



CAMBRIDGE

Redefining University Counsellors' Roles: Balancing Responsibilities to Support Students

A Discussion About The Professional Areas of a University Counsellor at School

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“We will develop an extraordinary
program that support our student and
community”

University Counseling Plus

A. Content-Based Guidance

1. **Introduction to Higher Education in Different Countries** – Covers the differences in application processes, university cultures, and admission expectations worldwide.
2. **Exploration of Majors and Courses** – Helps students understand different academic disciplines, career prospects, and how to align choices with personal strengths.
3. **Overview of the Holistic Review Process** – Educates students on how universities assess applicants beyond academics, including extracurriculars, leadership, and essays.

B. Information-Based Guidance

1. **University Fair** – Provides students direct access to university representatives from around the world.
2. **University Representative Workshops** – Sessions where universities explain admissions processes, academic programs, and career opportunities.

C. Practicum-Based Activities

1. **Resume Writing** – Guides students in crafting professional and impactful resumes.
2. **University Application Essay Practice** – Helps students brainstorm, draft, and refine college essays.
3. **Brag Sheet Writing** – Supports students in documenting achievements for recommendation letters.
4. **Finding Your College ‘Fit’** – Teaches students to assess university options based on academic, social, and financial factors.
5. **Career Readiness Programs** - Design In-house internships and career exploration oriented field trip

Not only Working with, but deeply invovled with
Academics/Pastoral/Boarding/Enrichment Program

D. Special Offerings

1. **Mock Interviews** – Prepares students for admission and scholarship interviews.
2. **Essay Clinics** – One-on-one or group workshops for refining personal statements and supplemental essays.
3. **Principal Talks on Life Skills** – School leaders discuss essential skills for university life, including independence, time management, and resilience.

We have a capable team of counsellors,
Who Can Do Anything!

“Hi Florence, I am kinda burn out.
Can I take a day off?”

A message from a counsellor in application season

Can Do Anything!

=capable of doing anything

=willing to do anything

=have the capacity to do anything

| | Items | Completed (h) | Achievement |
|---------------------------------|--|---------------|---|
| Direct Service(31) | Small-group Workshops/class | 8 | 1.prepared for G10 monthly workshop 2. prepare G11 counselling class – Resume Extension week 3. Had counselling class with Grade 11 (Resume & Activity list) |
| | Student 1-on-1 Meetings | 11 | 1.Worked with Frank on his college essay. 2. Worked with Sam om his college essay. 3.Work with Carl on his college essay 4. Discussed subject choices with Susie Parents 5. Discussed application plan with Sam 6. Guide students with filling UCAS And Common App form. |
| | Family Meetings | 2 | 1.Meeting with Frank Mother |
| | Walk-in Counseling (pupils) | 3 | 1.Discussed with G10 Howthorn’s subject choices. 2.Discussed with G12 Sam about his future application plan |
| | Non-planned Parent Communication | 0 | |
| | Application Documents | 7 | 1.confirm reference letters. 2. combine transcripts and upload |
| Indirect Service(13) | Individual Work(Research, replying to emails, making slides) | 10 | 1.Prepare for college visits (including sending notice, communication, posters design, venue set-up) 2.Search for university information 3. Prepare for Essay Clinics |
| | Data and Survey | 2 | 1.Update Grade 11’s students record 2.Update grade 12 students’ application process. 2.conduct and collect survey about college visits in October |
| | Parent University/Workshops | 0 | |
| | School/Section Conference | 1 | Department meeting |
| | College Connection & Visits | 0 | |
| Professional Development | Workshops Prep Group Work | 0 | |
| | Training Sessions (Internal) | 0 | |
| | Conference/Webinars (External) | 0 | |
| Other(6) | Academic-related Meetings | | |
| | Marketing-related Events | 3 | |
| | School duties | 3 | Campus safety duty, tutor duty, boarding duty |

Weekly Summary

A Discussion About The Professional Areas of a University Counsellor at School

Content

- Primary Role and Responsibility of a University Counsellor
- Extended Roles and Responsibilities of a University Counsellor
- FEASIBILITY Discussion

Primary Role and Responsibility

Primary Responsibility

- 1. College Planning & Guidance**
- 2. Application & Essay Support**
- 3. Standardized Testing & Academic Advising**
- 4. Financial Aid & Scholarships**
- 5. Career Exploration & Post-Secondary Pathways**
- 6. Student Advocacy & Support**
- 7. Collaboration & Communication**

Extended Roles and Responsibilities

Extended Responsibilities

Mental Health
Counseling

Disciplinary
Actions

Student
Recruitment

Pastoral
System/Tutor

Boarding
/Evening Duty

Student
Activities/Whole
School Event
Planning

Academic
Progress
Management

Marketing

Survey Result

(35 counsellors, 6 head of UC, from international/internationalized school/Public School International division)

80% indicates their job involves additional/unexpected roles and responsibilities

65% says that they are somewhat overwhelmed by the overall workload

70% says they need to work overtime to fulfill the expectation of the job during the application season

3% indicates that the additional responsibilities exceed the main responsibilities

35% of the counsellors have talked with their line manager about their stress and thoughts about the extended responsibilities

3 out of 6 head of UC have talked with school leadership about the boundaries of counsellors role.

FEASIBILITY Discussion

Feasible Or Not? Reasonable or Not?

Real Challenges Faced

Role Overload

Balancing core college counseling tasks with recruitment, event planning, and pastoral care can lead to burnout or diluted support.

Impact on Core Responsibilities

Non-counseling activities can reduce the time available for individualized student guidance—potentially affecting student outcomes in college admissions.

Skill and Training Mismatch

Event management, student welfare, or boarding supervision may require specialized training. Without adequate preparation, the counselor's effectiveness in both counseling and these additional roles can be compromised.

Structural Considerations

Schools must decide whether these extra duties are intentional and sustainable. Clear boundaries, proper training, and sufficient staffing help maintain the quality of college counseling.

My Solution

Defining the “University Counselor Plus” Concept

- Good plus
- Bad plus

Setting Boundaries

- Clarify Core Responsibilities
- Identify Non-Negotiables

Benefits of a Broader Role

- Holistic Understanding
- Stronger bonding with students

Balancing School Administrator Expectations

- Communication
- Support & Resources

Talking to my school administrator...
How did it go? How's my counsellors doing?

For Counselors & Heads of Counseling

- How can we **define and enhance the core role** of a university counselor to best support students?
- Are we aligned with our school's expectations, and how can we create more **clarity** around our responsibilities?
- Have we engaged in **open discussions** with school leadership about **setting healthy boundaries** for our work?
- How can we **prioritize our tasks** effectively to **maximize impact** while **maintaining balance**?
- What are our **long-term career goals**, and how can we shape our roles in a way that supports both our growth and student success?

For School Administrators

- What are the **key contributions** we expect from university counselors, and how can we best support them in achieving these goals?
- How can we help counselors prioritize their responsibilities to **optimize student outcomes**?
- Do we provide **clear communication channels** for counselors to share their needs and workload challenges?
- When assigning additional responsibilities, how can we ensure they align with **both school priorities and the professional development** of our counseling team?
- How can we foster a **sustainable and effective** university counseling program that meets both student needs and school objectives?

When counselors are
empowered,
students are too.



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