

This went out to all State Universities
as an annex to Circular 819 of 6th February 2003
issued by the University Grants Commission.

Recommendations and Guidelines for the development and institutionalisation of Career Guidance Services in the Universities

1. Introduction

As you are aware, as part of the education reform proposals, Career Guidance has been identified as a priority and since 1998 practically every university has started some activities in this regard. National workshops were held in 1999 and 2000, and a review was conducted in 2000 by a UK Consultant after which some recommendations were issued by the UGC through communique UGC/URD/03 dated 17th July 2000.

The University Grants Commission has decided that this work must move forward faster and in more focussed and determined manner. It is therefore necessary that the work of the institutionalisation of the Career Services within the university system and within each university through the respective Career Guidance Units (CGUs) must be taken a step further.

While taking action on the basis of the Circular being issued concomitantly, the Vice-Chancellors are requested to take the necessary steps to further develop the Career Guidance Services within the broader framework indicated here below.

As a Standing Committee on Career Guidance in Universities has been set up and is functioning, the Universities are requested to refer issues and problems in this regard for consideration there.

2. The Objectives of Career Guidance

Career Guidance, even within Higher Education, is a broad programme, covering a wide area and encompassing many activities. It seeks to support the undergraduates in their efforts to undertake career education, career exploration, career choice, career planning and career management. Such a broader and long-term view must always be kept in mind and Universities must encourage and support experimental and developmental work in such areas, which could differ from university to university depending on capability, expertise, concerns or context. While admitting that one must start small, it is recommended that without being limited to one or the other objective, a multi-pronged approach involving **at least 3 activities** from among the following be concentrated on in the initial stages in each university.

Career Counselling

- 2.1 Provision of guidance, counselling and training to the undergraduates in areas such as career exploration, self-assessment, career planning, job search techniques, requirements of the world of work today, transition to the world of work (including CV writing, facing of interviews, aptitude tests).

Information Services

- 2.2 Development and provision of information services including those on recent graduates, their profiles & availability and their destinations (tracer studies), about labour market trends, skills profiles in demand, as well as opportunities for employment, self-employment, entrepreneurship, training and further study.

Networking

- 2.3 Networking with persons, institutions, trade and professional bodies, voluntary organisations etc. outside the university (not ignoring the alumni of each university) with particular attention to the private sector and being a privileged interface between them and the university, its academic programmes, graduates and the undergraduates to serve the interests of all parties involved contributing to a process whereby employable graduates reach the labour market.

Work Experience

- 2.4 Collaborating with the parties referred to above and the academic departments (that do not have integrated work experience as part of a study programme) to develop/facilitate short programmes of exposure to and experience of the world of work (including as feasible internships, placements, vacation work, mentoring, work shadowing, volunteer work, course-related projects/research). *(It is noted that some of the above imply guiding and supporting the undergraduates in finding solutions by themselves.)*

Graduate Placement

- 2.5 Facilitation and provision of work-search services to graduating students and recent graduates, and recruitment services to prospective employers and collaboration with inter-university and national initiatives in this regard

Integration within Curricula

- 2.6 Initiate/support collaborative experimental/pilot projects within the University with Faculties and Departments incorporating inputs also from industry with an aim of integrating career orientation work within academic programmes and university culture.

3. Institutionalisation within the University

3.1 An Academic Service

The Career Guidance Unit (CGU) of each university will be integrated and operated as an academic service under the direct responsibility and supervision of the Vice-Chancellor / Deputy Vice-Chancellor.

Given the need for incorporating career orientation within academic programmes, the University is requested to consider inviting the Director of the CGU to the University Senate as an observer. Where relevant, similar invitation to participate in the Steering Committee on University Reforms too can be considered.

3.2 Action Plan, Targets etc.

Each University shall ensure that a plan of work in Career Guidance appropriate to the needs of the University is in place and that targets are established. Such will be used in reviewing the work both at university and at national level.

3.3 Stakeholder Participation

It is recommended that at each University the CGU be supported by an advisory board (of between 8 to 15 members) representing the various stakeholders including staff, students, employers and industry appointed by the Vice-Chancellor in consultation with the Deans of Faculties and the Director of the CGU. Initially these could be persons already collaborating with the Unit in its work. With experience a more formal mechanism would be recommended through the UGC Standing Committee on Career Guidance.

3.4 Resourcing (Staff and infrastructure)

As local/physical identification is essential, each CGU shall be provided at least one room initially (moving eventually to a definite and permanent location) and minimum facilities including furniture, computer equipment and office facilities. Where the service has got off the ground, there should be space for counselling and for the provision/display of information.

As this work will require much external contact easy access to transport facilities for official work should be provided. Mechanisms applicable within the university undergraduate system for the reimbursement of expenses and for payments to visiting staff / resource persons shall be applicable. Exceptionally the Vice-Chancellor may authorise the use of the money involved in such payment for the preparation/purchase of a souvenir/memento. On a case by case basis enhanced payment to a visiting resource person of standing may also be authorised.

The currently approved cadre shall be as given in the circular. The Vice-Chancellor together with the Council will make the necessary decisions on which posts to fill depending on the requirements of the university and the progress of the service at such university.

There is provision for the appointment of a full-time Director. Each university is free to choose from among the options provided. Care must be taken to ensure that persons being appointed have the relevant standing, capabilities and experience, are willing to carry a relatively heavy load of work as is typically involved in building up a new service, and will be able & ready to do

that for a period of time judged sufficient to develop the Unit to a reasonably active and operational level

Given particularly the need eventually for incorporating career orientation within academic programmes, the release of an internal academic full-time remains the preferred choice at least initially. All steps must be taken to ensure that his/her substantive post from which he/she has been released as well as the linked academic rights, privileges and career progression are clearly safeguarded. An internal academic staff member so released shall continue to be a member of the relevant academic department and of the Faculty concerned.

4. Integrating Career Orientation within Academic Programmes

It is important that (where it is not already so) "Career Orientation" be a component of the academic programmes just as English and Computing have become. This is for reasons of effectiveness and long-term sustainability, and takes into account the typical mentality of the undergraduates.

If resources permit, there is nothing to deter a CGU from involvement in or supporting the build up of English and Computing skills among the undergraduates which are essential for work today. It is however noted that resources are specifically available to the Universities for such work and maximum use must be made of such. It is therefore recommended that the CGUs focus rather on career management skills which are specific to career guidance, and on the generic (transferable) skills/competencies such as self-management, interpersonal & organisational, team work, critical/creative thinking, problem solving.

Where the service has got off the ground and where different campuses exist away from the main site, each University is encouraged to also consider appointing Faculty Coordinators of Career Guidance. They will collaborate with the CGU in building up services relevant to each Faculty and in integrating Career Guidance within the curricula. They will be appointed by the Vice-Chancellor in consultation with the relevant Dean of Faculty and the Director of Career Guidance. Such coordinators may be paid a monthly honorarium. Such contribution by the academic staff will need to be given due credit with regard to their own career progression.

In the matter of integrating career orientation within the academic programme, it is strongly recommended that as a first step (unless such activity is already carried out by the Departments concerned) Deans of Faculties and Heads of Departments in collaboration with the CGU Director/Counsellors as well as the Faculty Coordinators introduce sessions for awareness creation about the world of work and other related careers work. These are best fitted in within standard academic schedules. In view of longer-term goals, it is essential that at least some departmental staff are actively involved in such programmes already at this stage.

Each university is invited to move quickly to the incorporation of two to three non-credit but compulsory career orientation modules meaningfully spread over the duration of each study programme. These modules will be developed jointly by the academic staff from the study programmes involved and staff of the Career Guidance Unit. Such contribution by the academic staff will need to be given due credit with regard to their own career progression.

It is envisaged that pilot projects, research, inter-university collaboration particularly through the UGC Standing Committee too will contribute to further development of such work.