SD DOMBO UNIVERSITY OF BUSINESS AND INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

(SDD-UBIDS)

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND BUSINESS INCUBATION POLICY

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Foreword

Policies are an essential part of every organisation as they provide structure, direction, guidelines, and rules for an organisation's operations. The Directorate of Community Outreach and Business Incubation is one of the key academic directorates of the Simon Diedong Dombo University of Business and Integrated Development Studies, the operation of which is key to attaining its mandate of providing applied research and practically-oriented education in business, development studies, and cognate areas. I am excited about the Community Outreach and Business Incubation Policy, which provides the framework for the operations of the Directorate.

In the face of burgeoning graduate unemployment, especially in the global south, the need for practical skills development in our tertiary institutions is greater than ever. The SDD-UBIDS is committed to producing graduates who are well-equipped with knowledge and skills to solve the business and development challenges in our constantly changing society either as employees and/or owners of organisations. This policy provides the framework and underpins all community outreach and business incubation activities of the University for students, staff, and external partners/collaborators. It is a comprehensive policy, with sub-policies for the Practical Training Programme and Business Incubation.

Implementing this policy will enhance the university's community outreach and business incubation operations and create the needed impact within and outside the University environment. It is my ardent hope that students, lecturers, staff, and other stakeholders will uphold and follow this policy in all matters of community outreach and business incubation for efficiency, consistency, accountability, and impact.

Prof. Emmanuel K. Derbile
Vice-Chancellor

Preface

The Directorate of Community Outreach and Business Incubation (DCOBI) is one of the key academic directorates established to assist the University in prosecuting its mandate of providing applied research and practically-oriented education in business, development studies, and cognate areas. This Community Outreach and Business Incubation Policy is formulated to guide the Directorate in its operations. The policy outlines guidelines for the implementation of community outreaches, especially the practical training programme for Diploma and undergraduate students and business incubation activities of the university.

The Directorate appreciates the work of the committee that was tasked to develop the policy. The committee members are Prof. Raymond Aabeyir (Chairman), Prof. Stanley Kojo Dary, Dr. Gervase Kuuwaabong, Dr. Frederick Dapilah, Dr. George Dery, Dr. Lawrence Naaikur, Dr. Felicia Naatu, Dr. Robert K. Mokulogo, Rev. Dr. Clement Naapire, Dr. Suleman Bankuoro Egala, Mr. Leader Allou Achegeba, Mr. Abdul-Moomin Pantah, Mr. Joseph S. K. Bagah, and Mr. Mohammed Dombo.

The Directorate also acknowledges the contributions of individuals and groups who contributed their ideas to the development of this policy document. The Directorate is thankful to Lawra Traditional Council, Lambussie Traditional Council, and Lambussie District Assembly for their inputs in preparing this policy. The Directorate acknowledges the roles played by the Management of the Business Incubation Centres of the University for Development Studies, Tamale, and the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, in making it possible for the Policy Development Committee to visit and observe their incubators and interact with Management as well.

Prof. Stanley Kojo Dary

Director, Directorate of Community Outreach and Business Incubation

ACRONYMS

ACS	Advocacy and Consultancy Services
BIC	Business Incubation Centre
DCOBI	Directorate of Community Outreach and Business Incubation
MMDA	Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies
PTP	Practical Training Programme

1. INTRODUCTION

The Directorate of Community Outreach and Business Incubation (DCOBI), hereafter referred to as the Directorate, is one of the key establishments within Simon Diedong Dombo University of Business and Integrated Development Studies (SDD-UBIDS) that aims at fulfilling its mandate of providing applied research and practically-oriented education around business, integrated development studies, and cognate disciplines. The University has dedicated the Directorate to spearhead all practical training and business incubation activities. The Directorate, as enshrined in the University Statutes (Statute 30), is responsible for managing all matters relating to the practical training of students, including community outreach programmes, industrial attachments, workshops, and studio works during the Third Trimester and regular sessions in general (SDD-UBIDS, 2021).

The Directorate is also responsible for promoting the University's business incubation activities. Around the world, there is a new orientation for universities to become centres of entrepreneurial ecosystems, and the University has positioned itself in this new orientation. Under the business incubation component, the Directorate facilitates the incubation of new business ideas of students, lecturers, researchers, and other stakeholders within and outside the University environment to stimulate entrepreneurship and economic development. The primary focus is nurturing and developing promising business ideas that can lead to possible start-ups and provide business development services to young entrepreneurial ventures.

The stated roles of the Directorate are as follows:

a) to coordinate the university-wide community outreach programme;

b) to identify innovative sources of funding for supporting and sustaining community outreach programmes for the consideration of the Academic Board;

c) to develop and advise the Academic Board on (i) curricular for university-wide and Faculty/School specific community outreach programmes in collaboration with Faculties and Schools, (ii) innovations on how the community-outreach programme can promote business incubation through the joint efforts of students and Faculty, and (iii) how these business ideas can benefit the business and private sector and promote economic growth and equity in development;

d) to develop and advise the Academic Board on how the Directorate can build on the community outreach programme to support the research agenda of the University, in particular, enable joint Faculty and student research and publications;

e) to liaise with the Directorate of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance to advise management on how to ensure standards and integrity in the practical training of students; and

f) to promote policy Advocacy and Consultancy Services (ACS). The Directorate is required to design a system for data capturing, updating, and management of businesses and development in collaboration with the Directorate of Information Management Services (DIMS). This will support the development of extension activities of the University and the provision of consultancy services to the private sector, international development agencies, non-governmental organisations, and the Local Government Service (District and Municipal Assemblies).

Consequently, a policy must guide the Directorate's operations within and outside the University to ensure smooth implementation of its functions and activities.

2. RATIONALE

The rationale for this Policy is to ensure that the activities of the Directorate contribute to the realisation of the vision of the University in providing applied research and practically-oriented education in business, integrated development studies, and cognate areas for students and communities within its operational areas.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

This Policy provides a framework for the structure and operations of the Directorate in general, and specific guidelines on the operations of the practical training programme, business incubation, and other community outreach components of the Directorate. All undergraduate and diploma students shall undertake the Practical Training Programme, except where permission is granted by the Academic Board for some specialised programmes to implement separate practical training (practicums) to meet specific professional requirements of such programmes.

4. Policy Objectives

The objectives of the Policy are:

i) provide a framework for the operations of the community outreach programmes;

ii) develop a framework to guide the business incubation programme; and

iii) streamline the DCOBI structure, institutional responsibility, reporting, and implementation framework with those of SDD-UBIDS.

5. ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

5.1 INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND REPORTING

The Directorate is under the Office of the Vice-Chancellor, and the Director reports directly to the Vice-Chancellor regarding the operations of the Directorate. The Director also communicates directly with Deans of Schools/Faculties and Directors of other Directorates. Deans of Faculties/Schools, in turn, communicate with Heads of Department and Faculty Coordinators, who implement the decisions of the Directorate on the advice of Deans and report back to the Directorate through the Deans. Figure 1 presents reporting lines of key administrative structures in exercising their institutional responsibilities to ensure that DCOBI functions effectively. The Directorate has a special link with the Directorate of Research, Innovation, and Consultancy (DRIC) on matters of research and consultancy services.
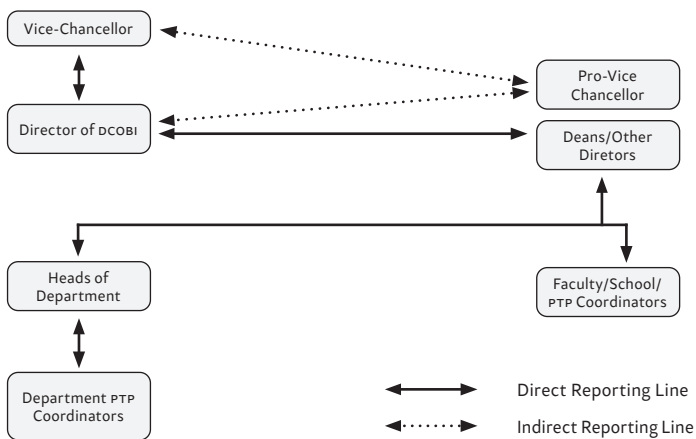
Figure 1: Institutional responsibilities and channels of reporting

5.2 ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE OF DCOBI

The administrative structure of the Directorate is presented in Figure 2. The functions of the various structures are described in the subsections below.
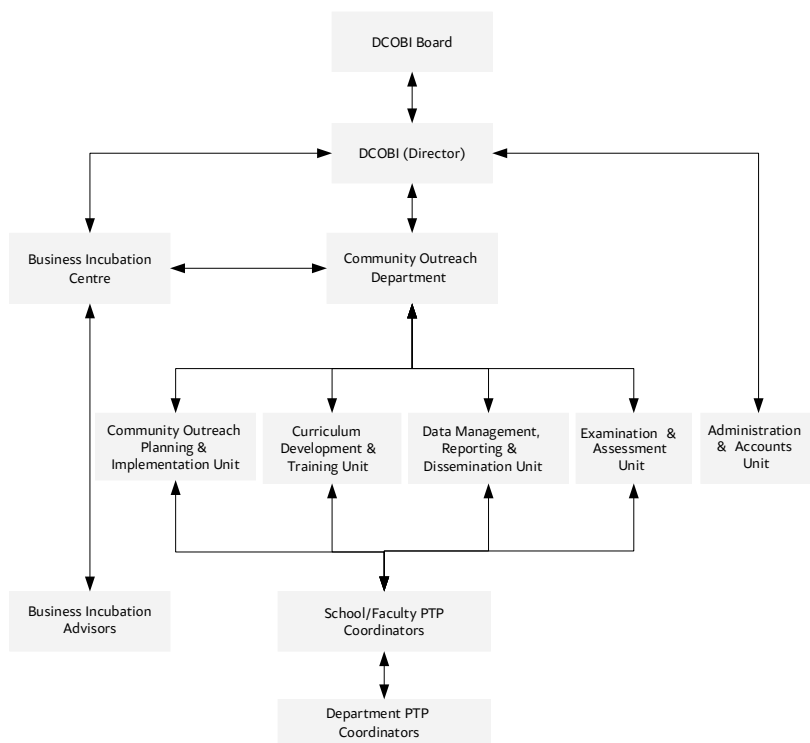
Figure 2: Structure of the Directorate of Community Outreach and Business Incubation

5.2.1 COMPOSITION AND FUNCTIONS OF THE DCOBI BOARD

The Board shall determine policies, make strategic decisions and oversee the Directorate's activities in relation to community outreach and business incubation. The Board shall meet a minimum of three (3) times in an academic year (once every trimester). The Board shall be composed of the following members:

i) Pro Vice-Chancellor, Chairman

ii) Director, Community Outreach and Business Incubation

iii) Director, Directorate of Research, Innovation and Consultancy

iv) Director, Directorate of Academic Planning and Quality Assurance

v) Director, Information Management System

vi) Director, General Administration

vii) Director, Directorate of Finance

viii) Representative of Deans of Schools/Faculties

ix) Assistant Registrar, DCOBI (Secretary)

5.2.2 Functions of the Director

The Director shall oversee the operations of the Community Outreach and Business Incubation as enshrined in the University Statutes (Statute 30) and shall be responsible for managing all matters relating to students' practical training (including community outreach programmes, industrial attachment, workshops, and studio works) and promoting all business incubation activities in the University.

5.2.3 Functions of the Various Units

5.2.3.1 Curriculum Development and Training Unit

This Unit shall be responsible for designing, planning, and implementing all community outreach activities, particularly students' practical training programmes at all levels of study. The unit shall also be responsible for (a) developing new community outreach and practical training programmes for the University in consultation with the Faculties/Schools, (b) reviewing existing practical training programmes in line with the mandate of the University and the training needs of students, (c) organising PTP orientation modules for students across all Schools/Faculties of the University, (d) training PTP field coordinators and assessors, and (e) providing training to external communities and development partners.

5.2.3.2 Community Outreach Planning and Implementation Unit

This Unit shall be responsible for (a) planning and preparing students' community outreach activities, including stakeholder engagements, mapping of districts, communities, and stakeholders, (b) mobilising and deploying logistics for community outreach activities, (c) undertaking deployment of students to assigned communities and organisations, (d) arranging for transportation of students, community outreach coordinators, and assessors, and (e) managing all issues and challenges during students' stay in communities/organisations for practical training.

5.2.3.3 Examination and Assessment Unit

This unit shall be responsible for conducting and coordinating all examinations and assessments relating to PTP. Students go through various examinations/assessments, including written, oral, and observational assessments. Among others, the Unit shall (a) handle students' PTP registration issues, (b) mark and grade orientation examinations, (c) compile and manage PTP results, and (d) upload, handle, and resolve PTP results challenges.

5.2.3.4 Data Management, Reporting, and Dissemination Unit

This unit will oversee PTP data management and dissemination and work with the Directorate of Information Management Systems (IMS), Directorate of Research, Innovation and Consultancy, and the Directorate of University Relations (DUR) in (a) maintaining a system for capturing, updating, managing field data from the PTP and utilising the data for research and consultancy services, (b) organising and producing PTP yearly reports for the university, and (c) disseminating information to the general public.

5.2.3.5 Business Incubation Centre

It shall be the responsibility of the Business Incubation Centre to design, plan, and implement the University's business incubation programmes and activities. The Centre shall provide support to nurture business

ideas of staff, students, and other stakeholders, and admit and nurture people with viable business ideas through the provision of various incubation services.

5.2.3.6 School and Faculty PTP Coordinators

There shall be PTP Coordinators who collaborate with School/ Faculty PTP coordinators to implement practical training activities across the university's various schools/faculties. School/Faculty PTP coordinators will oversee the coordination and implementation of practical training activities at all levels within their respective Schools/Faculties. Their responsibilities shall include: a) providing support and assistance to the Schools/Faculties in tasks such as scheduling, managing course materials, and coordinating meetings, b) working with the Directorate to design and update courses syllabi, ensure their alignment with learning objectives, and incorporating innovative teaching methods and technologies, c) representing Faculties/Schools interests and contributing expertise in decision-making processes in relation to community outreach and business incubation programmes, and d) facilitating effective communication channels, distributing vital information, and fostering collaboration among staff members and students about community outreach and business incubation programmes.

5.2.3.7 Departmental PTP Coordinators

Departmental PTP Coordinators shall be responsible for implementing and coordinating all departmental-level practical training activities in their respective departments.

5.2.3.8 Administration and Accounts Unit

This Unit shall perform the administrative and accounting roles of the Directorate regarding PTP-related activities. Administrative officers will support the Directorate's strategic planning and policy implementation, budgeting and resource management, facilities and infrastructure coordination, academic programme management, student support and services, compliance and regulatory matters,

stakeholder engagement, crisis management, and risk assessment. The Account Officer will handle financial record-keeping, budget preparation, payment processing, financial reporting, auditing, grants, and funding management.

6. Policy Implementation Framework

6.1 Practical Training Programme Policy

6.1.1 Introduction

The Practical Training Programme (PTP) is a pivotal initiative aimed at bridging the gap between academic learning and practical experience for students, while simultaneously fostering partnerships and development at the community and organisational levels. The PTP is mandatory for all degree and diploma students, except Level 400 students. Students must register for the PTP in the University's Information Management System (IMS) portal at the beginning of the Third Trimester. The following registration codes and titles are assigned for the various levels:

i) Level 100 - PTP 120: PRACTICAL TRAINING I

ii) Level 200 - PTP 220: PRACTICAL TRAINING II

iii) Level 300 - PTP 320: PRACTICAL TRAINING III

6.1.2 Rationale for the Practical Training Programme

i) To enable students to appreciate business and development problems and opportunities holistically through the perception and appreciation of such problems and opportunities from various angles (fields of study).

ii) To broaden the knowledge and experiences of students as they would have the opportunity to interact and learn from each other as well as important stakeholders in the business and development front.

iii) To foster teamwork and an integrated problem-solving spirit among students, which is an essential element in the job environment.

6.1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE PRACTICAL TRAINING PROGRAMME

The objectives of the PTP are to:

i) expose students to the practical nature of business and development problems and potentials in Ghana, particularly in rural and peri-urban settings;

ii) enable students to acquire specific practical skills in their areas of academic pursuit needed in the work environment.

iii) provide useful services to rural/peri-urban communities and organisations through the exchange of knowledge;

iv) assist students in developing favourable attitudes toward working in rural and peri-urban settings; and

v) generate data for development interventions and research into the real-life problems and potentials of communities, businesses, and organisations.

6.1.4 ORGANISATION OF THE PRACTICAL TRAINING PROGRAMME

The University-wide PTP shall be organised according to the various years/levels of diploma and undergraduate programmes. The practical training programmes are managed by DCOBI).

6.1.4.1 Level 100/Diploma (First Year) Practical Training Programme

The first-year/level 100 PTP is a Campus-based Integrated PTP aimed at providing students with a combination of theoretical knowledge and hands-on experience. It equips students with empirical social science research skills, including sampling, data collection, and analysis. Students across Faculties/Schools in the University shall be put into groups and tasked to execute assigned activities on campus or within

the university's catchment area under the supervision of assigned Group Coordinators. Students will be guided to apply practically-oriented research tools for participatory data collection on business and development problems and potentials, especially in rural and peri-urban communities in Ghana. Additionally, students will be exposed to the techniques of data analysis and reporting.

The specific objectives of the Level 100 PTP include:

i)   equipping students with practical knowledge and skills in participatory research methods and tools;

ii) introducing students to community studies through a review of existing community profiles and development practitioners' reports;

iii) assisting students to apply the methods and experiences acquired to collect relevant data, undertake data analysis, and present reports, both written and verbal; and

iv) inculcating in students the attitude to live and work in rural and peri-urban communities.

These objectives will be operationalised through a series of activities, including orientation lectures on participatory research methods and business, and development problems and potentials, development and application of participatory research methods and tools for data collection, data analysis and production of written reports, and oral presentations at the group and individual levels.

6.1.4.2 Level 200 (Second Year) Practical Training Programme

The Level 200 PTP shall be a Community-Based Integrated PTP Model that offers students the opportunity to work together in groups and experience practical field training in rural and peri-urban communities in Ghana. The thematic focus of Level 200 PTP is on business and development problems and potentials of rural and peri-urban communities in Ghana. This includes identifying human and non-human actors who can influence the development of the potentials identified, and proposed interventions to rural/peri-urban problems and potentials

identified in consultation with stakeholders in the community. Also, students are expected to develop a project or business proposal based on an identified problem or potential considered a key issue for the community students are placed in. For each district where student groups are placed, a District Coordinator is assigned with the responsibility of guiding, monitoring, supervising, and leading the assessment of students.

The objectives of the Level 200 PTP are to:

i)   inculcate in students the techniques and strategies of problem-solving;

ii) develop the skills of students in applying participatory methods and tools in analysing business and development problems and potentials of rural/peri-urban communities;

iii) equip students with the skills of developing project proposals/business proposals in response to a development problem or potential;

iv) expose students to issues of climate change and environmental sustainability; and

v)   provide an avenue for community outreach and sending research works to local communities.

6.1.4.3 Level 300 (Third Year) Practical Training Programme

The Level 300 PTP is designed to fit the different training needs of departments, faculties, and schools. It is campus-based, community-based, or organisational-based, whichever a particular Department, Faculty, or School deems appropriate. While the Department/Faculty/School maintains the design and implementation of their specific PTP, the DCOBI retains the coordinating responsibility of the programme.

The aim/goal of the Level 300 PTP is to enable students to acquire practical skills specific to their field of academic training through industrial/organisational attachment, teaching practice, on-campus training, or community work.

6.1.5 Coverage Area for Practical Training Programme

The PTP programme shall cover rural/peri-urban communities and organisations in the Savannah and Transitional Zones of Ghana and any other zone that may be deemed appropriate for the programme.

6.1.6 Duration of Practical Training Programme

Students will be expected to spend between 5 and 8 weeks on campus, in communities, or in organisations.

6.1.7 Orientation Lectures on the Practical Training Programme for Students

Levels 100 and 200 students will undergo orientation during the Second Trimester of each academic year as part of preparations for the fieldwork during the third trimester. The orientation will be organised by each Faculty/School and the schedule will be part of the second-trimester lecture timetable. Each Faculty/School will follow the orientation modules for the PTP (see Appendices 1 and 2). All students must participate in the orientation lectures and examinations. Students who fail to participate in the orientation will not qualify to undertake the fieldwork component of the PTP during the Third Trimester.

6.1.8 Community Outreach Activities

(a) Community Mapping and Students' Deployment

In the second trimester of the academic year, the DCOBI will select PTP Field Coordinators across the Faculties/Schools within the University to undertake mapping of PTP communities. The DCOBI will set the criteria for mapping communities with the goal of preventing exposure of students to any form of danger. These will include, but not limited, to i) access to water and health services, ii) motorable roads to and from the community, iii), community willingness to host and provide students with accommodation, iv) violent/conflict-free communities and, others that will be determined by the DCOBI from time to time. It is the duty of Field Coordinators to engage community-level stakeholders to ensure these criteria are met before the selection of PTP communities. In

addition, it is expected that Field Coordinators will engage community-level stakeholders on the objectives of the university's PTP to enhance cooperation and support at the community level.

A similar procedure should be followed in selecting communities, organisations for industrial attachment, places for teaching practice, etc. for Level 300 students and specialised stand-alone practicums.

(b) Practical Training Programme Monitoring and Supervision

The DCOBI will have oversight in monitoring and supervising the PTP. Group Coordinators and Field Coordinators shall be appointed to oversee the activities of Level 100 and 200 students, respectively. Each Group Coordinator or Field Coordinator will be assigned a group or PTP district, respectively. Group Coordinators and Field Coordinators are the first point of call for students and they are expected to guide and ensue students to stay in their groups or communities to execute their assigned activities as spelt out in the PTP field guide.

(c) Assessment and Grading

The PTP is a six-credit hour programme that is graded A+ to F and appears on students' transcripts under the "Third Trimester". For Levels 100 and 200 students, assessments shall be made during the orientation and in the field. Students will sit for an orientation examination based on the content of the orientation modules at the end-of-second trimester examinations. Some assessments of students will be done at the individual level and others at the group level. The individual assessment will include an assessment of orientation examination, attendance/field participation records, field notebooks, and individual oral presentations. The group assessment will include assessment of group oral presentations and group written reports. It should be emphasised that any student who scores zero in any of the areas of assessment listed in Table 1 will be scored zero in the total assessment and will be required to repeat the PTP in the following academic year. For clarity, a zero score in any of the assessment areas means the student did not participate in that activity and because the activities are interlinked, non-participation in one activity is a failure of the entire

PTP. Also, a student who absents him/herself from the community for more than 25% of the time will not be allowed to take part in the assessment and, consequently, will fail the entire PTP.

For Level 300 PTP and specialised stand-alone practicums, Departments/Faculties/Schools are allowed to determine their assessment criteria, but the grading must be from A+ to F.

Table 1: PTP Assessment

S/N	Areas of Assessment	Score	Remarks
1.	Orientation	100	Individual scores in the written orientation examination at the end of the second trimester
2.	Field participation	100	Individual score, based on community entry and stay records
3.	Field notebook	100	Individual score. Field Coordinators and Assessors will assess field notebooks based on consistency in daily recording, details, and clarity. Field Coordinators and Assessors are assigned 60% and 40% of the total score, respectively.
4.	Group oral presentation	100	Group score, based on background and objectives, research methods, the content of analysis, linkages, and overall impression. The group score is the average score of the three assessors
5.	Individual oral presentation	100	Individual score, based on student appearance, clarity of expression, knowledge of the content of the presentation (work undertaken), and ability to provide linkages. The individual score is the average score of the three assessors

S/N	Areas of Assessment	Score	Remarks
6.	Written reports	100	Group score, based on background and objectives, research methods, content (problems and potentials, and project/business proposal), and overall impression. The group score is the average score of the three assessors
Total		**600**	

6.2 BUSINESS INCUBATION POLICY

6.2.1 INTRODUCTION

Business incubation is currently being promoted in both developing and developed countries as a tool for stimulating and supporting entrepreneurship and hence economic development. Business incubation is a 'business support process that accelerates the successful development of start-up and fledgling businesses by providing entrepreneurs with an array of targeted resources and services'[1]. University business incubators (UBIs) are a growing phenomenon around the world. There is a new orientation for universities to become centres of entrepreneurial ecosystems, nurturing new business ideas, facilitating new products/service development, and accelerating new business startups. Public universities are responding to the call to play a role in incubating new business ideas from students, lecturers, researchers, and local entrepreneurs in and around universities' environments.[2]

Business incubation is delivered through specially-created organisations called business incubators. The business incubator admits and nurtures entrepreneurial start-ups through the provision of resources and services. The unique distinguishing feature of university business incubators (UBIs) relative to other business incubators is that

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1. National Business Incubators Association [NBIA](www.nbia.org)

2. Janet Napolitano (2016). Why universities are the new startup incubators https://medium.com/@UofCalifornia/why-universities-are-the-new-startup-incubators-be877f3c4cc4

their clients (incubates) are often at the conceptual stage and the UBI provides training on business environment analysis, company formation, development of business plans, development of pitch decks, making network connections, product/service marketing, and helping to launch and mentor promising business ideas. UBIs usually leverage existing infrastructure, the expertise of their staff, and their networks to provide resources and services crucial to the nurturing of business ideas and the launch of start-ups[3]. The University is well-positioned to play a pivotal role in stimulating innovation and entrepreneurship through its business incubation programme.

6.2.2 Rationale

The rationale for a University Business Incubation Policy is to promote entrepreneurship and incubate the business ideas of staff, students, and other external stakeholders. Another purpose of the policy is to outline the structure and mechanisms for the establishment and operation of a Business Incubation Centre in the University, which shall be a general-purpose incubation centre that will aim to support the development of business ideas and support start-ups across industrial sectors – agriculture, industry and services sectors. This Policy will also serve as a demonstration of the University's commitment to the cause of entrepreneurship development.

6.2.3 Objectives

The main aim or goal of the business incubation programme is to increase job creation, income, and economic development by nurturing viable business ideas and supporting the survival of new start-ups through the provision of an array of business support services.

The objectives of the business incubation programme are to:

  i) stimulate innovation and entrepreneurship among staff, students, and external stakeholders in the Upper West Region, in particular, and Ghana at large;

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3. Pellegrini, M., & Johnson-Sheehan, R. (2021). The Evolution of University Business Incubators: Transnational Hubs for Entrepreneurship. *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*, *35*(2), 185-218.

ii) motivate staff and students to align their endeavours with the overarching intention of the Business Incubation Centre to nurture and support job creators, enhance students' employability, and cultivate their entrepreneurial aptitude;

iii) create an environment that is conducive to generating innovative concepts spanning diverse fields, which have the potential to evolve into successful product/service development and technological advancements;

iv) offer mentorship, guidance, and robust support to facilitate the creation of start-up ventures; and

v) provide an accelerated path to monetisation of ideas, services, and products.

6.2.4 Business Incubation Structure

6.2.4.1 Business Incubation Centre (BIC)

The UBIDS Business Incubation Centre (UBIDS-BIC) will serve as the nucleus of the entrepreneurial ecosystem of the University. The Centre will be housed within the SDD-UBIDS Bamahu Campus at a physical location accessible to potential beneficiaries/clients. The Centre will be a general-purpose incubation centre supporting business ideas and young start-ups across all industrial sectors – agriculture, industry, and services. The Centre aims to nurture and support the growth of new/young start-ups by providing them with infrastructure (co-working space and administrative facilities/equipment), business advisory services (including training, coaching, and mentoring), financial services, and networking services. The Centre will connect with industry (private sector), government establishments, and local and international organisations for collaborations and exchanges in delivering on its mandate. The BIC should initially focus on pre-incubation services, providing training and support to emerging entrepreneurs with limited resources. This approach will allow the BIC to assist a broader range of individuals without the extensive commitment required for a full incubation programme.

a. Administration and Management

This section outlines the administrative and management structure for the business incubation centre, designed to cultivate a supportive and successful environment for entrepreneurial ideas and ventures.

i. Business Incubation Executive Committee

The Executive Committee shall comprise senior university officials, industry representatives (Ghana Enterprise Agency, Business Advisory Centre, etc.), and entrepreneurial experts. This committee shall provide strategic oversight and guidance to the incubation programme of the University. The responsibilities of the committee will include: setting overall programme goals and objectives for the business incubation, approving policies and procedures for firms' selection, support services, and graduation, overseeing resource allocation and fundraising efforts, and reviewing and evaluating the programme's performance.

ii. Head of Business Incubation

The Head of Business Incubation shall have the "**Needed Passion for Business Incubation"** and be responsible for designing, planning, and implementing business incubation programmes of the University. The Head of Business Incubation shall lead the day-to-day operations of the UBIDS Business Incubation Centre, providing leadership and direction with **passion** to the business incubation staff and team. Responsibilities include managing the application process and selecting promising ventures, overseeing the provision of support services to incubated businesses, monitoring the progress of incubated ventures, providing ongoing support, and facilitating connections between incubated ventures and potential investors, mentors, and partners.

iii. Business Incubation Technical Advisory Committee

The Committee will comprise specialists with diverse expertise in areas of business development, finance, legal matters, marketing, technology, and others. They will provide dedicated support to incubated ventures based on their individual needs in line with their areas of expertise.

6.2.4.2 Community Outreach Programmes and Business Ideation

Business ideation encompasses the process of conceiving and refining concepts for new ventures, products, or services. It entails activities such as brainstorming, thorough research, fostering creativity, and analysing existing challenges or market offerings to pinpoint potential opportunities. The UBIDS's Practical Training Programme (PTP) stands out as a crucial resource for students seeking inspiration. While the business ideation atmosphere extends beyond rural communities where students and staff engage during the University's PTP in the third trimester, special attention is directed towards utilising it as a platform for idea generation. Presented below is a structured framework for ideation facilitated through these outreach initiatives.

a. Pre-Community Outreach

The community outreach orientation lectures will integrate training sessions on business environment scanning and ideation. Students will receive this training before their field deployment. The curriculum will encompass topics such as idea generation, transforming concepts into viable ventures, innovating with existing business models, understanding business team dynamics, and perfecting the art of pitching business ideas.

a. Community Outreach

As part of the community practical training activities, students will engage in identifying and profiling existing businesses within communities. Subsequently, they can delineate areas within these businesses where support from the UBIDS-BIC would be beneficial, including resources and services such as marketing training, product design, financial management, bookkeeping, and general administration. Identifying both challenges and opportunities within rural communities will serve as the foundation for business ideation. In other words, students will generate business concepts based on the problems and potentials they have identified. These ideas can then be pursued by community members, students, and staff members alike.

b. Post-Community Outreach

Upon identifying unique business ideas during fieldwork, will present their concepts to a panel of experts from the UBIDS-BIC. These experts will evaluate the ideas and provide recommendations regarding admission into the incubator, where further development support will be offered. Only those ideas deemed both unique and feasible will be considered for incubation. Community members with distinctive business ideas will also be encouraged to seek support from the incubator, if needed.

6.2.5 Eligibility for Business Incubation Support

Students, staff, individuals, and groups from neighbouring communities with viable ideas demonstrating essential qualities such as innovativeness, commercial viability, technical feasibility, social sensibility, and scalability are all eligible to apply (refer to DCOBI implementation guidelines for selection criteria).

6.2.6 Business Incubation Support Services

The UBIDS-BIC shall strive to be a one-stop shop where all resources and services needed for business start-up and growth will be provided. The Centre shall provide hard, that is, tangible services and soft or intangible services. The Centre shall provide the following categories of services:

i) Physical office spaces (workstations) with accompanying facilities such as internet, computers, printers, photocopiers, and telecommunication.

ii) Capacity-building and skills training in all the functional areas of starting and managing a business, including business ideation, business planning, management, finance and financial management, marketing and sales, operations and production, networking, contracting, intellectual property and licensing, and legal/regulatory requirements.

iii) Advising, mentoring, and coaching incubated firms and other businesses requiring support.

iv) Networking services to connect businesses to sources of funding and other businesses/organisations for relationships/ partnerships.

6.2.7 Incubation Tenure and Exit Process

Depending on the nature of the incubation, an incubatee has a maximum of three years to exit or graduate from the Incubation Centre.

6.2.8 Conditions of Termination

An incubatee may be withdrawn from the business incubation programme:

a) for non-performance or underperformance based on the assessment of the technical committee;

b) if there is a violation of any institutional policy or infringement of intellectual property rights; and

c) for any other conduct that may bring the name of the University into disrepute.

6.2.9 Ethical and Intellectual Property Considerations

6.2.9.1 Ethical Issues

a) A robust code of ethics shall be designed to safeguard the operations and relationship with incubatees.

b) Discrimination and harassment: the Centre shall ensure there is no discrimination against any applicant or no discrimination among incubatees based on age, disability, pay, gender, race, religion, etc.

c) Whistleblowing or social media rants shall not be permitted in the Centre.

d) Incubatees shall respect and be respected by their colleagues and staff of the Centre

e) Incubatees shall not violate any of the Centre's rules and regulations.

6.2.9.2 Intellectual Property Considerations

a) The incubator shall determine the intellectual property (IP) ownership and come up with terms and conditions to protect the Ideas and IPs generated or presented by incubatees.

b) Incoming applicants shall know and agree to the terms and conditions regarding IP ownership and what is required of each of them to safeguard IPs in the incubator.

c) Participants in the incubation programme, no matter the stage, who violate IP terms and conditions will be penalised.

d) The Centre shall take steps to obtain IP rights or help incubatees obtain the rights.

e) The ethics of students and supervisors will be guided by the professional standards for the staff of SDD-UBIDS and the student handbook.

7. Funding Sources, Infrastructure and Logistics

7.1 Funding Sources

a. Business Incubation

Funds shall be generated for the business incubation programme from the following sources: annual budgetary allocations to the Centre by the University; fees, and charges from incubatees; donations from successful start-ups that have graduated from the Centre; grants, investors (venture capitalists, angel investors, corporate sponsorship), and other donors; crowdfunding; and any other source.

b. PTP

Funding for the PTP shall be sourced from the following: annual budgetary allocations to DCOBI by the University; PTP fees; grants, investors, corporate sponsorship, non-governmental organisations (NGOs),community service organisations (CSOs), other donors; and other sources.

7.2 Infrastructure

  i. **Office Space:** The UBIDS-BIC will be equipped with state-of-the-art facilities to create an environment conducive for innovation. Modern office spaces, meeting rooms, and coworking areas will be created to facilitate collaboration among entrepreneurs. For the smooth functioning of the incubation process, there should be adequate technology infrastructure, including high-speed internet and cutting-edge hardware.

  ii. **Specialised Workspaces:** To cater to diverse business needs, tailored workspaces for workers should be provided. This includes laboratories for scientific startups, design studios for

creative ventures, and technology-enabled spaces for digital enterprises. Adaptable spaces can accommodate a variety of startups with unique requirements, fostering a diverse and vibrant community.

iii. **Networking Zones:** Lounge areas, coffee corners, and communal spaces encourage interaction among entrepreneurs, mentors, and industry experts. Thus, creating spaces for networking and collaboration is crucial. These zones serve as catalysts for idea exchange, partnerships, and cross-pollination of skills.

iv. **Conference and Event Facilities:** Hosting workshops, seminars, and networking events is vital for the growth of startups. Adequate conference facilities with modern audio-visual equipment enable the Business Incubation Centre to organise and host such events, attracting valuable contributors from the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

7.3   LOGISTICS

The logistics will include buses (four 60-seater buses and three 30-seater buses), six off-road vehicles, and 200 solar rechargeable lamps for community stays.

8. External Partnerships

The University Business Incubation Centre (UBIC) stands as a testament to the power of collaboration and external partnerships. In this context, it explores the significance of fostering relationships beyond the University's walls to propel innovation within the entrepreneurial ecosystem. Key external partners shall include the Kosmos Innovation Centre (KIC), government agencies/departments (e.g., Ghana Enterprise Agency, Business Advisory Centre, Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations, and Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies), universities/research institutions (e.g., Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, University for Development Studies, Kwame Nkrumah University of Sccience and Technology), Commercial Banks, Corporate and Private Investors, and Private Business Incubators. Our collaborations and external partners are hinged on the following principles:

i) Building Bridges Beyond Borders: The Centre understands that true innovation knows no boundaries. To surpass local limitations, the Centre needs to actively cultivate external partnerships with industry players, governmental bodies, and international organisations. With this orientation, the Centre will not only propel individual ventures, but also contribute to the flourishing entrepreneurial landscape of Ghana, in general, and Upper West Region, in particular.

ii) Industry Collaboration for Real-World Impact: The Centre must actively engage with industry partners to bridge the gap between academia and real-world business challenges.

iii) Governmental Support for Sustainable Growth: Recognising the role of government in fostering innovation, the UBIC ought to establish partnerships with local and national governmental bodies. These collaborations will not only facilitate funding opportunities, but also create an environment conducive

to policy advocacy, ensuring a supportive ecosystem for budding entrepreneurs.

iv) Global Alliances for Cross-Cultural Innovation: In a world where diversity fuels creativity, the Centre will consciously seek international partnerships. Collaborations with universities and incubation centres worldwide will create a melting pot of ideas and perspectives. This cross-cultural exchange will enrich the entrepreneurial journey, fostering a truly global mindset among entrepreneurs.

v) Supporting Local Ecosystems: Beyond international connections, the Centre should be committed to nurturing its local ecosystem. Partnerships with local businesses, community organisations, and non-profit organisations will contribute to the Centre's social responsibility. This collaborative approach will ensure that innovation is not only profitable, but also beneficial for the region's socioeconomic development.

vi) Entrepreneurial Support Networks: The Centre appreciates the fact that a robust entrepreneurial ecosystem requires interconnected networks. Actively participating in and forming partnerships with startup accelerators, angel investors, and venture capitalists enhances the support system available to incubatees, facilitating access to funding, and mentorship.

9. Data Utilisation and Dissemination of Outputs

Data would be made available to individuals and organisations that would like to use it for research purposes, for which the DCOBI may charge a fee. The report of the Level 200 PTP should be shared with respective communities where students undertook their practical training and with district assemblies where the communities are located as well as developmental NGOs operating in the comminates and districts. A copy of the report (in soft and hard copies) should be submitted to the DCOBI of UBIDS.

10. Guidelines for Periodic Review of the Business Incubation Centre Policy

In the ever-evolving landscape of community outreach programmes, innovation and entrepreneurship, periodic review of this policy is crucial to ensuring it remains a dynamic force driving the activities of the Directorate and serving the needs of society. The following guidelines are designed to facilitate a review process of the policy:

i. **Establish a Review Committee:** Create a diverse committee comprising representatives from academia, industry, government, and the local community. This interdisciplinary approach ensures a holistic assessment of the Policy, considering various perspectives and expertise.

ii. **Define Clear Policy Review Objectives:** Clearly outline the objectives of the policy review. Are we aiming to enhance inclusivity, adapt to technological advancements, or strengthen community engagement? Setting specific goals provides a roadmap for the review process and ensures focused improvements.

iii. **Engage Stakeholders:** Actively involve all relevant stakeholders, including current entrepreneurs, past incubates, staff members, student leadership, local businesses, and community leaders. Collecting feedback and insights from those directly impacted by the PTP and BIC policies is crucial for identifying strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement.

iv. **Assess Alignment with Current Trends:** Review the existing policies in the light of the latest trends in community outreach programmes, entrepreneurship, technology, and societal expectations. Ensure that the BIC remains at the forefront of

innovation by adapting policies to address emerging challenges and opportunities.

v. **Evaluate Success Metrics:** Examine the effectiveness of the current policies in achieving desired outcomes. Assess key performance indicators, success stories, and areas where entrepreneurs may have faced challenges. This evaluation will inform adjustments to enhance the Policy.

vi. **Foster Ethical Entrepreneurship and Community Outreach:** Place a strong emphasis on ethical considerations. Evaluate the policy to ensure it aligns with principles of integrity, social responsibility, and environmental sustainability. Ethical Entrepreneurship and Community Outreach do not only contribute to a positive institutional culture but also enhance the reputation of the institution.

vii. **Enhance Industry Integration:** Assess the extent of collaboration with local businesses and industries. Identify opportunities to strengthen partnerships, provide more relevant resources, and align the BIC's activities with the current needs of the business community.

viii. **Embrace Technological Advancements:** Given the rapid pace of technological change, evaluate how well the BIC incorporates the latest tools and platforms. Ensure that entrepreneurs have access to cutting-edge technologies and that the Centre itself operates efficiently through technology-driven processes.

ix. **Cultivate Inclusivity:** Review the policy to ensure it promotes inclusivity and diversity. Consider how well the policy is serving the interests of stakeholders from various backgrounds, including women, minorities, and individuals with diverse socioeconomic status. There should be an aim to create an environment where everyone feels welcome and supported.

x. **a Regular Review Cycle:** Institute a regular review cycle, whether annually or biennially, to keep the policies aligned with the dynamic nature of entrepreneurship. This proactive approach ensures that the BIC remains a relevant and effective

resource for aspiring entrepreneurs in North Ghana. By religiously following these guidelines for periodic review of the policy, it will continue to play a pivotal role in shaping the future of innovation and entrepreneurship. Commitment to this process will ensure that the BIC remains a dynamic force for positive change.

11. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Level 100 Orientation Modules

S/N	MODULE TOPIC	LECTURE DURATION
1.	The Students' Practical Training Concept, Structure, Objectives, and Organisation	2 Hours
2.	Community Profiling I: Socio-Economic, Cultural, and Political aspects of Community Development	2 Hours
3.	Community Profiling II: Agriculture, Science, Technology, Health, and Nutrition aspects of Community Development	2 Hours
4.	Methods and Tools for Sampling, Data Collection, and Analysis – Qualitative Approach	2 Hours
5.	Methods and Tools for Sampling, Data Collection, and Analysis – Quantitative Approach	2 Hours
6.	How to Conduct a Review of Reports (with focus on Community Profiles) I	2 Hours
7.	How to Conduct a Review of Reports (with focus on Community Profiles) II	2 Hours
8.	Techniques of Report Writing and Presentation I: Rationale and Structure of Written Reports	2 Hours
9.	Techniques of Report Writing and Presentation II: PowerPoint Preparation and Oral Presentation Techniques	2 Hours

APPENDIX 2: LEVEL 200 ORIENTATION MODULES

S/N	MODULE TOPIC	LECTURE DURATION
1.	Overview of Level 200 PTP: Objectives, Tasks/ Activities, and Organisation	2 Hours
2.	Living and Working in Rural Communities: Preparation, Community Entry, Ethics of Community Work, and Exit	2 Hours
3.	Identification and Analysis of Problems and Potentials of Local Communities – Qualitative Approach	2 Hours
4.	Analysis and Identification of Priority Intervention Area(s)	2 Hours
5.	Business Environment scanning and business Ideation	2 Hours
6.	Business Proposal Development	3 Hours
7.	Participatory Proposal Writing and Presentation I: Goals/Objectives Setting, Log Frames, and Budgeting	2 Hours
8.	Participatory Proposal Writing and Presentation II: Goals/Objectives Setting, Log Frames, and Budgeting	2 Hours