



**ACCRA
TECHNICAL
UNIVERSITY**

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY POLICY

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1.0 INTRODUCTION.....	4
1.1 DEFINITION OF TERMS.....	5
2.0 THE POLICY.....	6
2.1 POLICY STATEMENT.....	6
2.2 PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY.....	7
2.3 OBJECTIVES.....	7
3.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF ATU's CSR POLICY.....	8
3.1 Ethics:.....	8
3.2 Legal:.....	8
3.3 Socio-Economic:.....	8
3.4 Activity:.....	8
4.0 INSPIRATION FOR ENGAGEMENT.....	9
4.1 Equality, Diversity and Social Inclusion.....	9
4.2 Public Engagement.....	10
4.3 Better Health.....	11
4.4 Environmental Sustainability	11
5.0 FACTORS DRIVING ATU CSR ACTIVITIES.....	12
5.1 Leadership and Governance	12
5.2 Stakeholder Engagement.....	12
5.3 Staff and Students Engagement.....	12
5.4 Government.....	13
5.5 Mutual Benefits.....	13
5.6 Funding.....	13
6.0 IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING & REPORTING, EVALUATION & IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF CSR PROJECTS.....	14
6.1 Implementation.....	14
6.2 Monitoring and Reporting.....	15
6.3 Evaluation and Impact Assessment.....	16
6.4 Publicity.....	17



1.0 INTRODUCTION

Institutions that have legal existence are also recognized as corporate citizens given that they have rights and responsibilities just as any normal human being. Accra Technical University (ATU) as an institution recognizes this dimension of its existence and attaches high importance to same. ATU aspires to establish itself as the leader for social impact, and have an annual plan for achieving this goal. This has necessitated the development of this policy document to guide its activities in line with the objective of being a good corporate citizen. The policy outlines the Strategies of ATU towards Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

ATU defines its social responsibility as a “voluntary and strategic commitment that entails to achieving targets while complying with its legal and contractual obligations, applying criteria of equity and stability to relationships with its stakeholders, thus contributing to meeting the current and future needs of society”. Corporate CRS in ATU relates to how the University aligns its activities with the expectations of people, who may be affected in relation to its economic, social and environmental impacts and in accordance with its charitable status.



1.1 DEFINITION OF TERMS

i. **Social Responsibility:** Social responsibility describes the way the University aligns itself in making a difference to the social and economic wellbeing of communities through teaching, research, public events and activities.

ii. **Public engagement:** The term “public engagement” refers to the various methods in which ATU connects with, shares, and includes the public in its work.

iii. **“ATU CSR Committee”:** An internal group, charged with the responsibilities of providing information, advice and guidance for implementing the CSR policy.

2.0 THE POLICY

2.1 POLICY STATEMENT

ATU's mission of "advancing technical knowledge by creating conducive environment for applied research, quality teaching and competency-based training, with high impact on industry and business creation", is tied to community engagement. Therefore, as part of its strategies, ATU plans to foster community engagement and serve as a technical and academic resource to its communities. ATU's CSR approach is to reconcile its interest with the interests of the different communities that affect and may be affected by its operations. To achieve this objective, ATU seeks to develop and use a policy on CSR to promote partnership, cooperation, and inclusiveness with people within its communities.

The present "CSR Policy" intends to establish a reference framework, from which the University can develop and strengthen socially responsible behaviour. By this policy, ATU hopes to actively engage under-represented communities and involve a wide range of people in its activities, as well as pay attention to public concerns and aspirations across its communities. Additionally, ATU churns out qualified graduates each year who become key citizens and future leaders. It therefore important to ensure that these graduates represent the widest range of social backgrounds. This can be achieved not only by developing their academic and professional skills, but also equipping them with a sense of ethical, social and environmental responsibility towards the societies they will serve.

2.2 PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

This policy seeks to:

Advance the frontiers of education and knowledge, and endeavour to contribute positively to improving the standard of living of members of the communities within which it operates. It is also meant to harness the potentials of students, staff and other members of ATU, towards community engagement activities for the benefit of the people in the communities whilst, enhancing research, innovation and training.

2.3 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this CSR policy are to:

- i. Identify areas to be considered as CSR in ATU.
- ii. Promote CSR activities in ATU.
- iii. Outline, monitor and control the activities of the Policy in the University.
- iv. Identifying sources of finances to support the Corporate Social Responsibility activities in the Accra Technical University including internal sources.

3.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF ATU'S CSR POLICY

The guiding principles of the ATU CSR Policy are:

3.1 Ethics: ATU promises to be ethical by doing what is right, just and fair. It tries to avoid activities that may cause harm to society.

3.2 Legal: To obey the laws of Ghana and regulations of the communities.

3.3 Socio-Economic: ATU strives to be economically profitable to the benefit of society.

3.4 Activity: ATU will focus on a particular activity within a specified period in order to achieve the desired positive impact.

4.0 INSPIRATION FOR ENGAGEMENT

ATU's inspiration is to increase community engagement with the University's resources and to build a better University-Society interface. This will be done through a budgetary allocation annually for the operations of the University's Corporate Social Responsibility. This budgetary allocation is to strengthen the commitment level of the University. ATU's priority social action for community engagement include:

4.1 Equality, Diversity and Social Inclusion

ATU is committed to creating an environment where diversity is celebrated and everyone is treated fairly. ATU aims to tackle the social inequalities, prejudices and barriers that affect the lives of people in its communities. As the premier Technical University, and leading technical education provider in Ghana, ATU is well positioned to tackle the social inequalities in accessing education services and barriers that continue to affect people's lives and choices locally, nationally and globally. ATU would therefore engage, involve and inspire students and people in its communities and around the world with open access to socially inclusive education. This would be delivered through:

- i. Long periods of admissions window;**
- ii. Mature students' access programmes;
- iii. Young people access programmes (non-HND diplomas);

- iv. Short certificate courses for specific skills acquirers and improvers;
- v. English proficiency course for non-English speaking applicants;
- vi. Sign and other international language courses to meet various demands;
- vii. Merit and Vulnerable Scholarships for continuing students, and
- viii. Other educational interventions which would be deemed appropriate.

4.2 Public Engagement

ATU's objective for high-quality community engagement is outlined in ATU's plan of:

- i. Fostering an environment of engaging, understanding, and working with a variety of communities by addressing their needs through the specialized skills of staff and students.
- ii. Working with various communities by exchanging ideas and encouraging discussion, debate, and innovation in order to ensure a meaningful involvement.
- iii. Involving ATU's communities in applied research and teaching, volunteering, mutual partnerships, policy engagement and traditional activities.

4.3 Better Health

ATU is committed to promoting good health and wellbeing for its staff, students and communities. In this regard, ATU would carry out frequent free health screenings in its catchment areas. ATU will engage and support students to address at least, one priority public health challenge catchment area, at least once every year.

4.4 Environmental Sustainability

ATU aspires to lead the way in promoting sustainable communities through research, teaching, operations and engagement. ATU's environmental sustainability vision is for the University to use its full range of knowledge and influence, in supporting communities to become environmentally sustainable. ATU intends to conduct its activity with a firm commitment to contribute to sustainability from an environmental perspective. This will be achieved through the integration of the environment into the business, the promotion of environmental responsibility, preservation of biodiversity, prevention of pollution, and efficient management of resources. ATU's Environmental Sustainability Strategy, aside research, teaching and operations, is to engage the communities in tree planting, cleaning of streets, proper disposal of waste, desilting gutters and other activities that would contribute to a clean and habitable society. By these efforts, ATU would be contributing to the achievement of the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

5.0 FACTORS DRIVING ATU CSR ACTIVITIES

The factors that would drive ATU's CSR activities include:

5.1 Leadership and Governance

ATU Management is committed to creating a dedicated CSR function, by appointing qualified personnel with appropriate knowledge, skills and abilities, and empowering responsible staff in the field of CSR. In this quest, ATU Management will motivate, lead and communicate its CSR vision to staff and students, as well as the communities the University operates in, through the CSR policy.

5.2 Stakeholder Engagement

ATU considers stakeholder involvement as vital to the success of CSR activities. Therefore, ATU will engage and communicate CSR activities to all stakeholders as and when necessary. Hence, ATU will ensure the full involvement and management of the stakeholder networks and will be committed to the mutually agreed objectives of CSR engagements.

5.3 Staff and Students Engagement

ATU will motivate and secure the commitment, support and participation of all staff and students in CSR activities through:

- i. Training students to be socially responsible and be aware of their responsibilities beyond the University campuses.

ii. Creating awareness among members of the University communities about their respective roles in building a balanced and sustainable society.

iii. Utilising the rich talent of the citizenry in general and the youth in particular, around the University's catchment areas and contribute positively to develop these talents for nation building.

5.4 Government

As a public University, ATU may seek approval of government for some CSR engagement when the financial outlay is substantial. Additionally, the Metropolitan, Municipal, District Assemblies (MMDAs) may be informed of CSR events of ATU in its jurisdiction to solicit for conducive environment, tax exemptions, dialogue on endorsement of activities and provision of some supportive resources in promoting CSR activities within its catchment areas.

5.5 Mutual Benefits

ATU will be highly interested in CSR events that will entail mutual exchange of benefits to ATU staff, students and its communities.

5.6 Funding

ATU views funding of CSR activities as critical in enhancing and ensuring success of the projects. It will therefore make a provision for CSR activities in its annual budget and also seek funding support from corporate bodies. ATU will ensure that funds spent on CSR programmes will create the desired impact.

6.0 IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING & REPORTING, EVALUATION & IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF CSR PROJECTS

This policy shall be championed by a committee known as the “ATU CSR Committee”, an internal group, charged with the responsibilities of providing information, advice and guidance for implementing this policy. “The Committee”, will present periodic reports to the ATU Academic Board, regarding the progress of the University, in compliance with the CSR policy and strategy. The procedures for engaging in CSR activities in ATU will include the following:

6.1 Implementation

The CSR activities shall be undertaken by ATU per this policy framework as projects, programmes or activities (either new or ongoing). The University may implement its CSR activities through the following methods, based on suitability:

- i. Through independent registered non-profit organizations that have track records in similar and related activities.
- ii. Collaborating or pooling resources together with other corporate bodies.
- iii. Proposals and requests from the community, the government or a corporate body, providing financial assistance for carrying out specific CSR initiatives, subject to the condition that “monitoring will be performed by the University”. A CSR activity through this mode will

only be permissible when it is planned to be carried out as a project. These proposals will be considered only after checking the credibility of the associated body.

6.2 Monitoring and Reporting

i. A comprehensive monitoring and reporting framework would be put in place.

ii. The CSR projects will include milestones in terms of measurable parameters. To maintain transparency, details of every project shall be maintained for any cross checks and future scrutiny. The details include:

Budgetary allocation,

- base line data,
- targeted beneficiaries,
- Intermediate milestones,
- targeted outcomes,
- completion schedule,
- payment plan,
- fund utilisation certificates,
- project completion certificates, and
- Impact assessment.

iii. Individuals, groups, units, departments etc. engaged in any CSR activities:

- Shall have and report to a project head.
- The project head, shall then directly report to the ATU CSR Committee regarding the progress of the assigned work.
- iv. The ATU CSR Committee shall also be answerable to the University Management for the CSR activities. CSR initiatives of the University will also be reported in the Annual Reports of the University.

6.3 Evaluation and Impact Assessment

a. Evaluation

Any CSR project proposal as mentioned above will be evaluated as follows:

There shall be an Office to Coordinate the Corporate Social Responsibility of the University.

i. Site visits shall be made for the projects/activities. The visit report must be accompanied by relevant facts, figures, comments of the beneficiaries and donors representative(s) regarding the quality of work done, photographs etc. Establishing the quality / credibility of the job carried out.

ii. All expenditure towards the CSR activities including remuneration and administrative cost of staff, shall be considered as CSR expenditure.

iii. A consolidated progress report of CSR activities will be provided by the CSR Office/Unit to the ATU CSR Advisory

Board on a regular basis which shall then be put up for consideration by ATU Management. On the basis of the progress reports, the ATU CSR Committee will recommend the appropriate action(s) with respect to any project/activity of the Policy.

- iv. CSR Advisory Board may consider recommending suitable modification in the CSR Policy for approval by ATU Management.
- v. The Corporate Social Responsibility Office will work under the Network and Community Engagement Office/Unit.
- vi. The Corporate Social Responsibility Office shall report to the Business Development Directorate.

b. Impact Assessment

The impact created by the project shall be documented and shall include the development/up-grade achieved in respect of the parameters corresponding to base line data and intermediary milestones (where possible) along with relevant photographs. To assess the impact of strategic and high value CSR schemes/projects, specialised independent professional institutions/agencies shall preferably be engaged.

6.4 Publicity

All ATU CSR activities shall be widely publicized using the University's website, mainstream media and other appropriate social media sources to increase the visibility and goodwill of the University.

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