

Our logo:



Our motto:

Supporting capability and employability for tomorrow
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Career Guidance Unit

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University of Sri Jayawardenepura

Note: Leaving it to an artist to do the art work, Mr Charles Fernando was responsible for the concept and sketch of the logo. He also formulated the motto in English while other academic staff members helped with the formulation in Sinhala. The pages that follow indicate where we now are due to the pioneering work of Mr Fernando

The Career Guidance Unit

The Mission

is to be a Service Centre of quality and excellence, while also being a role-model for the Sri Lankan university system, supporting the University in its objective of helping produce capable, employable and satisfied graduates and potential leaders empowered to contribute positively to their own well being, to the economy within the context of an ever-changing macro environment, and to the society as part of the conscience of a democratic civilised, and inclusive society.

The Aims and Objectives are:

1. To provide a service in Career Education, Career Guidance and Career Management

accessible to undergraduates and recent graduates of the University offering them and/or guiding them to a variety of resources including people, data & information, and activities & programmes to support them in their efforts to plan their future career and put those plans into effect

2. To support the students and the University in the area of Employability Skills Development

making a meaningful and relevant contribution to the University's learning environment through programmes and activities offered independently by the Careers Service itself and through collaborative work particularly with academic colleagues and academic departments, being a privileged channel also for feedback from the world of work intended to inform curriculum development moving progressively into becoming a well-integrated service within university culture and life responding to feedback from stakeholders and continually improving services

3. To help the graduating students in their job search and career projects as well as prospective employers through recruitment-related services

by maintaining and communicating information to graduating students on opportunities available on the basis of a database of such persons registering for such service

by keeping major employers, Chambers and Federations and Professional Bodies informed of developments at the university and of the type of graduate being introduced into the market, and providing opportunities to such employers when so requested for them to present themselves and the opportunities they offer to the students and

by acting as an intermediary in passing information as required in either direction, and if so requested acting on behalf of prospective employers by searching for and short-listing candidates who fit a specification provided

4. To be a partner involved in the broader preparation for life and work of the undergraduate

contributing to such together with the University, inter-university bodies and other partners

and with an emphasis on knowledge, skills, attitudes and values

helping the undergraduates to build up their capacity for independent and life long learning, and continued self/professional development

so as to become capable, employable and satisfied graduates and potential leaders empowered to contribute positively to their own well being, to the economy within the context of an ever-changing macro environment, and to the society as part of the conscience of a democratic civilised, and inclusive society.

Service Delivery against stated objectives:

To provide a service in Career Education, Career Guidance and Career Management

- Currently operational mainly through relevant workshops open to undergraduates and graduating batches of students.
- As needed one-to-one support too is provided
- Two new careers related modules are being prepared (*see info later*) as two new Careers Advisers have now been recruited.
- Reference material (in hard copy form) is available
- A computer-based employability skills development support lab is being formally opened today and will make available a variety of reference and self-study material which will at the same time support the workshops being conducted or planned (*see info later*)

To support the students and the University in the area of Employability Skills Development

- Currently operational mainly through relevant workshops
- This will be a core area for the future with a plan for a variety of workshops and training programmes to be conducted on a regular basis
- Have already collaborated with the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce in a pilot mentoring programme where senior executives helped groups of undergraduates. Leaving formal placement as an activity to be handled by the academic programmes within which such are integrated, the Careers Service will continue to initiate and support short programmes of exposure to industry including mentoring and work shadowing
- Activities & Services to be further expanded now that extra staff have been recruited as Careers Advisers
- A computer-based employability skills development support lab is being formally opened today and will make available a variety of reference and

self-study material which will at the same time support the workshops being conducted or planned (*see info later*)

- So as to be able to better inform curriculum development, undertake in more systematic manner the study of graduate destinations, labour market trends, skills profiles in demand etc going beyond the limited studies done so far
- Have already contributed to a programme within the Faculty of Medical Sciences where Career Education was integrated into the curriculum and it is hoped to support other academic units in similar manner
- The informal links with the Faculties and academic departments developed so far will be formalized through the establishment of an Advisory Committee with delegates from the different faculties to facilitate and support better integration of Career Guidance and skills development within curricula.

To help the graduating students in their job search and career projects as well as prospective employers through recruitment-related services

- This has been a regular activity since 6 years. While we do not wish to be an employment agency but one contributing to employability of graduates, we run the service and inform the recent graduates of opportunities as such information is received. Regular mailers are done, and urgent messages are handled via the telephone and e-mail
- At the moment an excellent reputation has been built up with us being recognized as a Centre that puts in a lot of effort (though offered free) into finding graduates who fit an employer's specification. It is noted that the number of employers who request such service is on the increase.

- The finalists register themselves and input their data into a computer database. This is currently local and is processed at the unit. We are currently expanding the system to offer an opportunity for employers to search it via the web and identify graduates that appear to match their criteria. The identification will be through a serial number and the prospective employer will then request the unit to be put in contact with the graduate(s) concerned. We have recently recruited a programmer on contract basis to help complete this project – while also helping with the new Employability Skills Development Support Lab.

To be a partner involved in the broader preparation for life and work of the undergraduate

- Our collaboration within the university system has won us respect and a leadership role
- The unit now maintains for example 10 notice boards of its own where information about activities, programmes (and vacancies) etc are made known to the student community. Among other things, daily it even carries headlines from two news sources (The New York Times and Channel News Asia) to help build up interest among students about what happens in the world beyond our borders.
- While the subject area is being handled mainly through presentations and workshops, a pilot project done recently by collaborating with the University Student Union in a film festival involving 4 award-winning movies has shown that even involvement in that area through “Movies with a Message” supported by a socio-political commentary on such leads to value education. That such was a success was seen in the unit being invited to support such a festival by a Faculty Student Union and an event organized by an academic department.

Employability Skills Development Support Lab and Resource Centre

(being opened 26th March 2007)

About 150 books related to Careers and Employability Skills are available in the resource centre amongst a lot of other things considered useful for students.

The multimedia-based employability skills development support lab will be unique in that it will be totally reserved for the task. It will support the Skills Development workshops and be available also as an 'open-access' resource. The students will not be able to run office applications or typical packages. Such will in fact not even be installed. Only careers-related and skills development applications will be accessible. These will include:

- Career Guidance Resources (*e.g. opportunities for work & further study related to subject areas – foreign resources but from which students can still learn, with us hoping to eventually produce material related to the Sri Lankan context*)
- Skills development and self-development material & tools
- Other support material (e.g. entrepreneurship)
- Learning Resources (*subject-oriented, How to study, How to prepare for exams etc.*)
- Sample material on alternative methods of learning (*e.g. Business Games*)
- Training Videos (*"How To" search for jobs, prepare CVs & Applications, face interviews etc. What is an Assessment Centre. etc.*)
- Aptitude Tests / Personality Tests (*practice tests & actual ones*)
- Practice Tests (*for IELTS, TOEFL, GMAT, GRE etc*)
- Electronic Newsletters on a variety of topics
- Company Information

New Careers Modules

(These will be available from academic year 2007/08. Module 1 is for those in years 1 & 2 of study. Module 2 is for those in years 3 & 4. By next year module 2 will have a version 2 for those who would by then have already followed Module 1.)

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MODULE 1: PREPARING FOR ONE'S FUTURE CAREER

(20 hours:10 sessions at 2 hours a week. Separately in English and in Sinhala depending on demand. Prior registration required. Groups of maximum 40 with students of Years 1 and 2. Contribution of 2-3 hours if possible from academic staff and/or external resource persons

Outline of content:

1. Profiting from the University and Enhancing Employability

What employers want of graduates? Developing employability skills.
Gaining industry experience even without doing a full-time job. Being SMART and competitive

2. Study Skills

Structure and purpose of university education
Profiting from Lectures, Tutorials, Assignments
Reading, Note-taking, Using the Library, Internet Search
Graphical tools for study (e.g. mind maps, fish bone diagrams, structure charts etc.)
Referencing guides
Assessments, Exams
Issues relating to plagiarism

3. Self-evaluation

Learning Styles, Personality and Interests, Self-assessment, Aptitude Tests
Making and maintaining a Progress File

4. My degree – what the future holds?

Using CGU and other resources to explore opportunities and options
What do past graduates do. Jobs, Self-employment, entrepreneurship
Flexibility and lifelong learning

5. Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

Helping students to discover how academic programmes can support these

6. Communication Skills (Including presentations and report writing)

7. Time Management and Project Management

The essentials and relevance for university life

8. Team work / working in groups

Assignments, Projects

Discussions, Meetings, Managing them

Conflicts, assertiveness, negotiation

9. Dealing with problems

Health issues, stress, memory and concentration

Relationship issues

10. Leadership Issues:

Changing One's World

Through brief exposures to articles, presentations and video clips etc:

An introduction to contemporary issues such as development, democracy and inclusiveness, equity, corporate & social responsibility, business ethics, environment

Brief reference also to current controversies

Changing and Managing One's Future

Exposure to role models.

Usefulness of action plans

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MODULE 2: EMBARKING ON ONE'S CAREER

(10 hours: 5 sessions at 2 hours a week. Using a combination of Sinhala and English -unless specific demand exists. Groups of maximum 40 for students of Years 3 and 4. Prior registration required. One or two 1-hour slots for internal academic staff and/or external resource persons)

1. Enhancing Employability (combining sessions 1 & 4 of Module 1)

2. Employability Skills: (combining sessions 5, 7 & 8 of module 1)

Critical Thinking, Problem Solving,

Time Management, Project Management & Teamwork Skills

3. CV Writing and Applications

Presentation, Video & Interactive sessions

4. Aptitude Tests, Assessment Centres and Facing Interviews

Presentation, Video & Interactive sessions

5. Leadership Issues (similar to session 10 of Module 1)


Dear Sir,

Done at the prompting of some of your students, this little booklet is a simple but hopefully meaningful token of appreciation from us, from them, and from all those who have contributed. It was done in just 10 days. So many more could have been contacted but constraints of time imposed limits. Further for about 72 hours now (to this moment of the text being submitted to the printers) our university mail server has been dead, and it is possible that some messages that were sent to us were either lost or are held up somewhere.


The Vice-Chancellor, the Dean of your Faculty, and the Head of your Academic Department have provided messages on behalf of the University. There are several dozens of past students of yours who are now academic staff members of this university. And there are the current students. We did not contact them because it was impossible to choose from among them. But just about a year back they rallied round you at the moment of your health crisis and were finally so glad that you came back to be with them and work again. And so in fact material in 'words' was not required. But we believe we were able to contact a representative sample of those who have worked with you or have benefited from your services from the 60s to today.

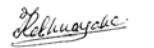
All this is proof, Dear Sir, that you can start your sabbatical leave knowing fully well that your life and work has had an impact on others.

As for us, the Career Guidance Team, we feel that the best tribute we can pay you is to promise you that what you started will be continued and developed even more on the basis of the inspiration you have been (and surely will be ... for you really cannot and will not forget us and this cause!). A part of that inspiration has been to push us towards creativity and that we will follow that path too changing our approaches and methods as problems change. Yes, we will be your partners in moving towards the realisation of your dream of supporting employability and capability among Sri Lankan graduates.


WM. Dhunapala
Senior Lecturer/Director


TMC Thennakoon
Careers Advisor


Sameera Nayawardane
Careers Advisor


Thilini Rathnayake
Programmer


Uppala Lokubogahawatta
Computer Applications Assistant