



MACHAKOS UNIVERSITY

INFORMATION LITERACY POLICY

SEPTEMBER, 2023

APPROVAL

Policy Title: Information Literacy Policy
Policy Contact: University Librarian
Approval Authority: The University Council
Category: Division of Academic and Student Affairs
Effective Date: Date of signing

Approved by University Council:

SIGN: **DATE:**
PROF. JOYCE J. AGALO, PhD
VICE CHANCELLOR & SECRETARY TO THE COUNCIL

 **SIGN:** **DATE:** 15/09/2023
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FOREWORD

The era of the 21st Century has been called the "information age" because of the explosion of information output and sources. As access to information becomes easier and less expensive, the skills and competencies relating to the selection and efficient use of information has turned out to be more crucial. Information Literacy encompasses knowledge of one's information needs, alongside the ability to identify, locate, evaluate, organize and effectively create and use the information to address the task at hand. Indeed, information literacy contributes towards personal empowerment in achieving academic freedom.

Kenya recently launched the Competence Based Curriculum (CBC) which emphasizes continuous search of information through library lessons and application of knowledge in creativity, innovation and problem solving. Through this bench marked policy, Machakos University has adopted the global best practices on equipping library users with critical skills necessary to make them independent lifelong learners.

In trying to achieve her core mandate, Machakos University acknowledges the role played by library instruction as a basic human right to promoting lifelong learning. Orientation and continued user education programmes empower students, staff and members of public to be independent seekers of knowledge and information. There has however, been no adequate guidelines, on the delivery of learning support strategies to the library users in the university. By developing the information literacy policy, the University aims at providing students, faculty and the community with opportunities of lifelong learning and critical thinking, which are the fundamental principles of university education.

PROF. JOYCE J. AGALO, PhD
VICE-CHANCELLOR & SECRETARY TO THE COUNCIL

UNIVERSITY FUNDAMENTAL STATEMENTS

VISION

Excellence in transformative scholarship and community service.

MISSION

To provide scholarship through teaching, training, research and innovation; and community service for sustainable industrial and socioeconomic transformation.

QUALITY POLICY STATEMENT

Machakos University is ISO 9001:2015 certified. The University Management shall ensure continuous review of quality objectives at all levels for continual improvement.

CORE VALUES

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|------|-------------------------|--|
| i. | Creativity: | Using imagination and original ideas to create value for our customers. |
| ii. | Agility: | Embracing urgency and flexibility in responding to customer demands. |
| iii. | Meritocracy: | Promoting of merit-based services. |
| iv. | Professionalism: | Commitment to high standards of training, research and service delivery. |
| v. | Integrity: | Upholding honesty and high moral standards. |
| vi. | Inclusivity: | Offering equitable access to opportunities and resources. |

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ASA ~	Academic and Student Affairs
CBC ~	Competence Based Curriculum
DVC ~	Deputy Vice-Chancellor
IL ~	Information Literacy
ISO ~	International Organization for Standardization
ILP ~	Information Literacy Policy
MksU ~	Machakos University
MLBC ~	MksU Library and Bookshop Committee
VC ~	Vice-Chancellor

DEFINITION OF TERMS

- Faculty:** Refers to all the teaching staff of a university or college, or department.
- Information Literacy:** A set of abilities requiring individuals to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate and use effectively the needed information'.
- Library patron/user:** A person who is actively seeking access to the data/information/knowledge available in the libraries and who when successful obtains and uses the data/information/knowledge ethically.
- University Community:** Students, faculty and other members of staff of the University or any other person formally affiliated with the University.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Preamble

Machakos University was established through a charter awarded on 7th October 2016, as a successor to Machakos University College (MUC) previously established through a Legal Notice NO. 161 of 4th November, 2011 as a Constituent College of Kenyatta University.

Machakos University aspires to be a preferred institution of higher learning committed to providing competitive and professional programmes. The University is committed to providing high level manpower through quality training, research, consultancy and community service. These shall be attained through customer satisfaction, good corporate governance, integrity and professionalism, creativity, responsibility, teamwork and adaptation to change. In order to realize this commitment, the University shall comply with all applicable requirements through the implementation of an effective quality management system based on ISO 9001: 2015. The University Management shall through ISO team ensure the establishment of quality objectives at departmental level. Annually, the Heads of Department shall review the established quality objectives.

Article 35 of the Constitution of Kenya 2010, guarantees right of access to information by citizens. This information literacy policy provides the basis for equipping the users of library services with skills and abilities to articulate one's information need(s), identify, locate and access appropriate information sources, effectively use the information sources and finally, critically but ethically apply the information.

1.2 Rationale

The ease of access to information has come up with the challenges of sorting and authentication whether the sources are credible and reliable. There is need of continued user education programmes to empower students, staff and members of public to be independent seekers of knowledge and information. Information Literacy Instruction Programme therefore aims at supporting teaching and learning in the University through training users on how to use the library resources. The programme shall be rolled out to freshmen and other library users

through general orientation to the library, course-related instruction, workshops and occasional user informative sessions. One on one training sessions shall be organized for teaching and non-teaching staff.

1.3 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to save time for the users in their endeavor to access library print and e- resources. It is expected to enhance service delivery to the library users and safeguard the interests of the users as well as the Library and University Management by ensuring value for resources employed in developing library collection.

1.4 Objectives

The objectives of the information literacy policy shall be:

- a) To equip library users with the knowledge, skills and attitude to exploit information.
- b) To facilitate patrons with requisite knowledge and competencies for academic pursuits and lifelong learning.
- c) To disseminate information that promotes literacy competencies across the disciplines in the University.

To meet the objectives of the information literacy skills training, the library shall implement short courses and also work with the relevant faculty/department to teach information literacy during communication skills lectures. Information Literacy and competency programme shall be taught by librarians as provided in the Standards and Guidelines for University Libraries (LIBR/STD/10(5)

1.5 Scope

The policy shall apply to:

All staff, students, visiting researchers, consultants and independent contractors and/collaborating institutions (including development partners) of the University. The content of information literacy programme will be offered within the framework of Article 35 of the Constitution of Kenya 2010 and Access to Information Act of 2016 that guarantees right of access to information by citizens.

1.6 Legal Framework

This Information Literacy policy shall be administered in compliance with the following legal documents among others:

- a) The Constitution of Kenya, 2010
- b) Access to Information Act, 2016
- c) The Universities Act, 2012
- d) The Public Officers Ethics Act, 2003
- e) Industrial Property Act, 2012
- f) Machakos University Intellectual Property Rights Policy, 2019
- g) Machakos University Research Policy, 2018
- h) Machakos University Statutes, 2019
- i) Machakos University Anti-Plagiarism Policy, 2019
- j) Rules Governing the Conduct and Discipline of Students, 2016
- k) Information and Communications Act, 2015
- l) Books and Newspapers Act, 2012
- m) Commission for University Education Guidelines and Standards, 2014
- n) MksU Library public user guidelines, 2019

2.0 INFORMATION ACCESS PROCEDURES

Information seeking behavior of library user(s) is motivated by an information gap. The requests for user instruction sessions shall be directed to the library management. Whenever an instruction session is requested, the librarian shall customize the session to best fit the faculty's or student's course and assignment requirements. The user shall critically evaluate information sources and use information ethically and legally.

The University Librarian shall partner with staff and University management in ensuring that library users become independent lifelong information seekers. Central to this policy is the concept that development of information literate graduates is a shared responsibility. The primary partners in this academic initiative are the academic faculty, the library staff and the University students.

It is the students' responsibility to provide feedback, submit requests and to initiate open dialogue with the stakeholders about the acquisition of Information Literacy Skills.

2.1 Responsivity of Academic Staff

- (a) Work with the library staff to develop information literacy program that is relevant to course curriculum and student learning outcomes.
- (b) Where appropriate, incorporate information literacy objectives into the syllabi, in the context of graduate attributes.

3.0 ADMINISTRATION OF THE POLICY

- a) This policy will be administered through the Machakos University Library and Bookshop Committee (MLBC) which shall provide guidelines for appropriate information literacy practices and procedures.
- b) The Committee shall be responsible for planning and vetting the information literacy content and adherence to this policy. The committee shall advocate for and apply the best practices in the dissemination of the information literacy curriculum. The secretariat shall regularly update the committee on the progress of the library instruction.

4.0 POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

4.1 Implementation Procedure

- a) The information literacy programme shall be implemented in modules. Each module represents different aspects of the required skills in searching and use of information resources. Module implementation will be through lectures, practical sessions and discussions (See Appendix 1).
- b) The University Library' instruction program is built around three levels of contact with students. Each addressing ascending skills (See Appendix 11). The goal of the program is that all users will be able to identify and use the appropriate information tools for their discipline.

4.2 Monitoring and Evaluation

- a) The University Librarian shall oversee the implementation of this policy through the Machakos University Library and Bookshop Committee (MLBC) which shall ensure that there is provision of quality services to the patrons and respect of individual rights.

- b) The MLBC shall monitor and evaluate the implementation of this policy and file periodical/annual reports to the University.

5.0 REVIEW OF POLICY

The policy shall be due for review five (5) years from the date of approval or when need arises.

APPENDIX 1: INFORMATION LITERACY MODULES

There are six modules that are currently recommended for the information literacy program. Additional modules or a variation of the recommended modules shall be considered in future as a result of evaluation studies.

Module 1: Library orientation

This module will mainly target first years and newly registered library users. The module will cover areas such as:

- a) Requirements for user registration for both print and digital library,
- b) Opening hours
- c) Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC)
- d) Classification scheme and its relationship to book shelves arrangement
- e) Library information resources and services
- f) Library rules and regulations.

Module 2: Information Sources

- a) This module will discuss all areas of information sources including primary, secondary and tertiary sources in print, electronic and multi- media formats.
- b) Emphasis will be on useful sources of information and the importance of each source of information to library users.

Module 3: Information Search and Retrieval Skills

This module will discuss various information access and retrieval tools and their characteristics. Examples of the tools will include:

- a) Online Public Access Catalogue- OPAC, e-books, e-journals
- b) Search engines and search directories
- c) Importance of developing search strategies
- d) Application of search techniques such as Boolean operators and their implication in the retrieval of relevant information will be discussed.

Module 4: Evaluation of Information Sources

Information especially Internet-based information is retrieved from diverse sources. There is need to evaluate such information to ascertain its authority, objectivity, relevancy, quality, accuracy and currency. The module will look into detail the various criteria for evaluating information and information sources.

Module 5: Intellectual Property Rights

This module will discuss the use of information ethically and legally. Issues relating to Intellectual Property, Copyright, and Fair Use of information will be discussed in relation to plagiarism and copyright infringement.

Module 6: Management of References

Information is harvested from different sources and hence the greater need to manage, organize, and present citations in acceptable referencing styles and formats. This module exposes students to effective ways of managing references and discusses the commonly used referencing styles for print and electronic resources. From a lab environment, the module practically introduces the use of various reference management softwares such as Zotero and Mendeley and introduces online bookmarking systems.

APPENDIX II: INFORMATION LITERACY LEVELS

The University Library's instruction program is built around three levels. Each stage builds on the understanding achieved at the previous phase.

Freshmen	Level I: Orientation Skills
	Level I instruction aids students in their transition from high school to University hence supporting student success and retention. Instruction at this level seeks to: • Reduce anxiety towards academic library and University -level research. • Create awareness of key services and resources available through the library (reference desk, multimedia support, literacy training etc.). • Use information ethically (plagiarism, Referencing style manuals). Students may also be introduced to the Basic Skills listed below.
Under graduate year 2~ 4	Level II: Basic Skills Level II instruction focuses on basic information skills and resources. Instruction at this level teaches students to: • Identify information needs and retrieve relevant information. • Analyze topic statements and formulate search strategies. • Search for and retrieve books and scholarly articles. • Evaluate information found on the public web. • Use information ethically (plagiarism and similarity index checks)
	Level III: Advanced Skills
Year 4 and post graduates	Level III instruction builds on Level II skills by applying them within the context of the students' major field of study. Instruction at this level focuses on: • Increasing student awareness and use of resources within their discipline • Advanced information searching skills. • Using bibliographic management tools- Mendeley, Zotero etc • Defining the publication cycle of their discipline. • Emphasizing critical evaluation of all sources. • Publishing

