

## Chapter 9

# The Undergraduate Career Compass: A Seven-Step Plan for Navigating the Transition From Academia to the World of Work

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### ABSTRACT

*Higher education's ultimate achievement is to position the undergraduate towards professionalism successfully. Recently, higher education institutes have recognized this need and offered various services to realistically place students in the world of work. Throughout the academic journey, undergraduates acquire the hard and soft skills to meet the demands of the work world. Nevertheless, properly positioning undergraduates in the world of work is a self-responsibility and exploration journey. Therefore, this chapter introduces a self-directed mechanism under the title of career compass and elaborates on seven steps that undergraduates need to follow for success in their career or professional development. These seven steps positively contribute to lifelong personal and professional development.*

### INTRODUCTION

The principal objective of each undergraduate is to position themselves in the world of work. Undergraduate success in their future endeavors lies in proper career planning and readiness on their academic journey. To address this need contemporary higher education institutes have developed the curriculums of academic programs according to the demands of the work world. Higher education institutions are providing career guidance services, mentoring, and internship opportunities for undergraduates to make this adaptation more effective (Stebbleton & Kaler, 2020). Moreover, contemporary technological transformations are making an impact on the changes in the work world. Such as technological integra-

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tion will develop a multi-talent workforce and open to distance work with technology. The result of this technological transformation is work world will be more globalized. The future work world will provide more access to innovations and cutting-edge technologies will rapidly change the demand of the work world (Lewis, 2020). Apart from this perspective positing in the work world is a challenging task in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Undergraduates will receive guidance supervision from their institutions. However, adapting to this climate in the work world will be a self-directed process (Ogunlana, 2023). Through this chapter, undergraduates gain an informative understanding of career development according to the several theories and practical dimensions present work world and facilitation provided by the higher education institutes. Ultimately, this chapter will give undergraduates a pragmatic way towards professionalism under the approach of career compass and empower the individual to meet the demands and cope with the changes and challenges that occur in the work world.

The career development mechanism's success lies in sound knowledge of career developmental theories. Scholars who belong to the disciplines of psychology, sociology, and human resource management have explored individual interaction in the work world and introduced various career developmental theories. These career development theories have revealed that career development is associated with each human development stage. In each human development, stage individuals develop career-related ideation and act purposefully (Lent & Brown, 2012). To recognize own ideation about the career throughout individual human development these theories provide a practical direction. Further recognizing the weaknesses and strengths of individual ideation of the career will benefit in developing effective ideation about career or professionalism. The ideation of career is developed through the influence of various psychological and social factors. However, according to human development theories, the transformation from adolescence to adulthood majorly lies in career development (Havighurst, 1972). Pragmatically, this is fulfilled with the individual interaction in higher education institutes. Therefore, preparing for the work world and creating economic independence knowledge about career development theories is essential.

Contemporary, individuals are unable to effectively adapt to professionalism due to the adequate knowledge about the world of work. The most significant feature is the work world is dynamic. Due to this dynamic nature of career-specific things also change rapidly. This has been more critical with the technological influence of digitalization, decreased manpower need, and economic changes in the global context (Parker & Grote, 2022). However, higher education institutes working towards the development of requirement competencies in undergraduates through the curriculum and learning exposure. Further, before the completion of the academic programs individual will receive industrial exposure through their internship placements. This process grooms the undergraduates accordingly and ensures preparing the undergraduates for the demands of the world of work (Ordine & Rose, 2015). knowledge about such opportunities will help undergraduates to adapt the learned and use the developed skills to fit the work world and survive the changes that occur in the work world.

The undergraduate inadequate knowledge about these two dimensions increases the rate of graduate unemployment. The below diagram indicates the severity of this condition:

Several factors influence undergraduate unemployment such as mismatch between qualifications and jobs, adequate competency, loss of skills, lack of soft skills, lack of emotional intelligence abilities, and lack of technological skills. The most critical factor is the preparation for the demands of the work world. When the individual is empowered to adapt work world with the acquired competencies in the tertiary of higher education individual can be free from unemployment (Alolaqi & Yusof, 2022). To acquire the maximum benefits from the undergraduate programs enrolled the student needs to have proper ideology about the nature of the higher education. The knowledge about the nature and services offered in higher

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