THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF TANZANIA

ADMISSIONS AND REGISTRATION
POLICY AND OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

MARCH 2010

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FOREWORD

This is the first policy and operational procedures on admissions, developed at the Open University of Tanzania. The Open University of Tanzania (OUT) was the third public university established in Tanzania following an Act of Parliament passed in 1992. The delivery mode of OUT is unique, in that the students and staff are not at the same place all the time. The university operates an open system where each student progresses at one's own pace, and the learning is centred on the learner rather than the teacher.

This policy on admissions and registration is essential in order to bring forward the necessary modalities of accepting students in an Open and Distance Learning (ODL) System. Among the target groups for admission into the Open University of Tanzania are the following:

- ❖ A level graduates who qualify for University studies but who opt for the open and distance learning mode..
- ❖ Workers in various vocations who wish to advance themselves without taking leave from their occupations.
- ❖ Graduates who wish to change their professions.
- ❖ Individuals who are constrained by family commitments and have no time to leave their homes or jobs to attend class rooms in conventional Universities.
- ❖ Ex form four leavers with greater than five passes or three credits who do not meet minimum entry requirements to degree programmes, but who qualify for admission into te pre-entry programme offered by the university.
- ❖ Special cases that can only be admitted based on experience after passing an oral or written interview.

This diverse background of target groups is both a point of strength and a challenge to the Open University of Tanzania. The University should also continue to open its doors wider to capture other disadvantaged groups. For example one of the oldest Open Universities in the World, Open University of the UK, is so open that it admits any adult person with requisite prior learning experience above the age of 18 years irrespective of educational background.

This Admission and Registration Policy therefore, specifies the best practices for making the admission process more transparent, efficient and acceptable, and for

ensuring those admitted and registered and encouraged to progress until they graduate. This policy and operational procedure is also in line with the strategic objective of the Open University's Rolling Strategic Plan on Admissions.

It is hoped that this policy and operational procedures will be read and understood by all staff and management of the Open University of Tanzania, so that our clients will receive the best service, making our university a model to be emulated by other universities.

Prof Tolly S.A. Mbwette
Vice-Chancellor

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The preparation of this policy and operational procedures, was only possible through hard work and dedication of the core team, which was led by Prof. M. Varisanga under the guidance of the DVC (Academic). I wish to acknowledge the team's efforts particularly its willingness to work beyond official hours. No words can express our gratitude to the Management and all other staff of the Open University, who in one way or the other, gave suggestions and ideas that helped to shape the policy and operational procedures to their present state during the stake holder workshop that was held on 24th April, 2009. Particularly let me acknowledge the Principal Resource Person in that workshop, Dr. Han Rakels who brought a lot of innovative ideas for the improvement of the policy and operational procedures by application of the Business Process Redesign (BPR) principles.

I also wish to acknowledge other participants in the stake holders workshop, particularly those from the University of Dar Es Salaam, the Tanzania Commission for Universities, and many others who contributed in one way or another to bring this policy into its present form. It is my sincere hope that this policy shall serve as a useful guide to staff and students of the open university of Tanzania.

Prof Elifas Tozo BISANDA, Dar es Salaam
Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academics) March, 2010

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AAU	Association of African Universities
ACDE	African Council for Distance Education
DCM	Directorate of Communications and Marketing
DES	Directorate of Examinations Syndicate
DHRM	Directorate of Human Resources Management
DRC	Director Regional Centre
DRPC	Directorate of Research, Postgraduate studies, and Consultancy
EAC	East African Community
FASS	Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
FBM	Faculty of Business Management
FED	Faculty of Education
FLW	Faculty of Law
FSTES	Faculty of Science, Technology, and Environmental Management
HESLB	Higher Education Students Loans Board
ICDE	International Council for Distance Education
ICE	Institute of Continuing Education
IET	Institute of Educational Technology
IGNOU	Indira Ghandhi National Open University
IUCEA	Inter University Council of East Africa
NACTE	National Council for Technical Education
NAMCOL	Namibia College of Open Learning
NECTA	National Examination Council of Tanzania
NOUN	National Open University of Nigeria
NQF	National Qualification Framework
OUT	Open University of Tanzania
PGSC	Postgraduate Studies Committee
RPPC	Research, Publications, and Postgraduate Studies Committee
RSP	Rolling Strategic Plan
SAIDE	South African Institute of Distance Education
SARUA	Southern Africa Region Universities Association
Sida	Swedish International Development Agency
SWOC	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Challenges
TCU	Tanzania Commission for Universities
TEA	Tanzania Education Authority
UGSC	Undergraduate Studies Committee

ZOU   Zimbabwe Open University

1. 0 Introduction

1.1 Establishment of the University

The Open University of Tanzania (OUT) was established by an Act of parliament No. 17 of 1992 which was assented on the 28th December 1992. However, the Universities Act No. 7, of 2005 repealed the Act No.17 of 1992 and all enabling legal instruments of the University, now replaced by the OUT Charter of 2007.

The University is mandated to offer its services through open and distance learning mode, mainly to complement the conventional Universities in the country. The OUT therefore was, and still is, intended to be accessible to all those who aspired to attain University education such as employed staff or the self employed who could not study in conventional Universities due to their career commitments, girls or women who could not leave their families, aspiring people in remote areas, and more currently school leavers who had the minimum entry requirements but could not be admitted in conventional Universities because of capacity limitations. From its inception, the University has tremendously grown in terms of student intake, academic units and academic programmes.

1.2 Administrative Set-up

The Open University of Tanzania operates through regional and coordination centres and depending on needs, there can be more than one examination centre within the region. The current administrative set-up allows for the following positions: A Governing Council, the Vice Chancellor, three Deputy Vice Chancellors (responsible for academic, resource management, and regional services, respectively), Directors and/or Deans of Faculties or Institutes, Directors of Regional Centres (DRCs) and Heads of various Academic Departments. According to the University' Charter and organization structures, the fourth DVC responsible for postgraduate, publications, research and consultancy issues shall be established when need arises.

1.3 Admission Trends

Although the University launched its academic programmes in 1994 with a modest enrolment of about 766 students, today OUT is the largest University not only in Tanzania but in East Africa, with a cumulative student enrolment exceeding 40,000 students. We wish to note that despite this large number of enrolment, the number of active Undergraduate students students as per attendance in the 2009/2010 annual examinations is just about 10000 which is only 25% of the total enrolment. The University has also managed to attract recognition at national, regional and international levels. Despite the fact that the majority of OUT's students are Tanzanians, some students enrolled at the OUT are from countries such as Malawi, Zambia, Kenya, Uganda, Namibia, Burundi, Libya, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Saudi Arabia, Botswana, Hungary and Hong Kong.

1.4 Rolling Strategic Plan

Given its very fast growing rate, the OUT felt necessary to establish its rolling and strategic plan so as to enable the optimum utilization of available resources. Therefore, since 2004, the Open University of Tanzania started conducting six monthly review workshops designed to determine achievements as well as constraints faced in the process of meeting the current growth challenges. During review meetings, priority needs are identified and strategies meant to address the problems are outlined. This exercise enables reviewing and updating of the University's Rolling and Strategic Planning (RSP) as a milestone towards achieving academic excellence.

1.5 Academic Units

To date, Five Faculties, Four Directorates, Two Institutes, and a Quality Assurance coordinating Unit have been established. The Faculties include: The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS), The Faculty of Business Management (FBM), The Faculty of Education (FED), The Faculty of Law (FLW), and The Faculty of Science, Technology and Environmental Studies (FSTES). As for the institutes, they are: The Institute of Educational Technology (IET) and The

Institute of Continuing Education (ICE). The Directorates are for Research, Publications, Postgraduate and Consultancy, (DRPC) the Directorate of Examinations Syndicate (DES), The Directorate of Communication and Marketing (DCM) and the Directorate of Human Resource Management (DHRM). The University Library has also the levelof a directorate, though not yet formalized.

2.0 Background and Justification

The Tanzania Vision 2025 envisages Tanzania to be a nation with high participation rate at all levels of education; a nation that produces quantity and qualities of educated people sufficiently equipped with the requisite knowledge and skills to solve the society's problems; meet the challenges of development and attain competitiveness at regional and global level.

In addressing the national development vision of 2025, the Open University of Tanzania, shall welcome applications to its programmes from people of all academic and professional backgrounds. This policy is aiming at providing fair and equal access to a university education to all who have the potential to benefit from it. The OUT aims to not only select students from programmes, which they intend to follow, but also to ensure that no prospective or existing student is treated less favourably on the ground of age, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, faith, disability, HIV status, sexual orientation, gender, marital or parental status ,social or economic class.

The OUT offers its programmes by Open and Distance Learning. According to SAIDE (2000), Distance Education is a set of teaching and learning that can be used to overcome spatial and temporal separation between educators and learners. It is through this flexibility and openness that the OUT offers the best alternatives for those who cannot join the campus based universities because of inadequate capacity or not being available for a full-time engagement studies. The justification for the OUT to have its admission policy is given by the fact that:
  • There is a continued expansion of students' enrolment

- There is a need to redress gender imbalances in the OUT's students enrolment
- It is imperative that the OUT widens the participation of persons with disabilities
- It is currently important to revitalize and improve the quality of education offered by the University.
- There are some ongoing efforts to strengthen the institutional capacity of the OUT to expand its capture base.
- There is a growing number of students, who wish to transfer their credit from campus based universities to the OUT.
- There is a need to achieve universal primary education as per UN millennium development goals.

2.1 University Vision and Mission

The Vision of OUT is, "To be a Leading World class University in the delivery of affordable quality education through Open and Distance Learning, Dynamic Knowledge generation and Application".

The vision is expected to be achieved through continuous implantation of the following Institutional Mission statement: "To continuously provide Open and Distance education, research and public services for sustainable social-economic development of Tanzania in particular, and the rest of Africa.

2.2 Guidelines on the OUT Admission Policy

The OUT admission policy complies with current various authorities which deals with student's admission in one way or another. These authorities include the following:

(a) *Relevant Regional and National Legislation / Protocols:*
- The Constitution of United Republic of Tanzania 1977, as amended from time to time.
- The Universities Act No. 7 of 2005
- OUT charter and rules 2007
- The envisaged NQF as well as the EAC protocols on higher education
- IUCEA handbook on Quality Assurance

(b) *National Commissions, Councils & Authority*
- Tanzania Commission for Universities
- National Examination Council of Tanzania (NECTA)

- National Council for Technical Education (NACTE)

(c) National Policies:
- Tanzania Development Vision 2025
- National Disability Policy

Apart from due regard to relevant provisions at national level, the OUT admission policy also observes institutional regulations and the related/relevant policies, such as the following:
- Quality Assurance Policy
- ICT Policy (2009)
- Policy on Writing Study Material (2009)

2.3 SWOC analysis of the Institution

2.3.1 Strengths

The following are perceived strengths of the OUT
- Existence of a OUT Rolling Strategic Plan
- Existence of Regional centres across the country
- Rapid development in ICT
- Increase in number of both academic and administrative staff at HQs and Regional centres
- Acquisition of own buildings at Regional centres
- Existence of a well defined fees collection mechanism through banks
- Existence of OUT website which provides various information on admission
- Presence of a bridging course, Certificate in Foundation Course, for candidates who lack direct entry requirements into degree programmes
- Presence of Quality Assurance (QA) Policy which guides admissions of students into various programmes
- Ability to absorb large numbers of potential students
- Availability of qualified staff
- OUT charging affordable fees
- Continuing students are allowed to officially postpone studies and resume after a year to applicants seeking admissions
- No age limit on admission into various academic programmes
- Issues of prospective students with disability well addressed in the application advert and form.

2.3.2 Weaknesses

The university admission and registration system has the following weaknesses.

- Lack of feedback to unsuccessful applicants
- Academic programmes not extensively marketed through various media
- Credit transfer arrangements not well structured
- Absence of guiding policy on applicants' data protection
- No acknowledgement letters to applicants
- Inability to identify applicants discontinued from other universities
- Dependence on files system in keeping students information
- Lack of guidelines on admission of prospective students with criminal conviction
- Delays in processing of application forms at Regional centres
- Some OUT staff are ignorant of the admission procedures and entry requirements into various programmes and consequently fail to disseminate information to prospective students
- On line application form not yet actualized.
- Inability to identify and label foreign students during registration
- Weak student counselling and support services, causing some students to drop out.
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2.3.3 Opportunities

The university admission and registration system has the following opportunities:

- Presence of regulatory bodies such as TCU, CVCPUT, NECTA, NACTE and VETA
- Existence of various media for advertising and marketing OUT programmes
- Availability of sister Universities such as Egerton University, NOUN, ZOU, NAMCOL, IGNOU, etc. all with signed agreements or memorandum of understanding and willing to collaborate with OUT in running various programmes.
- Membership in regional and international bodies such as the IUCEA, ACDE, AAU, ICDE, SARUA, etc.
- Availability of potential applicants within and outside the country
- Continued support from development partners such as Sida, World Bank, Chinese Government, etc.

2.3.4 Challenges

The OUT admission and registration system faces the following challenges:

- Sister conventional Universities are now also introducing distance and open learning mode like OUT
- Increased costs in advertising programmes
- Limited funds from the Government

- Scramble for applicants from the same pool
- Applicants trying to use names not found on original certificates during admission and registration processes
- Inability to reach all potential applicants
- Late submission of application forms
- Applicants presenting copies of certificates written using non-official languages such as Chinese, Russian.
- Increase in cases in cheating during admission process e.g. Presenting forged documents
- Low fees charged by the University
- Inability for students to pay their fees timely
- Delays in remittance of student fees from the student loans board (HESLB)

2.4 Objectives of the Admission Policy

2.4.1 General Objectives

The Open University of Tanzania admits students with different backgrounds and a variety of qualifications. The principal aim of this policy is to ensure that University admits students by assessing both ability and suitability for the programme for which they have applied irrespective of the social, racial, religious, ethnic and national origins, gender, sexuality, parental status, marital status, disability status, political beliefs, and social or economic background.

2.4.2 Specific Objectives

The following are the specific objectives of the University Admission Policy:

- Aspiration to offer admissions to students of the highest intellectual potential.
- To encourage applications from groups that are at present, in jobs, at homes or self employed.
- To ensure that every applicant is considered individually in a holistic assessment using all the information available to OUT.
- To ensure that the University welcomes applications from all candidates with the potential to succeed in higher education, at all times.
- To ensure that the University admission practices are designed to enable applicants wholly treated on the basis of their achievements and potential to successfully complete their chosen

programme of study.

- To ensure that admissions requirements and procedures are designed to help the University to select, from among applicants those qualified to benefit from the education opportunities at the University.
- To allow for registration of students who may wish to study only selected courses instead of the full programmes.

3.0 Policy Statements

3.1 Admission Criteria

The effectiveness of any programme offered in the University depends on the quality of students admitted in that particular programme. Consequently, admission is among the key activities as it assists in the management of student population in a given academic programme and their progression up to graduation. As a process, admission involves receiving applications, selection of prospective students according to the minimum entry requirements or programme needs, and registration of the newly admitted and continuing students.

3.1.1 Situational analysis

At the OUT, admission starts with the advertisement of admission requirements in public media, notice boards at the headquarters, regional centres and on the OUT website. Applicants are supposed to write an application letter accompanied by their respective supporting documents (certificates or transcripts to certify academic qualification and to qualify ones identity) to the Director of Regional Centre (DRC). Application forms are given to applicants, who have fully paid the application fee, and as an alternative, the forms could be downloaded from the OUT website but their acceptance subjected to the proof that one has paid the application fee.

The dully-filled forms are processed at the regional centre and the documented information is transmitted to the headquarters for further scrutiny by respective Faculties before it is presented to the

Undergraduate Studies Committee (UGSC) or Postgraduate Studies Committee (PGSC) depending on the programme. If approved, the admission list is sent to Senate for consideration and final approval. Thereafter, the list of admitted students is made public; publishing the names of selected students in the media, OUT website and notice boards (HQ and regional centres).

If the process of admission is not well done, it may lead to an enrolment of students who do not have the capacity to undertake University studies. It is thus imperative that the whole process of admission is robust in all its aspects and there should be regular review of this process by updating the admission policy.

3.1.2 Objectives
- Establish clear admission criteria
- Operationalize an inclusive, robust and secure admission process that allows admission into a course or programmes.

3.1.3 Policy statements
1) There ought to be an efficient, accurate, secure and clear admission criteria for each programme offered by the OUT.
   Strategies:
   i. Clearly indicating entry/minimum qualifications for admission
   ii. Establish acceptable, fair/logical, and transparent programme needs/requirements

2) Provision of smooth, transparent and efficient application procedure
   Strategies:
   iii. Provision of enough time between advertisement and processing of the applications for admission
   iv. Decentralize the admission process, i.e., all applications processed at the regional centres.
   v. Personnel handling applications should be well versed on the exercise
   vi. Pre-selection may start at the regions provided that

3.2 Announcements

3.2.1 Situational analysis

The collected data are preserved for evidential purposes, admission advertisements are publicized in the media, OUT website, and in the notice boards at the headquarters and regional centres. Sometimes, depending on the initiative of the regional director, admission announcements may be specifically sent to targeted groups such as teachers training centres or secondary schools. Surprisingly, it sometimes happens that our would be clients are not very well aware of the way Open University delivers its programmes, whether it is a public or private University, how are the OUT graduates accepted in the market, etc. Proper advertisement of our programmes definitely will make the admission process much easier.

3.2.2 Objectives:
- Adapt and/or adopt strategic publicity approaches of the OUT programmes
- Reach and attract a broad number of potential students

3.2.3 Policy statements

3) To have a well publicized and informative advertisement system that provides accurate information on admission issues

Strategies:
  i. Constant review and updating our programme delivery systems
  ii. Delivery system of the OUT programmes be publicized
  iii. Programme specifications be spelled out clearly
  iv. Programme requirements, fees structure & payments, support facilities, duration and credit points to be achieved should be indicated.

3.3 Application Requirements

3.3.1 Situational analysis

The application requirement at OUT is governed by the regulations of admission of the OUT. Admission requirement is published in the prospectus and in a booklet of general information on admission to

degrees, diploma and certificates. The same information is advertised in public media, notice boards at the OUT headquarters Regional centres and on the OUT website.

Application letters attached with certificates /transcripts showing full details of academic qualification, together with bank pay in slip of application fee with or without birth certificates are sent to the respective regional centres upon which are received. Alternatively, an applicant can download the application form from the OUT website and return it accompanied by academic certificates and the application fee pay-in slip with or without birth certificates or application letters at respective regional centres and not at the head office. A student will not be admitted into more than programme at a given moment. Prior to 2007/2008, the applicants were able to submit their applications at the head office. However, there is no online application.

Currently the general document required for application includes; - application letter, application form, all relevant academic certificates or transcripts, application fee pay in slip worth TSh. 10,000/= for Tanzanian and USD 30 for foreigners. Birth certificates were not mandatory.

3.3.2 Objectives
- To provide pre-entry advice and guidance which is comprehensive, accurate, and conveniently available to prospective applicants
- To encourage people who have the ability and motivation to benefit from the programmes they intend to apply.

3.3.3 Policy statements

4) To provide an efficient, accurate, secure and effective verification process of applicant credentials to certify their academic qualification and their identity.

Strategies
i. Establish full-proof procedure for screening applications.
ii. Collaborating with examination authorities and professional bodies to screen all suspected fake certificates.

5) To provide fair and equal access to university education to all who have potential to benefit from it.

Strategies

i. Establish flexible and inclusive application requirements.
ii. Provide special exemption for female applicants and those with special needs.
iii. Consider applicants with minimum learning experience in addition to extensive professional experience.
iv. The OUT is committed to make sure that, no applicant will be treated less favourably on the ground of age, race, colour, nationality, ethnic origin, faith, disability, HIV status, sexual orientation, gender, marital or parental status, political belief or social or economic class

6) To provide well-publicized and informative advertisement system that provides accurate information on application issues.

Strategies
i. Review and develop the university marketing and advertising strategies in relation to application procedures.
ii. To promote awareness of the programmes of studies at the OUT with its relevant entry qualification.
iii. To advertise the application requirement in time through national and international media, OUT website and in all notice boards of OUT headquarter and at Regional centres offices.
iv. To provide acknowledgment letters to all applicants.
v. To respond to applications promptly, efficiently and courteously.

7) To provide smooth, transparent and friendly application procedure.

Strategies
i. Decentralize application process to regional centres
ii. Establishment of online applications.
iii. Ensure that all staff involved in application procedures are well trained on the subject.
iv. Regularly reviewing and updating OUT admission policy and regulations.
v. Proper handling of applicants' data from the very beginning.

3.4 Registration Procedures

3.4.1 Situational Analysis

Registration in the OUT context refers to documentation that students undertake to inform the University the courses they wish to study under the academic programme to which they have been admitted. For new students, registration forms are availed to them at their respective Regional Centres during orientation day(s). Normally students are allowed

to register after they have instituted payments of prescribed fee through designated collection bank accounts. The registration process requires students to fill registration forms in triplicate that are countersigned by directors of regional centres. Two copies of the registration form are sent to respective faculty/institute deans/director. The latter checks the forms and endorses them if found dully filled.

The entire registration process is intended to produce statistics, which will help faculties and institute/directorate during preparation of examination papers and distribution of study materials to Regional Centres. However, the current system has failed to produce desired outcome. For proper registration and documentation, the university needs to put in place modern database software and recruit qualified staff in IT who will be responsible to process students data right at the regional centre level, so that the centres become the primary sources of students data.

3.4.2 Objective

- The University ought to ensure proper registration and documentation of admitted students at the Regional Centre in order to generate a reliable institutional students' database.

3.4.3 Policy Statements

8) OUT shall ensure that all regional centres have enough staff, modern ICT equipment, and connectivity to the University database.

Strategies
i.   Employ and deploy enough ICT staff at regional centres
ii. Equip regional centres with modern computers and software.
iii. Ensure that all regional centre databases are connected to university database

9) OUT shall ensure that admitted students pay prescribed tuition fees and other academic related fee as condition for registration.

Strategies
i.   Classify students as home and overseas
ii. Maximize utilization of collection accounts through chosen banks
iii. Provide Registration numbers to registered students only
iv. Ensure availability of information on bursaries, and scholarships to needy students
v.   Ensure that all registered students are served with identity cards (ID's)
vi. Ensure that students' registration in regional centres is timely handled.

10) OUT shall ensure consistent review of registration procedures from

time to time.

3.5 Change of Programme of Study

3.5.1 Situational analysis

The OUT conditionally allows registered students to change programme upon application to and subsequent approval by Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic). Students intending to change programme of study normally lodge their application through the office of Dean of students and passed through several offices intending admissions, dean/ director receiving and old faculty/ institute and finally the DVC (Academic)

Students should provide reasons to support their applications for change of study. They should also produce copies of certificates to substantiate that they qualify for new. Students need to be enlightened that qualification for one programme of study may not apply for the other. Each programme of study has unique entry requirements different from the other.

3.5.2 Objective
- Ensure that there exists an effective and efficient mechanism to guide and counsel students wishing to change programme of study

3.5.3 Policy statement
11) Ensure that faculties, institutes, directorates and regional centres provide academic guidance and counselling services to students wishing to change programme of study.

Strategies
i. Employ and deploy enough staff at both HQs and Regional centres
ii. Undertake capacity building to staff on how to offer academic guidance and counselling services to students
iii. Improve orientation and face to face sessions
iv. Provide information to students by distributing enough copies of General Information Booklets and posting the same at OUT website

3.6 Change of Names

3.6.1 Situational analysis

The OUT general admission rules require an applicant to use names appearing in the school/college or universities while filling it. This directive restrict applicants on the use of non-official names and this implies that

change of names is generally not allowed at OUT. University reserves the right to refuse any change of names that are drastic even when properly booked up by relevant laws of the land. However, in practice there exists evidence of students being allowed to change names by presenting marriage certificates and certified deed pools. Not only that, prospective graduands with two names have been advised on several occasions to add up a third and therefore contravening with the set regulations restricting change of names by students. In the light of the above, there is a need for the university to have a clear mechanism guiding use and change of students' names during and after registration.

3.6.2 Objective
- The University ought to put in place efficient and effective mechanism of controlling change of names of students

Policy Statement
12) Put in place clear rules guiding change of names

Strategies
i. Provide guidance regarding change of names to directors of Regional centres
ii. Utilize fully orientation and face to face sessions to provide detailed information on the procedures to follow when intending to make any alterations to ones names
iii. Ensure that information and guidelines involving change of names are available on the OUT website
iv. Restrict replacement of entire student names in use.

3.7 Applicants and Registration

3.7.1 Situational Analysis:

OUT is a fast growing University admitting various categories of applicants seeking for admission into various programmes of study available. In terms of nationalities, both Tanzania citizens and overseas applicants are acceptable. Applicants can be admitted under direct entry requirements or if they do not qualify, they should have to join some recognized pre-university entry programmes offered by the University or other recognized higher learning institutions; which upon completion have to re-apply. Also, in some cases, students may transfer credits from other universities to OUT for courses which they have completed successfully provided that the student has not been terminated under academic grounds. However, this depends on the

availability of the programme for which the student wishes to be transferred to. The maximum duration for which an undergraduate degree student is supposed to be registered is eight years after which they are deregistered unless was officially permitted to postpone studies. Deregistered students are allowed to reapply except where the student was deregistered (discontinued) under academic grounds whereby three years have to lapse before reapplication. Any applicant should be at least 18 years of age and mentally fit to be admitted at the OUT. Knowing that some applicants might be having some physical disabilities (e.g. visually impaired), the University should be informed in advance in order to prepare itself to serve them should they be admitted.

3.7.2 Objective

- To be inline with the University vision - To be a leading world class university in the delivery of affordable quality education through open and distance learning, dynamic knowledge generation and application.
- To ensure that only applicants with academic qualifications get admission regardless of other factors like gender, social class, etc.

3.7.3 Policy Statements

13) There shall be minimum entry qualifications for each programme of study, which should publicly be known and enforced aiming for fairness.

14) Students transferring credits from other universities shall meet the required programme minimum entry requirements of the OUT and TCU and will not be allowed to transfer more than one third of all required credit units.

15) There shall be procedures and conditions for admitting students from outside Tanzania.

16) There shall be a means to liaise with other bodies (e.g. examining bodies, embassies, immigration, etc.) for the purposes of authenticating validity of documents submitted by applicants.

17) There shall be a means to ensure that students discontinued from studies on academic grounds from other universities (institutions?) are not admitted until the prescribed period lapses.

18) There shall be a means to identify students who have unofficially exceeded the maximum study period.

19) There shall be computer software to improve applications and admissions in order to increase efficiency.

Strategies

i. To prepare and publish (booklets, brochures, website, etc.) minimum entry qualifications for each programme and make them available to the public.

ii. To inform students applying for credit transfer to submit their applications with their pre-university education certificates in addition to the official transcripts issued by the releasing university.

iii. To certify that students wishing to transfer credits are from universities/institutions accredited by Tanzania Commission for Universities.

iv. To spell out the minimum indicator of programme similarities for the acceptance of students from outside Tanzania.

v. Officially request issuing authorities to confirm the validity of documents submitted by applicants.

vi. Liaise with TCU in order to check if the applicant seeking for admission has ever been admitted by another higher learning institution(s) and the reason for reapplication at OUT.

vii. To regularly review student records in order to identify inactive students and act accordingly.

viii. Acquire appropriate computer software to fulfil relevant admission policies in order to improve efficiency and minimize processing time.

3.8 Selection

3.8.1 Situational analysis:

The OUT strives to ensure that selection of students is accurately handled in order to get qualified students that could lead to better output. Lists of selected candidates are tabled at a special UGSC meeting by respective deans/ directors of faculties/ institutes. The role of UGSC and RPPC is to go through tabled lists of selected candidates, endorse and transmit them to the SENATE for subsequent approval.

3.8.2 Objective

- To streamline and select suitably qualified candidates who meet programme requirements as per the University and TCU pre-stated criteria.
- To ensure that only applicants with academic qualifications get admission regardless of other factors like gender, social class, etc.

3.8.3 Policy Statement

20) Faculties, Regional Centres, Admissions Office, and UGSC Meeting Members shall have well defined entry requirements for each programme of study.

21) In order to ensure consistency and fairness, the general principles and procedures set out by the OUT must be followed by all faculties/ institutes.

Strategies

i. Ensure that selection at faculty level is preceded by pre selection at Admissions Office.

ii. Review programme entry requirements from time to time, update documents, and disseminate this information to public.

iii. Undertake capacity building to personnel involved in receiving and processing applications, selection, and review of programme requirements.

3.9 Approval Organs

3.9.1 Situational Analysis

The selection of new students at OUT is carried out by the UGSC and RPPC then lists are forwarded to Senate for approval. The lists of approved applicants are in turn sent to Tanzania Commission for Universities (TCU) for all universities joint admissions officers meeting. The role of TCU is to examine and verify entry qualifications for every applicant as well as to ensure that no multiple allocation of students. Lists of selected candidates are made public after joint admission selection committee meeting organized by TCU.

4.9.2 Objective

• Effectively and efficiently, cope with TCU format, entry qualifications, and guidelines of submitting the lists of selected applicants.

4.9.3 Policy Statement

22) There shall be a means to ensure that all names of students selected to join for degree programmes are sent to TCU.

23) Deadline for application and submission of documents should clearly be defined and adhered to.

24) The University should ensure a conducive environment, proper working tools, enough personnel, and other relevant resources are in place in order to facilitate application, selection, and admission processes.

Strategies

i. Establish procedures for handling non-degree students wishing to join degree programmes in order to ensure that they are included in the list to be submitted to TCU. This will avoid data mismatches between OUT and TCU.

3.10 Notice to Selected Students/Notice of Acceptance

3.10.1 Situational Analysis

One of the main functions of the admissions office is to send an admission letter to the selected applicants informing among other things the programme admitted to, fees details, orientation date and so on. Admission letter is also attached with registration forms which the student is supposed to fill and return to his respective regional centre or faculty.

This practice aims at providing quick feedback to applicants so that they can get enough time for preparations and planning for studies. However, there are many troubles that slow down the process. These include sending of thousands of admission letters to selected applicants within a very short time. Currently, admission office is running a shortage of enough manpower to overtake all functions.

3.10.2 Objectives
- The University ought to provide on time feedback to selected and successful applicants to enable students get enough time of preparations for studies.
- University aims at providing all required information for a student to be able to undertake his or her registered programme.

3.10.3 Policy statements

25) Shall put in place sufficient and qualified admissions staff to cater for the ever increasing students enrolments at the University.

26) University shall give on time feedback to selected applicants by sending them admission letters and registration forms.

27) The University shall not automatically give reasons for application rejection especially if reason for rejection is based on the confidential reference.

Strategies
i. To employ a constructive figure of qualified Admission staff
ii. Admissions staff be provided with regular training on admission issues and operations.
iii. Job descriptions for all admission staff be prepared and assigned accordingly.

i. To employ a computer database system for computerization of all applicant's data.
ii. A list of selected students is published in the University website and on public newspapers.
iii. Admissions Office is responsible on attending a variety of applicants' requests.

3.11 Programme Requirements

3.11.1 Situational Analysis

Faculties are responsible in evaluating applications to check if they meet minimum requirements of the requested programme. This activity is done by the authorized staff in the faculties to all screened applications and as per submission by the admissions office. The admissions office is responsible for submitting applications which have been screened to faculties for pre-selection. Faculties check academic qualifications of each applicant in respect of the programme required. However, there are many problems encountered in this process. These include:

i. Erroneous and off beam choices of programmes made in various applications.
ii. Unawareness of entry requirements by candidates in the opted programme.
iii. Poor observance of the University almanac by staff while carrying out different admission operations.

3.11.2 Objectives

- All admission information and requirements are accessible by general public within and across the boundaries.

3.11.3 Policy statements

28) Shall put in place a mechanism to ensure the availability of general and specific information for admissions in various programmes

29) Operations of Admissions activities shall observe the University almanac.
30) Minimum entry requirements set by faculties shall be designed to secure a good match between the abilities and aptitudes of the student and demands of the programme.

31) Specific admission criteria shall be set out in the relevant entry profile for each programme, where they exist

32) Where programmes attract large numbers of applications than the capacity,   faculties shall set an element of competition.

33) In cases where the University is unable to make offer for an applicant's original choice of programme, he or she shall be considered for an alternative or related programme.

34) For postgraduate programmes, applicants shall normally have a first degree   in a discipline appropriate to the subject or nature of the programme for which they are applying.

35) Postgraduate offers shall normally only be made when the University can offer supervision in the subject area of research.

36) In the event of a student failing, for any reason, to complete a programme of study, the University is not under any obligation to disregard any part of the   fees due, nor to return any sums paid by, or on behalf of, the student.

(37) Students shall be subject to dismissal if any part of the application is omitted falsified. Any student found to have been admitted on the basis of fraudulent information shall have their studies terminated.

Strategies

i.   To ensure that various documents pertaining to admissions like Admission booklets and adverts are in place and updated regularly.

ii. To have a special Admission link in the University website to assist students to apply for a programme to their needs, interests and academic qualifications and potential.

iii. Departments and faculties are responsible for setting the entry criteria for their programmes

3.12 Transfer of Credit

3.12.1 Situation Analysis

i. There has been a rise in mobility of students within and from outside Tanzania, in the present environment of globalization, privately sponsored higher education. Midway in the programme, students decide to move to another university for various reasons, for example the desire to work while studying motivates students to wish to move to open and distance learning mode.

ii. Credit transfer is a mechanism that allows a student to transfer credits attained in one accredited institution to another accredited higher education institution.

iii. Transfer of credit has not been easy due to differences in grading and definition of credit, amongst Tanzania Universities.

iv. There are also differences in course content and curriculum, even in programmes that appear similar on the surface.

v. Universities have a fear, that they may lose their credibility, if their graduate students who had transferred credits of core subjects, fails to perform professionally, upon graduation.

vi. The process of trying to convert credits attained in one university into equivalent credits of the other university is complex, and often subjective. What would work, are simple and objective rules, that will not compromise the quality of the final award, yet will not fall short of recognizing achievements gained from the previous university.

vii. Some universities in Tanzania, have established their own guidelines for credit transfer, while others remain rigid with no clear rules. The proposed rules will only complement existing rules in universities, and should be accepted only as the MINIMUM requirements for credit transfer. Universities will continue to have the final say, on credit transfer. The rules primarily apply only for undergraduate programmes.

3.12.2   Policy Statements

(38) No more than one third of credits required for graduation can be transferred, and should not include credits of the last four semesters.

(39) Credits for dissertation and final year project shall not be transferred.

(40) No credit may be transferred in practical based or field based subjects

(41) Credit may be transferred only where at least 75% of the syllabus and course content is the same, and the difference in contact hours (or its equivalent) not more than 10%.

(42) The actual grades of the credited courses will be determined using equivalence comparison of the grading systems of the target universities.

(43) Credit earned more than 5 years shall not be transferred.

(44) Students who have been discontinued from studies due to cases of cheating or other forms of examination misconduct shall not be allowed to transfer any credit.

(45) Only credits from accredited universities shall be transferred.

3.12.3   Strategies

i. A student wishing to transfer credit to another university shall first apply for admission, following the normal procedures, including paying application fees of the target university. Before considering transfer credit from one university to another, the student must fulfil all admission conditions of the target university.

ii. Once admission is secured, the student will be required to register for year 1 (level one). At this stage, the student may then apply for credit transfer through the Department and Faculty.

iii. The application for credit transfer will be submitted to the DVC responsible for academic affairs, and must be accompanied with officially endorsed documents (transcripts), photo attached personal identification from previous institution, passport, ID, or birth certificate, and a letter of attestation from the previous university, confirming that the student has not been discontinued due to cheating or examination misconduct.

iv. Credits shall only be transferred where the courses are comparable in nature, scope, content, depth and level between the two universities.