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4 TIPS **FROM A CAREER** **COUNSELLOR ON** **HOW TO PREPARE** **FOR COLLEGE** **ADMISSIONS**

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Preparing for college admissions can be daunting. Here's a guide from an expert to help high school students make informed decisions, explore unconventional courses, and use career counselling effectively.

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Transitioning to the world of colleges and universities is both exciting and challenging for high school students. With new research and innovative practices reshaping the teaching-learning landscape, students are now exposed to various unconventional courses and disciplines.

At the same time, a tech-driven job market is opening doors to previously unimagined career opportunities. In such a dynamic environment, having a clear vision becomes essential for students and their parents to make informed, long-term decisions.



Here are a few key steps to guide students and their families through the crucial process of college and university admissions:

1. LEVERAGE CAREER COUNSELLING SERVICES EFFECTIVELY

Many schools now offer career counselling services, yet students often fail to utilise them to their full potential. To avoid this pitfall, students should proactively engage with their counsellors to gain personalised advice.

Career counsellors typically have access to a student's academic and extracurricular records from middle school onward.

By reviewing these records, counsellors can administer psychometric assessments and conduct individual counselling sessions to help students identify their aspirations, interests, aptitudes, and abilities.

These insights are instrumental in guiding subject choices and identifying the most suitable college or university options.

Both students and parents must approach this process with an open mind, avoiding decisions influenced by societal pressures or herd mentality. Instead, the focus should be on aligning the student's strengths and aspirations with emerging career opportunities.

2. EXPLORE UNCONVENTIONAL COURSE OPTIONS

The era of strictly conventional streams—sciences, arts, or commerce—is rapidly evolving. Technological advancements have given rise to new and exciting disciplines such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, robotics, health tech, data science and analytics, digital technology, public policy, quantum computing, cybersecurity, sustainability and renewable energy, astrobiology, e-commerce, edtech, and many more.

Students should also consider creative and niche fields like ethical hacking, yoga, mental health, wellness space design, circular design, blogging, photography, performing arts, and social media management, which are gaining popularity as viable career options.

When choosing a course, it is important to focus on aligning personal interests, skills, and strengths with fields that offer promising career prospects. Staying informed about emerging industries will empower students to make future-ready decisions.

3. STAY UPDATED ON COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY ADMISSIONS

For students aspiring to study abroad, staying informed about admission requirements and deadlines is vital. For instance, US universities typically have regular decision deadlines between November and February, while UK admissions close in October and January.

Similarly, students applying to Indian institutions must stay aware of entrance exam schedules and institution-specific deadlines, which can vary significantly.

Parents can play a crucial role in helping students stay organised by tracking application timelines, gathering required documents, and ensuring that no critical deadlines are missed.



4. CONNECT WITH ALUMNI NETWORKS

Alumni networks are a valuable resource for students exploring potential colleges and career paths. By connecting with alumni, students can gain first-hand insights into campus life, academic programs, and career outcomes.

These conversations provide clarity on the pros and cons of various courses, enabling students to make informed choices about their future. Such comprehensive understanding paves the way for thoughtful and effective decision-making.

THE POWER OF INFORMED CHOICES

As students move from school to college, the decisions they make about their courses and institutions are transformative. A well-considered choice can lay the foundation for a fulfilling college experience and a successful career, while a hasty or misaligned decision can derail their journey and waste precious years.

To navigate this critical phase, students and parents must work collaboratively with teachers and counsellors, leveraging all available resources to make decisions that align with the student's goals and aspirations. By staying informed and proactive, students can confidently embark on a path that leads to a bright and promising future.

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