



E-COUNSELLING CONSIDERATIONS FOR CEAV MEMBERS

The current situation in Australia regarding the COVID-19 disease is changing on a daily basis.

CEAV members have requested some guidelines for their practice in the event that they are required to provide an online career counselling service for their students and school communities.

The CEAV provides these considerations as a starting point only and each member must follow the directives from their school or organisation in relation to privacy and confidentiality requirements when providing online service to students.

Effective careers counselling can happen online when appropriate steps are taken to address ethical concerns related to confidentiality and privacy of information. CEAV recommends the importance of these considerations in regards to e-careers counselling of students.

- Set clear boundaries at the start of your program about what will be discussed.
- Ensure your school or organisations leadership team support your e-career counselling program.
- Follow your schools or organisations guidelines in regards to parent consent for online services to be offered.
- Request student and / or parent consent to participate in e-careers counselling before you begin the program.
- Follow your school/organisations Child Safety Policy.

Ideally, career practitioners should aim to conduct their online career counselling sessions with students and their parents/carers attending the interview as well. In the event this cannot happen, recording the audio and visual conversation and securely storing a copy of the recording would be considered best practice. Students can then request a copy of their recorded career interview to share with their parents at a later date.

STEPS FOR QUALITY DELIVERY

1. SKILL

The Career Industry Council of Australia (CICA) our national peak body provides the Code of Ethics for our profession. The Professional Standards require that all career development practitioners only offer services within their scope of competence.

Providing online career counselling services requires specific skills where you can demonstrate competency. If you are not qualified to provide careers guidance you should not be offering an online careers interviewing service. E-career counselling requires specific skill sets and you need to be competent in careers counselling before you offer this service.

2. PERMISSION

You will need to check with your school or organisation that you are permitted to work online with students. The next consideration is how to do it well. The ethical concerns related to confidentiality and how to handle emergency situations must be clear and approved by your leadership and administration teams.

Keep your administration informed of your careers service practices. A full audio and visual transcript should be recorded. The transcript should also record start and finish times for the interview, where it was located, how it was conducted (ZOOM, Skype, TEAMS) and who attended. Refer to your schools IT policy on storage of recordings and access to career counselling recordings.

3. ACCESSIBILITY

Providing online career counselling requires, at a minimum, access to **secure** and **reliable internet** and digital devices (PC) that can support the selected systems for both the career practitioner and the student.

Again confidentiality is paramount and security of information should be discussed with the student and their consent be received in writing so that they understand the limits to confidentiality when using an online service carrier.

Your school's IT Communication policy should also provide you with the requirements in relation to the length of time of online sessions, security, recording and storage of recordings. Check with your school's IT Policy before commencing your e-career counselling programs.

STEPS FOR QUALITY DELIVERY

4. CONSENT

Informed consent must be attained before offering an online careers counselling interview to students. Only once students are informed about the risks and benefits of e-careers counselling, can they provide consent for services.

This requires that career practitioners explain the limits of the service and provide the link to the Code of Ethics.

Set clear boundaries at the start of the interview about what will be discussed and ensure students and parents have given consent. Explain that you will be taking summary notes of the career guidance provided, subject selections and pathways options discussed during the interview.

Explain that a copy of your summary notes will be scanned and forward to the student and parent for their storage and consent. Explain that they can have access to the audio and visual transcript for the e-interview.

5. APPROPRIATENESS

E-career counselling may not be suitable for all students. It should not be made mandatory, but rather be offered as a solution in the current situation. There may be presenting issues that would be better served by more traditional forms of career counselling.

When conducting e-interviews the practitioner, the student and parent should be visible and located in a suitable quiet counselling space that is private and where you will not be interrupted, for example, a home office. Check with your school in regards to recording of interviews as there may be a policy directive you must follow about video conferencing and the location of interviews. For example; bedrooms and bathrooms are not suitable locations.

6. TECHNOLOGY

Discuss with your school their preferred means of communication via online technology.

Current platforms could include Microsoft Teams, ZOOM and Skype. Pre and post interview preparation sessions could use email/ intranet systems to send information and request student and parent permission to conduct online interviews.

At all times career practitioners should be transparent with their information, consistent in the use of technological systems and securely store their written correspondence with students. Be consistent with the technology you set up to offer online services.

STEPS FOR QUALITY DELIVERY

7. SECURITY

Career practitioners must be mindful of the requirements of securing record-keeping notes and written correspondence to students. The regulatory requirements in regards to Records Maintenance/ Access to files principles should be followed.

Follow the Code of Ethics and your school's directives in terms of how career counselling notes are stored and shared.

8. TELEPHONES

Career practitioners should use call forwarding from their school's system to their private mobile phones to engage with students when offering additional careers support.

Microsoft Teams can provide intranet calls via the school's platform. Career practitioners should only take calls during normal school hours. If calls become advice sharing, ensure that you keep a record of your conversation, store notes securely and follow up actions should also be recorded.

If schools have provided a work mobile phone for careers services it is appropriate to only provide this number to students and their parents. It is not appropriate to conduct career counselling calls from a private mobile.

9. WEBSITES

Career practitioners with dedicated careers service websites should post the ACCE Code of Ethics for students and parents as a reference point to set boundaries for their online service.

10. ONLINE RELATIONSHIPS

Ethical practice requires that the career practitioner – student relationship is handled confidentially. Social media facilities sharing resources and marketing services, can present unique problems for career practitioners in terms of managing relationships with students. A student who sends a friend request to a career practitioner or likes their social media account/page breaches confidentiality and would present a dual relationship issue.

Career practitioners should maintain boundaries between personal and professional online presence, adhere to their school Child Safety Policies and ensure that students are aware of the issues interacting online can present.