

What is Career Guidance and What to Expect from a Career Guidance Interview

Career Guidance are services provided by a Professional Career Development Practitioner, intended to assist individuals, of any age and at any point throughout their lives, to make educational, training and occupational choices and to manage their careers. To help people to move from a general understating of life and work to a specific understanding of the realistic learning and work options that are open to them.

Whether you are in school making decisions about subject selection or post school destinations, studying at TAFE, Private Training Organisation, completing an Apprenticeship or University or are looking for new career opportunities, at some point you will be offered or will seek out an interview with a professional Career Development Practitioner.

This will help you have a better understanding of what to expect from your interview enabling you to gain maximum benefit from the experience.

It is important to ensure that the Career Development Practitioner working with you has appropriate skills and qualifications and is a Registered CICA Career Practitioner and/or a Professional Member of a CICA Member Association.

What is the guidance interview for?

People can seek career guidance with different career, educational and training-related needs. While at school you may need support with managing your career development journey including making effective subject choices or with weighing up options such as pursuing a course and qualification through Vocational Education and Training or University. You may also need help researching and analysing the vast (and ever changing) range of occupations available as well as current labour market information.

While significant people in your life such as teachers, parents or carers will be able to help with this to some extent, they may only know about the jobs they have held themselves and their knowledge may also be out-of-date. Whatever you need to discuss with your Career Development Practitioner, there are some common features to career guidance which should apply in all cases.



What will it cover?

Most importantly, your career guidance interview is about you. This is your time, and no-one else should be setting the agenda about what should be discussed in your interview.

This does not mean that the Career Development Practitioner will not at times make suggestions regarding options that might be worth considering – they may for example be aware of work or educational opportunities that you were not aware of – but they should never tell you what you should do or treat anything you choose to share during your interview do with anything less than respect.

As individuals we spend a significant amount of our lives in education and/or work and most of us want to engage in learning and work that stimulates and satisfies us, making the best use of our talents and personal qualities. As such we are all entitled to be listened to, acknowledged and supported when exploring something as fundamental as what we choose to do with our lives.

This is not to say however that your Career Development Practitioner will just be listening to you, albeit this is essential. In spite of what the job title suggests, Career Development Practitioners do not give directive 'advice' as such.

Your Career Development Practitioner will ask you questions, but for the most part these will be open questions starting with 'why', 'where' or 'how'. After all, they need to get to know you in order to get a sense of how best to support you and can only do this by asking questions that prompt you to share your qualifications, achievements, anxieties and just generally 'what makes you tick'.

The benchmark of a successful career guidance interview should be that you do the majority of the talking rather than the reverse! As well as this, all professionally trained Career Development Practitioners should maintain impartiality with regard to the different educational or occupational options being explored so that the guidance they offer is never influenced by their own personal opinions.

What will I gain from it?

Professional Career Development Practitioners are trained to work in the best interests of you. They are caring individuals who genuinely want to help people succeed in their goals and maximise their potential.

This is not to say that nothing you share in your career guidance interview will be questioned or challenged. Part of a Career Development Practitioners job is to make sure that you leave your interview with an accurate understanding of your strengths, your areas for development and also the challenges you may face in pursuing any of the options that you explore together.

It may be for example that they will need to challenge any misconceptions or knowledge gaps you may have around certain occupations or different qualifications. They will also help you understand some of the practicalities you will need to consider, such as the typical qualifications needed for entry to certain occupations and the availability (and location) of particular jobs in the current labour market.

