



Principles for Quality Education-to-Career Guidance

Delivering on the promise of postsecondary education

Today's postsecondary institutions are addressing several complex challenges, from strengthening enrollment, to advocating for the value and relevance of higher education, to addressing the academic and nonacademic barriers students experience as they pursue their education and career goals. Meaningful progress has been made in recent decades to broaden access to postsecondary education and support students in completing what they started.¹ However, although more students are completing postsecondary education, almost half are not working in college-level employment a decade after graduating.²

Guidance in connecting education to a career can make the difference in improving completion and postcompletion outcomes. When grounded in effective practices including proactive outreach and comprehensive support, coaching is associated with improved persistence and graduation rates.³ The benefits of career-focused support extend beyond graduation as well. More than two-thirds of students who received coaching and guidance to connect their education to a career had a college-level job right out of college. Yet as powerful as it can be, only 1 in 5 students at four-year institutions and less than 1 in 4 students at two-year institutions currently receive quality education-to-career guidance.⁴ Timely education-to-career guidance can strengthen the connection between education and opportunity.

The role of education-to-career guidance in student success

In 2023, an advisory group of leaders and practitioners from postsecondary education, nonprofit organizations, and workforce development organizations came together to identify the practices, services, and resources that are key to supporting students through a successful transition through education and into careers. The advisory group drew on evidence-based practices and emerging innovative approaches from academic advising, success coaching, career services, and other student success areas to develop a set of guiding principles for quality education-to-career guidance.

These principles describe the key components of quality education-to-career guidance and reflect the importance of ensuring all students experience these elements of quality coaching. Quality education-to-career guidance collaboratively supports student progress along a seamless and cohesive journey through their education pathways, and can be provided through many different resources and individuals. The

¹ Lumina Foundation. [A Stronger Nation: Learning Beyond High School Builds American Talent](#). 2024.

² Strada Education Foundation. [Talent Disrupted](#). February 2024.

³ Institute of Education Sciences and College Completion Network. [Advising for College Success: A Systematic Review of the Evidence](#). 2022.

⁴ Strada Education Foundation. [State Opportunity Index](#). April 2024.

vision of education-to-career guidance offered by the principles embed career-focused information, resources, and support throughout the student experience, in which coaching and guidance is provided early, continually, and through a multitude of services, programs, and experiences. At the core of the principles is a commitment to providing students with the information and support they need to identify a pathway and complete a postsecondary program in pursuit of their education and career goals, with full understanding of the likely employment and earnings outcomes of the pathway they choose.

Putting principles into practice

Institutions and organizations can support students in effectively connecting their education to a career by embedding coaching and guidance throughout the student experience, ensuring students have access to labor market insights to inform their decision-making, and providing a network of guidance for students.⁵ As the guiding principles reach students across the education landscape, the elements will continue to evolve and incorporate tailored practices and approaches to serve diverse student populations and educational settings.

Principles for Quality Education-to-Career Guidance

*Created by Quality Coaching Advisory Group convened by Strada Education Foundation
(Full list of advisory group members available on the last page)*

- I. Centered on education-to-career outcomes**
 - A. Integrates proactive support for academic success with ongoing career exploration and planning.
 - B. Directs students to identify education programs aligned with career pathways.
 - C. Provides students with timely labor market and career insights for informed academic and career planning.
- II. Driven by student agency**
 - A. Supports students in exploring and recognizing their interests, values, and purpose.
 - B. Guides students in building mindsets, skills, and a sense of belonging critical to success.
 - C. Validates the student's identity and responds to the student's personal circumstances and goals.
- III. Foundational and universal**
 - A. Embedded in existing programs and services to ensure students receive guidance early on and continually.
 - B. Engages students proactively and through multiple channels with the support of scalable technologies.
 - C. Reaches and benefits students who have been traditionally least served by postsecondary education.
- IV. Rooted in relationships**
 - A. Based in interactions and relationships between students and faculty and staff.
 - B. Connects students to networks, resources, and services and builds social capital.

⁵ Strada Education Foundation. [Quality Coaching: Helping Students Navigate the Journey From Education to Career](#). 2024.

C. Engages students' communities of support.

V. Informed by data and evidence

- A. Leverages data to provide personalized and timely support.
- B. Incorporates recognized, evidence-based practices.
- C. Measures outcomes and continually improves through research and evaluation.

Quality Coaching Advisory Group Members

Co-Chairs	
Andy Chan Vice President for Innovation and Career Development, Wake Forest University	Pascale Charlot Managing Director, College Excellence Program, Aspen Institute
Members	
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