SCHOOL OF DENTISTRY (SoD)

CAREER GUIDANCE POLICY

August 2022

Title	School of Dentistry (SoD) Career Guidance Policy
Approving Authority	School council /College Council
Approval date	31/08/2022
Effective from	
Guidelines Custodian	Dean/ School of Dentistry /Principal

Approved by:

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Ag. Principal, UR-College of Medicine and Health Sciences

Contents

List of abbreviations and Acronyms

CMHS: College of Medicine and Health Sciences

DVC-SPIA: Deputy Vice Chancellor for Strategic Planning and Institution Advancement

MIFOTRA: Rwanda Ministry of Public Services and Labor

MoH: Ministry of Health

SoD: School of Dentistry

Preamble

Policy refers to a course of action proposed by an organization such that if it is appropriately adhered with, then activities are well guided and operationalised. A policy is a statement of intent and is implemented as a procedure or protocol that deliberately contains guidelines meant to guide decisions taken and achieve rational outcomes. Policies are generally adopted by a governance body within an organization to give directions about what should be done.

An effective policy should be able to give the direction of what should be done during the course of action. This policy helps students to develop career learning goals and take action to enhance their professional careers. This Career guidance policy, therefore, is an important document that, if correctly applied, has the potential to improve the efficiency of the education system that provides readiness to the graduates to fit into their respective professions.

Every school must possess such a policy to guide its strategic and operational directions. In an academic setting, a career guidance policy provides the basis for decision-making about students' career development. The main objective of this policy is to help students choose the right career path based on their education and specialty choices. In any medical school such as SoD, it is imperative to have an important document that clearly stipulates what the school is focusing on in terms of career guidance.

Therefore, the Career Guidance Policy enhances the vision and mission of the school.

Vision

To be a leading school that produces oral health professionals who will be able to impact health systems and communities positively, contributing to sustainable development regionally and globally[1].

Mission

To provide education and training for oral healthcare professionals with academic excellence and clinical competence to deliver community services and advance knowledge through research[1].

Key Definition:

Career

A career is a profession for which one trains and is undertaken as a permanent calling[2].

Career Guidance

Career guidance refers to services and activities intended to assist individuals of any age at any point throughout their lives to make education, training, and occupation choices and manage their careers[3].

Employability skills

A set of achievements, skills, understandings, and personal attributes that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefit themselves, the workforce, the community, and the economy[4]

Career management skills

These skills are competencies that help individuals identify their existing skills, develop career learning goals, and take action to enhance their careers [5]

Methodology

The SoD career guidance policy was developed by the appointed team by DVC/SPIA and supervised by College Principal. This policy was developed based on the existing University of Rwanda policies and other related documents: The policy was approved by the School council/College Council.

Scope of this policy

This policy applies to all Dental students, on how they study and learn at undergraduate or post-graduate levels. The policy also applies to academic and non-academic staff teams who work together to nurture a highly knowledgeable, skilled, well-behaved, and employable oral health workforce[2].

Purpose of the Policy

This policy aims to help dental students choose the right career path based on their Dental educational and specialty choices[3].

Access to the policy

Before joining SoD, applicants should access to information through the website, open days, College Career Fairs, and the Induction weeks. Accessibility of the Career guidance policy should be for all prospective and ongoing SoD students entitled to relevant course information, advice, assistance with course choice, and transition into their programs based on their individual needs.

Responsibilities of different Actors

Institution responsibility

The Dean is the custodian of this policy and will oversee all career guidance-related activities. The implementing unit is the career and employability services.

Staff responsibilities {Both Academic & Non-Academic}
Dean, HoDs, Curriculum committees, Academic leaders, Career, and Employability Unit.

They should:

- Ensure industry-specific careers education is embedded throughout all programmes in their area.

- Deliver target setting and employability teaching with transparent links to self - awareness, labour market knowledge, and planning embedded in the Career Coaching and Progression programme.

- Supports the development of the Career Coaching and Progression programme.

- Deliver individual and group impartial information, advice, and guidance to students.

- Coordinate centrally delivered opportunities for contact with employers and recruiters.

- Work closely with Careers counselors and mentors.

- Support the development of student's confidence and self-esteem to access learning, apply experience and make positive progression.

- Participate in relevant professional training and maintain an up-to-date awareness of appropriate resources they and their students can use to support career decision-making.

- Provide timely and sufficient course information and advice to enable prospective students to make suitable choices.

- Establish alumni networks for integration, further study orientation and student mentorship.

Students' Responsibilities
- To be actively involved in and take ownership of their progression and career development.

- Participate in all relevant tutorials, careers coaching programme, careers education, and guidance activities to strengthen their understanding of education, training, employment, and other progression opportunities.

- To work cooperatively with staff and other peers, respecting the views of others and the principles of Equity, Equality and Diversity.

- To contribute to the ongoing evaluation and improvement of the services.

STRATEGIC AND OPERATIONAL DIRECTIONS OF CAREER POLICY

Strategy 1: Awareness of SoD Programs and Policies

- Creation of awareness of SoD programs among prospective students, parents, and school leaders, especially those offering subjects related to Health programs offered at SoD.

- Create awareness of SoD policies related to students' life in the SoD among prospective students, heads of departments, and the prospective students' parents.

Strategy 2: SoD Careers portal

- Creation and management of a career portal for scholars to access professional internship, exchange programs, professional seminars, workshops, call for research and innovation projects, and other job opening opportunities.

- Develop and provide key information to help all students- both prospective students and current students learning more about career options for all disciplines/courses so they can be more explicit about their career pathways and how to access additional information or the skills needed to underpin their choices.

- Develop and provide systems and information to enable students to record and assess their progress.

- Avail of up-to-date labor market information through collaboration with the government agencies such as the Ministry of public services and labor, Ministry of Health (MoH), and other agencies responsible for collecting and disseminating such information.

Strategy 3: SoD Professional Students' associations

- Manage and coordinate students' professional associations at SoD.

- Collaborate with alumni groups for career development networks.

- Orient SoD students to collaborate with medical professional bodies at national and international through seminars/workshops and outreach programs for their career development and mentorship.

- Establish a mechanism of supporting SoD student associations to have a faculty Petron/Matron for guidance in association activities.

Strategy 4: Career development and mentorship

- Providing support to SoD students in their professional development to become transformative leaders in their focus areas through workshops, public talks/lectures, and seminars.
- Establish a mechanism through which faculty staff/alumni mentor students and develop the mentor-mentee relationship for career development.
- Establish a mechanism for faculty staff to offer systematic practical training and consultation processes that foster ongoing professional development.
- Improving the quality of care and treatment service delivery through joint observation, discussion, and direct problem-solving.

Strategy 5: Partnerships and networking for students' career development
- Networking with national, regional, and international institutions with regard to student internship, placement, volunteer opportunities, job shadowing, scholarships, and other opportunities.
- Coordinating students' exchange programs for career development in their specific specialties.
- Collaborating with partners for purposes of involving students in research and innovation development and advising on project funding opportunities.

Strategy 6: Engagement with industry
- Offering industry-sponsored activities for students' career development.
- Collaborating with industries for programe development and review.
- Support students in securing industrial placements and work experience.
- Providing career guidance and social support to students at clerkship/placement sites.
- Monitoring and assessing learning challenges at clinical placement sites.

- Collaborating with health facilities to improve the learning at clinical clerkship/placement sites.

Strategy 7: Employment readiness

- Preparing students to acquire soft skills for available job opportunities.
- Orienting students through career coaching and mentorship programs, personal goal setting, exploring opportunities in career employment, and exploring their careers in entrepreneurship.

Strategy 8: Systematic monitoring of the SoD graduates

- Establishing alumni groups
- Collaborating with alumni groups for career development networks.
- Carrying out Periodical Tracer study to SoD graduates to inform for adjustment of the training programs and curriculum reviews about available job opportunities and current job trends.

References

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