting bodies, academic graduate programs, and other evaluative groups that generate and assess evaluation information to ensure comprehensiveness and quality.

Core program evaluation metrics and methods should include:

- A clearly articulated assessment plan;
- Annual review of goal completion;
- Benchmarking with other institutions to identify best practices;
- Quantitative and qualitative measures of engagement in programs and services;
- Quantitative and qualitative measures of constituent* satisfaction and feedback on all programs and services offered by career services;
- Systematic needs assessment on appropriate constituency to guide program development;
- Impact of career services on retention and degree completion through learning and program outcomes;
- Graduating student, e.g. first destination, surveys at or following graduation; and
- Alumni follow-up surveys at regular intervals.

Every five to seven years, using the NACE Professional Standards, career services should conduct both an internal review , i.e., self-study, and external review.

Career services must evaluate periodically how well it complements and enhances the institution’s stated mission and educational effectiveness.

Career services should identify and pursue opportunities to support the institution’s improvement plans and accreditation efforts.

Career services must develop an assessment plan to improve career-related student learning and development outcomes.

Career services should use NACE and other professional relevant resources, e.g., CAS, NASPA, ACPA, NCDA, to develop student learning and development outcomes that address career readiness, career development, and career management, i.e., searching and securing opportunities, as well as institutional strategic plans and accreditation standards.

Career services should prepare and disseminate annual reports and special program evaluation reports to appropriate constituents that address: career services philosophy; mission, goals, and objectives; programs and services; activities/outcomes; and graduate follow-up information.

Career services should gather, participate in, promote, and/or conduct relevant research on career development; academic success; institutional issues, e.g., admissions and retention; student learning outcomes; employment trends; and career interests.

** Constituents may include students, faculty, staff, employers, alumni, and others.*

Appendix: History of Professional Standards for Career Services

The National Association of College and Employers (NACE), then known as the College Placement Council (CPC), formulated a statement of ethical guidelines for recruiter organizations, college career services practitioners, and students as early as 1957, just a year after the establishment of the organization. (That publication has undergone a number of revisions and is today's [*Principles for Ethical Professional Practice*](#).) It was much later, however, that the question of standards was addressed. In *Career Counseling and Placement*, published by CPC in 1970, Everett W. Stephens argued for the establishment of national standards for the profession. Subsequently, a CPC Committee on Professional Standards crafted *Professional Standards for Career Counseling and Placement*, which was published in 1975.

Beginning in 1980, members of 22 professional associations in higher education student services and student development, under the aegis of the Council for the Advancement of Standards, began work on the development of standards. This resulted in the publication of the *CAS Standards and Guidelines for Student Services/Student Development* in 1986. That publication included general standards, applicable across all areas, as well as functional area standards, which included standards and guidelines for career planning and placement.

By the 1990s, career services practitioners recognized that the profession had evolved into one with many new dimensions that the CAS standards had not addressed. In 1992, the CPC Board of Governors appointed a task force to study the issues of standards for measuring and reporting the quality of services offered by career services offices and to develop a method for self-assessment. The work of that task force culminated in the *NACE Sourcebook for Conducting Evaluations and Measurements of Career Services*, which was published in 1995.

Later in 1995, another task force was constituted to develop professional standards for career services; its work resulted in the *Professional Standards for College and University Career Services*, which was approved by the NACE Board of Governors in 1998. Through the efforts of the NACE representatives to the CAS board, most of the 1998 NACE standards were incorporated into the 2001 and 2003 revisions of the CAS standards.

In 2004, a NACE task force was appointed to review and revise the *Professional Standards for College and University Career Services* and its companion workbook. The 2006 edition of the standards and workbook were approved by the NACE Board of Directors in 2006. At that time, the NACE Board also decided to formalize the review and revision process to provide for regular reviews on an every two-to-three year cycle. Consequently, the NACE standards and workbook were reviewed and updated again in 2008 (published 2009); in 2012-13 (published in 2014); and in 2015-16 (published in 2016).

In fall 2018, the College and University Professional Standards Review Team was tasked with updating the standards and workbook. Following precedent, the team was mindful of the current landscape as it undertook its review and revisions. Consequently, the team worked to ensure that the resulting standards and workbook support the evolution of career services, reflecting the ever-increasing emphasis on accountability and outcomes; changes in technology, its place in career services, and the challenges and opportunities it provides; and the rise of new initiatives, including career readiness.

The revised Standards and workbook were approved by the Board in July 2019.

