

University Programs and Careers

English translation:

I: Rutendo, is it possible to do any program you want at a Zimbabwean university? For example, here in the US, if you want to become a doctor you just don't go straight to medical school. Can you explain the differences in choosing degrees?

R: Yes, it's very different. In Zimbabwe if you want to become a doctor, it's different from what happens here in the US. [You] do an undergraduate program for four years, and then go to medical school. In Zimbabwe as soon as you finish Advanced Level (Form 6) you go straight to medical school for five years, then do housemanship for three years. So that is one difference. If you are here in the US, because of the liberal arts way of college education, you have about a year or two to find out what exactly you'd like to do in life. In Zimbabwe once you get your Advanced Level Results and start looking for a place in university, you actually have to know what degree you want to do and right from the first day of the your first semester you take classes that are specific to your degree. Here I have a chance to spend a year trying to figure out what exactly will make a better career for me.

I: So in Zimbabwe are you given a chance to choose your major, or you're given a major?

R: It differs. When you go to the university to apply, you have to make a choice. For example at the University of Zimbabwe they ask you to choose three degree programs in order of your preferred choice. However the program you get will depend on how many people requested for the same program and how well you did for Advanced Level. For example if you want to go to medical school, they will consider how well you did in Advanced Level Chemistry and Mathematics. If you want to do an engineering program they will look at the quality of your Advanced Level Physics grade. So if the quality of your Advanced Level grades doesn't equal the program you want, they will give you a program that they think will be more suitable for you. But if you did well, you will get the degree program you applied for.

I: Okay, I see. So now for our last question on this topic: Ropafadzo, do you think that tertiary education is valued in Zimbabwe? Also how many people have access to university education after high school?

P: Thank you. I think tertiary education is valued in Zimbabwe, but not everyone has access to it. The reason is that few people have enough money to pay for tertiary education. If you look at recent surveys, they show that a lot of children in the country have no access to primary or secondary education, let alone tertiary education, due to lack of funds or teachers. Because of this, the probability of someone going to university is now lower. Secondly, of late, the importance of going to university is not evident

because those who went to university and those who didn't are not different in terms of getting a job because of the state of the economy.

I: Oh as in whether you went to university or not, you end up getting the same job?

P: Yes.

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