



**UNIVERSITY OF LAY ADVENTISTS
OF KIGALI (UNILAK)**

**INTERNATIONAL ACADEMIC
PARTNERSHIPS POLICY**

January 2024

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1.0 DEFINITION OF TERMS

1.1 For purposes of these guidelines, and unless otherwise stated, the following definitions shall apply:

- 1.1.1 **Exchange Agreement:** A mutual bilateral agreement that has been formalized between UNILAK and another local or international institution which articulates student exchange programmes. The agreement comes in many forms and is normally based on principles of equity and reciprocity. For these Guidelines, exchange agreement shall be used in general terms to refer to any type of agreement including memorandum of understanding and co-operation.
- 1.1.2 **Exchange Programme:** Short-term programmes in which students from UNILAK and partner institutions apply to study at each other's institution under an exchange agreement. The exchange programme will normally enable students to study at a partner institution for up to two academic semesters.
- 1.1.3 **Exchange Student:** An exchange student is a student who participates in a student exchange programme that has been formally agreed between UNILAK and a partner institution.
- 1.1.4 **Home Institution:** An institution at which an exchange student has been originally registered as a student.
- 1.1.5 **Host Institution:** An institution at which an exchange student participates in a student exchange programme. It is the institution that is receiving the exchange student from a partner institution.
- 1.1.6 **Outgoing Student:** A UNILAK student who has applied for an exchange programme or has already been awarded the exchange at a partner institution.
- 1.1.7 **Incoming Student:** An exchange student from a partner institution who has applied for an exchange programme or has already been awarded the exchange at UNILAK.
- 1.1.8 **Partner Institution:** A local or international higher education institution that has a formal exchange agreement with UNILAK.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

University of Lay Adventists of Kigali (UNILAK) recognises that its students can enhance their professional and cultural potential and be able to take advantage of the many opportunities that the world of higher education has to offer by implementing student exchange programmes. Through rich exposure, students can become more competitive candidates for career opportunities in the region and the world at large. The Guidelines serve as an attractive option for enhancing student exchange (mobility) between the University and other institutions around the world.

UNILAK is fully conscious of the interlinked globalised world we live in and it has initiated collaborative programs with foreign institutions to achieve the following objectives:

- To create an environment of understanding in a highly globalized world.
- To provide the students with international perspective.
- To prepare world class leaders with a global view.

Such collaborations provide rich opportunities to the students of UNILAK to understand and appreciate other cultures. It enhances the quality of education received by the students. It also opens the door for faculty collaboration and research.

3.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of the Guidelines is to facilitate implementation of the University's student exchange programme. A student exchange programme will provide academic and intellectual benefit through the exchange of students between the University and respective institutions that are party to a formal exchange agreement.

4.0 SCOPE

The Guidelines cover local and international students exchange programmes between UNILAK and Partner Institutions. The Guidelines pertain to the exchange of postgraduate and undergraduate students on all modes of study.

5.0 RESPONSIBILITIES FOR IMPLEMENTING THE GUIDELINES

5.1 University Senate

5.1.1 The University Senate shall approve these Guidelines and oversee their implementation

5.2 University Management

5.2.1 Management shall give university level approval to all outgoing exchange students and staff before they are signed by the faculties.

5.2.2 Management shall give university level approval to student exchanges authorised at school level.

5.3 Dean of School

5.3.1 Deans shall select students within their faculties who will participate in exchange programme taking into account academic performance and conduct.

5.3.2 Deans shall approve incoming exchange students recommended by the home institution.

5.3.3 Deans shall ensure that exchange agreements signed within their faculties are assessed for academic, legal, and other implications and are compliant with the policies of the University.

5.4 Student Affairs

5.4.1 Student Affairs shall provide the incoming exchange students with an orientation to the University campus(es), counselling services, allocation of course offerings and registration procedures.

5.4.2 Student Affairs shall help exchange students to be provided with student ID cards, access to e-mail, library and other online facilities, and brief them on student support services available.

5.4.3 Student Affairs shall monitor the care and well-being of students on exchange programmes in consultation with the academic units and divisions concerned, and the relevant HOD/Deans, as appropriate.

5.4.4 Student Affairs shall provide incoming exchange students with special assistance regarding visas, residency permits, lodging and food facilities, where necessary.

5.5 Outgoing Exchange Students

- 5.5.1 UNILAK students shall apply for an exchange subject to the timelines, available places, application criteria and other relevant conditions.
- 5.5.2 UNILAK students going into the exchange programme shall arrange for their own VISA, travel and living expenses unless there is an alternative arrangement or depending on the policy of the host institution.
- 5.5.3 UNILAK students going into the exchange programme shall ensure they are covered by health, emergency evacuation and repatriation insurance that is valid in the host nation.
- 5.5.4 UNILAK students going into the exchange programme are subject to the laws of the host country, to the rules and regulations of the host institution, and shall be expected to comply.

5.6 Selection of Outgoing students

- 5.6.1 The students interested in going for international exchange program should have a minimum Second Class Upper and minimum aggregate of 70 percent with no retakes. Final year students do not qualify for exchange programmes.
- 5.6.2 The students must have no financial outstanding
- 5.6.3 A Selection Committee involving the Dean Academics and two faculty members will scrutinize the applications and interview the students who apply for exchange programs abroad.
- 5.6.4 The Partnership Office will do the needful for based on the recommendations of the Selection Committee.

5.7 Incoming Exchange Students

- 5.7.1 Exchange students coming to UNILAK should produce all documentation and meet registration requirements.
- 5.7.2 Exchange students coming to UNILAK shall arrange for their own travel and living expenses unless there is an alternative arrangement or depending on the policy of their home institutions.
- 5.7.3 Exchange students coming to UNILAK shall ensure they are covered by health, emergency evacuation and repatriation insurance that is valid in Rwanda.
- 5.7.4 Exchange students coming to UNILAK shall be subject to the laws of Rwanda, to the rules and regulations of UNILAK, and shall be expected to comply.

6.0 UNIVERSITY STUDENTS GOING TO OTHER INSTITUTIONS FOR EXCHANGE

6.1 Student Eligibility

- 6.1.1 To be eligible to apply for an exchange, the UNILAK student must:
 - a) Have a current enrolment at the University;
 - b) Have successfully completed at least one semester of study;
 - c) Have provided an academic recommendation from an appropriate faculty member, and a statement of purpose;
 - d) Be socially, psychologically, and intellectually fit for an exchange programme;
 - e) Provide medical report attesting good health.
 - f) A record of proper conduct; and
 - g) No outstanding financial record.
 - h) Minimum Second Class Upper and minimum aggregate of 70 percent with no retakes. Final year students do not qualify for exchange programmes.

- 6.1.2 The student must agree to:
- a) Be responsible for meeting all costs of the exchange programme such as VISA, travel, accommodation and insurance, and pay all administration fees by the due dates;
 - b) Enroll at the host institution for no more than two semesters, unless specific circumstances require other arrangements to be made; and
 - c) Abide by the rules and regulations of the Host Institution.
- 6.1.3 Where there are more applicants than places available for a given institution, eligible students will be ranked according to academic merit and may be offered a student exchange programme at their second or third preferred institution.
- 6.1.4 In certain exchanges, the applicant may have to meet additional requirements, depending on the exchange agreement made by the University.

6.2 Application for the Exchange

- 6.2.1 Students shall apply for the exchange to their respective Deans of their faculties who may make exchange arrangements with their counterparts in the appropriate Partner Institutions. Similarly, the Deans will encourage students in their faculties to apply for the exchange in line with the available places.
- 6.2.2 The applying student shall ensure that the application being submitted to the Dean of School satisfies the requirements stated in section 6.1 above.

6.3 Selection and Approval of the Exchange

- 6.3.1 Since these Guidelines provide that exchange students are selected by the home institution, the University through its respective faculties shall select exchange applicants. Ad hoc committees appointed by the respective Deans of faculties, chaired by the Deans themselves, will conduct the selection. The committee will ensure the selection decisions take cognizance of the requirements stated in section 6.1 above.
- 6.3.2 Ad hoc school committees will recommend the students to Management through the Deputy Vice Chancellor – Academic. The University Management shall give university level approval to the exchange decisions made in the faculties.

7.0 STUDENTS COMING TO UNILAK FOR EXCHANGE

7.1 Eligibility

- 7.1.1 To be considered eligible for an exchange at UNILAK, the applicants must satisfy the following:
- a) Be registered in an institution that has a formal exchange agreement with the University.
 - b) Be recommended by the head of their institution to the appropriate Dean of School at the University.
 - c) Be willing to study part of the degree at UNILAK and take all credits achieved to their home institution.

7.2 Exchange Application and Admission Requirements

- 7.2.1 Incoming students shall apply through their home institution or forward a letter of participation which is duly signed by the head of their institution to the appropriate Dean of Faculty within the University.
- 7.2.2 Applying for exchange will involve incoming students having to complete an approved exchange programme form which must be accompanied by the following minimum requisites information:
- a) Approval letter from the host institution recommending the student to the appropriate Dean of School at the University.
 - b) A proposed programme or course of study with the time frame.
 - c) Supporting documents including transcripts or awards to be added separately with the application.
 - d) Curriculum vitae and a one-page applicant' profile.
 - e) The potential source of funding for the visit.
- 7.2.3 Exchange application will not be accepted without proof of qualified English proficiency. All applicants must meet the English language requirement for their programme of study. The Dean of School shall approve special exceptions to this rule.

7.3 Incoming students shall meet the registration procedures and requirements of the University for them to be registered. Before incoming students can be registered at the University, they shall be required to:

- a) Present a properly signed form listing the course(s) to be taken at the University.
 - b) Have completed all course prerequisites.
 - c) Agree that all credits earned will be considered as resident credits at the University for degree purposes.
- 7.3.2 To complete registration process, an incoming exchange student will observe the University's registration requirements including the following steps:
- a) Secure an official exchange form from the home institution and complete it.
 - b) Hand in all the required documents to the Dean of School at UNILAK.
 - c) Obtain an acceptance letter as an exchange student from the Student Affairs Office.
 - d) Finalization of registration with Student Finance Office.
 - e) Visit the IT Department to be given log in credentials to the University learning management systems.
- 7.3.3 Once the registration process is completed, documentation should be shared with the host institution and be filed appropriately in the student's record in accordance with the University's record system.
- 7.3.4 At the end of the period of study at UNILAK, no official degree whatsoever will be delivered to the student, but an official transcript of records will be issued for the exclusive purpose of transfer to the Home Institution.

- 7.3.5 Exchange application will not be accepted without proof of qualified English proficiency. All applicants must meet the English language requirement for their programme of study. The Dean of School shall approve special exceptions to this rule.

8.0 CREDIT TRANSFER

8.1 Incoming Students

- 8.1.1 Incoming exchange students will have to negotiate a suitable programme, with credit transferable to their Home Institution. The students will need to start this part of the process at their home institution but should not expect to have it finished until they are at the University.
- 8.1.2 The award of credit to incoming exchange students will be made in accordance with the Credit Transfer Guidelines of the University.
- 8.1.3 When the students finish their study in the student exchange programme at UNILAK, they will be issued an official transcript of the courses they have completed and the grades achieved to take to their home institution. It is, however, the students' responsibility to obtain their transcript. Therefore, students have a responsibility to follow-up the transcript of grades.

8.2 Outgoing Students

- 8.2.1 Outgoing students shall make sure they negotiate a suitable programme with the partner institution, with credit transferable to UNILAK. The students will need to work hard on this part of the process to ensure they secure credit that will be accepted by the University.
- 8.2.2 The recognition of credit accumulated by an exchange student who participated in the exchange programme shall be done in accordance with the Credit Transfer Guidelines of the University.

9.0 UNIVERSITY SUPPORT FOR EXCHANGE STUDENTS

9.1 Student Exchange Funding

- 9.1.1 The University is not financially responsible for the costs and expenses associated with the student exchange who are hosted by the University. Likewise, the University has no financial commitment and obligation to support students who undertake local or international exchanges, unless this is provided for in the exchange agreement made with a Partner Institution.
- 9.1.2 The University may only give financial assistance to exchange students in circumstances where this is provided for in the exchange agreement made with a Partner Institution.

9.2 Technical, Administrative and other forms of Support

- 9.2.1 Whereas the University has no obligation to provide financial assistance to exchange students, the University shall through its various appropriate offices assist them with administrative, technical and other forms of support including the following:
- a) Support for visa process, letter for recommendation, no objection letters, Approval letters or other necessary administrative support for facilitating the visit.
 - b) Accommodation space and other facilities within the University.
 - c) Access to learning facilities such as library, portals, etc.
- 9.2.2 The University may offer other relevant support to incoming students if the agreement signed with partner institutions provide for such.

9.3 UNIVERSITY SUPPORT FOR EXCHANGE STUDENTS

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10.0 STAFF and STUDENT EXCHANGE AGREEMENTS

The formation, authorization and approval of any kind of student exchange agreement shall be done in accordance with the procedures.

Types of Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs):

Basically, UNILAK enters into three types of collaborations.

- 1) General MOUs that outline a broad framework for collaboration involving student exchanges, faculty exchanges and research.
- 2) MOUs which leads to Degrees/ Masters/ Doctorates from the international partner.
- 3) Area specific MOUs

Office of Partnerships in consultation with the Deputy Vice Chancellor – Finance and Administration will facilitate the management of International Collaborations. It will work in collaboration with the Deans’ offices and other stakeholders to create a positive atmosphere for visiting scholars and students. The Office of Partnerships would have dedicated staff to deal with the day-to-day operations involving International Collaborations.

11.0 REVIEW PERIOD

These Student Exchange Guidelines shall be reviewed every five years or as and when necessary

12.0 RELATED DOCUMENTS

The Guidelines shall be read along with the following related policies:

1. Student Admission Policy
2. Examination Management Policy
3. General Academic Regulations
4. Credit Transfer and Exemption Guidelines.

