

THE ROLE OF THE CENTRE FOR CAREER EDUCATION

The Career Development Process

Career development is an ongoing and dynamic process. In today's complex world, career planning is no longer about choosing one right career. Rather, individuals must be prepared to constantly assess their workplace interests and preferences, explore new directions, and build on their career competencies. "The catch phrase of the old paradigm 'What do you want to be when...?' focuses on destination, and loses relevance in a world in which most workers will experience regular job, even industry changes. It is no longer realistic, if it ever was, to expect young people to choose an occupation for life".¹ Hence, individuals are constantly making career decisions.

This reality coupled with the increasing demands from the government and the public for post-secondary institutions to report on the career success of their graduates, means that the University must support the development of career self-management skills among our students. This means "equipping people with the skills to make the myriad choices necessary through out their lives to become healthy, self-reliant citizens, able to cope with constant change in rapidly changing labour markets and maintain balance between life and work roles"². Specifically we must help our students to:

- Identify the possibilities in their lives by learning about their unique self, exploring career options and developing skills for seeking out and creating opportunities;
- Reflect on their university experience and identify and articulate the skills and knowledge areas they are developing.

In short, "career management equips people to make good choices throughout their lives. The aim is to help people become self-reliant, allowing them to enjoy personal satisfaction and fulfillment while contributing as fully as possible to our ever-changing society."³

Role of Career Development for Students

It has previously been identified that every Windsor graduate will have the ability to demonstrate:

- Team-building, leadership and interpersonal skills;
- The responsible use of ethical principles;
- The application and integration of knowledge;
- Research skills and the ability to access, retrieve and evaluate information;
- Advanced literacy numeracy and communication skills;
- Creativity, critical thinking and problem-solving skills;
- A commitment to continuous learning.

It is not enough for students to develop these attributes – they must recognize that they do in fact possess them, and that they developed them through their experiences at the University of Windsor. Further, they must be able to articulate them and apply them in the workplace. Given the changing nature of the labour market, they must continue to develop these attributes over the course of their career, contributing to lifelong learning.

¹ *Career Management Paradigm Shift: Prosperity for Citizens, Windfall for Government*, Philli S. Jarvix, Vice-President, Partnership Development, National Life/Work Centre, Ottawa, Canada, March 4, 2003.

² *Career Management Paradigm Shift: Prosperity for Citizens, Windfall for Government*, Philli S. Jarvix, Vice-President, Partnership Development, National Life/Work Centre, Ottawa, Canada, March 4, 2003.

³ *Management Paradigm Shift: Prosperity for Citizens, Windfall for Government*, Philli S. Jarvix, Vice-President, Partnership Development, National Life/Work Centre, Ottawa, Canada, March 4, 2003.

The Structure of Career Support Services at the University of Windsor

The University of Windsor currently provides career support services in three distinct ways:

- 1) Centrally through the Centre for Career Education.
- 2) The Faculty of Law has its own targeted career services office as does the Odette School of Business (Odette Career and Placement Services). These offer support specialized to the discipline and provide students with program-specific information and contacts.
- 3) There are certainly many career-related activities and events that are provided autonomously by student organizations and individual departments. These typically vary from year to year.

The role of the Centre for Career Education differs from these other career support services in that it is less about the provision of detailed, program-specific information, programs and contacts and more about assisting any student with exploring and creating successful careers.

The Unique Role of the Centre for Career Education

The Centre for Career Education contributes to the holistic education of students and complements academic programs of study by supporting a wide range of career-related programs and resources with an emphasis on excellence in learning from experience. We guide students through the career development process including the exploration of personal workplace preferences and strengths, the development of career competencies, and the construction of a career plan (Centre for Career Education Mission Statement).

The Centre for Career Education is seeking to help students develop the skills they will need to manage their own career development processes. We help all students:

- Better understand and value their degree programs;
- Strengthen their classroom experiences through experiential learning;
- Develop career competencies and an understanding of workplace realities;
- Construct a career plan;
- Develop the confidence and skills to manage a lifetime of career decisions.

In addition, the Centre for Career Education plays an integral role in the development of employment readiness skills such as team-building, leadership and interpersonal skills; the application and integration of knowledge; and creativity critical-thinking and problem solving skills.

Our programs, services and resources cover issues related to:

- Employment searches;
- Career options and exploration;
- Self-assessment of career and workplace interests and preferences;
- Workplace and labour market information;
- Competency development and employment preparation.

We provide a broad range of career programming, services and resources to students including:

- Individual support for students' unique questions and concerns (career and employment advising, career testing, resume critiques, interview practice sessions, etc);
- On-line information and educational tools;
- Experiential education programs including the Volunteer Internship program, the administration of co-operative education and support for course-based practicums;
- Job postings for full-time, part-time, summer, contract and international opportunities;
- Career-related events;
- Class presentations and workshops on career-related topics;
- Links to external community based resources, such as Workforce WindsorEssex.

Where time and resources allow, the Centre for Career Education will work collaboratively with academic programs to offer program-specific information and programming.

Eligibility for Service

Since the career development process is relevant to all students, the Centre for Career Education is open to and benefits all students, regardless of discipline. Certain programs, such as co-operative education programs have specific eligibility criteria as determined by the appropriate Faculties.

In addition, we will work with recent graduates, up to one year after graduation.

The Career for Career Education's Role with Employers

To support students' job searches and career development, the Centre for Career Education facilitates connections between students and employers in a variety of ways including:

- Acting as the central contact for employers interested in hiring Windsor students and recent graduates;
- Providing mechanisms for employers to post job opportunities and promote themselves on campus;
- Developing quality experiential learning placements that provide students with appropriate opportunities for skill development and personal growth;
- Providing opportunities for employers to contribute to the career development of Windsor students through information sessions, workshops, etc.);
- Organizing events that enable students and employers to discuss career paths and employment opportunities (such as the annual Job Fair).

Outside the Scope of the Centre for Career Education

Given limited resources, the Centre for Career Education has chosen to focus on supporting the holistic education of University of Windsor students within the career development context.

At the current time, we are unable to support the following activities:

- Focussed development of job opportunities for our graduates.
- Services to alumni for more than one year following graduation.

It is also important to recognize that we will continue not to offer placement services. These services which involve matching student with prospective employers were once a traditional activity of career centres but are now uncommon at University career offices.

Summary of Key Points

- The Centre for Career Education's primary mission is to help students develop career self-management skills (employability skills, knowledge of self, career competencies, understanding of workplace realities, etc.).
- The Centre for Career Education supports the academic mandate of the University by:
 - Helping students to better understand and value their academic development within the context of career development;
 - Supporting a variety of experiential learning programs including co-operative education.
- The Centre for Career Education is open to all students across all disciplines.
- The Centre for Career Education acts as the central contact for employers interested in recruiting Windsor students and recent graduates.
- The Centre for Career Education assists students in finding opportunities with the employers of their choice.

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This document is based on a similar one developed by the Career Centre at York University. With their permission, it has been modified and customized to the Centre for Career Education at the University of Windsor.