

What to Expect from your Career Guidance Appointment?

You have been booked in for a careers guidance appointment with one of our Careers Advisers. All are fully qualified Level 6/7 Professional Careers Practitioners who will give you impartial advice and guidance. The following information aims to give you a better idea of what to expect from your careers appointment so you can gain the most from the help offered.

What is the guidance appointment for?

- While at school or you may need support with making effective subject choices for your GCSEs or with weighing up the pros and cons of options such as going to College/University versus doing an Apprenticeship for example. You may also need help sifting through the vast (and ever changing) range of occupations available.
- 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with this to some extent, they may only know about the jobs they have held themselves and their knowledge may also be out-of-date.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 Careers Adviser, there are some common features to career guidance which should apply in all cases.

What will it cover?

- Most importantly, your career guidance appointment is about **you**. This is your time, and no-one else should be setting the agenda about what should be discussed in your appointment. This does not mean that your Adviser 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.
- Your Adviser 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 appointment should be that you do the majority of the talking rather than the reverse!
- This is not to say however that your Careers Adviser will just be listening to you, albeit this is essential. In spite of what the job title suggests, as you will have gathered by now that Careers Advisers do not give directive ‘advice’ as such. When we consider that in many other countries and contexts career guidance professionals are often referred to as ‘career counsellors’ or ‘career coaches’, this more accurately hints at the skills you can expect to be used in your interview.

What will I gain from it?

- You will hopefully have noticed by now that professional Careers Advisers are trained to work in the best interests of students; from my own experience I would say that for the most part they are a caring bunch who genuinely want to help people succeed in their goals and maximise their potential.
- This is not to say however that nothing you share in your career guidance appointment will be questioned or challenged. Part of a Careers Adviser’s job is to make sure that you leave your appointment 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.
- Finally, you will come away with an **action plan** which details the action that you need to take to progress in the areas of self-development, career exploration and career management.

Don’t worry if you are not sure where you see yourself in Year 11 or what job you want to do when you are older; Careers Advisers are trained to help students in exactly this situation and can usually help you get to the point where you have some ideas for further exploration at the very least.