

Considerations for Developing a Career Course for Credit

Looking Ahead

- Are there upcoming academic mergers that would necessitate or open the door for a career course?
- Would a career course help meet federal, state, or regional institutional initiatives for career services?
- Is there a need for specialized or additional support for a specific student population?
- Is there a need to supplement current career development offerings or services?
- Would top personal and/or university goals or missions be fulfilled through the addition of a career course?

Initials Stages

- What are the possible goals (outputs/outcomes) for the course?
- Who is the leader for this career development project?
- Is data from surveys or focus groups needed for institutional investment?
- Are there existing career courses on campus that could help or hinder a course proposal?
- What is the timeline for the implementation of the course?
- Is a pilot or a tried course a possibility?
- To whom would a proposal for the course be distributed or submitted?
- Are academic unit and student affairs leaders supportive?
- What is the level of support for the career course relative to other courses?
- Is instructional consultation and support available on campus?
- What curriculum committees will approve the course?
- Does the course's administrative location make a difference in course approval, marketing, or funding?

Potential Stakeholders/Support

- Academic units/faculty?
- Academic advisors?
- Student organizations? (e.g., the student government association)
- Top institutional personnel? (president, deans, department chairs, etc.)
- Parent organizations?
- Graduate students? (e.g., teaching assistants)
- Career services personnel?
- "First Year Experience" offerings?
- Local employers for internships/panels/guest speakers?
- Resources (books, journal articles) on teaching career courses?
- Career services professionals with experience teaching career courses?

Course Schedule

- How many times a year will the course be offered? How many sections?
- What are the best times for students? (e.g., avoid 8 a.m.)
- What are the best times for instructors?
- What are the best times for facility use? (e.g., classrooms, career center)
- How many times will the class meet per week and for how long?

Funding and Budget

- What institutional policies affect the collection and distribution of collected fees?
- How will the course be funded? One source? Multiple sources?
- Could course costs be reduced through ties with existing programs? (e.g. graduate TAs)
- Are there “outside” grants or funding for career initiatives or special populations available?
- Are there rules regarding the distribution of funds generated by non-instructional staff?
- What plans are in place for growth and future funding?
- Can lab fees be charged for consumable materials?

Course Structure

- Who is the class for? Entering or enrolled students? Open registration or targeted for groups of students? Who has priority? How is this determined?
- Will the course be an elective or a required course? Required in one or more majors?
- Will the class be offered for variable credit?
- Is the course available through continuing education or for distance students?
- Is the class delineated, focused, or comprehensive? (e.g., career exploration & employability skills)
- Will the course be offered as an online option? Partially online?
- Does the course meet general education requirements?
- Will the course be “a service” (e.g., supplement career counseling) or more focused on content (e.g., knowledge based)?
- How large with the class(es) be?
- Will the class have an experiential learning component? (e.g., a required internship)

Theory/Assessment

- How will theory be incorporated in the course?
- What theory/theories will be used? (e.g., single, non-explicit, eclectic)
- What role will formal assessment play in the course?
- Who will pay for assessments? (e.g., students, department, etc.)
- How will assessment be administered? (e.g., through the career center or online)
- Is there a group rate available for assessments through the publisher?
- How will be the student’s theory assimilation be assessed? (e.g., journal)

Course Instructors

- Regular faculty?
- Professional staff in counseling, career services, or advising?
- Graduate students?
- Adjuncts?
- Team-teaching?
- Experts in various areas? (e.g., marketing)
- Assigned duty or overboard? (extra duty)
- Instructor training and/or coordination across multiple sections?

Career Center Connections

- To what extent will the career center serve as a “laboratory” for the course?
- To what extent will employers be connected? (e.g., recruiters used as guest presenters)
- Can the course be used to market career services and programs? (e.g., internships opportunities)
- Who/how will you communicate with career center regarding class needs?
- What career center events might affect usage or access to career center resources?

Marketing the Course/Management

- What is the need for marketing?
- Direct marketing to students? Which ones? How?
- Academic advisors, career center, and professional student services staff?
- Faculty and academic departments? (e.g., academic course catalogs)?
- Orientation & new student programs?
- Websites and links?
- Parents?
- Targeted students or open enrollment? How will this be done?
- What happens to students not admitted?

Course Materials and Text

- Will the course materials be instructor developed vs. published materials?
- Will extra credit be offered? How will this relate to career center activities?
- Will the majority of the assignment be in-class or out-of-class?
- Do course activities provide opportunities for a variety of learning styles?
- How is the “buy-in” of students assured?
- What is the role of technology in the course?
- How will Internet & distance learning be incorporated into the course?
- What types of activities would be best for the population? (e.g., journaling for communication majors)
- Can materials be utilized from the main college library or career center collections?
- What are the grading procedures? (e.g., performance contracts, classroom tests)
- Are the course materials validated in independent, refereed research reports?
- Do the course materials include products or activities with established validity and reliability?

Course Evaluation

- Will there be student ratings of satisfaction and quality of instruction?
- Does the course have independent evaluators?
- Will the course use standardized instruments to assess value? (e.g., Career Thoughts Inventory)
- Will the course have a review of retention rates over short and long term periods?
- Will there be a strategic review of course? How, when, who?
- Can/how will research data be collected in the course? To whom can it be distributed?
- How will course success and value be conveyed back to stakeholders?
- How can career services/employers benefit from these students with new “career” skills? (e.g. direct recruiting)
- To what extent do course evaluations require IRB review?

Other Individual Considerations?

Dorsett, K., Allen, D., and Osborn, D. (2011, July). *Teaching Career Development: A Look at Career Courses, Past and Present*. Presented at the National Career Development Association Annual Conference. San Antonio, Texas. Adapted from: Reardon, R. *Career courses in U.S. universities*. PowerPoint presentation. Retrieved June 11, 2011 from: www.career.fsu.edu/documents/chinacourse08.ppt

For further information, please visit the Center for the Study of Technology in Counseling and Career Development at: <http://www.career.fsu.edu/techcenter/>