University of Peradeniya

Policy name:	The Community Engagement and Interaction Policy
Policy number:	UoP-P 013
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Approving Authority:	The Council, University of Peradeniya
Administrative Responsibility:	Vice-Chancellor Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Deans of the Faculties, Directors of PGIs, Heads of Departments
Monitoring responsibility:	The Faculty Board/Board of Management

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Overview

Universities are an integral and interdependent part of society. They contribute as well as gain from societies and communities around them. Community engagement has emerged as a top priority among many universities and colleges around the world. This engagement with society is mutually beneficial for both parties since knowledge and resources are exchanged. One of the major criticisms against universities, not only in Sri Lanka but globally, is that they are not sufficiently contributing to the progress of society. While universities can play a major role in society, current undergraduate and graduate students lack adequate community engagement skills. Moreover, some students are insensitive to social issues due to their lack of experience in solving real-life problems.

The University of Peradeniya, an aspiring Center of Excellence in higher education with national, regional and global standing is involved in diverse activities related to community engagement. Thus, a well-established policy is mandatory to initiate, sustain and promote a productive relationship between students, university staff and society. The University of Peradeniya is the leading university in Sri Lanka in education, research & development, and community engagement. This policy document covers all stakeholders of the university, including students, employees, and administrators. The purpose of this policy document is to streamline the engagement between the university and outside communities while ensuring all parties benefit from this engagement without damage to the reputation or interests of the parties involved.

The Community Engagement and Interaction Policy of the University of Peradeniya shall be reviewed and confirmed in five years to maintain its relevance.

Scope and Application:

This policy aims to guide and regularize community engagement and interaction as a core institutional function integrated with teaching and learning, research, voluntary work, public service, and promotion and publicity.

Policy objectives

The Community Engagement and Interaction Policy of the University of Peradeniya has the following objectives:

1. To integrate community engagement with teaching-learning, research and development and voluntary work. This integration will serve as a major function in the production, generation, application and dissemination of knowledge at UoP.
2. To ensure consistent, fair and appropriate application of community engagement on the part of UoP in a manner where the interests of UoP and communities at large are upheld.
3. To share the benefits of knowledge creation, experience and innovations of UoP with communities at large.

Scope of application

This policy will apply to all Faculties, PGIs. Centres/Units/Cells, Departments, Divisions of the UoP

Key areas involved are,
1. Teaching and Learning
2. Research and Development and Consultancy Services
3. Public and Voluntary Services
4. Publicity and Promotions

Policy Principles

Following guiding principles are expressed:

1.0 Policy for Community Engagement and Interaction of UoP through Teaching and Learning

One of the major ways community engagement occurs within and outside the university is through teaching and learning. An agreement/ MOU needs to be signed before undertaking activities related to research and development and consultancy services. These community engagement activities can be listed down as follows:

1.1 Externships/ Industry-based training

Externships/ industry-based training engages students in activities where the student is the primary beneficiary, and the goal is student learning. This provides practical experience for students in their area of study, assists with achieving learning outcomes and provides hands-on and vocational experiences.

The following areas of concern should be addressed in making externship /industry-based training.

i. The role of the student under the supervision of the external supervisor and the occupational hazards should be stated in advance.
ii. Developing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the university and the governing body of the relevant industry.

iii. Evaluation of feedback from all stakeholders at all levels would be beneficial.
iv. The notion of justice and fair play should be promoted.
v. Neither the student nor the community in the industry-based training centre should be subjected to any kind of discrimination.

1.2 Observation for education

In observational education activities within the relevant field of study, the student is the primary beneficiary, and student learning is the primary goal. This provides real-world experience to students in specific areas of the curriculum.
e.g. Field visits or/and field practicums
The following areas of concern should be addressed in making observational education activities

i. Role of the student under the supervision of the academic staff member and the hazards related to the working environment should be stated in advance.
ii. Required documentary approvals to avoid any inconveniences in such an environment should be duly attended
iii. Security of the students should be well looked after (female students should always be accompanied by female staff members, time limits should be set, should not go out with a male staff member at any time, secured transport)

1.3 Academic service-learning

Academic service-learning engages students in activities where both the community and students are the primary beneficiaries. Herein, the primary goals are to provide services to the community and equally enhance student learning through the rendering of these services delivered on a nonprofit basis or through any other means that generate profit to the university.
e.g. Clinical rotations at teaching hospitals of the university and conducting veterinary ambulatory clinics for farms, individual farmers or farmer groups.

The following areas of concern should be addressed in academic service learning

i. Role of the student under the supervision of the academic staff and the occupational hazards should be stated in advance.
ii. The community should be informed of the service provider who is an undergraduate under supervision.
iii. If services are delivered in any means of financial benefit, relevant fees and handling personnel should be stated by the relevant authorities of the university.
iv. Service should be delivered only with the recognition of the university and not by an individual staff member or the student.
v. The policy should ensure continuous student engagement with the relevant community to promote a more democratic and open academic environment, allowing more critical activities to occur under the supervision of the academic staff members.

1.4 Community outreach

This type of engagement primarily focuses on benefiting the community through delivering a particular service but is generally initiated from within the institution, department or faculty, and is linked to a form of recognition, such as academic credit or research.

E.g. Conducting outbound training for school students at the university, conducting activities for school teachers, conducting seminars for assisting school level education by the student unions, dissemination of knowledge to the public through electronic and printed media by the academic staff, publicizing different study programmes and organizing professional training programmes, workshops, awareness programmes. In addition to pure academic engagements, the university community promotes national integration within Sri Lanka by educating communities at large and then bringing forth inclusive multicultural policies.

The following areas of concern should be addressed in community outreach activities.

i. In terms of knowledge dissemination by academic members as a representative of the university, personal statements which are not accepted by the University should not be declared.

ii. Engagement in educating the public about socio, political, economic, environmental and cultural activities affecting the country whilst providing critical views about politically sensitive phenomena and promoting values associated with good governance like transparency, accountability and the rule of law. These engagements should not promote discrimination based on gender, race, ethnicity, religion, class, caste or creed.

iii. Should engage in constructive public policy formulation related to promoting equality, the rule of law, constitutionalism, depoliticizing state institutions, sustainable development, climate change, multiculturalism and national integration**.**

iv. Outreach projects organized by the student unions/ associations must be subjected to prior approval of the university and the relevant community and should be in accordance with the law of the country.

v. Outreach programmes organized by the staff and the students should not disturb the social, cultural, moral and ethical principles of the community.

vi. If outreach programmes involve activities aimed at educating the public with the involvement of university students as resource persons, their correct academic standing/ level shall be made known to the service receivers.

vii. Personal and political affiliations should not interfere with the governance of the university or its administration.

2.0 Policy for Community Engagement and Interaction of UoP through Research and Development and Consultancy Services

UoP encourages the engagement and participation of its members and departments in research and development and consultancy services to ensure positive outcomes with

communities. An agreement/ MOU needs to be signed before undertaking activities related to research and development and consultancy services.

2.1 Basic assumptions/ principles:

2.1.1. UoP recognizes the meaningful impact of involvement and engagement with the community that would aim to meet the following objectives:

- Enrich teaching and research and generate new research ideas.
- Promote good citizenship through community engagement.
- Provide a demonstrable impact and tangible outputs beyond academic forums.
- Help to provide income generation to study departments and members.
- Build relationships and work agreements with outside organizations.
- Facilitate career and professional developments.

2.1.2. It is encouraged to obtain approval of the appropriate authorities in all community engagement activities that have an official identity, directly or indirectly. It will ensure that the participation would support the interests of the department, faculty and the university, including key stakeholders.

2.1.3. It is the responsibility of all staff members involved to protect the interests of both the profession and UoP to ensure that practices align with the best interests of the university's objectives and professional standards.

Parameters	Research and Development	Consultancy
Scope 1	The conduct of Research and Development (R&D) activities while safeguarding the best interests of the communities who may be directly or indirectly involved in related activities.	The provision of expert advice, analysis and interpretation by academic staff to external clients through university-related projects.
Scope 2	The commercialization of Research and Development endeavours, inventions and related intellectual property rights created during research activities through licensing opportunities and the creation of spin-out companies.	The provision of expert advice, analysis and interpretation by academic staff to external clients in a personal capacity, directly or indirectly linked with the official positions held.
Eligibility	All academic staff and academic support staff are duly recognized by	All academic staff members are eligible to conduct consultancies. With appropriate authorization, other

	the academic departments of the university.	staff members may also be identified in university teams to conduct consultancy activities.
Expected Standards	The same high standards of professionalism and commitment are maintained in all other aspects of the formal roles of employees. All staff should be mindful of their obligation to declare any potential conflicts of interest they may be aware of to the respective Head of Department.	
Facilitation	UoP provides a creative environment for staff members for mutual benefit. Where the arrangement and payment for these activities are made through UoP, participating staff members will be provided basic support services to proceed.	

3.0 Policy for Community Engagement and Interaction of UoP through Public and Voluntary Services

3.1 The university's engagement in public and voluntary services shall be aimed at:
  i. Encouraging staff and student participation to build up relationships between the university and communities
  ii. Promoting social welfare and environmental sensitivity
  iii. Opening avenues for research via new relationships with communities
  iv. Maintaining and developing links with professional organizations

3.2 Benefits of public and voluntary services to the university:
  i. Networking with various organizations
  ii. An opportunity to share expertise, research, and innovations with the public
  iii. Development of opportunities for future research work, projects, and partnerships

3.3 Benefits of public and voluntary services to the university academic and non-academic staff:
  i. Recognition from the university and communities at large
  ii. Strengthening of the academic CV
  iii. Ability to develop links with professional and social organizations

3.4 Benefits of public and voluntary services to university students:
  i. Improve leadership, management skills and personal development
  ii. Improve relationships with communities
  iii. An opportunity to work with various organizations

3.5 Risks of carrying out public and voluntary services:
  i. Interference with routine duties and work hours- Guidelines to be formed
  ii. Safety precautions to be taken

iii.   Quality of the services provided: poor quality of public or voluntary services provided adversely affects the reputation of the individual and the university and lead to legal claims against the individual and the university

3.6 Approving of public and voluntary services carried out by the staff and students of the University

The academic, the non-academic staff and the students of UoP, who undertake public and voluntary activities, are reminded that they will be representing UoP and are expected to comply with rules and regulations of the university. Therefore, approval and monitoring of these activities are required:

   i.   The staff and students of UoP who would like to carry out public or voluntary services under the name of the university should first inform the university authorities in writing.
   ii.   Should provide a report or feedback obtained from the community after completing the public or voluntary work.
   iii.   Fundraising should be conducted in compliance with the university rules and regulations.
   iv.   Should not receive any pay, benefit and/or position.
   v.   Activities should not conflict with the roles of other staff members and students.
   vi.   University resources should not be used for public and voluntary services without obtaining prior approval.
   vii.   The staff and students carrying out public and voluntary services should be responsible for the quality of the work they provide.
   viii.   In the event of any disrepute or damage caused to the university by any staff or student by engaging themselves in such public and voluntary services, actions will be taken by the university, under the Policy of Conflict of Interest of UoP, and/or under any other applicable rules and regulations of the university.

4.0 Policy for Community Engagement and Interaction of UoP through Publicity and Promotions

4.1 Publicity

   i.   The university should have an approving mechanism for all the promotional items using the university name and/or logo, such as T-shirts, key tags, mugs, etc., before being ordered. In such cases, approval must be obtained from the Council of the University.
   ii.   The responsible approving authority should be announced for various UoP publications, including informational bulletins, newsletters, books and journals of opinion (e.g. Member of the university faculty or administrative staff of a particular office or department).
   iii.   Locations where the decorations, banners, etc., are prohibited from being displayed should be specified by the university. Faculties can have their own restrictions in addition to the university level policy (e.g. Posting signs, posters and flyers are permitted only on authorized bulletin boards).

iv.   If the university/ faculty colours, logo, etc., are used in promotion campaigns, their originality should be maintained.

4.2. Promotions

i.   Faculties should have mechanisms for fostering research and innovation and promoting community and industry engagement as applicable.

ii.   The university should use social media effectively to enhance communication channels currently in place for press, news, events, announcements and student communication.

iii.   The university shall have an institutional social media policy.

iv.   The web pages of the university, faculties and departments should be updated regularly. Prominent space should be provided for news promoting the institute. Ensure all the necessary information on undergraduate and postgraduate programmes are correctly and timely included in the university/ faculty web pages.

4.3 Promotion of consultancy services

i.   The University should recognize the importance and potential benefits of engagements in consultancies and extension services by the individual staff members and entities of the university. Also, the University may support the establishment of mechanisms or service units/ centres to facilitate, handle and promote such services.

ii.   UoP should facilitate the advertising of such services in its web pages, newspapers or publications.

iii.   UoP should provide and support training for developing the capacities of its members to provide consultancies.

iv.   UoP should approve and facilitate the utilization of physical or human resources for consultancies, provided that such use does not obstruct the mandatory programmes and activities of UoP.

4.4 Promotion of community services

i.   Provide knowledge, information and resources to industries and communities within the region and the country.

ii.   Develop, conduct and continue demand-driven education/ awareness programmes aimed at empowering relevant stakeholders.

iii.   Promote collaborative activities with local and international stakeholders.

iv.   Provide human and infrastructure facilities to promote outreach activities.

4.5 Other

University shall use the Office of the Registrar to promote community engagement and interaction effectively. The Registrar should take immediate actions to correct any misleading/false news related to the university.

Definitions:

For the purposes of this policy, the following definition of terms shall be applicable:

1.   *Community*

A community is any group or organization of people outside the internal university stakeholders, i.e., students, employees or administrators of UoP. In most instances, it is the community around the university premises, but it is not limited to this area. In some instances, it covers the local municipalities, Kandy district, Central province or even the entire country as UoP is a national university serving the nation.

2. *Community Engagement*

Community engagement at UoP refers to all unidirectional or multidirectional, negotiated and dynamic partnerships between the university and the community it serves. There are different practices and initiatives involving research, teaching, and learning to address the social, cultural, and economic development objectives of the society and the country.

3. *Community Interaction*

Community interaction denotes a relationship that is mutually beneficial to both the community and the university. This would include certain activities that are liaised to a group within the community and the form of interactions between the two parties, i.e., the university and the community should fulfil a particular need(s) of both parties. In addition, such activities should be sustained through a robust joint relationship.

Related Acts, Rules, Regulations and Circulars:
   i.   UGC Circular No. 951, 04/2016, 10/2016, 20/2017
   ii.   Management Services Circular No. 01/2016
   iii. Code of Conduct for the Academic Members
   iv.   General Conduct under the Establishment Code
   v.   Student By-laws

Related policies, if any:
   i.   Intellectual Property Policy
   ii.   Policy on Conflict of Interest
   iii.   Policy on Internationalization
   iv.   Policy on Quality Assurance
   v.   Policy on Teaching and Learning
   vi.   Policy on PG Studies and Research
   vii.   Policy on ICT
   viii. Policy on Assessments and Awards
   ix.   Policy on requirement to align with National Policies, Frameworks and Requirements
   x.   Policy on Funds and Financial Management
   xi.   Policy on Research Innovation and Development

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