

# The Open University of Tanzania



## *Student Affairs Policy*

## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.0. INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. Background

The Open University of Tanzania (OUT) has witnessed tremendous growth in student enrolment since it was established in 1992. OUT students population varies in terms of age, experience, and in terms of geographical location. The OUT enrolls students located in all regions in Tanzania and some in other countries. These students have a wide range of background, economic status and personalities and therefore they experience different problems be educational, psychological, social, cultural or economical, which need guidance and counselling and other students' services. Thus, this situation calls for the need to have a comprehensive policy for students' affairs. This Students' Affairs Policy offers direct supervision of students' activities and contributes to their growth as academically and as individuals.

In this policy and operational procedures for students' affairs the term *Students Welfare* can be defined as health, happiness, prosperity, contentment and safety of a student during studies. Students Welfare is therefore meant to provide assistance for students who have personal, academic and social problems. *Students Affairs* on the other hand is connected to issues related to students' personal life, financial situation and all matters for personal concern as s/he pursues studies.

The office of the Dean of Students, which is under the DVC (RM), as per OUT charter of 2007, Part IV article 39 and 40; forms a crucial department, as its functions relates directly with the day to day personal and spiritual welfare of the students. Students in the University community are an important and most numerous portion of the community. The most sensitive part of this population is its nature in terms of age, mental, spiritual and academic development. Students at the University are like raw materials in a factory which are being processed to

produce refined materials for the market. Students at the University are in the refining process being prepared to become well-rounded individuals mature in terms of physical, social, emotional, and intellectual capabilities.

The office of Dean of Students participates fully in almost all process except in academic field of study. Thus the office plays a big role in shaping the students to produce graduates who are ready for use in the economic market of the society. The office of DoS nurtures and empowers them to emerge as educated, responsible service-oriented and committed citizen.

Students welfare services at OUT are unlike in conventional Universities whereby students are in one location. The OUT Open and Distance Learning (ODL) mode of teaching and learning places the University students in various locations (region) where they work or reside while studying. The office of DoS thus has to coordinate such services in all the current 25 regional centers in the country. Such a University setup thus demands for a well organized and effective system of coordination in order to adhere to the University Vision and Mission of providing quality education through dynamic knowledge generation and application, using mainly ODL mode.

## **1.2. The Rationale for Students Affair Policy**

The University aspiration is to produce quality output, integrity and quality education for all (RSP, 2006). The office of the Dean of Students being one of the University organs has a similar aspiration.

The OUT has embarked of bringing a change in terms of provision of education to students and related delivery services through its Rolling Strategic Plan (RSP) for the period 2006/2007-2010/11. The OUT RSP addresses the nineteen strategic issues of which the eleventh one is for improved handling of students' affairs. The University Charter of 2007 part IV likewise discusses the role of the office of DoS in the University.

The RSP and the University Charter emphasize on the important role of the office of DoS in catering for students academic developmental needs in the process of

preparing them to become efficient and effective members of the society. To achieve the aspired goal of the University as stipulated in the RSP, there needs a policy and operational procedures for students' affairs that will act as a guiding mirror to provide direction towards the realization of the aspired goal.

### **1.3. The Objectives**

The main purpose of the policy is to contribute to the realization of the University Vision and Mission. The policy augments the University struggle in provision of the affordable and quality education through ODL mode, dynamic knowledge generation and application. The office of DoS is expected to work towards these goals through effective provision of services in students' social welfare, academic support services and judicatory and control services.

#### **1.3.1. The General Objectives**

These are to:

- i. Offer improved students social welfare services.
- ii. Provide better academic support services.
- iii. Provide improved judicatory and control services.
- iv. Facilitate formation of strong students' government and instill good governance.

#### **1.3.2. The Specific Objectives**

These include to:

- i. Put in place a strong well qualified professional staff at headquarters and regional centres.
- ii. Put in place facilities necessary for performing essential duties in the office.
- iii. Provide efficient and effective guidance and counselling services to both students.
- iv. Facilitate formation of strong students' government and instill good governance.
- v. Facilitate formation of better health services during emergency.
- vi. Promote activities for knowledge and awareness on HIV/AIDS.
- vii. Support participation of students in sports and games and other recreational activities.

- viii. Assist students to access accommodation and food services during examinations and practicals.
- ix. Provide channels of communication for effective information delivery to both students and DoS office.
- x. Provide an environment conducive for academic pursuits.
- xi. Facilitate effective induction /orientation programme for ODL students in all regional centres.
- xii. Provide adequate training to students on study skills for the ODL mode of learning.
- xiii. Facilitate students to establish both internal and external links with students and libraries for better development of their welfare and training endeavors.
- xiv. Ensure female students and students with disabilities are given special opportunities and are assisted to achieve their academic goals.
- xv. Facilitate adherence to integrity among all students in all regional centres irrespective of their gender status, and belief orientation while enrolled as students of OUT.
- xvi. Ensure students' by-laws are adhered to, in order to maintain discipline.
- xvii. Ensure students' affairs and disciplinary committees are established to address various students' issues including complaints and other discipline issues.
- xviii. Coordinate complaints and discipline issues to maintain peace and harmony among University members.
- xix. Assist in proper handling of Students Association Funds.
- xx. Facilitate students to acquire loans from various sources for fees, research and practicals.
- xxi. To sensitise students on gender issues in relation to admission, choice of programmes and OUTSO leadership.

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2.0 ANALYSIS OF THE EXISTING STUDENTS' AFFAIRS SERVICES AT THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF TANZANIA

#### 2.1. Introduction

The current situation of the students' affairs can well be understood by analyzing the present situation, on how students' affairs are handled at the Open University of Tanzania. In this Chapter therefore, the role of the Office of Dean of Students and Students Organization (OUTSO) will be discussed in relation to the prevailing situation of the handling of students' affairs.

#### 2.2. Office of the Dean of Students

The DoS office is dealing with students affairs; it is under the DVC (Resource Management) office even though in some situations it operates under the DVC (Academic). Currently the office has two assistant deans of students who are trained in the guidance and counselling profession and one supporting staff.

Services offered in the DoS office are guidance and counselling to students on career, personal, health and academic issues, facilitating and coordinating students' and staff participation in sports and games. Others are advising students' government, facilitating access to financial and other resources and to link students with the University administration and the government through the Ministry of Education and Vocation Training.

The DoS office facilitates access to financial assistance to students. Currently DoS handle the following sources of funds; Students Assistance Funds, Women Education Fund, Loan from Higher Education Students' Loans Board (HESLB) and David Anderson African Trust (DAAT) sponsorship for disadvantaged women and students with disabilities.

Regarding accommodation, the OUT does not provide that service to students rather it depends on private and public institutions to provide accommodation to students when attending residential sessions like face to face, practical training, examinations or any other activity organized by the university (OUT prospectus, 2007). In few circumstances especially when students attend science practicals which are done in conventional Universities, the DoS office communicates and makes preparations with respective institutions for students' accommodation.

Due to the nature of OUT operations, health services for students are not the responsibility of the university. However, in few circumstances especially during science practicals the university takes care of sick students. The same is true when a student dies; the university is not liable because there are no specific guidelines on how to handle such incidences. But based on the humanitarian reasons when a student dies, the Director of Regional Centre (DRC), OUTSO leaders in a respective region and DoS (only for centres which are located in Dar es Salaam) attend funeral ceremonies.

The University also admits students with disabilities but their actual number and type of disability is not known by the DoS office, as a result they are failing to get closer help and advice. However, the University has a unit that offers special services to students who are visually impaired or otherwise print-disabled. This unit is located at OUT headquarters.

Regarding judicatory and control services, the OUT has students' by-laws, which were approved in 1994. But very few students either know or have a copy of it. There is therefore a need for DoS office to emphasize the institutionalization of the by-laws by making sure that every student has a copy of it.

There are several weaknesses in DoS office which hinders efficiency and sustainable delivery of students' affairs welfare services. These include inadequate organization structure of DoS office, inadequate staffing, inadequate motivation of

staff and inadequate provision of office space and other necessary facilities for guidance and counselling. Others are inadequate funding, inadequate communication system covering all key areas of students' affairs, lack of recreation and sports facilities , lack of students' funeral support, inadequate public relations related to student affairs and inadequate promotion of external linkages related to students' affairs.

### **2.3 Analysis of Existing Situation of Students Organisation**

The students' organisation was established by Act No.17 of 1992 vide S.65 (1). The affairs of the University Student Organisation are conducted in accordance with its constitution which was approved in 1996 and as amended in 2001 and 2007. OUTSO operations start at Regional Centres whereby leaders at this level are Vice Presidents (VP) and Regional Secretaries (RS). Top leaders at national level are President, Vice President and Secretary General. The University Students representative Council (USRC) normally meets twice per year. Members of USRC are all VPs, RS, OUTSO ministers and Representatives in various OUT board/committee meetings. OUTSO leaders are elected after 3 years. Since 2004 the newly elected student government leaders at national (University) level (University Students Representatives Council (USRC) were given leadership orientation by the university management under the coordination of the DoS office.

There are certain weaknesses regarding students' government and these are low representation of female students', inadequate participation of female students in leadership, lack of comprehensive orientation for new elected leaders at regional level, lack of transparency in use of OUTSO funds, lack of OUTSO offices in some regional centres and poor communication between the students' leadership and other students.



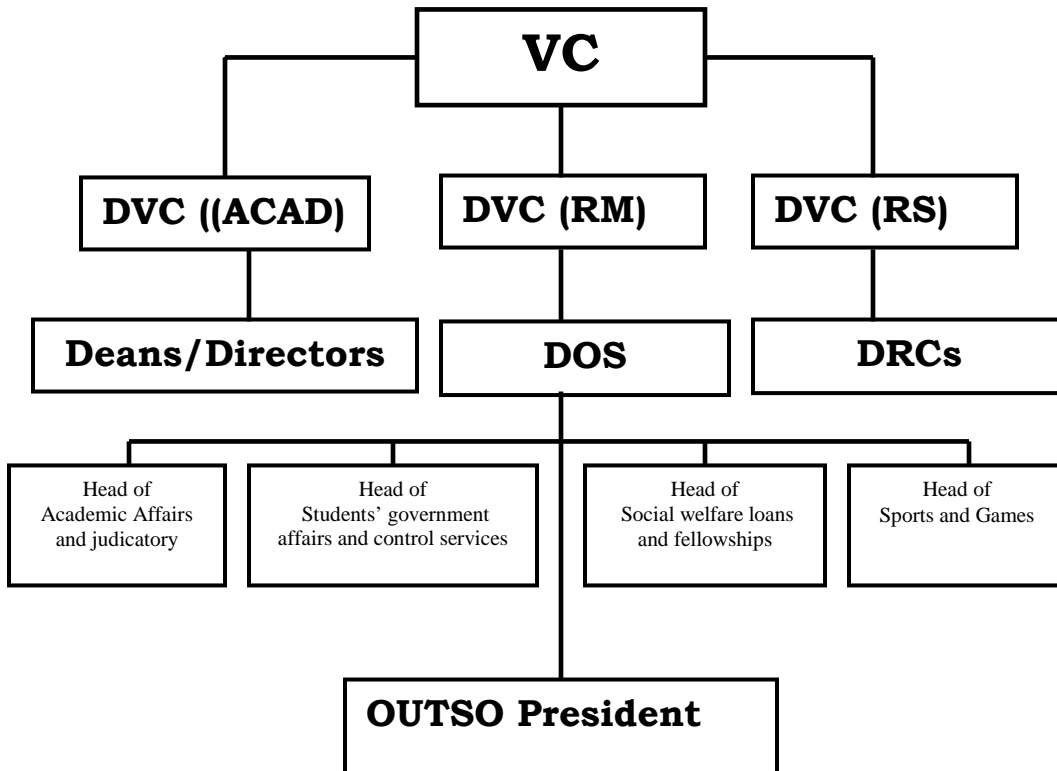
## CHAPTER THREE

### 3.0. POLICY AND OPERATION PROCEDURES FOR STUDENTS' AFFAIRS

#### 3.1. Introduction

In order to implement Student Affair Policy, explicitly policy statements coupled with operation procedures have been indicated in this chapter. The broader policy statements can thus be translated by the associated operational procedures. In order to manage students' affairs more effectively, good vertical and horizontal coordination between OUT Management on one hand and students on the other an organizational structure is required. This organizational structure contains various positions indicating who is what and lines of responsibility and accountability. The following *organ-o-gram* indicates the structure for students' services and OUTSO services

**Figure: 3:1. Organizational Structure of OUT Students Services**



Source: Panel Members of Students Affair Policy Committee (OUT)

### **3.2. Description of the proposed structure**

The office of DoS will be headed by qualified personnel who shall be conversant in counselling, psychology or sociology. S/he will report to DVC (RM). The DoS will be assisted by four heads at the headquarters and 25 officers in 25 regional centres. At the headquarters the officers will be assigned different jobs. The first one will be responsible for academic affairs and judicatory, the second one will deal with students' government affairs and control services, while the third one will deal with social welfare loans and fellowships, the fourth will deal with sports and games.

At regional level (centre) the officer concerned will report to the DRC on all matters concerning student's affairs. The DRC will forward all the reports to the DVC (RS) who will then inform the concerned to DVC

#### **3.2.1. Organisational Structure of OUT student services**

To put the organizational structure of OUT students services from the theoretical perspective to action orientated framework, the following are the policy statement and the related operational procedures for implementation purposed.

##### **a. Policy Statement**

The Open University of Tanzania shall:

- i. Set an organizational structure for the office of DoS in relation to OUTSO.
- ii. Oversee the start of the organizational structure of the office of OUTSO

##### **b. Operational Procedures**

The Open University of Tanzania will:

- i. Operationalise the office of DoS with four heads in charge at the headquarters.
- ii. Facilitate the formation of OUTSO organizational structure

### **3.3. Students Governance**

It is an obligation of OUT to provide the working place for student's organization at the headquarters and at regional centres. Students' governance encompasses the organisation of election for the leadership of students in free and fair elections. In this election majority of students, both males and females are required to take part. OUT is advised to facilitate training of students' leadership in financial management, meeting procedures and communication skills.

#### **a. Policy Statement**

The Open University of Tanzania shall:

- i. Promote exchange of visits by student's leaders to and from other Universities.
- ii. Ensure transparency in the use of OUTSO funds.
- iii. Encourage female students to contest for top OUTSO leadership position.
- iv. Avail OUTSO offices in all regional centres.
- v. Encourage students to generate income.

#### **b. Operational Procedures**

The Open University of Tanzania will:

- i. Give permission to students' leaders to visit their counterparts in other Universities.
- ii. Provide an auditor to OUTSO financial account University Internal and External should audit OUTSO account.
- iii. Make sure that OUTSO leadership position are contested by both men and women students.
- iv. To have an OUTSO office to each regional centre.
- v. Motivate students who generate income to OUTSO.
- vi. Give certificates of recognition to students who excel in sports and games.

### **3.4. Students Social Related Services**

Students Social Related Services in this policy comprises career guidance and advice, information delivery to students, individual and group counselling, spiritual counselling, financial aid administration and accommodation advice. These two services are critical in ensuring a smooth and right required path during his/her studies at the University of Tanzania. Below is the policy statement accompanied by operation procedures for each of the services to be provided.

#### **3.4.1. Career Guidance and Advice**

Career support services aim at providing students with career advice prior to admission and during post enrollment period. They require career advice as an integral part of their learning process in all the stages of one's life long learning to enhance development of healthy concepts and confidence among themselves. Thus to enable them to determine choices of programmes in relation to the fields they wish to undertake.

##### **a. Policy Statement**

The Open University of Tanzania shall:

- i. Provide advice to students on career choices.
- ii. Promote guidance as a study process for the distance learners.
- iii. Encourage student's career development and self awareness.
- iv. Provide a clear direction of facilities/services offered at other institutions elsewhere.

##### **b. Operational Procedures**

The Open University of Tanzania will:

- i. Employ trained staff to provide professional learning and support services at the headquarters and at regional centres.
- ii. Ensure that the study materials are sent to the students at the regional centres on time.

- iii. Ensure that the students are given appropriate guidance and choose programmes of study in relation to the field which they intend to undertake.
- iv. Liaise with service providers to ensure that students are provided with necessary facilities needed for their programmes.
- v. Offer learning support through E-learning as one of the new and innovative tools in carrying out their studies.
- vi. Offer career guidance and advice to enable the students to explore their learning problems and identity alternatives before they choose their path.

### **3.4.2. Information Delivery to Students**

Students should enquire information and communication about studying at the OUT and other general information in assisting them to achieve their objectives and targets of graduating within the prescribed time of the programmes.

#### **a. Police Statement**

The Open University of Tanzania shall:

- i. Give clear information using the OUT Prospectus, General Information Booklet, ICT and through regional centres.
- ii. Provide ICT facilities to each Regional Centre.
- iii. Ensure students' records management and communication system is improved.
- iv. Provide all the relevant information that enables students to deal with their concerns and the University personal identifier.
- v. Provide information that will help a student to make an informed decision about whether to study with Open University of Tanzania.
- vi. Extend the database system of information to district level, countrywide.

#### **b. Operational procedures**

The Open University of Tanzania will:

- i. Give clear information about the OUT through OUT Prospectus, General Information Booklets, and ICT and through regional centres.

- ii. Improve communication system by provision of independent postal address, telephone lines and e-mails.
- iii. Ensure students are receiving accurate and up-to-date information in printed documents and on the Open University website.
- iv. Ensure students are aware about how they can access the University staff who can provide them with more accurate information about the University study, detailed advice about particular academic and administrative issues.
- v. Facilitate students support and study skills materials through establishing internet services to all regional centers.
- vi. Ensure students are well informed about available library resources and services.
- vii. Improve communication system through provision of independent telephone lines and e-mail addresses.
- viii. Continue providing quality assurance seminars to the Open University Staffs i.e. Receptionist, telephone operators and invigilators so as to serve well the students.

### **3.4.3. Individual and Group counseling**

Counselling is a technical and professional skill offered by trained counsellors to clients seeking to understand and solve their psychological, social and environmental problems (Burks and Steffle, 1979:14). Counselling includes working with individuals, groups and with relationships which may be developmental in nature, crisis support, psychotherapeutic, guiding and problem solving. The students in Open and distance learning, counselling process is essential as it enhances recognition of problems and adaptation of positive change of behaviour and attitudes through modification of thinking and doing things.

#### **a. Policy statement**

The Open University of Tanzania shall:

- i. Provide counselling to help students with psychological dilemma/problems

- ii. Ensure students' problems are identified and are helped to learn how to go about in solving them
- iii. Make sure that in counselling rooms, confidentiality is maintained
- iv. Established referral desks to book for appointments for counselling sessions
- v. Ensure that a student's cases are not revealed to any one without seeking consent from the counselee.
- vi. Facilitate the student's counselling using seminars/ workshops and sensitize them to realize the existence of counselling services at the institution

#### **b. Operational Procedures**

The Open University of Tanzania will:

- i. Offer counselling services to students with psychological, emotional and anxieties to attain health and appropriate learning atmosphere
- ii. Put in place ways of finding students' problems and enabling them to learn how to solve them.
- iii. Train staff to acquire the highest degree of providing counselling services.
- iv. Set up dropping sessions at the Headquarters and regional centers and provide counselling sessions to students in need
- v. Set up mechanisms that will ensure the cases of students' are dealt with confidentiality to comply with human dignity and potentialities
- vi. Conduct seminars/ workshops to sensitize the student's and the Open University community on the availability of counselling services

#### **3.4.4. Spiritual Counselling**

Spiritual counselling like other aspects of counselling dispensed to OUT students is important in contribution of the pursuance of the studies by a student. Spiritual counselling which does not exist at OUT as of presently needs to be established like other counselling provision.

##### **a. Policy Statement**

The Open University of Tanzania shall;

- i. Facilitate spiritual counselling to OUT students where considered necessary

- ii. Establish competency in spiritual counsellors to all spiritual and typically personal problems that beset students, forcing them to seek spiritual help.

**b. Operational Procedures**

The Open University of Tanzania will;

- i. Introduce spiritual counselling to OUT students as part of other aspects of counselling carried out at the OUT.
- ii. Strengthen skills through training of counsellors including spiritual counselling
- iii. Create awareness to students on the availability of counselling services that include spiritual counselling.

**3.4.5. Financial Aid Administration.**

The OUT offers various scholarships which include financial assistance given to students who have commendable progress in their studies, DAAT, Students Assistance Fund, and Women Education Fund for Women Students who can not pay fees for various reasons. There is also the Higher Education Students Loans Board (HESLB) which aims at helping students to get loans. These are not the only avenues for financial aid to students. The needy students are at liberty to seek financial aid from difference sources in order to fulfill the requirement of paying fees.

**a. Policy statement**

The Open University of Tanzania shall:

- i. Certify all students Loan application forms.
- ii. Encourage those students facing financial difficulties to apply and seek for financial support from various sources.
- iii. Give sponsorship to students with disabilities.

**b. Operational procedure**

The Open University of Tanzania will:



- i. Ensure that through DoS office the students' loan forms are correctly filled, processed and submitted to the HESLB on time.
- ii. Provide information on various sources of financial assistance.
- iii. Purchase learning equipment for student with disabilities.
- iv. Support students with disabilities during residential sessions.
- v. Offer clear and up-to-date information about the availability of Open University financial assistance and how to apply.

#### **3.4.6. Accommodation Advice**

The Open University of Tanzania uses the Open and Distance Learning system. During residential sessions (face to face sessions, timed tests, examinations and practical training), the students' may need accommodation where the University depends on getting accommodation from private and public institution and students' individually arrange for payments to the financial officer of respective institution.

##### **a. Policy Statement**

The Open University of Tanzania shall:

- i. Facilitate the availability of private and public institutions accommodation for students to use during needy periods.
- ii. Build students' hostels in regional centers.

##### **b. Operational Procedure**

The Open University of Tanzania will:

- i. Provide information to students on the existing private and public hostels where students can arrange for their accommodation.
- ii. Build its own hostels at regional centers.

#### **3.4.7. Games and Sports**

The Open University of Tanzania encourages the participation of students in games and sports. Through Tanzania Universities Sports Association (TUSA) for example, students are taking part in attending sports and games competitions

organized by various sports bodies such as East Africa University Games (EAUG), OUT sports Bonanza and other creative activities.

#### **a. Policy Statement**

The Open University of Tanzania shall:

- i. Ensure that students at the headquarters and regional centres participate in sports and Games.
- ii. Provide information on sports and games are disseminated to all students.
- iii. Facilitate all sports and Games.

#### **b. Operational Procedures**

The Open University of Tanzania will:

- i. Enable students from regional centres and headquarters participate in sports Bonanza, East Africa University Games, TUSA games and other creative activities.
- ii. Provide information to students concerning sports and games that involve the OUT through DVC (RM), Director of Communication and Marketing, Regional Directors and OUTSO leaders.
- iii. Ensure Accommodation and all necessary needs are available during sports Bonanza.

### **3.5. Health and HIV/AIDS Services**

Health is physical, mental and social well being of an individual. Health is therefore an aspect that has to do with the relationship between the body, the mind, and the social patterns of the human being in a given context. Healthy is very much affected by HIV/AIDS resulting in unhealthy to people in different settings. However HIV/AIDS continues to sweep across the continent; it is disastrous pandemic that poses a serious threat to the survival of human beings. It is a formidable challenge to the entire world, Tanzania, and consequently the Open University of Tanzania's community.

**a. Policy Statement**

The Open University of Tanzania shall:

- i. Raise awareness against HIV/AIDS infection.
- ii. Ensure sensitization on HIV/AIDS to OUT students at the headquarters and Regional Centres.
- iii. Mainstream HIV/AIDS within OUT curriculum.
- iv. Provide health services to students indirectly as first aid in the circumstances, such as face to face sessions, orientations, and examination sessions.

**b. Operational Procedures**

The Open University of Tanzania will:

- i. Ensure that students are well informed on the HIV/AIDS policy and provide information through education and effective use of technology
- ii. Establish HIV/AIDS clubs conduct seminars and organize workshops periodically to all distance learning students at the headquarters and regional centres.
- iii. Ensure that HIV/AIDS information is being incorporated in the curricula of OUT academic programmes.
- iv. Establish caution money to students that will be used in cases of require First Aid.

**3.5.1. Morbidity and Death of Students**

**a. Policy Statement**

The Open University of Tanzania shall:

- i. Provide assistance during the students' funerals/burials.
- ii. Ensure that the DoS office through the DRCs and OUTSO leaders take part in funeral services where possible.

**b. Operational Procedures**

The Open University of Tanzania will:

- i. Make voluntary contributions funeral services from students and staff during funerals

- ii. Establish communication system between Regional Centre and OUT headquarters on matters related to funerals

### **3.5.2. Catering Services**

The fact that the OUT is moving towards operating dual operation (ODL and face to face) the issue of catering services as to be taken on board as this will be one way another affect studies of individual students

#### **a. Policy Statement**

The Open University of Tanzania shall:

- i. Provide students in need with quality but affordable food
- ii. Facilitate the availability of food in/around the specific area where the students are carrying out study related activities

#### **b. Operational Procedures**

The Open University of Tanzania will:

- i. Involve students' leaders to identify places where appropriate catering services are available.
- ii. Provide quality catering services for the students to effectively participate in their studies.
- iii. Arrange for quality and affordable food with caterers in surrounding areas where OUT activities for students are being carried out.

### **3.6. Academic Support Services**

#### **3.6.1. Students Orientation/Induction**

Orientation to new and continuing students in related to OUT programme when the academic year commences is of crucial importance in assisting students as they pursue their studies. The orientation can be organized at faculty/institute level and be implemented at regional centres.

#### **a. Policy Statement**

The Open University Tanzania shall;

- i. Issue guidelines to regional centres on modalities of carrying out orientation sessions.
- ii. Arrange orientation/induction programmes for new as well as continuing students.
- iii. Introduce new students to all aspects of study with the OUT using ODL.

**b. Operational Procedures**

The Open University Tanzania will;

- i. Arrange in liaison with Directors of Regional Centres face to face sessions for orientation/induction purposes.
- ii. Interpret academic programme requirement too new students.

**3.6.2 Study Skills Support**

For students to be able to pursue OUT academic programme successfully it is important that they master study skills to support them, such skills include, time, management, how write and answer assignments.

**a. Policy Statement**

The Open University of Tanzania shall:

- i. Design modalities of training of students to master study skills in ODL
- ii. Provide and ensure appropriate study manuals to students on study skills required in ODL
- iii. Ensure that training and retraining of OUT academic staff on study skills that will enable them to impart the skills to students.

**b. Operational Procedures**

The Open University of Tanzania will:

- i. Teach students study skills on the basis of ODL.
- ii. Write and issue appropriate study manuals/handouts on study skills that students will learn from such manuals.
- iii. Arrange tutorials for students through face to face sessions at regional centre.

- iv. Train and retrain University academics on study skills so that they can impart to students.

### **3.6.3. Study Centres**

The importance of study centres in pursuing academic programmes through ODL programmes through ODL can not be overemphasis. Such centres can be used to support services to students studying using both ODL and face to face modes. Such centres can be used to provide counselling and tutorial services for OUT students there experiences with other students as they interact in these centres/places points for project work, practical work, and places used for mini libraries.

#### **a. Policy Statements;**

The Open University Tanzania shall:

- i. Motivate students to form more study centres.
- ii. Strengthen the existing study centres.
- iii. Use study centres in assisting students in their studies.

#### **b. Operational Procedures**

The Open University Tanzania will;

- i. Support the formulation and strengthening of study centres using staff at regional centres.
- ii. Provide tutorials to students on different courses using academicians at the headquarters and at regional centres.
- iii. Arrange tutorial and seminars to students in identified problematic areas of their studies.
- iv. Stock reference materials in these centres that will assist students in pursuing their studies.
- v. Coordinate meetings of students in carrying out study activities in different specific areas such as project work, practicals, and demonstrations

#### **3.6.4. International Students Services**

The OUT welcomes students to study its programme to all over the world. Studying at OUT is open to all Tanzania and non-Tanzania. OUT therefore, caters studies for international students.

##### **a. Policy Statement**

The Open University Tanzania shall:

- i. Promote and encourage international students to study with the OUT
- ii. Formulate mechanisms to facilitate smooth operation for international studies by individual students at the OUT.
- iii. Collaborate with other institutions of higher learning abroad in carrying out OUT activities

##### **b. Operational Procedures**

The Open University Tanzania will:

- i. Market the OUT academic programme to attract not only the Tanzania but international students as well.
- ii. Ensure availability of centres that will cater for these international students
- iii. Provide comprehensive study materials that would allow individual students to face their way through a structured programme.

#### **3.7. Disability Services**

The students with disabilities have learning requirements that differ from non-disabled students. Students with disabilities use special learning aids and environment in the learning process (Tobin, 1998). To study for them through Open and distance learning availability of facilities need to be identified, these are, audio cassettes, computer with special speech software and Braille devices. Systems of screening, educational assessment and ICT technologies prior to admission stage needed as a priority for facilitating orientation training students with disabilities in Open and Distance learning.

**a. Policy Statement**

The Open University of Tanzania shall:

- i. Provide training to student prior commencement of their programmes.
- ii. Screen and assess student's sight and learning techniques by using special technical special devices.
- iii. Provide adequate learning facilities in the resource rooms at the Headquarters and Regional centres.
- iv. Make adjustments of environment for the students with physical and hearing problems.
- v. Ensure students with disabilities participate fully in learning and social activities.
- vi. Mobilize students to disclose their inability in order to facilitate them hence use learning aids due to additional disabilities.

**b. Operational Procedures**

The Open University of Tanzania will:

- i. Ensure training is offered from registration of graduation stage to students with disabilities since they need continuous learning support services.
- ii. Offer screening and assessment to measure the student's level of blindness and capability to study through audio tape systems and ICT Braille.
- iii. Provide special learning equipment and special technical support to attend learning difficulties.
- iv. Make adjustment of the learning environment for access of the students with physical disabilities.
- v. Provide necessary equipment for use of writing and learning aids for students with blindness and hearing impairment.
- vi. Provide special rooms at learning centres including adequate special equipment such as ICT and audio tape facilities.
- vii. Ensure that students with disabilities are participating in group study to enhance learning and exchange of ideas.
- viii. Encourage students to discuss issues related to learning and disabilities.



- ix. Provide guidance and learning support services at the headquarters and Regional centres through the coordinator of the Assistive Special Education Unit and with the Assistants Dean of Students.

### **3.7.1. Services to students with disability**

#### **a. Policy Statements**

The Open University of Tanzania shall:

- i. Establish programme of staff development to provide support and address educational issues and needs of students with disabilities.
- ii. Renovate buildings to enable students with disability to use

#### **b. Operational Procedures**

The Open University of Tanzania will:

- i. Apply policies and practices related to students with disabilities that include learning support coordinator from all faculties, institutes and regional centre.
- ii. Renovate the old buildings and constrictions the new with disabilities to access.

### **3.8. Gender Issues**

OUT aspires to have community which is non-gendered in all matters pertaining to the University community welfare and academic. The aspiration is expressed in the OUT RSP of 2006/07-2020/11 strategic objective number 9 on improved gender balance and mainstreaming. Likewise the aspiration features out in the University charter part VIII clause 82 emphasizing the gender equity principles The office of DoS as an organ of the University will ensure gender equity in all matters pertaining to academic and welfare issues of students.

#### **a. Policy Statement**

The Open University of Tanzania shall:

- i Ensure provision of equal opportunities for male and female students in enrolment process
- ii. Facilitate equal participation of males and females in students' government
- iii Ensure academic programmes are gender mainstreamed

- iv. Facilitate female students to enroll in science subjects and encourage them to achieve their academic pursuits.
- v. Ensure female students participate fully in sports and games and other recreational activities.
- vi. Ensure University environment both at headquarters and regional centres are free from harassment based on gender

#### **b. Operational Procedures**

The Open University of Tanzania will:

- i. Create programmes for sensitizing female students to enroll for science subjects at University level
- ii. Participate in strengthening OFC programmes for female students to upgrade entry qualifications for enrolling in University studies.
- iii. Revise students' government constitution to include clauses that will oblige female students to participate in students' government leadership
- iv. Sensitize female students to participate in students' government
- v. Urge and collaborate with the OUT gender committee to conduct gender mainstreaming of academic programme
- vi. Conduct a sensitization programme in high schools to encourage female students to develop interest in science subjects for enrolment in University science subjects.
- vii. Provide various opportunities including sponsorship for science female students who qualify for enrolment at the University.
- viii. Conduct various sports and games competitions special for female students for all regional centres and against other Universities female sports teams
- ix. Conduct seminars in all regional centers to make them aware of all types of harassments which will empower them to speak out their problems through DoS office or Integrity office.
- xi. Produce fliers indicating type of harassments and rights of each student against such harassment.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4.0. Integrity Issues

#### 4.1. Introduction

Integrity is an important factor in work places for purpose of proper use of public office through treating subordinates fairly and justly, maintaining high level of transparency and minimizing abuse of power. Integrity is equally important in learning institutions for purpose of proper use of office to discharge proper services to students.

##### a. Policy Statement

The Open University of Tanzania shall:

- (i) Ensure and put in place adequate machinery for maintenance of integrity among its staff and students for proper discharge of services to students in a manner that guarantee transparency and minimize abuse of powers.
- (ii) Endeavour in sensitizing and creating awareness on transparency and integrity issues in the University community, both at the head quarter and in the regional centres.

##### b. Operational procedures

The Open University of Tanzania will

- i. Establish and create office for integrity committee whose composition shall ensure gender balance.
- ii. Provide means and measures for combating corruption at OUT Headquarters and Regional Centres.
- iii. Conduct training, workshops and seminars to staff and students in measures of transparency and integrity.
- iv. Inculcate among students a sense of self confidence to direct complaints to the integrity committee.

## **4.2. Judicatory and Control Services**

OUT has witnessed a rapid increase in student enrolment since it was established in 1992. The composition of student population varies in terms of age, experiences and in terms of geographical location.

The nature of number of student enrolment and composition may create problems related to discipline and complaints from students, cases and instances of irregularity, cheating in any part of examination that student may be charged of that need to be promptly and appropriately addressed by a machinery that guarantee justice and fairness on both students themselves and the University. The mode of delivery of OUT academic programmes has rendered these machineries not to be employed frequently and not to be popular among students unlike the case in other residential universities. The OUT Charter lays down a framework for the mechanism for the administration of the University students' affairs which include, establishment of and overseeing the machinery for monitoring, coordinating, regulating, controlling, and facilitating, the general conduct of students at the university and any other place or places where the affairs of the University in which students are involved may take place, be conducted, provided, organized or overseen by the University. This includes procedure for putting in place rules to ensure discipline amongst the students and the punishment that may be imposed for such disciplinary offence.

### **4.2.1. Students Discipline and Complaints**

#### **a. Policy Statement**

The Open University of Tanzania shall:

- i. Ensure at all times existence of fair and just system of handling and determination of disciplinary proceedings initiated against students.
- ii. Institutionalize students' representation in disciplinary proceedings where student/students are /are charged of a disciplinary offence.

- iii. Ensure fair and impartial treatment of all students that are charged of disciplinary offences without regard to their gender, religion, race, disability and political affiliation or any other discriminatory consideration.
- iv. Inculcate a culture of discipline among students.
- v. Institutionalize a fair and just system of lodging and hearing a student or students' complaint or complaints.
- vi. Put in place timeframe within which disciplinary proceedings and complaints shall be investigated, heard and determined without undue delay.
- vii. Mainstream principles of natural justice in investigation and settlement of complaints and disciplinary action involving a student or students.
- viii. Make rules and by-laws for the administration and general welfare of the students and provide that the contravention of any such rule shall constitute a disciplinary offence or misconduct and may further provide the punishment that may be imposed for such disciplinary offence.

## **b. Operational Procedures**

The Open University of Tanzania will:

- i. Inform and educate students on existing procedure for disciplinary actions and complaints they may have against any officer of the University.
- ii. Inform students of their rights and duties in complaints reporting, settlements, and disciplinary proceedings.
- iii. Publish in the University Prospectus for students' access rules and by laws that provide for the machinery for disciplinary action and proceedings and complaint reporting and settlement.
- iv. Charge students that are accused of disciplinary offences and avail them opportunity to defend themselves before determination of the disciplinary proceeding and imposition of appropriate punishment.
- v. Involve students in formulation and making of rules and by laws for the administration and general welfare of the students.
- vi. Provide a comprehensive list of disciplinary offences and punishments that correspond to seriousness and gravity of the offence a student may commit.

- vii. Provide room for a student against whom disciplinary procedure is invoked to consult Students' Organisation.
- viii. Proper record keeping of complaints, investigation thereof, and determination.
- x. Adhere to confidentiality in handling complaints.

#### **4.2.2. Complaints Related to Academic Programmes and Decision of Committees**

##### **a. Policy Statement**

The Open University of Tanzania shall:

- i. Provide effective and efficient separate procedures for complaints related to academic programmes and decisions of committees on academic matters.
- ii. Provide details of complaints related to academic programmes that may be instituted against a student and the corresponding punishments
- iii. Provide complaints that may be brought by a student against a decision of OUT Committee on matters affecting a student.
- iv. Ensure that there is in place appropriate mechanism for making formal complaint in a manner that provide full details of the complaint and all matters related to it.
- v. Set time frame within which a complaint may be formally registered and determined by appropriate bodies.
- vi. Handle and deal with registered complaint under strict confidentiality whilst ensuring that it is only the relevant information needed that is publicized and availed to facilitate investigation on the complaint.
- vii. Ensure that any act of academic dishonesty, such as cheating or plagiarism, subjects a student to disciplinary action and appropriate punishment is imposed to a convicted student.
- viii. Endeavour to make use of complaints to improve services for the future.

**a. Operational Procedures**

The Open University of Tanzania will:

- i. Inform and educate students on the available procedures for complaint related to academic programmes.
- ii. Inform and educate students on complaints that may be filed against them and their rights and duties in such proceedings.
- iii. Involve student representative(s) in proceedings on complaint relating to academic programmes and decision of committees.
- iv. Expedite investigation and proceedings on complaint filed without compromising principles of natural justice.
- v. Inform and communicate to students decisions of committees that touch on their affairs and welfare.
- vi. Design forms making formal complaint.
- vii. Regulate proceedings of the proceedings under strict confidentiality.
- viii. Publish in the University Prospectus for students' access rules and by laws on academic related complaint.
- ix. Provide time frame within which a complaint may be made, investigated and determined.
  - x. Deal sensitively with issues arising from complaints that involve other students or staff.
  - xi. Proper record keeping of complaints, investigation thereof, and determination.
  - xii. Adhere to confidentiality in handling complaints.

**4.2.3. Avenues of Complaints, Disciplinary Offence and Appeal**

**a. Policy Statement**

The Open University of Tanzania shall:

- i. Ensure establishment of impartial bodies for handling and determining formal complaints, disciplinary offence and appeal from a student with diligence and high level of integrity.

- ii. Ensure membership of a student representative in the bodies charged with handling and determination of complaints, disciplinary offence or appeal.
- iii. Put in place machinery and conducive working environment to enable the bodies to discharge their work promptly and efficiently.

#### **b. Operational Procedures**

The Open University of Tanzania shall:

- i. Provide room and time frame for appealing against determination or decision.
- ii. Provide mode and format of appeal in appropriate forms.
- iii. Facilitate review of full record relevant to the grievance, including a hearing record and/or investigation reports if a hearing and/or investigations has/have been held.
- iv. Expedite the appeal process.
  - v. Ensure appeals are entertained by unbiased body.
  - vi. Provide time frame for determination of appeal.
- vii. Proper record keeping of handling appeals.
- viii. Adhere to confidentiality in handling appeals.

#### **4.2.4. Sexual Harassment**

##### **a. Policy Statement**

The Open University of Tanzania shall:

- i. Endeavour to create and maintain a community, in which those who participate in its programmes and activities can work together in an atmosphere free of harassment, exploitation, or intimidation, including sexual.
- ii. Endeavour to ensure that every student and member of the university community is aware that the University is strongly opposed to sexual harassment and shall take whatever action needed to prevent, correct and if necessary, discipline behaviour that is contrary to this policy.
- iii. Provide a comprehensive definition of what amounts into sexual harassment and machinery for prompt and equitable resolution of sexual harassment complaints involving students.



## **b. Operational Procedures**

The Open University of Tanzania will:

- i. Establish formal procedures to resolve sexual harassment complaints at earliest opportunity possible.
- ii. Entertain sexual harassment complaints with diligence and confidentiality.
- iii. Review complaints to minimize chances capricious claims and to uphold rights of all parties.
- iv. Provide room for gender balance in machinery for charged with investigating sexual harassment complaint.
- v. Guarantee students' right to prompt and equitable resolution of complaints.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **5.0. IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION OF THE STUDENTS' AFFAIRS POLICY**

#### **5.1. Introduction**

The implementations monitoring and evaluation of the students' affairs policy will involve the different stakeholders playing their role effectively in the realisation of set policy objectives. The stakeholders include individuals in the various organs of the OUT. These include the management of the OUT, the office of the DoS, the OUTSO, the office of the DVC (RS) and the personnel at the regional centres who include directors and DVC (Academic).

#### **5.2. Implementation of the policy**

In the implementation of this policy each respective organ and/or persons mentioned in the policy have to play their role as required by operationalising the indicated procedures. While the OUT management for example, has to look into the recruitment of well qualified staff at both the headquarters and regional centres, the office of DoS has to play a coordination role in ensuring the successful implementation of the policy. Students' government at the regional and national levels has also to play their role towards the realisation of the policy objectives. The organ-o-gram indicated in the policy is a useful structure that has to be used as a guide in the chain of commands from Regional Centres to national organs to OUT national organs or vice versa. These ensure well the smooth implementation of the policy.

### **5.3. Evaluation of the Policy**

The evaluation of this policy is crucial in order to gauge the realisation of the set policy objectives using both formative and summative evaluation. The different organs that are earmarked in the policy have to be consistently monitored on how the written policy is concretized into observable actions. The findings from the evaluation task have to be reported to respective organs for remedial purposes in order to improve the implementation of the policy. The evaluation exercises will in the long run assist the revision of the policy. For instance the directors of Regional Centres have to discuss the implementation of the policy in the Regional Directors Coordination Committee (RDCC) and note how the policy deliberations are fairing. At the same time OUTSO have also discuss the implementation of the policy in the USRC meetings. The DoS has to report the implementation of the policy in the Students' Affairs Committee and RSP meetings. During the management meetings the affairs of the students have to be discussed in order to not only to effectively improve the policy but also to provide quality education for our students to acquire.

In view of the above, the implementation of the policy coupled with getting appropriate evaluation feedback from all stakeholders, will improve the Students' Affairs Policy.

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