



# UNIVERSITY OF MONTEVALLO Career Development Center

## STUDENTS | ALUMNI Official Policy Statement

### MISSION & GOALS

**Mission:** The University of Montevallo Career Development Center enhances student success by providing innovative educational programs, services, and resources that empower students to explore, define, and pursue meaningful employment and thrive in an ever-changing job market and workplace.

**Vision:** As a result of a comprehensive career planning and professional development process, integral to the overall college experience, all UM students will be personally responsible, professionally focused, self-directed, well prepared, fully equipped, and actively sought by employers.

**Model:** Career development is a life-long learning process of exploration and decision-making and is best conceptualized by the following model: Explore (Exploring personal strengths and life direction), Examine (Researching options and choosing a career path), Engage (Getting involved and gaining experience in activities relevant to a chosen career), Execute (Pursuing and obtaining meaningful career opportunities).

**Values:** We seek to provide professional, comprehensive, innovative, high quality and compassionate services to all of our clients. We encourage informed and responsible decision-making regarding career and life goals. We strive to provide a safe, inclusive and affirming environment that is respectful and supportive of our diverse community. We endeavor at all times to act with integrity and honesty and to adhere to high standards of professional and ethical conduct and fair and equitable practices. We believe in empowering students to be independent, self-directed, and self-reliant career planners. We promote experiential education opportunities and a philosophy of career exploration and experience-based learning. We value collaborative efforts through internal teamwork and external partnerships.

### CLIENT SERVICES

**Services Provided:** The UM Career Development Center provides individual career services for students, alumni, faculty, and staff of the University of Montevallo. Professional services include counseling, consultation and coaching related to career and life planning, transitions and changes, personal and professional assessment, career testing, career exploration, decision making, goal setting, job market research, graduate school preparation, workplace issues, career transition, job search strategies, networking techniques, interview preparation, and resume writing.

**Confidentiality:** The client's privacy will be maintained. All spoken, written, and recorded data concerning each session are considered confidential and will not be divulged to any person, group, or authority without the client's expressed (written or verbal) consent, unless disclosure is compelled by exceptional circumstances. Exceptional circumstances include, for example, a court ordered disclosure in a legal proceeding or in response to a subpoena, information revealed to group members in group therapy sessions in which participation is voluntarily, when the information disclosed relates to possible abuse, neglect or exploitation of a minor or defenseless person, or when communication relates to a threatened crime or the reasonably likely possibility that the client plans to cause harm to him/herself or others. Also, an exception to confidentiality is recognized regarding information related to on-campus assault incidents. In the case of an imposed referral, sanction or assignment requiring a report to an advisor, faculty member, or staff member, the client will be asked to sign a release form.

**Initial Appointment:** At the first appointment, clients will be required to complete an intake form. During the initial session, the counselor and client will discuss the presenting concern or predicating issues for which the appointment was made. The counselor will discuss with the client the manner in which the UM Career Development Center will best be able to provide the kind of services needed and specify the limitations and parameters of that service. When the UM Career Development Center is unable to provide the service needed or requested, any appropriate referral will be made.

**Scheduling Policy:** Meetings with a counselor are by appointment only. Sessions are a maximum of 50 minutes in length, unless otherwise stated. Clients are expected to honor their appointment obligations and are further expected to arrive on time. If a client is unable to keep an appointment, he/she is expected to notify the UM Career Development Center in a timely manner to cancel or reschedule. 24 hours advance notification is recommended.

**Counseling Process:** The client's issues or concerns may not be addressed in a single session and problems may not be solved in just one visit. Clients should be aware that their counseling sessions are part of an ongoing process. Most issues are resolved through a commitment of time and effort. Clients should also understand that they must be active participants in the proceedings, that they are ultimately responsible for their progress, and should assume ownership of the process.

The counseling process seeks to empower clients to effectively make choices, set goals, manage transitions, and implement strategies. It is the intention of the counseling process to equip the client to act independently in his/her own behalf. The counseling process as it exists in an academic setting is intended to be an integral part of an ongoing learning experience. As such, all related activities are meant to provide instruction, teach concepts, and develop skills.

**Student/Client Responsibility:** Meetings with a career counselor are by appointment only. The UM Career Development Center is not able to meet with walk-in clients. Clients are encouraged to be proactive in anticipating their needs and to plan ahead when making appointments to meet with a career counselor. The UM Career Development Center recognizes few emergencies in career-related situations and is typically unable to meet with clients on short notice.

Clients are expected to come to their meetings on time and prepared. Clients are expected to be focused, take responsibility and be accountable. Clients should clearly state their situation, thoroughly discuss their objectives, ask questions, listen carefully, take notes, apply learning, utilize resources, respond to counsel, and complete homework assignments.

Clients arriving late for a scheduled appointment may be asked to reschedule their appointment for another time. While the UM Career Development Center will attempt to salvage the remaining time for tardy clients, late arrivals of 15 minutes or more will be asked to reschedule.

**Resolution:** No guarantees or entitlements are expressed or implied regarding resolution or placement. The counseling relationship may be discontinued and sessions may be ended at the discretion of the client, unless the sessions are the result of an imposed referral or sanction. The UM Career Development Center may, at any time, due to specified conditions, circumstances or actions, determine that a client is not able to benefit from the services provided and may discontinue service to that client.

**Access Denied:** Due to specific improper actions or inappropriate behaviors, students or clients may be denied the access to or use of the services, resources and assistance provided by the UM Career Development Center. Students or clients who are deemed to have committed improper actions or inappropriate behaviors will not be permitted to make appointments to meet with a career counselor, nor will they be permitted to attend any events or activities sponsored by the UM Career Development Center.

Improper actions or inappropriate behaviors include, for example, missing scheduled interview sessions with employers (without acknowledgement, notification, or follow up); repeatedly missing scheduled appointments with the career counselor or the UM Career Development Center staff (without acknowledgement, notification, or follow up); overt rude, impertinent, discourteous or disrespectful behavior to employers or staff members; extreme lack of cooperation with staff or compliance with procedures; or deliberate acts of dishonesty, deceit, or fraud.

Students or clients shall remain in a restricted status indefinitely or until such time as the actuating conditions or circumstances have been resolved as determined by the UM Career Development Center Director.

## PHILOSOPHICAL UNDERSTANDING

**Career Orientation:** There is a difference between a job and a career. And there is a difference between job hunting and career planning. The college track student is reminded to be intentional about his or her career planning efforts and deliberate about adopting techniques and strategies that will foster a professional career orientation that is over and above a less sophisticated job orientation.

**Proactive Approach:** Students and clients need to be proactive, plan ahead, and begin early establishing a relationship with their college career center. A career is too important to be tended to only under desperation circumstances and in a state of panic. It is not wise to solicit help from the career center on short notice. It is not advisable that clients wait until the last minute to address any component of their career planning or job search process.

**Ongoing Process:** Career planning is a process, not a one-time act. It is multifaceted and progressive. To be successful in their career pursuit, clients will need to understand that important things in life take time and require planning. One visit to the career center will not solve all their problems, nor will it equip them with everything they need to be effective in the attainment of their career goals.

**Beyond the Degree:** A degree alone will not guarantee a lucrative career upon graduation. In order to be a serious candidate in today's competitive job market, students will need to extend their education beyond the classroom and expand their experience beyond the degree. Students must get involved in extracurricular activities, relevant clubs, and internships that can provide opportunities to gain experience before graduation.

**Goal Oriented:** The more goal-oriented students are, the more likely they are to obtain career success. Once students explore their range of career options, they should be encouraged to set realistic and attainable career goals. Without some notion of where they want to go and what they want to do, students will lack the sense of focus and direction necessary for career success. Choosing their career goal before they choose their academic major is oftentimes more advisable.

**Active Participation:** To ensure they are adequately prepared and fully equipped, clients will need to take full advantage of the services offered and actively participate in the various programs, events and activities sponsored by the career center. Clients' attendance at career workshops, career fairs, information sessions, and other career-related events provides them the tools necessary to effectively manage their career.

**Professional Growth and Maturity:** College is an appropriate time for students to begin thinking and acting like professionals. If they intend to pursue a serious career, it will be necessary for them to devote adequate time and energy to such critical details as professional attire, professional behavior and attitude, etiquette, employer expectations, workplace culture, networking techniques, prospecting techniques, negotiation techniques, job market research methods, job search strategies, interview preparation, and resume writing skills. Too often, young candidates head out into the job market with no training in any of these important areas, and they suffer the consequences.

**Assume Responsibility:** Clients will need to take responsibility for their own career planning and job search efforts. It is not the role of the campus career center to find a job for their clients. More often than not, the career center will focus on teaching job search skills rather than actually placing clients in jobs. While many job openings will be posted through the career center, and many interviews will be available through the career center, the majority of opportunities that await clients will be the ones they discover through the comprehensive career planning and job search process taught by the career center.

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