

**GARDEN CITY UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
KENYASE-KUMASI**



GUIDING ETHICAL PRINCIPLES FOR STAFF AND STUDENTS

2017

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PART I: GUIDING ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

1.0 Introduction

Garden City University College (GCUC) as community is made up of a diversity of populations which have relations of power, relations of kind or of role, relations based on cultural and/or ethnic difference.

To function properly and with due regard to human rights and dignity, every community ought to have an interest in ensuring ethical behaviour among all its members. Moreover, the University College as an institutional and administrative entity also has rights and responsibilities. The principles set out below show how GCUC and its members may co-exist, co-operate and collaborate to form a community in which everyone's rights are observed and protected.

1.1 General Responsibility of GCUC

In general, the responsibilities of Garden City University College as a community are to:

- encourage and promote ethical behaviour
- provide an appropriate environment for all its members so that they may express ideas, theories and beliefs freely
- provide equity of access to the learning environment, career development and University College management
- ensure that the working environment of the University College is a safe and healthy one
- respect the intellect and humanity of others
- foster recognition of obligations both as a member of the University College and, where relevant and appropriate, as a member of a profession/discipline
- encourage research and teaching according to accepted ethical principles

2.0 Specific principles

Below are specific principles.

2.1 THE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

2.1.1 The Dignity and Value of the Individual

The University is committed to the principles stated in declarations, statutes, and student handbook, and accordingly seeks to foster a working environment that, as well as being safe for all members of the University College community protects the rights of those people. Individuals should be respected as persons who have the right to make decisions on their own behalf. Indeed, the University College has a responsibility to facilitate such autonomous decision-making, but should, at the same time, protect the rights and dignity of all members of the community.

Principles of equity therefore should underpin academic and management decision-making so that both individuals and corporate bodies are encouraged to respect the rights of others. Where there is a conflict because of competing rights, various University College instrumentalities may be used to resolve issues.

2.1.2 Protection of Freedoms

Traditionally, universities have been places where members of the community have been encouraged to observe society and comments on all its activities. At the same time, individuals have also been encouraged to explore new concepts and to develop these through open discussion. The concept of freedom of thought and speech is that which respects the right of persons to express ideas, theories and opinions without censure or fear of political or religious interference. Such freedom should be extended to all staff and students in order that they are encouraged to develop skills of reasoning and to explore new ideas.

2.1.3 The Impact of University College Activities on Society

The University College should constantly seek to ensure that all its activities serve to benefit society. For instance, research and development activities include assessments of the short-, medium- and long-term impact of the University College's projects on people, and on environmental and social conditions, so that appropriate judgements and decisions may be made.

2.1.4 The Impact of University Activities on the Environment

The University should seek to preserve and restore the environment and to minimise any negative or destructive effect thereon.

3.0 THE INDIVIDUAL

3.1 The Autonomous Person

All members of the University College have rights and responsibilities which they may exercise according to their designated positions, their role or function within the University College, and the policies, regulations and statutes of the University College. Each member of the University College community, however, should be recognised as a person in her or his own right. Likewise, that person should also recognise the rights and dignity of others.

3.2 Exercise of Freedoms

Individuals have the right to express their ideas, theories, beliefs and values and should respect the rights of others, including students, to do likewise. The recognition and exercise of freedom of ideas and of speech are fundamental to the democratic, and especially a university community: it has traditionally been a university's role to challenge held beliefs and structures, as well as to offer new technologies and approaches.

3.3 Individual Responsibility

Members of the University College community should demonstrate integrity, objectivity and conscientiousness by an honest approach to their various employment activities, including teaching, study, research, administration, and business activities, by respecting the rights of others, and by ensuring that activities of individuals and groups in the University College are in accord with general as well as University College's ethical principles.

3.4 Scholarly and Professional Practices

Originality of research and publication, appropriate acknowledgement of ideas and material, and fair and honest dealing with the original material and research of others are responsibilities of the members of any university community. The codes of ethical practice set out in specific University College and professional documents provide staff with the expected standards of practice and behaviour, both as academics and as members of a particular profession/discipline. These standards, moreover,

would thus be demonstrated to students by the example of their lecturers/instructors. Similarly, staff should behave in such a way as to set a positive example both to other staff and to students.

3.5 Loyalty to the University College Community

It is both reasonable and desirable that members of the University College be able to question or criticise the philosophy, statement of intent, economic dealings and other activities of the institution. Members of the Garden City University College community should act at all times in such a way as to uphold the values and principles of the University and seek not to bring it into disrepute.

3.6 Responsibility to Colleagues/School/Department/Area

Members of the University College community should behave in ways which do not cause discredit or unnecessary disquiet to the school, department or area with which they are affiliated. The convergence of loyalties to one's discipline and/or one's affiliation may occasionally conflict with responsibility to the University College. Members may resolve such conflict through reasoned argument consistent with both general and University College's ethical principles.

3.7 Responsibilities towards Others

Relations among staff and between staff and students should be respectful, among other things avoiding language and/or behaviour of a racist, sexist or otherwise prejudicial or demeaning kind. Members of the University College community should be sensitive to those from other cultures. Academic staff should ensure, first, that their teaching practice recognises these rights of students and other staff members; second, because students have the right to access staff for assistance and counsel in their studies, staff should also ensure accessibility according to this right. Those staff members who undertake to supervise students have special obligations, including accessibility, loyalty, honesty and respect for the ownership of intellectual property.

3.8 Conflict of Interest

Staff should take suitable measures to avoid any situation in which they may have, or be seen to have, a conflict of interest. Staff should avoid situations which may require them to supervise or assess a student or other staff member with whom they have, or have had, a sexual, commercial, familial or other significant relationship.

PART II: CODE OF ETHICS

4.0 Introduction

This *Code* applies to all staff and students of the University, representatives and visitors engaging in any University College-related activity. They are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with this *Code*.

The code of ethics is intended to document the principles of conduct and ethics to be followed by the staff and students of Garden City University College.

4.1 Objectives

The objectives of the *Code* are to:

- Provide direction to staff and students with respect to expected conduct whilst affiliated with the University College.
- Provide staff and students with direction in ethically ambiguous situations
- Promote honest and ethical conduct in all academic transactions including personal and professional relationships with staff and students.
- Promote compliance with applicable national laws, rules and regulations
- Help promote a culture of honesty and accountability for the university College and for Ghana
- Provide mechanisms for reporting unethical conduct

The tenets of the *Code* apply equally to all staff members - full time and part time of the University College.

4.2 General Behaviour

Garden City University College fosters an academic environment in which students, faculty, staff and all other employees in the University College community are treated with respect and dignity. GCUC administration will not tolerate harassment of its employees in any form. GCUC workplace

environment must be free from violent behaviour. Threatening, intimidating or aggressive behaviour as well as bullying, subjecting to ridicule or other similar behaviour toward students, faculty, staff members and other employees will not be tolerated.

4.3 Inclusion and diversity

GCUC is committed to maintaining an environment where students and staff are valued, respected and able to realize their full potential. Harassment and discrimination of any form and bullying has no place in such a culture.

4.4 Sexual Harassment

For productive teaching and learning to occur in a university environment, members of the community lecturers, staff and students - should pursue their responsibilities guided by a strong commitment to principles of mutual trust, respect and confidence, as well as professional codes of conduct. Sexual harassment by any lecturer, staff member, or student is a violation of both national law and University policy and will not be tolerated.

5.0. CONSENSUAL RELATIONSHIPS POLICY

Definitions - The following definitions are to be understood in the context of this policy:

Employees refer to lecturers, administrative staff of any status, and other staff.

Lecturers refer to all full and part-time employees of the University College with teaching responsibilities, and other instructional personnel, e.g. laboratory or workshop staff.

Students refer to all full or part-time students of GCUC.

A consensual relationship is any mutually agreed dating, romantic, or sexual relationship.

"Position of authority" includes, but not limited to, situations in which an individual is responsible for the teaching, evaluation or supervision of students, or the employment, evaluation, promotion of staff.

For purposes of this policy, it is recognized that there are occasions when individuals, holding classifications of student, lecturer or staff in their regular duties will fall into more than one classification due to certain situations. For example, if a staff member is enrolled in a course and a consensual relationship develops within an instructional context, the staff member will be considered a student for purposes of the requirements of this policy.

5.1 Guidelines

It should be understood by all members of the University College community that consensual relationships that occur in the context of educational or employment supervision and evaluation are generally deemed unwise because they present serious ethical concerns.

Even in instances in which the employee, especially a lecturer, has no direct working relationship with a student, he should be sensitive to the perceptions of other students and staff who may conclude that a student in a consensual relationship with a lecturer may receive preferential treatment from him/her or his/her colleagues.

Consensual relationship between lecturers and students occurring outside the instructional environment may lead to difficulties particularly when the lecturer and student are in the same academic unit or in units that are academically allied. The lecturer may face serious conflicts of interest and should be careful to distance him/herself from any decisions that reward or penalize the student involved.

Further, a relationship in which the parties consider as consensual may appear to others to be exploitative. It potentially places the lecturer or staff in a position with the real possibility of advancing the student's academic and other interests in return for sexual favours.

5.2. Non-compliance with Consensual Relationship Policy

Lecturers and staff who fail to remove themselves from a "position of authority" over a student or employee with whom a consensual relationship exists will be deemed to have violated an ethical obligation to students, employees, colleagues, and the University College.

Credible allegations of a lecturer's or staff member's failure to avoid or terminate a consensual relationship obligates the immediate or appropriate supervisor to conduct a prompt and thorough inquiry to determine whether or not there is any validity to the allegation.

Where it is concluded that a relationship involving a "position of authority" exists, the immediate or appropriate supervisor shall advise the lecturer/staff involved to terminate the relationship, or impose sanctions against the parties involved where the advice is ignored.

The Head of School/Department shall make suitable arrangements for an objective evaluation of the student's academic performance in order to ensure that the student's interest and the credibility of GCUC are protected.

5.3. Sanctions/Appeal

Persons in violation of this policy shall be subject to sanctions ranging from verbal warnings to termination of appointment or expulsion from the University College.

Should it be determined that disciplinary action is appropriate, the action to be taken shall be determined in the case of a lecturer or staff by the President.

In the case of students, action shall be taken by the Dean of Students.

Persons who knowingly make false allegations that an improper relationship exists between a lecturer/staff and a student, cover it up, fail to act appropriately on it in the case of responsible officials, or block action when a complaint comes to their attention shall equally be subject to appropriate sanctions.

5.4. Alcohols and Drug Abuse

Garden City University is committed to maintaining a safe and healthy work environment free of any substance abuse. The possession and use of alcohol, use or distribution of drugs for non- medical purposes on GCUC premises is strictly forbidden. Faculty, Students and all other employees of the University are expected to perform their duties in a professional manner and not hindered by the effects of drugs and/or alcohol.

6.0 Intellectual Property of Others

Intellectual Property is recognized by this University 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 University. Regulations provide for the ownership of intellectual property created by students and staff of the University. Intellectual Property includes inventions and copyright in various types of work.

Faculty, staff and students of the university may not reproduce, distribute or alter copyrighted materials without permission of the copyright owner or its authorized agents. Plagiarism is strictly forbidden and faculty must ensure the Compliance of the rules of plagiarism with their own work, and the work of their students and report any observed infringement of the rules to the Registrar.

7.0 Use of IT Infrastructure

The University's IT systems including computers, email, intranet and internet facilities and telephones are the property of the University and are to be used primarily for work and academic purposes. Faculty, staff and students alike may not use the University's IT systems and telephones to:

- a. allow others to gain access to the University's IT systems through the use of their password or other security codes
- b. send harassing, threatening or obscene messages
- c. access the internet for inappropriate use
- d. send copyrighted documents that are not authorized for publication
- e. make personal or group solicitations unless authorized by the University
- f. conduct personal commercial business

8.0. Confidentiality

Staff members who have access to official University documentation and information must take care to maintain the integrity, confidentiality and privacy of such information to protect any individual concerned. Members of the University should also undertake to maintain the privacy of oral communications where that has been requested.

Staff and students files are highly confidential. It is essential that staff members and students feel confident that information relating to them is treated in an appropriate manner, with due attention paid to the need for non-disclosure of file contents outside normal University College business transactions. Staff must take care to respect the confidentiality and privacy of students and only provide information when authorized by the Registrar's Office for legitimate purposes.

9.0 Use of University Facilities and Equipment

Members of the University College are expected to use all University facilities and equipment efficiently, carefully and honestly. Resources should be used economically, secured against theft or misuse and waste avoided. These resources should not be used for personal purposes unless express permission has been granted in accordance with University policy.

10.0 Health and Safety

The University College is committed to providing and maintaining safe workplaces, plant and systems of work as far as reasonably practicable. All activities are required to be properly planned and conducted in accordance with legislative, industry and relevant standards to ensure the safety, health and welfare of all participants and others.

All persons who organize or conduct activities for or on behalf of the University are responsible for acquiring and keeping up to date knowledge of safety and health matters and ensuring that appropriate resources and processes for eliminating or minimizing risks from hazards are in place. Effective communications and compliance through documentation, inspection and reviewing of activities is required in order to demonstrate due diligence.

All staff and students are required to take reasonable care of their health and safety and that of others, follow all health and safety policies and procedures and report all known or observed hazards, incidents and injuries.

11.0. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS

Academic Conduct

Students share with their Lecturers and academic heads the responsibility of maintaining a suitable environment that is conducive for their own learning as well as for classroom management by their Lecturers. Students perform their part in this shared responsibility by doing any or all of the following:

In regard to their academic life at the University, students shall faithfully observe the rules and regulations given in the *Handbook for Students*.

Students shall assume full accountability and responsibility for their own learning and actively take part in the learning of other students.

Students shall exert every effort to relate what they learn in the classroom to the real world outside.

Students shall at all times observe proper academic conduct. They shall refrain from committing plagiarism, cheating in tests or examinations and/or aiding other students to do so, or in falsifying academic documents.

Students shall demonstrate sensitivity and appreciation of the facilities provided for their learning by the University by way of refraining from defacing, damaging, or committing wastage and theft of institutional resources.

Student-Student Relationship

As a major part of the University community, students are responsible for promoting genuine collegiality among their peers through mutual respect for each other as well as by the example of their moral behaviour. This collegiality is demonstrated in the following manner:

- Students shall respect the rights of fellow students to learn and shall afford them courtesy and respect at all times.
- Students shall value and respect the diverse qualities and gifts of their peers, especially those of other cultures, religions, nationalities and social classes.
- Students shall respect each other as individuals. Under no circumstance shall they physically or psychologically harm or threaten to harm others by bullying, hazing, stalking, harassing or discriminating other students in any form.
- Students shall be open to constructive criticisms from fellow students.

Student-Lecturer Relationship

The maturity of a society's culture is assessed by the level of respect and appreciation its members have of those who hand on to each generation the knowledge and wisdom that is its heritage. Students demonstrate this respect in the following manner:

- Students shall treat their Lecturers with the respect due them in view of the experience, knowledge and concern they have for the welfare and learning of their students.

- Students shall endeavour to actively participate and engage in sound interaction and dialogue with their Lecturers and their peers without fear of intimidation or ridicule.
- Students shall appreciate feedbacks or constructive criticisms of their teachers as part of the normal process of formative education.
- Students shall refrain from giving personal favours or gifts, whether in cash or in kind, in return for any special consideration in giving a passing grade, granting of honours, consideration or otherwise.
- Students shall be truthful in the reasons they give for not completing academic assignments, attending class or taking an examination.
- Students shall properly elevate their concern to the Departmental Head or School Head as the case may be should they feel they are not given a fair and reasonable hearing on an academic matter.

Student-Administrative Employee Relationship

Administrative employees of an academic institution fulfil unassuming but, in the end, indispensable function in rendering support to the programs of colleges and departments. Students show recognition to this important contribution in the following manner:

- Students shall treat administrative employees with respect and courtesy regardless of their administrative status or position.
- Students shall be sensitive to administrative employees schedule and workload in dealing with them.
- Students shall properly elevate their concern to the administrative employee's immediate superior should they feel they are not given a reasonable response on a particular request, query or dispute.

Student-Community Relationship

While the University is, in a most important way, a preparation of students for their participation in the community-at-large, the students themselves, however, represent the institution by their early interest and involvement in the community. In supporting these ends, students are encouraged to exhibit the following acts and deeds:

- Students shall participate in community service and extracurricular activities by making active use of the knowledge and skills they gain at the University.
- Students shall, in a measure possible, participate in and support activities of other sectors, such as the civil society, government, and parochial and religious organizations.
- Students shall refrain from involving the University in their own personal financial dealings or the like on the outside.

Staff-staff relationship

Although the existence of a personal relationship between members of staff does not necessarily constitute a bar to the employment or promotion of either party, staff should declare to their supervisors any personal relationships which may give rise to a real or perceived conflict of interest, trust or breach of confidentiality.

Where a personal relationship exists or develops between members of staff who are in a management or supervisory relationship at work, they must not be involved in recruitment, selection, appraisal, promotion or in any other management activity or process involving the other party. Additionally, staff in a personal relationship should not work together in any circumstance whereby a conflict of interest, breach of confidentiality or unfair advantage may be perceived to be gained from the overlap of a personal and professional relationship.

12.0 RIGHTS OF STUDENTS

In addition to duties and responsibilities, students shall enjoy the following rights:

- The right to receive, primarily through competent instruction, relevant quality education in line with national goals and conducive to their full development as persons with human dignity
- The right to freely choose their field of study subject to existing curricula and to continue their course therein up to graduation, except in cases of academic deficiency, or violation of disciplinary regulations.

- The right to school guidance and counselling services for making decisions and selecting the alternatives in fields of work suited to his potentialities.
- The right of access to his or her school records, the confidentiality of which the school shall maintain and preserve.
- The right to issuance of official certificates, transcript of records, results, and other similar documents within thirty days from request
- The right to publish a student newspaper and similar publications, as well as the right to invite resource persons during assemblies, symposia and other activities of similar nature
- The right to free expression of opinions and suggestions, and to effective channels of communication with appropriate academic channels and administrative bodies of the school or institution
- The right to form, establish, join and participate in organizations and societies recognized by the school to foster their intellectual, cultural, spiritual and physical growth and development, or to form, establish, join and maintain organizations and societies for purposes not contrary to law
- The right to be free from involuntary contributions, except those approved by their own organizations or societies

13.0. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The University does not compromise on issues of integrity and honesty in academic matters. Lack of academic integrity and honesty is defined in the following terms:

13.1.1 P L A G I A R I S M

Plagiarism is the use or close imitation of the language and ideas of another author and representation of them as one's own original work. It is not the mere copying of text, but the presentation of another's ideas as one's own, regardless of the specific words or constructs used to express that idea.

Self-plagiarism is the reuse of significant, identical, or nearly identical portions of one's own work without acknowledging that one is doing so or without citing the original work.

Typically, self-plagiarism is only considered to be a serious ethical issue in settings where a publication is asserted to consist of new material, such as in academic publishing or educational assignments.

In academic fields, self-plagiarism is when an author re-uses portions of his or her own published and copyrighted work in subsequent publications, but without attributing the previous publication.

13.2 Disciplinary Implications:

Within academia, plagiarism by students, lecturers, administrators, or researchers is considered academic dishonesty or academic fraud and offenders are subject to disciplinary measures.

Sanctions:

Students - Plagiarism by students can result in punishments such as a **failing grade** on the particular assignment or for the entire course.

For cases of repeated plagiarism, or for cases in which a student commits severe plagiarism (e.g., submitting a copied article as his or her own work), a student may be **suspended** or **expelled**.

Revocation of academic degrees, diplomas, or other awards could also be applied as a sanction against a student who has graduated from the institution.

Staff - For academic and administrative staff, plagiarism may be punishable by any of the following sanctions depending on the gravity of the offence: **suspension, termination** of appointment, **dismissal**, or **loss of financial and other entitlements** under the conditions of service.

Disciplinary Rules and Procedures: Cases of plagiarism shall be considered under relevant provisions of Statutes 42-48 of the University College's Statute.

Observing and Reporting Infringement of Code of Conduct

It is the responsibility of all faculty members to understand and comply with the code of conduct and report to the Registrar, any observed infractions of the rules.

14.1 Amendment of this Code of Ethics: At the request of the Registrar, the President may appoint a Committee to review and amend this Code of Ethics and the policies herein enshrined.

15.1 RESEARCH

In recent years, the complexities of various issues facing society have been exacerbated by the upheavals brought about by globalization and increased diversity. At the same time, the interdisciplinary natures of academic research fields as well as the roles they play in society have also become more complex. A fundamental commitment of the University is to the advancement of learning through scholarly activities. The University recognizes that such activities flourish only in a climate of academic freedom, and therefore is committed to safeguarding, among others, the freedoms of inquiry and dissemination of research results.

Academic freedom entails respect for the autonomy of Researchers in their research activities as well as their right to investigate the truth. However, high ethical standards are also required of Researchers because of the considerable influence their research activities and the findings thereof bring to bear on humanity, society and the environment.

15.2 RATIONALE

The GCUC's Policy on Research Ethics aims to ensure:

The reliability and fairness of academic research conducted at the University.

That an ethical and scientific intellectual culture prevails among its employees and students

The rights and interests of human participants are protected.

Ethical and scientific soundness of research is not compromised where lack of funding limits opportunities for research and force cost-saving procedures

15.3 OBJECTIVES

The Policy on Research Ethics is not intended to restrict or discourage research at GCUC. On the contrary, this policy aims to:

- serve as a basis for policymakers and to provide an enabling environment for the practice of ethical research
- enable researchers to enhance their capability to undertake ethical research as well as maintaining their independence, especially when confronted with undue influence or pressure which may compromise their integrity or that of their research
- discourage unethical research practice

- provide an additional resource for the teaching and training of students in research
- preserve and promote the autonomy, quality, legitimacy and credibility of research
- protect and promote the rights of research participants and honour their trust in researchers and research
- make ethics an integral part of the planning and methodology of research
- strengthen the research ethics review system in the University where research involves human participants, animals, or other living or genetically modified organisms

15.4 RESPONSIBILITIES

Authority for ethics review according to this policy is established by the Board of Governors of the University. The ethical conduct of research involving human subjects is a responsibility that is shared by the various constituents of the University. Notwithstanding this shared responsibility, there are specific responsibilities that can be summarized as follows.

15.4.1 Responsibilities of the Administration

The Office of the Registrar bears the responsibility for the implementation of the University's policies on research involving human subjects. It must provide for the appropriate administrative oversight and the necessary resources to ensure that the University's adopted practices and procedures are being adhered to and are in compliance with all applicable ethical requirements.

15.4.2 Responsibilities of Researchers

Researchers have the primary responsibility to ensure that their research is carried out in an ethical manner. They are responsible for the protection of the rights and welfare of the human research subjects.

Researchers must be familiar with and comply with this policy and other ethical guidelines relevant to their research discipline. It is the responsibility of the researcher to obtain ethical approval as described in this policy for any project involving human subjects before starting the research. If there is any uncertainty about whether the research needs

ethical review and approval, the researcher should consult the appropriate Research Ethics Board (REB) for advice.

All members of a research team who conduct research under the supervision of others also bear personal responsibility for the ethical conduct of research. The Principal Investigator has the responsibility to ensure that the members of the research team comply with the provisions of this policy. Principal investigators should ensure that the members of the research team are aware of the contents of this policy and of other applicable ethical guidelines that are relevant to their responsibilities. Researchers must ensure that all individuals under their supervision have the training and competence needed to carry out their responsibilities in an ethical manner.

15.4.3 Responsibilities of Faculty Members as Supervisors of Student Researchers

All student research must be supervised by a faculty member who accepts responsibility for overseeing the ethical conduct of the student's research project. The supervising faculty member has certain responsibilities even though the student may be the primary researcher. Supervisors must ensure that their students have the training and competence needed to carry out their responsibilities in an ethical manner. They must ensure that the students are aware of and familiar with the contents of this policy and of other applicable ethical guidelines that are relevant to their responsibilities. Once a student's research project is approved, the supervisor must take further reasonable measures to ensure that the research is conducted in accordance with the provisions of this policy and other applicable ethical requirements. In the case of all undergraduate research, the supervisor has full responsibility to ensure that a student's project receives the appropriate ethics approval. In the case of course research projects, the supervisor/instructor has full responsibility to ensure that a student's project receives the appropriate ethics approval. In the case of graduate or postdoctoral research, it is the joint responsibility of the faculty supervisor and the student to ensure that the project receives the appropriate ethics approval. Supervisors are required to co-sign the student's submission to the REB to affirm their supervisory responsibilities.

15.4.5 Responsibilities of Student Researchers

Student research projects must receive the appropriate ethics review and approval before the research may begin. Although a student's research must be supervised by a faculty member, this does not in any way relieve

the obligation of the student to be familiar with and comply with the contents of this policy that are relevant to the student's responsibilities.

15.5 RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF RESEARCHERS AT GCUC

Researchers have the fundamental right to academic freedom and freedom of scientific research.

15.6 Integrity in research

Researchers should be competent and accountable. They should act in a responsible manner and strive to achieve the highest possible level of excellence, integrity and scientific quality in their research

Researchers have a right, as well as a duty, to refrain from undertaking or continuing any research that contravenes the Policy on Research Ethics, violates the integrity and/or validity of research and/or compromises their autonomy in research. If they feel that the policy or ethical principles are being violated, or that the study is unethical, they should make all possible efforts to make corrections. These would include reporting to the relevant Unit Ethics Review Committee. In the event of failure of remedial measures they should terminate the study or end their involvement in it.

Researchers may undertake only such research involving human participants, animals, other living or genetically modified organisms as has been approved by an appropriate Ethics Review Committee.

Researchers should undertake only such research as, according to their understanding, will benefit society and contribute to knowledge on the subject. They are advised to use resources judiciously and to avoid the unnecessary duplication of research.

Researchers have a right and a duty to make all necessary efforts to bring the research and its findings to the public domain in an appropriate manner and at an appropriate time. The publishing of research findings should be done in a manner which will not harm research participants or their communities.

Researchers should not undertake secret or classified research, any secret assignment under the guise of research or research whose findings are to remain confidential. They should endeavour to convince their client(s)/sponsor(s)/funder(s) of the importance of publishing research findings in scientific journals.

Researchers have a responsibility towards those involved in or affected by their work. They should make reasonable efforts to anticipate and to guard against the possible undesirable or harmful consequences of research. They should take reasonable corrective steps when they come across misuse or misrepresentation of their work.

Researchers should be honest in respect of their own actions in research and in their responses to the actions of other researchers. This applies to the whole range of research, including generating and analyzing data, publishing results, and acknowledging the direct and indirect contributions of colleagues, collaborators and others.

Researchers may not commit plagiarism, piracy, falsification or the fabrication of results at any stage of the research. The findings of research should be reported accurately and truthfully, and historical records and study material should be preserved and protected.

Plagiarism, falsification, the fabrication of results, and scientific misconduct in general are regarded as serious disciplinary offences. These will be investigated by the relevant Ethics Review Committee and the findings reported to GCUC or the research sponsor.

Researchers undertaking research involving humans, animals, other living or genetically modified organisms may be requested to report regularly to the relevant Ethics Review Committee. They should inform this committee immediately about any unexpected adverse events.

15.7 Relationship among researchers

Principal researchers are responsible for the ethical conduct of research by juniors, assistants, students and trainees under their supervision. At the same time juniors, assistants, students and trainees have a responsibility to act ethically and to observe the Policy on Research Ethics.

Juniors, assistants, students and trainees have a right to receive, and principal researchers have a responsibility to provide, proper training and guidance on all aspects of research, including ethical conduct. The principal researchers should delegate to juniors, assistants, students and trainees only those responsibilities that they are reasonably capable of performing on the basis of their education, training or experience, either independently or under supervision.

Researchers should not engage in discriminatory, harmful or exploitative practices or harassment. They should not impose their views or beliefs on

or try to seek personal, sexual or economic gain from anybody, including other researchers, juniors, assistants, trainees or students.

Researchers should not deceive or coerce other researchers, including juniors, assistants, trainees and students into serving as research participants. Students, either as research participants or as research assistants, have the right to end involvement in the research without having to face adverse consequences.

Students working on research as a tuition requirement should not be exploited by advisors or mentors, nor used as cheap labour.

In addition to researchers and students, other individuals such as administrative employees of GCUC who may have access to data or identifying information, should be briefed on ethical issues and the Policy on Research Ethics, including the participants' right to confidentiality.

15.7.1 Data sharing

Researchers should ensure the protection of the interests of co-researchers and participants, including participants' right to confidentiality, when sharing or making public available data in any form.

Data which do not identify participants and which are in the form of anonymous or abstracted facts may be commonly shared, if necessary even before publication of the study, among researchers and peer reviewers, and may be made available to the public.

As far as possible, researchers should ensure that relevant findings of the research are taken back to the research participants or communities in a form and manner that they can understand, and which will not cause them harm.

15.7.2 Peer review

Apart from ethical review, peer (scientific) review is an essential part of research. The purpose of peer review is to improve and advance research, and to facilitate observance of ethics. Researchers should be encouraged to subject their own work to such a process.

Researchers should be encouraged to make themselves available as peer reviewers for research in the fields in which they have adequate knowledge and expertise.

Peer reviewers should be aware of the ethical aspects of research and publication. They have to act objectively, impartially and constructively.

If peer reviewers have any actual or potential conflicts of personal or professional interest with the work under review which could jeopardize their ability to undertake the review in a scientific and ethical manner, they should either disclose the same or decline to review the work concerned. In such situations, their role should be decided on the basis of the type and severity of the conflict of interest.

When scientific misconduct or violation of ethics is discovered, the peer reviewer should take appropriate steps to report it to the relevant Ethics Review Committee.

16.1 BASIC PRINCIPLES FOR RESEARCH

Moral principles: GCUC promotes the following four internationally established and accepted moral principles of ethics as bases for research:

- autonomy (research should respect the autonomy, rights and dignity of research participants)
- beneficence (research should make a positive contribution towards the welfare of people)
- non maleficence (research should not cause harm to the research participant(s) in particular or to people in general)
- justice (the benefits and risks of research should be fairly distributed among people)

These principles are not ranked in any order of preference. In disputes a balance between the four principles should be pursued.

17.1 General ethics principles

In addition to, and expanding on, the above moral principles, the following ten general ethics principles should be adhered to by researchers. Again, the ethical principles may not, by themselves, resolve all ethical problems and dilemmas which confront researchers. Researchers may be required to balance the demands made by moral principles of research and to privilege one principle over another, depending on the context and circumstances of the research involved.

18.1 Essentiality and relevance

Before undertaking research adequate consideration should be given to existing literature on the subject or issue under study, and to alternatives available. In view of the scarcity of resources in Ghana, it should be clearly demonstrated that the research is essential to the pursuit of knowledge and/or the public good.

19 1 Maximisation of public interest and of social justice

Research should be carried out for the benefit of society, and with the motive of maximizing public interest and social justice. All efforts should be made to make public in an appropriate manner and form, and at an appropriate time, information on the research undertaken, as well as the results and implications of the completed research.

20.1 Competence, ability and commitment to research

Researchers should be professionally and personally qualified for the research. Commitment to research in general and to the relevant subject in particular is an essential prerequisite for good and ethical research.

21.1 Respect for and protection of participants' rights

Researchers should respect and protect the dignity, privacy and confidentiality of participants and should never expose them to procedures or risks not directly attached to the research project or its methodology. Research and the pursuit of knowledge should not be regarded as the supreme goal at the expense of participants' rights.

22.1 Informed and non-coerced consent

Autonomy requires that individuals' participation should be freely given, specific and based on informed consent. Direct or indirect coercion, as well as undue inducement of people in the name of research should be avoided. These act as barriers to autonomous decision making and may result in people consenting against their better judgment to participate in studies involving risks.

23.1 Respect for cultural differences

Researchers should treat research participants as unique human beings within the context of their community systems, and should respect what is sacred and secret by tradition. Research should preferably be undertaken with, and not merely on, an identified community.

24.1 Justice, fairness and objectivity

Criteria for the selection of participants of research should be fair, besides being scientific. Easily accessible individuals or groups should not be inordinately burdened with research being carried out repeatedly on them.

25.1 Integrity, transparency and accountability

The conduct of research should be honest, fair and transparent. Researchers should be honest about their own limitations, competence, belief systems, values and needs. The contribution of other researchers or members of the research team should be properly acknowledged. Researchers should not abuse their positions or knowledge for personal power or gain.

26.1 Risk minimisation

Researchers should ensure that the actual benefits to be derived by the participants or society from the research clearly outweigh possible risks, and that participants are subjected to only those risks that are clearly necessary for the conduct of the research. Researchers should ensure that the risks are assessed and that adequate precautions are taken to minimize and mitigate risks.

27.1 Non-exploitation

There may be no exploitation of research participants, researchers (including student and junior members), communities, institutions or vulnerable people. There should be benefit to a community in which research is conducted. As far as possible, communities should receive feedback on research carried out on them.

28.1 Informed consent

Personal information (i.e. Information about an identifiable, natural person) may only be collected and processed with the specific informed consent of the individual(s) involved. Only information that is relevant and necessary (i.e. not excessive) may be collected.

Consent need not be obtained where personal information is involved which has been de-identified to the extent that it cannot be re-identified again, if it is about a natural person who has been dead for more than 20 years or if it is in the public domain or contained in a public record.

The participation of individuals should be based on their freely given, specific and informed consent. Researchers should respect their right to refuse to participate in research and to change their decision or withdraw their informed consent given earlier, at any stage of the research without giving any reason and without any penalty.

Participants should give their consent in writing. They, in turn, should be given written information containing adequate details of the research.

Consent for participation in research is freely given and informed if:

- i. it is given without any direct/indirect coercion or inducement.
- ii. prospective participants have been informed on the details of the intended research
- iii. prospective participants have understood this information
- iv. the researcher has answered any question(s) about the research and their participation
- v. it is given before research commences

The information in (ii) and (iii) should include the following:

29 1 Purpose of research

The aims, implications (including commercial ones) and possible outcomes of the intended research should be stated in understandable language.

30.1 Risks and benefits

The possible, anticipated and potential benefits and the potential risks (direct/indirect, immediate/long term) of the research should be explained. These include discomfort and unpleasant emotional experiences. Where questionnaires or interviews are involved, participants should be informed of the nature of questions posed, for example that they are sensitive or emotionally disturbing, or that they cover personal issues such as health, sex life or criminal behaviour. Where research may affect communities (e.g. when genetically modified organisms are studied) they should be informed and consulted on possible long term effects for them.

Methods of study and participants' actual role in research where questionnaires or interviews are involved, participants should be informed of the estimated time these will take.

31.1 Identity of the researchers

The name, address and telephone number of researcher(s), the institution(s) and the chairperson of the relevant Ethics Review Committee who may be contacted, should be provided.

31.1.1 Identity of others associated with the research

The name(s), address and telephone number of chief consultant(s), funder(s) or sponsor(s) if any, should be provided.

31.1.2 Why selected

The reasons or method for selecting the particular locality, community, group and/or individual for participation in the study should be explained.

Privacy, anonymity and confidentiality Measures to ensure privacy, anonymity and confidentiality of participants, as well as any risk of breach of confidentiality and anonymity should be explained. If data and identity provided by participants in group discussions cannot be kept anonymous and confidential, this should also be disclosed.

31.2 Future use of information

Participants should be informed of any possible future use of the information obtained, including publication of research findings, use as a database, archival research, recordings for educational purposes, and use as secondary data (i.e. anonymous or abstracted information which does not violate the privacy, anonymity and confidentiality of participants).

31.3 Right not to participate and to withdraw

Participants should be informed that they have the right to decline their consent outright, or to withdraw their given consent at any time without any penalty or prejudice. They are free to refuse to answer certain questions which form part of an interview or questionnaire, and to object to the use of data gathering devices, such as camera, tape recorder, and so forth.

31.4 Right to get help

Researchers should help participant(s) in cases of adverse consequence resulting from their participation in research. These include psychological trauma, distress, and loss of job, social hostility or retaliation against the participant(s). When, in the course of the research, researchers come to know of a need of participants that is not connected to the research but which may improve their lives (e.g. medical treatment), they should endeavour to get the help needed.

Additional information should be given to which a reasonable person in the prospective participant's position is likely to attach significance in his/her decision whether to participate.

If the data collection from the participant(s) is done in more than one sitting and there is a long time period between the sittings/contacts, informed consent should be sought each time.

32.1 PRIVACY, ANONYMITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

All research participants have the right to privacy to the extent permitted by law (e.g. child abuse cases should be reported to the appropriate authorities in terms of the law).

Privacy includes autonomy over personal information, anonymity and confidentiality, especially if the research deals with stigmatizing, sensitive or potentially damaging issues or information. When deciding on what information should be regarded as private and confidential, the perspective of the participant(s) on the matter should be respected.

All personal information and records provided by participants should remain confidential. When conducting interviews it should be made clear that confidentiality and anonymity will be safe guarded. Whenever it is methodologically feasible, participants should be allowed to respond anonymously or under a pseudonym to protect their privacy.

All personal information obtained directly or indirectly on or about the participants (e.g. names obtained by researchers from hospital and school records), as well as information obtained in the course of research which may reveal the identity of participants, should remain confidential and anonymous.

In the case of covert observation (e.g. of a public scene) steps should be taken to ensure that the information will not be used or published in a form in which the individuals could be identified.

Researchers should maintain privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality of information in collecting, creating, storing, accessing, transferring and disposing of personal records and data under their control, whether these are written, automated or recorded in any other medium, including computer equipment, graphs, drawings, photographs, films or other devices in which visual images are embodied.

Researchers should make appropriate arrangements for the preservation and confidentiality of research records for one year after the submission of the report or the results.

Risk minimization should be applied to research records. The possibility of a breach of confidentiality and anonymity should be anticipated, addressed and explained to the participants as an attendant risk.

Codes or other identifiers should be used to break obvious connections between data and individuals/organizations/institutions where possible. Where there is a mixture of information obtained from the public domain and information obtained with the participants' informed consent, no traceable link should be left between the two sets of information.

Confidentiality and anonymity of participants and their localities should be maintained when reporting to clients/sponsors/funders. Participants should not be identified or made identifiable in the report unless there are clear reasons for doing so. If the researcher or institution intends to identify participants or communities in the report, their informed consent allowing such disclosure should be obtained, preferably in writing.

Research findings published in the public domain (e.g. theses and articles) which relate to specific participants (e.g. organizations or communities) should protect their privacy. Identifiers which could be traced back to the participants in the study should be removed. However, public interest may outweigh the right to privacy, and may require that participants be named in reports (e.g. when child labour is used by a firm).

Participants' consent should be sought where data identifying them are to be shared with individuals or organizations not in the research team. They should be provided with information about such individuals or organizations (their names, addresses etc.).

The obligation to maintain privacy, anonymity and confidentiality extends to the entire research team, other researchers at GCUC, GCUC administrative employees, and all those (from or outside GCUC) not directly

associated with the research who may possibly have access to the information.

33.1 Research Ethics Boards (REB)

The mandate of a REB is to determine the ethical acceptability of research, with the primary objective of protecting the rights and welfare of these subjects. Each REB reports to the School Board and the office of the Registrar and must submit an annual report of its activities.

The jurisdiction and number of REBs are established considering the range of research conducted at the University and consistent with appropriate workloads. Researchers may consult with the REB Chair to determine if another REB may be more appropriate for the review of their research project. The REB Chair has the authority to refer a project to another more appropriate REB, in consultation with the Chair of the other REB.

33.1.1 Membership

REBs will be maximally effective to the extent that their members are selected on the basis of their interest in, commitment to, and suitability for the role.

A REB, shall, at a minimum, consist of five members, including both men and women, and have:

- members who are knowledgeable about the relevant ethical issues
- at least two faculty members who have broad expertise in the methods or in the areas of research that are covered by the REB; no REB may consist entirely of members of one discipline
- at least one member who represents community interests and concerns, and has no formal affiliation with the Institution.

The term of appointment for members will normally be 3 years, renewable, with staggered appointments. The Chair will be appointed by the President.

The other members of a REB are to be appointed by the relevant Faculties/Schools/Departments according to their regular nominating procedures, in consultation with the Chair of the REB.

The REB Chair may appoint ad hoc members or seek outside advice when reviewing a project that requires specific expertise regarding methodology, community or research subject representation, or other matters.

No member of a REB may participate in the review of any project in which the member has a conflicting interest, such as their own or their student's project. Members must disclose to the REB possible conflicts of interest arising out of personal relationships, financial interests, multiple roles, or other factors. When the REB determines that a conflict exists, the member may be requested to provide information to the REB but may not be present during the consideration of the project.

33.1.2 Responsibilities

Each REB:

- Has the authority to approve, require modification of, or disapprove research projects according to the requirements of this policy.
- Is responsible for conducting the continuing review of ongoing research projects
- Has the authority to suspend or terminate approval of any proposed or ongoing research that is not being conducted in accordance with the REB's requirements or other ethical requirements.
- Has the authority to suspend or terminate approval of any ongoing research that has been associated with unexpected serious harm to subjects or that it deems to pose an unacceptable risk of harm to subjects. In this regard, the REB Chair is authorized to act on behalf of REB members in exigent circumstances. Actions taken by the REB Chair in relation to exceptional circumstances should be brought to the full REB for ratification as soon as is practicable and in all cases, no later than 30 days after the action was taken.
- Is responsible for promptly reporting the suspension or termination of approval of a research project to the Principal Investigator, the and other institutional officials as deemed appropriate by the REB, providing a statement of the reasons for the action taken.
- Is responsible for establishing and overseeing mechanisms for review of course research projects in units within its jurisdiction
- Is responsible for serving as the initial appeals committee for any appeal taken by an individual against a decision of a department review of course research projects

- Acts as a resource to the University community on matters pertaining to the ethical conduct of research and can provide consultation to researchers at all stages of the application and review processes.

Appendix I

34.1 DEFINITIONS OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

GCUC considers sexual harassment as a very serious offence and shall subject the offender to dismissal or other sanctions following the University College's investigation and substantiation of the complaint and compliance with due process requirements.

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, deliberate provocative dressing targeted at an individual(s) to gain favours, requests for sexual favours, verbal or physical advances of a sexual nature when:

Submission to such conduct is either explicitly or implicitly made a condition of an individual's employment with the University College or a factor in the educational programme of a student;

Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an Individual's right to achieve an educational objective or to work in an environment free of intimidation, hostility or threats stemming from acts of a sexual nature.

34.2 PROCEDURES FOR LODGING SEXUAL HARASSMENT COMPLAINTS

Individuals who are aware of or have experienced an incident of sexual harassment should promptly report the matter to one of the University College's officials designated to receive these complaints including the President, Registrar, Head of School/Department, Dean of Students, Guidance and Counselling Officer, Hall/Hostel Manager/Manageress depending on the status of the offender and venue of commission.

No person shall be subject to restraints, interference or reprisal for action taken in good faith to report or to seek advice in matters of sexual harassment. In the course of a complaint, the University College will attempt to maintain confidentiality for all parties involved.

However, there can be no guarantee of confidentiality and anonymity based upon the course and scope of the complaint investigated.

An aggrieved person, whose complaint is found to be both false and to have been made with malicious intent, will be subject to disciplinary action which may include, but not limited to demotion, transfer, suspension or termination of employment of the lecturer/staff/student, or warning, suspension, or dismissal in the case of a student.

Employees or students of the University College who believe they have been subjected to sexual harassment are encouraged to use either the formal or informal approach to seek redress.

34.3 INFORMAL INVESTIGATION AND RESOLUTION

Individuals who believe they have been subjected to sexual harassment should report the incident promptly to their immediate supervisor or academic dean or to a departmental supervisor/head.

The person to whom the complaint is made shall immediately contact the Registrar, Guidance and Counselling Officer, Dean of Students, the Vice President, the Dean of School, the Head of Department or the President depending on the status of the offender. One or more of these administrators will determine the course of the informal investigation and resolution.

The department head involved and/or the supervisor to whom the complaint was made may be asked to assist in the informal investigation.

If after an informal resolution of the matter is satisfactory to the complainant, respondent, and the University College Official, the matter shall be considered closed and all parties involved shall be so advised in writing by the immediate supervisor or academic dean with copies to the Registrar and the Dean of Students.

34.4 FORMAL INVESTIGATION AND RESOLUTION

If informal procedures fail to resolve a sexual harassment complaint, the formal process will be pursued. In this case, the complainant will have to file a written complaint with the Registrar with a copy to the President within twenty (20) days. The complainant and respondent shall be entitled to have, to the individual's own expense, an advisor, who may or may not be an attorney, to assist in preparing the formal complaint or defence.

A Sexual Harassment Investigative Committee appointed by the Registrar or the President, depending on the status of the personalities involved, will notify the parties involved of the sexual harassment complaint, provide copies of the complaint and advise the parties of the procedures for a formal investigation and hearing within three (3) working days of

receipt of the formal written complaint. The respondent will then be given five (5) working days to respond in writing to the complaint.

Within five (5) working days of the Committee's receipt of the complaint and the respondent's response, if any, the Committee will meet separately with the complainant and the respondent. The purpose of these preliminary meetings is to inform the parties about the case, to ensure that the complainant and respondent are fully aware of their procedural rights and to explain the nature of the investigation to the parties.

Throughout the proceedings, the respondent and complainant shall have the right to be accompanied by an advisor, who may or may not be an attorney.

Attorneys will not be provided at University College's expense. The legal counsel may be present, but shall act only in an advisory capacity to his client.

Within five (5) working days of the conclusion of the Committee's preliminary meetings with the complainant and respondent, the Committee will hold a formal meeting on the matter. The Committee members may receive any evidence they consider to be relevant.

The respondent and complainant, and their advisors, shall have the right to be present at any time a testimony is presented and to be provided copies of all evidence considered by the Committee. Neither the respondent nor complainant shall have the right to cross-examine witnesses. Advisors shall not have the right to address or question committee members or witnesses.

A written record of the minutes of the proceedings and recommendations of the Committee shall be presented to the President within five (5) working days of the Committee's final meeting and copied to both the complainant and the respondent.

Within ten (10) working days of receipt of the Committee's recommendation(s), the President shall make a final decision concerning what action if any, to take including disciplinary action after considering the recommendation(s) of the Committee, and will notify the complainant and respondent accordingly.