HEALTH AND SAFETY
POLICY

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CONTENT

POLICY INFORMATION

Version	Version 1.0
Short Description	The Health and Safety Policy serves as the guiding document to preserve the best possible work conditions for staff, students and stakeholders of Accra Technical University (ATU). It spells out who does what, when and how. It includes preventive actions, emergency management and quality healthcare.
Relevant to	All staff, students and clients of the University
Issuing Authority (Approved by)	University Governing Council
Responsible Officer (s)	Health, Safety and Disaster Officer Director, General Services Vice-Chancellor
Responsible Office (s)	Health, Safety and Disaster Management Unit Directorate of General Services Office of the Vice-Chancellor
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Related Technical University Document	Business Continuity and Disaster Management Policy of Accra Technical University
Key words	Health, Safety, Policy

1.0   INTRODUCTION

Accra Technical University (ATU) is committed to ensuring a healthy and safe working environment for its quality human resource and to enhancing students experience as enshrined in the ATU strategic plan (2021-2025). Occupational health and safety can be related to the promotion and maintenance of the highest physical, mental and social well- being of employees in the discharge of their duties and responsibilities (ILO, 1995).

Health is wealth. In 1948, the World Health Organisation (WHO) defined health as a "state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity". In 1986, WHO clarified the definition stating that health is "a resource for everyday life, not the objective of living. Health and safety are positive concepts emphasizing social and personal resources, as well as physical capacities." This means that health is a resource to support an individual's function in wider society, rather than an end in itself. A healthy lifestyle provides the means to lead a full life with meaning and purpose.

In 2009, researchers publishing in the Lancet defined health as the ability of a body to adapt to new threats and infirmities. Physical fitness is the key to a healthy body that forms the basis of creative intellectual personality. This is applicable to one's personal and professional life. A healthy and safe employee is a valuable asset to any organisation. Wellness and safety help people become more productive. It can reduce absenteeism and various sickness-related expenses and accidents. But, most importantly, employee wellness and safety are vital aspects of building a happier workplace.

Every staff and student have a right to feel safe at work.

1.1   Overview of the University

The Mandate of Accra Technical University, as provided for under section 3(1) of the Technical Universities Act, 2016 (Act 922) as amended Act 974 are among others to provide higher education in Engineering, Science and technology-based disciplines, Technical and Vocational Education and Training, Applied Arts and related disciplines.

Accra Technical University, Ghana's premier technical university, since its inception as a Technical Institute continues to offer education in hands-on and competency-based training in diverse fields of engineering and industrial practice. The University is endowed with skilled experts as lecturers and instructors, competent to impart invaluable knowledge and lessons to students.

ATU in conformity with the mandate of the Technical University Act, 2016 (922) is driven by the zeal to achieve greater results and keep up with the global pace of technical development through creativity. Thus, the University has over the years adhered to a high sense of quality standards regardless of the challenges of academic trends.

The pillar of global economy being technology, has compelled the institution to adopt thoughtful approaches and tactics to train and transform students to become university products with enviable abilities. This distinguished effort spurred by the mission to provide excellent tuition, practical training/ learning and research combine to produce leaders and create solutions, has made ATU the preferred choice for many students.

1.2   Policy Definition

The International Occupational Hygiene Association (IOHA) defines occupational health and safety (OHS) as the science of anticipation, recognition, evaluation and control of hazards arising in or from the workplace or its environment which could impair the health and well-being of employees (ILO, 2009). Safety involves the protection of people from physical and psychological injury. ATU adheres to the above international definitions.

1.3   Purpose of Policy

This Health and Safety Policy is designed to preserve the best possible work conditions for staff, students and facility users of Accra Technical University (ATU). The health and safety policy sets out the general approach to health and safety. It explains who does what, when and how Accra Technical University will manage the health and safety of its staff, students, clients and facility users. It is everyone's responsibility to contribute to a healthy and safe workplace.

1.4   Scope of Policy

The Health and Safety Policy applies to all prospective and current staff and students of Accra Technical University as well as researchers, customers, clients, volunteers, contractors and consultants. It also applies to all activities and facilities considered to be wholly or partly under the university's control.

1.5   Principles of Policy

The principles of this Health and Safety Policy include preventative action, emergency management and quality healthcare. Accra Technical

University is committed to following legal standards and creating a hazard-free workplace, ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of the University's staff, students, clients activities and facilities.

2.0 GENERAL STATEMENT OF INTENT

The University is committed to: -

(a) Prevent accidents and all cases of workplace ill-health.

(b) Take all reasonable care in the conduct of its activities and the provision of its facilities to ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of its members of staff, students and clients researchers and others who may be affected.

(c) Ensure the necessary resources are available, as far as is reason ably practicable, to deliver successful health and safety risk management.

(d) Create an accessible health and safety management system that eliminates or minimises the risk of injury or illness to people associated with the University's operations.

(e) Provide appropriate health and safety training for all staff, and disseminates health and safety information and instruction to all personnel in the workplace.

(f) Engage with all staff, students, clients and partner organisations in creating safe working and learning environments;

(g) Establish a health and safety management framework to meet

legislative obligations to the highest possible standard.

(h)   Promptly report hazards, incidents and injuries, investigates where appropriate, and implements control measures to eliminate or minimise the risk of recurrence.

(i)   Review and revise this policy regularly.

2.1   Policy Objectives

In carrying out its statements of intent, the University will deliver and maintain its health and safety objectives of: -

(a)   Providing and maintaining a safe and healthy environment for all.

(b)   Individual commitment to health and safety being integral to all activities.

(c)   Providing the necessary information, instruction and training to competently carry out health and safety responsibilities.

(d)   Fulfilling, as a minimum, its statutory and common law duties of care.

(e)   Implementing health and safety risk management practices.

3.0   HEALTH AND SAFETY ORGANISATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The organizational structure for the management of health and safety in the University is classified as follows:

University Governing Council

Health and Safety Management Team

Health and Safety Committee

Health and Safety Response Group

Health, Safety and Disaster Management Unit

Health, Safety and Disaster Officer

Health and Safety Response Support

3.1   The University Governing Council

(a) The University Governing Council has the ultimate the responsibility for health, safety and wellbeing across the University, including responsibility of ensuring that an effective and up to date health and safety policy is in place.

(b) University Council will ensure the necessary resources are made available for the effective implementation of the policy.

(c) University Council is advised on matters of health, safety and

wellbeing by the university's senior management.

3.2   Health and Safety Management Team

The University shall establish the Health and Safety Management Team whose responsibility is to prevent, prepare, prioritise, respond and re-cover from health and safety disaster in Accra Technical University. The Health and Safety Management Team shall include but not limited to:

- Vice-Chancellor's Representative
- Registrar
- Director of General Services
- Director of Public Affairs
- Director of Human Resources and Organisation Management
- Director of Health Services
- Dean of Students' Affairs.

3.2.1   Responsibilities of Health and Safety Management Team

It is essential that members of the University's senior management team recognise their ultimate responsibility with regard to planning the University's response to incidents and providing appropriate guidance and support to members of the University community during and after emergency situations, in order to protect their health and safety needs. The Team is formed for this purpose, and should meet at least once a year to review procedures and update this Health and Safety Policy where necessary. The team should also conduct post-incident meetings to evaluate the effectiveness of the emergency management procedures.

3.2.2   Office of the Vice-Chancellor / Pro Vice-Chancellor

As the Chief Executive Officer for Accra Technical University, the Vice-Chancellor or, in his/her absence, the Pro Vice-Chancellor has the responsibility as the Chair of the Health and Safety Management Team.

3.2.3   Office of the Registrar

The Registrar being the chief administrator of the University shall be responsible to

- Serve as a member of the Management Team.

- Declare disaster and communicate same to the Management Team, Disaster Response Team and the University community.

- Liaise with the Director of Public Affairs to manage emergency communications to the internal and external stakeholders.

3.2.4   Director of General Services

- Serves as a member of the Management Team.

- Serves as Head of the Health and Safety Response Group.

- Directs and coordinates specific campus-wide response activi ties and campus support operations for isolated incidents involving students.

- Liaise with governmental agencies such as National Disaster Management Organisation (NADMO), National Ambulance Service, National Fire Service and the Security Agencies in disaster operational management.

- Provides vehicles, equipment, and operators for movement of personnel and supplies, and assigns vehicles for emergency use as required by the Emergency Response Group and other staff of the University.

3.2.5 Director of Public Affairs

- Serves as a member of the Management Team.

- Ensures all the necessary communication procedures are in place and ready for deployment.

- Prepares appropriate communication material such as core messages, briefing documents, updates, and media releases to internal and external stakeholders.

- Dispatches communications to internal stakeholders, external stakeholders and the media once a decision has been taken by the Management Team and as directed by the Vice- Chancellor.

- Anticipates and prepares to manage possible negative issues and media play-out.

- Monitors the media coverage and identifies issues that will need to be addressed and responded to.

- Provides ongoing updates and actively manages issues as and when the situation requires.

3.2.6 Director of Human Resources

As the person with overall responsibility for the University's employees and HR support matters, the Director of Human Resources has the following responsibilities:

- Serves as a member of the Management Team.

- Ensures that the Human Resources support system is suitably prepared to respond to an emergency situation.

- Ensure that all staff members work under in a safe environment.

- Ensures that employee support is provided in the aftermath of a disaster.

3.2.7   Director of Health Services

- Serves as a member of the Management Team.

- Coordinates the medical team to provide emergency medical services.

- Advises the management team on the public health effects and prevention protocols of disasters and epidemics or pandemics.

- Provides public health education to the University community in the event of medical emergencies.

- Liaises with the appropriate National Health agencies and emergency services to manage medical emergencies.

3.2.8   Dean of Students' Affairs

As the person with overall responsibility for the University's students and student affairs' Affairs, it is vital that s/he is informed and kept up to date about incidents, particularly those concerning students. The Dean of Students has the following responsibilities:

- • Serves as a member of the Management Team.

- • Ensures that the student support system is suitably prepared to respond to an emergency situation with the support of the Students' Representative Council.

- • Upon receiving notification of an emergency which may lead to media coverage, liaise with Senior Management and provide relevant information to the Public Affairs Directorate who will summarise the facts in a public statement.

3.3   Health and Safety Committee

This is the sub-committee of Academic Board as established in the University Statutes. The committee advises the Board on matters relating to the health of staff, student and food vendors on campus, recommends appropriate measures on sanitation at all premises of the University and ensure the implementation of decisions on health and sanitation matters in the University.

3.4   Disaster Response Group

The Disaster Response Group as the link of the operational team to the Management Team, responds to the needs of the University community during and after emergency situations. Members of the group also play a practical role in emergency preparedness, supporting emergency evacuation exercises, providing and/or maintaining emergency resources and equipment, and assisting in the implementation of standard operating procedures relevant to any emergency situation. The Disaster Response Group is comprised primarily of but is not limited to the:

- Head of the Disaster Response Group (Director of General Services)
- Head of Health, Safety and Disaster Unit (Health and Safety Officer)
- Head of Security
- Head of Environment and Sanitation
- Maintenance Engineer
- Emergency Communication Team

3.4.1 Health, Safety and Disaster Management Unit

There shall be a Health, Safety and Disaster Management Unit. The Health, Safety and Disaster Management Unit shall serve as the head of the health and safety as well as the emergency control and action centre for the Accra Technical University (as indicated in the previously approved Business Continuity and Disaster Management Policy).

.3.4.2 Health, Safety and Disaster Officer (HSDO)

The Health, Safety and Disaster Officer will direct and coordinate the specific campus-wide health and safety response activities and campus support operations during a major emergency or disaster. The officer shall report to the Director of General Services.

The Health, Safety and Disaster officer will be a licensed professional with the requisite qualification and experience in occupational health and safety management.

3.4.3   Disaster Response Support

All Faculties, Directorates, Departments, Hostels, Libraries and Facilities shall have Disaster Response Support Personnel to support the Disaster Response Group as indicted in the previously approved Business Continuity and Disaster Management Policy.

Officers working in the places mentioned above should be trained in managing disaster and one of the trained should be appointed the officer to respond.

4.0 ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

The effective implementation of this policy document is crucial. This requires the commitment of all those within the University, accepting and carrying out their individual and collective health and safety roles and responsibilities.

4.1 Hazard and Risk Assessment

Risk assessment has a significant bearing on whether health and safety efforts will be successful. Threats can take many forms, including malicious activity as well as natural and technical disasters. A threat should be analyzed by focusing on its impact on the institution, not the nature of the threat. Threat scenarios need to consider the impact of a disruption and the probability of the threat occurring (as indicted in the previously approved Business Continuity and Disaster Management Policy) hence ATU has to put in place a Risk Management check list.

4.2 Preventative Action

Preventative actions are actions taken to avoid injuries or illness related to workplace conditions. Annual health screening, risk assessments and job hazard analysis will be conducted to discover what is likely to harm Staff and Members. ATU will establish preventative measures accordingly.

Potential risk factors to health, threats and dangerous situations include but are not limited to:

- Performing tasks on heights, scaffolds, ladders and other

unsteady structures.

- Chemical substances (toxic, flammable etc.) in the laboratories.

- Operating dangerous equipment in the workshops and laboratories

- Slippery or uneven surfaces in the offices, lecture rooms, hostels, laboratories and workshops.

- Electrical infrastructure.

- Noise/temperature.

- Quality of air.

- High blood sugar levels, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, obesity, lack of exercise, poor nutrition, smoking and substance abuse (drug and alcohol).

ATU will take the following preventative measures to avoid injuries or illness related to workplace conditions:

- While working, members must not use or be under the influence of alcohol, inhalants or drugs.

- Smoking is prohibited on the University premises, vehicles and indoors at any time, not just during working hours. We may establish designated areas that are properly ventilated and secluded. This is to protect non-smokers and students without unreasonably depriving smokers of their right to smoke.

- ATU will enforce a substance abuse policy to protect employees and students from colleagues' misconduct.

- When employees work in dangerous contexts or locations, we will make sure there are safety precautions like safety nets and ropes.

- Inspectors and quality control workers will inspect equipment and infrastructure regularly.

- We will educate employees and students on health & safety standards and procedures.

- Exposure to chemicals and radiation will not exceed healthy levels.

- Employees who do repairs or works need to put up caution signs.

- Provide and operate fire assembly points.

- Spot Checks

- Safety Inspection with Checklists

- Provide comprehensive annual medical examination for staff as and when budgetary allocations from its internally generated f unds will permit as stipulated in the policy.

4.3   Personal Protective Equipment

Where required, Staff and Students must use protective gear like gloves, protective uniforms, goggles etc. Using safety equipment is obligatory. Sanitary workers will be provided with personal protective equipment.

4.4   Training

The Health, Safety and Disaster Management Unit will give staff and clients health and safety induction and training. Systems will be put in place for workers to work remotely in case of emergencies and health threat.

4.5   Quality Health Care

Members of the University Community shall seek quality healthcare from registered medical professionals. The University Clinic is registered with Health Facilities Regulatory Agency (HEFRA) and will be upgraded and resourced to attend to the healthcare needs of members using the National Health Insurance Authority Card. Financing of the healthcare needs of Members will be done in accordance with budgetary allocations and approved healthcare financing guidelines

4.6   Effective Communication and Consultation

The ability to communicate instructions during an emergency situation is key to the effectiveness of executing a successful emergency management. Communicating accurate and sufficiently detailed information is a challenge. In general, alarms should alert everyone to conduct an evacuation. Although detailed information (fire, bomb threat, etc.) cannot be communicated, the basic advice to evacuate is communicated.

The role of primary communications methods is the dissemination of important and up-to-date information to the majority of University stakeholders. It could take the form of notices, University website, E-mails, University social media platforms, SMS, telephone systems and campus radio station broadcasts. Primary communications channels should be well-known in advance.

Secondary communications methods are used to make people aware that a crisis exists and that they should pay attention to the primary communications channel for information. This includes information vans, siren, vuvuzelas or intercom system. These are needed to alert everyone to a critical situation that affects the whole campus, for example, a hostile intruder or the release of hazardous material (accidental or intentional).

4.7   Health and Safety Reporting

In order for the Governing Council to be properly informed of the status of health and safety risks facing the University, all departments are required to report regularly to the Health, Safety and Disaster Officer. The reports shall include:

(a)   Quarterly report on the performance in relation to the risk management objectives;

(b)   Accident investigation and reports on incidents and accidents;

(c)   Review of trends of key risk indicators; and

(d)   Reporting on initiatives planned and completed that address exposures;

The consolidated reports are to be submitted to the Health and Safety Manager for onward submission to the Health and Safety Management Team.

4.7.1   Quarterly Health and Safety Reporting

The Health and Safety Response Group and Health and Safety Committee will follow-up on health and safety risks reported on quarterly basis and check the existence of newly identified material risks. The goal is to improve health and safety risk controll by instituting quarterly risk follow-ups. The quarterly health and safety report shall be issued to the Vice Chancellor and the Governing Council with appropriate comments from the Health and Safety Management Committee.

The quarterly report will be reviewed by the Vice Chancellor in terms of endorsing the actions undertaken or proposed, and by the Governing Council in terms of the appropriateness of actions and compliance with the Health and Safety Policy.

4.7.2   Accidents Investigation and Reporting

Managers at all levels of ATU will report newly recognized health and safety risks and incidences to the Health and Safety Response Group for investigation and mitigation action. AD HOC reports can also be used to highlight risks that have not been identified in the past.

It will be the role of the health and safety response support team and heads of departments or unit heads, health and safety manager to regularly review progress on the achievement against the action plan. However, the Governing Council will also receive quarterly reports on achievement of the plan and on any unresolved health and safety risk issues.

5.0   MONITORING AND EVALUATIONS

The presence and functioning of the components of the health and safety policy will be assessed over time and modifications made as necessary. Health and safety monitoring will be an integral part of risk plans to give assurance that the measures remain effective.

The ATU's health and safety monitoring and review process encompasses all aspects of risk management for the purposes of:

(a) ensuring that controls are effective and efficient in both design and operation;

(b) obtaining further information to improve risk identification and assessment;

(c) analyzing and learning lessons from events (including near-misses), changes, trends, successes, and failures;

(d) detecting changes in the external and internal context of ATU; and

(e) identifying emerging health and safety risks and hazards.

Monitoring will be accomplished through ongoing monitoring activities, separate evaluations, or a combination of the two. Risk controlling will involve monitoring the implementation and progress of agreed actions and controls, re-evaluation, and compliance with decisions.

Offices/Directorates/Faculties/Departmental/Unit heads should under-

take day-to-day monitoring of their top safety risks/hazards. Progress in implementing risk treatment plans provides a performance measure.

6.0   REVIEW OF POLICY

The Health and Safety Policy shall be reviewed as and when necessary to ensure relevance to ATU's business and compliance with new developments in health and safety management. The various sections that form part of this policy shall be reviewed independently and individually whenever the need arises.