

# **BOLGATANGA TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY**



## **HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY**

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

2.0 Introduction.....	1
2.1 Purpose of the Policy.....	1
2.2 Objectives.....	2
2.3 Scope.....	2
3.0 Health and Safety Organs: Roles and responsibilities.....	3
3.1 The University.....	3
3.2 The University Council.....	3
3.3 The Vice Chancellor.....	4
3.4 The Pro-Vice Chancellor.....	4
3.5 Deans of Schools and Directors.....	4
3.6 The Director of Works and Physical Development.....	4
3.7 Staff and Students.....	6
3.8 Contractors Working for the University.....	7
4.0 Health and Safety Requirements.....	7
4.1 Medical Examination.....	7
4.2 Health Services Committee.....	8
4.3 University Health and Safety Officer.....	8
4.4 School Health and Safety Team.....	9
4.5 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).....	9
4.6 Health and Safety Information and Training.....	10
4.7 Children and Vulnerable Adults.....	10
4.8 First Aid.....	11
4.9 Student’s Fieldwork and Visits to Third-Party Premises.....	11

## 1.0 Definition of Terms

In this policy, the following terms mean:

**Risk** (related to work): The likelihood of a harmful effect such as an accident or occupational disease occurring within a specified period or in specific circumstances such as during or after specified exposure.

**Incident:** An unplanned or unexpected event which has the potential to cause harm to people, damage to property or loss to a process.

**Hazard:** A physical or psychosocial condition, object or agent that has the potential to cause harm to a worker and/or to cause damage to property or environment.

**Health and safety programme:** A systematic combination of activities, procedures, and facilities designed to ensure and maintain a safe and healthy workplace.

**Risk Assessment:** A process where hazards are identified and risks evaluated, with the objective of eliminating or reducing the risks to an acceptable level.

**Safety Audit:** Monitoring of the implementation of a safety policy by obtaining evidence from inspections, interviews and document reviews, and evaluating same to determine the extent to which relevant criteria, guidelines and standards are met.

**Safety Monitoring:** Periodic checks on the observance of safety standards and procedures.

**Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** Any device worn by a worker or student to protect him or her against hazards, as a barrier between himself or herself and the hazardous agent. Some examples are: respirators, gloves, ear plugs, hard hats, safety goggles and safety shoes.

**First Aid:** The skilled application of accepted principles of treatment on the occurrence of an accident or in the case of sudden illness, using facilities or materials available at the time.

**Harm:** Injury or damage to persons.

**Negligence:** The omission to do something, which a reasonable person, guided upon those considerations which ordinarily regulate the conduct of human affairs would not do, or something, which a prudent and reasonable person would not do.

**Safety Culture:** A product of the individual and group values, attitudes, competencies and patterns of behaviour that determine the commitment to and the style and proficiency of an organisation's health and safety programmes.

**Safety Management System:** Management of Safety in order to promote a strong Safety Culture and achieve high standards of safety performance.

**Vulnerable adult:** An individual aged 18 years or more, who may not be able to take care of or is unable to protect himself or herself from significant harm.



## **2.0 Introduction**

Safety in the learning and working environment is important to prevent/reduce potential injuries and ill health that students and staff may be exposed to. As a University, we recognise that teaching and learning need to take place in a healthy and safe environment because it is a basic human right enshrined in the 1992 Constitution and the Labour Act, 2003 (Act 651) of the Republic of Ghana.

In recognition of the basic right of every staff or student to work and learn in a safe and healthy environment, the University is committed to this health and safety policy which provides for all teaching, learning and administrative work to be carried out in a safe and healthy environment and with all efforts made at eliminating any possible risks that may affect students and workers in the discharge of their duties.

For this right to be enjoyed by all, the Bolgatanga Technical University has developed this Health and Safety Policy for the promotion of an accident-free working and learning environment.

### **2.1 Purpose of the Policy**

This policy seeks to identify, evaluate and mitigate predicted risks associated with the activities of all departments and directorates in the University. This policy also creates awareness of work environment threats and educate staff and students on the need to see health and safety issues as a shared responsibility, and as such, take the necessary precautions to protect lives and property in the discharge of their responsibilities. The policy further provides practicable steps to identify hazards at the workplace and ways to reduce them.

The policy aims to create an accident-free environment by providing training for all staff and students to respond appropriately during emergencies.

## 2.2 Objectives

The objectives of the Health and Safety Policy are to:

- a) assess work activities by identifying hazards and evaluating risks;
- b) minimise risk(s) to health and safety through the provision and maintenance of suitable plants, buildings, facilities, equipment and the provision of safe systems of work;
- c) minimise unavoidable risks by the use of physical control measures and the use of personal protective equipment;
- d) provide the necessary information, instruction, training and supervision to ensure the health and safety of students, staff and others;
- e) implement safe monitoring, inspection and audit processes to ensure effective management of health and safety throughout the University;
- f) integrate health and safety measures into everyday working practices and managerial responsibilities.
- g) encourage persons operating in risky environments in the University to put on the required Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- h) provide sufficient information and instruction to enable everyone to avoid harm and contribute to their safety and health.

## 2.3 Scope

This policy applies to all students, staff, contractors and visitors; and is intended for implementation in all academic and administrative departments, schools, faculties, and units of the University.

As the University is enjoined to perform statutory duties which are broad and complex, each Department is thus obliged to adhere to this policy based on the nature of its operations.

### **3.0 Health and Safety Organs: Roles and responsibilities**

#### **3.1 The University**

For the University to meet its health and safety responsibilities to staff, students, contractors, visitors and those affected by its activities, a delegated accountability system is in place and this runs from the University Council, the Vice-Chancellor down to each individual member of the University. All officers are responsible for work under their control: those who work under them and those affected by their work.

#### **3.2 The University Council**

- a) The University Council has ultimate responsibility for health and safety across the University, including responsibility for ensuring that an effective and up-to-date health and safety policy is in place.
- b) The University Council is to ensure that the University has the organisational arrangements, systems and resources in place to enable the effective management of health and safety issues.
- c) The Council is also to ensure that the University has access to effective health and safety advice before taking decisions on matters that have health and safety concerns.



### **3.3 The Vice Chancellor**

The Vice Chancellor is delegated the overall responsibility by the University Council to:

- a) ensure that the University has a Policy on the management of health and safety;
- b) appoint competent people to be in charge of health and safety management;
- c) establish and maintain mechanisms for effective consultation and cooperation on matters of health and safety;
- d) provide direction on health and safety matters;
- e) ensure adequate compensation for persons who get injured in the line of duty;

### **3.4 The Pro-Vice Chancellor**

- a) Where appropriate, the Pro-Vice Chancellor shall provide advice and guidance in relation to good health and safety management as part of his/her mentoring role.
- b) He/she shall also advocate and champion a positive health and safety culture,
- c) He shall ensure that health and safety risks are considered and effectively managed through the projects and work-streams he/she oversees.

### **3.5 Deans of Schools and Directors**

Deans and Directors shall be responsible for:

- a) the overall health and safety issues at their Schools and

Directorates;

- b) ensuring suitable and sufficient organisational and managerial arrangements are in place to deliver successful health and safety management.

### **3.6 The Director of Works and Physical Development**

The Director shall ensure that necessary arrangements are in place for:

- (a) The lasting safe condition of premises, grounds, roads, equipment, facilities and services;
- (b) The suitability of, regular inspection, testing and maintenance of:
  - 
  - i. Fire detection and warning systems;
  - ii. Fixed fire-fighting systems;
  - iii. Lighting systems; and
  - iv. Fire compartmentalisation and separation;
- (c) The management of risks associated with gas installations, air-conditioning and similar systems;
- (d) The management of risks associated with waste (i.e. biological, solid, liquid, etc).

### **3.7 Staff and Students**

#### **All staff and students shall:**

- a) Take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their actions or omissions while at work;
- b) Comply with the University's health and safety policy guidelines;
- c) Report, through the appropriate channel, any situation that threatens or presents risks to health and safety;
- d) Ensure they undertake activities and use equipment and facilities in accordance with health and safety guidelines;
- e) Observe safety rules;
- f) Use all equipment, safety equipment, devices and protective clothing as directed;
- g) Avoid any improvisations of any form which could create an unnecessary risk to their personal safety and the safety of others;
- h) Maintain all equipment in good condition and report any defect, safety hazard or malfunction of any item, plant or equipment to the appropriate authority;
- i) Observe fire evacuation procedures.
- j) Observe all laid down procedures for processes, materials and substances including workshop/laboratory rules;
- k) Obey all instructions to ensure personal safety and the safety of others;

### **3.8 Contractors Working for the University**

Contractors working for the University shall:

- a) Be responsible for ensuring that personnel they employ take reasonable care for their own health and safety and that of others within the University;
- b) Make available the needed PPEs to their workforce to safeguard their safety and health at the construction site;
- c) Provide hoarding for their sites and erect warning signposts on any aspects of their operations that may pose a threat to health and safety;
- d) Report, through the appropriate channel, any situation that threatens or presents risks to health and safety;
- e) Abide by the University's health and safety policy and any other procedures and arrangements laid down by the user department or directorate for purposes of ensuring health and safety.

## **4.0 Health and Safety Requirements**

### **4.1 Medical Examination**

- a) Newly recruited staff shall be required to undergo medical examinations in the first month of their appointment;
- b) All staff may be required to undergo medical examination at the University Health Facility every three years where possible;
- c) All students shall be required to undergo medical examination at the University Health Facility within the first semester of their admission.

## **4.2 Health Services Committee**

The Health Services Committee shall in addition to its functions as spelt out in the Statutes of the University be responsible for:

- a) the overall health and safety programmes in the University;
- b) the continuous development of best practices in relation to health and safety  
across the University;
- c) the training, monitoring and evaluation of the application of all relevant policies and procedures across the University on health and safety;
- d) ensure regular reviews of this health and safety policy and other related policies, guidelines and standards in accordance with the specified timelines ;
- e) advise the University on matters relating to health, safety and emergencies or major incidents.

## **4.3 University Health and Safety Officer**

There shall be a University Health and Safety Officer appointed by the Vice Chancellor. The duties of the Health and Safety Officer among others shall be to:

- a) oversee the implementation of the Health and Safety Policy;
- b) conduct health and safety monitoring on campus and advise management accordingly;
- c) carry out risk assessment of facilities / equipment and advise management;
- d) develop and establish emergency procedures and organise evacuation simulations for staff and students;

#### **4.4 School Health and Safety Team**

Each School shall have a Health and Safety Team constituted by the Dean of the School. The team shall not be more than five (5) persons from within the school to oversee the health and safety needs of the school. The Chairperson of the team shall serve on the University Health and Safety Committee. The role of the School Health and Safety Team shall be to:

- a) Assist the Dean of School in carrying out the health and safety responsibilities of the school;
- b) Help develop and maintain the health and safety management systems and procedures for the School.

#### **4.5 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

- a) Appropriate personal protective equipment shall be provided to staff, researchers and students by the University.
- b) The University shall take responsibility for damages caused to property or injuries sustained by staff and students in the course of performing lawful duties due to failure by it to provide the needed safety systems and equipment for their work or studies.
- c) Apart from PPEs that are provided by the University, staff, students or persons working with the University shall take their health and safety seriously and should make efforts to acquire PPEs.
- d) The University shall not be responsible for damages caused to property or injuries sustained by staff, students or any person working with the University due to negligence.

## **4.6 Health and Safety Information and Training**

- a) Staff, researchers and students shall receive the necessary health and safety information, instruction, training and awareness from the University Health Services Committee to safeguard their safety in carrying out their work, research and study-related activities.
- b) New staff shall be provided with a health and safety orientation by the Committee within two months of commencing employment.
- c) Visiting researchers and students shall receive suitable and sufficient health and safety orientation from the University's Health Services Committee in the first month of the commencement of their studies.

## **4.7 Children and Vulnerable Adults**

- a) Where a staff or student is compelled by circumstances to bring a child or a vulnerable adult to campus, the staff or student must:
  - i. Seek authorisation from the respective Dean, Director or Head (or person having delegated authority);
  - ii. Provide a caretaker for the child or the vulnerable adult outside offices, lecture halls and laboratories.

Children and vulnerable adults shall be prohibited from having access to:

- b) Science and engineering laboratories or workshop environments;
- c) Other areas where the respective Dean, Director or Head

deems appropriate due to the health and safety risks or hazards therein (e.g. from powered machinery, hazardous substances, etc.).

#### **4.8 First Aid**

- a) Adequate first aid arrangements shall be put in place within the University.
- b) The University shall sponsor the training and certification of members of the Health Services Committee in first aid administration.
- c) All health related emergencies shall be referred to the University health facility or any other approved facility as may be recommended by the University health facility.

#### **4.9 Student's Fieldwork and Visits to Third-Party Premises**

- a) Fieldwork activities and visits to third party premises by a student shall be subject to suitable and sufficient risk assessment by the lecturer responsible, the findings of which shall be fully communicated to the student.
- b) Where transportation is organised for a student's field trip or visit to third party premises, the officer responsible shall ascertain the driver's legality to drive, the condition and the roadworthiness of the vehicle and the validity of the insurance cover of the vehicle involved.