

ULK POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

UPI



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E-LEARNING POLICY

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CREATION, VISION, MISSION, PHILOSOPHY, MOTTO, VALUES, OBJECTIVES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND POWERS

Article 1: Creation and Accreditation

ULK Polytechnic Institute UPI is a private technical learning Institution founded on 2nd October, 2014, now governed by the new Law n° 010/2021 of 16/02/2021 determining the organization of Education, Ministerial Order determining Rwanda Qualification Framework N° 001/MINEDUC/2021 of 20/10//2021, Ministerial Order determining Standards in Education N° 003/MINEDUC/2021 of 20/10//2021, UPI statutes, its Internal Regulations and other academic regulations.

Article 2: Vision

In line with the vision of the Government of Rwanda to promote practical skills; strives to stand out as a remarkable Institute for excellence with highly skilled and motivated students endowed with elevated ethical values.

Article 3: Philosophy

ULK Polytechnic Institute Philosophy is based on four fundamental principles:

- To have faith in God; to know your mission on earth;
- To have positive thoughts and to live ethical values. ULK Polytechnic Institute's motto is "Science, Conscience and Skills", ULK Polytechnic Institute key values are: Integrity, Humility, Determination and Excellence.

Article 4: Mission

The Mission of ULK Polytechnic Institute is: to educate, teach, conduct technical projects and serve the community. The fundamental mission of ULK Polytechnic Institute is to provide the students with, competitive, creative, innovative skills which will contribute to finding solutions on the labor market.

Article 5: Motto

The motto of ULK Polytechnic Institute is “Science, Conscience and Skills”.

Article 6: Objectives of UPI

ULK Polytechnic Institute has the following objectives:

- To contribute to capacity building hands on skills based;
- To promote projects innovation for serving the community;
- To provide middle technicians with technical trainings to meet the community needs;
- To provide service to the community;
- Self-employers; etc.

Article 7: Overview of the Policy

The world today is changing by reaps and bounds mainly due to digital technologies. In response to the associated quick and versatile changing demands of the local and global markets, learning institutions all over the world try to harness the potential Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in order to provide their students and the community at large with a flexible access to the required knowledge and key skills.

This document specifies ULK Polytechnic Institute (UPI) policy for the delivery of programmes leading to an award by means of E-Learning approach. This policy is intended to support UPI in developing flexible learning opportunities and providing access to higher education.

Given the current global trends imposed by the use of technology, UPI has not lagged behind. Therefore, in order to meet the current demands, the use of E-Learning approach has become imperative. Hence this policy will guide UPI in managing the potential risks posed by challenges and complexities in the arrangements for blended and online learning programmes and to safeguard academic standards.

Article 8: Definition of E-Learning

“The integration of classroom face-to-face learning experiences with online learning experiences” (Garrison and Kanuak, 2004, p96). “Typically these are face-to-face programmes which incorporate remote online learning via a virtual learning environment” (QQI, 2018, p3).

“Learning that is delivered or supported through the use of technology” (QQI, 2016, p27).

“A form of teaching and learning - which may represent a part or the whole of the educational model in which it is used – that makes use of electronic media and devices to facilitate access, promote evolution and improve the quality of education and training” (Sangra et al., 2011, p73).

Its meaning here, therefore, is normally synonymous with ICT-based learning. The term may refer to the use of various technologies and tools to support learning in different contexts, including face-to-face settings and distance learning.

Article 9: Purpose of this Policy

The purpose of this policy is to set out the principles and processes which apply to the development, delivery and monitoring of programmes of study leading to an award or to specified credits towards an award which are to be delivered through E-Learning.

- UPI E-Learning Policy has been developed in the context of its E-Learning Strategy, to support our mission, vision, and goals.
- The current E-Learning policy has been developed in the context of the our Strategic Plan (2018 – 2023)

Article 10: Legal and Policy Context

UPI used the Higher Education Council guidelines to ensure our compliance with the requirements of Quality Assurance guidelines.

Article 11: Objectives of this policy

- To equip UPI staff with skills and competences needed in the framework of E-Learning programme delivery according to the relevant academic standard for programmes and awards;
- To ensure compliance with UPI Quality Assurance of E-Learning programme delivery;
- To ensure that the learning environment has the necessary operational supports for E-Learning programme delivery;
- To ensure that the technical infrastructure is available for E-Learning delivery;
- To provide guidance on instructional design for E-Learning programme delivery;

- To ensure compliance with legal requirements in line with E-Learning programme delivery.

Article 12: Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to the UPI teaching staff and students.

- This policy supports our Institution in developing flexible learning opportunities in professional and continuing education programmes.
- ULK Polytechnic Institute is aware that not all its traditional programmes, policies and procedures are appropriate for E-Learning. Therefore all policies and regulations will be reviewed accordingly once the accreditation of E-Learning is given to ensure they are fit-for-purpose in context.
- This policy also guides the identification and management of potential risks posed by challenges and complexities in the arrangements for blended and online learning programmes and to safeguard academic standards.

Article 13: Principles

E-Learning will revolve around the following principles:

- Enhancing students' learning experience, cater for diversity and improving engagement and outcomes.
- Achieving through a process of systematic module design/redesign using the best features of online face-to-face environments.
- Focusing on constructive alignment of learning outcomes, assessments, content (resources) and learning activities.
- Preparing adequately learners (students), teachers and support staff to function in BL environment.
- Making sure assessments are rigorous, fit-for-purpose, safe and secure.
- Ensuring that any learning material supports effective teaching, learning and assessments.

Article 14: Academic Standards

- UPI is responsible for the academic standards and quality assurance of programmes delivered through E-Learning. All programmes offered under E-Learning will be subject to the core quality processes that underpin all of UPI's programmes,
- The UPI shall ensure that procedures and regulations as specified in the Academic Regulations are fit for purpose in a E-Learning environment and that Student Assessment; Marks & Standards are fit for purpose in a E-Learning environment.
- The UPI shall ensure that quality assurance systems to monitor and /or moderate standards are fit for purpose in a E-Learning environment.
- The UPI shall ensure that processes and regulations as specified in Academic Regulations, Transfer and Progression are fit for purpose in a E-Learning environment.
- The UPI shall ensure that the student record system supports E-Learning programmes and the quality assurance of a flexible learning experience.

Article 15: Programme Design and Delivery

- In accordance with UPI Academic Regulations, Programme Context, the teaching, learning and assessment strategies and delivery mechanisms adopted in blended learning delivery, should be specifically designed for this context.
- In accordance with UPI Academic Regulations, the Institute will ensure that E-Learning developments are learner centered and subject-led rather than technology led. The organizational structure and processes will ensure that technology is the service of pedagogy
- The UPI will ensure its teaching, learning, and assessment practices are accessible to all students through the implementation of a Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework to improve and optimize teaching and learning for all.
- For a module to be taught through E-Learning mode, it must be first designed in accordance with international standards.
- For a lecturer to be given a module to teach, he/she must be equipped with module design, development and delivery skills.
- A module at UPI is a coherent and identifiable unit of learning and teaching with defined learning outcomes.

- Modules descriptions have not been changed. It is only a mode of delivery that has been changed.
- No lecturer will start teaching through E-Learning approach before:
 - i. His/her module has been designed in line with international E-Learning standards;
 - ii. Demonstrating his/her ability to deliver the module using the E-Learning mode;
- The lecturer is also required to teach the contents of the module (theory, practical exercises and presentations) in line with HEC requirements of the total module/unit hours, and to abide by the schedule established by the Head of Department.
- The student participation to modules/units, practical assignments, exercises and assessments is compulsory. Any absence due to disease or any other important reason should be communicated and the notification to the head of the department shouldn't exceed one week. An information copy should be handed to the corresponding Deputy Chancellor; the notification will have supporting documents.
- Any teaching staff member is evaluated by students, class representatives, Department Commission at the end of the module/unit and by the Executive Organ at the end of the academic year, based on:
 - i. His/her scientific competence (his/her handling of the module/unit contents, scientific articles and books published) through E-Learning mode;
 - ii. His/her pedagogic competence (methodology, techniques and strategies applied in transmitting efficiently the module/unit contents) through E-Learning mode;
- In order to maintain or keep teaching his/her module or unit, the lecturer must get at least 80% of marks of the evaluation done by his/her students and the evaluation done by the Senior Management, on the overall evaluation.

Article 16: Students Support

- Prior to the learning through E-Learning programme, students shall be provided with a User Manual.
- The student programme User Manual shall also specify requirements for access to the E-Learning environment
- The student programme Use Manual shall provide information on the level and nature of support available, including but not limited to academic, technical support.

- The UPI will ensure that procedures and regulations as specified in the Code of Student Conduct are fit for purpose in E-Learning environment.
- The UPI shall ensure that implementation strategies as articulated in the Student Retention Policy are fit for purpose in E-Learning environment.
- There will also be orientation of students which shall focus on skills for e-learning and academic socialization. The areas include:
 - a) Basic skills on e-learning: reading, study, notes taking, writing and computer skills.
 - b) Academic orientation and socialization:
 - i. Provide pre-entry guidance and counseling on types of programmes and modules available; selection of modules in relation to learners needs; instructional system and its requirements, and distance learner's challenges and how to cope with them.
 - ii. Module support after admission including induction into instructional system; timely distribution of study materials; introduction of learners to reading skills; electronic academic support at the campus; tutorial and counseling services to the learners; organization of practical; time management focusing on hours required to cover any specific module; and how to create the required time; and assignment and feed back to marked assignments; and introducing learner to examination techniques.
 - iii. Post-module support service including immediate communication of results; advise on career prospects; lasting contact with their provider as alumni; and information on new prospects.

Article 17: Face to Face Sessions

These sessions shall be conducted at the campuses, to serve the following purposes:

- (a) To provide special session for difficult aspects of the module at the middle of the programme/module;
- (b) To provide some revision work to students before examination; and
- (c) To provide general orientation and introduction to the module materials at the commencement of the module (i.e. once e-learning programmes are fully accredited)

Article 18: Module Approval and Cancellation

The module approval process for blended mode is the same as that of a traditional face-to-face module mode. On the other hand, module cancellation will be coordinated by the department in charge of the programme in collaboration with the institution directorate of academic services. The Director of Academic Services will coordinate with the Head of Department to review module enrollment. The department council will decide on cancellation of modules.

Article 19: Student-Department Interactions

The students will be provided with timely feedback on their assignments by the lecturer. Any delay in returning feedback to students makes teaching and learning process less effective. The longer the delay the less effective the teaching and learning process becomes. Hence, teachers should provide students with feedback within reasonable time. All grades for student's progress will be delivered to the directorate of academic services according to the academic calendar.

Article 20: Assessment of Students and Requirements

- The purpose of assessment is to measure the achievement of the intended learning outcomes, as enumerated into the Programme Specification and its related module descriptions. The form (s) of assessment for any module shall be appropriate for this purpose.
- Assessments strategies and tools for the blended teaching will be similar to those used for on-campus programmes with parity of standards being paramount. They include online collaborative discussions forums that focus on team learning and personal mastery which are intended to provide the students with peer feedback, lecturer assessment and self-reflection.
- The UPI shall ensure that the outcomes of assessment for E-Learning programme meets the specified academic level of the award as defined by the National Qualification Framework.
- The grade for a module is made up of the grades for assessments, weighted as approved in the Programme Specification. All assignments, module and programme marks shall be presented as percentage scores. Modules and/or units are normally assessed by:

- (a) Continuous Assessment Tests (online practical assignments, Class participation, Course works, Case studies, CAT 2) which will be part of Formative assessment and will carry 60% of total grading; and
- (b) Summative assessment which will carry 40%.
- Participation to lectures, seminars, and practical sessions by students is compulsory. Attendance will be monitored by related Head of Departments with e-attendance list. Senior Management will also be involved in this monitoring.
 - Submission of coursework on due date and attendance at assessment and in-module tests is obligatory. Non submission or non-attendance will lead to a mark of zero for the assignment or assessment unless adequately justified.
 - The date for each assessment test is jointly fixed by students and the Department office, who inform the lecturer of the course module/unit.
 - The Assessment test questions are set from each module/ unit which has been taught. It must comprise general questions as well as maturity questions.
 - Students will normally receive feedback on their grade and performance on coursework within two weeks or at least a week before the next piece of assessed work on the same module, whichever is earlier.
 - As per the final examination, results are to be released within one month from the day the examination has been conducted. For Summative Assessment scripts, the marking scheme and signed nominative grades lists are handed in by the lecturer to the department. A copy of these lists is published either in hardcopy or through the ULK Official Website.
 - In order to enhance quality assurance, there is an internal academic auditor appointed by the Founder to verify the accuracy of and prevention of all academic malpractices on a regular basis and external examiners in every academic year whose attributions are the following:
 - to comment upon the assessments for each module for which they are responsible, the extent to which the assessments cover the syllabus, and whether they enable students to demonstrate achievement of the learning outcomes
 - to consider, comment upon, and approve all examination questionnaires, and to comment upon marking schemes for individual papers, assessment criteria, and model answers

- to confirm whether or not the standard of marking is satisfactory by scrutinising a sample of assessed work for each module (sample size to be agreed between the board and the examiner)
- to comment upon the standards of achievement of students, and the comparability of this achievement to standards elsewhere
- to comment upon the standards of proposed awards, and their comparability to similar awards made elsewhere
- to make known any causes for concern in relation to academic standards achieved by students, the standards of modules, and the standards of awards to be made
- to advise the Subject Examination Board on appropriate actions where the marks for a module are significantly outside the normal pattern, and to endorse recommendations by markers for actions where the marks for a module are significantly outside the normal pattern
- to endorse decisions on results, progression, and recommendations for award
- to submit a full written report, including an optional confidential report to the Principal to perform any other duties requested by Senior Authorities.

Article 21: Continuous Formative Assessment (CFA)

Formative assessment helps to monitor student learning to provide ongoing feedback that can be used by instructors to improve their teaching and by students to improve their learning

The most common digital techniques used by educators across the world to assess learners in their formative assessments will be used at UPI. These include multiple choice tests, true or false items, essays, etc.

In setting Continuous Formative Assessment, the following four aspects shall be taken into consideration:

- 1) **Instructor Formative Assessment** - To what degree do instructors adjust their instruction to meet student needs when employing CFA compared to traditional models of instruction?
- 2) **Student Formative Assessment** - What effect does the CFA model have in motivating students to apply formative self-assessments such as self-monitoring and self-correcting.
- 3) **Accountability / Engagement**– To what degree are students engaged in the instructional process by the use of CFA compared to traditional models of instruction?

- 4) **Student Learning** - What effect does the CFA model have on student learning?

Article 22: Summative Assessment

For this type of assessment, UPI will maintain the already existing on-campus assessment modalities as stipulated in the Academic Regulations. UPI Academic Regulations remains the most important document of reference as far as assessments are concerned.

Article 23: Staff Professional Development in E-Learning Approach

Staff need a set of digital competences specific to their profession in order to be able to seize the potential of digital technologies for enhancing and innovating teaching. UPI will ensure that staff members are appropriately qualified and supported. Also, UPI will ensure that staff members are provided with opportunities to develop their academic and technology enhanced learning skills and digital competences. The staff shall be oriented and trained on e-learning material development.

Article 24: Orientation and Training on Development of Learning Materials

Mechanisms to ensure appropriate orientation and training on requirements, skills and strategies of developing materials for e-learning by use of facilitators and training manuals. The training manuals cover the following:

- (a) Overview of e-learning;
- (b) Learner characteristics and their implications to the content development;
- (c) Unpacking the syllabus to develop module outlines;
- (d) Writing objectives and learning outcomes and their role in open and e-learning instructional materials;
- (e) Presentation of materials for better understanding by the learners;
- (f) Creating interactivity in open and distance learning materials; and
- (g) Use of visualization in open and distance learning materials.

Article 25: Orientation to Academic Staff

The orientation of academic staff focuses on understanding their roles and strategies of operation for greater effective or maximum benefits to the learners. The orientation training includes:

- (a) Overview of e-learning;
- (b) Understanding the learner;
- (c) Understanding the teaching/learning process-mode of delivery;
- (d) Strategies of operations of the UPI;
- (e) Understanding the role of the academic staff member; and
- (f) The lecturing processes both face to face and by correspondence through comments on assignments and lectures.

Article 26: Orientation to Non-academic Staff

The orientation of non-academic staff focuses on their role and the contribution of the programme/module. The areas to be covered should include:

- (a) Vision, mission of the UPI;
- (b) Strategies of operation of the UPI;
- (c) The role of non-academic staff in the teaching and learning environment and success to the programme; and
- (d) The customers who are learners or target groups and their concerns.

Article 27: Final Provisions

Any member of the ULK Polytechnic Institute (staff and student) acknowledges having read and agreed to the text of the UPI E-Learning policy

Article 28: Modification

The current policy is susceptible to modification anytime circumstances related to the UPI development will oblige.

Done at Kigali, on December 12, 2023

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