University of Rwanda

Graduate Employability

Strategy

October 2020

Employability Strategy Content Sheet

Custodian	*DVC-AAR* *DVC-IA*
Contact office	*UR-DTLE* *Students' Experience Specialist*
Recommended by	*Senior Management Council*
Approved by	*Board of Governors*
Approval Date	14th October, 2020
Effective Date	*Date of Approval*
Review cycle	*3 years*
Policy amended/ replaced	*New Strategy*

Related legislation, policies and regulations	
Legislation and/or other regulatory obligations	**Organisational policies, procedures, guidelines and regulations**
- Education Sector Strategic Plan 2018 - 2024 of the Ministry of Education of Rwanda - University of Rwanda 2018 - 2025 Strategic Plan - https://ur.ac.rw/?Academic-regulations-Polices	- University of Rwanda Careers and Employability Service Policy - https://ur.ac.rw/?Graduate-Attributes - https://ur.ac.rw/?Academic-regulations-Polices - https://ur.ac.rw/?Intended-learning-Outcome

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

1. ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATION

Table 1 lists the acronyms and abbreviations used in this document.

Table 1: Acronyms and Abbreviations

4IR	4th Industrial Revolution
CBE	Community Based Education
CDE	Challenge Driven Education
CE	Career and Employability Services
CMHS	College of Medicine and Health Sciences
CNRU	Rwanda National Commission for UNESCO
DTLE	Director of Teaching and Learning Enhancement
DVC-AAR	Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs and Research
DVC-IA	Deputy Vice Chancellor, Institutional Advancement
HEC	High Education Council
HoD	Head of Department
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IS	Information Systems
IT	Information Technology
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
OBE	Outcomes Based Education
ODS	Office of the Dean of Students
PBL	Problem / Project Based Learning
PVC: AA	Pro-Vice Chancellor: Academic Affairs
REB	Rwanda Education Board
RP	Rwanda Polytechnic
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal(s)
UR	University of Rwanda
WDA	Workforce Development Authority

2. BACKGROUND

This Employability Strategy of the University of Rwanda (UR) is an outcome of extensive consultations with senior management and other stakeholders of the institution on collaborative drafting exercises with the objective of improving employability of UR graduates. The strategy is a component of the UR's 2018 - 2025 Strategic Plan. The UR Careers and Employability Service Policy was approved in 2017 and this Employability Strategy aims to strengthen and specify actions in the continued implementation of that policy.

2.1 Methodology

The document was made available online for multiple authors to collaborate over a period of a month, during which senior managers and stakeholders met in conference and contributed remotely.

2.2 Definition of Employability

Employability refers to the blending of academic learning with attributes and skills of personal and professional development that equip graduates with competencies, and entrepreneurship skills from first contact with the institution, to make a meaningful impact in the world of work and society at large.

2.3 Scope of Strategy

Goal two of the current UR seven year (2018-2025) Strategic Plan, "Quality Teaching and Learning" states that UR has committed itself to constant review and redesign of its curricula in creative and innovative ways that are informed by research and in close consultation with stakeholders and particular attention paid to professional graduate attributes for the contemporary national and global workforce. The Strategic Plan goes on to emphasise the mainstreaming of innovation and entrepreneurship into the curriculum. Students are to be equipped with the necessary knowledge, competencies and skills for them to engage and contribute creatively to the transformation of society.

This Strategy provides the emphasis on designing and integrating employability attributes into the curriculum and extra-curricular activities so as to improve the quality of teaching and widening of student learning and life experiences to help ensure employabilityin support of the current Strategic Plan.

2.4 Vision

To be a leading university that develops highly enterprising graduates prepared and dedicated to building a more just and sustainable society locally, nationally and globally, with appropriate innovations that advance quality of life.

2.5 Mission

To support the development of Rwanda by discovering and advancing knowledge and being committed to the highest standards of academic excellence, where students are prepared for lives of service and leadership, transforming communities through finding solutions.

2.6 Aims

The UR aspires to be an internationally recognised university that excels in research and innovation, quality teaching and learning, as well as community engagement.

As an aspiring internationally recognised university, this policy aims at:

- Making UR one of the nationally, regionally and internationally leading research and teaching universities, benchmarked against the highest international standards.
- Providing a high-quality teaching and learning environment.
- Helping to produce Graduates who are responsible citizens ready to serve to their highest professional standards.
- Making a significant and sustainable contribution nationally, regionally and internationally, by promoting economic growth and impacting on well-being of people.
- Developing students' professional relationships and networks within and beyond the University community.
- Increasing opportunities of networking through the University's alumni.
- Instilling employability skills to graduates to meet labour market demands.

3. STATUS OF EMPLOYABILITY OF GRADUATES

Currently there are no concrete statistics as the University of Rwanda has not done any tracer study on employability of graduates. Only general graduate statistics can give an indication.

3.1 Enhancing Student Support and Engagement

The following services are available to enhance the support of students at UR:

- Industrial/clinical attachment- Students are placed for their industrial and clinical attachment by their respective departments. During the placement, students acquire practical and professional skills.
- Career Development services- Career development sessions/workshops are offered bySchools in collaboration with Career and employability centres.
- Student support hours-Academic staff are to set aside ample time for students to make consultations on employability issues.
- Student supervision and Evaluation- Supervision is done to enhance students' ability to perform their duties during attachment.
- Learning Outcomes - Academic staff are to measure achievement of the intended learning outcomes in relation to students' professions.
- Project/Research development for each year of students' studies - Students are guided in research projects or assignments that focus on solving real-life problems in his/her career. This may be explored through CDE, PBL, CBE, OBE among other approaches that may boost employability.

3.2 Embedding Employability in Learning, Teaching and Assessment Processes

Currently, a number of employability skills have been embedded in the curriculum, such as the institutional attributes, but appropriate and meaningful attributes are still needed to be incorporated throughout all curricula.

3.3 Deepening Industry Engagement

Efforts have been put in place to acquire MoUs with stakeholders, but insufficient agreements have been entered into to date. There is a need to map university internship partners and programmes so that UR can follow through and engage stakeholders and ensure that they understand the importance of internship programmes for students.

Some students are securing placement for industrial attachments, but students experience difficulties finding them. This is as a result of an increased number of students in relation to the available places in the industry sector.
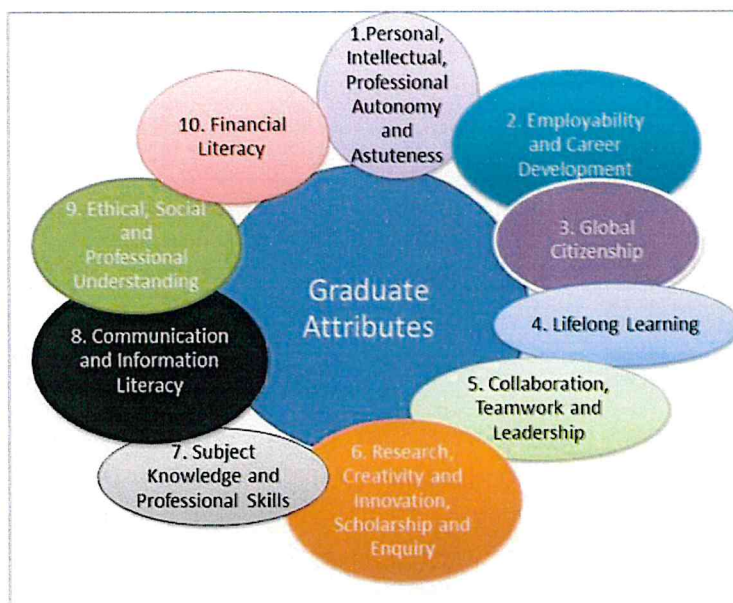
3.4 University-wide Employability Attributes

Figure 1 shows the Institutional graduate attributes. Implementation is still in progress.

- Personal intellectual, professional autonomy and astuteness
- Employability and Career Development
- Global Citizenship
- Lifelong Learning
- Collaboration, Teamwork and Leadership
- Research, Creativity and Innovation, Scholarship and Enquiry
- Subject Knowledge and Professional Skills
- Communication and Information Literacy
- Ethical, Social and Professional Understanding
- Financial Literacy

UR Graduate Attributes

Figure 1: University of Rwanda Graduate Attributes

4. AIM OF THIS STRATEGY

This strategy aims to place graduate employability at the heart of the UR. This strategy will be promoted in a manner that is tailored to embrace teaching, learning, research and community engagement that foster awareness of career opportunities, equip graduates with the ethos for excellence at the workplace and the pursuit of lifelong learning. The employability initiative at the UR will help to empower the UR graduates with required education, skills and competencies to ensure more meaningful employment, solving real-world problems and enabling self-employment. When implemented, this strategy will enable graduates to have the ability to gain, sustain and progress in their chosen careers to their own satisfaction and that of prospective employers. The strategy will be reflected in all curricula with clear metrics that will allow more effective monitoring of the impact of the education process at the UR.

5. STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

This strategy aims to significantly enhance the employability of graduates to find, retain and confidently explore career options throughout their lives.

5.1 Approach

The strategy is situated within the Education Sector Strategic Plan 2018 - 2024 of the Ministry of Education of Rwanda and includes the context and contribution to be made by HEC, REB, RP, WDA, and CNRU. It is also accommodative of future possibilities when the sector plan is updated post 2024. In addition, the strategy is a component of UR's 2018 - 2025 Strategic Plan.

5.2 Core Principles

UR strives to develop a culture and environment that supports:

- Lifelong Learning
- Technology and Innovation
- Sustainable Urbanisation
- Entrepreneurial Opportunities
- Critical Thinking and Leadership Skills

5.3 Strategic Directions

Table 2 outlines UR's Key Priorities and Strategic Directions over the period 2020 to 2023.

Table 2: Key Priorities and Strategic Directions

Key Priorities (KP)	Strategic Directions (SD)
KP 1 A whole curriculum approach – embedding employability into the curriculum and assessment strategies at all levels of all programmes.	**SD 1a** An institutional commitment to key pedagogical approaches including PBL, CDE, OBE and CBE. **SD 1b** An institutional commitment to improving employability and entrepreneurship in every programme through co-op programmes and increased academia-industry co-instruction / co-supervision. **SD 1c** Invest in Tracer Studies after every two years that inform the University about the employment status and diversity of career destinations as a way of reinforcing the education process.
KP 2 Significantly increase the number and breadth of real-world work opportunities available to students through work integrated learning.	**SD 2a** Encourage job creation opportunities where graduates are able to contribute to socio-economic development. **SD 2b** Cooperate with industry to provide a project incubator and work placement opportunities for students.

KP 3	SD 3a
Improve student engagement with employers and alumni network for career development.	Create a network between Alumni and current students for possible mentoring especially for career development.
	SD 3b Encourage frequent visits by alumni to the UR to help enrich current students' experiences.

5.4 Engagement with Stakeholders

The UR has the following formal structures that enable faculty to reach out to and connect with stakeholders on a regular basis:

1. Government departments
2. Professional regulators and bodies
3. Industry, Business and Corporate Organisations
4. Representative bodies and advocates
5. Local and international funding agencies, and diplomatic corps
6. Local non-governmental organisations (NGOs)
7. Academic and support staff
8. Alumni Associations
9. Higher learning institution

This strategy shall come into effect on the date of its approval by the Vice Chancellor of the University of Rwanda.

Prof. Philip Cotton

Vice Chancellor

University of Rwanda