Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi

Mentorship
POLICY

MENTORSHIP
POLICY

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

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 a Mentoring Policy

This policy discusses the University's approach to mentoring. It seeks to provide mentors and mentees with a framework and practical guidance to support the process.

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 initiated the Mentoring Policy which was approved by the Academic Board.

The QAPU is grateful to the Prof. F. T. Awuah's committee for the draft of the Mentoring Policy and also the members of various committees that reviewed it. We are equally indebted to the staff of QAPU who facilitated the entire process.

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Prof. Christian Agyare
HEAD, QAPU
APRIL, 2018

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1.0 Introduction

The Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) was founded to provide higher education with special reference to science and technology and to act as a catalyst for the technological development of the country. The University seeks to do this by hiring competent, experienced and motivated staff and retaining them to fulfil its mandate. Having been in existence for a little over half a century, the University is confronted with challenges including engaging competent and qualified faculty, development of staff's capacity and retaining experienced staff.

The University has grown over the years in terms of both staff and student population. The number of academic programmes has also increased significantly. Considering the fact that new senior members, who are relatively young and without much experience, are being routinely engaged, it is important to provide such staff with effective support and guidance to integrate them effectively into the University through mentoring. This policy document discusses the University's approach to mentoring. It seeks to provide mentors and mentees with a framework and practical guidance to support the process.

2.0 Types of Mentorship

Mentoring is an appropriate vehicle for promoting professional development of novice professionals or staff in higher education institutions. Blackwell (1989) defined mentoring as "a process by which persons of special rank, special achievements and prestige instruct, counsel, guide and facilitate the intellectual and/or career development of persons identified as protégés". The mentor-protégé relationship helps the agency reach its goal while facilitating the career and professional development of both parties (Kram, 1985).

Generally, mentoring can be categorized into two; informal or natural (unstructured) and formal (structured). Mentoring may also have a blend of elements of both structured and unstructured methods. Informal or natural mentoring has existed throughout the ages. In this

type of mentoring common interests are discovered and a relationship is developed, where the more experienced person provides unofficial intermediary assistance to the less experienced person (Redmond, 1990). Although this form of mentoring is ideal, many faculty and/or novice professionals are not privy to such relationships or privileges. Natural mentoring takes place among persons who feel comfortable with each other.

Formal mentoring develops when there is executive commitment for it and advocates are ready to argue for such a scheme. A formal mentoring programme extends the mentoring experience to those who may not readily find informal mentors or who would not otherwise consider it. A formal mentoring scheme, unlike the informal type, has a clear rationale, measurable goals and outcomes, mechanisms for assessment, selection of mentors and mentees, accountability etc., since the institutions monitor the results.

3.0 Rationale of the Policy

Work in higher education in general has become more diversified and complex requiring astute teachers, managers and administrators. As with other organizations, KNUST has experienced substantial and rapid change in a period characterized by financial constraint, increased student and staff population with high staff/student ratio, among others. These conditions highlight the importance of strong teaching and management skills within the University setup. Academics, when promoted, are often confronted with significant skills gaps in their move from technical (lecturing/research) roles to management and leadership roles. University administration is also increasingly becoming professionalism and this is placing demands on universities to enhance the professional skills of its future managers and administrators. Perhaps more importantly, the hitherto unrecognized trajectories of power within workplaces have been identified, and attention drawn to those who through gender, race or other reasons may not have equal access to informal mentoring. In this scenario formal/structured mentoring can provide a significant means of remedying the situation.

This policy therefore provides some guidelines for the development of the human resources of the University. It is aimed at providing effective guides for mentoring of new/inexperienced staff in the University in the areas of teaching, research and administration, with the view to improving staff performance and, thereby, projecting the overall image of the University.

4.0 Policy Goals and Objectives

The overall goal of the policy is to empower new and continuing faculty by supporting their professional growth, renewal and development. It also seeks to promote faculty satisfaction through dialectical relationship with peers and senior faculty that can foster a sense of community.

The specific objectives of the policy are as follows:

i.   To facilitate the promotion of new faculty by thoroughly explaining the university's tenure and promotion systems;

ii. To provide opportunity for interactions between junior and senior faculty to foster mutual respect and avoid counterproductive divisions between old and young professors;

iii. To provide a platform for the introduction and discussion of the organisational structure and culture, good practices and values of the University;

iv. To help identify development needs and opportunities of faculty;

v.   To provide access to networks or contacts for academic development;

vi. To enable new staff to understand the functions, philosophy and purposes of the departments or Academic Groups in which they are working; and

vii. To support the professional development of mentees within their specific areas of expertise.

5.0 Guiding Principles

KNUST shall at all levels be guided by the following principles:

i.   KNUST shall use mentoring as a tool to develop its human resources;

ii. Staff and the University Management Team shall be committed to the mentoring programme;

iii. Quality assurance shall be the bedrock of the management, delivery and assessment of mentoring activities;

iv. Every action of the mentoring process would be informed by ethical consideration and best practices;

v.   The Mentoring scheme shall endeavour to meet the development needs and choices of all staff, taking into account individual differences and circumstances;

vi. Measures shall be taken at all levels of the mentoring programme to ensure equity in gender, disability, discipline of study, availability of resources and opportunities;

vii. Mentors shall be expected to demonstrate sensitivity to potentially different challenges faced by diverse faculty;

viii. Conflict of interest should be minimized, confidentiality protected, and mentors/mentees provided with an environment in which they can address concerns without fear of retribution;

ix. Excellence in mentoring shall be recognized by KNUST; and

x.   Evaluation shall be incorporated into the design of the mentoring programme to maximize the benefit to each individual being mentored.

6.0 The University Mentoring Scheme

Recognizing that mentoring would help the University to achieve its goals of producing a high-quality teaching and managerial staff, diversity, and a positive work environment, KNUST shall adopt a formal mentoring

scheme to ensure that as many members as possible of the University have equal opportunity to participate in it using the following:

i. KNUST shall assign a mentor to each newly appointed senior member (employee).

ii. Existing staff members taking on new responsibilities in the University shall also be assigned mentors.

iii. KNUST shall offer the opportunity to existing staff to request for a mentor as part of their continuous development.

7.0 Who Can Be a Mentor?

A mentor should ideally be a more experienced member of staff with a minimum rank of senior lecturer or its equivalent who has served for at least 10 years in the University. He or she must be committed to the University's equality and diversity principles and must have the relevant skills to support the mentoring relationship.

8.0 Responsibilities of Mentors

It is the responsibility of Mentors to help Mentees to come to their own conclusions about issues that they may be facing. Mentors shall include the following ways to conduct their mentoring roles:

i. Take proactive positions or attitudes in the mentoring process;

ii. Give the mentees the necessary attention to enable them set realistic goals;

iii. Adopt a nurturing attitude in presenting the mentee to other members of staff;

iv. Offer constructive feedback to enable the mentees bring out the potentials that they may have for professional development;

v. Do follow-ups to see whether the mentees are doing what is required of them;

vi. Build rapport with the mentees to give them some level of self-confidence;

vii. Avoid meddling in the mentee's day to day affairs;

viii. Provide appropriate advice, guidance and support to enable mentees complete their induction into their new duties or continuous professional development tasks; and

ix. Prepare annual mentoring progress reports.

9.0 Responsibilities of Mentees

The mentees shall:

i. Bear a significant part of the responsibilities for making the mentoring relationship productive and rewarding. In general, mentees should always try to be open and honest with their mentors and demonstrate respect and trust;

ii. Actively pursue the aims of the mentoring activities established in conjunction with their mentors;

iii. Take positive approaches to the relationships, and be prepared to contribute actively to the setting of agenda for the relationships;

iv. Use the mentoring experience to enhance personal and professional growth;

v. Be truthful to their mentors and open to new ideas;

vi. Be appreciative of the efforts of their mentors;

vii. Be willing to endure challenges and work hard;

viii. Be willing to accept and discuss suggestions from their mentors;

ix. Keep agreements made with mentors on regularity of meetings and communication;

x. Prepare for and participate in meetings with mentors;

xi. Keep mentors informed of progress and problems; and

xii. Ask for help or advice when necessary.

10.0 Mentorship Directorate

KNUST shall establish a mentoring Directorate. The Head of the Directorate shall not be below the level of senior lecturer (or its equivalent). The position of the Head shall be equivalent to that of a Head of Department.

11.0 Responsibilities of the Head of the Mentoring Directorate

The responsibilities of the Head of the Directorate shall include the following:

i.   Overall coordination and monitoring of the mentoring scheme, providing support, including appropriate training and guidance to mentors;

ii. Dissemination of information on the Scheme to the colleges as required;

iii. Ensure good interpersonal relationship and communication with mentors and mentees;

iv. Arrange training in consultation with Heads of Departments;

v.   Be the point of reference for questions about mentoring in KNUST;

vi. Facilitate the introduction between mentors and mentees and give short briefings to explain the principles of the mentoring policy;

vii. Conflict Resolution between mentors and mentees; and

viii. Evaluate the mentoring process

12.0 Assessment/Evaluation of Mentoring Programme

Both the Mentors and Mentees are expected to participate in regular evaluation of the programme's effectiveness. Factors to be considered in the evaluation shall include frequency of contact and the status of mentoring goals, mentee's integration with the KNUST community such as application for promotion, service to committees, intention to continue or discontinue with the Mentoring programme etc. The evaluation may also include dimensions such as:

- Quality of information shared;

- Relative comfort level enjoyed by both;

- Quality of the constructive relationship between mentor and mentee;

- On-going quality improvement;

- Degree of rapport established; and

- Availability of mentor when needed.

13.0 Gender Sensitive Mentoring

The KNUST mentoring programme shall be gender sensitive. As a formal mentoring programme, it will ensure that females, who otherwise are less likely to be in situation where informal mentoring takes place, are receiving increased opportunities for professional development.

14.0 Responsibility of Knust

KNUST shall:

i. Provide the necessary support such as sponsorship to attend workshops, seminars and conferences for mentors and mentees;

ii. Recognize the mentoring relationship existing between mentors and mentees as service to community;

iii. Provide the enabling environment for mentoring and assessment of the process;

iv. Help resolve misunderstanding between mentors and mentees when they arise; and

v. Ensure that there is orientation for new staff

15.0 Assignment of Mentees to Mentors

i. Each College shall appoint a Mentoring Coordinator to coordinate and communicate the mentoring scheme within the College for newly appointed senior members;

ii. The Coordinators shall liaise with the Mentoring Directorate in the conduct of their duties;

iii. Colleges shall ensure the maintenance of appropriate numbers of trained mentors;

iv. Requests for mentoring shall be directed to the College Mentoring Coordinators following discussions with newly appointed academic staff during their induction. The request should be supported by a completed mentee application form outlining the mentee's academic subject(s), what is required from a mentor, the mentee's main objectives and priorities and current continuous professional development activities;

v. The first meeting shall normally be arranged within a month of the mentee commencing work, and shall include a review of the induction process to date and agreement on ways of working together;

vi. It is recommended that mentors and mentees meet officially at least once a month;

vii. During meetings, mentorship progress forms shall be completed by both mentors and mentees; and

viii. If, at any time, either party wishes to end the mentoring relationship, it may be appropriate to secure an alternative mentor.

16.0   Review of the Policy

The Directorate/Committee will review the Policy, Framework and Guidance, as and when appropriate but not more than once in five years, to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness.

17.0 Implementation of the Policy

- The Policy shall be implemented at the College level with support from the Mentorship Directorate

- Heads of Departments shall identify University staff who are to be provided with mentors and assign them to suitable mentors

- Where staff request mentors, they shall normally make their request through the Heads of Departments

- It is expected that Heads of Departments will take mentoring responsibilities into account when determining staff workloads and when reviewing the performance and professional development needs of both mentors and mentees.

18.0 Inducement/ Recognition for Mentors

Each Mentor will receive a Certificate of participation at the end of each academic year. Mentors may also be motivated through formal recognition such as award of credits for service for promotions.

19.0 Duration of Mentor-Mentees Commitment

The length of mentorship commitment set forth in the Mentor Agreement Form will be two academic years. However, mentees and mentors are free to extend their relationship indefinitely. Such relationships can be considered a "career-long support system".

20.0 Training of Mentors and Mentees

Colleagues who undertake the mentoring role shall be provided with appropriate training and guidance. Workshops will be held for mentors and mentees on a regular basis.

21.0 Conclusion/Summary

The University Faculty/Professional Staff is the most valuable resource. Faculty/Staff mentoring represents the most tangible bridge to continue the tradition of excellence. The mentoring programme for new faculty at KNUST is based on the recognition that it is difficult to advance without multiple sources of support.

To better retain and revitalize our faculty, KNUST considers this as a component of its staff development programme. This mentoring policy is expected to nurture, recognize, and promote the growth of professionals and Faculty that are critical for the achievement of the mission of KNUST.

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