

UNIVERSITY OF LAY ADVENTISTS OF KIGALI (UNILAK)



OPEN, DISTANCE AND ELEARNING (ODEL) POLICY

Table of Content

A. Policy Statement	4
B. Abbreviations and Acronyms	4
C. Definitions	4
D. Preamble	5
E. Policy Scope	6
F. ODeL Policy Objectives	6
G. Guiding Principles and Values	6
H. Implementation	7
1. The Position of eLearning and ODeL in UNILAK	7
2. UNILAK ODeL Target Clients	8
3. Financing of ODeL at UNILAK	8
4. Staffing ODeL at UNILAK	8
a. Roles of ODeL Academic Staff	9
b. Roles of ODeL Professional Staff	9
5. ODeL Study Materials and Programme Delivery	10
6. ODeL Discipline Development	11
7. Quality Assurance System for ODeL	11
8. ODeL Management and Administration	11
9. Relationship between ODeL unit and Other Academic Units	13
10. Technological Support for ODeL	13
H. Policy Implementation/ Roles and Responsibilities	14
The University Council	14
The University Senate	14
The Vice-Chancellor and Management Team	14
Directorate of Quality Assurance	15
Schools Deans, Institute Directors, Heads of Departments/Division and Sections	15
The Directorate of ICT	15
Academic Units	15
Students and Staff in ODeL-Delivered Programmes	16
I. Institutional and regulatory Frameworks	16

J. Enhancing Organizational Capacity to implement the ODeL Policy	16
L. Monitoring and Evaluation	17
M. Policy Commencement	17

A. Policy Statement

This policy aims to mainstream open, distance and eLearning (ODeL) into academic programmes of University of Lay Adventists of Kigali (UNILAK) so as to increase to flexible and quality technology supported learning as is emphasized in the University of Lay Adventists of Kigali Strategic Plan which recognizes ODeL as the number one strategy for increasing access to flexible education for all prospective students.

B. Abbreviations and Acronyms

ODeL	Open, Distance and eLearning
eLearning	Electronic Learning
ICTs	Information and Communication Technologies
UNILAK	University of Lay Adventists of Kigali

C. Definitions

Academic Unit	The Department/School/College with an ODeL-delivered programme (s).
Distance Education	Distance Education, also referred to as ‘Distance Learning’ or ‘online learning’, is a teaching and learning method designed to be carried out remotely by using electronic and/or non-electronic media. It is a currently formalized method for academic institutions.
eLearning	The use of ICTs in teaching and learning that supports course delivery through appropriate learning management systems/platforms such as moodle and other ICTs such as mobile devices, CDs, etc.

Learning Centre	An off-campus centre created to support ODeL learners in and outside Rwanda.
Open, Distance and eLearning (ODeL)	This is a formal learning method which employs flexible approaches to learning and teaching by enabling learners and teachers who have multiple roles and are affected by the barriers of distance, cost and time, an opportunity to pursue their studies online. This flexible approach, allows students to pay tuition and have access to e-learning platforms designed with multiple media study materials.
Online Learning	The form of eLearning which uses electronic devices that are linked to a learning management system via the Internet.
Study Materials	Students contents designed for self-study, student-centered interactive learning resources used in ODeL courses and programmes.
Student Support	Refers to the care accorded to an ODeL student with the aim of ensuring he/she accomplishes his/her study programme within the stipulated time with ease.

D. Preamble

Whereas University of Lay Adventists of Kigali is committed to mainstreaming ODeL programmes as is articulated in the University's Strategic Plan and the UNILAK ICT Policy. ODeL policy will guide to streamline the acceptable methods, practices and behavior of all users on the system thus attaining teaching excellence and quality students outcomes.

E. Policy Scope

This Policy promotes open and distance learning as a viable mode of delivery. It applies to all matters related to, designing, developing and implementing/running ODeL programmes and eLearning activities at University of Lay Adventists of Kigali. The policy applies to all users of the system.

F. ODeL Policy Objectives

- a) To provide a framework for mainstreaming ODeL into different academic programmes of University of Lay Adventists of Kigali.
- b) To increase access to higher education through multiple and flexible modes of delivery.
- c) To provide a framework for assuring quality of ODeL delivered programmes.
- d) To leverage the effectiveness of online/eLearning as enablers of ODeL delivered programmes.

G. Guiding Principles and Values

The Policy is built on the following ten (10) principles and values:

1. **Accessibility:** The education system shall ensure that programmes on offer and the mode of learning and facilities used can be accessed by all learners.
2. **Collaboration and Partnership:** Open and Distance Learning providers shall promote collaboration and establish partnership for programme development, acquisition of resources, teacher and learner support, exchange programmes, quality assurance and certification.
3. **Cost Effectiveness and Sustainability:** Open and Distance Learning providers shall seek to promote cost effective access to learning opportunities in the development and deployment of open and distance learning and, shall consider the long term nature of diverse experiences needed.
4. **Equity:** Open and Distance Learning providers shall ensure the enhancement of the conditions for optimum achievement by every individual

or groups, including the gifted, the slow learner and the learning disabled; and for both genders to succeed.

5. **Flexibility:** Open and Distance Learning providers shall promote flexibility in the provision of open and distance learning and ensure that the related institutional structures are dynamic and respond to the ever changing demands and needs of the learners.
6. **Learner Centeredness:** Open and Distance Learning providers shall ensure that the learner is at the center of all the activities ensuring that the environment is conducive to learning and that basic resources are at his/her disposal.
7. **Openness:** Open and Distance Learning providers shall ensure reduction of barriers to entry/access to programmes they offer.
8. **Quality and Relevance:** Programme development and delivery shall be characterized by the highest standards and relevant to the context of national economic development and human resource needs.
9. **Harmonization and Standardization:** Open and Distance Learning opportunities shall be provided through harmonized national policies and guidelines and in an environment of acceptable standards, ethics, and measures for the protection of learners.
10. **Ethics and Professionalism:** Open and Distance Learning providers shall ensure that the services are provided efficiently, with honesty, transparency, integrity and professionalism.

H. Implementation

1. The Position of eLearning and ODeL in UNILAK

1.1. The Elearning / Open and Distance Learning unit at University of Lay Adventists of Kigali shall be established within the department of ICT.

1.2. The eLearning/ODeL unit shall be a non-teaching academic unit; however, the unit shall be responsible for supporting all ODeL users (academic staff and students).

1.3. The structure of the ODeL unit shall be headed by a coordinator who will be reporting to the ICT department directorate.

2. UNILAK ODeL Target Clients

2.1 University of Lay Adventists of Kigali ODeL, shall accommodate all students who will be admitted on eLearning programme as well as Academic staff and administrators on who operate day to day activities on the systems.

3. Financing of ODeL at UNILAK

3.1 The University shall finance ODeL-delivered programmes and eLearning from internally generated resources.

3.2 The University shall source from students who will be admitted on the eLearning programmes. Additionally, development partner's support for ODeL-delivered programmes and eLearning will be appreciated.

3.3 The University shall allocate adequate human and financial resources to the eLearning/ODeL unit so as to enable it to carry out its mandate.

3.4 The University shall ensure that the ODeL unit and academic units running ODeL-delivered programmes share internally generated resources as per their mandated roles.

3.5 The University shall ensure continuous investment in events that supports the growth, development of ODeL-delivered programmes and eLearning activities e.g. Elearning Africa annual events.

4. Staffing ODeL at UNILAK

4.1 The University shall ensure that there is a staffing structure that recognizes the unique functions required to efficiently manage and deliver ODeL programmes and eLearning support.

4.2 The University shall have two main categories of staff in the ODeL unit, namely:

- i) ODeL academic staff;
- ii) ODeL professional staff.

a. Roles of ODeL Academic Staff

- i. Provide continuous ODeL pedagogical training to all academic units of the university (e.g. training in ODeL course design and development, content development, facilitation, student support and other related areas)
- ii. Provide support to all the academic units in the university in ODeL-delivered programme development, delivery, management and administration.
- iii. Sensitize all students in ODeL-delivered programmes about the ODeL mode of study.
- iv. Facilitate on ODeL disciplinary programmes tenable at the UNILAK.
- v. Facilitate on ODeL disciplinary subjects and courses across the university.
- vi. Undertake research and publication in the field of ODeL.
- vii. Shall be part of the team of reviewers at the quality assurance committee, before approval, all programmes, to be delivered through ODeL.
- viii. Periodically review programmes and student support structures for ODeL delivered programme.

b. Roles of ODeL Professional Staff

- i. Shall be ICT technologists, distance education specialists, eLearning specialists, multimedia experts, graphic designers, instructional designers, LMS specialists, system developers and others.
 - ii. Shall support academic units running eLearning and ODeL-delivered programmes in the design, development and use of different educational technology artifacts and tools.
 - iii. Shall in liaison with ICT department to provide technical backstopping support for all technologies (hardware and software) that will be employed in delivering eLearning and ODeL programmes.
- 4.3 The University shall put in place a promotional criterion that recognizes ODeL activities as being part of the components for promoting ODeL academic and professional staff.
- 4.4 Staff teaching on and/or coordinating ODeL programmes in the different academic units of the University shall be those who will have received training in the discipline of ODeL.

5. ODeL Study Materials and Programme Delivery

5.1 The University shall permit student-centered and decentralized support systems (champions within each programme) and assessment methods on ODeL-delivered programmes.

5.2 The University shall promote and support the efficient delivery of ODeL programmes using multiple media that meet men and women learner preferences and abilities.

5.3 Prior to approval of any ODeL-delivered programme, appropriate technology mediated study materials shall be developed for it as is required by the National Council for Higher Education.

5.4 All programmes in the University stand to be candidate programmes for running in the ODeL mode and having eLearning support.

5.5 Study materials shall be developed so as to conform to the University of Lay Adventists of Kigali ODeL study materials house style set by the ODeL unit.

5.6 The University shall use eLearning to support both learners on ODeL and on-campus delivered programmes.

5.7 All study materials developed for use on any ODeL-delivered programme shall be accredited by the ODeL unit with the QA committee before use and before approval of any new ODeL delivered programme.

5.8 The University shall permit student-centered and decentralized support systems (champions within each programme) and assessment methods on ODeL-delivered programmes.

5.9 The University shall permit modular study and multiple exit on ODeL programmes.

5.10 The University shall continuously upgrade its distance education delivery and support modes into delivery and support modes that heavily utilize ICTs (eLearning and online learning approaches).

6. ODeL Discipline Development

6.1 The University shall develop and offer ODeL study programmes, at all levels, so as to nurture the discipline of ODeL in the country and beyond.

7. Quality Assurance System for ODeL

7.1 UNILAK shall promote and support provision of quality ODeL programmes in line with the goals of the University's Quality Assurance Framework.

7.2 The ODeL unit shall be part of the members in the quality assurance unit whose day to day role shall be to monitor and ensure the provision of quality learning through the ODeL mode.

8. ODeL Management and Administration

8.1 Specifically, it shall be the mandate of the ODeL unit to:

- (a) Initiate continuous staff training for effective delivery and management of ODeL programmes in all academic units in the University.
- (b) Run training and development programmes and courses intended to build pedagogical capacity in the discipline of ODeL across the University.
- (c) Develop ODeL pedagogy programmes (like the learning outcomes and objectives of topics within a course).
- (d) Carry out continuing capacity-building for ODeL units members, administrators, practitioners, tutors and study materials developers.
- (e) Provide oversight to academic units while developing/reviewing proposals and curricula for programmes to be delivered through ODeL mode before approval.
- (f) Accredite together with the QA committee new or revised curricula for programmes to be delivered through ODeL mode before approval.
- (g) Provide oversight in the development and production of technology mediated study materials for ODeL programmes.
- (h) Accredite technology mediated study materials before use in ODeL-delivered programmes and before approval of any new ODeL-delivered programme.
- (i) Provide oversight in the implementation of curricula and student support services for ODeL-delivered programmes.

- (j) Initiate innovations in ODeL programme delivery across the University.
- (k) Facilitate on ODeL disciplinary subjects and courses across the university.
- (m) Ensure that ODeL is appropriately represented on key planning organs of the University.
- (n) Represent the University on ODeL organs and activities outside University of Lay Adventists of Kigali.
- (o) Forge links and partnerships with organizations involved in ODeL.
- (p) Carry out advocacy in ODeL at institutional and national level.
- (q) Market University of Lay Adventists of Kigali ODeL expertise to various stakeholders.
- (r) Manage ODeL staff, infrastructure and resources.
- (s) Manage and coordinate up-country study centers and activities as the institution grows.
- (t) Undertake appropriate planning, of both short and long term, strategic dimensions for ODeL programmes.
- (s) In collaboration with the ICT directorate, provide educational technology support to all academic units.
- (u) Sensitize all students in ODeL-delivered programme about the ODeL mode of delivery
- (v) Initiate policies and regulations for the usage of UNILAK ODeL study materials and resources by third parties, in conformity with institutional regulations and national laws.

8.2. The academic units in the University shall;

- (a) With oversight support from the ODeL unit, provide necessary distance learning study materials to students on ODeL-delivered programmes before commencement of any course.
- b) With oversight support from the ODeL unit, house their respective ODeL delivered programmes.
- (c) With oversight support from the ODeL unit, initiate the development of curricula for programmes to be offered using ODeL.
- (d) With oversight support from the ODeL unit, implement and review curricula for the ODeL-delivered programmes.
- (e) Provide only ODeL pedagogy trained faculty to facilitate/teach on ODeL delivered programmes.

- (f) Avail their faculty and other staff to the ODeL unit for the ODeL pedagogy and study materials development training.
- (g) Provide only ODeL administrative and support staff to provide different ODeL administrative and support functions.
- (h) With oversight support from the ODeL unit, develop and review appropriate technology-based study materials for ODeL-programmes.
- (i) With oversight support from the ODeL unit, provide academic and administrative support to students on ODeL-delivered programmes.
- (j) Provide formative and summative assessment of students on ODeL-delivered programmes.

9. Relationship between ODeL unit and Other Academic Units

9.1 The ODeL unit shall provide ODeL backstopping support services to academic units running ODeL-delivered programmes and courses.

9.2 The ODeL unit shall be represented on each faculty's ODeL Programmes Committee.

10. Technological Support for ODeL

10.1 The University shall continuously equip academic units with appropriate educational technologies for delivering ODeL programmes.

10.2 The University shall ensure that there is adequate bandwidth to support ODeL and eLearning programmes.

10.3 The ICT directorate shall be in charge of all educational technologies and tools and shall ensure that they are up to date and in good and sound working condition.

H. Policy Implementation/ Roles and Responsibilities

All individuals in the university and all those associated with the University have a responsibility to adhere to this policy and apply it in their day-to-day activities and in all dealings with, or on behalf of the institution. The overall responsibilities in relation to this policy are as follows:

The University Council

The University council, as the employer, supreme governing body and the ultimate financial accounting of the University, is responsible for ensuring that the institution fulfills its legal and fiscal responsibilities for promoting ODeL operations in the University. In order to fulfill this responsibility, Council shall receive an annual progress report on the monitoring and implementation of the Policy to enable its members ensure that the Policy is being operationalised. Council shall further monitor progress on the implementation of the Policy. Council discharges this responsibility through the management structures of the University.

The University Senate

The university Senate as a custodian of all academic programmes in the university is responsible for ensuring that all the provisions of this Policy are adhered to in order to ensure quality in all aspects relates to the provision of ODeL at University of Lay Adventists of Kigali.

The Vice-Chancellor and Management Team

The Vice Chancellor, who gives a consistent and high profile lead on all academic issues in the University, is responsible for ensuring that the Policy is effectively implemented and that staff are aware of their responsibilities, accountabilities and training needs; ensuring that appropriate action is taken against staff or students who breach or violate the Policy.

The Vice Chancellor shall also oversee the smooth development of ODeL across the University. The Vice-Chancellor relies on the Deputy Vice Chancellors and

other members of the management team to take forward the ODeL agenda ensuring that it is given priority and is fully operationalized.

Directorate of Quality Assurance

This Directorate is responsible for assuring quality in all academic programmes, The quality assurance unit in the ODeL unit shall work hand in hand with the Directorate of the quality assurance to monitor and ensure quality learning through ODeL.

Schools Deans, Institute Directors, Heads of Departments/Division and Sections

The above-mentioned stakeholders are responsible for the implementation of the ODeL Policy within their spheres of responsibility. This involves putting the Policy and its strategies and procedures into practice; making sure all concerned members of staff are aware of their responsibilities and receiving support and training in carrying out these responsibilities; and taking action against staff or students who default on their obligations to this Policy.

The Directorate of ICT

The directorate of ICT houses the Elearning/ Open and Distance Learning unit. The ODeL unit is responsible for developing and promoting the discipline of ODeL and supporting academic units in the running of ODeL-delivered programmes. The ODeL unit shall be responsible for facilitating the development and growth of ODeL in the entire University in accordance with the provisions of the Policy.

Academic Units

Academic units are responsible for running ODeL-delivered programmes in accordance with provisions of this Policy.

Students and Staff in ODeL-Delivered Programmes

Students and staff on ODeL-delivered programmes are responsible for understanding the ODeL mode of delivery.

I. Institutional and regulatory Frameworks

The implementation of the Policy shall be operationalized through the existing University institutional structures. Council as the governing body of the University shall ensure that all its organs and officers abide by and implement all provisions of this Policy.

J. Enhancing Organizational Capacity to implement the ODeL Policy

So as to enhance the organizational capacity to implement the ODeL Policy, UNILAK shall aim to maximize its own institutional capacity and marshal political goodwill to achieve the objectives of the ODeL Policy by providing adequate support, guidance and training to staff and students. In addition, organizational structures, working practices and management styles that reflect the principles of ODeL shall be promoted throughout the University.

K. Commitment to Proactive Implementation of the ODeL Policy

University of Lay Adventists of Kigali is set to proactively implement the ODeL Policy. To realize that commitment, an elaborate monitoring and implementation matrix shall be developed by the Management of ODeL unit for every three years and presented to the Senate for approval. The ODeL unit shall develop a policy monitoring and implementation matrix outlining the steps the University shall take to operationalize the identified Policy resolutions. The University shall identify and make available appropriate resources to implement the monitoring and action matrix. The monitoring and implementation matrices shall constitute the University ODeL Strategic Action Plans which shall be the major tools for monitoring the implementation of the ODeL Policy and achieving its objectives. These tools shall

take into account both qualitative and quantitative measures of successful implementation of ODeL at UNILAK.

L. Monitoring and Evaluation

Regular and timely monitoring of progress regarding this Policy shall be carried out by the ODeL unit and where appropriate, with the Human Resources Directorate, Directorate of Quality Assurance, and ICT directorate and the oversight of the College Academic Board. This Academic Board shall, on an annual basis, review progress on the implementation of this Policy and report to the Senate. The ODeL unit management team shall annually produce data that supports the implementation and monitoring of the ODeL Policy. It shall also have the responsibility for tasking working groups to produce reviewed and updated versions of this Policy triennially. This Policy and annual progress reports shall be published on the University website. In addition to formal publicity, outcomes and continuing work shall be disseminated through publications, Internet and promotional materials.

M. Policy Commencement

This Policy became effective on _____ when it was
approved by University Council and signed off by:

Name:.....

Chairperson University Council

Name:.....

University Vice Chancellor