

H2. Career Advising

The school provides accessible and supportive career advising services for students. All students, including those who may be currently employed, have access to qualified faculty and/or staff who are actively engaged, knowledgeable about the workforce and sensitive to their professional development needs; these faculty and/or staff provide appropriate career placement advice, including advice about enrollment in additional education or training programs, when applicable. Career advising services may take a variety of forms, including but not limited to individualized consultations, résumé workshops, mock interviews, career fairs, professional panels, networking events, employer presentations and online job databases.

The school provides such resources for both currently enrolled students and alums. The school may accomplish this through a variety of formal or informal mechanisms including connecting graduates with professional associations, making faculty and other alums available for networking and advice, etc.

- 1) *Describe the school's career advising and services. If services differ by degree and/or concentration, a brief description should be provided for each. Include an explanation of efforts to tailor services to meet students' specific needs.*

GWSPH students and alums receive formal career advising and services from two main sources at GW: (1) Career Services within GWSPH and (2) GW Center for Career Services. These organizations collaborate regularly to provide programming for students and alums of GWSPH. Informally, students may also receive career advice from faculty and advisors.

Career Services (GWSPH)

The career advising offered at Career Services is geared toward graduate students and alums of GWSPH, though undergraduate students are welcome to participate in schoolwide events. Career Services offers several services including:

- Individualized career counseling to identify career interests, career-focused SMART goals and job search strategies
- Résumé and cover-letter writing, tailoring and proofing
- Mock interviews with students who seek employment or additional education
- Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) testing to navigate behavioral and psychological types and better understand potential career paths
- Annual public health career and practicum fairs that invite all GWSPH students to explore potential career and practicum (APEX and DAPEX) opportunities
- Employer panels and information sessions that promote interest in a specific industry or company
- Networking opportunities for students and alums to connect and form professional networking relationships
- Job posting board on [Handshake](#)
- Weekly newsletter highlighting upcoming events and new practicum and job opportunities
- Written resources such as sample résumés, sample cover letters, salary negotiation, job search strategies and federal application tips
- Luncheons with practicum preceptors and employers to learn about organizational needs and how desired skills may be incorporated in the GWSPH curricula

GW Center for Career Services

The university's Center for Career Services primarily serves GWSPH undergraduate students. Services offered by the GW Center for Career Services include:

- Individualized career coaching and assessment

- Virtual résumé and cover-letter development
- Coaching on networking and interviewing skills
- Workshops and events geared toward the needs of students with disabilities, students with current and former military experience, international students and alums
- Career and internship fairs, industry career expos, skills workshops, panels, employer informational sessions, company site visits and employer consultations
- Job and internship posting board on [Handshake](#)
- Campus interviewing for employers

Office of Alumni Relations

The [Office of Alumni Relations](#) engages GWSPH alums through organized networking opportunities, both in person and virtually. The Alumni Industry Networks provide in-person and online networking events by industry sector. GW Career Connect is an online community for both current GW students and alums to network and seek career guidance and professional development advice.

PhD/MS Programs

The Office of PhD/MS Programs at GWSPH coordinates a few career workshops and panels throughout the year, geared specifically toward PhD and MS students and research careers.

- 2) *Explain how individuals providing career advising are selected and oriented to their roles and responsibilities.*

The majority of public health career advising occurs at the school level, coordinated by two full-time staff members who have master's degrees and extensive experience in higher education and student-centered programming. The Director of Career Services obtained an EdS in Clinical Mental Health Counseling and a [Graduate Certificate in Counseling and Life Transitions](#) with a concentration in Career and Workforce Development from GW and is completing an MPH in Health Promotion. This training has provided a unique view into the skills and strengths that the public health students gain through their curriculum, including core competencies to articulate to employers during their internship, practicum, fellowship and job search process. In addition, counseling staff have each obtained master's degrees in Higher Education and Education Counseling as well as multiple certifications including the MBTI [Call to Service Network: Federal Advisor Certificate Program](#), which trains counselors on how to guide students and recent graduates through the federal government application process on USAJOBS. Counselors are oriented to their role by shadowing current counselors, reading books and articles about public health careers, and having discussions with faculty about curricula and skills learned in each program. Counselors are strongly encouraged to regularly research career opportunities for public health students and interview faculty, community stakeholders, employers and alums to learn about new trends, opportunities and desired skills.

Faculty who informally career advise students rely on their lived public health experiences and the expertise and resources of GWSPH Career Services.

At the university level, career advising staff hold, at minimum, a bachelor's degree in an appropriate area of specialization. For more senior-level positions, career coaching experience and/or a master's degree is preferred. Communication, teamwork and customer service skills are required, regardless of level. Staff are trained on FERPA and other relevant policies as well as working with a diverse student population.

- 3) *Provide three examples from the last three years of career advising services provided to students and one example of career advising provided to an alums. For each category, indicate the number of individuals participating.*

Most alums seek one-on-one appointments and assistance, personalized to their situation and needs. GWSPH Career Services sees an uptick in alum appointments (three or more per week) in May through August just after graduation, when many recent graduates are searching for positions. For the remainder of the year, alum appointments drop to about one per week. GWSPH offers lifetime career services, so alums may return at any point, post-graduation, for assistance. Most often, alums seek support in résumé/CV writing and job search strategies, followed by networking connections.

In addition to individual appointments, GWSPH Career Services offers numerous informational sessions, panels, workshops and fairs throughout the year. Depending on the topic, these events are open to all or a select group of students and alums. Attendance varies by event depending on topic, timing and format (virtual versus in person).

Event	Description	Attendees
Public Health Career Fair (2023)	Regional, national and international employers engage with students and alums virtually at this annual spring event. Employers at the 2023 event included US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), American Diabetes Association, Maryland Department of Health, The Children’s Guild, Inc, Peace Corps and Acumen, LLC. During the event, employers discuss their organizational needs and accept résumés from interested candidates. This event is open to all GWSPH students and alums.	175
CDC/ORISE Information Session (2023)	Recruiters from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) ORISE Research Participation Program held an information session to promote and recruit for the ORISE program. This event was open to all graduate GWSPH students.	38
Crafting a Résumé for Your Practicum and Other Career Opportunities (2022)	Led by Career Services counselors, this workshop focused on building a résumé. Counselors provided tips on wording, formatting and organization. This event was open to all graduate GWSPH students.	33
Fireside Chat: Behind the Scenes of a Consulting Interview (2021)	Alums who work in the consulting industry had informal conversations about their experiences interviewing for such positions. This event was open to all graduate GWSPH students and alums.	31

For a complete list of events hosted by Career Services between 2020–2023, see ERF > Criterion H > Criterion H2 > H2.1: Career services.

The Office of PhD/MS Programs coordinated several events over the last year or so, focused on career opportunities post-graduation. For example, in April 2023, the Office hosted an event for 25 attendees on careers in the pharmaceutical industry. Another event was hosted in April 2023 on career in government. Approximately 25 students attended this session. Additionally, career opportunities are discussed during PhD information sessions, which are held at least once per year and usually attract 50 to 70 attendees.

- 4) *Provide data reflecting the level of student satisfaction with career advising during each of the last three years. Include survey response rates, if applicable.*

After every one-on-one meeting between students and GWSPH counselors, Handshake emails a satisfaction survey to the student. This question was on a four-point Likert scale with 4 representing high satisfaction and 1 representing low satisfaction with the statement.

	2020-2021 Average (N)	2021-2022 Average (N)	2022-2023 Average (N)
The goals I set for my career counseling appointment were met.	3.87 (62)	3.88 (42)	3.82 (39)

Qualitative data from this post-appointment survey over the three years indicate that the vast majority of students were happy with the services offered and could not identify anything else the career counselor could have done to improve the meeting. Several students noted that counseling staff were late for their appointments or missed them entirely, which could be indicative of the need to hire additional staff to meet student needs.

The Office of PhD/MS Programs surveyed PhD students in 2022 and one of the questions asked was "How satisfied are you with the career development guidance you have received from your program?" Of the 29 respondents, 11 students (37.93%) said they were extremely or somewhat satisfied with their program's career development guidance. A plurality students (N=12, 41.38%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (see ERF > Criterion H > Criterion H2 > H2.4: Career Satisfaction).

- 5) *If applicable, assess strengths and weaknesses related to this criterion and plans for improvement in this area.*

Strengths

- Career counselors collaborate regularly with GWSPH departments and instructors. This engagement has resulted in counselors' guest lecturing in classes and better coordination of support for students.
- The transition to Handshake in 2017 as the technology platform for career services streamlined and simplified many processes. Students create lifetime accounts and can view and apply to job and practicum postings and book appointments with a counselor. The job board in Handshake is very well-organized and current.
- Counselors offer flexible appointment times from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. ET by phone, Zoom (or similar program), in person and email. This is appreciated by students and alums in separate time zones and with busy schedules.
- Many students develop close relationships with faculty who support them through their career search. During Alum Interviews, several graduates highlighted specific faculty with whom they regularly talk with, even post-graduation and who helped them either find positions or choose between job offers. This is particularly appreciated by doctoral level students who benefit from faculty network connections and discipline specific career advice.
- The GWSPH Career Services personnel are continuously attending trainings and workshops to learn about the latest trends in the industry. For example, the team recently participated in a training on the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in resumé writing. The team also continues to build relationships with employers, expanding our employment network, and engage in collaborative opportunities specific to the public and private sectors.

Challenges

- GWSPH Career Services is limited in what opportunities they may offer and demands they can feasibly meet given they only have two staff members that serve the entire graduate student and alum population.
- Alum relations and development support is provided centrally by the university with a small team supporting the medical and health sciences and nursing schools in addition to GWSPH. They have faced staff challenges, and there is a lack of strategy and cohesion specifically for alum engagement. This negatively impacts career opportunities and networking between current students and alum as well as giving, retention and ongoing alum engagement.
- Through GWSPH admissions and various departmental efforts, there are attempts to connect alums and prospective and current students. However, with the possible exception of the MHA program, these are underresourced and episodic, without a long-term consistent strategy.

Future Plans

- GWSPH Career Services is planning to hire a graduate assistant who can help with data collection and analysis, advertising for upcoming events and general office assistance.
- GWSPH plans to continue offering employer engagement opportunities in person and virtually to best meet the needs of employers and students and maximize interactions.
- GWSPH plans to partner with University Career services to strengthen our approach.