

Career Counseling Specialization Field Placement Criteria

Department of Counseling
San Francisco State University

Field placement experience for career counseling may occur in a variety of settings and encompass a range of experiences and activities. This document is intended to provide an overview of how the Department of Counseling at San Francisco State University views career counseling as a practice as well as the types of activities and experiences that qualify as career counseling hours.

The Department of Counseling views career counseling as a practice of counseling with a focus on individual and interpersonal development as well as family and community dynamics as they relate to one's self-concept associated with vocational choice, work, employment, or professional identity. Career counseling encompasses the well-being of the whole individual and how work and career relate to family, life fulfillment, and lifestyle.

Career counseling may take the form of explicit exploration and facilitation of a client's choices regarding career or occupational direction and often involves providing the client with tools and a process for examining their values, skills, interests, and personality style as well as analyzing previous experiences to identify strengths and preferences. In addition, career counseling often involves understanding the world of work, occupational systems, trends in employment, private and public systems, and public policies regarding work. This is all done within the context of understanding and acknowledging cultural and environmental assets and barriers that may influence the client's past, present, and future experiences. Career counseling also may focus on the employment or job search aspect of the process and facilitate clients in developing strong skills in identifying and communicating their strengths and experiences on paper (resume or cover letters) and in person (interviews and networking). Career counseling should be customized to the needs of the client population and thus is best understood as a framework through which a counselor understands and organizes the challenges the client brings and works to help the client shift to a strength-based perspective integrating self-awareness, tools, and knowledge about the work world. Career counselors facilitate clients in identifying and implementing experiments and learning opportunities that allow them to gain a better understanding of themselves and the environments in which they may work. Career counselors become proficient at using formal and informal assessment tools as well as a broad range of technology to facilitate the empowerment of clients to use their strengths and technology.

Because career counseling takes place within the role of career counselor as well as other types of counseling roles, the SFSU Department of Counseling - Career Counseling Specialization believes that it is important for training in career counseling may take place within the context of a variety of roles and counseling foci. In addition, career counselors may likely work in roles that expand beyond traditional career counseling roles, for example, educational counseling, psychotherapy, rehabilitation counseling, school counseling, and other realms. What differentiates a counselor who represents the SFSU Career Counseling Specialization or Emphasis is that they

approaches the counseling work from a career counseling perspective. As such, it is sometimes beneficial for students who expect to work within a setting where they are likely to provide career counseling within the context of those other counseling foci, to engage in tasks that may not be traditionally seen as career counseling. For example, a student who will be practicing in a college setting may need to have expertise in educational planning as well as career decision-making, thus the experience of educational planning may count toward career counseling hours. And, the framework from which the counselor approaches educational planning has, at the counselor's core, a career perspective to this approach. It is expected that students who have career counseling as a specialization or emphasis will learn and implement a perspective of clients and interventions that reflect career counseling theory and practice.

It is essential that internships in career counseling provide the trainee with the opportunity to provide counseling sessions as opposed to solely information giving or coaching on topics such as job search techniques. Although some of the sessions may involve information giving and dissemination of technical knowledge, there must be counseling sessions with more depth requiring relational skills not simply transactional skills. It is possible that some sites may need to design services that interns provide that the regular staff members do not provide if the site does not involve much counseling. Questions about the distinction between counseling-focused sessions versus coaching or informational sessions should be directed to the student's liaison or the DOC Career Counseling Coordinator.

Direct hours:

Focused career counseling placement:

Direct client hours may be accrued in individual counseling, group counseling, teaching and facilitating workshops. In addition, a limited number of hours may be accrued through providing services via email or by telephone. A limited number of hours may also be accrued through activities such as career fairs, tabling, and other events if the intern is actively involved in providing direct services to clients. Hours will count when the focus of individual or group counseling is clearly career development, career counseling, or job search (as described above). Focused career counseling experience is typically gained through placements in college, university, or community career centers or other organizations (e.g., nonprofit organizations) in which career development, career decision-making, or employment are the primary goals of the organization.

Blended career counseling placement:

In addition to the above activities, career counseling may also take place in the context of providing counseling services in a setting where career-related issues are not the primary focus of the setting and where, for some clients, the initial presenting issues or focus is different from career counseling. It is strongly advised that the supervisor have training or experience in career counseling. If this is not available, the student should talk with the supervisor about gaining additional consultation from another staff member who has such expertise.

Examples:

- **College counseling and school counseling** settings: there is often a blend of presenting issues of clients ranging from academic advisement needs (information regarding course requirements or institutional policies) to assistance with decision-making regarding career or major choices. This latter grouping may include issues such as family concerns regarding the client's choice of direction, identity issues regarding one's future, crises regarding academic difficulty, and the potential consequences on the client's life goals. Career counseling integrates the client's decisions and choices regarding their future with their other life or educational decisions. It is important to note that scheduling and course advising is not necessarily career counseling. It does reflect career counseling when facilitating a student's understanding of themselves, their families, and the world of work to make decisions about their longer-term goals.
- **Clinical and personal counseling** settings: career counseling may be seen as helping a client navigate or negotiate conflicting life roles and responsibilities, particularly as they may influence the client's future progress related to employment, professional identity and/or involvement, or choices regarding work, family, and self. This may involve adjusting to transitioning life roles and identities as well as resolving current crises or circumstances interfering in the client's ability to move forward successfully toward a life/work/professional goal.
- **Rehabilitation counseling** settings: career counseling may enter particularly about vocational rehabilitation or assisting clients with vocational identities and/or employment-related issues. Examples of this may include assisting the client in adjusting to changing vocational identities given ability status, facilitating relationships regarding work or future vocational goals, and others.

Other types of Direct Hours:

Groups and classes: Direct hours may be accrued by facilitating or co-facilitating groups or classes focused on career exploration, career decision-making, preparing for employment, team building, conflict resolution, and other topics. Hours are counted by contact hours (not by number of students in the group). In other words, a class of 20 students that meets for three hours per week would be counted as three contact hours per week. There does need to be a minimum number of individual counseling, however, because that is currently what the student is evaluated on by the supervisor and practicum instructor and what the student is learning and practicing in 706/736 (as well as 890/891). Individual client hours weekly for 705/706 and 736 are between 2-8. Individual client hours weekly for 890 and 891 are between 5-12. Individual cases listed in the handbook are important primarily because students need to have enough variety of experience

to choose from for their supervision, and so their supervisor can have an adequate understanding of their counseling skill.

Email: Historically, it has been acceptable to allow a small portion of hours for email or telephone counseling or advising. It must be counted by the contact time though, so if you are assigned a 30-minute block in your schedule to respond to clients by email and you respond to 20 emails in that time, it counts as 30 minutes total (not an hour for each email). It is important though that those emails are substantive in providing guidance, counseling, and advising for students, not appropriate to count scheduling appointments, etc. Also, if you are spending more than 30 minutes a week doing counseling or advising by email, you should report it and consult with your practicum/internship course instructor (student liaison).

Tabling (e.g., outreach, career fairs, etc.)

Some hours may count IF the intern has provided substantive client contact during that time. The hours should be counted in terms of the amount of client contact that takes place and the content of the interaction. For example, if the intern is handing out flyers, this would not be considered counseling contact. However, if the intern is staffing a service or information table and provides on-the-spot advising or counseling, the number of direct contact hours would reflect the amount of time spent with clients. Example: If the intern is scheduled for a two-hour block to staff a resume assistance table and during that time provides resume assistance for two clients (approximately 30 minutes per client), that will count as one hour of contact time.

Indirect hours:

Indirect hours may be accrued through activities such as creating counseling and information materials (e.g., resume or job search guides, guides for using career resources) writing case notes, engaging in supervision or consultation, training sessions, preparing for classes or workshops, etc.

Supervision: It is strongly preferred that the supervisor, or someone on the staff at the placement site, has training and/or experience in career counseling and that the student has regular meetings with that staff person. We understand that this is not always possible and encourage the student to follow up with the practicum instructor, liaison, and Career Counseling Specialization Coordinator if this is the case.

Counting Hours:

Career Specialization: Students who have career counseling as their specialization must complete at least 700 hours of internship, of which one year must be in a field placement in which the main focus is career counseling, career services, or employment counseling (e.g., a career center). If the placement is in a “blended” setting (career counseling and other type of counseling), the other year of placement should be in a “focused” in a setting in which the counseling addresses career issues including career counseling, or employment counseling. It

is also advisable for students to gain experience in facilitating career workshops or classes.

Career Emphasis: Students who have career counseling as an emphasis must complete 360 of their total 700 hours of field placement in direct career counseling that could be in a “focused” or “blended” site. If one year is in a focused career counseling site (e.g., career center) that will meet the requirement provided the student logs a minimum of 360 hours at that site. If the placement is a blended placement, the student will need to track the number of hours that are providing career counseling, as defined above. If the student is placed in blended sites for both years of internship, it is likely that career hours will need to be accrued over 2 years in order to make 360 hours. The other hours may be counseling that develops the student’s capacity to perform competently as a counselor in a blended setting (e.g., school counseling, college counseling, etc.).

Questions for Fieldwork Sites:

- Will the intern be providing “focused” or “blended” career counseling as defined in this document?
- If blended, in what ways will the intern engage in career counseling (please specify all possible), for example, facilitating career or major decision workshops, providing individual counseling that includes attention to career decisions, life planning, life-career transitions, etc.?
- What percentage of the direct client hours will include career counseling-related activities (estimate)?
- What percentage of the indirect client hours will include career counseling-related activities (estimate)?
- Will the intern have the opportunity to receive supervision or consultation from a counseling professional who has expertise in career counseling?
- Will the student be able to engage in sessions with clients that entail substantive “counseling” rather than solely information giving or dissemination of technical knowledge?

Prepared by: Rebecca Toporek

Last edited by Elif Balin, October 24, 2024,
Career Counseling Specialization Coordinator

For questions, please contact:
ebalin@sfsu.edu

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