

2015

# *Staff Handbook*

## **STARZ COLLEGE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

The policies set forth in this handbook are not intended to create a contract, nor are they to be construed to constitute contractual obligations of any kind or a contract of employment between Starz College of Science and Technology and any of its employees.

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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

We are pleased to provide you with a copy of the Starz College of Science and Technology Staff Handbook. The handbook is intended to serve as both a guide and a reference source. If you have questions concerning any of the information, I encourage you to talk with your supervisor or contact the Administration Office.

The strength and resiliency of Starz College of Science and Technology community is directly related to the dedication shown by its most valuable resource, the faculty and staff. Each of you plays a vital role in the teaching and learning mission of this institution, and it is a joy and privilege to join with you in this important work.

Sincerely,

*Amb Latim Dathong*

Latim Dathong, MBA.

President

## INTRODUCTION

This staff handbook is designed to acquaint staff of Starz College of Science and Technology with information about working conditions, benefits, and some of the policies affecting employment. It is your responsibility to read, understand, and comply with all provisions of this handbook.

No handbook can anticipate every circumstance or question regarding college policy. Accordingly, the college reserves the right to amend, supplement, interpret, rescind, or deviate from any policies or portions of the handbook from time to time as it deems appropriate, in its sole and absolute discretion. This handbook supersedes and revokes all prior statements of policy at the college, whether oral or written.

If this handbook does not address a matter of interest to you, or if you are uncertain about something after you have read the applicable policy, please do not hesitate to ask your supervisor or to contact the Office of Administrator.

### ***Nature of Employment***

Employment at Starz College of Science and Technology is legally entered into or voluntary in nature. Employees can be considered Fulltime, Part time, Student Intern or volunteer. Part time employee can resign with or without cause if a 30 days' notice is communicated to avoid legal penalties. Full time employees will have to follow the terms of their contract or any arrangements they have with the college. In all cases, A 30 days' notice is required by the college to avoid legal penalties. Similarly, the college may terminate the employment relationship at will at any time, with or without cause, and with or without notice.

## HISTORY

Starz was established in the United States of America in 2007 and incorporated in Monrovia in July of 2009 with the objectives of addressing the Information Technology education needs of Liberia and being the best in Information Technology. Our Information Technology education Training center was launched in March, 2010. Starz aims to achieve and retain the status as the largest Information Technology Education Training Institute in Liberia with an enrollment of over 2000 students from both short and long terms program. The Corporate Sector, including major banks, NGO'S, government and individuals have and will benefit immensely from our services. Starz is now Liberia's most trusted name in Information Technology Education, Consultancy and Manage-

ment.

## **MISSION OF STARZ COLLEGE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

Starz College of Science and Technology is a leading name in quality Information Technology education in Liberia. Starz's proficiency spans IT education, IT-assisted professional training and business solutions. We are fully equipped with an extensive collection of educational programs and solutions to touch the lives of numerous market segments from commercial organizations with specific training needs, to needed solutions geared toward individuals looking for Information Technology education and other skills.

As a Science and Technology college, Starz is committed to a way of learning that moves us beyond immediate interests and present knowledge into a larger world—an education that disciplines minds and develops whole persons equipped to understand and confront a changing society.

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY**

It is the policy of Starz College of Science and Technology to provide equal educational opportunities and equal access to facilities for all qualified persons. The college does not discriminate in employment, educational programs, and activities on the basis of age, color, creed, disability, gender identity, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or any other basis protected by law. This commitment includes the provision of a campus environment that is free from discrimination and harassment. The college will not tolerate any form of illegal discrimination or harassment and will not condone any actions or words that constitute such.

Any employee who believes that he or she has been unlawfully discriminated against should contact his or her supervisor or the VP of Administration.

### ***Guidelines for Diversity in Employment***

Starz College of Science and Technology is committed to recruiting and retaining a diverse workforce through specific guidelines regarding employment searches, diversity training, assessment of recruitment and retention for diversity, and curricular and co-curricular programs that seek to enhance intercultural understanding.

# **CLASSIFICATIONS OF EMPLOYEES, WORK SCHEDULE, ATTENDANCE AND PAY**

## ***Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)***

All employees are assigned a full-time equivalent (FTE), which is based on their annual work hours. An FTE determines benefit eligibility, holiday and vacation time, and leave programs.

## ***Full-time and Part-time Employees***

### **Full-time Employees**

Full-time employees are those who are scheduled to work 40 hours per week with a scheduled work year of at least 12 months.

### **Part-time Employees (Part time, student intern & volunteer)**

Part-time employees are those who are scheduled to work anything less than 40 hours per week.

### **Orientation Period**

All new employees enter into an orientation period of employment. The period is generally set for an initial period of 30 days. The supervisor may direct that the orientation period be terminated, curtailed, or extended depending upon the progress being made by the new employee.

During the orientation period, new employees should receive the necessary advice and training from their supervisors to help them learn their assignments and perform to expectations. A written performance review will normally be conducted at the end of the 30-day orientation period for all staff employees. Normally, employee vacations will not be scheduled during the first year of employment.

Successful completion of the orientation period does not alter the employment-at-will status or confer any greater right to employment than previously existed.

## ***Hours of Work***

Normal operating hours for the college are 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. The hours of work in particular departments or for particular employees are established by the college administration and/or the supervisor.

The normal workweek for full-time employees is 40 hours. Overtime may be required under certain circumstances. Every effort will be made to give the employee as much advance notice as possible.

Due to the demand for Starz College services, Staff (mostly administrators and fulltime employees) will be required to be available for unscheduled work for which compensation may not be available. It is expected that each person cooperate during such times. However, should there be emergency workload that requires urgent and additional inputs; stipend may be provided for those involved.

## ***Regular Attendance and Punctuality***

Punctuality and regular attendance are important to the smooth operation of departments. If an employee is late or absent, Starz College ability to serve its students and perform other work is affected, and an extra unfair burden is placed on an employee's fellow workers. Unless an absence is permitted under Starz's holiday, vacation, sick, or leave programs, employees are responsible for being at work and arriving on time. If an employee is going to be absent or late, it is the employee's responsibility to call his or her supervisor as soon as possible (but not later than one hour after the start of the workday). An employee must notify his or her supervisor each day that he or she is absent.

An employee who is absent for reasons other than those permitted by Starz's holiday, vacation, sick, or leave programs, or who fails to provide notice as required, will be subject to appropriate corrective action ranging from a spoken warning, reduction in pay to termination. Employees who have more than three days of absences not permitted under a holiday, vacation, sick, or leave program during a semester period will be subject to review by management.



### ***Pay Periods and Deductions from Pay***

Payments are made by the finance office directly to each employee. In some Instances, direct deposit into the bank account(s) authorized by the employee may also available. If a payday falls on a holiday, Saturday, or Sunday, salaries disbursement or direct deposits will be made in the following work week. The college is required by law to take certain deductions from an employee's pay. These include Government income tax and withholdings for Social Security. Employees and faculties are required to meet all their required duties at the end of each pay period to prevent a delay and/or deduction in their pay.

### ***Performance and Salary Review***

All employees will receive an annual performance review to be conducted by their supervisor. The performance review process for employees or faculty provides an intentional means for a position description, professional development, and job performance to be discussed by the supervisor and staff member. Compensation increases are normally made on basis of performance, tenure with the college and are based upon the college's financial position.

## **RESIGNATION AND TERMINATION**

### ***Resignation***

Employees who voluntarily terminate their employment with Starz College must give at least a 30 days' notice. Employees are expected to contact the Office of Administration to complete the checkout process and schedule an exit interview. All Employees under contract is expected to meet with the President during this period.

### ***Termination***

Starz College does not have tenure employment for staff employees. An employee's service may be terminated because of changes in the college's needs, when the employee's performance or conduct does not meet the college's expectations, or for other reasons including Ethical determined by the college. Although inadequate performance of specific job duties, failure to comply with college policies, or other misconduct may result in the termination of employment, the college may also terminate

employment without cause at its sole discretion. Employees are expected to contact the Office of Administration to complete the checkout process and schedule an exit interview.

### ***Reinstatement/Re-employment***

When an individual who has previously been a regular employee of the college is reinstated/re-employed, a new appointment is subject to the same 30-day orientation period as a new employee. If the individual returns to the college within a period of 12 months or less, previous service with the college is credited to establish the vacation allowance and years of service but may not be used to establish eligibility for the dependent tuition program.

## **CORRECTIVE ACTION AND PROBLEM-SOLVING PROCEDURES**

### ***Corrective Action***

All college personnel are expected to comply with college policies, to uphold professional standards, and to perform satisfactorily their job responsibilities. Failure to do so may result in corrective action, up to and including termination of employment.

The corrective action process used in response to employee performance problems and employee misconduct will be determined by the college in light of the facts and circumstances of each case. Corrective action measures may include oral or written warnings, probation, suspension without pay, or immediate discharge. Each situation will be considered in light of a variety of factors, including but not limited to:

- The seriousness of the situation
- The employee's past conduct and length of service
- The nature of the employee's previous performance or incidents involving the employee

### **Examples of Misconduct**

The following are examples of misconduct that could result in corrective action, up to and/or including immediate termination of employment. This list is not intended to be exhaustive, but only illustrates the kinds of behavior that violate professional expectations at the college.

- Violation of the Inappropriate Conduct and Anti-Harassment
- Acts or threatened acts of violence
- Theft or misappropriation of college funds or supplies, including misuse of campus computing resources
- Unexplained absences from work
- Refusal or failure to follow directions from his or her supervisor
- Uncivil behavior, such as discourtesy, rudeness, or profane language, whether directed at colleagues, students, or guests of the college
- Unauthorized disclosure of confidential information
- Violation of the Drug and Alcohol Policy
- Unsatisfactory performance of the functions of his or her position

### ***Employee Problem-Solving Procedure***

Starz College strives to provide a positive work environment. Where an employee has a problem or concern, the college will endeavor satisfactorily to resolve the problem wherever possible. The college cannot guarantee that a consensus will be reached on every issue, however, or that every issue will be resolved in the manner requested. In general, employees seeking to resolve problems or concerns should refer to the following procedures:

#### **Supervisor Accessibility**

All supervisors at the college are available to their employees as an avenue for resolving problems or concerns. Thus, if an employee has a problem or concern about work-related issues, he or she is strongly encouraged first to communicate those issues openly and directly with his or her immediate supervisor. If reporting to his or her immediate supervisor would be uncomfortable or inappropriate, he or she should discuss the issues with another supervisor or with the VP of Administration. Administrative and operational staff is expected to first contact direct supervisor and/ or VP of administration and faculties are expected to first contact the VP Instruction/office of the Dean

### **Additional Avenues**

If, after discussing the situation with a supervisor, the problem or concern remains unresolved, Administrative and operational staff are expected to contact the VP of administration and Faculty are expected to contact the VP Instruction/office of the Dean. If the situation remains unresolved, he or she may proceed to the next level of authority by contacting the President.

Starz College is committed to conducting its operations with integrity by engaging in lawful, ethical, and respectful practices. For this reason, we have encouraged members of the campus community to make any concerns known to the college. Whether these concerns relate to fraud or crime, security or internet abuses, or fraudulent financial or business practices, violations, or ethical concerns, the doors of college administrators, supervisors, and the president are always open.

## **PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT**

Starz College, in keeping with its mission is committed to creating and maintaining an atmosphere in which all members of the community students, faculty, and staff are treated with respect and dignity. The following policies were designed not to limit the legitimate exercise of academic freedom, but rather to achieve and maintain the common good. Employees are expected to comply with the policies; non-compliance will be subject to corrective action.

### ***Dress Code***

Employees are required to dress in a manner acceptable to the institution and their community. It is therefore expected that Starz College employees adhere to a strict dress code of attiring his/herself professionally. Not paying attention to this can lead to disciplinary action.

### ***Inappropriate Conduct and Anti-Harassment Policy***

All members of the college community are responsible for the maintenance of an atmosphere that fosters openness, tolerance, and diversity. Toward this end, the college is committed to maintaining a campus environment that is free from discrimination and harassment. Discrimination, harassment, and other inappropriate conduct on the basis of age, color, creed, disability, gender identity, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, veteran status, or any other basis protected by Liberia law is against Starz college policy and will not be tolerated. Electronic communication (such as e-mail and Internet use) is covered by this policy in the same manner as other communication and actions. The college encourages its employees and students to re-

port any incident of possible discrimination or harassment to the college's administration.

### ***Prohibited Conduct Defined***

For the purpose of this policy, prohibited conduct relates to another person's age, color, creed, disability, gender identity, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, veteran status, or any other basis protected by law. It includes verbal, visual, or physical conduct where such conduct may have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or educational performance, or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or educational environment.

Prohibited conduct may include, among other things, telling racist or sexist jokes or making offensive or derogatory remarks about another person's race, ancestry, national origin, age, sexual orientation, or disability. Prohibited conduct may occur through personal contact, comments, telephone communication, visual displays, e-mail, Internet sites, or other material or information intentionally displayed on computer monitors. Prohibited conduct also includes sexual harassment as defined below.

### ***Sexual Harassment Defined***

Unwelcome advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment and are prohibited, where:

- a) Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or academic status; or
- b) Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment or academic decisions affecting that individual; or
- c) Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or learning environment.

Sexually harassing conduct may include, among other things, use of suggestive sexual comments, jokes, or innuendo; persistent, unwanted flirtation or invitations for dates or other social activities; unwelcome sexual advances or passes; sexual remarks or questions about a person's body, clothing, or sexual activities; patting, pinching, or other offensive touching; or displays of sexually suggestive pictures or objects.

## **Persons Covered**

Unlawful discrimination and harassment is prohibited whether it is committed by faculty members, administrators, supervisors, co-workers, or non-employees, including students, vendors, or suppliers. Similarly, college personnel must not engage in prohibited conduct against students, college employees, or employees of the college's vendors or suppliers.

## ***Complaint Procedure***

Individuals who become aware of or think they have been subject to discriminatory or harassing conduct are strongly encouraged to contact the college's administrator or the immediate supervisor.

Individuals who become aware of or think they have been subject to discriminatory or harassing conduct may also wish to talk to the chair of the Ethics Committee, members of the Health Service professional staff, or to one of the college pastors. Because these staff members are professionals with special requirements regarding confidentiality, they are not required to report the incident to the college's ethics committee unless the individual decides to release the information.

After these discussions, if the individual decides to file a complaint with the ethics committee, a written summary will be completed by the complainant or the committee in conjunction with the complainant. The summary will include the following information: name, address, and phone number of the complainant; name of the accused; nature of the complaint; date(s) and location(s) of the alleged incident(s); evidence on which the complaint is based.

Once the written summary has been completed, the committee will begin an investigation of the complaint as soon as possible. The committee will also inform the employee's supervisor, vice president, and the president.

Even if a written complaint is not filed, the college may undertake an independent investigation as circumstances warrant and implement remedial measures.

## **Reporting Requirements of Supervisors or Department Heads**

Supervisors or department heads who become aware of any incidents or alleged incidents of discrimination or harassment must immediately report them directly to the college official(s) identified above. Any supervisor or department head who fails to report allegations of discrimination, harassment, or other prohibited conduct or who otherwise fails to deal properly with such allegations will be subject to corrective action,

up to and including dismissal.

### **Investigation and Response**

The College Administration will take prompt action to investigate complaints of discrimination or harassment. The investigation will gather sufficient information from both the complainant and the accused in order to determine an appropriate response.

Upon conclusion of the investigation, the college will take immediate and appropriate action to resolve the complaint informally or through corrective action. Any employee found to have engaged in unlawful discrimination, harassment, or other prohibited conduct will be subject to corrective action, from an oral or written warning up to and including discharge. Immediate and appropriate steps will also be taken if any non-employee (such as a student, vendor, or supplier) is found to have unlawfully discriminated against or harassed any students, college employees, or employees of the college's vendors or suppliers.

The college reserves the right to institute temporary measures to respond to reported incidents of harassment or discrimination pending the completion of any applicable complaint resolution process.

In cases of incidents of anonymous harassment as determined to be serious by the appropriate harassment officers, the Office of the President will ensure a timely, campus-wide release of information regarding the incident.

### ***Files and Confidentiality***

Files related to complaints of discriminatory or harassing conduct will be kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the need for a thorough investigation.

The ethics committee shall record the following information in a confidential file for each complaint:

- a) Names of the complainant, the accused, the officer
- b) Written summary of the complaint
- c) Notes pertaining to the investigation
- d) Findings of the investigation



e) Measures related to the resolution of the complaint

The files of the officer(s) will be stored in the Office of the President, not in personnel or student files. Files of the officer(s) will be retained for seven years after the most recent complaint against the individual and then destroyed.

### **Non-Retaliation**

The college will not retaliate or take any form of reprisal against any victim of or witness to discrimination or harassment, and any such retaliation or reprisal by a college employee is forbidden. Any employee who retaliates against another employee, student, or witness because of a complaint of discrimination or harassment, or because of participation in any investigation, will be subject to corrective action up to and including termination of employment.

### **Implementation**

The college's intent in preparing, implementing, and distributing this policy is to maintain a campus environment free from inappropriate conduct and harassment. The college expects the cooperation of all employees in making this policy work in compliance with Liberia laws. This policy is not intended to impose any contractual obligations on the college or any of its employees or representatives. Questions about this policy should be directed to the college's administration.

### **Consensual Relations Policy**

A dating, romantic, or sexual relationship between an employee and a student carries risks of conflict of interest, breach of trust, and abuse of power. Under some circumstances such as those involving teaching, supervising, advising, or counseling students a student's freedom of choice is greatly diminished, even in relationships that appear to be based on mutual consent, because of the power differential between the employee and the student.

**"Starz College faculty and staff shall not engage in a dating, romantic, or sexual relationship"** with students who are currently enrolled in any courses in the school or who are under their direct supervision in any way. In all other situations, faculty and staff considering or had a previous dating, romantic, or sexual relationship with a student are required to disclose it to the administration and consider seriously the exploitative possibilities that may be inherent in such relationships. Such relationships are strongly dis-



couraged by the college. Individuals engaging in such relationships render themselves vulnerable to later allegations of sexual harassment or other serious legal claims, as well as the possibility of termination for unprofessional conduct.

### **Anti-Violence Policy**

Any acts or threats of violence against employees, students, or visitors on college property are strictly prohibited.

Specifically:

- a) No form of weapon is permitted on college property or at college sponsored events. Examples of weapons include switchblades, guns or other firearms, explosives, and toxic substances. Employees who bring such weapons or substances on college property or to college-sponsored events, or who state or imply that they have such weapons or substances, will be subject to appropriate corrective action up to and including termination of employment.
- b) Threatening or intimidating behavior or assaults against any person on the campus or at college-sponsored events are strictly prohibited. This includes verbal or nonverbal threats to another employee or person, or an expression of intent to inflict injury or damage to another employee or person. This also includes such disorderly conduct as fighting or using abusive or threatening language toward another. Employees engaging in such behavior will be subject to appropriate corrective action up to and including termination of employment.
- c) Defacing or damaging property of the college, its employees, or students is strictly prohibited. Employees engaging in such actions will be subject to appropriate corrective action up to and including termination of employment.

Employees are encouraged to report immediately any threatening behavior or the presence of weapons or other prohibited substances on college property or at college sponsored events to their supervisor or to the Chief of Security. Reprisals against an employee who reports or experiences any form of workplace violence will not be tolerated.

### **Drug and Alcohol Policy**

Starz College highly values its students and employees and is therefore committed to maintaining a safe and healthful learning environment and workplace free from chemical substance abuse. The college prohibits its employees ("employees" or "employee" includes student workers in this policy) from reporting to work or performing work for the

college while impaired by or under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol.

The illegal use, possession, dispensation, distribution, manufacture, or sale of alcohol or other drugs by an employee in the workplace, or while the employee is on duty or official college business or by a student is prohibited. This standard of conduct applies to all college-sponsored on-campus and off-campus activities.

Government law contains further prohibitions against the manufacture, possession with the intent to distribute, or distribution of controlled substances, including narcotic drugs, marijuana, depressant, or stimulant substances. Starz College promotes wellness and recognizes chemical dependency as a major threat to wholeness of personal health. The college is therefore committed to seeing that all its students and employees understand that:

- The use of alcohol and/or illegal drugs can interfere physically, mentally, socially and spiritually with the ability to perform important functions
- These drugs impair physical coordination and mental alertness and may damage the immune system, resulting in irreversible health problems and death
- Social behavior following use of alcohol or illegal drugs may be destructive to relationships

Violations of the standards of conduct described previously will result in:

- corrective action up to and including dismissal/termination as described in the respective staff, student and faculty handbooks, and students' residence hall contracts and/or
- required satisfactory participation in a drug and alcohol abuse evaluation or rehabilitation program

Any employee or student employee, who is convicted of violating any criminal drug statute in such workplace situations as described above, must report that conviction to the Schools Administration immediately.

## **STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SECURITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY OF DATA AND DATA NETWORKS**

### ***Statement of Responsibility***

Security and confidentiality of all data is a matter of concern for all members of the Starz community who have access to records and files, paper and computerized, and the data infrastructure and networks owned by Starz College.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

### ***Emergency Procedures***

#### **Accident or Injury**

If an employee is seriously ill or injured please contact the nurse office. The Administration should also be notified so that family members can be contacted if appropriate.

#### **Report of Accidents**

Any employee sustaining an illness or injury on the job must complete, with their supervisor, an Incident/Accident Report and forward it to the Administrator as soon as possible. This report is needed even if the injury does not appear serious enough to justify consulting a doctor.

#### ***College Keys***

Campus security is important to all college employees. If you are issued a building or office key, it should be kept in your possession; you should not loan it to anyone. The privilege of carrying a key is not transferable. A lost key must be reported at once to the employee's supervisor and the Administrator.

## **Smoking Policy**

The use of pipes, hookahs and other smoking devices such as e-cigarettes or vapor cigarettes is also prohibited on Starz campus. Individuals in violation of the policy will be subject to the following Starz College penalties:

- Employees who have been reminded and continue to smoke will be reported to Administrator/Human Resources. Corrective action, including possible termination, may occur if smoking on campus continues.

## **Blood borne Pathogens**

Faculty and staff are not authorized to clean **any** spills of body fluids unless they have received training in infection control and been offered a Hepatitis B vaccine. For more detailed information, contact the supervisor or the health petitioner on campus.

## **Solicitation Policy**

To protect employees, no outside solicitors will be permitted to approach employees on the college's premises. Employees may engage in solicitation only as described below.

During working time, employees should focus on their work duties and not interfere with other employees' work. Therefore, no employee may engage in solicitation or accept solicitation on behalf of any club, society, religious organization, political party, labor union, or similar association, or for any other purpose, during the working time of either the solicitor or the person being solicited. "Working time" means the time during which an employee is required to be performing work duties.

At Starz "Technology Is our passion and education Is our Life"