

# Talking About Careers with Your Students

To be hired into professional-level jobs most students will need to obtain supplemental career experiences and skills in addition to their Bachelor's degree. Careers and job searching have changed significantly over the last five years. For instance, there has been a dramatic rise of robots (known as Applicant Tracking Systems) used to sort resumes, and employers expect new hires to arrive with relevant experiences in hand and already trained.

## I Do Want to Talk about Careers with My Students

It is okay to tell students that career prep is not your knowledge area.

**Ask open-ended questions** such as: "What is in your future after you graduate?" or, "What kind of jobs or careers have you been considering?"

You don't have to be a Career Counselor - just **listening and being supportive can be immensely helpful.**

If they say they don't know what they should do, and/or ask you what career they should pursue, just **keep asking questions.** Sometimes asking what careers they have considered but dismissed (and "Why?" after each answer) can reveal avenues and themes they might not have paid attention to previously.

**Know about the career resources available** both online (<http://www.umass.edu/hfa/careers>) and in-person (appointments and workshops are offered at the HFA Advising and Career Center, E202 South College). Perhaps your department's website has some career resources and/or links as well. You can request hard copy handouts on career-related information from the Advising and Career Center to give to your students.

## I Do NOT Want to Talk about Careers with My Students

It is okay to tell students that career prep is not your knowledge area. Students sometimes feel "passed along a chain," so consider adding that you are referring them specifically to career advising specialists.

As appropriate, steer your students toward the career resources available both in-person and online (<http://www.umass.edu/hfa/careers>) Appointments and workshops are offered at the HFA Advising and Career Center, E202 South College. Perhaps your department's website has some career resources and/or links as well. You can request hard copy handouts on career-related information from the Advising and Career Center to give to your students.

## In either case, consider saying...

"It's never too early to go to the Career Center."

- Students need supplemental experiences such as internships to prepare for the world after graduation. A short internship – even one unrelated to their major or career interests – during the first year is a good way to begin that process, but more may be needed depending upon the student's career goals.

"You will need to learn how to customize each resume and cover letter to the position for which you are applying."

- Resume robots (Applicant Tracking Systems) do not read cover letters and often use word matching to sort through resumes. Resumes must be customized to a position or applying online will probably be a waste of time. Cover letters are only read by humans after an initial screening by robots.

"My career has been good to me, but there could be many other jobs you could do."

- Depending upon how long ago you got your position, either the process or the position may be completely different or non-existent. Your advisee might not be able to follow your path even if they wanted.

**Would you like to continue this conversation about providing career advising to your students?**

Email or call Caroline Gould, Director of HFA Career Development Services, [clgould@umass.edu](mailto:clgould@umass.edu), 413-545-6257

