



MACHAKOS UNIVERSITY

ISO 9001:2015 Certified

OPEN, DISTANCE AND e~LEARNING POLICY

SEPTEMBER

2023

APPROVAL

Approval Authority: The University Council

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Policy Contact: Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Student Affairs)

Policy Title: Open, Distance and e-Learning Policy

Reference No.: MksU/DVC-ASA/ODeL/PD006

Approved by the University Council:

Sign: Date:

PROF. JOYCE AGALO, Ph.D.

VICE-CHANCELLOR & SECRETARY TO THE COUNCIL

Sign: Date:

DR. CHRISTOPHER GATAMA GAKAHU, Ph.D.

CHAIRMAN, MACHAKOS UNIVERSITY COUNCIL



FOREWORD

Machakos University recognizes that academic institutions worldwide are harnessing Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) to improve efficiency and effectiveness in their teaching, learning and research activities. The university believes in Open, Distance and e-learning (ODeL) as a key contributor to enhancing the academic profile of training institutions. It also has a potential for improving learners' educational experience by enabling students to pursue world-class education in a Flexible Learning Environment (FLE) outside of a conventional classroom setting.

The use of ODeL requires a paradigm shift that puts the student at the center of the learning process and gives the instructor more time for individual interaction with students. This enables students to have a two-way communication with effective interactive discussions with their instructors either synchronously or asynchronously.

This Policy details the course of action that Machakos University will take on all matters related to ODeL mode of delivery. Its purpose is to define the guidelines, regulations and procedures for all involved in this mode at the training Institutions. The policy must be followed when ODeL activities are carried out to ensure that there is uniformity and consistency. It also encourages all departments to adopt ODeL to ensure that all staff and students benefit from this initiative.

Open Educational Resource (OER) Policies are developed to guide the development and the use of resources developed or obtained from the internet at no cost. University OER policy shall be developed in future.

PROF. JOYCE AGALO, Ph.D.

VICE-CHANCELLOR & SECRETARY TO THE COUNCIL

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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.

Core Values

- 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 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 Students Affairs
BGS	Board of Graduate School
CDP	Curriculum Development Policy
COD	Chairman of Department
CUE	Commission for University Education
DS	Deans of Schools
DQA	Directorate of Quality Assurance
DVC	Deputy Vice Chancellor
ICTs	Information and Communication Technologies
IPR	Intellectual Property Rights
LMS	Learning Management System
MksU	Machakos University
ODeL	Open, Distance and e-Learning
OER	Open Educational Resources
OU	Open University
QMS	Quality Management Standards
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training

DEFINITIONS

Asynchronous Learning: Refers to learning where the learner is not online at the same time as an instructor or other learners.

Blended Learning: A form of learning that combines traditional instruction, print based and multimedia delivery with online instruction. A teaching and learning approach that demonstrates blend of different methods, technologies, and resources to improve student learning through flipped classroom, online interaction, face-to-face teaching and online learning supplemented by face-to-face practical.

Curriculum: means any MksU documented programme of study.

Distance education: means delivery of learning or training to those who are separated mostly by time and space from those who are teaching or training.

Distance Learning: Is a mode of learning where there is separation of the learners from the teachers in time and place, and teaching and learning is conducted through a variety of media.

e-learning: means the application of information and communication technologies (ICTs) to enhance distance education, implement open learning policies, make learning activities more flexible and enable those learning activities to be distributed among many learning venues.

Learning Management System: Is a web-based system that allows learning activities to be integrated in a single multimedia enabled environment.

Modes of Learning: A variegated combination of teaching and learning methods within a time

ODeL: Is an acronym for: Open, Distance and e-learning and it refers to a systematic application and integration of Information and Communication



Technologies in the process of teaching and learning, also anonymously referred to as Technology enhanced Learning.

Online Learning: Describes e-learning that makes use of Internet technologies and teachers and learners can be located anywhere as long as they have access to a computer and a connection to the Internet. Online learning can happen on campus or at a distance from the campus. It can be synchronous or Asynchronous.

Open learning: means policies and practices that permit entry to learning with no or minimum barriers with respect to age, gender, or time constraints and with recognition of prior learning. Is defined as flexibility in terms of delivery modes, time, place, admission, examinations and target groups.

Open Educational Resources (OER) are learning, teaching and research materials in any format and medium that reside in the public domain or are under copyright that have been released under an open license, that permit no-cost access, re-use, re-purpose, adaptation and redistribution by others.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Machakos University Open, Distance and e-Learning (ODeL) shall provide a platform for all members of teaching staff to deliver their programs using the online recommended platform and Learning Management System to students. ODeL shall offer a variegated combination of teaching and learning methods within a continuum that includes face-to-face, blended and e-learning mode of delivery.

Education plays a significant role in shaping a nation, and the proliferation of Internet-based educational opportunities has expanded distance learning modalities to all parts of the globe. However, though this mode of delivery is being capitalized upon as a result of the opportunities it offers, it is still new to many nations and institutions of learning.

Demand for flexible online offerings has continued to increase as prospective students seek to upskill, re-train, and undertake further study. Education institutions are moving to intensive modes of online study. For teachers, skill development is critical to promote a flexible, responsive approach and maintain technological capabilities; for students, an ability to navigate the technology, interact with the learning environment in meaningful ways, and self-regulate learning is important, as the absence of physical infrastructure and opportunities for face-to-face interactions in online environments places a greater emphasis on alternate forms of communication and support.

2.0 RATIONALE OF THE ODeL POLICY

The Policy is in response to the need for a more rationalized, harmonized, integrated and co-ordinated approach to the provision and expansion of open and distance learning, given its recognized potential to contribute to human resources development and sustainable development. It provides an agreed, common and transparent framework of essential elements that need to be

effectively addressed to facilitate the successful implementation of open and distance learning, as an integral component of the national education and training system. The Machakos University Statutes provide for the establishment of the Centre for Open, Distance and e-learning. This policy is also contextualized in the existing global, national, Ministry of Education and existing laws and regulations listed below:

- a) AU Agenda 2063 (2015)
- b) OOFAT Model: Models for online, open, flexible and technology-enhanced higher education across the globe: a comparative analysis
- c) UNESCO: Open and Distance Learning Trends, Policy and strategy considerations
- d) ICDE: International Council for Open and Distance Education
- e) The Kenya Vision 2030 (2007)
- f) Bottom- Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA)
- g) National Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) Policy (2019)
- h) MoE Sessional Paper (2012) A Policy Framework for Education and Training
- i) National Education Sector Strategic Plan for the period 2018 – 2022
- j) Commission for University Education Standards and Guidelines 2014.

3.0 OBJECTIVES OF ODeL POLICY

The objectives of MksU ODeL policy shall be to:

- a) To guide and give direction to all ODeL practices at MksU to ensure that ODeL practices are aligned to MksU strategic plan
- b) Uphold a culture and practices that promotes gender mainstreaming in the educational set up
- c) Commit MksU to a continual, responsive interaction with current and emerging national and international imperatives and developments with relevance to quality ODeL provision

- d) Facilitate and increase access to quality education for all and skills development;
- e) Mainstream open and distance learning as a means of achieving education for all at all levels

4.0 KEY STRATEGIES FOR MACHAKOS UNIVERSITY ODeL

The key strategies for MksU ODeL are:

- a) To work closely with potential students, employers and other stakeholders in the identification and development of market driven programmes.
- b) To identify and use cutting edge Information Communication and Technology (ICT) for the delivery of ODeL programmes.

5.0 SCOPE OF THE ODeL POLICY

This Policy applies to the following:

- a) All ODeL activities of the University.
- b) All parties working with the University on any aspects of ODeL

6.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR ODeL

The development and implementation of ODeL activities will be guided by the following principles:

- a) **Equity:** The University will utilize various technologies to create and deliver ODeL courses to enable students who may not be able to attend conventional classes access training.
- b) **Fairness:** The University will ensure that students enrolled in ODeL courses have equal opportunity with students enrolled in traditional face-to-face courses in terms of course delivery, administrative and support procedures. It will also ensure that the workloads of staff members delivering their courses through ODeL mode are acknowledged.

- c) **Flexibility:** The University will ensure an anytime, anywhere learning environment catering for all modes of learning.
- d) **Capacity:** The University will create organisational trainer capacity and provide adequate infrastructural resources necessary for assuring continuous in-house ODeL development capabilities in the long-term.
- e) **Sustainability:** The University will ensure that they put in place mechanisms for continuous training of course facilitators to equip them with the requisite skills to fully exploit ODeL environment in their different disciplines.
- f) **Scalability:** The University will expand ODeL services to all in order to reach the point where enough individuals will become comfortable users of ICTs

7.0 LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF MACHAKOS UNIVERSITY ODeL POLICY

This Policy informs the general principles to be followed by Academic Staff, Students and the University in relation to online teaching and learning. This ODeL Policy shall operate within existing relevant legal, regulatory and policy frameworks and guidelines. These include:

- a) MksU Statutes, 2019
- b) Commission for University Education Format for Preparing a Self-Assessment Report for Open, Distance and e-Learning (ODeL) Programmes and Institutions in Kenya, 2020
- c) Commission for University Education Standards and Guidelines 2014.
- d) Handbook for Postgraduate Students, 2022
- e) Intellectual Property Rights policy, 2022
- f) Kenya Data protection act 2019.
- g) Kenya National ICT Policy, 2019.
- h) MksU Anti-plagiarism policy, 2023

- i) MksU Strategic Plan 2023/2024-2027/2028
- j) TVET Act, 2013.

8.0 EXAMINATION ADMINISTRATION

- a) Formative and summative assessments for e-learning courses shall be determined as per the University Examination Policy, unless required otherwise in specific programmes.
- b) The appropriate assessment method depends on the level of study, and, therefore, should be aligned with objectives of the course. These could be matched with revised Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational objectives and/or any other appropriate taxonomy.
- c) The rules regarding invigilation shall be in line with the common University regulations concerning examinations

9.0 CURRICULUM DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

The Director for the Centre of ODeL in liaison with the host schools may initiate the need for a new curriculum for ODeL students. The Procedure for developing a new ODeL curriculum shall be as per the University Curriculum Development Policy.

10.0 INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

- a) Course ownership is based on the Intellectual Property Right Policy (IPR) of MksU. MksU shall retain intellectual property rights of all teaching and learning resources developed by the staff subject to the developer being compensated as per MksU intellectual property rights clause 4.0
- b) Copyright of all material developed and shared on the LMS and institutional repository shall remain with the owner who upon signing an agreement with the University shall transfer the



materials rights to the University by signing a copyright transfer form to the MksU (Appendix).

- c) Remuneration of content developers shall be determined by the Open, Distance and e-Learning Management Board in consultation with University Management Board and approved by the council.
- d) All course content and materials developed will be subjected to MksU antiplagiarism policy before copyright transfer.

11.0 ODeL MANAGEMENT BOARD

There shall be an ODeL Management Board comprising of the following:

- a) Deputy Vice chancellor (ASA)- Chair
- b) Registrar (ASA)
- c) Deans of Schools or their representatives
- d) Dean, Graduate School or representative
- e) Dean of Students or representative
- f) Director, TVET or representative
- g) Director, Quality Assurance or representative
- h) Director, ICT or representative
- i) Director, Research or representative
- j) University Librarian or representative
- k) Director, ODeL – Secretary

The ODeL Management Board and ODeL Directorate shall be responsible for Quality Control and Quality Assurance of teaching and learning resources.

12.0 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Open, Distance and e-Learning Management Board shall conduct monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of this Policy in line with the

Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting framework. Open, Distance and e-Learning Management Board shall:

- a) Develop and maintain strategies and mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation of this Policy.
- b) Undertake regular check on implementation of the Policy.
- c) Carry out annual evaluation on the implementation of the Policy.
- d) Use the information for planning and management.
- e) Propose potential areas for review.

13.0 POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

The ODeL Management Board and ODeL Directorate shall be responsible for Quality Control and Quality Assurance of teaching and learning resources. The responsibility for the design and development of teaching and learning resources shall lie with the respective lecturers, Departments and Schools. Collectively, the ODeL Management Board, the ODeL Directorate, lecturers, Schools and Departments shall be responsible for the implementation of this Policy.

14.0 POLICY REVIEW

This policy shall be reviewed within a period not exceeding five years or as need arises.

15.0 EFFECTIVE DATE

The Policy shall come into effect on the date of signing and supersedes all prior Open, Distance and e-learning Policy.

APPENDIX





MACHAKOS UNIVERSITY
OPEN, DISTANCE AND e-LEARNING POLICY

Copyright Transfer Form

Title of the Module/Online resource:

The authors hereby transfer all copyrights in and to the module/online resource named above in all forms and media, now or hereafter known, to Machakos University effective if and when the module/resource is accepted to be used for online teaching and learning.

This module/ resource is my/our works that have not previously been printed, published or used or not under consideration for printing, publication and circulation in other universities.

Authors:

Name	Signature	Date
Name	Signature	Date
Name	Signature	Date

(This form must be signed by all authors in order as it appears in the Module/resource and should be returned to the ODeL office.)