

Institute of Child Health Careers Advice Surgeries

Career Advisor role description (from UCL Equalities and Diversity; amended)

Lack of access to career advice – often because of limited opportunities for informal interactions in which information is conveyed casually – is one of the most widely reported barriers to career advancement. There is evidence that women are particularly likely to suffer career setbacks from lack of career guidance. In one study, one third of women interviewed who exited science cited a lack of guidance as the major factor leading to the exit decision, while none of the men interviewed identified this as a factor influencing exit.

How is career advising different from mentoring?

Career Advisors are simply neutral, senior staff who are willing to share their practical knowledge on the approach junior staff should take if they want to move up in UCL. Mentoring usually offers a more holistic level of assistance and encouragement than this. For example, Career Advisors are not expected to give emotional or psychological support, provide access to their networks, be proactive in seeking out opportunities for the member of staff they are advising or to be their advocate or sponsor their career.

Whilst all staff at UCL should be able to discuss their career development with their manager, it is recognised that the advice offered may not always be of a consistent standard across the university. The Careers Advisors will exist to ensure all junior staff can have the opportunity of discussing advancement strategies with an impartial member of staff who can provide an unbiased perspective.

Role Overview

The ultimate goal of giving career advice to more junior staff is to enhance their chances of career success through promotion. Senior staff as career advisors can explain the system and point out pitfalls and potential shortcuts.

The role of the Institute Careers Advisors will be to:

- Comment on documents such as curriculum vitae (will be supplied in advance)
- Advise about the career ladder and alternative tracks
- Provide information about UCL's promotion process
- Advise on how to navigate the faculty, institution and sector
- Discuss level of achievement expected for promotion
- Direct to other sources of assistance
- Share the "tacit" rules of being successful in the business of research

The Career Advisors will be senior members of academic staff (both male and female) who are willing to dedicate 1 hour per month (split into two 30 minute sessions) to meet with junior staff. Advisors will be Professors, Readers or Senior Lecturers (or equivalent).

Any junior staff member can request a meeting with a Career Advisor, though the initiative will be promoted to women, through Athena SWAN, and black and minority ethnic (BME) staff. Junior staff members should be research assistants, post-docs or lecturers. They will be able to have a total of two meetings with the Advisors.