

Supporting self-directed career design founded on long-term vision



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“Once, Hitotsubashi University was known as part of the ‘aristocracy’ of the job market. However, we can no longer be complacent and rely on the strength of the Hitotsubashi brand. We need to help students develop the kinds of skills that employers expect, and match employer needs to students' individual aspirations and plans for the future. A diversity of new systems for career support is being developed at other universities;

we must be careful not to fall behind.” Seigo Mori, Executive Vice President for Education and Student Affairs and Director, Student Support Center)

It was the kind of awareness expressed above that informed the decision to launch an Employment Information Office in April 1996, followed by a Student Support Center (Student Advising and Counseling Room and Employment Guidance Office) on October 1, 2004.



Then, in April 2006, the Employment Guidance Office was re-named the Career Support Office, and began to provide not only support to job seekers but careers education and assistance for all undergraduate and graduate students at Hitotsubashi.

“As the name Career Support Office suggests, our aim is to help students design their careers rather than focusing solely on securing job offers. For this purpose we provide information, organize seminars, lectures and internships, and offer consultation services.” (Professor Hiroki Hayashi, Graduate School of Social Science, General Manager of the Career Support Office).

One particular challenge at present is the provision of career support to female students, graduate students, and international students. From April 2008, career consultation services have been bolstered by moves such as engaging Haruo Takahashi from the alumni association Josuikai as a Senior Advisor, and appointing two other specialist Career Advisors.

It is not unusual for students to seek advice from the Center for Student Exchange on job hunting, for issues raised at the Student Advising and Counseling Room to be related to career matters, or for the root cause of problems for students visiting the Healthcare Center to lie in career planning troubles. For this reason, student advisors from the Student Support Center (Student Advising and Counseling Room and Career Support Office), the Healthcare Center, and the Center for Student Exchange hold regular meetings to facilitate close collaboration in the delivery of student support services.

In the area of support for graduate students, the Graduate School of Social Science's program on “Graduate School as a Venue for Career Design (Educational program that integrates program entry, learning content, and program exit)” has been selected for three years' funding under the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology's Support Program for Enhancing Systematic Education in Graduate Schools. To tie in with this program, from the 2007 academic year a program for career support and

job placement assistance has been offered to all graduate students in collaboration with an external organization specializing in this field. Graduate schools are now throwing off their old “ivory tower” image, a transformation symbolized by the establishment and expansion of professional graduate schools oriented to the development of advanced professional and practical abilities on the premise that students will go on to work in companies, international organizations and other bodies. For this reason, says Executive Vice President Mori, “From now on we hope to take a more pro-active approach to communicating the realities of education and training in our rapidly changing graduate schools to companies and other prospective employers, as well as facilitating opportunities for information exchange to ensure that we respond to the human resource needs of those employers, and finding other ways to develop a unified job placement and career support framework that embraces both graduate and undergraduate levels.”

The Career Support Office has now embarked on earnest in its mission of assisting each student with self-directed career design founded on long-term vision.



Collaboration with Josuikai yields results for Career Support Office

Organization and functions of the Career Support Office

The Career Support Office is part of the Student Support Center (headed by Executive Vice President for Education and Student Affairs Seigo Mori). Under the General Manager (Professor Hiroki Hayashi), the Office's work is carried out by a Senior Advisor (Haruo Takahashi), two Career Advisors (Iwao Shima and Eri Fujimori), and administrative staff from the Student Services Division (Chiyuki Akatsuka and Hirokazu Hara) and the Educational Affairs Division (Miko Goto). The Office also furnishes assistance for the student-run Career Design Committee.

The main functions of the Career Support Office are as follows.

(1) Job placement guidance and employment seminars

In order to assist students engaged in job-hunting, the Office runs numerous activities including guidance sessions, seminars, government employer information sessions, company tours, industry information sessions, on-campus company information sessions, and student

reports on job-hunting experience.

(2) Computer access and job career information

The Office has computer terminals available for students to conduct job searches, as well as an extensive range of job offer notices and corporate and industry materials.




(3) Consultation on careers and job-hunting

Three Advisors provide attentive individual consultations on issues such as job-hunting and career design.

(4) Internships

There are two types of internship programs. The first is a cross-faculty common course titled "Internship," offered to undergraduates at year levels 2 to 3 (worth 2 course credits); the other, is a job placement support course for first year Master's students, also titled "Internship" (not for credit). In the 2008 academic year, 28 undergraduates took the former course and 49 graduate students took the latter, with placements across 12





and 20 companies respectively. The short-term overseas training program run by the Center for Student Exchange and the Student Exchange Division of the Department of Academic Affairs, which entails an internship experience at a Spanish trading firm, could also be said to form a part of the university's career support scheme.

(5) Support for the Career Design Committee

Funding and a variety of other forms of support are provided to the Career Design Committee, a body that pursues a range of career-related activities from a student standpoint.

Collaboration with Josuikai on career development support

Hitotsubashi University has been selected for funding under the 2007 round of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology's Support Program for Contemporary Educational Needs (Contemporary GP) for an initiative titled Development of Advanced Career Support Model that Collaborates with Alumni Association: Development of a Core Program of Donated Lectures and Organic Linkage with Career Development Assistance. This involves the systematic provision of career education around three core courses: Seminar for Career Designing (interactive small-group classes led by around 150 Hitotsubashi alumni now working at the front lines of the business world), Dialogue on Social Practice, and Career Design and Gender. In addition, the Program is enriching career support activities through internships, special seminars on job-hunting, and other initiatives.

Curricular courses for career support

(1) Dialogue on Social Practice (2 credits; year levels 1-2)

Offered through the generosity of the Josuikai and the Hitotsubashi University Support Association, this is an omnibus-style lecture course taught by alumni. Former Hitotsubashi students playing leading roles in society share their outlooks on life and work backed by personal experience, communicating conditions in the real world today and thereby fostering stronger vocational awareness among students. A Josuikai donated course.

(2) Seminar for Career Designing (2 credits; year levels 2-4)

Implemented in collaboration with the Josuikai, this course is offered as part of the integrated education system for career development support. The classes, each of which has just 10 to 15 students, involve seminar-style discussion with business leaders from many different sec-

tors, allowing students to deepen their understanding of business practice and develop a clearer idea of where they want to be after graduation. Another Josuikai donated course.

(3) Career Design (2 credits; year levels 2-3)

Develop your vocational self-image and hone the skills you will need, while making decisions regarding your preferred field of work. - This course helps students understand the concept of "career" and ignites their interest in career design.

(4) Career Design and Gender (2 credits; year levels 1-2)

This course fosters basic insights to inform effective career design and the development of broader life plans, understandings of the corporate system and intellectual capacities attuned to a gender-equal society. Another Josuikai donated course.

(5) History of Hitotsubashi University (2 credits; year level 1)

An opportunity to learn about the history of the university, and to re-assess what it means to study at Hitotsubashi. Lecturers include the University President, faculty members, Professors Emeritus, and alumni.

(6) Career Education Collaborative Courses **Corporate Society**

This course examines how players in the business sector, the non-profit sector and elsewhere are working to address social issues, and how they themselves are implicated in these issues. This yields guiding principles for students considering their future career options.

Community Revitalization

Students formulate their own social contribution projects, and work in collaboration and partnership with a range of organizations and individuals in the local community.

Communication and Expression / Seminar

This course employs improvisation activities for the experiential study of communication and expression, providing a forum for development of capacities for self-reflection and effective interpersonal relations—fundamental facets of career development.

The Career Support Office also operates a Special Seminar on Job-Hunting as part of the Contemporary GP program, focusing on themes that arise often in the course of student consultation. The themes scheduled for the 2009 academic year are: Preparing Entry Sheets / Visiting Alumni (September 28), Preparing Entry Sheets / Interview Techniques (September 29), and Interview Techniques / Visiting Alumni (September 30).