

# Strategies for Developing, Managing, and Evaluating a Successful Career Course for 45 Years

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## Considerations for Developing a Career Course\*

### Initial Assessment

- Are there upcoming academic transitions that would necessitate or open the door for a career course?
- Would top university or personal goals be fulfilled through the addition of a career course?
- Would a career course help meet federal/state/regional institutional initiatives for career services?
- Is there a need for specialized or additional career support for specific student populations?
- Is there a need to supplement current career development offerings or services?
- What are the learning outcomes for the course?
- Can data from surveys or focus groups be used for institutional support?
- Are there existing career courses on campus that could serve as a model and/or duplication of effort?
- What is a potential timeline for implementing a course?
- Is a pilot version of a career course a possibility?
- To whom would a proposal for the course be distributed?
- What is the level of support for the career course relative to other courses?
- Is instructional consultation and support available on campus?
- Does the course academic “home” make a difference in course approval, marketing, or funding?
- What is the disposition of career services for such a course?

### Potential Stakeholders & Resources

- Academic units/faculty?
- Academic advisors/Enrollment management staff?
- Student organizations? (e.g., student government association)
- Top institutional personnel? (President, Deans, Department Chairs, etc.)
- Parent/family organizations?
- Graduate students? (e.g., teaching assistants)
- Career services personnel?
- “First Year Experience” teachers?
- Local employers for internships, panels, and guest speakers?
- Resources (books, journal articles) on teaching career courses?
- Other career services professionals with experience teaching career courses?

### Course Schedule

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

### Funding and Budget

- What institutional policies affect the collection and distribution of student fees?
- How will the course be funded? Internal or external? One source? Multiple sources?
- Could course costs be reduced through ties with existing programs (e.g., teaching assistants)?
- 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 course growth and future funding?

### 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 credit or noncredit? Variable credit?
- Is the course available through continuing education or for distance students?
- Is the class focused or comprehensive? (e.g., career exploration or just employability skills)
- Will the course be offered as an online option? Hybrid? Self-paced?
- Does the course meet general education requirements?

- Will the course be “a service” course (e.g., to supplement existing career counseling) or more focused on content (e.g., knowledge-based)?
- How large will the class(es) be?
- Will the class have an experiential learning component? (e.g., required internship)
- Who will teach the class? Regular faculty? Professional staff in counseling, career services, or advising? Graduate students? Adjuncts? Team-taught? Subject experts or guest lecturers?
- How do the institutional accreditation requirements impact who teaches the course, e.g., must have demonstrated content knowledge or years of experience?
- How will the course be marketed? To students? Academic advisors and professional student services staff? Faculty and academic departments? Orientation and new student programs? Web sites and links? Parents?

### **Theory & Assessment**

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

### **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)
- How will the course be used to market career services and programs? (e.g., career fairs, workshops)
- Who will communicate with the career center regarding class needs?
- What career center events might affect usage or access to career center resources?

### **Course Materials, Activities, & Text**

- Will the course materials be instructor developed vs. published materials?
- Will extra credit options be offered through the course? (e.g., complete a career portfolio)
- Will the majority of the completed assignments be in-class or out-of-class?
- Do course activities provide opportunities for a variety of learning styles?
- What types of learning activities are best for the population?
- How is the “buy-in” of students assured?
- What is the role of technology in the course?
- What is the use of library materials in the main college library or career center?
- 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 and activities with established validity and reliability?
- How is the campus course management system (e.g., Blackboard, Canvas) integrated into the course?

### **Course Evaluation**

- Will there be student ratings of satisfaction and quality of instruction?
- Will the course have independent evaluators?
- Will the course use standardized instruments to assess outputs? (e.g., Career Thoughts Inventory)
- Will the course managers analyze retention/graduation rates over short and long term periods to assess course outcomes?
- Will there be a strategic review of course? How, when, and by who?
- How will research data be collected? To whom will it be distributed?
- How will course success and value be conveyed to stakeholders?

\*Adapted from Ledwith, K., Freeman, V., Fiore, E., Lenz, J., & Reardon, R. (2014). A course for student success: Strategies for designing and delivering effective career classes. National Career Development Association, Long Beach, CA.

For copies of the PPT and related paper visit: <http://www.career.fsu.edu/tech-center/resources/presentations/ncda-presentations>

For more information on FSU career course visit: <http://www.career.fsu.edu/students/plan-your-career/sds-3340-introduction-to-career-development>