

KNUST POLICY 0002

Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi

Teaching and Learning POLICY



TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY



KWAME NKROMAH 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 a Policy on Teaching and Learning.

This policy seeks among others to provide the needed guidelines to ensure that the University offers innovative, demand-driven academic programmes that facilitate the acquisition of knowledge and skills to contribute to the development of the nation.

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 Teaching and Learning Policy which was approved by the Academic Board.

The QAPU is grateful to the Prof. S. A. Osei's committee for the draft of this 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.

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

PROF. CHRISTIAN AGYARE

HEAD, QAPU

AUGUST, 2018

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1. BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION

The Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) is a globally recognised university of excellence in Africa. KNUST is faced with increasing student to lecturer ratios with the current student population being about four times more than the student population a decade ago. In addition to this, new academic programmes have been introduced to meet the needs of industry. These have culminated in the emergence of some challenges including an urgent need to address plagiarism, provide more e-library resources and promote more effective teaching and learning methods among others. The goal of the Policy is to enhance Teaching and Learning activities by providing guidelines to all academic and supporting staff as well as the students of KNUST.

1.1 SCOPE OF THE POLICY

The scope of the Teaching and Learning policy includes the guiding principles for teaching and learning, objectives of the policy and corresponding strategic actions to achieve the policy objectives, support for effective teaching and learning, academic regulations, guidance and counselling services, professional development of staff, international students and support services and implementation guidelines.

2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

The KNUST Teaching and Learning policy seeks to provide the needed guidelines to ensure that the University offers innovative, demand-driven academic programmes that facilitate the acquisition of knowledge and skills to contribute to the development of the nation. The core values that have implications for the teaching and learning principles are as follows:

- **Application of technology and innovative approaches**

The University emphasizes on teaching and learning methodologies that are simultaneously varied, flexible, innovative, state-of-the-art and relevant. The reliance on modern technologies is assumed.

- **Globalization of education**

KNUST as an international University shall emphasize the importance of multi-cultural interactions among staff and students. The training should endow students with the knowledge and skills that will make them competitive in a globalized world.

- **Quality assurance and improvement**

KNUST shall maintain the highest quality of teaching and learning through intellectual inquiry/research, exploration and application, and continuous professional development of staff. In this regard, KNUST must continually strive to pursue and develop cutting edge technologies for the socio-economic development of mankind.

- **Staff-student cooperation for mutual benefits**

Effective teaching and learning depends, to a great extent, on the collaboration developed between teachers and learners. KNUST shall therefore evolve strategies to promote and improve student-staff collaboration in all aspects of education, including research.

- **Academic freedom**

KNUST's core values include the belief in "ethical and scholarly questioning in an environment that respects the rights of all to freely pursue knowledge". This means that the University is willing to accept and promote a diversity of views, beliefs and inclinations within the limits of law and order.

- **Equity and diversity**

KNUST's Teaching and Learning Policy is committed to upholding equal rights and opportunities for all staff and students without prejudice to ethnic background, religious beliefs, language, gender or any other socio-economic circumstances.

- **Lifelong learning**

Learning is a continuing process that ensures that the learner is continuously equipped with the knowledge and skills required to play a useful role in society. The Teaching and Learning policy should therefore emphasize the need for lifelong learning among students and teachers alike.

- **Academic programmes and curricula**

Academic programmes shall be clearly spelt out and thus, help students to make selections without confusion. Programmes shall, for instance, state in unambiguous terms, the requirements for progression and eventual certification.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE KNUST TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

The KNUST Teaching and Learning policy seeks to bring to fruition the University's mandate, mission and core values. The goals of the policy shall include the following:

- Equipping students/learners with the requisite knowledge, skills and attitudes to make them useful participants in development;
- Providing a congenial and satisfying environment for both teaching and learning;
- Regularly assessing teaching and learning with the aim of enhancing quality;
- Recognizing excellence in research, teaching and learning;
- Promoting critical thinking and problem-solving skills;
- Promoting entrepreneurial skills;
- Expanding the ICT infrastructure and institutionalizing its application in teaching, research and learning;
- Expanding and modernizing the physical infrastructure and facilities of the University;
- Expanding postgraduate training and research;
- Promoting gender equality; and
- Promoting peer evaluation of teaching.

3.1 STRATEGIC ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE THE TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY OBJECTIVES

The Policy shall, by implication, focus on four core areas. These are teaching and research, learning, human resource development and evaluation/assessment. In all these, innovative approaches would be key.

3.1.1 Teaching and Research

KNUST shall aim to:

- Institutionalise a system of quality assurance in teaching, research and service utilizing appropriate methods including evaluation by peers, students, self and Heads of Institutions (where applicable);
- Actively promote research-led teaching that benefits from up-to-date knowledge and technologies arising from such research;
- Reward excellence in teaching and research in a way that serves as an incentive to all staff;
- Encourage student-centered learning that develops critical thinking and evaluation of information rather than rote learning;
- Offer pedagogical training for all academic staff that promotes effective teaching and learning;
- Develop and implement strategies in all programmes that ensure that teaching staff adopt an integrated approach to teaching and learning;
- Encourage and promote interdisciplinary cooperation among staff and students that incorporates relevant knowledge and skills in teaching and learning;
- Promote equal opportunity for all students to learn irrespective of disability or differences in religion, ethnicity, race or language,

socio-economic background or other characteristics that foster discrimination;

- Institute a peer evaluation of teaching mechanism whose instrument shall be developed by the Quality Assurance and Planning Unit (QAPU); and
- Establish a Teaching and Learning Unit within QAPU that will have day-to-day responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the Teaching and Learning policy.

3.1.2 Learning

With respect to learning, KNUST will instil in all students the need to:

- Strive for excellence in their academic pursuits by developing active learning habits and developing skills that enable them to be useful professionals and good citizens;
- Apply knowledge acquired in the classroom to solving real life problems;
- Develop and improve their written as well as oral communication skills;
- Develop autonomous learning skills and attitudes that promote lifelong learning as a way of keeping up with a fast-changing world of technology and knowledge;
- Develop inquiring and curious mind-sets that seek new ways of doing “old things”;
- Develop a multi-cultural and international outlook in their studies that will prepare them for a highly competitive global workplace;
- Develop an integrated approach to problem-solving that respects the diversity of available multidisciplinary skills and approaches;
- Encourage innovative learning and avail themselves of information and communication technologies that enhance

access to information and facilitate contact with teachers and colleagues;

- Focus on acquiring managerial and entrepreneurial skills that expand employment possibilities;
- Eschew the “ivory tower” mentality and cultivate a sense of belonging to the community and therefore having a responsibility to its cultural, political and socio-economic well being;
- Cultivate strong moral and ethical values; and
- Consider themselves as stakeholders in the achievement of continuing excellence by KNUST and be active participants in its activities.

3.1.3 Human Resource Development

High quality human resources are a pre-requisite for KNUST to achieve its vision of becoming a centre of excellence for the dissemination of knowledge and skills in science and technology for sustainable development. Consequently, KNUST shall focus on:

- Attracting, developing, motivating and retaining high calibre staff for teaching;
- Offering opportunities for continued training and professional development of all academic staff to improve teaching and research in all programmes of study;
- Establishing Quality Assurance and Monitoring Units within academic Departments, Faculties or Colleges, as the case may be, which will be responsible for initiating new appropriate academic programmes and implementing evaluation procedures within;
- Ensuring that appointments and promotions are fair, transparent and unbiased and duly recognise quality teaching, research output, and service to community provided by staff;

- Actively promote and support postgraduate studies with the aim of building a pool of potential researchers and teachers to fill vacancies in the various academic programmes;
- Offering refresher and custom-made training courses to improve the skills and knowledge of professionals already in the field; and
- Developing online training and assessment tools tailored to the Teaching and Learning policy for staff, especially newly recruited staff to build their capacity.

3.1.4 Assessment and Evaluation

The KNUST shall consider the following issues in assessing the quality of teaching and learning:

- Ensuring that Academic standards are comparable to global best practices;
- Opportunities for academic staff to be fairly and objectively assessed particularly by students and also by peers and senior management;
- Students' academic work shall be assessed as and when necessary using approaches and methods that are considered appropriate, fair and transparent;
- Both staff and students shall be provided with timely and detailed descriptive feedback on any assessment to serve as a guide for future improvement in teaching and learning;
- Both staff and students must understand that the essential role of objective evaluation/ assessment is to enhance academic work and should never be used as a tool for victimization; and
- Students' prior learning, experience and other achievements shall be recognised and credited to them appropriately. This is especially important in the admission of mature and transfer students.

3.2 INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENT TO FACILITATE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY

The Pro-Vice-Chancellor shall be charged with the overall responsibility of ensuring the implementation of the University's Teaching and Learning policy. Day-to-day implementation and monitoring responsibility shall, however, lie with the Academic Units and the Quality Assurance Unit. Faculties/Colleges shall draw up their own teaching and learning plans in line with this policy. Such plans shall give a comprehensive description of the strategies to promote and enforce quality teaching and learning.

KNUST shall ensure that the requisite resources are adequately provided to the academic and research units for the pursuit of the objectives of the Teaching and Learning policy. These resources include, among others, the following:

- Adequately furnished/equipped classrooms and laboratories;
- State-of-the-art workshops and studios;
- Properly furnished and resourced staff offices;
- Well-resourced library system with access to current literature;
- Information and communication infrastructure; and
- Reliable source of electricity.

3.3 INCENTIVES FOR EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING

Meaningful incentive packages act as extrinsic motivation for teachers and learners in their quest to give of their best. KNUST shall establish three types of awards to recognize hard working Lecturers and Students: the Distinguished Teacher, Distinguished Researcher Award and the Distinguished Student Award. The Vice-Chancellor shall be responsible for the establishment of selection committee(s) to guide the selection of award winners based on existing established criteria.

3.4 MAKING TEACHING, LEARNING AND RESEARCH EFFECTIVE

In order to make teaching/learning and research effective, KNUST shall pay attention to certain critical issues that have a direct bearing on the achievement of excellence. Some of the issues are as follows.

3.4.1 Academic Programme Review

For academic programmes to be relevant in a fast changing and globalized world, a system of regular review of academic programmes is a primary mechanism to maintain and improve quality. KNUST shall enforce the 5-year rule of review of curricula.

3.4.2 Professional Development of Staff/

Orientation for Newly Appointed Staff

KNUST's Strategic Plan emphasizes the necessity to produce, recruit, develop and retain highly qualified and experienced staff. Every effort shall be made to ensure this desire becomes a reality. The Vice-Chancellor shall ensure that staff development focuses on recruiting the critical mass of future teaching/research staff required by the University. The University's Research Grant scheme shall be revitalized. The Grants Office would liaise with the various academic departments to design and write proposals for funding.

A system of short courses in pedagogy for all academic staff, particularly, the newly recruited ones shall be implemented. All Lecturers shall undergo a training course in pedagogy.

3.4.3 Refresher Courses for Academic Staff

Refresher courses ensure that academic staff are equipped with new developments in teaching and research methodologies. Lecturers would be encouraged to take refresher courses within and outside the University for staff development.

3.4.4 Use of Teaching and Learning Resources

The use of modern technology to enhance teaching and learning cannot be over-emphasized. The KNUST has elected to deploy modern ICT-based audio-visual aids in teaching and learning. All lecture rooms and halls shall be equipped, at the minimum, with mounted projectors, and every Lecturer at KNUST should have access to a laptop for teaching.

3.4.5 Teaching and Learning Implementation and Monitoring Unit

A monitoring and implementation Unit shall be established under the Quality Assurance Unit. The objectives of the Teaching and Learning policy would be achieved through strict implementation and close monitoring.

3.4.6 Open Access to Research and Lecture Notes

The KNUSTspace is an open access University based Institutional Repository that makes available in digital format academic and research output and teaching and learning resources. The KNUSTspace requires staff and students to deposit their research output and learning and teaching resources, published and unpublished works in the Institutional Repository. The repository is accessible at all times. The **KNUSTspace** has several benefits and Lecturers and students shall be encouraged to use this resource and other open access resources to support teaching and learning.

3.5 MEASUREMENT AND ASSESSMENT OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

KNUST has procedures for assessing students, teachers and researchers. In the case of students, details of assessment of learning can be found in KNUST Recorder No. 334 vol. 44 (1). The assessment of Teaching can be found in the KNUST Recorder for Appointments and Promotions of Senior Members.

3.5.1 Monitoring of Students Records and Progress

The academic tutorial system shall allow academic tutors to have access to the academic records of their students for the purpose of monitoring their progress. Academic Tutors shall be required to act as counsellors to students and efforts shall be made to ensure that Tutors perform their functions regularly.

3.5.2 Research and Tracer Studies on Teaching and Learning

KNUST through the QAPU would use data generated from student evaluation; alumni satisfaction survey (tracer studies) and environmental survey to generate information to guide planning and policy review and improvement.

3.6 ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AND PLAGIARISM

Academic dishonesty refers to any behaviour that has the effect of providing a misleading basis for admission, assessment or academic progression or advantage to which the person is not entitled. Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental principles of the University as an institution devoted to the pursuit of excellence in learning, teaching, research and service. Any conduct that breaches academic honesty attacks the integrity of teaching and learning, and this contravenes academic values of respect for knowledge and scholarship. Academic dishonesty is in fact a form of fraud and therefore it is considered criminal in academia.

Plagiarism occurs when a Senior or Junior Member presents as his/her own work, the thoughts, ideas, findings or work of another person(s) or entity, without due acknowledgement of the source. Plagiarism fundamentally breaches the principle of academic honesty. Whether intentional or unintentional, it is unacceptable in the academic world.

Plagiarism includes the following:

- Any printed, electronic or audio-visual material (including computer-based material), drawings, designs, experimental results or conclusions, statistical data, computer programmes or other creative work;
- An assessment task that is copied almost entirely from another source such as a published article, text, computer programme, internet source or another student's work (or draft work);
- An assessment task that is constructed of segments drawn from one or a number of sources without attribution of the source;
- Summarizing another person's work without acknowledgement;
- Failure to acknowledge indebtedness to books, articles and other sources;
- Citing third-party sources (e.g. texts) that the Senior/Junior Member has not read, without acknowledging the 'secondary' source from which the information is derived;
- In an assessment task where there was legitimate cooperation and collaborative preparatory work, submitting substantially the same final version of any material as another student; or
- In group work, where the group utilises work from another group or from other sources, or
- In-group work, where a student claims credit for the work of the group but has not actively participated in or contributed to such work.

Encouraging or assisting another person to commit plagiarism is a form of collusion and may attract the same penalties that apply to plagiarism.

Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism are considered misconduct. Sanctions for behaviour that shall be described as misconduct are enumerated in Statute 56 to 61 of the Statutes of KNUST, October 2004.

3.7 TEACHING AND LEARNING CO-OPERATION

KNUST gives due recognition to the legitimate right of staff and/or students co-operation on projects or research, sharing materials or data collection, discussion and interpretation of such material. Such legitimate co-operation and collaboration may include:

- Informal study/discussion groups;
- Discussion of general themes and concepts;
- Interpretation of assessment criteria; or
- Development and strengthening of academic writing and/or study skills through peer assistance.

In pursuing the above, guidelines and policies relating to academic honesty and ethics must be adhered to.

3.8 RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING AND CREDIT TRANSFER

KNUST shall recognise Prior Learning and Credit transfer where learners can demonstrate that they can meet the assessment requirements for a unit through the knowledge or skills they already possess. This is based on existing criteria that may be reviewed from time to time.

4. LEGAL AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The following legislations regulate Higher Education in Ghana

- National Council for Tertiary Education Act, 1993, Act 454
- Education Act, 2008, Act 778
- National Accreditation Board Act, 2007, Act 744
- Ghana Education Trust Fund Act, 2001, Act 581
- Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology Act, 1961, Act 80 as amended

KNUST currently has a variety of rules and regulations that guide the implementation of essential functions including teaching and learning. Apart from the national laws cited above as well as the enabling Act of KNUST, the following Statutes, Records and Publications of KNUST constitute part of the enforcement mechanisms under the Teaching and Learning Policy such as KNUST Statutes 16, 30, 31, 32 & 43; Recorder 334, Vol. 44, No 1; and the Students' Guide.

5. SUPPORT SERVICES

These services contribute to the provision of a congenial and healthy environment for teaching and learning and can have important effects on teaching and learning outcomes.

- **Guidance and Counselling Unit** – The Office of the Dean of Students offers guidance and counselling services to all students.
- **Health Services** – Provided primarily at the KNUST Hospital.
- **Office of International Students Affairs** – The Office deals with all matters relating to international students.

6. POLICY REVIEW AND AMENDMENTS

This policy does not seek to replace other provisions in the KNUST Statutes. In event of conflict, appropriate measures shall be taken by the Academic Board to address them. The policy shall be subject to periodic reviews and changes to conform to modern trends. The QAPU shall liaise with the appropriate Units for such reviews and amendments.

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