

Actual Circumstances of Job-Placement Support at University Career Centers and Responses to Students with Difficulty in Employment

1. Background and Issues

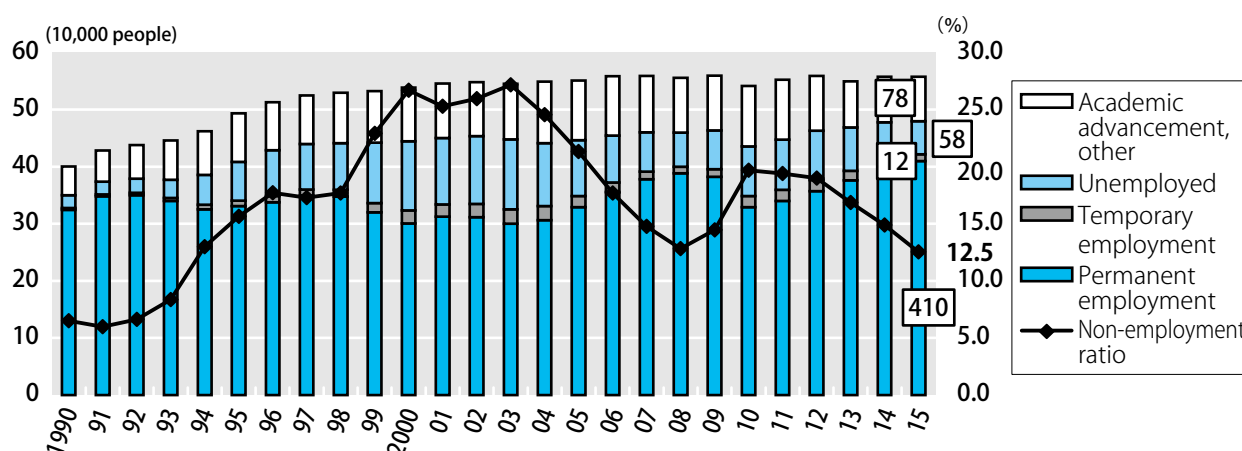
This paper reports results obtained from two types of survey, a questionnaire survey and interview survey, concerning the actual circumstances of job-placement support provided to students by university career centers and of support for students who have difficulty finding employment.

In Japan, it is still customary for graduates of universities and other schools to enter employment, primarily as regular workers, immediately following their graduation, without taking any time off in the interim. This custom remains firmly rooted in Japan though advancing economic globalization and accompanying changes has a considerable negative impact on the existence of Japanese-style employment system, namely long-term employment of regular workers. Accordingly, the standard social mindset is that a student will engage in job-hunting activities and obtain an informal job offer from a company prior to graduation, become employed as a regular worker by that company immediately upon graduation, and then work continuously for that company for a long period

of time.

Against this backdrop, there is a growing segment of students who cannot find employment as regular workers after graduation. Looking solely at new graduates, beginning particularly in the mid-1990s, the career paths of new graduates became more diversified amid a long-term economic slowdown in Japan. This was marked by growing percentages of young people who temporarily took unstable jobs after graduation, those who became non-regular workers, and the unemployed youth. Even when temporary economic recoveries occurred, those recoveries did not lead to significant increases or improvements in the percentage of those employed as regular workers. Instead, the diversification of career paths has tended to become even more established (Figure III-1). According to Figure III-1, new graduates who found employment as regular workers in 2015 numbered 410,000, while those who took temporary jobs numbered 12,000 and those who were unemployed numbered 58,000. Although the percentage rate of those who did not find work among all graduates has improved compared to previous highs, it is still high at 12.5%.

Figure III-1 Paths Taken by New University Graduates



Source: School Basic Survey conducted by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT).

For this reason, more career centers of universities and other final educational institutions have been focusing on job-placement support in recent years, in addition to efforts to enhance specialized education, which is primary duty for educational institutions. This is designed to help all students find work as regular workers following their graduation. Additionally, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) revised its criteria for university establishment in 2010, requiring universities and junior colleges to include career guidance in their curricula beginning in 2011. Meanwhile, there are a growing number of instances in which academic staffs and clerical staffs in career centers are cooperating to provide career education that helps students set their future paths within regular coursework.

When new university graduates seek employment, the items that are emphasized are character and behavioral characteristics that are evaluated through interactions during job interviews together with a certain level of basic academic skill. Under such circumstances, those students who are not skillful in the improvised interactions that take place during interviews have difficulty scoring highly in terms of their character evaluation. This reduces their chance of passing employment exams and, ultimately, makes it difficult for them to finalize their employment. Moreover, if a student has a developmental disorder or characteristics that resemble such a disorder, for example, and thus has difficulty communicating with people, he or she will have even more difficulty getting passed the interview stage. In other words, given that companies emphasize personal character evaluations in their hiring, job-seekers who communicate poorly in interviews and other situations are always facing at the danger that they will end up having difficulty finding employment. In some cases, providing simulated interviews or basic communication training can be effective for students who have such difficulties. This kind of training is often provided as part of ordinary support menus at youth employment support organizations (Japan Institute for Labour Policy and Training, 2013), and in recent years it has also come to be provided by university career centers.

As this demonstrates, while supporting certain students who require special assistance on the one

hand, a recent characteristic of university career centers is that their activities now cover a broad range, such as providing employment guidance for all students and supporting career education in regular coursework on the other. However, generally speaking, the number of staff members assigned to career centers is not necessarily large, and thus centers are forced to provide highly efficient support with limited resources.

For the purpose of this paper, the author conducted surveys of two types to grasp the actual circumstances in university career centers and report the results. First, the author conducted a large-scale questionnaire survey of career centers to get a picture of the various job-placement support services they currently provide, recent student trends, the challenges that career centers face, and other matters. The author also conducted an interview survey to get a clear understanding of students who have difficulty finding employment and the actual circumstances of support for them. Here, the author selected a number of career centers based on certain conditions and paid particular attention to support for students who have difficulty finding employment.

2. Questionnaire Survey

2-1 Survey outline

■ Survey objectives

This survey was planned and executed for the purpose of gaining a concrete picture of the actual circumstances of job-placement support provided at universities, junior colleges, colleges of technology, and vocational schools. The questions were mainly established in five categories, namely (1) Attributes of the responding school, (2) Details of job-placement support, (3) Use of/need for assessments and tools to identify the aptitude of students, (4) Students' understanding of jobs and vocation, and methods/needs concerning supply of job-opening information and support, and (5) Current initiatives, challenges, and systems of career centers. The content of this paper focuses primarily on categories (1), (2), and (5).

Survey results were received through responses from four school types: universities, junior colleges, colleges of technologies, and vocational schools.

Detailed results are provided in the original report (*JILPT Research Series No. 116*). Because this paper's purpose is to give particular attention to the actual circumstances of support provided by university career centers, sections beginning with the following section will report with focus on results received from universities and junior colleges. For universities, specifically, the paper will explain differences in three groupings to be formed based on the size of the percentage of those recent graduates who remain undecided about their career path (hereinafter "undecided graduates").

■ Survey method

The questionnaire was sent by post to all targeted schools. Responses were received either by post or through entries made on a webpage.

A complete survey was conducted for universities and for junior colleges. When several campuses belonged to the same incorporated educational institution, questionnaires were sent to each campus. Consequently, the total number of questionnaires sent was 1,071 for universities and 370 for junior colleges.

■ Response rates

The total number of responses received (postal service and webpage) was 636. In many cases, responses from incorporated educational institutions having multiple campuses were received as a single compiled response. Thus, a calculation of the number of responses against the actual number of schools ultimately produced a response rate of 63.5% for universities and 51.2% for junior colleges (Table III-2).

■ Basic attributes of responding schools

Looking at bodies that established the responding schools (i.e., in terms of whether they are national schools, public schools, or private schools), of the responding universities, private universities accounted for the largest share with 71.9% (330 schools). Following were national universities with 15.3% (70 schools) and private universities with 12.9% (59 schools). For junior colleges, 91.5% (162 schools) were private schools, 8.5% (15 schools) were public schools, and none (0%; 0 school) was categorized in national schools.

In terms of the sizes of their student bodies, just

Table: III-2 Numbers of Responses and Response Rates

School type	Total questionnaires sent	Actual number of schools	Number of responses	Collection rate against number of questionnaires sent (%)	Collection rate against actual number of schools (%)
University	1,071	723	459	42.9	63.5
Jr. college	370	346	177	47.8	51.2

Table III-3 Sizes of Responding Schools

School type	Number of students	Fewer than 100	100 - 199	200 - 299	300 - 399	400 - 499	500 - 599	600 - 699	700 - 799	800 - 899	900 - 999	Total
University	Frequency	0	5	8	17	16	18	17	19	13	14	
	%	0.0	1.1	1.8	3.8	3.5	4.0	3.8	4.2	2.9	3.1	
Jr. college	Frequency	10	19	46	39	16	19	13	5	2	1	
	%	5.7	10.8	26.1	22.2	9.1	10.8	7.4	2.8	1.1	0.6	

School type	Number of students	1,000 - 1,999	2,000 - 2,999	3,000 - 3,999	4,000 - 4,999	5,000 - 5,999	6,000 - 6,999	7,000 - 7,999	8,000 - 8,999	9,000 - 9,999	10,000 or more	Total
University	Frequency	100	50	30	31	27	14	14	9	6	45	453
	%	22.1	11.0	6.6	6.8	6.0	3.1	3.1	2.0	1.3	9.9	100.0
Jr. college	Frequency	5	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	176
	%	2.8	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0

under 30% of responding universities had fewer than 1,000 students, while 70% had at least 1,000 students. On the other hand, schools with student bodies of fewer than 1,000 accounted for approximately 97% of responding junior colleges (Table III-3).

For circumstances of career path immediately after graduation, responses divided into five categories were received through the survey. These categories were (1) Graduates in permanent employment, (2) Graduates advancing to higher education, (3) Graduates in temporary employment, (4) Graduates other than (1) to (3) (i.e., neither employed nor advancing to higher education), and (5) Unknown or other. In

the case of (3), the graduates being referred to are indeed employed, but only temporarily, and thus they are those to be in an unstable position from a social standpoint. The graduates being referred to in (4) are similarly in an unstable position, and regardless of whether it is in employment or higher education, they are people for whom it is desired that their post-graduation path will become clear as soon as possible. Category (5) refers to graduates whose status could not be ascertained by the school. From the standpoint of the schools, whose role is to send competent graduates out to activate the society positively, it is a category whose share should be made as small

Table III-4 Percentages of Recent Graduates Who Proceeded on a Path Other Than toward Full-Time Employment or Academic Advancement and of Graduates Whose Paths are Unknown

	Universities		Jr. colleges	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Less than 1%	13	3.0	8	4.7
1% to less than 2%	6	1.4	7	4.1
2% to less than 4%	27	6.2	18	10.5
4% to less than 6%	21	4.8	16	9.4
6% to less than 8%	38	8.7	12	7.0
8% to less than 10%	37	8.5	16	9.4
10% to less than 12%	38	8.7	22	12.9
12% to less than 14%	26	5.9	6	3.5
14% to less than 16%	36	8.2	12	7.0
16% to less than 18%	26	5.9	9	5.3
18% to less than 20%	23	5.3	9	5.3
20% to less than 22%	24	5.5	8	4.7
22% to less than 24%	17	3.9	3	1.8
24% to less than 26%	17	3.9	8	4.7
26% to less than 28%	17	3.9	2	1.2
28% to less than 30%	11	2.5	3	1.8
30% to less than 32%	10	2.3	3	1.8
32% to less than 34%	9	2.1	0	0.0
34% to less than 36%	8	1.8	0	0.0
36% to less than 38%	5	1.1	4	2.3
38% to less than 40%	7	1.6	0	0.0
40% to less than 42%	4	0.9	0	0.0
42% to less than 44%	6	1.4	3	1.8
44% or higher	11	2.5	2	1.2
Total	437	100.0	171	100.0

as possible. Accordingly, low shares are desired for categories (3), (4), and (5). When the shares of (3), (4), and (5) were calculated (Table III-4), it became apparent that there was a broad variety of circumstances among all of the responding schools. Specifically, when a school had high shares for (3), (4), and (5), this indicates that it has many graduates who remain undecided about their career path. It is therefore thought that the way it provides career guidance must be improved in some way. On the other hand, when a school has low shares here, this suggests that the school has few undecided graduates and therefore the career guidance for the students works well to provide most graduates with definite career paths after graduation.

2-2 Results

In the following section, we will primarily examine the results of universities and junior colleges as

general trends relating to job-placement support. We will then examine the results based on the percentages of undecided graduates in universities.

Overall trends relating to job-placement support

(1) Employment support schemes

To begin with, we arranged responses on the number of staffs working in career centers (Table III-5). The most common responses were two to three people in the case of junior colleges and four to five in the case of universities. Although some universities responded that they have “22 or more” staffs, those figures were arrived at by totaling the staffs of multiple campuses or came from the use of many part-time staffs.

When we asked whether or not there are any full-time staff members who had come to the center utilizing previous work experience in job-placement support

Table III-5 Number of Career Center Staff Members

		0-1	2-3	4-5	6-7	8-9	10-11	12-13	14-15	16-17	18-19	20-21	22 or more	School total
University	Frequency	20	84	121	71	46	37	18	16	10	8	7	12	450
	%	4.4	18.7	26.9	15.8	10.2	8.2	4.0	3.6	2.2	1.8	1.6	2.7	100.0
Jr. college	Frequency	13	52	44	34	12	6	5	3	2	1	3	0	175
	%	7.4	29.7	25.1	19.4	6.9	3.4	2.9	1.7	1.1	0.6	1.7	0.0	100.0

Table III-6 Current Duties of Full-Time Staff Members Who Joined the Center Utilizing Work Experience from a Previous Job

	Universities		Jr. colleges	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1 Management of employment guidance-related activities (e.g., general manager or deputy manager of career center, etc.)	50	27.3	17	30.4
2 Consultant with professional qualification or job title related to career (e.g., career advisor, career consultant, etc.)	32	17.5	8	14.3
3 (General) Consultant for students about job-hunting	26	14.2	12	21.4
4 Clerical worker (including in management), staff member	23	12.6	6	10.7
5 Duties pertaining to job openings/companies (e.g., development of job openings, potential employers, etc.)	20	10.9	7	12.5
6 Duties pertaining to operation and planning of career center	9	4.9	1	1.8
7 Instruction-related duties, instructor	8	4.4	4	7.1
8 Non-regular staff member, associate staff member	5	2.7	0	0.0
9 Other	10	5.4	1	1.8
Total	183	100.0	56	100.0

or personnel affairs (for example, those who came from the personnel departments of private enterprises), 44.0% (189 schools) of universities and 34.3% (57 schools) of junior colleges said “yes.” When we asked schools to freely describe the current duties of such staff members, the most common response for both universities and junior colleges was management of employment guidance-related activities (e.g., general manager of career center etc.). The percentages here were, 27.3% (50 people) for universities and 30.4% (17 people) for junior colleges (Table III-6).

Next, we asked about the expertise of staffs involved in career support (Table III-7). When asked to indicate whether the statement “There are full-time staff members who possess a professional qualification, such as a career consultant” applies to their school, the responses of both universities and junior colleges were polarized around “applicable” and “inapplicable.” While responses in the combined “applicable + somewhat applicable” group (53.7%) were more common than the “inapplicable + somewhat inapplicable” group (42.8%) in the case of universities, responses in the “inapplicable + somewhat inapplicable” group (54.7%) were more common in the case of junior colleges.

When asked to respond to the applicability of the statement “There are full-time staff members who conduct and interpret the results of vocational aptitude tests,” responses from universities tended to be polarized around the “applicable + somewhat applicable” group (36.8%) and “inapplicable + somewhat inapplicable” group (46.1%). Of junior colleges, 55.2% of responses were in the “inapplicable + somewhat inapplicable” group.

(2) Specific methods and content of job-placement support

We asked schools about the implementation of individual job-placement support menus that career centers offer to students (Table III-8). Results show that both universities and junior colleges have high implementation rates for “1. General guidance for employment and job-hunting,” “4. Seminar for writing job application forms,” and “6. Practice for job interviews.” Additionally, of all items mentioned, those with implementation rates of over 80% numbered seven in the case of universities and four in the case of junior colleges.

Next, we arranged “items handled with particular thoroughness and care” and “items that are difficult to handle” in individual consultations and individualized support that career centers offer to students (Table III-9). As a result, we found that the response trends of universities and junior colleges were similar. Responses for “items handled with particular thoroughness and care” included “16. Consultation for students failing to obtain job offers,” “7. Guidance and consultation on writing job application forms,” and “1. Consultation on job-hunting methods.” The most common among responses for “items that are difficult to handle” were “15. “Mental health consultation,” and “17. Consultation for students thought to have difficulty following the same job-hunting process used by ordinary students.” Other responses that were received in large numbers were “14. Consultation concerning personal life and family matters” and “20. Encouragement for students who do not use job-placement support services.”

Table III-7 Expertise of Career Center Staffs in Job-Placement Support

		Applicable		Somewhat applicable		Neither applicable nor inapplicable		Somewhat inapplicable		Inapplicable	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
There are full-time staff members who possess a professional qualification, such as a career consultant	Universities	214	47.5	28	6.2	16	3.6	18	4.0	175	38.8
	Jr. colleges	60	34.5	9	5.2	10	5.8	6	3.5	89	51.2
There are full-time staff members who conduct and interpret the results of vocational aptitude tests	Universities	100	22.2	66	14.6	77	17.1	42	9.3	166	36.8
	Jr. colleges	25	14.4	26	14.9	27	15.5	20	11.5	76	43.7

(3) Philosophy vis-à-vis job-placement support and school policies

Next, we arranged results concerning schools' attitudes related to job-placement support and school policy (Table III-10).

Results obtained when schools were asked whether the statement "We review and update our support menu each year" is applicable to them indicate that most schools, regardless of type, tend to review their menus each year. Results indicate that 91.3% of universities and 90.2% of junior colleges responded that the statement is "applicable" or "somewhat applicable."

For the statement "Academic staffs actively participate in the career center's operation," junior colleges (59.8%) ranked above universities (57.6%) for the combined responses "applicable + somewhat applicable."

For the statement, "The school favorably supports efforts by staff members to raise their expertise in job-placement support," it was clear that cases in which schools favorably provide such support are limited.

For the statement "The percentage of services associated with planning and operation of job-placement

support that are outsourced to external organizations has been rising in recent years," the highest share for universities was "Neither applicable nor inapplicable" (36.3%). Responses from junior colleges leaned slightly toward "inapplicable" and "somewhat inapplicable" (52.8% combined).

For the statement "Regarding students who are difficult to be supported by using ordinary guidance services, our policy is to take care of them at the career center until they find employment whenever possible, rather than referring them to other specialized organizations," the response "Neither applicable nor inapplicable" had significant shares. However, in the case of junior colleges, the combined responses "applicable" and "somewhat applicable" also had a significant share (40.6%), suggesting that a comparatively large number of schools have a policy of having their career center take care of such students on its own until their success to find employment.

We calculated the correlation coefficients among individual items for universities' responses pertaining to philosophy vis-à-vis job-placement support, the expertise of staff members, and school policy (Table III-11). A positive correlation was confirmed between

Table III-8 Content of Yearly Guidance Services for Mass Students (M. A.)

	Universities		Jr. colleges	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1 General guidance for employment and job-hunting	444	98.2	171	97.7
2 Self-understanding and self-analysis (including conducting vocational aptitude tests)	390	86.3	140	80.0
3 Providing information on occupations and industries/companies; organizing company-led lectures and field tours	388	85.8	133	76.0
4 Seminar for writing job application forms	414	91.6	161	92.0
5 Courses on strategies for taking job-placement exams (paper-and-pencil tests, internet-based tests)	359	79.4	131	74.9
6 Practice for job interviews	402	88.9	161	92.0
7 Courses for business manners	372	82.3	137	78.3
8 Providing information on labor law etc.	194	42.9	81	46.3
9 Presentations and gatherings by graduates and students already obtaining job offers	354	78.3	128	73.1
10 Providing information to parents/guardians	291	64.4	109	62.3
11 Providing information on internships	368	81.4	91	52.0
12 Other	71	15.7	14	8.0

Note: Missing values occurred in seven instances for universities and two instances for junior colleges.

Table III-9 Content of Individualized Consultation and Support (M. A.)

	Universities				Jr. colleges				
	Item handled with particular thoroughness and care		Item that is difficult to handle		Item handled with particular thoroughness and care		Item that is difficult to handle		
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	
1	Consultations on job-hunting methods	347	76.1	23	5.0	140	79.1	11	6.2
2	Consultation on self-understanding and self-analysis (including conducting vocational aptitude tests)	289	63.4	59	12.9	94	53.1	32	18.1
3	Consultation on reevaluating and reflecting on past experience	236	51.8	51	11.2	68	38.4	22	12.4
4	Provision of information on and consultation of occupations	230	50.4	34	7.5	103	58.2	9	5.1
5	Provision of information (including job openings) and consultation on industries/companies	290	63.6	22	4.8	112	63.3	11	6.2
6	Guidance and consultation on internships	219	48.0	22	4.8	56	31.6	16	9.0
7	Guidance and consultation on writing job application forms	368	80.7	33	7.2	146	82.5	22	12.4
8	Guidance and consultation on job-placement exams (paper-and-pencil tests, internet-based tests)	172	37.7	52	11.4	66	37.3	14	7.9
9	Guidance and consultation on business manners and interviews	320	70.2	21	4.6	128	72.3	11	6.2
10	Consultation on future career design	213	46.7	71	15.6	68	38.4	30	17.0
11	Consultation on coursework	80	17.5	65	14.3	46	26.0	14	7.9
12	Consultation on acquirement of professional qualification	132	29.0	31	6.8	53	29.9	5	2.8
13	Consultation on interpersonal relationships	110	24.1	189	41.5	46	26.0	67	37.9
14	Consultation concerning personal life and family matters	116	25.4	211	46.3	45	25.4	82	46.3
15	Mental health consultation	134	29.4	304	66.7	43	24.3	101	57.1
16	Consultation for students failing to obtain job offers	397	87.1	93	20.4	147	83.1	40	22.6
17	Consultation for students thought to have difficulty following the same job-hunting process used by ordinary students	245	53.7	246	54.0	82	46.3	109	61.6
18	Follow-up for students already obtaining job offers	119	26.1	23	5.0	58	32.8	4	2.3
19	Provision of information and consultation for graduates	128	28.1	122	26.8	54	30.5	40	22.6
20	Reaching out to students who do not use job-placement support services (calling out, telephoning, etc.)	194	42.5	219	48.0	86	48.6	81	45.8
21	Other	9	2.0	11	2.4	4	2.3	2	1.1
22	Not applicable	5	1.1	32	7.0	2	1.1	7	4.0

Note: Missing values occurred in three instances for universities.

Table III-10 School Policies concerning Job-Placement Support

		Applicable		Somewhat applicable		Neither applicable nor inapplicable		Somewhat inapplicable		Inapplicable	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
We review and update our support menu each year	Universities	278	61.6	134	29.7	23	5.1	8	1.8	8	1.8
	Jr. colleges	86	49.1	72	41.1	11	6.3	4	2.3	2	1.1
Academic staffs actively participate in the career center's operation	Universities	122	27.1	138	30.6	103	22.8	68	15.1	20	4.4
	Jr. colleges	68	38.9	54	30.9	33	18.9	15	8.6	5	2.9
The school favorably supports efforts by staff members to raise their expertise in job-placement support	Universities	72	15.9	81	17.9	132	29.2	75	16.6	92	20.4
	Jr. colleges	18	10.2	27	15.3	62	35.2	28	15.9	41	23.3
The percentage of services associated with planning and operation of job-placement support that are outsourced to external organizations has been rising in recent years	Universities	24	5.3	88	19.5	164	36.3	91	20.1	85	18.8
	Jr. colleges	11	6.3	29	16.5	43	24.4	46	26.1	47	26.7
Regarding students who are difficult to be supported by using ordinary guidance services, our policy is to take care of them at the career center until they find employment whenever possible, rather than referring them to other specialized organizations	Universities	36	8.0	83	18.4	186	41.2	98	21.7	49	10.8
	Jr. colleges	22	12.6	49	28.0	65	37.1	29	16.6	10	5.7

the response trend for “There are full-time staff members who possess a professional qualification, such as a career consultant” and the response trend for “There are full-time staff members who conduct and interpret the results of vocational aptitude tests” ($r=.545$, $p<.01$). When the university or junior college has full-time staff members possessing a professional qualification, response trends were also recognized for annual updates of support menus ($r=.290$, $p<.01$) and schools’ favorable support for efforts by staff members to raise their expertise ($r=.271$, $p<.01$).

Next, we asked about the degree to which career center staff members are involved with career education as part of the regular coursework of universities and junior colleges.

For the level of involvement, in the case of universities, the largest share of responses indicated “very much involved,” accounting for more than 30%. The share was under 30% for junior colleges. For universities, the shares of “very much involved” and “somewhat involved” combined exceeded 60%. For junior colleges, these combined shares accounted

for roughly 50% (Table III-12).

We then asked those schools that responded “very much involved” in career education to freely describe the involvement in concrete terms. We compiled and arranged the results into categories of similar content (Table III-13). As is shown in Table III-13, 150 freely written descriptions of involvement were received from universities and 49 were received from junior colleges. We arranged the responses into the following categories: “taking charge of/participation in classroom lectures related to career education,” “planning of career education course (preparation of curriculum and syllabi),” “collaboration with lecturers planning curriculum content and preparation of materials,” “cooperation in conducting internship programs,” “selection of/collaboration with lecturers,” “implementation of career guidance and job-placement support,” “participation in on-campus committees as a member,” and “other.” Responses concerning “taking charge of/participation in lectures related to career education” and “planning of career education course (preparation of curriculum and

Table III-11 Correlation between Philosophy vis-à-vis Job-Placement and School Policies

	1. We review and update our support menu each year	2. There are full-time staff members who possess a professional qualification, such as a career consultant	3. There are full-time staff members who conduct and interpret the results of vocational aptitude tests	4. Academic staffs actively participate in the career center's operation	5. The school favorably supports efforts by staff members to raise their expertise in job-placement support	6. The percentage of services associated with planning and operation of job-placement support that are outsourced to external organizations has been rising in recent years	7. Regarding students who are difficult to be supported by using ordinary guidance services, our policy is to take care of them at the career center until they find employment whenever possible, rather than referring them to other specialized organizations
1. We review and update our support menu each year	1	.290 **	.241 **	.157 **	.134 **	.087	.105 *
2. There are full-time staff members who possess a professional qualification, such as a career consultant		1	.545 **	.085	.271 **	-.045	-.005
3. There are full-time staff members who conduct and interpret the results of vocational aptitude tests			1	.017	.205 **	-.060	-.062
4. Academic staffs actively participate in the career center's operation				1	.281 **	.101 *	.127 **
5. The school favorably supports efforts by staff members to raise their expertise in job-placement support					1	.058	.022
6. The percentage of services associated with planning and operation of job-placement support that are outsourced to external organizations has been rising in recent years						1	.058
7. Regarding students who are difficult to be supported by using ordinary guidance services, our policy is to take care of them at the career center until they find employment whenever possible, rather than referring them to other specialized organizations							1

Note: ** p<.01, * p<.05

Table III-12 Degree of Involvement of Career Center Staffs in Career Education-related Classes

Degree of involvement	Universities		Jr. colleges	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Very much involved	160	35.6	50	28.7
Somewhat involved	121	27.0	42	24.1
Not very much involved	101	22.5	52	29.9
Not involved at all	67	14.9	30	17.2

syllabi)” were numerous for both universities and junior colleges. This suggests that some practices related to career education frequently take place such as planning of career education programs by career centers, holding of classes by academic staffs affiliated with the centers or by the center (clerical) staffs, and supporting for class operation in cooperation with lecturers.

(4) Changes in and actual circumstances of students’ motivation and attitude

Next, we arranged responses concerning changes in students’ motivation and attitude over the past three to five years as well as the actual circumstances of their motivation and attitude (Table III-14).

For “attitude and learning motivation with respect to academic classes,” the intermediate response values signifying “neither applicable nor inapplicable” (Response Value 3) were much larger than the other values. A comparison of the shares of responses

Table III-13 Details of Involvement in Career Education-related Classes (Free Descriptions)

	Universities	Jr. colleges
◆ Taking charge of/participation in lectures related to career education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the center staffs is a full-time instructor who takes charge of career education and principally provides lectures of career education • Staff members in charge of career support serve as classroom lecturers or settle the flow of the lectures • Courses for job-placement are included within non-career education classes, and the career center cooperates with the lecturer in providing job-placement instruction 	45	21
◆ Planning of career education course(preparation of curriculum and syllabi)	49	13
◆ Collaboration with lecturers that plan curriculum content and preparation of materials	19	5
◆ Cooperation for conducting internship programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative work (e.g., recognizing credits related to internships, etc.) • Instruction on pre- and post-internship support(manners, greetings, etc.) • Coordination with partner companies and selection of companies 	14	2
◆ Selection of/collaboration with lecturers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection of external (contracted) lecturers; sharing of the goal and specifications of the lecture; meetings • Communication of university’s requests for the lecture led by contracted lecturers and receiving regular reports about the lecture 	10	5
◆ Implementation of career guidance and job-placement support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yearly provision of career guidance for all students • Implementation of job-placement support in each academic department • Search for new internship partners • Personal guidance and training for job interviews • Support for job-matching between students and companies/graduates • Conducting of vocational aptitude tests 	8	1
◆ Participation in on-campus committees as a member <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement in an on-campus “office for enhancement of employability” • Operation of a committee that formulates curricula • Participation in a “career support committee” and “career education working group” comprised of academic and clerical staffs 	3	1
◆ Other <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking charge of work as an executive office 	2	1
Total	150	49

indicating “has improved” (the total of Response Values 1 and 2) and “has worsened” (the total of Response Values 4 and 5) shows that “has improved” (22.4%) was higher than “has worsened” (16.3%) for universities. However, the situation is reversed for junior colleges, for which “has improved” (16.5%) was lower than “has worsened” (25.6%).

For “awareness of future career design,” intermediate responses (neither applicable nor inapplicable) again accounted for roughly 40 or 50% of the total. For universities, the share of responses indicating that awareness “has risen” (the total share of Response Values 1 and 2) was 34.7% and thus trended higher than the share for “has fallen” (the total share of Response Values 4 and 5), which was 15.4%. On the other hand, for junior colleges, the shares for “has risen” (22.7%) and “has fallen” (27.8%) trended at about the same level.

The response trends for “proactiveness in acquiring professional qualifications and taking courses” and “students’ participation rate in job-placement support services as a whole” were similar. Responses were concentrated in the intermediate value (Response Value 3), accounting for roughly 40 to 50% for universities and junior colleges. Additionally, shares of responses indicating that proactiveness and the participation rate “has risen” tended to be higher than those for “has fallen.” The response shares for “has risen” accounted for roughly 30 to 40% for universities and roughly 20 to 30% for junior colleges.

Looking at rising or falling trends in the “percentage of students who remain undecided about their career path in their final academic year,” many schools responded with the intermediate value signifying “neither applicable nor inapplicable” (Response Value 3). Their shares were roughly 50% for both universities and junior colleges. The percentage of schools responding that their percentage of undecided students is falling was 37.3% for universities and 37.9% for junior colleges.

For increasing or decreasing trends in the “percentage of students thought to have difficulty in standard job-hunting activities,” roughly 40 to 50% of responses indicated the intermediate value signifying “no change” (Response Value 3). Responses indicating “has increased” (the total of Response Values 4

and 5) trended higher than responses indicating “has decreased.”

Regarding changes in the “percentage of dropouts,” the majority of schools answered with Response Value 3 (no change). Their shares were at the 70% level for universities and the 60% level for junior colleges. Responses indicating “has increased” accounted slightly higher than 10%.

The following trends can be surmised based on the above results.

Looking at specific changes in students’ behavior in terms of “proactiveness in acquiring professional qualifications and taking courses” and “participation rate in job-placement support services,” many schools responded that there was no change; however, roughly 20 to 40% reported an improving trend. The same trend was seen in “attitude and learning motivation with respect to academic classes” and “awareness of career design,” which concern staff members’ daily perceptions. Moreover, improvement trends were clearly evident in proactiveness and participation rate. While it can be surmised that such improvements were influenced by schools’ proactive initiatives of career support and curricula, this cannot be asserted with certainty based on these results alone.

The “percentage of students who remain undecided about their career path” and “percentage of dropouts” are items for which improvement can ultimately be expected as a result of career support initiatives. Looking at the responses, improvement trends were generally observed for both universities and junior colleges. However, one point that deserves bearing in mind with regard to the “percentage of students thought to have difficulty in standard job-hunting activities” is that, although many schools reported no change, many others reported that this percentage “has increased.” It is possible that this kind of recent environmental change is strongly linked to schools’ motivation to enhance and improve their career support services.

Next, we calculated correlation coefficients among individual items for responses received from universities. As a result, we found that, although varying in strength, a significant positive correlation existed between all items (Table III-15). As for main results, we found that, when students’ “attitude and learning

motivation with respect to academic classes” is high, a positive correlation existed whereby “awareness of future career design” improved ($r=.604$, $p<.01$) and “proactiveness in acquiring professional qualifications and taking courses” rose ($r=.388$, $p<.01$). For “awareness of future career design,” a positive correlation was found to exist with “proactiveness in acquiring certifications and taking courses” ($r=.456$, $p<.01$) and “students’ participation rate in job-placement support services as a whole” ($r=.457$, $p<.01$). Thus, a mutually positive correlation of at least .3 was found among items for behavioral changes that are routinely sensed by staff members—namely, changes in students’ motivation and attitude—who responded to the questionnaire. Additionally, although somewhat slight, significant positive correlations of around .1 and .2 were found between these items and the percentage of students who remain undecided about their career path, percentage of

students with difficulty in employment, and percentage of dropouts, which are benchmarks for actual job-placement support. From these results, it is clear that though changes in “soft” aspects—namely changes in students’ motivation and attitude—are not instantly linked to improvements in terms of specific indicators, such as a lower percentage of undecided students and lower number of dropouts, they do have a positive effect on numerical improvements.

(5) Priority issues tackled by career centers in the medium and long term

We asked career centers to indicate the issues they are prioritizing at the present time or from a medium-to long-term perspective. We asked them to select as many as are applicable from 17 options (Table III-16). In the case of universities, more than 70% indicated “building career awareness from early in collegiate studies” and “promoting use of the career center.”

Table III-14 Changes in and Actual Circumstances of Students’ Motivation and Attitude during the Past 3 to 5 Years

		Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
		Has improved ← 1		2		3		4		→Has worsened 5	
Attitude towards academic classes and learning motivation	Universities	14	3.2	85	19.2	272	61.4	70	15.8	2	0.5
	Jr. colleges	5	2.8	24	13.6	102	58.0	42	23.9	3	1.7
		Has risen ← 1		2		3		4		→Has fallen 5	
Awareness of future career design	Universities	18	4.0	138	30.7	224	49.9	66	14.7	3	0.7
	Jr. colleges	5	2.8	35	19.9	87	49.4	45	25.6	4	2.3
Proactiveness in acquiring professional qualifications and taking courses	Universities	18	4.0	130	28.8	228	50.6	65	14.4	10	2.2
	Jr. colleges	5	2.8	41	23.3	96	54.6	28	15.9	6	3.4
Students’ participation rate in employment support services as a whole	Universities	25	5.6	160	35.6	185	41.1	70	15.6	10	2.2
	Jr. colleges	12	6.9	47	26.9	89	50.9	22	12.6	5	2.9
		Has decreased ← 1		2		3		4		→Has increased 5	
Percentage of students who remain undecided about their career path in their final academic year	Universities	39	8.7	128	28.6	227	50.7	51	11.4	3	0.7
	Jr. colleges	19	10.7	48	27.1	86	48.6	23	13.0	1	0.6
Percentage of students thought to have difficulty in standard job-hunting activities	Universities	7	1.6	28	6.2	253	56.4	140	31.2	21	4.7
	Jr. colleges	4	2.3	15	8.5	89	50.6	58	33.0	10	5.7
Percentage of dropouts	Universities	11	2.5	29	6.5	343	76.9	61	13.7	2	0.5
	Jr. colleges	10	5.7	19	10.9	112	64.0	31	17.7	3	1.7

Table III-15 Correlations between Changes in and Actual Circumstances of Students' Motivation and Attitude

	1. Attitude towards academic classes and learning motivation	2. Awareness of future career design	3. Proactiveness in acquiring professional qualifications and taking courses	4. Students' participation rate in employment support services as a whole	5. Declining trend in the "percentage of students who remain undecided about their career path in their final academic year"	6. Declining trend in the "percentage of students thought to have difficulty in standard job-hunting activities"	7. Declining trend in the "percentage of dropouts"
Attitude towards academic classes and learning motivation	1	.604 **	.388 **	.320 **	.246 **	.225 **	.249 **
Awareness of future career design		1	.456 **	.457 **	.194 **	.219 **	.161 **
Proactiveness in acquiring professional qualifications and taking courses			1	.412 **	.168 **	.224 **	.102 *
Students' participation rate in employment support services as a whole				1	.208 **	.164 **	.100 *
Declining trend in the "percentage of students who remain undecided about their career path in their final academic year"					1	.243 **	.185 **
Declining trend in the "percentage of students thought to have difficulty in standard job-hunting activities"						1	.258 **
Declining trend in the "percentage of dropouts"							1

Note: ** p<.01, * p<.05

Following were "reaching out to/approaching students with low employment motivation or difficulty in employment," "enhancing the personal consultation system," "improving job offer rate of final-year students," and "enhancing internships," which were selected by more than 50% of the responding universities.

Among junior colleges, more than 70% indicated "reaching out to/approaching students with low employment motivation or difficulty in employment" and "building career awareness from early in collegiate studies." More than 50% of junior colleges selected "promoting use of the career center," "enhancing the personal consultation system," and "improving job offer rate of final-year students." "Reaching out to/approaching students with low employment motivation or difficulty in employment" ranked third among responses selected by universities and at the top among those selected by junior

colleges. Items with a selection rate of at least 50% among junior colleges matched the top items with a selection rate of at least 50% among universities.

■ Results based on the percentages of undecided graduates in universities

Next, for universities, we calculated the percentage of undecided recent graduates based on the career-path circumstances of final-year students of the previous school year at the time of the survey¹ and then classified those percentages into three groupings—low, middle, and high—so that roughly the same number of schools exists in each. After eliminating missing values, the low percentage grouping was comprised of 156 schools, the middle grouping of 135 schools, and the high grouping of 146 schools.

1 For students' career-path circumstances immediately after graduation, we asked about five categories ((1) "Graduates in permanent employment," (2) "Graduates advancing to higher education," (3) "Graduates in temporary employment," (4) "Graduates other than (1) to (3) (i.e., neither employed nor advancing to higher education)," and (5) "Unknown or other") and then established the total of (3), (4), and (5) as the "percentages of undecided graduates." In this survey, the boundary value between the low grouping and middle grouping was 10.00% and between the middle grouping and the high grouping was 20.00%.

Table III-16 Priority Issues Being Tackled Currently or from a Medium/Long-Term Perspective (M. A.)

	Universities		Jr. colleges	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1 Promoting use of the career center	342	75.5	121	68.8
2 Building career awareness early in collegiate studies	357	78.8	124	70.5
3 Enhancing internships	256	56.5	56	31.8
4 Developing and enhancing career education program suitable for the school	170	37.5	47	26.7
5 Reaching out/approaching students with low employment motivation or difficulty in employment	308	68.0	127	72.2
6 Improving job offer rate of final-year students	271	59.8	92	52.3
7 Enhancing the personal consultation system	278	61.4	114	64.8
8 Developing and enhancing information services to graduates	135	29.8	48	27.3
9 Developing and enhancing information services to parents and guardians	143	31.6	45	25.6
10 Collaborating with/utilizing companies and businesses in the educational information industry	76	16.8	31	17.6
11 Establishing and enhancing networks with other universities, educational institutions, etc.	91	20.1	21	11.9
12 Networking and enhancing on-campus career support services	150	33.1	51	29.0
13 Integration of specialized education and career education	129	28.5	42	23.9
14 Enlightenment for academic staffs about the importance of career education	198	43.7	60	34.1
15 Arranging and organizing information on students helpful for career services	195	43.1	85	48.3
16 Upskilling of the center staffs	205	45.3	56	31.8
17 Other	16	3.5	1	0.6

(1) Details of guidance services for mass students and issues in personal consultations

We arranged the content of guidance services for mass students into three groupings depending on the percentage of undecided graduates. As a result, we found that there is tendency for the rate at which collective guidance services are held to be higher when the percentage of undecided graduates is higher. Large differences in this rate among the groupings were particularly evident with “10. Providing information to parents/guardians,” “5. Courses on strategies for taking job-placement exams,” “2. Self-understanding and self-analysis,” and “11. Providing information on internships.” On the other hand, the differences were comparatively small for “1. General guidance for employment and job-hunting” and “4. Seminar for writing job application forms,” confirming

that those seminars were held at many schools regardless of their percentage of undecided graduates (Table III-17).

Next, we arranged data on items that are handled with particular thoroughness and care in personal consultations and items that they find difficult to handle. For “items that are handled with particular thoroughness and care” in personal consultations, those that showed particularly large differences in terms of percentage of undecided graduates included “2. Consultation on self-understanding and self-analysis,” “3. Consultation on reevaluating and reflecting on past experience,” “16. Consultation for students failing to obtain job offers,” and “17. Consultation for students thought to have difficulty following the same job-hunting process used by ordinary students” (Table III-18). For those items, schools in the middle and

Table III-17 Content of Yearly Guidance Services for Mass Students (by Percentage of Graduates Remaining Undecided about Career Path in Universities) (M. A.)

	Low		Middle		High	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1 General guidance for employment and job-hunting	150	97.4	135	100.0	141	97.9
2 Self-understanding and self-analysis	115	74.7	126	93.3	132	91.7
3 Providing information on occupations and industries/ companies; organizing company-led lectures and field tours	123	79.9	122	90.4	128	88.9
4 Seminar for writing job application forms	136	88.3	126	93.3	135	93.8
5 Courses on strategies for taking employment exams	105	68.2	110	81.5	129	89.6
6 Practice for job interviews	127	82.5	126	93.3	131	91.0
7 Courses for business manners	118	76.6	116	85.9	125	86.8
8 Providing information on labor law etc.	59	38.3	55	40.7	71	49.3
9 Presentations and gatherings by graduates and students already obtaining job offers	111	72.1	111	82.2	120	83.3
10 Providing information to parents/guardians	80	51.9	89	65.9	111	77.1
11 Providing information on internships	111	72.1	117	86.7	123	85.4
12 Other	23	14.9	19	14.1	27	18.8

high groupings for the percentage of undecided graduates more often said that they are responding with thoroughness and care than schools with fewer undecided graduates (i.e., in the low grouping). However, a comparison of the middle grouping and high grouping reveals that schools in the high grouping did not necessarily answer with greater frequency that they respond with thoroughness and care. In fact, for consultations on “2. Self-understanding and self-analysis,” “3. Reevaluating past experience,” and “16. students failing to obtain job offers,” the middle grouping had higher rates of responses indicating “responding with thoroughness and care” than the higher grouping. Moreover, for other items, the middle grouping had the highest response rates of the three groupings; examples include “10. Consultation on future career design” and “19. Providing information and consultation for graduates.” On the other hand, there were also some items for which the low grouping had the highest response frequency of the three groups. This was the case with “11. Consultation on coursework” and “13. Consultation on interpersonal relationships.” However, the response rates were around 20% for all of the groupings and thus there

was no conspicuous difference between the low grouping and the other groupings.

Looking next at “items that are difficult to handle” in personal consultations, those items having particularly large differences in terms of percentage of undecided graduates included “15. Consultation pertaining to mental health,” “17. Consultation for students thought to have difficulty following the same job-hunting process used by ordinary students,” and “10. Consultation on future career design” (Table III-19). For all three items, the middle grouping had the highest response rate. On the other hand, “20. Reaching out to students who do not use job-placement support services” was an item for which all of the groupings had relatively high response rates (in other words, they felt the item was difficult to handle) with little difference among them. Of them, the high grouping had the highest response rate. Similarly, in the cases of “13. Consultation on interpersonal relationships” and “14. Consultation concerning personal life and family matters,” all three groupings had response rates of around 40 and 50%, with fairly insignificant differences among them. Thus, it is clear that many universities experience difficulty handling these

Table III-18 Content of Individualized Consultation and Support : Items Handled with Particular Thoroughness and Care (by Percentage of Graduates Remaining Undecided in Career Path in Universities) (M. A.)

	Low		Middle		High	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1 Consultations on job-hunting methods	107	68.6	106	78.5	118	81.4
2 Consultation on self-understanding and self-analysis	80	51.3	98	72.6	99	68.3
3 Consultation on reevaluating and reflecting on past experience	69	44.2	85	63.0	74	51.0
4 Provision of information on and consultation of occupations	73	46.8	73	54.1	74	51.0
5 Provision of information and consultation on industries/companies	93	59.6	85	63.0	98	67.6
6 Guidance and consultation on internships	72	46.2	64	47.4	72	49.7
7 Guidance and consultation on writing job application forms	117	75.0	111	82.2	124	85.5
8 Guidance and consultation on employment exams	50	32.1	52	38.5	62	42.8
9 Guidance and consultation on business manners and interviews	101	64.7	99	73.3	107	73.8
10 Consultation on future career design	68	43.6	67	49.6	67	46.2
11 Consultation on coursework	35	22.4	18	13.3	25	17.2
12 Consultation on acquirement of professional qualification	44	28.2	36	26.7	44	30.3
13 Consultation on interpersonal relationships	44	28.2	32	23.7	32	22.1
14 Consultation concerning personal life and family matters	43	27.6	37	27.4	35	24.1
15 Mental health consultation	51	32.7	40	29.6	40	27.6
16 Consultation for students failing to obtain job offers	121	77.6	130	96.3	130	89.7
17 Consultation for students thought to have difficulty following the same job-hunting process used by ordinary students	70	44.9	79	58.5	86	59.3
18 Follow-up for students already obtaining job offers	40	25.6	35	25.9	39	26.9
19 Provision of information and consultation for graduates	37	23.7	44	32.6	42	29.0
20 Reaching out to students who do not use job-placement support services	58	37.2	59	43.7	70	48.3
21 Other	4	2.6	1	0.7	3	2.1
22 Not applicable	2	1.3	0	0.0	1	0.7

items. It should be noted that, for “16. Consultation for students of failing to obtain job offers,” we anticipated a high response rate for the high grouping. However, the results for all three groupings were around 20%, and no major difference among them could be confirmed.

Summarizing the results described above, as general trends, it is clear that universities of the low grouping for the percentage of undecided graduates marked fewer responses for “items that are handled

with particular thoroughness and care” and “items that are hard to handle,” while universities in the middle and high groupings marked more responses. Nonetheless, the high grouping did not always mark more responses on each item than the middle grouping, and there were several items for which the middle grouping marked more responses than the high grouping. In the case of the low grouping, there are some factors for the low percentage of undecided graduates. For example, some universities consist of

departments of specialized fields for which the career paths and directions of graduates is already determined at the time of students' enrollment. By their very nature, such universities would have low need for "thorough and careful treatment about general career guidance" and would therefore place low priority on it. It is natural to expect that this point would be a factor behind fewer responses on each item. On the other hand, the middle and high groupings must be investigated separately. Among the survey's results,

there were some items for which universities in the middle grouping strive to make "thorough and careful treatments" at a level that equals or surpasses the high grouping, as well as items for which the middle group marked more responses for "items that are difficult to handle." In particular, looking at consultations for "2. self-understanding and self-analysis," "3. reevaluating and reflecting on past experience," and "16. students failing to obtain job offers," the middle grouping marked more responses indicating they strive for a

Table III-19 Content of Individualized Consultation and Support : Items That Are Difficult to Handle (by Percentage of Graduates Remaining Undecided in Career Path in Universities) (M. A.)

	Low		Middle		High	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1 Consultations on job-hunting methods	8	5.1	5	3.7	10	6.9
2 Consultation on self-understanding and self-analysis	19	12.2	21	15.6	17	11.7
3 Consultation on reevaluating and reflecting on past experience	11	7.1	17	12.6	22	15.2
4 Provision of information on and consultation of occupations	10	6.4	8	5.9	15	10.3
5 Provision of information and consultation on industries/companies	11	7.1	4	3.0	7	4.8
6 Guidance and consultation on internships	6	3.8	7	5.2	9	6.2
7 Guidance and consultation on writing job application forms	12	7.7	11	8.1	10	6.9
8 Guidance and consultation on employment exams	14	9.0	15	11.1	21	14.5
9 Guidance and consultation on business manners and interviews	9	5.8	4	3.0	7	4.8
10 Consultation on future career design	13	8.3	28	20.7	27	18.6
11 Consultation on coursework	17	10.9	25	18.5	21	14.5
12 Consultation on acquirement of professional qualification	10	6.4	10	7.4	11	7.6
13 Consultation on interpersonal relationships	62	39.7	57	42.2	64	44.1
14 Consultation concerning personal life and family matters	68	43.6	66	48.9	69	47.6
15 Mental health consultation	92	59.0	100	74.1	103	71.0
16 Consultation for students failing to obtain job offers	28	17.9	32	23.7	32	22.1
17 Consultation for students thought to have difficulty following the same job-hunting process used by ordinary students	72	46.2	81	60.0	84	57.9
18 Follow-up for students already obtaining job offers	9	5.8	2	1.5	12	8.3
19 Provision of information and consultation for graduates	47	30.1	24	17.8	45	31.0
20 Reaching out to students who do not use job-placement support services	68	43.6	67	49.6	75	51.7
21 Other	2	1.3	5	3.7	4	2.8
22 Not applicable	19	12.2	2	1.5	7	4.8

thorough and careful treatment. It is thought that their initiatives here may be useful in holding down the percentage of undecided graduates.²

(2) Philosophy vis-à-vis job-placement support and school policy

Next, we tabulated data on schools' philosophy for job-placement support by percentage of undecided graduates (Table III-20). Items showing large

Table III-20 Philosophy vis-à-vis Job-Placement Support (by Percentage of Graduates Remaining Undecided in Career Path in Universities)

	Percentage of persons who remain undecided about their career path (low to high groupings)	Applicable		Somewhat applicable		Neither applicable nor inapplicable		Somewhat inapplicable		Inapplicable	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1	Low	84	55.3	46	30.3	12	7.9	5	3.3	5	3.3
	Middle	99	73.3	31	23.0	3	2.2	2	1.5	0	0.0
	High	80	55.2	54	37.2	7	4.8	1	0.7	3	2.1
2	Low	61	39.9	4	2.6	2	1.3	8	5.2	78	51.0
	Middle	70	51.9	12	8.9	7	5.2	7	5.2	39	28.9
	High	74	51.4	10	6.9	7	4.9	3	2.1	50	34.7
3	Low	26	17.0	14	9.2	25	16.3	13	8.5	75	49.0
	Middle	35	25.9	18	13.3	26	19.3	10	7.4	46	34.1
	High	36	25.0	28	19.4	22	15.3	18	12.5	40	27.8
4	Low	55	35.9	43	28.1	29	19.0	20	13.1	6	3.9
	Middle	37	27.4	43	31.9	32	23.7	19	14.1	4	3.0
	High	25	17.4	46	31.9	37	25.7	28	19.4	8	5.6
5	Low	17	11.1	30	19.6	45	29.4	33	21.6	28	18.3
	Middle	29	21.5	20	14.8	43	31.9	17	12.6	26	19.3
	High	22	15.2	29	20.0	40	27.6	23	15.9	31	21.4
6	Low	10	6.5	31	20.3	50	32.7	30	19.6	32	20.9
	Middle	7	5.2	27	20.0	49	36.3	28	20.7	24	17.8
	High	7	4.8	25	17.2	58	40.0	32	22.1	23	15.9
7	Low	15	9.8	26	17.0	68	44.4	26	17.0	18	11.8
	Middle	12	8.9	25	18.5	52	38.5	30	22.2	16	11.9
	High	8	5.5	26	17.9	58	40.0	38	26.2	15	10.3

2 However, the causal relationship here cannot be identified based on these results alone. Another possible reason is that middle-grouping schools have an environment in which job-placement support is not as serious a matter as in the high grouping, meaning that diverse requests for personal consultations from students (including occasional consultations having low seriousness) can be received and given higher priority. For example, "consultation on coursework" and "consultation on interpersonal relationships," which on the surface are not related to job-placement consultation, marked the most responses in terms of "thorough and careful handling" in the low grouping. A similar situation could be having an impact here.

differences in responses among the groupings were “2. There are full-time staff members who possess a professional qualification, such as a career consultant” and “3. There are full-time staff members who conduct and interpret the results of vocational aptitude tests.” Looking at the combined response rate for “applicable” and “somewhat applicable,” the low grouping of the percentage of undecided graduates was low in comparison with the middle and high groupings. In other words, more universities in the middle and high groupings had full-time staffs with professional qualifications or the skill to interpret vocational assessments.

Looking at specific characteristics, for “4. Academic staffs actively participate in the career center’s operation,” the grouping with the highest positive response rate (“applicable” + “somewhat applicable”) was the low grouping (64.1%). The middle grouping (59.3%) and high grouping (49.3%) ranked lower. Similarly, for negative response rates (“inapplicable” + “somewhat inapplicable”), the high grouping was higher than the low and middle groupings. Although definite statements concerning the causal relationship cannot be made based on the survey, it is possible that the existence or nonexistence of academic staffs’ favorable participation in career center operation has some effect on differences in universities’ percentage of undecided graduates.

Looking at responses for other items, the middle group showed the highest degree of eagerness for “1. Annual reviews and updates of support menus” (total of “applicable” + “somewhat applicable” = 96.3%). For “5. The school favorably supports efforts by staff members to raise their expertise in job-placement support,” although the high and middle groupings appeared to be slightly more active than the low grouping, responses in the spread from “applicable” to “inapplicable” were generally dispersed. Likewise, for support policies focused on having the career center handle students with difficulty in employment all by itself, although negative responses were slightly higher for the middle and high groupings, the responses were generally dispersed.

(3) Changes in and actual circumstances of students’ motivation and attitude

Next, we tabulated data concerning changes in students’ motivation and attitude over the past three to five years as well as the actual circumstances of their motivation and attitude by percentage of undecided graduates (Table III-21). In general, the results show conspicuous degrees of seriousness and deterioration for the high grouping of the percentage of undecided graduates. This is not simply a problem of numerical values for “5. Percentage of students who remain undecided about their career path,” “6. Percentage of students with difficulty in employment,” and “7. Percentage of dropouts,” as many responses indicated deteriorating or declining trends with regard to changes in/circumstances of the university environment in terms of students’ attitude and learning motivation with respect to academic classes, awareness of career design, proactiveness in acquiring professional qualifications, and participation rate in job-placement support services as a whole. Standing in contrast, however, were the high marks provided by the middle grouping. Particularly noteworthy here are “1. Attitude towards academic classes and learning motivation” and “4. Students’ participation rate in job-placement support services as a whole,” where responses indicating an improvement trend (share of Response Values 1 and 2 combined) had shares of 25.0% and 49.6%, respectively. These results were the highest in comparison with the other groupings. Similarly, the middle grouping had the highest improvement-trend response rates for “5. Percentage of students who remain undecided about their career path” and “7. Percentage of dropouts” (43.7% and 10.8%, respectively).

On the other hand, conspicuous among responses for these questions that indicated a deteriorating trend were those for “6. Percentage of students thought to have difficulty in standard job-hunting activities.” Although the highest response rate belonged to the high grouping (47.2%), the middle grouping (36.6%) and the low grouping (24.8%) also had rates at a notable level. This suggests that, regardless of the number of graduates who remain undecided about their career, staff members’ daily perception is that students who have difficulty in standard job-hunting activities are

Table III-21 Changes in and Actual Circumstances of Students' Motivation and Attitude during the Past 3 to 5 Years (by Percentage of Graduates Remaining Undecided in Career Path in Universities)

		Percentage of undecided persons (low to high groupings)	Frequency %	Frequency %	Frequency %	Frequency %	Frequency %
			Has improved← 1	2	3	4	→Has worsened 5
1	Attitude towards academic classes and learning motivation	Low	4 2.6	24 15.8	94 61.8	30 19.7	0 0.0
		Middle	6 4.5	27 20.5	86 65.2	13 9.8	0 0.0
		High	4 2.8	28 19.9	84 59.6	23 16.3	2 1.4
			Has risen← 1	2	3	4	→Has fallen 5
2	Awareness of future career design	Low	8 5.2	45 29.2	78 50.6	23 14.9	0 0.0
		Middle	5 3.8	39 29.3	74 55.6	15 11.3	0 0.0
		High	5 3.5	45 31.3	66 45.8	25 17.4	3 2.1
3	Proactiveness in acquiring professional qualifications and taking courses	Low	4 2.6	45 29.2	86 55.8	19 12.3	0 0.0
		Middle	8 6.0	34 25.4	70 52.2	20 14.9	2 1.5
		High	6 4.1	45 31.0	64 44.1	24 16.6	6 4.1
4	Students' participation rate in job-placement support services as a whole	Low	8 5.2	52 33.8	72 46.8	21 13.6	1 0.6
		Middle	9 6.8	57 42.9	46 34.6	16 12.0	5 3.8
		High	7 4.8	46 31.7	58 40.0	30 20.7	4 2.8
			Has decreased← 1	2	3	4	→Has increased 5
5	Percentage of students who remain undecided about their career path in their final academic year	Low	14 9.1	36 23.4	93 60.4	10 6.5	1 0.6
		Middle	16 11.9	43 31.9	67 49.6	9 6.7	0 0.0
		High	7 4.9	45 31.5	60 42.0	29 20.3	2 1.4
6	Percentage of students thought to have difficulty in standard job-hunting activities	Low	6 3.9	10 6.5	99 64.7	38 24.8	0 0.0
		Middle	0 0.0	7 5.2	78 58.2	41 30.6	8 6.0
		High	1 0.7	10 6.9	65 45.1	56 38.9	12 8.3
7	Percentage of dropouts	Low	6 3.9	9 5.8	124 80.0	16 10.3	0 0.0
		Middle	3 2.3	11 8.5	106 81.5	10 7.7	0 0.0
		High	2 1.4	9 6.3	100 69.4	32 22.2	1 0.7

becoming conspicuous.

(4) Priority issues tackled by career centers in medium and long term

We calculated the selection rates of each grouping for the 17 options that were selected by universities as priority issues being tackled by their career centers from a medium- to long-term perspective (Table

III-22).

In general, the middle and high groupings of the percentage of undecided graduates had high selection rates compared to the low grouping for nearly all of the items. The overall selection rate for universities was high for "2. Building career awareness from early in collegiate studies," "1. Promoting use of the career center," and "5. Reaching out to/approaching

Table III-22 Selection Rates for Priority Issues (by Percentage of University Students who Remain Undecided about their Career Path)

Priority issues	Percentage of undecided persons (%)		
	Low	Middle	High
1 Promoting use of the career center	64.9	78.5	82.1
2 Building career awareness early in collegiate studies	72.7	79.3	82.8
3 Enhancing internships	49.4	61.5	59.3
4 Developing and enhancing career education program suitable for the school	34.4	34.8	42.1
5 Reaching out/approaching students with low employment motivation or difficulty in employment	57.1	77.8	67.6
6 Improving job offer rate of final-year students	42.2	71.1	69.7
7 Enhancing the personal consultation system	55.2	69.6	59.3
8 Developing and enhancing information services to graduates	27.9	37.8	26.2
9 Developing and enhancing information services to parents and guardians	26.0	32.6	35.2
10 Collaborating with/utilizing companies and businesses in the educational information industry	18.8	15.6	15.2
11 Establishing and enhancing networks with other universities, educational institutions, etc.	16.2	22.2	22.1
12 Networking and enhancing on-campus career support services	30.5	37.0	30.3
13 Integration of specialized education and career education	31.8	24.4	27.6
14 Enlightenment for academic staffs about the importance of career education	40.3	43.7	46.2
15 Arranging and organizing information on students helpful for career services	39.0	44.4	45.5
16 Upskilling of the center staffs	37.7	49.6	51.0
17 Other	5.8	2.2	2.1

students with low employment motivation or difficulty in employment”; the high and middle groupings had higher selection rates than the low grouping for all. Additionally, the middle and high groupings had higher selection rates compared to the low grouping for “6. Improving job offer rate of final-year students,” “16. Upskilling of the center staffs,” and “3. Enhancing internships.” The middle group had higher selection rates than the low and high groupings for “7. Enhancing the personal consultation system,” “8. Developing and enhancing information services to graduates,” and “12. Networking and enhancing on-campus career support services.” Among universities within the low grouping of the percentage of undecided graduates are some for which students’ post-graduation career paths are already determined at the time of their enrollment. Because students’ paths are already set in those cases, it is thought that there is less need to actively engage in various job-placement

support activities compared to the middle and high groupings. Thus the results show that differences that are based on the percentage of undecided graduates are also reflected in the selection rate for priority issues.

2-3 Discussion

This survey produced results relating to the career center schemes of universities and junior colleges, the details of job-placement support, school job-placement support policies, changes in students’ motivation and attitudes, and priority issues being tackled by career centers from medium- and long-term perspectives. In addition, we examined how differences in the attributes of universities where the students remain undecided about their career path (namely, whether the percentage of said students is high or low) are related to job-placement support.

Looking first at career centers schemes, it was

found that many centers have a staff of around four or five members in universities. It was further found that, in many cases, some staffs in career centers who had worked in the personnel department of a private enterprise or other similar organization used their experience to take a career center management position. As for the assignment of staff members with a professional qualification or expertise in career support, such assignments are comparatively common in universities but less common in junior colleges.

Looking at specific methods for job-placement support, in the area of collective-style guidance, the rates of general guidance for job-hunting, instruction on writing job application forms, and interview training had high tendencies. In the area of personal consultation, thorough and careful service was provided to students without obtaining job offers. As for consultation items that respondents feel are difficult to handle, commonly mentioned items included consultation on mental health and consultation for students thought to have difficulty in standard job-hunting activities.

Looking at school job-placement support policies, annual reviewing and updating of support menus was the predominant among most schools. Proactive participation of career centers' operation by academic staffs was particularly low in the case of universities, remaining below 60%. Career centers participated in career education in more than 60% of universities and roughly 50% of junior colleges. Specifically forms of participation included taking charge of lectures, participating in classes, and planning of curricula.

As for recent student circumstances as perceived by staff members, it was clear that a certain percentage of responding schools, both universities and junior colleges, specifically feel that the percentage of students thought to have difficulty in job-hunting activities has increased.

An analysis of results for universities in terms of the percentage of undecided graduates revealed that there was little difference in the rate at which collective seminars for mass students are conducted between the low grouping and the high grouping. On the other hand, a look at academic staffs' active involvement in career support showed that there was more earnestness for such participation in universities

with a low percentage of undecided graduates.

We next decided to plan and execute an interview survey to ascertain in detail the situation in universities based on the above-mentioned outcomes. From the results of the above survey, we decided to address the following three points that deserve more in-depth study: 1) Understanding of a real picture of students who have difficulty in employment and how to support them; 2) Identification of specific support and cases in which career centers face difficulty and their methods for addressing them (e.g., how to handle students with mental health issues or disorders); and 3) Details in the cases of involvement by academic staffs.

3. Interview Survey

3-1 Survey outline

■ Survey objectives

This survey was planned and executed for the purpose of gathering qualitative information on the actual circumstances of job-placement support in university career centers based on the results of the above-mentioned questionnaire survey.

Because the number of schools that could be targeted in the interview survey was limited, consideration was necessary to ensure that no bias existed in their selection. The purpose of the survey was to clarify circumstances of job-placement support that are commonly observed in all targeted schools, while being mindful to select universities with diverse characteristics in terms of school size and percentage of undecided graduates.

■ Survey framework

A major difference between a university career center and a general youth employment support organization, such as "Hello Work" (public employment security office in Japan), is that while the latter handles only those people who visit it, the former has a responsibility to provide employment support to not only those students who visit it but also those who do not. Consequently, in addition to providing personal support to visiting students, a university career center has an obligation to organize seminars targeted for mass students and reach out to (i.e., encourage visits

by) students who do not visit it. Furthermore, there are cases when a career center has difficulty providing job-placement support to students who may have a developmental or psychiatric disorder only with its own staffs' efforts and need appropriate cooperation from professionals in other fields. Accordingly, by nature, university career centers handle a more diverse variety of operations than general youth employment support organizations and must execute those operations with a limited number of staff members. Against this backdrop, this survey was designed with emphasis on examining how career centers handle students' various circumstances.

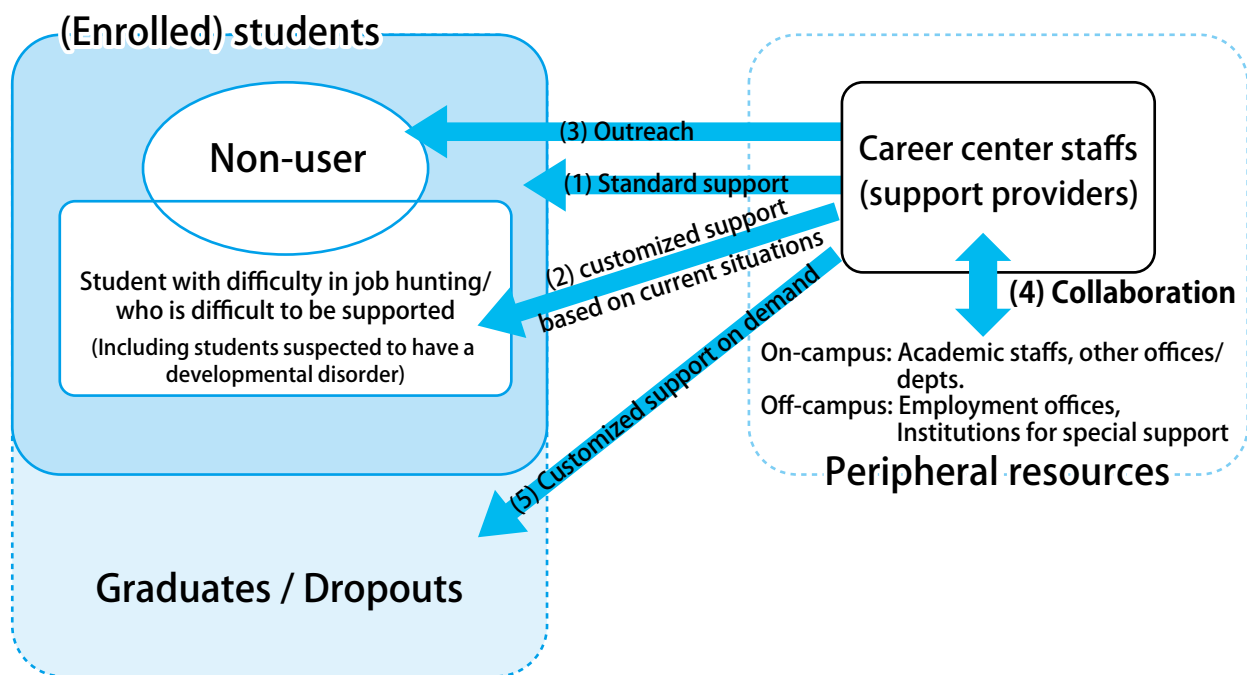
The survey primarily targeted the following six fields: (1) Methods for providing job-placement support to general students at the career center; (2) Current circumstances of and response to students thought to have difficulty in obtaining a job offer; (3) Communication with and response to students who do not use the career center; (4) Actual status of collaboration with resources outside the career center (on campus/off campus); (5) Support for unemployed

graduates, graduates who leave jobs very early, and dropouts from university; and (6) Other (i.e., description of various episodes related to job-placement support in a career center) (Figure III-23).

■ Survey method

We selected the targeted schools based on the following standards in the interest of gathering case information from a diverse range of universities. From all of the responding schools of the previously mentioned questionnaire survey (459 schools), we selected universities that provided responses in the "free description" spaces (195 schools) and universities that responded that they have difficulty with "consultation for students thought to have difficulty following the same job-hunting process used by ordinary students" (246 schools) as primary targeted schools. Thus the targeted schools numbered 327 at this point. Given the possibility that the interview survey's results could be significantly distorted depending on the qualities of the targeted schools, we selected schools by ensuring diversity in terms of school size,

Figure III-23 Interview Survey Framework



percentage of undecided graduates, and region based on the results of the questionnaire survey.

We allocated primary targeted schools to all nine cells created by the three groupings based on school size (number of students; large, medium, and small)³ multiplied by the three groupings for the percentage of undecided graduates (high, middle, low) of the questionnaire survey. We then selected two schools in each cell for interviews, with conditions for final selection being (1) the school is a private university (which accounted for more than 70% of the total of universities in the questionnaire survey), and (2) the school's faculties are necessarily comprised of or include humanities-oriented faculties, rather than those focused on specialized or well-defined career paths (e.g., the school only with medical, pharmacy or nursing-oriented or engineering-oriented faculties). With regard to (2), it is common in Japan for job seekers to go to companies that have no direct relationship with their university major, a situation that makes the relationship between academic major and employment field ambiguous. Given this, we reasoned that many students can encounter difficulty up until their employment has been settled. It was for this reason that we decided to make universities that meet this condition candidates for the targets of the survey.

We also sought to achieve a locational balance between urban and rural schools in addition to these conditions. This process ended in our selection of 18 schools (two schools in each cell) that were asked to participate in the survey. Ultimately we conducted the survey for a total of 17 schools, as our request was accepted by only one of the schools in the large grouping and in the grouping cell with low percentage of undecided graduates.

We used the following survey method. We first sent a paper questionnaire providing a simple survey outline to each university beforehand. We then asked them to respond to all presented topics during an interview to last between 90 and 150 minutes. All survey content was recorded. At a later date, we asked

the interviewed people, both academic staffs (e.g. lecturers, professors) and career center (clerical) staffs to confirm and okay their statements. We then published the approved statements in a report (*JILPT Research Material Series No. 156*) in a form that kept school and personal names completely confidential.

■ Survey respondents and survey implementation period

We stated that we would be conducting interviews with clerical staffs that have a daily understanding of the support provided by university career centers and asked as many academic staffs as possible for interview. As a result, we obtained opportunities to conduct direct interviews with a total of 34 academic and clerical staffs from the 17 surveyed schools. In some cases, academic and clerical staffs were interviewed together, while in others they were interviewed individually. Some responses to certain items were received in written form.

The survey was conducted between September 2014 and January 2015.

3-2 Results

Detailed survey results are provided in the original report (*JILPT Research Material Series No. 156*). Here, we will focus particularly on the circumstances of support for students who have difficulty in employment and arrange results with primary attention given to items (2), (3), (4), and (5) of Figure III-23.

In addition, we will present characteristics that were commonly seen particularly among schools with low percentages of undecided graduates as an addendum at the end of this section. This survey was conducted in an interview style with a limited sample size. Thus, the conclusion drawn from the results should not be generalized excessively. However, we did hear about good initiatives of career support from some of the universities. Thus, in order to formulate some tentative hypotheses, we decided to compile characteristics that were seen in universities having a

3 Allocating from all responding universities based on student body size to achieve three groupings of nearly the same size produced a small school grouping of 151 schools (student body of no more than 1,136 students), a medium school grouping of 151 schools (between 1,137 and 3,782 students), and large school grouping of 151 schools (3,783 students or more).

low percentage of undecided graduates.

(1) Current circumstances of and response to students thought to have difficulty in employment

■ Characteristics of students with difficulty in employment as seen by support providers

We arranged in order commonly received responses concerning the characteristics of students thought to require time in job-hunting as seen from the standpoint of career center staffs (not including cases requiring special consideration, such as students thought to have developmental disorders or psychiatric disorders) (Table III-24). It should be noted, however, that in many cases the characteristics were described as appearing in a compound manner (i.e., with other characteristics) rather than as exclusive phenomena.

(i) Difficulty from students' own biased judgment

The most common response received involved cases in which students fall into difficulty when their job-hunting activities do not progress smoothly due to inappropriate "own-way" decisions (i.e., decisions not made in accordance with standard manner). A variety of patterns are included here.

Difficulty from inadequate self-understanding includes cases in which students repeatedly submit job applications that lack consistency in terms of business or occupational fields because they do not understand or notice which career direction suits for themselves. Difficulty from close-minded or narrow perspective includes cases in which students show a strong preference to a specific business or occupational field despite with insufficient knowledge in that field (e.g., the student will not accept any job offers except for the aviation industry) or strong desire for job offers in a particular region (e.g., the student's hometown). Difficulty from poor understanding of job-hunting methods includes cases in which students engage in job-hunting with unconventional or mistaken methods (for example, the student takes company recruitment exams at the beginning without attending any briefing sessions held by the company beforehand) and cases in which students write self-promotion

application documents in their own style and without consideration for the reader in the employer. Difficulty from inadequate or mistaken understanding of work includes cases in which students find little incentive to engage in job-hunting to become a regular employee because they experienced earning more as a part-timer while a student than the graduates' starting salary. And difficulty from mistaken recognition of actual circumstances includes cases in which students tend to loosen their tensions to hunt jobs earnestly after hearing about the news that the job market for new graduates has been improved and are delayed in starting their job-hunting activities.

What is behind this kind of failure (or temporary difficulty) from "own-way" biased judgment in students' job-hunting? It is thought that there are two main possibilities here. In many cases, ordinary university students who went directly from high school graduation to university have no experience in the workforce and look for jobs for the first time. Thus, one possibility is that this inexperience leads to misjudgment about job-hunting activities (and that students are not even aware that they "lack experience" in job-hunting). The other possibility is that, within Japan's hiring system, in which new graduates are hired collectively, there is an irreversible aspect, as the period during which companies announce job openings and hire university graduates is largely established in annual planning. This means that if a student makes an error in judgment at some point during the job hunting process, the industry or company he or she desires to enter may have closed the recruitment of new graduates for the year, and that he or she may lose the opportunity even to take recruitment exams as a result. This employment practice can cause students to be at risk for leading to failure or difficulty in job hunting.

(ii) Difficulty from communication problems

The next most common response received involved communication-related problems. In many cases, responses referred to students' poor communication skills, impassive face without smiling, and inability to have conversation with or exchange greetings with people properly. It can be assumed in such cases that such students would struggle or have

Table III-24 Characteristics of Students with Difficulty in Employment as Seen by Support Providers

(i) Difficulty from students' own biased judgment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Inadequacy of self-understanding; submission of various job applications incoherent in industries or fields due to lack of understanding of aptitude ◆ Close-minded or narrow perspective ◆ Poor understanding of job-hunting methods ◆ Inadequate or mistaken understanding of work ◆ False recognition of what he/she should do now (insensitivity of necessity for future preparation, incorrect self-image)
(ii) Communication problems
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Poor communication skills; inability to have conversation with or to exchange greetings with people properly ◆ Non-attention to people's advice; anti-open-minded/anti-accepting personality ◆ Impassive face without smiling; (supposedly) isolated life ◆ Awkward communication with people (consequently provoking unpleasant feelings)
(iii) Inactivity or apathy
A: Apathetic; slow-starting attitude (including moratorium)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Hesitation to contact companies about job offers ◆ Unclear motive or intention (lack of seriousness) vis-à-vis job hunting
B: Behavior unascertainable due to non-use of services/long-term absence from school
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Non-use of the center or non-participation in job-placement support events ◆ Long-term absence from school (or research seminars); Out of contact with others
C: Weak connection with society
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Emotional acceptance of the current situation unambitious for the future (life with minimal consumption and connection to the outer world etc.) ◆ Little interest in connecting with the society (people, companies, etc.)
(iv) Difficulty from parent-child relationship or parents' attitude
A: Too susceptible to parent's values to make child's own decisions at will
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Too strong wishes by parents (e.g., wishes for large-scale companies, nearby companies from parents' home) ◆ Parents' refusal to accept child's decision (compulsion to withdraw job offers unfavorable for parents)
B: Negative impact of parents' attitudes on child's job hunting (e.g., apathy for child's actual situation, etc.)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Parents' restraint of talks with child about employment (because of hesitant feeling) ◆ Parents' tolerant attitude about child's failure to hunt jobs (because of no urgent desire for child's independence)
(v) Dependent tendency or lack of self-initiative towards job hunting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Unclear purpose or insufficient motivation for enrollment of university ◆ Indecisive attitude vis-à-vis their own future ◆ Emotionally dependent attitude upon center staffs (lack of self-initiative to write up resumes or documents, unreasonable blame on staffs about students' own troubles, inactive attitude as if suitable job offers came up spontaneously)
(vi) Insufficient social experiences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ None of experiences in on- or off-campus activities (group activities, part-time jobs, etc.) ◆ Few or no experiences of activities to keep up in some periods of time (frequent changes of part-time jobs in a short time) ◆ Unusual part-time job experiences (i.e., jobs done all alone without others' help)
(vii) Few or no important advantages of themselves (that can be mentioned in application documents)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Lack of experiences worthy of special mention (special skills, activities kept over long periods, etc.) ◆ None of outstanding academic successes worthy of special mention in application documents
(viii) Lack of self-confidence or inferiority complex
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Lack of self-confidence or negative attitude for the future ◆ Feeling of inferiority when preparing self-promotion documents
(ix) Poor academic performance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Delay in starting of job hunting due to insufficient graduation credits
(x) Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Little time left for job hunting because of students' indispensability of part-time jobs in long hours ◆ Suspected developmental disorder (e.g., poor comprehension of staffs' advice, etc.)

difficulty in employment interviews, where first impression is important. However, some responses also indicated that if students receive long-term trainings in university classes and other settings that require frequent communication, the effects finally come up and the difficult situation can be gradually improved.

On the other hand, some responses mentioned cases in which communication is too difficult to achieve fruits in personal consultation, as students are emotionally unable to accept staffs' advice due to personality-rooted problems (such as strong obsessiveness to a particular idea). In such cases, it is possible that the student will refuse to visit the career center. In addition, it is also possible that the student will be unable to access or receive the job-placement support fundamentally essential to him or her.

(iii) Difficulty from inactivity or apathy

Difficulty from inactivity or apathy can be largely arranged into the following three student groupings. The first is comprised of students who have no clear perspective vis-à-vis their own career and thus are generally slow to start job-hunting. The second consists of students whom the career center loses the track of because they tend to be absent from classes or decline to participate in job-placement support events. Such students appear to be apathetic as a result. It is possible that those students will explore job-hunting all by themselves regardless of whether or not they are approached by the career center. However, if the student tends to be absent and is difficult for the professor in his or her research seminar to reach, it is also highly possible that the student is apathetic. The third grouping is comprised of students who are attending school but with little interest in having contact with the outer world. They cannot keep up with job-hunting activities even at the right time many active approaches to companies should be needed and tend to procrastinate their job-hunting activities.

(iv) Difficulty from parent-child relationship or parents' attitude

Some respondents reported employment difficulty that arises from students' relationship with their parents or the attitude of the parents. Such difficulty can

be largely classified into two types.

The first involves cases in which a parent has extremely strong values or intentions and the child cannot go against them. Determining one's own future career is one of the important decision-making situations in the student's life. However, there is a tendency for students to be unable to go against their parents' wishes (for example, for a large-scale company or a nearby company from parents' home) and to end up feeling that it looks pointless for the students in opposing their parents' will and pushing forward to their own wishes. Another factor thought to be relevant here is children's lack of emotional independence from their parents. There are also cases in which a big trouble arises when children who live apart from the parents to attend university later encounter fierce opposition from their parents when they report to the parents that they have obtained an informal job offer unsatisfying the parents' real wishes.

The second involves cases in which parents do not encourage their child in job-hunting (and in some cases even discourage the child). In some cases, the parents leave job-hunting activities entirely to the child and restrain talking with the child about employment because of hesitant feelings to child. In other cases, the child has difficulty in getting serious about job-hunting after their parents have told the child that they don't care even if the child does not immediately find a job offer, possibly because the parents don't want urgent independence of the child in their real mind. The latter in particular can easily lead to the difficulty from apathy mentioned in (iii) above.

(v) Difficulty from dependent tendency or lack of self-initiative towards job hunting

Difficulty from dependent tendency or lack of self-initiative runs in two directions. One is manifested in lack of initiative in determining one's own path forward (including university enrollment) so far at the present moment, and the other involves interpersonal dependency on people who provide job-placement support.

For the former, responses indicated, for example, that when students' purpose for enrolling in university is ambiguous or poorly developed, their

post-graduation career path also tends to become unclear. This situation can consequently lead to difficulty in employment. Additionally, some university reported the cases in which students lack the ability to make their own decisions (i.e., they cannot select the best offer for themselves among the multiple informal job offers they obtained).

As for the latter, responses indicated a tendency for students to have a wrong idea towards the well-prepared job-placement support services provided by the career center, which leads them to emotionally depend on staff members such as to help them to fill out the job application forms or take an inactive attitude as if suitable job offers came up before their eyes spontaneously. They also showed an undesirable attitude to blame on the staffs or others (i.e., companies) unreasonably because they fail to get a job offer. Pursuing a post-graduation career path and job-hunting activities for it should be led by the students themselves based on their own initiative. It was reported that the students who do not understand who should take the leading role on their own job-hunting activities turned out to experience difficulty in job-hunting activities.

(vi) Difficulty from insufficient social experiences

Responses indicated that students who lack the kinds of social experience that most university students possess—for example, they have never joined an on- or off-campus group activity or had a part-time job—they tend to have difficulty in finding employment. Responses further indicated that even if students have part-time job experiences, they tended to have insufficient social interaction when, for example, they have not experienced working in a particular job over the long term and changes jobs frequently in a short period or had a job that they could complete alone without any coworkers' help and therefore had almost no interaction with people.

(vii) Difficulty from a lack of self-promotion resources

This item is related to (vi) above, as a lack of social experience (e.g., through peer group activities or a part-time job) leads to a lack of self-promotion resources when preparing for job application documents.

Responses indicated that when students do not have a special skill, have never engaged in an activity kept over the long period, or have not achieved academic successes worthy of special mention, they can have difficulty in preparing for job application documents and thus experience difficulty in job-hunting.

(viii) Difficulty from self-confidence or inferiority complex

Some responses indicated students can experience difficulty in job-hunting if they suffer a lack of self-confidence and this causes their diffident attitude and appearance. It was reported that a lack of self-confidence not only makes a student less proactive in job-hunting but also leads to self-disapproval or feelings of inferiority—reflecting a feeling that the student has never done anything valuable for the society—when preparing for self-promotion job application documents, and that such a mental condition may cause difficulty in propelling job-hunting activities.

(ix) Difficulty from poor academic performance

We also received reports indicating that students who lack the credits needed for graduation due to poor academic performance and are thus delayed in starting job-hunting also lead to difficulty in job-hunting activities. We also heard of bewildering instances in which students were proved to have insufficient credits for graduation on the eve of succeeding in obtaining an informal job offer after substantial efforts by staff members.

(x) Difficulty from other causes

Among other reported cases were those involving students who could not make time for job-hunting because they were forced to work long hours at a part-time job for their daily living. Others involved suspected development disorders or other tendencies for which job-placement support did not proceed well because students could not comprehend the meanings of the staffs' advice or persisted in talking about the things irrelevant to job hunting.

■ Consideration and response

Specific methods for considering and responding to the various characteristics and circumstances of

students with difficulty in employment that were reported through the survey largely centered on the following three (Table III-25).

The first is attentive listening. This involves listening carefully to what students try to talk about and accepting their viewpoint as a general rule, working with them to get an organized picture for them, and then formulating an approach for assisting them. An approach involving not only listening attentively but also avoiding communicating in an authoritative tone was also reported.

Secondly, universities reported that they use a “low-hurdle approach” that makes it easier to visit the career center and facilitates communication. For example, some responses indicated that when students have particular problems with communication, a staff tries to facilitate it by selecting easy topics or adjusting how to ask questions. Others indicated that when students have not completed yet their assignments in time (e.g., finishing of a resume or an application form etc.) and may hesitate to visit the center as a result, the center takes steps to ease their concerns and encourage them to visit.

And thirdly, universities responded that they take steps to encourage students’ own awareness of their strengths or problems. They reported that rather than giving direct instructions, they took steps to help students realize their attitude necessary to be improved on their own. Some universities responded that they

help students become aware of personal strengths that they remain unaware of by attentively explaining them from the standpoint of a support provider.

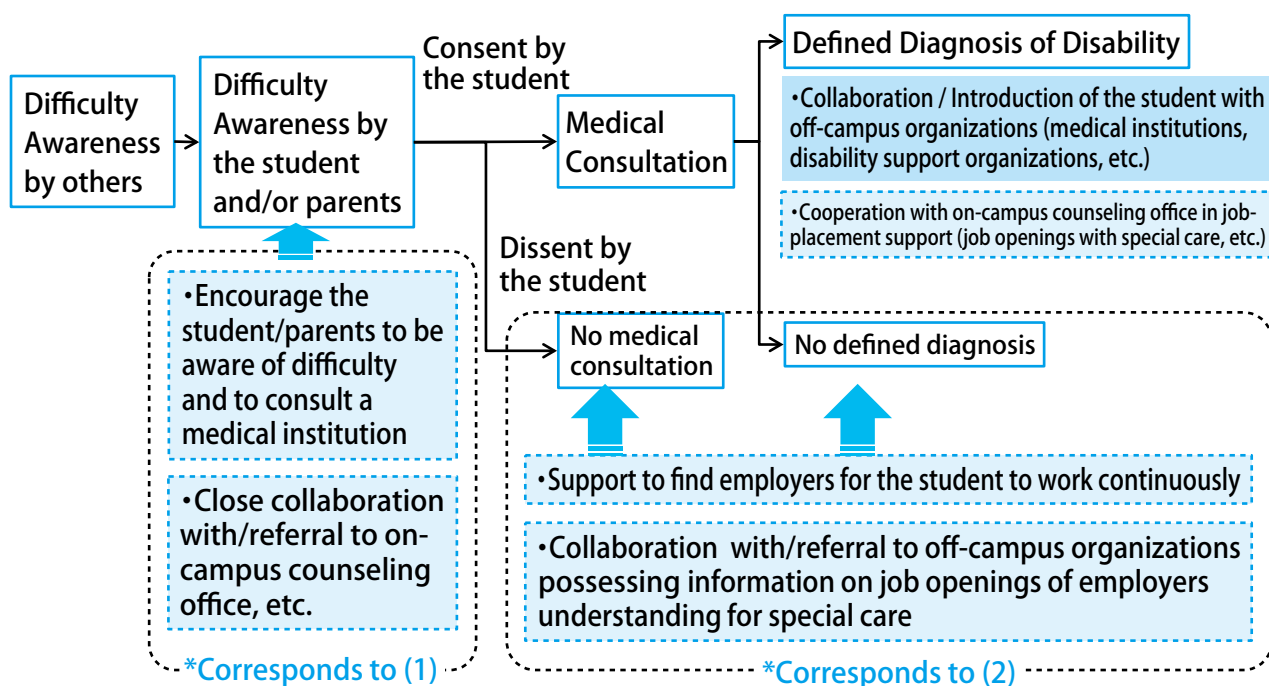
■ Arrangement of issues concerning job-placement support for students with traits resembling disability

Next, Figure III-26 arranges responses to students with traits resembling disability (e.g., a developmental or psychiatric disorder), as seen from the standpoint of career centers. In general, career centers don’t have professional staffs that are capable of judging the level of disability of the visiting students. Thus, they need to cooperate with an appropriate facility, such as on-campus counseling office for students, on-campus health office, or off-campus organizations that support people with disabilities. Cases in which career centers experience difficulty when providing job-placement support can largely be arranged into two categories. The first is difficulty in recommending a medical consultation to the student by the career center because people around the student (professors, friends, etc.) have become aware of the traits to be treated carefully but the student him/herself and the parents have never. The survey’s results show that some universities collaborate smoothly with on-campus counseling office or health office on that situation but that others have not always done well. The other category is difficulty when finding appropriate

Table III-25 Details of Consideration and Supportive Attitude for Students with Difficulty in Employment

(i) Attentive listening
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Listen carefully to what the student tries to talk about and sort out noteworthy points from what he/she said. ◆ Accept the student’s story unconditionally.
(ii) “Low-hurdle approach” to promote frequent visits and communications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Ease students’ minds by starting with daily conversation irrelevant to job hunting topics to get them to be open-minded. ◆ Accept in ways that make it easier for the student to start talking willingly. ◆ Avoid offering too many demands or assignments. (Let the student feel easy in visiting the center.) ◆ Avoid being too direct in getting to the heart of the matter. ◆ Counsel in the ways the student recognizes the center is on his/her side.
(iii) Encourage the student to become aware of his/her strengths or problems
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Help the student become aware of his/her own strengths in free talking. ◆ Encourage his/her self-awareness of attitude necessary to be improved (i.e., close-minded or anti-accepting attitude). ◆ Raise the student’s correct awareness of current situation by attentive explanation and advice.

Figure III-26 Support Flowchart of Students with Difficulty from the Standpoint of Career Centers (Students with Traits Resembling Disability)



***Explanation:** Activities by Career Center Activities by on-campus counseling office

(1) (Prior to medical consultation) Activities with difficulty when gaining the student's and/or parents' consent for medical consultation

(2) (In cases of none of medical consultation or no diagnosis defined after consultation) Activities with difficulty when finding employment or support facility suitable for student's desire and aptitude

employers or training organizations that fit for the student's desires. In some cases the student and his/her parents did not consent with having a medical consultation, while in others the student had no significant diagnosis for his/her traits after the medical consultation. In still other cases, the career center took charge of finding a job offer with special care for the student with a defined medical diagnosis for his/her disability following a request from on-campus counseling office.

(2) Communication with and response to students who do not use the career center

When asked about the time when students first use the career center, many universities reported that it is

when third-year students register their desired career path. Accordingly, career centers begin using various means to reach out to students who have not yet visited around this time. This has two purposes: to ascertain students' progress in developing their career path ("registration of prospective career path or plan after graduation" in the case of third-year students and "report of nearest career path after graduation" in the case of graduating students) and to provide career support to students. We organized the responses concerning actual methods universities used to contact students in order beginning with the most common (Table III-27).

The most common response was direct communication with the student (mobile telephone or e-mail). Although communicating by e-mail is easy, some

Table III-27 Means of Communication with Students Who Do Not Use the Career Center (from all 17 Schools)

	(number of responses)
◆ Phone calls to the student's mobile phones	16
◆ E-mails to the student (by mass e-mails, or specific delivery to the student)	15
◆ Phone calls to the parents/guardians (as a last resort)	11
◆ Communications through the professor of research seminar	9
◆ Letters/postcards (sent together with other enclosed items, etc.)	4
◆ Communications through friends	4
◆ Other (e.g., bulletin boards, direct contact to the student after the class ends, etc.)	

universities reported the problem of frequently being unable to contact students who quickly change their e-mail address, and others reported that e-mail becomes a one-way form of communication because it is impossible to confirm whether or not messages were actually read. Consequently calling to mobile telephones is also used. However, this method is accompanied by various problems that a majority of universities reported struggling with. In addition to the fact that assigning the work of phone calls among a limited number of staff members increases considerable workload to normal duties, problems include students' not answering the phone (because they don't want to answer the call from an unknown number), inability to leave a message because the message recording service has not been switched on, and an extremely low call-back rate even when a call record exists. Additionally, some universities stated that, rather than simply to communicate to the students, the center should demonstrate an attitude for heart-warmingly assisting the students by using frequent e-mails or phone calls.

When students cannot be contacted personally, many universities indicated that they next contact parents or guardians or reach the students through academic staffs (professors, lecturers etc.) of the research seminar. However, many also responded that they make calls to parents' homes only as a last resort, as such calls tend to be taken very seriously. At universities where career center staffs and academic staffs work together on a daily basis, students' circumstances were ascertained by the seminar professor's prompt contact to them. However, some universities reported that contacting students can be difficult, as contacting via professors is not available when the students do not belong to any research

seminar or have been absent for a long periods of time.

Additionally, some schools reported contacting students with letters or postcards, or through friends.

It should be noted that career centers must contact all students (including those with informal job offers) prior to their graduation in order to ascertain their post-graduation career paths. Ordinarily universities have a system in place whereby students take the step of reporting their post-graduation career path to the career center. However, when students do not make this report of their own, many universities responded that, as a last resort, they have those students report their post-graduation path when submitting their graduation thesis or in exchange for their diploma at the graduation ceremony. Additionally, universities indicated that they notify students whose employment situation remains unsettled at graduation that the career center can continue to support them even after graduation.

■ Issues concerning respect for students' autonomy and schools' career support stance

Career centers attempt to communicate with students with which they have no contact through various means. However, several universities responded by expressing thoughts and concerns about their stance as educational institutions. On the one hand, in the ways described above, they make campus-wide efforts toward the ideal of providing high-quality job-placement support through sensitive and attentive services that are adjusted to students' characteristics. However, on the other hand, they wondered how far a career center, as a single office in a university, should go in terms of approaching students and intruding into their autonomy and decision-making.

At the same time, there were responses that

presented concerns regarding another challenge for career centers—specifically, that the types of students who are capable of job-hunting at their own initiative and students who are incapable of doing so look polarized more and more, and as a result a certain percentage of students who have difficulty finding employment will be left behind. Although career centers use various means of calling out to students who have difficulty settling their employment situation, some universities expressed the opinion that the persistence of just calling out the student itself is meaningless for anybody. Some career center staffs mentioned an actual example of a university in which the center staffs take the extra step of going to students' houses directly to collect career path reports. There were also universities that responded that they are hesitant to pay excessive attention to students, and that they wrestle with the questions of where to draw the line in terms of respecting students' autonomy and providing guidance and support.

(3) Status of collaboration with resources outside of the career center (on campus/off campus)

In many cases, the key to success in supporting students' employment is the utilization of resources that are outside of the career center. Here we will report on the personnel and organizations with which career centers collaborate by separating them into "on campus" and "off campus" groupings.

■ On-campus collaboration

On-campus collaboration can be largely categorized into (i) collaboration with academic staffs and (ii) collaboration with a counseling office for students, a health office, etc.

(i) Collaboration with academic staffs

A very commonly mentioned example of collaboration with academic staffs involved research seminar professors' working with the career center to ascertain students' current progress of job hunting regardless of the professors' field of research. Other examples included cases in which academic staffs specializing in clinical psychology or support for people with disabilities stepped outside of their

responsibilities to students in their own research seminars to provide consultation or supervise counselors at the on-campus counseling office.

We arranged specific responses concerning collaboration with academic staffs into groupings in their order of commonality (Table III-28). The most commonly received grouping was academic staffs' urging of students to use the career center. Worthy of particular mention here is the fact that giving guidance on job-hunting in detail to the seminar students is a difficult task for academic staffs who have never had work experiences at a company. Thus there were many cases in which academic staffs who encounter students having difficulty here have a rational idea to entrust the guidance to the specialist in the career center. The second grouping involved academic staffs' serving to make direct contact with students and urge them to visit the career center. In general contact was made as follows: The career center prepares a list of students who are necessary to be contacted by the center and provides it to academic staffs. Then, they try to contact directly those students on the list who are in their seminars.

Third grouping was academic staffs' taking the role of identifying which students require support and then sharing that information in faculty meetings or with the career center. By communicating with students in their seminars, academic staffs can obtain up-to-date information on students' job-hunting status (e.g., whether or not they have received an informal job offer). Collaboration among staffs has been promoted, for example, when the academic staffs share this information in faculty meetings or report it to the career center. They also share information on students with poor academic performance or poor attendance records. Other responses indicated cases in which a graduate that leaves a job soon after graduation personally contacts their seminar professor, rather than visits the career center, and reports on their circumstances. When the graduate wanted to consult the professor about the graduate's job change, the professor sent that information to the career center and asked it to help him/her.

For the fourth grouping, universities reported cases in which academic staffs take charge of some activities that are similar to the job-placement support

handled by the career center. For example, some universities indicated that they provide job-placement support with a process through which academic staffs first conduct personal interviews with students (third-year) about their future career and then hand over the information of the students to the career center. In other reported examples, career center staffs provide job-placement guidance to students by using time and venue of research seminar. There were also examples in which academic staffs who have working experience at the business world give lectures of job-hunting activities based on the professor's personal experiences to the students and examine students' job application forms and instruct how to write them properly. Additionally, some universities indicated that academic staffs handle to collect students' career status reports immediately after the graduation at the presentation date of graduation thesis, while others said that academic staffs who specialized in a field with a practical qualification manage to find employers suitable for some students who need special care.

The fifth grouping included cases in which

academic staffs cooperate in making a significant linkage between career education and all other courses or subjects. One example was the inclusion of information in syllabi on how particular courses cultivate basic abilities for entering the workforce, allowing students to see visually grasp how coursework will help develop their abilities by using figures of students' achieved abilities. Though not directly linked to job-placement support, this implied one of the examples of academic staffs' active involvements in career education.

The degree of collaboration between academic staffs and the career center tends to be influenced by the degree to which job-placement support environment has been developed in the university. Responses indicating a "difference in willingness" vis-à-vis job-placement support among academic staffs were particularly numerous. Some universities indicated that they lack a consensus concerning how cooperation in job-placement support should be provided on campus, and as a result some academic staffs are cooperative while others expect students to handle the

Table III-28 Specific Examples of Job-Placement Support-related Activities Conducted by Academic Staffs

(i) Promoting students' use of the career center
◆ Encouraging students to use consultation services at the center during the research seminar
◆ Introducing students directly into the center
(ii) Contacting/reaching out to students (of research seminar)
◆ Frequent communications (e-mail, telephone, etc.) with students
◆ Receiving a list of students who have been lost track of by the center in order to manage to contact them via the research seminar
(iii) Identification of students requiring specific supports and sharing such information in all campus
◆ Inquiring directly for seminar students' current progress of job hunting (number of obtained informal job offers etc.) and reporting the results to faculty meeting or the career center
◆ Sharing information on students with insufficient credits or frequent absences
◆ Reporting to the center about information on graduates who are supposed to need career support partly because of leaving a job early
(iv) Taking charge of some part of job-placement support duties
◆ Holding career-related interviews of seminar students, or attending at the students' interviews held by the center
◆ Allowing the center staff to use time and venue of research seminar for job-placement guidance for seminar students
◆ Giving lectures of job-hunting activities based on the professor's own experience (when the professor has some working experiences at the business world)
◆ Examining students' job application forms and instructing how to write them
◆ Collecting students' career status reports immediately after the graduation (at presentation date of graduation theses)
◆ Finding employers for students requiring special assistance (in the case of specialized courses)
(v) Cooperating in efforts to make a significant linkage between career education and all other courses or subjects
◆ Specification of the skills and abilities to be obtained through coursework in syllabi

matter on their own. Meanwhile other universities indicated that academic staffs in the humanities (and particularly in disciplines of weak linkage to occupations in the real world) are generally unskilled in job-placement support. Some responses noted that young academic staffs are often cooperative in job-placement support, while older academic staffs are becoming more cooperative as they recognize that times have changed and collaborate with the university to foster the students together as valuable human resources in the world.

We also received several responses indicating that a campus-wide cooperative scheme to support students' employment was still in place. Some reports even noted that the university president's leadership had a major influence on the scheme's creation. One university that was previously a junior college but is now a four-year university stated that it had a tradition of providing well-designed job-placement support as a junior college, and that even now a university culture that embraces job-placement support remains unchanged. Another university that has many specialist job-oriented courses through which students seek to achieve professional qualifications stated that its academic staffs also come from specialist backgrounds and have personal experience benefitting from earnest job-placement support, and as a result a cooperative scheme for students' job-placement support emerged naturally. Yet another university indicated that a career support committee comprised of academic staffs and an administrative body (i.e., the career center) is functioning well together based on a strong cooperative framework. On the other hand, there was also a university that said a clear division of roles exists—specifically, academic staffs should handle specialized fields of study and career center staffs should handle job-placement support—and that although academic staffs cooperate in job-placement support to a certain extent, the university's policy (and culture) is that, as a general rule, they should not be directly involved in job-placement support.

(ii) Collaboration with a students' counseling office, health office, etc.

Settings of collaboration with a students' counseling office, health office, or other offices are generally

divided into two situations. The first involves cases in which a student suspected to have a developmental or psychological disorder visits the career center and is then referred to the counseling office or health office because specialized support is required. And the second involves cases in which the students' counseling office or health office referred to the career center to ask for job-placement support consultation of its client student. However, some career centers indicated that collaboration in itself can be difficult, as even if a student who is thought to benefit from giving special care of the student counseling office or health office visits the career center, telling the fact before the student's face can be embarrassing. Conversely, however, there were universities where collaboration proceeds smoothly. Some universities with experience in collaboration responded that they utilize a team-based support scheme, whereby they pursue collaboration for students requiring special consideration with not only the students' counseling office and health center but also other on-campus offices (e.g., instruction department, educational affairs department, etc.).

In cases of collaboration, it is essential that information on students to be helped be shared among the collaborating offices. However, information obtained through consultation often contains sensitive details. Students' counseling offices, in particular, are under a strict obligation to maintain confidentiality in specialized consultation; this obligation prevents them from sharing information easily. Some universities mentioned that such difficulty in sharing the information required for student assistance presents a challenge to be solved. On the other hand, other universities reported that they had achieved a certain level of consensus on job-placement support for students who face difficulty, and that they were attempting to proceed with some information sharing while also abiding by confidentiality obligations. It is anticipated that if a certain level of consensus on support can be cultivated—e.g., by making it a goal to ensure that as many students as possible can achieve prospective future careers—some sharing of the information that tends to be shut up in individual offices will become available.

■ Off-campus collaboration

Looking at off-campus job-placement support resources used by career centers, the most common was “Hello Work” offices (public employment security offices). With the exception of one university, 16 of the universities targeted in the survey said that they receive so-called “job supporters (consultants for supporting job search)” dispatched from Hello Work offices onto their grounds and utilize them primarily to offer job information in personal consultations. Some universities responded that there are benefits to having students contact job openings with various skill levels through Hello Work when some of the students do not always meet the requirements of job openings coming directly into the university. Some universities stated the experience of using the disability support division of the local Hello Work office; however, some also reported that, in such cases, the career center did not approach such division directly but rather through the students’ counseling office or health office.

Additionally, a number of universities reported that they use Regional Support Station for Youth, which is one of youth employment support organizations governed and outsourced by the ministry. However, some universities reported that when the nearest support station was inconveniently located, students have difficulty in going all the way there on their own, which shows another challenge to be solved in terms of easy access. Additionally, collaboration between disability support organizations and non-disability support organizations was also reported.

(4) Support for unemployed graduates, graduates who left jobs very early, and dropouts

When we asked about their support for unemployed graduates and graduates who left jobs very early, all of the surveyed universities responded that they accept requests for personal consultations in exactly the same manner for graduates as for currently enrolled students. The fact that continuing support is available is publicized on websites and at graduation ceremonies. Many responses stated that no particular time limits are set on availability. On the other hand, some responses pointed out that students who did not

use the career center frequently during their enrollment ultimately remained hesitant to contact after graduation. Some universities reported that they provide matching services to unemployed graduates and graduates who left jobs very early with the job openings that have been sent to the university and are still available to graduates and with the notices of emergency recruitment offers coming from companies. However, some universities reported that they do not receive information on job offers that are suitable for graduates who have been out of school for two or three years. They stated that, while they will accept requests for consultation from such graduates, they generally recommend that the graduates use a Hello Work office to find job openings.

As for factors leading up to early turnover from employment, in some cases graduates did not sufficiently examine the information on their company during their job-hunting activities during enrollment, and in other cases the graduates happened to obtain an informal job offer from a company which new graduates have been hired easily because of personnel shortage but later found that the company was not where they wanted to work. Some universities reported that if a graduate leaves his or her company on the first day of work or within a few days of the first day, a career center staff member visits the company to apologize for early turnover as soon as the center learns of this fact. In many cases, it is difficult for a career center to ascertain the individual facts of graduates’ early turnovers. Although career centers want graduates to contact them to receive consultation before leaving employment, in actuality many graduates leave employment without notifying the center. Some universities reported that they can learn about graduates’ turnovers through research seminar professors.

When we asked about support for dropouts, in the sense of receiving requests for consultations from students who have already left university or students who intend to leave university, 14 of the 17 universities responded that they had never received such a request at the career centers. Thus, many universities viewed those students as being removed from those eligible for career center support. Although some universities responded that they are prepared to accept requests for consultations from dropouts should they

want them, the reality is that current career centers are in an environment that makes it difficult to provide career support to dropouts and students who plan to drop out. The biggest reason for this is that the job offers that come into university career centers require students to be eligible for university graduation, and thus the students who plan to drop out cannot apply for them. On the other hand, some responses suggested that students who drop out want to take another career path. Their mental familiarity with the university becomes lower and it is unlikely that they will want to keep a relationship with the career center. Another possible reason is the fact that no opportunities exist for direct contact between students who plan to drop out and the career center within the process for settling withdrawals from enrollment in most universities. Because dropping out implies “discontinuing studies,” it is handled by such offices as the instruction department, university affairs department, or students’ affairs office and becomes a process whereby the final decision on whether withdrawal will be accepted or denied is entrusted to the faculty or dean. Given this, there is little room to consider support for post-withdrawal living (particularly in terms of employment). On the other hand, a number of universities said that their career center has received requests for consultation from students who are considering dropping out. Accordingly, it is thought that, at present, it is difficult for career centers to provide consultation on withdrawal from enrollment or post-withdrawal living unless the student personally brings up the subject.

(5) Addendum: Characteristics seen in universities with a low percentage of undecided graduates

Finally, as an addendum, we gathered characteristics that were commonly seen in the universities with a low percentage of undecided graduates (five universities in total) from among all the universities we surveyed. We conducted the survey for the purpose of exploring common characteristics among all of the targeted universities, not for the purpose of comparing their percentages of undecided graduates or their university size. However, among the various initiatives and examples that we heard about, there were

some excellent ones that we believe were definitely possible because the universities have low percentages of undecided graduates. For this reason, we decided to gather characteristics that, despite being still only hypothetical in nature, were commonly seen in the five universities here as an addendum.

■ Influence of students’ temperament, job-placement support scheme in university, and “university tradition”

Students’ temperament in the mentioned universities seems helpful for keeping the good quality of the services provided by the career center. They described students as “compliant,” “quiet,” “of a good disposition,” “earnest,” and “accepting of advice.” This suggests that, from the standpoint of support providers, the mentioned universities have many students likely to be supported by the career center and to be encouraged to use it.

Another characteristic was that the job-placement support scheme in university was cooperative and proactive and very much reflected the intentions of the president. Some of the universities had an environment founded on a tradition that made it easy to build a job-placement support scheme for students. For example, there were universities that emphasize matching functions—specifically, by sending students who had been preselected on the basis of the university’s own standard and instructed such as business manners etc. by the career center to specific companies—and that make great efforts to develop relationships with companies that will offer jobs to such students. At a university that offers specialist job-oriented courses, academic staffs have personal experiences benefitting from earnest job-placement support. Thus the university had a tradition whereby providing earnest job-placement support is simply a matter of course.

Another university mentioned that it has an on-campus scheme that provides impeded support for students who have difficulty in employment. The scheme has a close collaborative relationship with concerned university departments, which offers the advantages of making full support for students with difficulties possible while simultaneously allowing the career center to also focus on job-placement support

for ordinary students.

■ Characteristics of faculty composition and location

Second, there is the possibility that the characteristics of faculty composition lead to the successful result of students' obtaining job offers. For example, at a university with faculties focused on specialized fields, many students enter with a clear picture of their post-graduation career path and a strong sense of purpose. This allows the career center to provide careful and personal job-placement support only to those students who cannot obtain job offers on their own. Additionally, one university in a certain specialized field responded that students with developmental disorders tend not to want to study in that field. Consequently, the university has not had the opportunity to provide special job-placement support for students with such disorders and has thus never experienced struggling to provide them with support.

There was also a university that responded that it has a locational advantage. Specifically, a lack of other four-year universities in the neighborhood means that it leads to no or few competition to obtain job offers for university graduates. As a result, only few students are left without a specific career path forward at the time of graduation.

3-3 Discussion

(1) Classification of students targeted for support at university career centers

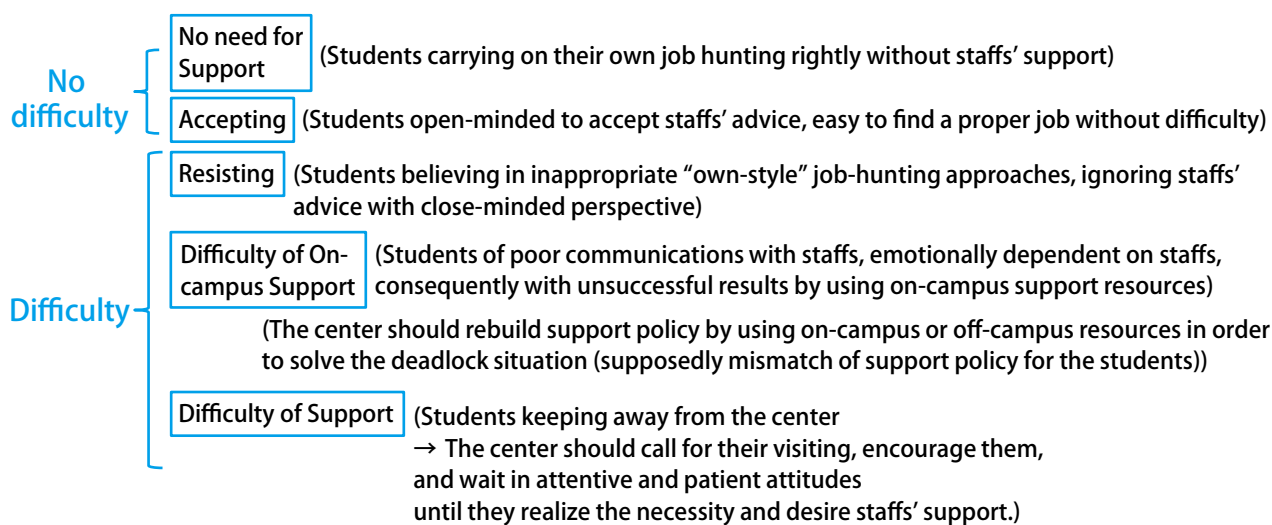
Using the details of the survey described above as a basis, the author attempted to classify students who are targeted for support by university career centers in accordance with the degrees of difficulty based on support providers' experiences.

Figure III-29 shows our classification of students who do not have salient symptoms or traits resembling developmental disability on the basis of support difficulty. The upper two types are groupings of students who show little difficulty in terms of job-hunting activities and job-placement support. The first is the "no need for support" grouping. It is comprised of students who can carry on their own job-hunting activities rightly and then obtain informal job offers successfully. In general, the job-hunting activities of

these students will be settled without the career center's support. The other is the "accepting" grouping. It is comprised of students who are open-minded to accept the career center's support or advice with earnestness, conducting smooth job-hunting activities, and consequently obtaining informal job offers successfully.

On the other hand, the lower three types of Figure III-29 are groupings of students who present more difficulty in terms of job-hunting activities and job-placement support. One is the "resisting" grouping. In contrast to the "accepting" grouping, students here intentionally do not accept staff members' advice, engage in job-hunting in their own way, and do not attempt to make corrections even if going in the wrong direction. However, these students are using the career center, and thus the difficulty they present is not as high as that of the remaining two types. In fact, the possibility exists that the students will overcome their difficulty by gaining a lot of job-hunting experience and recognizing desirable behaviors or attitudes for the immediate success in the job-hunting activities. Next is the "Difficulty of on-campus support" grouping. The students in this grouping do visit the career center. However, they do not communicate well with the staffs (in some cases due to malfunction in interpersonal relations) and do not fully comprehend their advice. As a result, support enters a stagnated state because, among other reasons, the staffs have no choice but to wait until the student gets matured mentally and recognizes the desire to solve the current problem. This grouping also includes students who tend to become dependent excessively on staffs. It is thought that students within it can receive only limited benefit through the current support scheme alone, and that improving the support's effectiveness will be difficult unless some sort of off-campus support or stimulation comes into play. The "Difficulty of support" grouping includes students who do not respond to various approaches from the career center, such as telephone calls and e-mail. Even if they do not use the career center, some part of the students may not be a major problem if they can engage in job-hunting and obtain informal job offers on their own. On the other hand, when students demonstrate little intention to search jobs earnestly even as

Figure III-29 Classifications of Students Targeted for Support from the Standpoint of Support Providers (Ordinary Students)



graduation approaches and do not feel a need to receive support from the career center, the career center's only option is to continue using various means to approach and encourage them. In such cases the connection between students and the career center tends to terminate after graduation. When students in this grouping graduate without employment, they fall into the category of young people who have difficulty in finding employment, which implies one of the targets to be handled in labor policy.

(2) Future challenges

Through this survey, we investigated the actual circumstances of job-placement support provided by universities having various characteristics. Looking at the present situation, it is clear that many universities have a cooperative scheme for job-placement support, that academic staffs' understanding of support has progressed, and that the quality of support is improving as a whole. Here, however, we wish to present some challenges that were revealed through the survey.

First, there is the possibility that support for students who have difficulty in job-hunting activities can be further advanced by utilizing approaches from off-campus organizations (for example, Hello Work offices). For students of the "Difficulty of on-campus

support" grouping whose on-campus support situation has become stagnated, it is possible that outside stimulation—in the form of involvement by job supporters (consultants for supporting job search) or counselors from Hello Work offices or outside organizations, for instance—will improve things in a positive direction. The same methods can apply to support for students who have traits resembling developmental disability. Even when there are scarce resources inside universities to provide proper support for such students about job hunting activities, they can overcome the difficult situation by gaining the support of personnel from outside organizations who have plenty of experience supporting job-hunting activities of such people. Additionally, the personnel of outside organizations that visit the university can play a role as interpersonal "hubs" that can refer the university to other experts in the community. Thus they can integrate the human resources of experts that work in various offices individually throughout the area and, as a result, make job-placement support resources in the university and its surroundings more abundant.

Secondly, it will be important to further promote the sharing of job-placement support-related information within the university. Among the universities that were surveyed, there were cases in which a campus-wide scheme exists to support students who have

difficulty in university enrollment (or job-hunting activities), regardless of defined diagnosis of disability, by providing team support based on the sharing of some information with multiple offices in the university. Such an approach could be applied not only to university enrollment but also to job-placement support. A problem that arises here is the sharing of sensitive information; namely, consultation records. Consultation records are subject to confidentiality obligations, and naturally those obligations must be observed. On the other hand, however, should every single piece of information in consultation records be treated as confidential? This is almost certainly not the case. As a means of resolving problems associated with success in obtaining a proper job offer, it would probably be more advantageous for students to have a framework in place whereby only the information needed for job-placement support is carefully extracted from consultation records, with students' cooperation and consent, and then utilized to tighten collaboration within the university. Proactive approaches from the university president are the most effective way of improving the current situation of sharing information among offices and departments. However, it is also likely that simply sharing awareness of the current situation among concerned offices and departments in the university will be able to work well. To make the job-placement support in universities well-designed in the future, proactive sharing information that is based on full consideration for the issues involved must be promoted.

4. General Consideration

In this paper, we have reported on the actual circumstance of job-placement support provided to students by career centers and the current status of support for students who have difficulty in job-hunting activities, with primary focus on universities. The report's content is based on results that we obtained from a large-scale questionnaire survey and an interview survey of some university samples.

University career centers have a responsibility to help all students affiliated with the university find employment. We found that career centers provide collective-style guidance for all students and, at the

same time, provide careful individualized guidance—ranging from invitation to the center to interview training—to certain students who grapple with difficulties in finding employment. They make full use of their limited personnel resources to provide distinctive support derived from their university's unique characteristics. On the other hand, there were many instances in which the degree to which services can be made is limited within the on-campus career center framework. Overcoming such limitation requires unimpeded collaboration among academic staffs, the student counseling office, and Hello Work and other external employment support organizations. However, it became clear that the degree to which multiple local resources have been integrated depends on the earnestness for employment support shared among them or on the geographical local area where the individual resources are likely to gather and collaborate. Among the surveyed universities, there were some for which improvement in this area should lead to achieving even higher quality of job-placement support.

Although employment as a regular worker remains the main career path taken by new university graduates, an irreversible trend exists whereby a certain percentage of graduates enter the workforce as non-regular workers. Amid this social trend, the question of how career centers will support students' lifelong career development as their "starting point" has gained importance, and it is believed that the roles of career centers will become even more significant going forward. If career centers are to provide job-placement support services of even higher quality, achieving unimpeded collaboration with human resources in their periphery (specifically, academic staffs, the on-campus counseling office, and outside employment support organizations) will hold the key, as there is a limit to what can be achieved by merely expanding their functions quantitatively; for example, by increasing their staff numbers. Political support from the national government should improve the career centers' capabilities and, by extension, increase the number of young people capable of playing useful roles in society.

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