

Accreditation: Improving Career Awareness and Opportunities for Your Students

AACSB Business Accreditation Standard 8 states that a “school maintains a staff sufficient to provide stability and ongoing quality improvement for student support activities. Student support activities reflect the school’s mission and programs and the students’ characteristics.” A portion of this standard’s expectation involves “career advising” or providing support for business students as they seek to begin their careers.

For your students, choosing a career path and finding that first “good” job are major decisions they must make. Therefore, any set of activities that your business school can develop or expand with regard to career services will greatly enhance your students’ experience—which also will bring return by enhancing your school’s reputation with prospective students and alumni.

A Couple of Examples:

The Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan segments its student career services into two groups: career counseling and recruiter relations. The school’s career counseling staff assists students with career searches, as well as provides individual counseling and workshops. The recruiter relations function coordinates on-campus interviews with external organizations.

The Harvard Business School’s students and recruiters have access to videos, blogs, networking opportunities, individual career coaching, alumni job banks, and research support—a complete set of resources to help students enter the workplace.

Ideas for Enhancing Career Service Efforts

Campaigns to Gain Employer Attention

Many business schools have implemented campaigns surrounding the communication of their student talent to potential employers—we've all seen the television advertisements from schools that are attempting to push their quality. For AACSB-accredited schools, it also is important to develop communication channels that pride your students' skills and knowledge. If your school is on a limited budget, a simple Facebook ad campaign can be an inexpensive option. For example, AACSB recently ran a Facebook ad campaign targeting 19–22 year olds that displayed interest in business degree programs. The ad (as shown on the right) received thousands of views and several hundred clicks during a controlled test period. Overall, a Facebook ad campaign is inexpensive, can easily be created in house, and can target specific audiences with specific messages. The ad linked to the AACSB student Web site (BestBizSchools.com) and drove a significant amount of visitors to the site to learn more about business programs and search among only AACSB-accredited institutions.

Be a Business Major.



Find the right business school for you. A business degree from an AACSB-accredited school means a better education, a better job.

AACSB-accredited schools can enhance their communication efforts by including terminology that relates to their **AACSB Accreditation**—particularly since there is a growing demand from employers for AACSB-accredited graduates, as well as a push to only reimburse current employees for business courses completed at AACSB-accredited schools. If your institution is accredited in accounting, be sure to communicate your additional **AACSB Accounting Accreditation** to organizations that are seeking highly skilled accounting graduates.

Individual Advising

Students have a lot on their minds when it comes to career choices. There are a variety of ways your school's career center, faculty, and staff can become more involved. For instance, create a location within your business school (or perhaps within each department) where students can learn more about careers in different disciplines and speak with faculty/staff. If your school does not have the resources to have such a location, merely providing copies of trade magazines and a list of reliable Web sites can point students in the right direction. If your school has a specific career services office, be sure to provide resources related to careers for business graduates. Also, creating a group of local business professionals with whom business students can meet is extremely helpful. For example, developing a program for students to shadow financial advisors will allow for a day-in-the-life of a real business professional.

Career Fairs

Bringing recruiters and corporations to your business school can be a large undertaking. A decent-sized career fair takes coordination, facilities, mass communication, and organization. Yet, students usually get a lot out of a career fair. It provides an opportunity for students to dress for an interview, prepare and distribute resumes, and speak with corporate representatives. Even if they do not leave a career fair with a job, the experience will allow them to develop their self-presentation skills.

If you cannot physically hold a career fair, look to the Internet. For example, although not a fair for careers, Beta Gamma Sigma International (BGS) holds periodic “Virtual Graduate Fairs.” The virtual fairs are designed to help recruit undergraduates for graduate business programs (such as the MBA) at AACSB-accredited schools.

Consulting and Competitions

At the London Business School, students have the opportunity to experience the workplace first hand through consulting. This method provides students with additional income and opportunities to gain connections. Other business schools make consulting projects a course requirement and/or develop competitions for students where business professionals serve as judges. Both of these methods provide students with a multitude of opportunities to gain knowledge and begin to focus on a career path.

Guest Lecturers

Providing opportunities for students to listen to real professionals from different disciplines enables them to visualize a day in the workplace. And, providing a variety of speakers from different fields can help students narrow down their interests. Guest lecturers also enable your school to build valuable relationships with external organizations that may donate funds, volunteer time, or enroll employees in the future.

Student Banks

On the Booth School of Business at the University of Chicago Web site, visitors can navigate through a bank of MBA students and alumni. At the IESE Business School at the University of Navarra, recruiters are able to meet students, view resumes, and locate individuals with profiles that fit their organization. There is a technology curve associated with creating a student bank. However, if you have an existing platform it can create an easy method for organizations to meet and recruit your graduates.

Workshops

Career service workshops are ideal for schools that have limited faculty/staff resources for individualized guidance. For instance, workshops on resume writing, dressing for business, job searching, and networking are all useful topics to cover. These student development events can greatly improve a student’s ability to develop impressive job search materials.

Practice Interviews

Remember your first big interview? It involved a stressful preparation process...deciding on your first suit, dressing to impress the organization's representative, and developing concise, powerful answers to possible interview questions. Or, perhaps you were not nearly that prepared.

Providing students with opportunities to practice their interview skills and receive feedback can significantly help them prepare for the real day. Some schools even videotape students during practice interviews in order to allow for self-evaluation. If your school does not have the resources to provide scheduled practice interviews, simply helping students in any manner to prepare for a big interview is invaluable.