Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi

Internationalisation
POLICY

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

Foreword

The Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Kumasi is committed to advancing internationalisation and global competitiveness as an important pathway to achieving its core mandate and to being the attractive choice for excellent staff and students, collaborators and industry.

Internationalising Higher Education Institutions cannot be attained in isolation from others, hence, the need to outline measures and systems to support the effort of the University to open its doors to the international community to partner in research, teaching and community service.

The KNUST Internationalisation Policy document has been timely. The policy will guide the University's directions on internationalisation related limits, principles, and regulations for decision-making to improve its global outlook and programmes.

Internationalisation and global competitiveness of Higher Education come with benefits such as improving the quality of education and research, enhancing international cooperation and capacity building of staff and students, quality of teaching and learning and opening opportunities for graduate employment as well as enhance the profile of the institution.

This Policy document reflects the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology's strategy and initiatives to improve its visibility, attraction and reputation to its stakeholders both locally and internationally and actions that must be taken to continue to be relevant in the field of Higher Education.

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VICE-CHANCELLOR
KNUST

Acknowledgement

As part of the strategic planning mandate of the Quality Assurance and Planning Office (QAPO), University policies are initiated and proposed for approval by the Academic Board.

The Quality Assurance and Planning Office is grateful to the Committee consisting of Prof. Rexford Assasie Oppong, Department of Architecture, Chairman, Dr. J. Humphrey Amuasi, Department of Global & International Health, Dr. (Mrs.) Evelyn Asante-Kwatia, Department of Pharmacognosy, Dr. Alexander Boakye Marful, Department of Architecture, Members and Mrs. Gladys Addai, IPO, Secretary who provided inputs for this Policy. They are deeply appreciated for their enormous contributions.

We are equally indebted to the staff of QAPO and the Publication and Documentations Unit of the University Relations Office (URO) who facilitated the technical review and publication of this Policy.

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

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1.0 POLICY CONTEXT

KNUST Statute 46 states that there shall be established in the Vice-Chancellor's Office of the University an International Programmes Office (IPO) to handle all matters affecting the University vis-à-vis its relationship with other associated institutions both national and international in respect of academic matters.

The Cooperate Strategic Plan 2016-2025, (themes 3 and 7) affirms the University's position to focus on global competitiveness while striving to be locally relevant by contributing meaningfully to the sustainable development of the country and sub-region as a whole.

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND EXPECTED OUTPUT

Transnational partnerships focused on strengthening excellence through academic and research cooperation have been identified as key processes to maintaining and enhancing academic standards and development. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have been widely acknowledged as central components for transformation and development transcending regional, national, local government and institutional or organisational levels. The Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi identifies itself as a critical engine for intellectual and cultural renaissance in Africa, and for economic liberation and integration for social development across the continent. KNUST is intent on improving its status as a hub for international academic exchange within and beyond the sub-region. In the quest to improve the University's global standing, KNUST is strengthening its international dimension of teaching, research, community outreach, and engagement with partners in the region and abroad.

With KNUST's core mandate to develop human resource capacity through education and training programmes and the production

of evidence-based research outputs that meet current and future needs, this document will establish a structure for the development and integration of internationalisation in the University's strategy, organisation, diversity, culture and governance. This Policy enunciates the broad framework and principles for internationalisation at KNUST.

1.2 THE CONCEPT OF INTERNATIONALISATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Internationalisation at the KNUST is a process of creating and integrating an international and intercultural dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of higher education through collaboration and partnerships based on emancipatory pedagogical conditions. It entails the mutual cross-border mobility of faculty, staff and students, national cultural values, and academic resources and research initiatives including policies and practices between universities. The process requires systemic rethinking of curricula, programmes, strategies and structures of HEIs to cope with the rapidly evolving dynamics of the global academic environment and to create competitive advantage for KNUST; opportunities for students, products and staff to operate effectively at a global level and meet local and international needs.

Internationalisation has strong potential for transforming HEIs to provide quality and reflective education that meets both local and international needs without compromising on indigenous knowledge and innovative capacities. The process requires interdependence of curriculum systems and standardisation of education performance criteria. KNUST is particular about curriculum homogeneity and places emphasis on developing curricula pedagogies that reflect Ghanaian and African context and need, but with a strong international appeal. In its drive towards enhancing internationalisation, KNUST prioritises its contribution to a knowledge-based economy with curricula that matches, and is responsive to the country's needs, and meets the expectations of the global academic environment.

1.3 INTERNATIONALISATION AT KNUST

The Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Kumasi established the International Programmes Office as a step towards advancing internationalisation. KNUST sees internationalisation as an important pathway towards achieving its core mandate and attracting and developing excellent staff and students in order to contribute towards the achievement of its goals, targets and directions that the government has set for higher education. The following core values characterise the work and life of the University and its drive for internationalisation:

a. Leadership in Innovation and Technology

b. Culture of Excellence

c. Diversity and Equal Opportunity for All

d. Integrity and Stewardship of Resources

Stipulated by the statutes of the KNUST (Statute 46), the International Programmes Office (IPO) was established directly under the Vice-Chancellor's office to address matters affecting the University *vis-à-vis* its relationship with other associated institutions, both national and international in respect of academic and research matters. Since its establishment, the IPO has been responsible for the following:

a. In collaboration with the Principals of KNUST University Colleges, Provost of Colleges, Deans of Faculties and Heads of Departments; to regularly update the database of the University's collaborations or partners in respect of national and international academic programmes; and to handle matters involving both staff and students visits and exchange programmes.

b. In conjunction with the Registrar's Office; to handle all agreements involving the University and its collaborators or partners in respect of external academic programmes.

c. To publish annually; a comprehensive report on the activities of the IPO

d. To perform any other relevant functions as may be assigned by the Vice-Chancellor.

Over the years, KNUST has attained enviable positions in university rankings in Ghana, West Africa and in the African continent. This success has been as a result of the stellar output of staff with regard to publications, patents, national and international engagements; including with civil society coupled with deliberate efforts by the University's Management to improve visibility of the Institution and the activities of its staff. KNUST can maintain its international standing by regularly reviewing the functions and output of the IPO. The core functions of the IPO shall be expanded to fully encompass the concept of Internationalisation of Higher Education Institutions. The following functions are to be added to the current responsibilities of the IPO:

a. Provide annual strategic policy recommendations to the Vice-Chancellor to support deliberate efforts at pursuing an internationalisation agenda at KNUST based on evolving knowledge, current trends, and best practices.

b. Actively provide support in establishing collaborations and partnerships with potential universities around the world.

c. Promote cross-border education and research i.e., the movement of people, programmes, policies, projects, and services across national boundaries.

d. Periodically review, reform, and modernise curricula and pedagogy of international programmes and support the inclusion of regional and international best practices and resources.

1.4 Internationalisation Policy Objectives

The main goal of this Policy document is to ensure that KNUST achieves its mission to advance knowledge in Science and Technology by providing a pathway to promote academic mobility for students and staff and establish a mutually beneficial collaboration and partnership with world renowned HEIs to meet development goals. This will be achieved through cooperating with universities in other countries to

reform and modernise curricula and pedagogy. The Policy seeks to promote achieving the following specific goals:

a. Facilitate the establishment of collaborative links between international communities to improve the University's global status and international reputation

b. Become the hub for international academic exchange programmes in the sub-region that prepares capable and global culturally sensitive graduates who can perform optimally in international and multicultural societies

c. Establish a hotspot for international collaboration and partnership for higher education institutions in research and development

d. Develop University faculty and staff to be global citizens by providing cutting-edge capacity-building workshops and training programmes for all staff and partner providers to guarantee regular improvement of support services to meet international standards

e. Advance leadership in innovation and technology through the development of appropriate international programmes in science and technology that meet the needs of the local and international job market and industry

f. Provide an enabling platform for local and international professional development.

1.5 Policy Scope

Internationalisation has become an important component for effective collaboration and partnerships among higher education institutions (HEIs) around the world. To ensure that KNUST remains at the fore of this global phenomenon, the concept of internationalisation shall be applied and integrated across curricula development and pedagogy, research and scholarship; staff and students' orientation and experience; and both for – and not-for-profit service delivery. This effort at integrating internationalisation across KNUST provides an

explicit recognition of the academic context, regulatory framework for quality and partnerships, and the scope of the business environment the University operates in. KNUST's Internationalisation Policy shall apply to all staff, students and members of the University decision-making or advisory bodies and provides a framework for the University's partner providers to operate in when they are dealing with University programmes.

2.0 Policy Statements

KNUST is integrating an international dimension that will accentuate its international programmes activities to access and contribute to global knowledge and expertise through collaboration with universities and research institutes around the world. This collaboration will further expand the University's appeal to international student markets, creating a borderless academic environment that meets national, regional and global needs. This document outlines the following specific policy statements by the KNUST.

2.1 Academic Mobility of Students and Staff

2.1.1 Exchange of undergraduate and postgraduate students

a. Establish collaborations with partner providers to offer exchange opportunities for undergraduate and postgraduate students to visit and study in their institutions in both for-credit and not-for-credit capacities

b. Develop online platforms to allow undergraduate and postgraduate students to enrol in modules offered by KNUST and in partner HEIs.

2.1.2 Exchange of faculty and staff

a. Create sustainable staff development programmes to mitigate brain drain

b. Access international technical expertise from partner HEIs

c. Encourage faculty and staff to explore opportunities for skills development in specialised areas with HEIs

d.   Develop local capacity for exchanges in which the responsibilities and expertise of the faculty/staff person remain the same but may also provide services upon prior agreement with the receiving partner.

2.2 International Linkages and Cooperation

2.2.1 Joint research activities

a.   Improve research and innovation agenda as a frontier for international academic exchanges, partnerships and engagements.

b.   Collaborate with partners to promote interconnection and exchange of resources to support and sustain knowledge production.

c.   Develop operation plans for the application and implementation of large joint research projects.

d.   Create opportunities for researchers to participate in international research networks to improve the quality of the research environment, funding, research infrastructure and incentives.

e.   Establish international research communities that will contribute to creating solutions to cross-border challenges.

2.2.2 Participation in academic meetings

a.   Maintain special advantage and autonomy to ensure competitiveness and effective participation in international gatherings.

b.   Actively promote transparent and effective participatory approaches in all academic meetings

c.   Periodically invite partner HEIs to participate in academic meetings of the International Programmes Office.

d.   Academic meetings shall prioritise localised pedagogy and research that focus on local development with international application.

2.3 International Academic Programmes

2.3.1 Exchange of academic materials and information

a.   Collaborate with partners in the use of information communication technologies to exchange information and academic material.

b.   Develop new initiatives with partner HEIs towards enhanced academic exchanges, and harmonisation of academic programmes.

c.   Design high quality programmes by infusing new and relevant knowledge appropriate for addressing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

2.3.2 Mobility programmes and exchanges.

a.   Establish a joint platform with partners and collaborators to develop and periodically review the process and content of exchange programmes with strong international appeal.

b.   Explore efforts towards the harmonisation of partner HEIs' systems.

c.   Collaborate in the development of quality assurance and credit transfer systems that would be useful for enhanced internationalisation with partner universities.

d.   Develop new international programmes and review existing curricula in terms of their relevance.

e.   Develop an exchange programme that promotes respect and adapts itself to the characteristics of local culture to ensure continued linkage between knowledge production and utilisation.

2.4 Professional Development and Agreements

2.4.1 Managing memorandum of understanding/agreements (MoU/As)

a. Ensure mutual collaboration with reciprocity required in partnerships.

b. Build institutional governance and management capacity essential for fostering partnerships and collaborations, and implementing internationalisation activities.

c. Support emerging centres of excellence and new mobility programmes by partner providers.

d. Foster the development of trans-boundary agreements in the form of concerted efforts towards the pursuit, advancement and harnessing of indigenous knowledge for societal development.

2.4.2 Short-term academic training and cultural diversity

a. Develop the next generation of academics through increased opportunities for quality doctoral and specialised training with partner providers to promote scaling up local intellectual capacity.

b. Establish professional collaborative arrangements specifically aimed at mutual brain gain.

c. Construct a broader cultural and social perspective to ensure the University performs successfully within the localised contexts.

2.4.3 Professional development

a. Explore partnerships to generate knowledge and transform the University's internal resources to be more competitive.

b. Motivate staff and researchers to utilise their research capacities and knowledge resources efficiently to transform society.

c. Promote internationalisation practices that protect indigenous knowledge, provides diversity and social justice.

d. Establish specialised centres of excellence and engagements with partner providers.

e. Establish collaborative transformational change programmes to build a more international knowledge-based workforce.

3.0 Policy Implementation Strategies

Internationalisation strategies can be seen as steps or actions taken by the University to engender internationalisation throughout its systems and structures to achieve the desired outputs and outcomes. The KNUST IPO shall be primarily responsible for operationalising the Internationalisation Policy in close collaboration with QAPU, Provosts, Deans, Director of Centres and Heads of Departments. The following are some recommended strategies for the implementation of an Internationalisation Policy in KNUST:

3.1 Internationalisation of the University's Curricula

a. The curricula must be designed to produce professional qualifications that meet global standards and are internationally recognised.

b. The curricula should be tailored to include preparing students for defined international careers involving their discipline of study.

c. Appropriately selected curricula should be designed based on internationally comparative approaches that can lead to the award of joint or double degrees through partnerships.

d. Curricula be encouraged to incorporate international exchange programmes which count towards academic credits.

e. Strategically selected programmes could be offered in foreign languages to attract particularly French and Portuguese-speaking students from Africa.

f. Curricula should include elective courses in linguistics and provide training in cross cultural skills and cultural sensitivity.

3.2 Organising and Hosting International Conferences while Promoting and Facilitating Student and Staff Participation in Similar International Conferences Abroad

The IPO must organise and host International Conferences for staff, researchers and students for collaborative research opportunities to enhance learning outcomes and find solutions to societal challenges. Conferences and Workshops for exposure to cultural awareness, and institutional experiences as well as study abroad prospects.

3.3 Promoting the international impact of KNUST. The following strategies may be undertaken to increase dissemination and recognition of the contributions of KNUST:

a. Effective communication of international developments in research and teaching to internal and external stakeholders, e.g., through the preparation of an International Newsletter and improvements in the user-friendliness of the KNUST website for its international visitors.

b. Maintaining a database of ongoing international activities or collaborations within KNUST. This is to be achieved by mandating that in addition to all the requirements for reporting by Heads of Departments to the KNUST Quality Assurance and Publications Office (QAPO), a detailed list of international collaborations, specific activities and outputs be included using a standard template to be provided by the IPO. The IPO shall be further mandated to retrieve this information from QAPO for further processing and strategic dissemination.

c. Effective communication with the International Relations Representatives of Colleges/Faculties.

d. Maintain patency of communication and other engagement channels with key international organizations such as the African Union, European Union, United Nations, UNESCO etc.

e. Establishing and involving chapters of international alumni groups in celebrating and broadening the contributions and visibility of KNUST.

3.4 Academic Mobility of Students and Staff

a. The KNUST Admission and Recruitment Offices shall endeavour to increase the domestic and international diversity of students and staff. Fostering diversity shall promote interaction, challenge stereotypes, and enhance integration. This will translate into culturally competent staff and students.

b. The University shall recruit international students through organisation and participation in Educational Fairs organised in partnership with the Ministry of Education, foreign embassies, and other national stakeholders.

c. The Public Relations/International Programme Offices of KNUST could collaborate with partner HEIs and research institutes to create awareness of mobility/exchange opportunities through symposia, orientations and decentralised communication to staff and students including mailing lists, bulk SMS, and social media channels.

d. Development, update, and dissemination of brochures presenting overviews and listings of mobility opportunities between KNUST and partner HEIs.

e. Set up competitive scholarship and funding schemes to aid mobility and exchange programmes through internally generated funds and partnering with industry.

3.5 International Linkages and Cooperation

a. Through the IPO structures, respective faculties and research centres shall be supported administratively to host

International Conferences, Summer Schools and Workshops and further foster the establishment of international visiting professorships.

b. To encourage visiting Lecturers/Researchers stay in touch with KNUST after their time in the University, the establishment of alumni clubs shall be explored as a networking platform. This network should be published on the University's homepage to enable KNUST link up with foreign and Ghanaian Researchers living abroad who may wish to return.

c. KNUST Management shall also promote intercultural trainings among KNUST staff and students to enable international students blend in well with students on campus. This will create opportunities for churning out graduates who are global citizens. Intercultural training also engenders collaborative work and learning among students which ultimately translate into an improved society.

d. Promote advocacy through participation in international meeting activities and commissioning of global ambassadors.

e. Encourage the formation of consortiums and collaborations to identify research questions and synthesise implementable solutions fit for joint applications in response to Research Calls for Applications within respective research areas and funding schemes.

f. Cultural programmes for International students and staff.

g. Annual interactions and visits to cultural Centres, home stays.

h. Orientation for international students.

3.6 International Academic Programmes

a. The Academic Affairs Unit shall develop joint academic degrees with partner HEIs abroad.

b. Develop programmes and courses which will require the acquisition of theoretical knowledge and conduct of practical sessions in partner institutions and associated industries.

c. Organise joint workshops with other HEIs locally and internationally for exchanging pedagogy notes/techniques/practises and other teaching-aids/resources.

d. Transform participants in exchange programmes into fellowship cohorts to sustain continuous learning and collaboration.

3.7 Professional Development and Agreements

a. Invest in modern technologies and tools at par with international standards to promote the attraction of international students and staff for research and learning. This shall be done by organising joint student-led, faculty-mentored hackathons to provide practical, relevant, innovative solutions to identified community-based and industrial problems. This will also be via the creation of e-learning modules via virtual platforms with faculties sourced from partner institutions.

b. Invest in and improve the acquisition of transferable skills to translate theories of change, improved methodologies and new theoretical knowledge into patent-worthy innovations and practical tools capable of attracting collaborations (particularly with industry) and achieving increased visibility for KNUST.

c. Establish fellowships for developing faculty and other staff capacities and expertise.

d. Open centres of excellence to partners for participatory and collaborative research and learning for staff development and experience.

3.8 Education, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation

a. The University through the IPO shall develop training programmes for all IPO staff to ensure understanding and effective implementation of this Policy.

b. The IPO shall be directed by the Vice-Chancellor to sensitise, monitor, and evaluate the effectiveness of this Policy.

c. The IPO shall submit annual or periodic reports on the implementation of this Policy to the Vice-Chancellor.

d. The IPO shall set the performance standards of its operations and bench marked against internal and international best practices in its service delivery within the University community.

e. The IPO would conduct a satisfaction survey for international students, staff, and researchers to obtain feedback for improvement.

f. The IPO shall design systems and procedures for outbound (staff and students) and inbound (incoming staff and students) mobilities.

4.0 Conclusion

Operationalising the Internationalisation Policy in KNUST will expose students and staff to global engagements and equip them with the international skills and experience required to identify and solve global challenges. In the spirit of developing curricula and delivering programmes homogeneous with global standards and with international appeal, students and staff will not be limited to their fields of study and geographical boundaries, but will be empowered to cross-fertilise ideas with others. This will help the University produce global citizens who will build new knowledge through collaborative and comparative approaches, and thereby contribute towards the achievement of KNUST's mission. All members of the University community have a role to play in contributing towards implementing this Policy.

5.0 Policy Alignment, Validity, Effective Date and Review

5.1 Alignment with Other Policies

The Quality Assurance and Planning Office (QAPO) shall be responsible for monitoring the implementation of this Policy to ensure that it is in alignment with other policies and strategies of the University. Actions and strategies of this Policy should not conflict with other policies of the University.

5.2 Validity of Policy Provisions

This Policy does not replace other University policies. It is meant to support and improve current University policies. In the event of conflicts with other policies such as the Statutes, appropriate measures shall be taken by the International Programmes Office Board/Academic Board to address the conflicts. The Policy becomes operational after approval by the University Academic Board.

5.3 Effective Date

This Policy was approved at the 405th (Regular) Meeting of Academic Board held on 13th June 2022

5.4 Review of the Policy

The entire Policy shall be subjected to review and changes every five (5) years or at the instance of the Vice-Chancellor to ensure that it conforms to current trends and remains relevant to the administration and management of the University.

The Quality Assurance and Planning Office (QAPO) shall liaise with the appropriate Units for such reviews.

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