

Making the most of your time with a Careers Adviser



At some stage during your studies and beyond, there may be an occasion when you realise that a discussion with a careers adviser might be useful. Not everyone wants or needs to do this but if you do take the opportunity, this guide is designed to help you to decide whether it would be useful to see a careers adviser and to gain the most benefit from that meeting.

➤ What can I expect when I see a careers adviser?

A careers interview is a conversation with a purpose which is agreed with you from the start. It is a confidential one-to-one discussion with a careers adviser who is here to help you.

Whatever you wish to discuss, you can be sure that the adviser will be objective and impartial, supportive and non judgmental.

During the meeting, the adviser will listen carefully to you and will offer guidance by asking questions, making notes, challenging ideas, giving advice and recommending useful resources. These appointments generate an electronic summary and agreed action plan which is emailed to you.

Whilst we also offer 15 minute drop in sessions for quick queries (which do not require to be pre-booked), these are only really suitable for quick questions and initial information and advice. Detailed and confidential careers discussions can only occur during the longer appointments.

➤ What sorts of topics are often discussed?

Some students have specific questions to ask but many wish to talk through ideas and concerns which may include:

- I don't know what to do next. Can you help me?
- How can I find more information relating to my interests and make good use of it?
- How can I improve my chances of success at an interview?
- I've looked into job ideas but don't know which way to go.
- My CV needs checking - and how do I write a covering letter to go with it?
- I am finding it difficult to complete an online application form that is asking for examples of my skills.
- I am not sure this course is the right one for me.
- How can I gain some relevant work experience?
- I have applied for a few jobs but didn't get an interview. What is going wrong?

➤ What is the careers adviser's role?

Our team of careers advisers are experienced professionals who provide focused and specialist guidance in relation to your career planning and decision making. In addition, they can advise on other related issues such as diversity. To supplement our guidance interviews, they undertake a range of career related activities including delivering workshops, seminars and lectures, working with specific departments, liaising with employers, organising visits and events and writing guidance materials. During a careers interview the adviser will:

- Negotiate and agree with you the structure of the interview
- Focus on your needs and particular requirements
- Help you to recognise what stage you are at in your decision making
- Provide practical feedback and encouragement
- Refer you to specialist information or services if appropriate

Careers advisers will **not**:

- Tell you what to do with your life
- Offer a 'quick fix' solution to your future
- Judge you or your ideas
- Find a job for you
- Make decisions for you
- Rewrite CVs, letters and applications on your behalf
- Provide a spelling/grammar check service (although they will mention if there are errors)

➤ How can you prepare yourself before seeing a careers adviser?

By thinking about what you wish to gain from your career discussion **before** it takes place, you can greatly increase the benefits of the time spent with the adviser. By taking part in and committing to your own career planning, you are beginning to manage your future and take control. Try one or more of the following activities:

- Plan ahead - give yourself time to organise career related activities.
- Ask yourself: 'what have I done so far about my next steps?' Make a note.
- Ask yourself: 'What am I hoping to get from this discussion?' Make a note.
- Be on time - why miss out on 5 minutes of your meeting?
- Depending on the nature of your query, gather together relevant items such as a hard copy of your CV, an application form, any information you already have - bring them with you.
- Read the web page related to your specific department on the Careers Service website www.aber.ac.uk/careers/subjectdo/ -it should give you something to think about before your discussion.
- Follow up on any action identified at a previous interview you may have had.

➔ Careers Service

We are here to help you - our services are available to undergraduates, graduates and postgraduates at all stages of study and beyond. Our friendly and experienced staff in our office in the Students' Union will be happy to arrange a booked appointment with a careers adviser and to assist you with anything you are not sure about eg informing you of how to access the drop in sessions or advising on other services we offer.

Let them know in advance if you have any special requirements or if you need to rearrange an appointment. By letting them know that you **cannot** attend an appointment, that slot can be offered to someone else.

There is no limit to the number of times you can see a careers adviser but you can often do some useful preparation work such as reading relevant information, accessing our web pages, using our e-learning modules (www.aber.ac.uk/careers/casmod), requesting help from the Information Manager and using some of the many guides such as 'CVs and Covering Letters' and 'Interviews'.

To go on improving the quality of the service we offer, you may be asked to complete a feedback form. On occasion, we may ask if you would mind if a second adviser sits in on the discussion to observe your adviser. Your co-operation is appreciated but feel free to decline if asked.

➔ How do I arrange a careers interview?

Call in to the Careers Service in the Students' Union (next door to the shop) or phone us on 01970 622378.



Location and Contact Details

➔ Careers Service

Students' Union (next to the Union shop)
 Open Monday–Thursday 10 am–5 pm and
 Friday 10 am–4 pm
 Closed 1 pm–2 pm during vacations
 Tel: 01970 622378
 E-mail: careers@aber.ac.uk