PROTESTANT INSTITUTE OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES (PIASS)

TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT POLICY

1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF PROTESTANT INSTITUTE OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

The institution which later on became the Protestant Institute of Arts and Social Sciences was founded in 1970 by mainline protestant churches that were operating in Rwanda. The institution was then called "Ecole de Theologie de Butare: ETB" (Butare School of Theology). In 1990, it was upgraded into Faculty of Protestant Theology of Butare (FTPB) which got official accreditation in 1993 by the convention No 1552 of 09 December 1993. In the same year, the convention No 1554/09.2/01/02 acknowledged the degrees delivered by the FTPB.

In the aftermath   of 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, the founders of the institution, in the collaboration with the FTPB national and international partners deployed a lot of efforts to help FTPB resume its activities in such a way that specific needs of a recovering society could be met. In that perspective, a so-called Special Program was launched in 1995 and lasted till 2001: three successive intakes of students have been trained over two years and educated in contextual and practical theological training through those kinds of crash courses. The graduates of the Special program were awarded with Diploma in Protestant Theology. As of 1999, the FTPB returned to the ordinary four years' program of Hon. Bachelor's degree in Protestant Theology.

In 2009, the FTPB grew up and was supplemented by two new Faculties: The Faculty of Education (FED) and the Faculty of Development Studies (FDS) within the new framework of "Institut Protestant des Sciences Humaines de Butare (IPSHB)". Those two new fields have been chosen based on the experiences and expertise acquired by Protestant Churches in Rwanda. In 2010, the French name was changed to Protestant Institute of Arts and Social Sciences (PIASS). The new Institution (PIASS) has been respectively accredited by the Ministerial Order no 09/11 of November 2009 licensing "Institut Protestant des Sciences Humaines de Butare (IPSHB)" and the ministerial order n°29 of 19/07/2010 recognizing the Institute under the new name of Protestant Institute of Arts and Social Sciences (PIASS).

1.1. PIASS Philosophy

PIASS holds the view that   faith and science are indispensable tools for any society to survive and harness moral obligation of people to creatively improve the socio-economic environment in which they can survive and realize their potential. This can only be achieved

through a well-conceptualized educational and scientific package through which everyone must rightfully experience and acquire the tools to facilitate this philosophy.

1.2. PIASS's Statement of Faith

PIASS affirms the following as fundamental to Christian belief, practice, and behavior.

1.   The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as the written Word originally given by God through revelation to humans, are inspired, true, and entirely trustworthy in all that it intends to teach, and have supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct since they contain all things necessary for salvation.

2.   There is ONE GOD, eternally existent in Three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

3.   God is the Creator and Sustainer of the world and of life thanks to His universal sovereignty over all that He has made in heaven and on earth.

4.   Our Lord Jesus Christ, incarnated God, was conceived through the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, true God, and a true man without sin. His bodily resurrection, His ascension, His present mediatorial work, and His personal return in Power and Glory to judge the living and the dead remain a firm source of our hope for the present and life to come.

5.   The Holy Spirit, one of the persons of the Trinity, witnesses to Christ, regenerates, and sanctifies us. His indwelling enables us to witness and serve the Triune God and humankind through different spiritual gifts and talents.

6.   Man and woman were created by God in His image, free and responsible to choose good or evil. By sin, human beings were corrupted in their nature and were separated from their Creator.

7.   Salvation for humans remains the work of God, accomplished through Jesus Christ's expiatory death and bodily resurrection. In His grace, God justifies the sinner through faith alone.

8.   The unity of all those who, through believing and confessing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the Saviour of the world, form a community of children of God, the Church, the Body of Christ of which He is the Head.

9.　　　　The bodily resurrection of all the dead, the final judgment, and the establishment of the eternal kingdom of Christ.

As a Church-owned institution, PIASS's overall conviction and calling are to build a world in which the love of God for His creation and that we have for one another is visible and lived in concrete experiences. To stand firm in its faith and succeed in its mission, the following commitments and strategies are set as safeguards:

1. PIASS is committed to reading, teaching, and preaching the Holy Scriptures in their plain and canonical sense through an in-depth analysis, and to applying their message.

2. PIASS is committed to promoting Ecumenism within it and among Protestant Churches in Rwanda and beyond as an opportunity and strategy to affirm our Christian witness and fight against separatism, destructive fundamentalism, and any form of extremism.

3. PIASS is engaged in the ministry of reconciliation and search for peace within surrounding communities, in the Rwandan society, and in the Great Lakes sub-region.

4. PIASS is committed to supporting initiatives likely to improve the living conditions of communities.

5. PIASS is committed to supporting the weakest among us and to building healing communities where everyone finds a place.

1.3. PIASS Vision

"To be a reference university, fostering knowledge development and research that is relevant for the society and inspired by Christian ethics and values."

1.4. PIASS Mission

"To provide Society and Churches with well trained personnel who are inquisitive, solution oriented, committed and equipped with intellectual tools that enable them to meeting specific needs of societies that are moving to a global, modern and pluralistic world."

1.5. PIASS Moto

Fides et Scientia (Faith and Science): By this moto, PIASS assumes that faith and science are interwoven to ensure the quality of life.

1.6. PIASS Objectives

PIASS as Higher Learning Institution has the following objectives:

- To develop practical and applicable knowledge in social as well as economic development.

- To impart a high-quality teaching enabling creation of employment and that proves relevant to communities is close to reality, helpful for the society at large.

- To contribute to the positive transformation of society using short teaching and training, research, consultancy and projects and respect to ethical dimension.

- To contribute to local and national sustainable development by promoting scientific and technological research as well as research for integrated development.

1.7. Principles and values

Being a Protestant institution of Higher Education, PIASS ethical values are grounded in its statement of faith.

- **Liberation**: As the Gospel of Christ liberates from all human alienations here and now, bearing witness to it cannot go without running social dialogue with the society and serving the poor.

- **Relevance**: Higher education plays a key role in construction and development of a just, equitable and stable society through the training of committed, responsible and professionally competent citizens.

- **Unity in Diversity**: Open and respectful exchange of ideas along with evidence-based documentation is essential to higher education   contribution to a pluralistic society.

- **Effectiveness and efficiency**: Finding out the optimal and cost-effective way to reach objectives, in changing environment and limitation of resources and keeps on being result and solution oriented.

- **Quality Service Delivery:** Training, research, and services to both national and international communities must be qualitative and competitive.

- **Innovation**: Teaching and learning processes are considering changing needs of churches and society and therefore programs are continually assessed and improved accordingly in a spirit of creativity and entrepreneurship at all levels.

- **Responsibility**: Teachers, students and administrative staff, to achieve their job, are expected to make decisions, act upon their choices, delegate and report openly.

- **Solidarity**: Promoting a gender balanced culture and stressing on the needs of disadvantaged groups.

- **Collaboration**: Fostering team spirit and looking for win-win partnerships with other institutions of higher learning.

- **Transparency**: Managing resources of the institution in a rigorous and transparent manner.

- **Good Governance**: Fairness, equity without discrimination, clear delegation and decentralization are adopted at all levels of the institution.

- **Prayerful life:** Prayer as a conversation with God and a means for self-examination can bring about a sense of inner peace, spiritual refreshment, and more commitment to sever God, fellow humans, and the whole creation.

- **Hard work:** The necessity for hard work is not only a way to attain prosperity and wealth for oneself and society, but it also remains a calling to fulfill the mandate given to human beings to take care of creation and fructify it in a sustainable way.

2. **Equality and Inclusivity***:* All members of the PIASS community are equal. We believe in a fair and respectful manner so that each member of the PIASS community has an equal opportunity to contribute to the University's operations. We promote the safety, security and wellbeing of society and our environment by acting in accordance with the University's equality and diversity policy.

Introduction

The principle of academic integrity, high-quality teaching, learning and assessment, providing equal opportunities, seeking excellence and increasing access by developing more opportunities for flexible learning both on and off campus must be at the centre of the process of teaching, learning and assessment. Excellence in learning, teaching and assessment is the centre of all PIASS activities. It must therefore be important to provide academic staff with adequate means to facilitate of high quality teaching, learning and assessment. Therefore, adequate academic staff professional development: didactically, pedagogically as well as subject-centred of are given high priority to make the quality of learning, teaching and assessment a reality at PIASS.

3. **Global context for learning and teaching**

- Increased demand for external accountability and the expectation that PIASS degrees shall be benchmarked to sound international standards.

- Emphasis on flexibility and lifelong learning.

- Structural changes to academic programmes arising from the development of a credit framework.

- Sustained focus upon the development of personal and transferable skills, including employability and entrepreneurial skills, to ensure that PIASS graduates have the competence that employers are entitled to expect from them

- New forms of learning arising from developments in ICT and other technologies-distance learning and blended learning.

- The need to increase the provision of part-time, community and work-based learning, including students learning off campus.

4. **The PIASS learning, teaching, and assessment policy**

The national learning, teaching and assessment policy provides a broad framework within which PIASS can guide and support the continued enhancement of the provided learning experience. It aims to ensure support and enhancement of student learning and provides broad strategies in learning, teaching and assessment, which will work to inform institutional strategies according to PIASS' priorities. It covers the support and development of staff who are involved in teaching, the support of students learning, and the development of student skills. The principles of the relationship between research and teaching and the promotion of equality through the development of an inclusive learning culture and central to this policy.

5. **Guiding Questions for the learning, teaching, and assessment policy**

- To what extent do PIASS current ways of teaching, learning and assessment encourage progressive development of independent learners equipped with necessary knowledge, skills, attributes and confidence to play a constructive role in the employment of the country? In other words, to what extent does PIASS produce graduates who can take responsibility for decision-making?

- Is there a mismatch between workplace expectations and student skills and competences? If there is a mismatch, can an effective mechanism be put in place to redress the issue? Is PIASS facilitating the development of the skills and qualities needed for effective employment, as well as subject knowledge?

- Are teaching staff provided with the necessary and appropriate training to implement innovative, imaginative and effective ways of teaching informed by current research and linking research and teaching?

- Are staffs provided with the necessary resources and facilities to implement effective teaching?

- Do the types of assessment PIASS uses test and encourage the development of skills and competent effectively?

6. Objectives of the policy

- To provide strategies, procedures and methods to satisfy the academic needs of students.

- To maintain and enhance the quality of the student learning experience in the context of the PIASS's mission and strategic priorities.

- To encourage a development culture for learning, teaching and assessment and adequate means for the assurance of high standards.

- To equip PIASS's students with the necessary subject knowledge, skills, attributes and confidence to enter the job market, undertake further studies and play a constructive and creative role in society throughout their lives.

- To enhance teacher effectiveness by supporting the role of the lecturer as a manager and facilitator of students' learning,

- To support and encourage a shift from teacher-centered pedagogy towards learned-centered pedagogy.

- To address the quality assurance and monitoring mechanism which apply to all PIASS Programmes.

7. The strategic Framework

a. The learning strategy

PIASS seeks that the learning opportunities made available to its students fulfil the following conditions:

a) Prepare all students to become independent and lifelong learners.

b) Allow all students to develop appropriate research and academic-related skills, and

c) Offer all students an equal opportunity to develop their potential.

All PIASS students shall be provided as appropriate with opportunities to develop a range of research and academic-related skills, both generic and discipline-specific. All students shall also be provided with opportunities to engage in personal development planning, to ensure that they are aware of their own strengths and able to recognize the areas in which they can improve further.

b. The teaching strategy

PIASS has the responsibility to ensure that the teaching/programme:

a) Builds on, and is appropriately linked with subject-specific research; that curricula are inclusive and of a high academic standards;

b) Creates no unnecessary barriers to participation and, further, is inclusive and fully accessible to all students;

c) Is structured so as to facilitate the development of skills and competences;

d) Is innovative, market-relevant, interdisciplinary and capable of attracting a wide range of students;

e) Is suited to the knowledge-based economy, and students are capable of deploying their knowledge and skills in a wide range of environments.

f) Is based on action and teaching plans provided by each faculty by the starting of every academic year.

c. The learning and teaching approaches

The types of domain of learning, the type of students and the nature of educational goals determine the choice of learning and teaching approaches. A wide range of learning and teaching approaches may be employed. These include but not are limited to the following

The learning environment strategy

The learning environment strategy focuses on the physical learning infrastructure and the information resources. PIASS should provide staff with the necessary material resources and training to be able to implement the institutional learning, teaching and assessment policy. PIASS staff should apply innovative ways of teaching, and be able to link research and teaching. PIASS should ensure that the necessary resources are allocated to support learning and teaching, including: lecture theatres, classrooms and laboratories appropriately equipped;

access to ICT; learning materials including books, journals and electronic resources; student services including guidance and counselling; and an 'Effective Learning Support Service'.

Discovery/research guided approaches: independent studies, projects, thesis/dissertation work, construction tasks (building prototypes, writing computer programmess, creating web pages, artistic and literary work), independent reading, case studies, etc.

Participatory approaches: Group work, focused group discussion, debates, seminars, conferences, panel discussions, peer tutoring and tutorials, etc.

Presentation approaches: Lectures, films and slide shows, video shows, performance, demonstration and exhibition, etc.

Application approaches: practical exercises, simulations, micro-teaching, microteaching practice, internships, field and community attachments, cases studies of real-life problems, etc.

Theory-praxis-nexus approaches:

d. The assessment strategy

Assessment is part of an integral to learning and teaching activities. The purposes of assessment are to help staff and students monitor and improve learning, to provide a measure of student achievement and to help assure academic quality and standards.

This is to ensure that assessment is explicit, valid and reliable.

(a) Core Principles of Assessment

- **Assessment shall be explicit**
  Assessment tasks, processes and procedures shall be accessible, clearly explained to be understood by all stakeholders including prospective and current students, funding agents, academic and related staff, professional bodies and employers.

- **Assessment shall be valid**
  Assessment tasks shall assess what is intended to be assessed and be fit for purpose. All modules have learning outcomes, which are what the assessment is to test. These learning

outcomes cover knowledge/understanding, cognitive for each module must cover all these outcomes, and it must be appropriately designed.

- **Assessment shall be reliable**

  Assessment process and procedures shall be consistent, accurate and trustworthy, and shall be subject to internal and external moderation.

(b) Types of Assessment

This policy encourages two main types of assessment:

- Formative assessment, designed to help learners learn more effectively through giving them feedback on their performance indicating how it can be improved; *Self-, peer and reflective assessment*
- Summative assessment, used to indicate the extent of learner's success in meeting the intended learning outcomes of a unit of study or programme.

(c) Functions of assessment

A singular assessment task may incorporate several functions; an implicit element of any form of assessment is feedback to the learners regarding his/her learning. Feedback provides information about any different between the learning outcome and what has been achieved and enables the learner to identify any action required to manage this difference. Throughout the strategy, the term "assessment" includes peer and self-assessment.

(d) Forms of assessment

Forms of assessment that may be appropriate for different learning outcomes include but are not limited to:

- Tests, examinations, short written pieces (e.g. Press releases) that elicit knowledge, understanding and the ability to describe accurately;
- Essays, examinations and other kinds of writing that require students to produce evidence and make reasoned argument on the basis of it:
- Essay and examination that require students to analyze a problem, diagnose the nature of a substance or complaint, plan investigation or purpose solutions;

- Oral and other non-written forms of presentations of arguments or results (oral or poster presentations, websites)- including presentation with a role-play element, such as a presentation to a non-technical audience;

- Role-plays to explore and test decision-making or group-work skills, or diagnostic ability;

- Performance: making prototypes, works of art; writing computer programmes, poems; presenting music, dram;

- Plans for practical tasks or situations: proposals for research or social intervention/action or placement activity, plans for works of art or prototypes.

- Practical tasks: laboratory-based tasks; diagnostic tasks; research projects;

- Reports of practical tasks or visit/placements: research projects;

- Reports of practical tasks or visits/placements: research reports, laboratory reports, reflexive accounts of placements etc;

e. The academic staff support strategy

PIASS should ensure that academic staff:

- Are effectively supported in making their contribution to learning and teaching;

- Have opportunities to appropriately develop and enhance their skills;

- Are appropriately recognized and rewarded for excellence.

The academic staffs are the PIASS's greatest asset, and PIASS shall seek to ensure that they are supported and appropriately recognized for their contributions. PIASS shall therefore endeavor to ensure that a more unified approach is adopted to academic staff support and development, in recognition of the perpetual need for staff to develop their skills and expertise in teaching and the support of learning. Such coordinated support shall involve staff taking a postgraduate certified in learning and teaching in higher education.

The above and other staff development routes should attempt to raise staff capacity to:

- Contribute to the realization of the PIASS's strategic targets and to the assurance and enhancement of academic quality;

- Enable and develop as role managers and facilitators of students' learning;

- Adopt new ways of teaching and assessing, share good academic practice and make good use of new resources.

f.   The learning environment strategy

The learning environment strategy focuses on the learning infrastructure, the virtual learning environment and the information resources.

PIASS shall provide academic staff with the necessary material resources and training to implement the PIASS learning, teaching and assessment strategies. PIASS shall ensure that academic staff applies innovative ways of teaching, including e-learning and blended learning. PIASS shall promote learning on and off campus. The above strategies shall ensure that the necessary resources are allocated to support learning and teaching, including: lecture theatres, classrooms and laboratories appropriately equipped, free access to ICT; learning materials including books, journals and electronic resources; students services including guidance and counselling; etc.

8.   Implementation and monitoring of the policy

A monitoring and evaluation framework will be developed and applied in the implementation of this policy. Monitoring would be done in order to access the achievement of intended objectives, make decisions aimed at improving performance, and to measure accountability to all parties. The policy will be reviewed and evaluated during and after the time of its implementation to ensure that the intended results are achieved.

Approved By PIASS Council at Huye on 25-5-2022

Chairman of PIASS Council