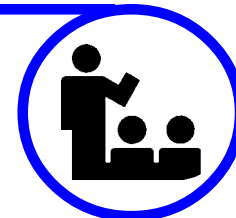


# College and University Admissions Directors



## Occupational Brief Title Codes:

- D.O.T.: 090.167-014
- G.O.E.: 11.07.03
- S.O.C.: 11-9033
- O\*NET™: 11-9033.00
- N.A.I.C.S.: 611710
- H.O.C.: ESA

## Work Classification Based Related

### D.O.T. Occupations:

- Deans of Students
- Directors of Extension Work
- Financial Aid Officers
- Foreign Student Advisors
- Graduate Assistants
- Instructors of Extension Work

## Interests Based Related

### G.O.E. Occupations:

- Academic Deans
- Athletic Directors
- Directors of Institutional Research
- Education Consultants
- Principals
- School Superintendents

## Skills Based Related

### O\*NET Occupations:

- Food Service Managers
- Government Service Executives
- Human Resources Managers
- Instructional Coordinators
- Management Analysts
- Medical and Health Services Managers

## Noteworthy Quote:

*“Admissions directors generally work with students as they make decisions about their educational lives after high school. They also assist adults who may be attending college for the first time or returning to college after taking time off or working. Admissions directors are most often the primary sources of information about the transition process and, as a result, are uniquely aware of the concerns held by students contemplating college. The position is one of the most rewarding jobs because of the sense of satisfaction gained from helping students fulfill their educational potential and make successful lives for themselves and their families.”*

—Admissions Director, Alexandria, VA

*College and university admissions directors* (ˈcol-lege and uniˈver-si-ty adˈmis-sions diˈrec-tors) oversee the processes for recruiting and admitting students to colleges and universities.

Many different kinds of students attend college. Along with the traditional recent high school graduates, older students with jobs and family obligations often go back to college for retraining or to further their education. Students from many racial and ethnic backgrounds, as well as from other countries, are attending U.S. colleges and universities in greater numbers.

Admissions policies and standards vary. Some private colleges and universities may be highly selective in admitting students. Admission to most institutions depends on high school grades, rank in class, and standardized admission test scores. A two-year college or a school with an open admissions policy may require only a high school diploma or a GED.

Admissions directors help colleges and universities attract students and work to retain them. Public and private four-year institutions, two-year or community colleges, graduate schools, and professional schools of law, medicine, and business employ admissions directors to understand the profile of their successful graduates, then to create a plan to identify a diverse pool of potential applicants.

## Work Performed

College and university admissions directors follow administrative policies established by a governing board. Their main responsibility is to recommend policies and criteria for admissions, and coordinate recruitment and retention activities for the school. They design and set up special programs to attract students. They direct staff who carry out recruitment activities. Admissions directors may interact with faculty who are on the admissions committee.

Admissions directors supervise *admissions counselors* who may interview applicants and evaluate applications. Admissions directors may review applications with exceptional circumstances and make decisions on these admissions situations.

Admissions directors, along with counselors and other staff, try to determine if the educational and career goals of the applicant mesh with the educational philosophy of the school and its programs. Staff from the admissions office may invite high school students to visit the college or university. Students tour the campus and may have the opportunity to participate in activities that help them learn more about the college. They may meet with admissions directors or counselors. Admissions staff may offer advice on academics, college life, student responsibilities, and financial aid.

In schools with highly competitive admissions policies, admissions directors may head a committee that decides which students to admit to the school. The director and the admissions committee may establish the criteria for the preliminary screening process and may decide which students they wish to interview.

Admissions directors and their staff may travel to high schools to recruit students. They give talks about their school, meet prospective students and

parents, distribute literature, and encourage qualified students to apply. They make sure the school guidance counselor has accurate information about their college.

Admissions directors oversee the planning and production of admission materials, including catalogs, applications, and related publications and brochures. They also coordinate the mailing of these materials. They supply information for other college publicity materials. Some directors oversee the production of videos and other multimedia tools used in recruitment. Admissions directors coordinate their efforts with the college public relations office. They also solicit input from college faculty, department chairpersons, current students, and alumni.

Each year admissions directors present a recruitment plan and a budget to the college administration. They research admissions procedures and make recommendations on how to improve recruitment and retention.

Many colleges and universities combine the activities of the admissions office with the activities of the financial aid office. In this kind of organization, the director is also in charge of student loan programs, grants, scholarships, and work study programs.

Admissions directors stay current with developments in higher education by joining professional organizations. They may subscribe to academic journals and may attend workshops, seminars, and conferences.

### **Working Conditions**

College and university campuses are generally pleasant, stimulating places to work. An active campus gives administrators the opportunity to exchange ideas with diverse groups, and presents a constant assortment of activities.

Offices are usually comfortable, particularly admissions offices, since they are usually the first impression the student gets of the school.

Admissions directors spend time in the office and on the road. They may travel to high schools, career and college fairs, other colleges, and conferences. They spend a lot of time talking to students, supervising staff, overseeing the production of admissions materials, and conferring with other college and university administrators. Correlating and interacting with faculty, parents, and students can be fast paced and stimulating, but also stressful and demanding.

### **Hours and Earnings**

These professionals work more than forty hours a week. Long hours are usual. During peak work periods in the spring, when the college or university makes decisions on admissions and notifies the students, admissions directors may work fifty to seventy hours a week. Directors usually work year-round.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics classifies college and university admissions directors with other post secondary

education administrators. In May 2004, these workers earned an average of \$75,800 a year. Earnings ranged from a high of more than \$123,650 a year to a low of less than \$38,400 a year. Wages vary depending on geographic location, level of education, years of experience, and educational institution. Directors working for private institutions usually earn less than those working for public institutions.

Admissions directors usually have excellent fringe benefits including paid holidays and vacations, health and life insurance, and pension plans. Admissions directors may receive funding to attend conferences, or may get free tickets to cultural and athletic events. They may also receive fellowships, study grants, and tuition waivers for dependents.

### **Education and Training**

The minimum educational requirement for admissions directors at most colleges and universities is a master's degree. Many aspiring directors start with an undergraduate degree in educational administration or in social or behavioral sciences like economics, history, psychology, communications, or sociology. Other useful undergraduate majors are education, finance, counseling, social work, business, computer science, and marketing.

Once students earn their undergraduate degree, they may continue their studies by pursuing a master's degree or a doctorate. An advanced degree in student counseling services or higher education administration is helpful for work in an admissions office. Advanced degrees in higher education and college student affairs are offered in many college and universities. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education and the Education Leadership Constituent Council accredit these programs.

Admissions directors need computer skills because most institutions use electronic student information systems. For example, for those whose institutions present information on the Internet, such as college catalogs and schedules, knowledge of online resources, imaging, and other computer skills is important.

High school students should take courses that prepare them for college. They should concentrate on courses in English, social sciences, natural sciences, foreign languages, and mathematics. Students should work closely with guidance counselors to make sure that high school subjects will meet college admissions requirements.

### **Licensing, Certification, Unions and Professional Societies**

Although admissions directors do not need a license or certification, professional groups do set standards for these workers.

The American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) is a nonprofit,

voluntary, professional association of more than 9,000 higher education admissions and registration professionals who represent approximately 2,300 institutions in more than 35 countries. AACRAO provides professional development, guidelines and voluntary standards to be used by higher education officials regarding the best practices in records management, admissions, enrollment management, administrative information technology and student services. It also provides a forum for discussion regarding policy initiation and development, interpretation and implementation at the institutional level and in the global educational community.

The National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) is an organization of about 8,000 professionals from around the world dedicated to serving students as they make choices about pursuing post secondary education. NACAC supports college admission counseling professionals as they help students realize their full educational potential, with particular emphasis on the transition from secondary schools to higher education. NACAC offers college fairs, national conferences, publications, and career opportunities.

Other professional associations include the Educational Research Service (ERS) and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA).

### **Personal Qualifications**

Admissions directors must be good organizers with orderly work habits in order to meet deadlines and to make decisions. They must be tactful and have the ability to stick to their decisions. Patience, energy, perseverance, courtesy, and directness are important qualities. Admissions directors must be able to communicate with students, parents, counselors, faculty, staff, and administrators. Sometimes applicants or their parents can be very persistent.

Occupations can be adapted for workers with disabilities. Persons should contact their school or employment counselors, their state office of vocational rehabilitation, or their state department of labor to explore fully their individual needs and requirements as well as the requirements of the occupation.

### **Where Employed**

Admissions directors work at graduate schools, and at four-year and two-year colleges and universities throughout the United States. They work at small schools with fewer than five hundred students and large schools with more than fifty thousand students. Some institutions are in large cities. Many are in small towns and in rural settings. The majority of admissions directors work for public education institutions while the rest work for private colleges and universities. They may also work at post-secondary trade, vocational, and technical schools.

### **Employment Outlook**

Employment in this field is tied to student population and external funding. The Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts that the employment of college administrators will grow about as fast as the average for all occupations through the year 2012.

A significant portion of growth will stem from growth in the private and for-profit segments of education. Many of these schools cater to working adults, many of whom might not ordinarily participate in postsecondary education. These schools allow students to earn a degree, receive job training, or update their skills through part-time programs or distance learning. As the number of these schools continues to grow, more admissions directors will be needed to oversee them.

Most openings will arise as older directors retire. Other openings will become available as admissions staff transfer to other colleges, other work, or leave the field. Leaner budgets have forced many colleges and universities to combine administrative offices. As a result, administrative positions in higher education are becoming harder to find, and competition is stiff.

### **Entry Methods**

Most people work their way through the ranks to become admissions directors. Most admissions directors hold an advanced degree and have several years of experience in admissions positions.

College students interested in careers in higher education administration may find out more about the field by working part-time in the admissions office where they attend college. In fact, work in any office of student personnel services can be helpful. Job seekers may find part-time positions in the financial aid office, the student union, or the registrar's office. College placement offices can help graduates by offering job leads and contacts. *The Chronicle of Higher Education* often advertises admissions positions.

Candidates with a record of experience and a good reputation known to the people at the employing institution have a distinct advantage. Ties to these people through professional associations are also helpful. Professional societies often offer career centers on their Web sites which list opportunities.

New workers in the admissions office may serve as recruiters, admissions counselors, and assistant and associate directors. They may advise applicants and help them make the transition from high school to college.

Admissions clerks check high school records and college transfer data to see if students meet the admissions criteria set by the college.

Recruiters visit high schools to tell students and guidance counselors about their college. They also participate in college information fairs.

## Advancement

Opportunities for advancement depend on the size of the admissions office and its organization. Large colleges and universities may have a substantial admissions staff. In these settings, admissions counselors advance to become assistant directors of admissions. With experience they may become associate directors of admissions.

Larger offices may have a special staff for freshmen admissions, minority admissions, nontraditional admissions, transfer admissions, graduate admissions, or international admissions. Some admissions directors go on to become department chairpersons and deans. In small offices advancement opportunities are more limited. Top administrative positions are scarce, and competition is very keen.

### For Further Research

**American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers**, One Dupont Circle, NW, Suite 520, Washington, DC 20036. Web site: [www.aacrao.org](http://www.aacrao.org)

**Chronicle of Higher Education**, 1255 23rd Street, NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20037. Web site: <http://chronicle.com>

**Educational Research Service**, 2000 Clarendon Boulevard, Arlington, VA 22201. Web site: [www.ers.org](http://www.ers.org)

**National Association for College Admission Counseling** 1631 Prince Street, Alexandria, VA 22314-2818. Web site: [www.nacacnet.org](http://www.nacacnet.org)

**National Association of Student Personnel Administrators**, 1875 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 418, Washington, DC 20009. Web site: [www.naspa.org](http://www.naspa.org)

### Acknowledgments

Chronicle Guidance Publications appreciates the cooperation of the individuals who reviewed the information in this brief.

O\*NET™ is a trademark of the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration.

H.O.C. codes adapted and reproduced by special permission of the publisher, Psychological Assessment Resources, Inc., Odessa, FL 33556, from the *Dictionary of Holland Occupational Codes-Third Edition*, by Gary D. Gottfredson, Ph.D., and John L. Holland, Ph.D. Copyright 1982, 1989, 1996 by PAR, Inc.

### Briefs Related to This Title

*Academic Deans.* **Brief 93.**

*Alumni Directors.* **Brief 669.**

*Athletics Directors.* **Brief 627.**

*College and University Faculty Members.*  
**Brief 184.**

*College and University Registrars.*  
**Brief 371.**

*Employment Firm Workers.* **Brief 402.**

*Financial Aid Administrators.* **Brief 486.**

*Job Development Specialists.* **Brief 341.**

*Religious Education Directors.* **Brief 255.**

*Residence Hall Directors.* **Brief 311.**

*School Principals.* **Brief 247.**

For a complete list of brief and reprint titles with current pricing information call:

**Chronicle Guidance Publications, Inc.**  
66 Aurora Street  
Moravia, New York 13118-3569

Phone 1 800 622-7284  
FAX (315) 497-3359

Visit our Web Site at  
[www.ChronicleGuidance.com](http://www.ChronicleGuidance.com)