

KNUST POLICY 0007

Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi

Ethics POLICY



ETHICS POLICY



KWAME NKURUMAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE
AND TECHNOLOGY, KUMASI-GHANA
**QUALITY ASSURANCE AND
PLANNING UNIT**

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FORWARD

The Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi has a mission to advance knowledge in science and technology through creating an environment for undertaking relevant research, quality teaching, entrepreneurship training and community engagement to improve the quality of life. In order to achieve this mission, there is the need to have Ethics Policy.

The rationale of this policy is to provide a document that will set the standard of behaviour for all members of the KNUST community with regards to ethical and morale issues as part of quality improvement.

The University is grateful to all those who ensured the initiation, development and approval of this Policy.

PROFESSOR K. OBIRI-DANSO

VICE-CHANCELLOR

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

As part of the strategic planning mandate of the Quality Assurance and Planning Unit (QAPU), university policies are initiated and proposed for approval by the Academic Board. The Unit therefore, initiated Health and Safety Policy which was approved by the Academic Board.

The QAPU is grateful to Prof. Samuel Nii Odai and Paul Kwadwo Addo for the draft of this Policy. We are equally indebted to all staff who helped to edit and review it.

Lastly, we wish to appreciate the contribution of all staff of this University who contributed in several ways for the development and approval of this Policy.

PROF. CHRISTIAN AGYARE

HEAD, QAPU

AUGUST, 2018

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POLICY RATIONALE

KNUST recognises that it has an obligation to all its stakeholders to observe and maintain high ethical standards in all transactions. The rationale of this policy is to provide a document that will set the standard of behaviour for all members of the KNUST community with regards to ethical and morale issues as part of quality improvement.

POLICY BACKGROUND

The KNUST has operated as an institution with various principles that have been enacted in various documents in the form of Records. This document is developed to serve as a comprehensive guideline for ethical issues.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following principles shall guide this policy:

- i. **Excellence:** This principle shall be adhered to, in order to ensure that the university attains the highest academic and service excellence.
- ii. **Diversity:** The principle of diversity shall be adhered to, in order to ensure that people of different backgrounds and opinions can make inputs into the growth of the university.
- iii. **Equal Rights:** This principle shall also guide this policy and ensure that all people are treated equally and without discrimination under all laws of Ghana and the statutes of this university.
- iv. **Integrity:** This principle is to ensure that all students and staff have the highest sense of integrity in all that they do.
- v. **Stewardship:** The principle of stewardship shall be adhered to for effective and efficient use of resources for higher productivity.

The standards and processes spelt out in this policy attempt to embody and give life to the principles stated above. In turn, these standards and

processes will foster responsible ethical behaviour, to the extent that we commit ourselves to the principles.

COMMUNITIES/STAKEHOLDERS SERVED BY THE UNIVERSITY

The University serves the following communities/stakeholders: *students, staff, corporate and government partners, research partners and collaborators, the global academic community, and society at large.* The university's responsibilities to these stakeholders form the basis of this ethics policy.

- 1. Students:** KNUST seeks to offer a rewarding experience to all students to support their future careers and aspirations. In this attempt, it seeks to produce high quality graduates while giving value for money. All programmes are developed with the fundamental philosophy of transmitting up-to-date and relevant knowledge and skills to students for personal development. In alignment with its mission, KNUST seeks to develop ethical scientific leaders and innovators who will serve their people. KNUST's obligation does not end with graduation, but extends to its alumni as well.
- 2. University members:** The University seeks to rationally meet the needs of all its staff members, thus enabling all Senior Members, Senior Staff and Junior Staff, to contribute their expertise towards the development of the University without any hindrance.
- 3. Corporate and Government Partners:** The University seeks to meet the needs of its corporate and government partners, as sponsors or employers of our students, as well as suppliers of products and services upon which our productivity depends. The university aims to produce technically competent and adaptable graduates who as innovators and problem-solvers will contribute to the progress of their organisations in an ethical and responsible fashion. KNUST expects and delivers value, good service and fair treatment in all its business transactions.

4. **Research Partners and Collaborators:** The University seeks to bring its full capabilities to its research programmes for all partners and collaborators, in both the public and private sectors. KNUST seeks to generate and apply new knowledge in the service of national development as it strives to attain leadership in innovation and technology.
5. **Global Academic Community:** The University recognises its responsibility to the global academic community to aspire for excellence and contribute wherever possible to its development.
6. **Society at Large:** The University seeks to fulfil its commitment to the Ghanaian community and to contribute wherever possible to the development of these communities.

POLICY PRIORITY AREAS

1. **Professional Conduct:** All members of the University shall seek to conduct their work thoroughly and professionally for the benefit of all the communities/stakeholders that the University seeks to serve. More importantly, all staff (Senior Members, Senior Staff and Junior Staff) shall not claim knowledge, competence or qualifications that they do not possess and they shall take every precaution to ensure that their views are not subject to misrepresentation. Staff and students shall undertake teaching and learning, research and enterprise activities in accordance with established good practice in their areas of specialisation.

Professional attitudes like, attendance to duty, providing feedback to students and receiving same from students, transparency in grading, financial integrity, good customer service, etc. are encouraged.

2. **Research:** Ethical conduct of research demands respect for the rights of others directly or indirectly affected by the research. For human participants, both their physical and personal sovereignty should be respected. However, whilst it is recognised that much scientific research involving the use

of human participants may, by their very nature, conceal from participants the true purpose of the enquiry or experiment, this concealment should be at the minimum level essential for the conduct of that research.

While it is recognised that there is a continuum of covert-overt research and enterprise whereby the person carrying out the research and enterprise is required to keep the content of the research and enterprise to him/herself, the person(s) carrying out the research and enterprise should endeavour, wherever possible and practicable, to avoid the use of deception in their research and enterprise.

The anonymity and privacy of participants in research and enterprise should be respected. Personal information relating to participants must be held in a confidential and secure place.

Research and enterprise should avoid involving intrusive or invasive procedures on animals and must avoid suffering of any kind to the animals. The person carrying out the research and enterprise must ensure that proper husbandry practices are followed and that they show respect for animals as fellow sentient beings. In addition, the environment must not be destroyed just for the sake of generating data for publication. Where environmental degradation or eco-balance will be affected, a proper permit should be sought from the appropriate Authority/Agency and related organisations.

All Scientific research involving members of the University especially those dealing with human subjects must have the approval of the **KNUST Research Ethics Oversight Committee (KREOC)**.

- 3. Teaching and Learning:** All teaching staff must bring all knowledge to the design, delivery and assessment of all teaching programmes. Through scholarly inquiry, including instruction and classroom discussion, we must encourage love of learning, to overcome ignorance, to foster a rigorous examination of ideas, and to transmit knowledge. Due to our commitment to a culture of excellence, conscious acts of deceit, particularly in

academic activities, such as plagiarism, cheating, fabrication and forgery which undermine the university's credibility and integrity are generally treated as grave offenses. Members of the University are to guard against such acts.

All staff must assess fairly and honestly all students and give honest feedback to students concerning their progress.

- 4. Accountability:** The concept of accountability is part of our value of integrity and stewardship of resources. This requires that budgeting and administrative decision-making must be a consultative and transparent process. Teaching staff, administrative staff and other professional staff covered by collective agreement are accountable for the performance of their duties and responsibilities as defined in the relevant collective agreements. Students are accountable for the obligations enjoined upon them in the Students' Handbook. All University members are accountable for their conduct towards one another.

It is expected that accountability and stewardship of resources will transcend from misuse of University resources to the use of University time. Members of the University should ensure that University time and other resources are used only for the University's defined purposes, and not misapplied for personal gain.

- 5. External grants:** The University's financial accounting and the internal audit systems are rigorously designed to check and control misapplication and misappropriation of funds. Therefore, all funds and grants brought into the university through individual or group efforts will be subjected to the same scrutiny and financial controls.
- 6. Students-Students Relations:** The University shall ensure that students shall be cordial; and any student found to pose a threat to other students would be appropriately sanctioned. In cases of students who are victimised and subjected to unfair treatment, the University shall offer the necessary support

in terms of counselling and and/or investigations by the Ghana Police.

7. **Staff-Staff Relations:** The University seeks to foster a collegial professional relationship among staff in the administration of the university. Collegiality is integral to the identity of the university; therefore it is committed to collegial decision making through representative collegial bodies, such as departments, faculties and colleges. Collegiality also deeply and extensively influences all activities of administrators, professionals, faculty, staff and students. The extent to which the University is able to promote responsible – even exemplary conduct depends on its capacity to foster a lively sense of collegiality. The overarching principle is respect for each other; therefore the use of force and pressure on subordinates is discouraged.
8. **Staff-Student Relations:** In the pursuit of our value of Culture of Excellence, students are expected to be conscientious in all their work and activities, in exercising their rights, and in providing useful input to the faculties on the quality of courses and teaching. Students own their intellectual work to the degree of their own contributions. However, they should not restrict access to the data to faculty or others who helped to generate them. In case of publications generated from the supervision of a student’s work, decision on the first author should be mutually agreed upon, taking into consideration any financial support provided by the supervisor during the research. Otherwise, the students should simply be made the first author especially when substantial amount of work in the write up has been carried out by the student. (*Refer to Section 2.1.3 of the KNUST Intellectual Property Policy for details*).

Staff-Student relation shall be mainly professional. Any acts of exploitation and victimisation shall be dealt with within the College, first by the Head of Department and when necessary referred to the Provost’s office.

9. **Sexual Harassment:** Sexual harassment is discriminatory, unlawful and will not be tolerated at KNUST.

Sexual harassment may involve the behaviour of a person of the opposite sex, and occurs when such behaviour constitutes unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favors, and other unwelcome verbal or physical behaviour of a sexual nature where:

- Submission to such conduct is made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's education or employment;
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for academic or employment decisions affecting the individual's welfare; or
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's welfare, academic or work performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile, offensive education or work environment.

Examples of Sexual Harassment: Acts that constitute sexual harassment take a variety of forms. Examples of the kinds of conduct that may constitute sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:

- Unwelcome sexual propositions, invitations, solicitations, and flirtations.
- Threats or insinuations that a person's employment, wages, academic grade, promotional opportunities, classroom or work assignments or other conditions of employment or academic life may be adversely affected by not submitting to sexual advances.
- Unwelcome verbal expressions of a sexual nature, including graphic sexual commentaries about a person's body, dress, appearance, or sexual activities; the unwelcome use of sexually degrading language, jokes or innuendoes; unwelcome suggestive or insulting sounds or whistles; obscene phone calls.

- Sexually suggestive objects, pictures, videotapes, audio recordings, computer communications, or literature placed in the work or study area that may embarrass or offend individuals.
- Unwelcome and inappropriate touching, patting, pinching, or obscene gestures.
- Consensual sexual relationships where such relationships lead to favoritism of a student or subordinate employee with whom the instructor or superior is sexually involved and where such favoritism adversely affects other students and/or employees.

KNUST adheres to the principles and traditions of academic freedom, and recognizes that these freedoms must be in balance with the rights of others, including the right of individuals not to be sexually harassed. It is understood that the principles of academic freedom permit topics of all types, including those with sexual content, to be part of courses, lectures, and other academic pursuits. Materials with sexual content that are used or displayed in an educational setting should be related to educational purposes.

Sexual Harassment need not be intentional. Under KNUST sexual harassment policies, the intent of the person who is alleged to have behaved improperly is not relevant to determining whether a violation of KNUST's policy has occurred. The relevant determination is whether a reasonable person could have interpreted the alleged behaviour to be sexual. The University seeks to create a peaceful and cordial atmosphere devoid of sexual harassment of any form. The University abhors all forms and manifestations of sexual harassment and will take the necessary steps to correct the situation. Sanctions will however be applied where appropriate when the complaint or allegation of sexual harassment is established.

10. University-Public Relations: The University seeks to communicate with a single voice its intents and purposes with clarity and without any ambiguity. Therefore it has resourced

and mandated the University Relations Office to undertake all such communications on behalf of the University. Such communications also include information published on the University website and University serials, like the Recorder.

- 11. Conflict of Interest/Commitment:** Many University members are extended considerable discretion over the use of their work time. This could lead to apparent or potential conflict of commitment situations from time to time.

All university staff and fellowship-holders are expected to make a full-time commitment to the University, and are not to hold any other full time remuneration positions. However, they may hold other part-time remuneration positions, as specific collective agreements allow, if these can be performed without compromising their ability to perform their duties and responsibilities in keeping with expected standards.

- 12. Support Service:** In the delivery of all service in support of the work of KNUST, all staff must endeavour to seek at all times prompt quality services to all our clients. Our clients must receive value for money in our service delivery. All staff must project at all times a very good image of KNUST.

- 13. Consultancy:** All staff who offer consultancy and advice must do so within the area of the consultant's knowledge and field of expertise. Staff must at all times respect clients' confidentiality, and unless expressly permitted by the client must not divulge any information about them to a third party. Details of commitments, responsibilities and rights should as much as possible always be spelt out in a MOU or a contract between the two parties to avoid any potential future conflict. Consultants should especially agree on the use of data arising from any consultancy or contract work, prior to start of the work. Permission to engage in part-time consulting, professional and other work-related activities shall be obtained from the Vice-Chancellor or Provost where appropriate.

IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISM

The Quality Assurance and Planning Unit and the various Quality Assurance Teams in the Colleges and the various Units will play an active role in sensitising all stakeholders (staff, students, customers, etc.) about this policy and the need to adhere to these values. Workshops will be organised in this direction for all categories of staff where deemed necessary. The principles defined herein apply to all activities, however, there are areas where more detailed ethical principles and practices have been set out. Some of these are the Students Handbook, KNUST HIV/AIDS Policy, Research Policy, etc.

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW OF THE POLICY

The implementation of this policy will be evaluated every two years against performance measures that will include:

- Employer satisfaction
- Student satisfaction
- Staff satisfaction
- Satisfaction of other communities served by the University

The University's performance in these areas will be benchmarked internally and externally against comparable international institutions.

The policy shall be reviewed every five (5) years and when necessary in line with other policies of the University.

ALIGNMENT WITH OTHER POLICIES

The QUAPU shall monitor the implementation of the Ethics policy to ensure that it is in alignment with other policies. QUAPU shall ensure that the Actions and Strategies of this policy do not conflict with other policies of the University.

WHEN NOT SURE

One can use the following quick test to decide on actions to take with respect to all issues that have not been explicitly stated in this document:

- Is the action legal?
- Shall I be proud of it?
- Will I feel bad about it?
- Does it comply with the University's core values?
- How will it look to my friends and family?
- How will it look in the Media?

If you know it's wrong don't do it. If you're not sure, ask and keep asking until you get an answer that enables you to answer the questions above to your satisfaction.

GLOSSARY

- **CHEATING:** Any act dishonestly or unfairly done in order to gain advantage.
- **CONSULTANCY:** An engagement of a professional by other person(s) or entities where his/her expertise is used.
- **COUNSELLING:** Counselling takes place when a counsellor sees a client in private and confidential setting to explore a difficulty that the client has, or distress the client may be experiencing or perhaps the client's dissatisfaction with life, or loss of a sense of direction and purpose. It is always at the request of the client as no one can properly be 'sent' for counselling.
- **ETHICS:** Norms for conduct that distinguish between an acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.
- **EXPLOITATION:** The action or fact of treating someone unfairly in order to benefit from their work.

- **FABRICATION:** Any attempt to lie in order to get undue advantage of a process/**to invent false information in order to trick people.**
- **FACULTY:** All staff of the University employed for the main purpose of teaching and research.
- **FORGERY:** It involves a false document, signature, or other imitation of an object of value used with the intent to deceive another. Put differently it is the process of making, adapting or imitating objects, statistics or documents with the intent to deceive.
- **PLAGIARISM:** The production or appropriation of someone else's work without the proper attribution.
- **SEXUAL HARASSMENT:** Unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favour and other verbal or physical conduct of sexual nature when submission to or rejection of this conduct explicitly or implicitly affects an individual's employment, unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.
- **SEXUAL MISCONDUCT:** Is defined to mean any misconduct of sexual nature between a person of authority and subordinate. It encompasses a range of behaviours used to obtain sexual gratification against another's will or at the expense of another.
- **STUDENT:** All categories of junior members undertaking various programmes of study.
- **UNIVERSITY STAFF:** All categories of staff appointed by the University to perform a function or duty. They include: Senior Members, Senior Staff and Junior Staff.
- **VICTIMISATION:** The act of punishing or threatening to punish someone or discrimination against someone.

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