

## *Study of Career Education in Global Society*

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### **Abstract**

The diversification of employment has progressed, and the practice of lifetime employment, which is a characteristic of Japan, has decreased sharply by the impact of declining birthrate, aging society and structural changes in economy. Under these influences, the environment surrounding employment has been changing. The number of young people who leave their jobs within three years after graduating from university and who do not work are increasing. As human resource is an important resource in society, we worry that a shrinking labor force will make the economy less productive. There is a large gap between university and society, and young people who cannot smoothly become members of society increase. This situation has been a serious social problem in society. Career education is an important educational stage just before working in society. Looking at the current state of career education at Japanese universities, most of them are standardized and credit recognition is limited. Career education that will improve students' qualification and ability as professional and increase their interest and motivation for working is required. We will confirm the current situation and issues of career education from the materials, by "Career Programs at Universities" (2014), "Career Development Support and Career Education at Universities" (2016), and "Career Education Practical Courses at Universities" (2016) published by the Japanese Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare and propose the direction and practical method in the accelerating global society. It will contribute to career education that can deal with diversity without being standardized.

Keywords: Career Education, Career Center, Career Develop Support, Global Society

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## **Introduction**

Japan faces the effects of “Aging society with a declining birthrate”, “Structural changes in industry and economy”, and “Diversification and fluidity of employment”. The practice of employment which Japan used to have in the past has decreased sharply. Under these influences, the environment surrounding job hunting and employment has been changing. As Japan considers human resources to be an important resource, we concern that a decline in the labor force will lead to a decline in economic productivity. The percentage of people who leave their jobs within three years after graduating from university tends to increase, and the number of NEETs (not in employment, education or training) and part-time workers also tends to increase. There is a large gap between university and society, and the increasing number of young people who cannot smoothly become members of society has become a social problem. Career education improves students’ qualities and abilities as professionals, and increases their interest and desire to work. Looking at the current state of career education at Japanese universities, most of them are standardized and credit recognition is limited.

In this paper, we will confirm the current situation and issues of career education from the materials, by “Career Programs at Universities” (2014), “Career Development Support and Career Education at Universities” (2016), and “Career Education Practical Courses at Universities” (2016) published by the Japanese Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare. Then we will propose the direction and practical method in the accelerating global society. It will contribute to career education that can deal with diversity without being standardized.

## **Progress and Current Status of Career Education in Japan**

Career education in Japan was proposed in “Improvement of Connection between Primary/Secondary Education and Higher Education” by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) (1999). This report stated it was necessary to implement career education in order to facilitate smooth connections between schools and society, and start from the elementary school according to the developmental stages.

The Council of University reported that career education at university was to have a clear sense of purpose for the future, cultivate a view of work, acquire knowledge and skill related to work, and develop the ability and attitude to independently choose a career path based on the understanding of their own individuality for students (2000). Career education was proposed 24 years ago (1999) and has a relatively short history. It is still undergoing trial and error.

The content required for career education has changed with the times, and it has been introduced and practiced in various ways. In Japan, career education is promoted mainly by the government. Career education consists of two perspectives as the support for career development. First is to promote career development by cultivating the basic abilities and attitudes that are necessary for each student’s social and vocational independence. Second is to develop the knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes that are necessary for working at some or specific occupation.

MEXT has made some proposals regarding the quality assurance of university education and the relationship between university education and the abilities expected by society after

graduation. In 2003, the policy promotion of career education was accelerated in the “Youth Independence and Challenge Plan” (2003).

In 2008, it proposed that “Vocational Guidance (career guidance)” should be positioned appropriately in university educational activities. “Vocational Guidance (career guidance)” is to support students from the time of admission so that they can cultivate their own views on careers and work and develop the qualities and abilities necessary for a member of society. It supports the self-improvement of students throughout the educational activities of the university by providing course instruction such as course selection, consultation, other advice, and information provision, both inside and outside the curriculum according to the stage.

At the time of transition from university to society, students are required to make independent and autonomous choices. Career guidance, information provision and consultation systems regarding occupations and employment through career guidance and career centers are particularly important.

The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry has been promoting career education through the development of “Basic Skills for Working People” at universities (2006). It consists of three skills (12 elements): “ability to step forward,” “ability to think,” and “ability to work as a team.” In addition to basic academic skills and specialized knowledge, it is important to consciously cultivate this “Basic Skills for Working People” in order to make good use of them.

The employment rate after graduating from university in Japan is 97.3% (Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare and Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, April 2023). It means most of students find their job as soon as graduation. “Basic academic skills”, “Specialized knowledge” and “Basic skills for working” are important to learn at universities in order to make good use of these skills and work with a diverse range of people in global society.

## **Issues of Career Education**

In order to explore the specific content for guidance and future direction of career education, we will confirm the existing data and reports regarding current issues.

According to “Career Education Practical Courses at Universities” (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 2016), the elements included in social and vocational independence as career education at university, and the skills necessary for a smooth transition from university to society and working are basic skills, and general abilities (human relationship, social abilities, self-understanding/self-management ability, problem-solving ability, career planning ability), logical thinking ability, creativity, ambition and sense of values, specialized knowledge/skills are mentioned.

According to the report, there are six issues in career education.

- 1) Career education is now recognized as an initiative that only the faculty and staff members can undertake in charge. Career education should position as university-wide program by all faculty and staff members.

2) Human resource is needed with flexible expertise and creativity. It can respond to the changes in the industrial structure with basic skills as a member of society and professional, based on the diversification of types of occupations, industries, and size.

3) Based on the current severe employment situation and the need for transition support after graduation due to the diversification of students, they need to confirm how to interact with society through their occupations with their knowledge and skills in their respective specialized fields. They need to get a clear awareness of issues and specific goals, and to acquire the ability to achieve them.

4) Each university need to clarify the policy of career education and share the understanding of faculty and staffs paying attention to the situation of each student. It is necessary to develop career education systematically and comprehensively throughout both inside and outside the university.

5) The educational functions expected of each university, and the actual situation of students are diverse. It is important to note that career education is not required uniform efforts from all universities.

6) It is important to implement in combination of group work, seminar-style classes, group surveys, practical training, presentations, task-based learning, and internships. It is important to effectively combine and implement activities both inside and outside the curriculum.

In order to explore the specific guidance content and future direction of career education, we will confirm the result of the existing survey on current issues. According to the “Survey on Grasping University Students’ Views of Working People and Demonstrating Increased Awareness of ‘Fundamental Skills for Worker’” (Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, 2009), companies point out that students’ tenacity, teamwork, independence, and communication skills are severely lacking. However, students themselves answer that they are able to do these things well. There is a huge difference in awareness between the two sides.

According to “Survey on Current Status and Issues of Career Education and Employment Support” (Benesse Educational Research Institute, 2010), the current status and issues of career education at universities are conducted in relation to career education sponsored by career centers in universities. “distribution of career path booklets” (81%), “guidance course for nurturing vocational outlook (no credit)” (78.50%), “course aimed at developing general skills (no credit)” (56.9%), “Internship (without credits)” (53.2%), “Internship (with credits)” (48.6%), “Guidance class for cultivating a professional outlook (with credits)” (42.0%), “Class aimed at developing general-purpose abilities (with credits)” (32.0%).

Next, the subjects related to career education that are certified as university subjects and are being implemented are “internship (with credit)” (60.6%), “guidance for cultivating a view of work (with credit)” (56.9%), and “class (with credits) aimed at developing general-purpose abilities (with credits)” (54.3%).

The problems of students pointed out by the Career Center are “lack of writing skills necessary to create an entry sheet” (82.5%), “lack of ability to think and express themselves verbally, difficulty of interview guidance” (70.7%), “polarization between students who get multiple job offers and students who can’t get any offers” (70.3%), “lack of basic academic

skills” (60.2%), “do not try to take action for job hunting” (53%), “do not have any experience to appeal to employment without their own ideas”(50.1%) “do not have any experience that can be appealed for employment” (49%), “lack of manners, and attitudes as members of society” (47.1%), “give up on job hunting” (43.8%), “find employment at only famous and large companies”(37.5%), and “cannot explain about their issues at Career Center” (37.4%).

Issues of career education are “It is difficult to link career education and undergraduate education” (56.4%), “Difficulty in understanding the importance of career education among faculty members” (55.7%), “It is difficult to plan a valid career education” (46.6%), “The goals and effects of career education are vague and unclear” (35.0%), “The results of career education are not linked to the improvement of employment skills” (20.1%).

Regarding future career education and support for employment, the most important points are “It is important to develop the basic of working abilities (problem solving through the development of thinking ability, expression ability, and ability to consider) ” (90.4%), “It is important to deepen the cooperative relationship between Career Center and faculty members” (89.7%), “It is important to improve the professional skills of Career Center staff” (86%), and “It is important to plan integrated career education and employment support. Management is important” (84.7%), “Expansion of guidance from lower grades is necessary” (81.2%), “It is important for professors to improve their career education skills” (75.1%), “It is important to collaborate with high-quality private businesses” (61.1%).

The most common questions asked by students are about self-analysis (motivation/self-promotion) and employment exams (interview/writing). In the other hand, Carrer Center points up the lack of “basic skills as a member of society” and “basic academic skills” such as “tenacity”, “teamwork”, “independence”, and “communication skills”. This means that it is difficult to provide interview guidance as career education because of lack of basic skills, necessary writing skills, thinking ability and verbal expression skills. Before developing specialized abilities, it is necessary for students to develop self-analysis, basic academic skills, ability to think and express one’s own opinions, and ability to consider one’s own life plan. In the process of transitioning from a student to a worker, there are many students who are unable to independently and autonomously choose their own occupations. There is an urgent need for university-wide consideration of career education. In addition, the training of versatile abilities and the cooperative relationship between Career Center and undergraduate faculty members require time-consuming efforts from the beginning of admission.

### **Proposal Direction and Practical Method**

In recent years, “how to quickly create products and services with new value” has being needed as an industrial competitiveness. At corporate sites, there is a strong demand for the ability to discover issues for creating new value, the ability to take action to solve them, and the ability to work in teams that fuse with different fields. On the other hand, the educational ability at home, community, club activities and group activities, which used to be a place to polish these abilities “naturally” is declining. The balance between demand and supply required in workplace and community has collapsed. In other words, though until now abilities required in workplace and community could been acquired “naturally” in the process of growing into an adult, it has now become the abilities that must be “consciously” cultivated.

The development of basic and versatile abilities is essential as a guidance item in career education. These are the basic skills necessary for social and vocational independence, regardless of any field or occupation. The specific content of this ability can be organized into the following eight abilities from the perspective of focusing on getting a job and manifesting in actual behavior.

### ***Basic/General-Purpose Ability***

#### 1) Ability to form human relationships and society

This ability is the basic ability to live and work in relation to society. In modern society, where value is diversifying, it is necessary to have the ability to accept and cooperate with others. In today's rapidly changing world, people are required to participate in and adapt to society, while creating and building new society on their own if necessary. This ability means to understand and listen to other's thought, position, personality and opinion, accurately convey own thoughts, to accept situation and cooperate with others while fulfilling one's role, to participate in society actively for the future society. Specific elements include communication skills, teamwork, and leadership.

#### 2) Self-understanding/self-management ability

This ability is the basic ability for career development and human relationship. In particular, self-understanding needs to be constantly deepened throughout the lifespan of building a variety of careers. While maintaining a mutual relationship with society, act independently based on a positive understanding of what you can do, what you feel meaningfully, and what you want to do, including your own future possibilities. The ability controls own thought and emotion, and is willing to learn for future growth. Specific elements include understanding one's own role, thinking positively, self-motivation, perseverance, stress management, and proactive behavior.

#### 3) Problem-solving ability

This ability is necessary in order to work enthusiastically on what one should do. It is to move forward without being bound by conventional ways of thinking and methods at knowledge-based society and globalization. It is to discover and analyze various issues of work, to create appropriate plans to handle and resolve the issues. As society becomes more information-oriented, it is also important to acquire the ability to independently select, utilize information and information methods. Specific elements include understanding, selecting, processing of information, understanding essence, pursuing causes, problem discovery, planning, execution ability, and evaluation/improvement.

#### 4) Career planning ability

This ability is necessary throughout life in order to live as a member of society or a professional. It is to understand the significance of working, position working based on the relationship with various positions and roles that one should fulfill, and while appropriately selecting and utilizing various information on diverse lifestyles. It is the ability to make independent decisions and build a career. Specific elements include understanding the significance and role of learning and working, understanding diversity, future planning, selection, action and improvement.

#### 5) Logical thinking ability/Creativity

Logical thinking ability means developing the ability to think about things logically and come up with new ideas. Creativity is necessary in order to create and build a new society on one's own in a rapidly changing global society.

#### 6) Motivation/Attitude

Motivation and attitude are extremely important when engaging in work and taking specific actions in society throughout life. Motivation and attitude lead to improv ability, and developing ability leads to motivation and attitude. The two elements are closely related in the sense that they may even enhance the situation.

#### 7) Outlook on Life

Outlook on life is internal in individual and is important element related to motivation and attitude. There is a relationship in which people recognize value and decide to do something, and when they put that idea into action, it materializes in their motivation and attitude. It includes the work and vocational views that career education has traditionally fostered, such as "How do you live?" "Why do you work?" and "How do you work and occupation in your life?"

#### 8) Specialized Knowledge/Techniques

No matter what kind of job or occupation, a certain level of expertise is required to perform the job. Having a specialty also allows individuals to demonstrate their individuality, so it is extremely important to choose the specialty while looking ahead to own future, and to develop the knowledge and skills necessary for it. Until now, specialized knowledge and skills have mainly been developed through in-house education and training in Japan. In the future, it will be necessary to consciously develop them at university, and from this perspective, it is necessary to review and enrich vocational education.

The basic effective teaching methods will be shown below.

#### 1) Self analysis

Creating values maps and life plans. Think about each career through self-analysis rather than inputting knowledge.

#### 2) Information gathering

Decide on a theme and conduct research books and other materials by internet and at libraries.

#### 3) Lectures by external lecturers

We invite people from companies and alumni to give lectures. It is important to listen lectures directly from people who are active in the field.

#### 4) Active learning

Active learning is not about acquiring correct knowledge, but rather learning how to approach problem solving through discussions (tasks) that have no correct answers. Through active learning, students can learn proactively and collaboratively to discover and solve problems.

#### 5) Work experience

Develop career abilities through practical work experiences.

University is expected to engage in career education, taking into account the educational functions and the educational policies paying attention to the circumstances of each student. From the perspective of career education initiative at university, we aim to ensure a smooth transition from high school to university early in the first year, give freshman a sense of purpose for learning at university, and encourage them to think about their life and career after graduation and cultivate the foundation for implementing this. We provide guidance on career planning, setting specific goals until graduation, and developing a broad vocational awareness. Sophomore will develop the skills, attitudes, and problem-solving skills necessary to become socially and professionally independent. Next Career Support Stage will be shown below.

***First Step for Freshman: Enhancing Career Awareness***

Our university will provide a career design hand-book to all freshman immediately after enrollment so that they can think about their career design at an early stage. At the introductory seminar for freshman, seminar's professors use this at class due to think about their own career designs, future, set goals and create opportunities to put them into action. They will take a conduct vocational interest and personality to understand of occupation and deepen their vocational interests by worksheet. They will hear from junior and senior students who are job hunting about their own career development and job hunting. Group discussions will be held for the purpose of improving self-expression and deepening self-understanding. They will Learn how to write papers and emails as business communication.

***Second Step for Sophomore: Gain Insight Into the Relationship Between Self and Society***

Career education will provide opportunities to further deepen understanding of oneself and society, gain insight into the relationship between oneself and society, and think about one's future by incorporating assignments such as written expressions, presentations, and group discussions. They will develop an image of working in society by hearing experiences from graduates and workers working at companies. Through industry research, they narrow down the industries and occupations that suit them and want to work in. We will provide a pre-internship guidance on how to prepare for work and business manner.

***Third Step for Junior: Internship Pre-training/Practical Training***

Before participating in an internship, reconfirm the purpose and significance of the internship and conduct business manner exercise. Even if students understand business manners as explicit knowledge, they have to be able to act and speak smoothly. They will submit daily reports during the internship and the instructor will provide feedback that will be useful for training the following day. After completing the internship, they will report their experiences of the internship and learn how to utilize what they have learned in the future. In preparation for job hunting, students will learn how to do self-analyze and research companies, and will give shape to their career path. Through mock interviews and group discussions, they will develop the mindset to start job hunting. At the same time, they will participate in job hunting seminars by the university's career center and learn know-how.

***Last Step for Senior: Support for Job Hunting***

We will provide general support for job hunting and post-graduation. At the same time, we will provide guidance on how to prepare for working as a member of society through campus life.



## **Conclusion**

Changes in the social environment surrounding careers, such as structural changes in industry and economy, and the diversification of employment are having a major impact. As the social environment surrounding careers changes, it is becoming increasingly difficult to find ideal role models who can help students think about their future, and even if they find the model, it may be outdated in 10 years. The purpose of career education is to give students an opportunity to think about their own future and the importance of learning, and to develop their ability and attitude to respond to change in order to independently carve out their own future with hope.

As we surveyed the current state of career education and explored issues, we became acutely aware of the importance of career education at universities. The second half of the four years at university overlaps with job hunting in Japan. At each university, it will be necessary for faculty members with different research fields and professional experience to teach students basic skills for working while linking them to their respective specialized fields. As a large number of diverse students are enrolling, we recognize that we will provide individual support for each student to develop an effective career education by sharing information about job hunting.

This paper provides the overview of the current state of career education for students, career centers, and companies based on the existing data, and the effective approach to career education. Career education in Japan is still at the stage of trial and error. In the near future, we would like to focus on verifying specific methods and the impact on students to provide more effective career education at universities.

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