

OPTIMUM VOCATIONAL TRAINING INSTITUTE

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Hohoe – Volta Region, Ghana

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Our Core Values:

- ❖ DISCIPLINE & HARDWORK
- ❖ PROFESSIONALISM
- ❖ INNOVATION

Bankers: ADB

Date:

CODE OF ETHICS FOR THE STAFF AND STUDENTS OF OPTIMUM VOCATIONAL TRAINING INSTITUTE, HOHOE

1. Introduction

1.1 The OPTIMUM VOCATIONAL TRAINING INSTITUTE, HOHOE follows various “guiding principles” in pursuit of its objectives, most importantly consideration and support for the professional development, and intellectual and cultural needs of the staff and the student body.

1.2 The institution is accountable to its staff, students, the public and the state. It is in the interests of all members of the institute to maintain the highest possible ethical standards including accuracy, honesty, cooperation, tolerance and adherence to obligations as well as rights.

1.3 The Code of Ethics is a formulation of policies, rules or guideline that define the specifications or procedures applicable to members of OPTIMUM VOCATIONAL TRAINING INSTITUTE, HOHOE in respect of a range of specific ethical issues.

1.4 This Code applies to all staff and students of the Institution. The purpose of the code is to ensure high standards of integrity in the conduct of the Institution’s business, and to avoid both impropriety and any appearance of impropriety. Contractors, their employees and representatives, and visitors engaging in any Institution-related activity are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent with this Code.

1.5 The Code does not supersede other policies or agreements that the OPTIMUM VOCATIONAL TRAINING INSTITUTE, HOHOE has in place. Members of this Institution should be familiar with the responsibilities which are part of their employment, and be aware that sanctions will be applied if these provisions are breached. These sanctions may include counseling, suspension, and dismissal, laying criminal charges or taking civil action against the offending party.

1.6 COMPLIANCE

Heads of Department and Directorate are responsible for ensuring that within their Department and Directorate, the Code is followed and a record of outside interests and employment is kept. It may be misconduct under the Institution’s Disciplinary Rules for members of staff and students for any staff or student to fail to comply with the Code.

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1.7 DISCLOSURE

All those to whom the Code applies should declare any perceived or potential conflict of interest between their private affairs and those of the Institution, arising in the course of their duties management of the institution.

OPTIMUM VOCATIONAL TRAINING INSTITUTE has adopted the following ethical principles:

2. EQUITY AND JUSTICE

2.1 EQUITY OF ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT AND PROGRAMMES

OPTIMUM VOCATIONAL TRAINING INSTITUTE is committed to the principle of equal opportunity and encourages staff to pursue equity in all aspects of their activities.

2.2 DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

- 2.2.1** The OPTIMUM VOCATIONAL TRAINING INSTITUTE, HOHOE is committed to maintaining an environment within the Institution that is free from harassment. Harassment in such forms as sexism, racism or bullying is inconsistent with the Institution's Equal Opportunity policy and denies respect for the rights of staff and students to fair treatment. Harassment is unlawful and can also be harmful to organizational effectiveness.
- 2.2.2** Employees of the Institution must not discriminate against or harass colleagues, students or members of the public on any grounds including sex, marital status, pregnancy, age, race, ethnic or national origin, physical or intellectual impairment and HIV/AIDS. In addition, employees and students must not harass or discriminate on the grounds of political or religious conviction.

2.3 GRIEVANCES

Staff and students of this Institution are entitled to fair and equitable grievance procedures.

2.4 LAWFUL OBEDIENCE

All members of the Institution must comply with any legislative and industrial requirements, as well as the rules and regulations of the Institution, upholding the principle of equal opportunities for all.

2.5 OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

- 2.5.1** The OPTIMUM VOCATIONAL TRAINING INSTITUTE, HOHOE is committed to the provision of a safe and healthy working environment for staff, students and visitors. In consequence, the Institution encourages all members of the community to regard accident prevention and working safely as a collective and individual responsibility.

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- 2.5.2 Managers have a responsibility to ensure the health and safety of all on campus and a duty to provide and maintain so far as is practicable a working environment that is safe and without risks to health.
- 2.5.3 Staffs who are involved in teaching, research or assisting in other sections must dispose of hazardous and dangerous materials in an appropriate fashion.

3. RESPECT FOR PEOPLE

3.1 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

- 3.1.1 The potential for a conflict of interest arises when an employee is placed in a situation where private interests could influence or appear to influence judgements made during the course of his/her professional duty to the Institution.
- 3.1.2 Staff members should take suitable measures to avoid, or appropriately deal with any situation in which they may have, or be seen to have, a conflict of interest that could, directly or indirectly, compromise the performance of their duties. When staff members become aware of such a situation they should take appropriate steps to disclose the conflict. Failure to do so and continuation of such a conflict of interest may lead to disciplinary action.
- 3.1.3 Examples of relationships that may cause conflicts of interest are positive and negative emotional relationships (including all sexual relationships and antagonisms), academic, (awarding marks to underserving students) and financial relationships, etc.

3.2 OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT AND PRIVATE PRACTICE

- 3.2.1 Members of academic staff of the Institution are encouraged to undertake contract research, consultancy and other similar professional external jobs, provided that this is not done in a way which would conflict with the interests of the Institution and should be of a standard which would enhance the name and image of the Institution and the professional reputations of the staff involved.
- 3.2.2 Academic staff may undertake private consultancies provided this does not interfere with the time commitment of duties and responsibilities associated with the staff member's employment with the Institution. It must be clearly understood that the Institution accepts no responsibility for the consultancy work of staff members when they are acting in a private capacity.

3.3 CONFIDENTIALITY

- 3.3.1 All staff of the OPTIMUM VOCATIONAL TRAINING INSTITUTE, HOHOE must adhere to the principles of confidentiality and have a duty to maintain the confidentiality and security of any personal information for which they are responsible, including computerized data.

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- 3.3.2** Staff members who have access to official Institution documentation and information must take care to maintain the integrity, confidentiality and privacy of such information to protect any individual concerned. Members of the Institution should also undertake to maintain the privacy of oral communications where that has been requested.
- 3.3.3** Staff must take care to respect the confidentiality and privacy of students and only provide information when authorized by the Registrar's Officer or for legitimate academic purposes.
- 3.3.4** Within the Institution, no staff member shall have access to information about any individual, without that individual's consent unless a responsible officer of the Institution is satisfied that the staff member is acting in the course of his or her duties and that the information is relevant for the purpose for which it is being sought.
- 3.3.5** No computerized data about Any individual should be accessed for other than institutional purposes without the full, written authority of that person. Access of personal, student or staff records without a specific, job-related purpose constitutes a breach of the privacy policy.
- 3.3.6** Personal information about staff or students will generally not be released to a third party unless the subject is informed of the reason for this collection and provides a full written approval other than in special circumstances where the disclosure may prevent a serious and imminent threat to the life or health of the individual concerned or of another person. However, the Institution is legally obliged to respond to any request for information in the form of a police warrant, subpoena, summons or other court order.

3.4 ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS OR BENEFITS

- 3.4.1** The OPTIMUM VOCATIONAL TRAINING INSTITUTE, HOHOE acknowledges that relationships can develop between service providers and staff and students and staff and would not seek to unduly interfere with such relationships.
- 3.4.2** Staff members should however not solicit, encourage or accept gifts or benefits if they could be reasonably seen as an inducement to act in a particular way or to place staff members under an obligation that may either directly or indirectly compromise or influence them in their official capacity. Receipt of gifts may be perceived as an inducement by others, thus creating a potential conflict of interest. This code requires staff to avoid actual as well as potential conflicts of interest.
- 3.4.3** Gifts of a nominal value (under GH¢50.00) in accordance with social or cultural practices are acceptable. All gifts of substantial value must be declared in writing to the management who will decide whether the gift can be kept or should be given to the Institution.

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3.5 INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Intellectual Property is recognized by this Institution and stipulates that the benefits should provide equitable returns to the originators of intellectual property, both as an incentive and reward, as well as to the Institution.

3.6 COPYRIGHT

Staff members should ensure that any work for which they claim authorship is original and that where it includes the works of another party, the work is appropriately acknowledged.

4. PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

4.1 PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1.1 All staff must maintain and develop knowledge and understanding of their area of expertise or professional field. They should continuously seek to improve work performance with an emphasis on quality Skills.
- 4.1.2 All staff should actively seek out ways to bring about quality improvements in their workplaces.

4.2 PUBLIC COMMENT

- 4.2.1 Public comment includes public speaking engagements, comments on radio, television or online and expressing views in letters to newspapers or in books, journals or notices or where it might be expected that the publication or circulation of the comment may spread to the community at large.
- 4.2.2 Staff members are encouraged to comment publicly. When staff members are representing the Institution the highest ethical and professional standards are expected of them primarily that of the Institution.
- 4.2.3 Members of Institution in their capacity as private citizens have a right to make public comments. If staff members are publicly commenting on issues not within their professional expertise, the member must make it clear that the comment is being made in a private capacity and not necessarily that of the Institution.
- 4.2.4 Views which are attributed to the Institution as a corporate body can only be made public by officers of the Institution duly designated by Governing Board to act on behalf of the Institution or the staff members designated by Governing Board, or their delegate, to represent the Institution's position on specific issues.

4.3 USE OF INSTITUTIONAL FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

Members of the CAREST INSTITUTION OF HEALTH INSTITUTION, HOHOE are expected to use all Institution facilities and equipment efficiently, carefully and honestly. Resource should be used economically and secured against theft or misuse and waste is to be avoided. These resources should not be used for private purposes unless express permission has been granted.

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5. REPORTING CONDUCTS AND COMPLAINTS

5.1 REPORTING CORRUPT CONDUCT, MALADMINISTRATION AND SERIOUS AND SUBSTANTIAL WASTE OF PUBLIC RESOURCES

5.1.1 Employees and students are urged to report suspicions of a corrupt conduct, maladministration and serious substantial waste of the Institution resources.

5.1.2 When an employee of the Institution suspects corrupt conduct, the employee may report the allegation confidence to the institution head. Any such allegations will be treated in strict confidence and investigated appropriately.

5.2 THE INSTITUTION'S APPROACH TO COMPLAINTS

5.2.1 The OPTIMUM VOCATIONAL TRAINING INSTITUTE, HOHOE treats all complaints seriously and makes every effort to direct their complaints through the proper channels.

5.2.2 The Institution applies the principles of natural justice in investigating complaints. The Institution acknowledges that there are multiple ways of dealing with complaints. It is useful prior to making a complaint, to consult with appropriate persons to identify the best way to proceed. Employees are encouraged to consider all potential complaints carefully and should refrain from making frivolous, malicious or vexatious complaints.

6. PUNCTUALITY

6.1 The staff of the Institution are required to report at work early to enhance the effectiveness of the Institution and close at the appropriate closing time.

6.2 Any staff that would be late to work for any good reason needs to inform his or her immediate supervisor and receive the approval before doing so.

6.3 Teaching staff should make sure that they report for lectures, five minutes before the actual time and may leave not more than five minutes to the closing time.

6.4 For any reason a teaching staff may not be able to make it to lecture, the staff needs to inform the head for appropriate action to be taken.

6.5 It is mandatory for students to attend lectures on time and regularly, and seek permission from the class representative if the student may not be able to attend a particular lecture. The class representative needs to inform the lecturer immediately he/she arrives to lecture.

6.6 Failure for staff and students to adhere to the code would mandate the responsible supervisor to sanction the staff or student involved after investigation on the matter.

7. RELATIONSHIPS

7.1 STUDENT –STUDENTS RELATIONS

The OPTIMUM VOCATIONAL TRAINING INSTITUTE, HOHOE seeks to promote healthy relations among students in order to enhance the pursuit of their studies at the institute. The

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Institution's jurisdiction regarding student conduct is generally limited to conduct of any student that occurs on the institute's premise. In addition, the Institution reserves the right to impose discipline based on any student conduct, regardless of the location when that conduct may affect the Institution's community. The following violations, or the aiding, abetting, conspiring, soliciting, or inciting of, or attempting to commit these violations are strictly prohibited:

7.1.1 sexual misconduct

- (a) any sexual act without the consent of the victim
- (b) obscene or indecent which includes but is not limited to, exposure of one's sexual organs or display of sexual behavior that would be reasonably be offensive to others.
- (c) conduct of sexual nature that creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment to another person.

7.1.2 endangerment

- (a) physical violence towards another person
- (b) action(s) that endanger the health, safety and well-being of another person
- (c) interference with the freedom of another person to move about in a lawful manner.

7.1.3 harassment

- (a) conduct not of a sexual nature that creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment to another person
- (b) action(s) or statement(s) that threaten harm or intimidate another
- (c) acts that invade the privacy of another
- (d) stalking, defined as to follow or otherwise contact another person, repeatedly so as to put that person in fear for his or her life or personal safety

7.2 STAFF-STAFF RELATIONS

The OPTIMUM VOCATIONAL TRAINING INSTITUTE, HOHOE considers consensual romantic and sexual relationships between staff members as a threat to professionalism in situation where they compromise, or appear to compromise, a staff member's judgement of those subject to his or her authority. A similar threat exists when they lead or is perceived to lead to preferential treatment of one staff member over another. In these circumstances, they can be detrimental to the affected individuals, including staff members outside of the relationship, and can injure the Institution and its reputation. The Institution therefore does not encourage this form of relationship between staff members.

7.3 STAFF-STUDENT RELATIONS

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The OPTIMUM VOCATIONAL TRAINING INSTITUTE, HOHOE does not encourage in any way a close, intimate and or exclusive relationship between staff and the students whom they teach, assess or supervise. Such relationships raise questions of conflict of interest, trust and confidence and dependency in working relationships and of equal treatment in teaching, learning, selection, assessment and research. There is a danger that such relationships exploit the relationship of authority and trust that is inherent in the relationship between members of staff and students. For the protection of staff and students the boundaries and moral obligations of the professional role of staff must be fully recognized and respected. Staff should recognize their professional and ethical responsibilities to protect the interests of students, to respect the trust involved in the staff/student relationship and to accept the obligations inherent in that responsibility. While the Institution recognizes that it has no right to regulate the private lives of its staff, it would strongly advise staff not to enter into a close, intimate and/or exclusive relationship with a student for whom they have responsibility.

7.4 INSTITUTION-PUBLIC RELATIONS

The OPTIMUM VOCATIONAL TRAINING INSTITUTE, HOHOE is committed to the creation and dissemination of knowledge and ideas in science and technology and liberal arts. The Institution recognizes the important role of the news media as a channel of communication with the public and will provide qualified representatives of news reporting organizations with timely and accurate information regarding the Institution's programs and activities. The public relations unit of the OPTIMUM VOCATIONAL TRAINING INSTITUTE, HOHOE serves as the designated contact point for the news media and is the source of official information about the Institution. Faculty, staff members and students who wish to initiate contact with the news media, or who receive news media, or who receive news media inquiries, should first coordinate with the public relations unit of the Institution.

8. SANCTIONS FOR BREACH OF CONDUCT

8.1 The OPTIMUM VOCATIONAL TRAINING INSTITUTE, HOHOE STATUTES 36-40 describe discipline in the Institution where:

- (a) the Institution head shall be the chief disciplinary officer within the Institution, and in this connection, shall act in accordance with rules formulated by Board under section M, of the statutes.
- (b) the Institution head may delegate any part of his authority in respect to any person or body as he may deem fit or appropriate.
- (c) disciplinary offences shall be as prescribed in section M of the Institution's statutes. Without prejudice to the generality of the offences prescribed in rules (b), (c) and (d) of section M OF The statutes, disciplinary offences in the Institution shall also include the following:
 - (i) conviction by a competent court of law for any offence which the Board considers to be such as to render the person concerned unfit for the discharge of the functions of his office.

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(ii) conduct of a scandalous or other disgraceful nature which the Board considers to be such as to render the person concerned unfit to continue to be in the Institution, or in the employment of the Institution, or hold office.

(iii) conduct which the Board considers to constitute failure on the part of the person concerned to discharge or perform the functions of his office, or to comply with the terms of his appointment.

(iv) conduct which, in the opinion of the Board, has brought the name of the Institution into disrepute.

8.2 DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS

The following are the sanctions (major and minor) that may be imposed for breaches of discipline.

(a) Major

(i) Dismissal

(ii) Termination of appointment

(iii) Reduction in rank or grade

(iv) Suspension for stated period with or without pay

(v) Deferment of increment, i.e. a postponement of date of which the next increment is due, with corresponding postponement in subsequent years

(vi) Forfeiture of pay for stated period

(vii) Stoppage of increment, i.e non-payment for a specified period of an increment otherwise due.

(viii) Withholding of increment

(b) Minor

(i) Interdiction

(ii) Reprimand

(iii) Warning

(iv) Caution

(v) Rustication

(vi) Withholding of certificate for a period, not exceeding three academic years

(vii) Cancellation of certificate and banishment from writing university examination for a period of three academic years;

8.2.1 for the purpose of these statutes major penalties shall be imposed only by the Institution head or in his instructions

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8.2.2 any person affected by any decision of the disciplinary committee or the person or body to whom the Institution head has delegated authority shall have the right to appeal as prescribed by the Institution's rules.

8.2.3 The Board may, by rules or regulations, make further provisions including setting up independent committees, relating to disciplinary matters in the Institution

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