

AL-MUHIBBAH OPEN UNIVERSITY (AOU), ABUJA
Career Services Integration Policy

Ratified by the Senate of AOU, Abuja
July, 2024

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PART A

INTRODUCTION

Al Muhibbah Open University (AOU) is dedicated to producing 21st-century capable and employable graduates. This policy outlines the comprehensive integration of career services into the academic programs at AOU, in line with the Core Curriculum Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS) and international best practices. The aim is to equip students with the skills, knowledge, and experiences necessary to thrive in the modern workforce.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Career Services Integration Policy are to:

1. Embed career readiness and employability skills into the curriculum of all academic programs.
2. Provide students with access to comprehensive career services and support throughout their studies.
3. Foster strong partnerships with industry to enhance student employability and career opportunities.
4. Ensure that graduates are well-prepared to meet the demands of the 21st-century job market.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all undergraduate and postgraduate programs at AOU. It encompasses the integration of career services into the curriculum, co-curricular activities, student support services, and industry partnerships.

CAREER SERVICES INTEGRATION FRAMEWORK

1. Career Readiness Competencies:
 - a. Identify and integrate core career readiness competencies such as critical thinking, communication, teamwork, digital literacy, and professional ethics into the curriculum.
 - b. Ensure that courses and programs include opportunities for students to develop these competencies through practical experiences, projects, and assessments.
2. Career Services Offices:
 - a. Establish a centralized career services office to coordinate career-related activities, resources, and support for all students.
 - b. **Develop program-specific career services tailored to the unique needs and career paths of different academic disciplines.**

CURRICULUM DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

1. Embedding Career Services:
 - a. Integrate career services into the curriculum by including career-related modules, workshops, and seminars in each program.
 - b. Incorporate capstone projects that require students to apply their academic knowledge to real-world challenges, enhancing their employability skills.
2. Career Development Courses:
 - a. Include mandatory career development courses in the curriculum that cover resume writing, job search strategies, interview skills, and career planning.
 - b. Offer elective courses focused on specialized career skills relevant to specific industries or career paths.

CAREER SERVICES PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

1. Career Workshops and Seminars:

- a. Organize regular career workshops and seminars on topics such as job search strategies, networking, personal branding, and professional development.
 - b. Invite industry professionals and alumni to share their experiences and insights with students.
2. Career Fairs and Networking Events:
 - a. Host annual career fairs to connect students with potential employers and internship opportunities.
 - b. Facilitate networking events where students can interact with industry professionals and explore career opportunities.
 3. Internship and Placement Support:
 - a. Develop and promote internship programs that provide students with hands-on experience in their chosen fields.
 - b. Offer placement services to assist students in securing employment upon graduation.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Career Services Office:
 - a. Coordinate all career services activities and ensure alignment with academic programs.
 - b. Provide resources and support for students, including career counseling, job search assistance, and professional development tools.
2. Faculty Members:
 - a. Integrate career readiness competencies into their courses and provide guidance on career development.
 - b. Act as mentors to support students in their career planning and development.
3. Industry Partners:
 - a. Collaborate with AOU to offer internships, mentorship programs, and job opportunities for students.
 - b. Provide feedback on curriculum and career services to ensure alignment with industry needs.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

1. Tracking Progress:
 - a. Data Collection: Collect data on student participation in career services activities, internship placements, and employment outcomes.
 - b. Implement feedback mechanisms to gather input from students, faculty, and industry partners.
2. Evaluation Metrics:
 - a. Establish key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure the effectiveness of career services integration, such as student satisfaction, employment rates, and employer feedback.
 - b. Conduct regular reviews of career services programs and activities to identify areas for improvement.

STUDENT SUPPORT AND ENGAGEMENT

1. Personalized Career Counseling:
 - a. Offer personalized career counseling sessions to help students with career planning, job search strategies, and professional development.

- b. Provide career assessments and tools to help students identify their strengths, interests, and career goals.
- 2. Online Resources:
 - a. Develop an online career portal with resources such as job listings, resume templates, interview tips, and career planning tools.
 - b. Offer virtual workshops and webinars to ensure accessibility for all students, including those in remote locations.

INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

- 1. Building Relationships:
 - a. Establish industry advisory boards to provide guidance on curriculum development and career services.
 - b. Develop partnerships with employers to offer internships, mentorship programs, and job placements.
- 2. Collaborative Initiatives:
 - a. Collaborate with industry partners on research projects that provide students with practical experience and industry exposure.
 - b. Work with industry partners to develop skill development programs that address current and future workforce needs.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND REVIEW

- 1. Regular Updates:
 - a. Regularly review and update the curriculum to ensure it remains relevant to industry trends and job market demands.
 - b. Integrate feedback from students, faculty, and industry partners into the continuous improvement process.
- 2. Professional Development:
 - a. Provide ongoing professional development for faculty members to enhance their ability to integrate career services into their teaching.
 - b. Offer training for career services staff to ensure they are equipped with the latest tools and techniques in career counseling and support.

CONCLUSION

AOU is committed to producing graduates who are capable and employable in the 21st-century job market. By integrating career services into the academic programs, we aim to equip our students with the skills, knowledge, and experiences necessary to succeed in their chosen careers. This policy outlines our comprehensive approach to embedding career readiness into the curriculum, fostering industry partnerships, and providing robust support for our students' career development.

PART B

IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISM

INTRODUCTION

The implementation of the Career Services Integration Policy at AOU is designed to equip students with the skills, knowledge, and experiences necessary to succeed in the 21st-century job market. By embedding career readiness into the curriculum, fostering industry partnerships, and providing robust support for students, AOU aims to produce graduates who are capable and employable. Continuous monitoring, evaluation, and improvement will ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of the policy.

1. ESTABLISHMENT OF A CAREER SERVICES OFFICE

- a. Appointment of a Director of Career Services to oversee the implementation of the policy, manage the career services team, and coordinate with academic departments and industry partners.
- b. The Director should be an academic with experience in career counseling, student support services, and industry relations. In the alternative, an academic who in the opinion of the Vice Chancellor, possesses these qualities.

2. STAFFING

- a. Hire career counselors to provide personalized support to students. In the alternative, the Vice Chancellor may from among the academic officers of the University people he deemed possessed these qualities or can be trained to acquire them.
- b. Employ administrative staff to manage the day-to-day operations of the Career Services Office.

3. CURRICULUM INTEGRATION

- a. Development of Career Development Courses:
 - i. Design and incorporate mandatory career development courses into the curriculum of all programs. These courses should cover topics such as resume writing, job search strategies, interview skills, and career planning.
 - ii. Offer elective courses focused on specialized career skills relevant to specific industries or career paths.

4. EMBEDDING CAREER READINESS COMPETENCIES

- a. Provide training for faculty members on how to integrate career readiness competencies into their courses. This includes incorporating practical experiences, projects, and assessments that develop critical thinking, communication, teamwork, digital literacy, and professional ethics.
- b. Conduct regular reviews of the curriculum to ensure that career readiness competencies are effectively integrated and aligned with industry needs.

5. CAREER SERVICES PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

- a. Regular Workshops and Seminars:
 - i. Organize regular workshops on job search strategies, networking, personal branding, and professional development.
 - ii. Invite industry professionals and alumni to share their experiences and insights with students.
- b. Career Fairs and Networking Events:
 - i. Host annual career fairs to connect students with potential employers and internship opportunities.
 - ii. Facilitate networking events where students can interact with industry professionals and explore career opportunities.
- c. Internship and Placement Support:
 - i. Develop and promote internship programs that provide students with hands-on experience in their chosen fields.
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6. STUDENT SUPPORT AND ENGAGEMENT

- a. Personalized Career Counseling:

- i. Offer personalized career counseling sessions to help students with career planning, job search strategies, and professional development.
 - ii. Provide career assessments and tools to help students identify their strengths, interests, and career goals.
- b. Online Resources:**
- i. Develop an online career portal with resources such as job listings, resume templates, interview tips, and career planning tools.
 - ii. Offer virtual workshops and webinars to ensure accessibility for all students, including those in remote locations.

7. INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

- a. Building Relationships:**
- i. Establish industry advisory boards to provide guidance on curriculum development and career services.
 - ii. Develop partnerships with employers to offer internships, mentorship programs, and job placements.
- b. Collaborative Initiatives:**
- i. Collaborate with industry partners on research projects that provide students with practical experience and industry exposure.
 - ii. Work with industry partners to develop skill development programs that address current and future workforce needs.

8. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- a. Tracking Progress:**
- i. Collect data on student participation in career services activities, internship placements, and employment outcomes.
 - ii. Implement feedback mechanisms to gather input from students, faculty, and industry partners.
- b. Evaluation Metrics:**
- i. Establish key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure the effectiveness of career services integration, such as student satisfaction, employment rates, and employer feedback.
 - ii. Conduct regular reviews of career services programs and activities to identify areas for improvement.

9. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT AND REVIEW

- a. Regular Updates:**
- i. Regularly review and update the curriculum to ensure it remains relevant to industry trends and job market demands
 - ii. Integrate feedback from students, faculty, and industry partners into the continuous improvement process.
- b. Professional Development:**
- i. Provide ongoing professional development for faculty members to enhance their ability to integrate career services into their teaching.
 - ii. Offer training for career services staff to ensure they are equipped with the latest tools and techniques in career counseling and support.

10. COMMUNICATION AND AWARENESS

- a. Student Engagement:**

- i. Include career services information in student orientation programs to raise awareness of available resources and support.
- ii. Conduct regular information campaigns to promote career services programs and activities to students.
- b. Faculty and Staff Involvement:**
 - i. Include updates on career services integration in faculty meetings to encourage involvement and support.
 - ii. Provide training sessions for administrative staff to ensure they are knowledgeable about career services and can effectively support students.

11. RESOURCE ALLOCATION

- a. Budget Planning:**
 - i. Allocate sufficient budget for the implementation and maintenance of career services programs and activities.
 - ii. Ensure efficient use of resources to maximize the impact of career services on student employability.
- b. Infrastructure Development:**
 - i. Develop and maintain facilities for career services, such as counseling offices, career resource centers, and event spaces
 - ii. Invest in technology infrastructure to support online career services, virtual workshops, and digital resources.

PART C CAREER SERVICES COURSES

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- 4. Level Three: Pre-Professional Year**
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- 7. Course Descriptions and Outcomes**
- 8. Implementation and Evaluation**

INTRODUCTION

The Career Services Integration Policy at AOU aims to equip students with the skills, knowledge, and experiences necessary for successful careers in the 21st-century job market. This document outlines a comprehensive set of career service courses designed for students from their first year through to post-graduation engagement, ensuring continuous career development and readiness.

Level	Course	Description	L/Outcome	Topics Covered
Level 1 Foundation Year	Career Exploration and Self-Assessment	This introductory course is designed to help first-year students explore various career options, understand their strengths and interests, and begin developing a career plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Identify personal strengths, interests, and values. -Explore different career paths and industries. - Develop an initial career plan and set short-term goals. - Understand the importance of soft skills and basic professional behavior. 	Self-assessment tools and techniques. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction to career options and industries. - Goal setting and career planning basics. - Soft skills development (e.g., communication, teamwork, time management).
Level 2 Development Year	Building Professional Skills	This course focuses on developing key professional skills that are essential for workplace success. It prepares students for internships and part-time jobs related to their field of study.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop effective resume and cover letter writing skills. - Understand job search strategies and application processes. - Practice interview skills and techniques. - Build a professional online presence (e.g., LinkedIn profile). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resume and cover letter writing workshops. - Job search strategies and networking. - Interview preparation and mock interviews. - Professional online branding and social media etiquette.
Level 3 Pre-Professional Year	Experiential Learning and Internship Preparation	This course is designed to prepare students for internships and experiential learning opportunities, providing hands-on experience in their chosen field.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gain practical experience through internships or co-op programs. - Apply academic knowledge in a professional setting. - Develop industry-specific skills and competencies. - Reflect on and evaluate internship experiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Internship search and application process. - Professional behavior and workplace etiquette. - Industry-specific skills and tools. - Reflection and evaluation of experiential learning.
Level 4 Professional Year	Career Transition and Job Search	This course helps final-year students transition from academic life to the professional world, focusing on advanced job search strategies and career planning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Master advanced job search techniques and strategies. - Prepare for and navigate the job interview process. - Understand salary negotiation and employment contracts. - Develop a long-term career development plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advanced job search strategies and networking. - Job interviews and follow-up techniques. - Salary negotiation and understanding employment contracts. - Long-term career planning and professional development.

Post-Graduation Engagement	Continuous Career Development and Alumni Engagement	This course aims to support recent graduates in their early career stages, providing resources for continuous professional growth and opportunities for alumni engagement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop strategies for ongoing career development and professional growth. - Build and maintain a professional network. - Engage with AOU alumni for mentorship and networking. - Access resources for continuous learning and skill enhancement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Continuous professional development strategies. - Networking and relationship building. - Alumni mentorship programs. - Resources for lifelong learning and career advancement.
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COURSE DESCRIPTIONS AND OUTCOMES

Each course will include detailed descriptions and specific learning outcomes tailored to the students' level of study. The courses will be integrated into the academic curriculum and aligned with the Core Curriculum Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS) to ensure comprehensive career readiness.

IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION

Implementation Plan:

1. Collaborate with faculty and industry experts to develop detailed course content and materials.
2. Provide training for faculty members on delivering career services courses effectively.
3. Allocate resources, including dedicated career counselors and support staff, to assist with course delivery.

EVALUATION METRICS

1. Collect feedback from students to evaluate the effectiveness of the courses and identify areas for improvement.
2. Track employment rates and career progression of graduates to assess the impact of career services courses.
3. Regularly review and update course content based on feedback and industry trends to ensure ongoing relevance and effectiveness.

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