

Report of the UCOC Subcommittee on Professional Development

March 1, 2013

Subcommittee Members

Diane Badame, Brian Head,
Janet Levin and Geoffrey Middlebrook

The issue was raised regarding the type of coursework that should be given credit or not for various types of activities related to job searches.

The objectives of the UCOC Subcommittee on Professional Development were to:

1. Provide guidelines on what constitutes professional development versus academic content that might be offered in courses and,
2. Provide guidance on how to assess academic credit for those courses that include elements of professional development.

Guidance on How to Assess Academic Credit for Courses that Include Professional Development Content

1. Content and activities associated solely with obtaining a job should not be given academic credit while content and coursework that cover the skills and techniques required to perform specific job functions can be given academic credit.
2. In cases in which a blend of content occurs, determine the total weight of the academic content, and use this to assess the appropriate unit value for the course. Some professional development content may be included in certain cases, but should not contribute to the academic unit determination of the course.

We suggest that departments should make available these non-academic professional development opportunities through a combination of faculty mentoring and departmental professional development seminars, as well as through programs and mentoring within Student Affairs, the Center for Excellence in Teaching, departmental and school career services, and the USC Career Center.

Examples of Professional Development That Should Not Receive Academic Credit

- How to apply for graduate programs or job positions
- How to map out the steps to obtain a dream job
- Writing a curriculum vitae (CV) or resume
- Developing written communication for career management (cover letters, etc.)
- Obtaining networking skills
- How to conduct informational interviews
- How to develop interviewing skills
- Developing job search strategies
- How to interview for jobs
- How to evaluate and negotiate an offer
- How to get the most out of your summer internship

Examples of Content that Should Receive Academic Credit

- Improving teaching techniques, including use of various technological tools
- Learning strategies for turning dissertations into publishable articles or books
- Demonstrating communication competence in interpersonal, presentation, written, team and leadership situations.
- Effectively supporting the communication and leadership skill development of their teammates. Students will be able to evaluate their teammate's plans and coach them to greater effectiveness.
- Conducting research on businesses to assess their core competencies, sales, profits and value propositions
- Administering personality inventories and assessing the results