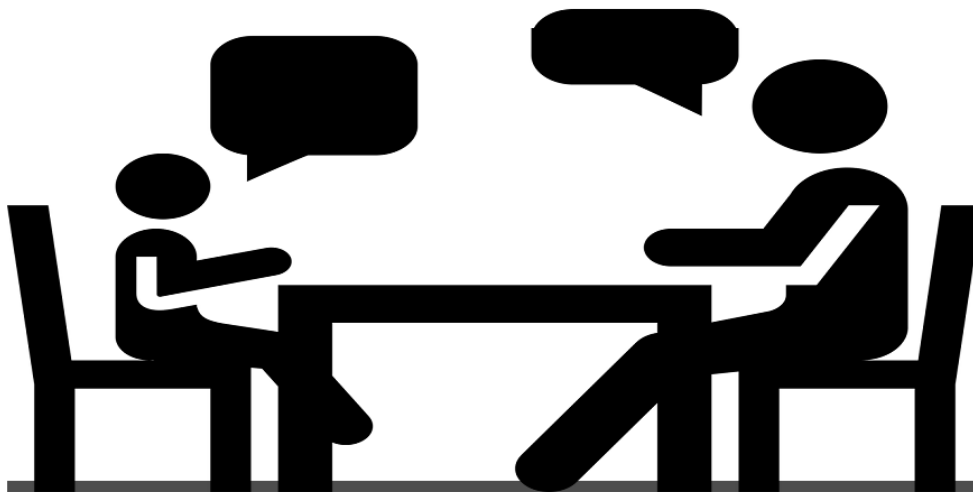


## College Placement And Counselling: A Springboard To A Fulfilling Future

*The college placement centre provides a safe, non-judgemental space for the student/parent to come in with questions, doubts or general questions about the what, where and how of the college application process.*



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It is that time of the year when millions of students across the country have given farewell to their school lives and are now focusing on moving forward to enter higher education by applying to colleges and universities in India and abroad.

Out of these, a few, in fact, just a minuscule number know where their true passion lies and prepare for a fulfilling and productive future. The majority, depending on their school-leaving board results and the advice they receive from parents, family and friends, opt for courses and colleges without truly recognizing their own interests or aptitude. What makes matters worse is that the adults advising them out of their best intent and knowledge seldom have a complete understanding of the future of jobs or the choices available.

The purpose here is not to dampen the dreams and aspirations of school-leaving children and their parents but to understand why only a few students make a rational choice on which course or college to attend after school. The problem is that choices are often burdened by parents' expectations and aspirations or shaped by the advice given to parents by a relative or friend who is 'successful' in a certain field and will recommend it as a career to the child. In this entire process, it is forgotten or ignored that the child is an individual and their aptitude, passion and, personality should drive the choice that is being made.

This is where the critical role of school, college placement/counselling programmes comes in. These programmes run on the basis of principles in practice across the world and are manned by experienced experts, who takes into account all important aspects, hence, helping the students in making the right choice.

### Some tips for students and their parents:

1. It is crucial to start early. Starting college placement guidance of students and their parents as early as when the child is 14 years of age is advised. It is at this point that teachers and counsellors are able to gauge the students' skills and aptitudes and accordingly guide the students and their parents towards the stream of learning that they will be most fit for.

2. It is vital to find the right fit for the child. Every student is an individual and can be at a different developmental stage from classmates in the same grade. Every child also has different dreams and aspirations, personalities, skills and aptitudes. The choice of colleges should be based on an assessment of these attributes. However, it is important to note that no single aptitude test or interest inventory would give you an accurate assessment of the child. Such tools can provide indicators to support dialogue. In the end, this would require teachers, parents and counsellors close to the child to ask the right set of questions and help the child through a series of reflections, with the single goal of letting the child uncover who they are, rather than imposing who they could or should be.

However, the importance of college placement counselling is not very well understood in India and only a handful of schools offer the service.

### **Why counselling and placements schools are important?**

1. The counselling and placement cells have only one goal: enabling students to achieve their potential. The college placement centre provides a safe, non-judgemental space for the student/parent to come in with questions, doubts or general questions about the what, where and how of the college application process. To do this, the placement team undertakes a robust evaluation of Indian and international colleges and universities, subject rankings across the world and the culture and ethos of these institutions to be able to offer students and their parents' constructive advice and rational recommendations.

2. In the majority of the cases, students/parents are unaware of courses and colleges beyond those they have heard from relatives or studied in themselves. To get updated information year on year, the College Placement Centre team in schools work tirelessly tapping into personal and professional networks across the globe to proffer the best possible choices to students. The idea is not just to help students secure admissions at elite institutions of higher learning but to thrive and succeed through their undergrad experience and beyond.

3. At the end of the day, for the school's placement and counselling team, their job is about relationships. The counsellors build a bond of trust with the students and their families by providing good advice that parents can act on. Emotional support and handholding apart, the team also gives students guidance on skills such as independence and housekeeping to be able to cope with the different social cultures outside of school.

4. These centres build relationships within India as well as overseas that will not only enrich the learning of students but will also provide them with a fertile ground for being valuable members of the college milieu and the community at large all the while maintaining high standards of academic and ethical rigour. Through extensive research on universities, geographies, programmes, courses, professors and the interest of the students, the team invites highly rated, elite universities to see the school campus, to understand the school's philosophy and speak to parents and students and allows them to understand the philosophy of the visiting institutions.

5. The College Placement office also continuously keeps students apprised of college and university visits in the surrounding area and encourages them to visit such gatherings and meets.

It is seen that schools that have well-established college placement and counselling programmes have better placements rates and have placed students in some of the finest colleges and universities of the world. The success of these programmes can be attributed to the fact that the entire school from teachers, management, sports coaches to administration works together with the placement and counselling team to fulfill the aspirations and needs of each student leaving school and to ensure that they are stepping on a springboard that will propel them towards joyful adult life.

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