PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT POLICY

2024

ATEBUBU COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

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BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ATEBUBU COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Atebubu College of Education is a Teacher Education Institution in Atebubu (Atebubu Amantin Municipality), Bono East Region. The College was founded in October 1965. The College was the first second cycle institution, and the only Teacher Training College in the Eastern Corridor of the then Brong-Ahafo Region, out of which Bono, Bono East and Ahafo Regions were born. The College began with eighty (80) male students and with the passage of the Education Act in 2008, Act 778, the College is now a tertiary institution, affiliated to the University of Cape Coast and currently running 4-year Bachelor in Primary Education, 4-Year Bachelor in Early Grade Education and 4-Year Bachelor in JHS Education programmes. The College has six Academic Departments: Education Studies, Science, Social Sciences, Languages, Mathematics and ICT, and Creative Arts.

MISSION STATEMENT

Atebubu College of Education is committed to a partnership with students, alumni, sister educational institutions, government regulatory bodies and community stakeholders, providing students with the knowledge, practical skills and professional attitudes to become productive citizen in a challenging, technological and diverse world.

VISION

The Igniting minds, beyond borders: Atebubu College of Education's legacy – a generation of teachers redefining education.
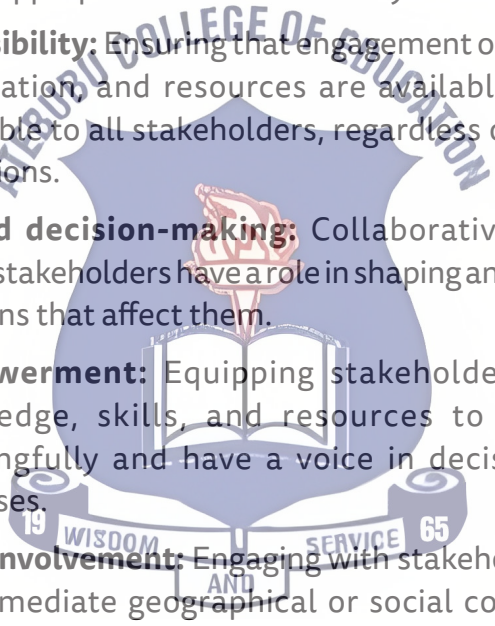
CORE VALUES

The following Core Values are intended to drive the mission, vision and strategic direction of Atebubu College of Education:

- · Excellence and Professionalism
- · Commitment and Hard Work
- · Gender, Equity, and Social Inclusion (GESI)
- · Teamwork and Mentorship

DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. **Transparency:** Openness and clarity in communication and decision-making processes, ensuring that information is accessible to stakeholders.

2. **Accountability:** Responsibility for actions and decisions, including being answerable to stakeholders for the outcomes and impacts of those actions and decisions.

3. **Inclusivity:** Ensuring that diverse perspectives, voices, and interests are represented and considered in decision-making and engagement processes.

4. **Stakeholder involvement:** Active participation of individuals, groups, or organizations who have an interest or stake in the college's activities, programs, or outcomes.

5. **Collaboration:** Working together with stakeholders to achieve common goals, often involving shared resources, expertise, and responsibilities.

6. **Community partnerships:** Formal or informal relationships and collaborations between the college and external organizations, agencies, or groups within the community.

7. **Dialogue:** Open and ongoing communication and exchange of ideas, perspectives, and feedback between the college and its stakeholders.

8. **Feedback mechanisms:** Structured processes or channels for collecting, analysing, and responding to input, opinions, and suggestions from stakeholders.

9. **Participation:** Active involvement and engagement of stakeholders in activities, events, or decision-making processes related to the college.

10. **Responsiveness:** Being receptive and adaptive to the needs, concerns, and feedback of stakeholders, and taking appropriate action in a timely manner.

11. **Accessibility:** Ensuring that engagement opportunities, information, and resources are available and easily reachable to all stakeholders, regardless of barriers or limitations.

12. **Shared decision-making:** Collaborative processes where stakeholders have a role in shaping and influencing decisions that affect them.

13. **Empowerment:** Equipping stakeholders with the knowledge, skills, and resources to participate meaningfully and have a voice in decision-making processes.

14. **Local involvement:** Engaging with stakeholders within the immediate geographical or social context of the college, recognizing the importance of local perspectives and needs.

15. **Engagement strategies:** Planned approaches, methods, or activities designed to foster interaction, collaboration, and meaningful participation among stakeholders

ABBREVIATIONS

1. **PEP** - Public Engagement Policy
2. **KPIs** - Key performance indicators
3. **GTEC** - Ghana Tertiary Education Commission
4. **UCC** - University of Cape Coast
5. **PRINCOF** - Conference of Principals of Colleges of Education
6. **UG** - University of Ghana
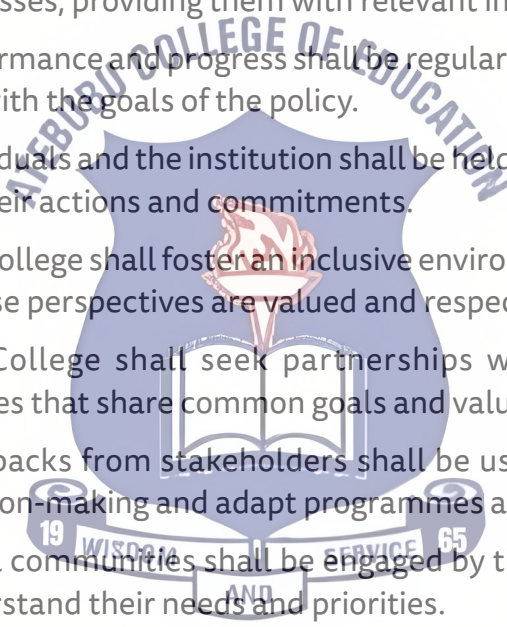7. **KNUST** - Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology

1.0 PREAMBLE

The Public Engagement Policy of Atebubu College of Education aims to establish a framework that fosters robust relationships with various institutions, communities, stakeholders and the wider public, aligning with the college's mission and vision of advancing academic excellence in teaching, learning and research. This policy formulation is grounded in the Tertiary Education Act, 2020 (Act 1044), which establishes the legal structure for overseeing, coordinating, and regulating tertiary education institutions in Ghana, including the Colleges of Education. Additionally, it draws from the Local Governance Act, 2016 (Act 936), which supports decentralized governance and encourages local involvement in decision-making, as well as the Higher Education Strategic Plan (2018-2030), highlighting the significance of community engagement and partnerships in enhancing the quality, relevance, and accessibility of higher education in Ghana. The College's commitment to this policy is rooted in the belief that collaboration, dialogue and partnership are essential for addressing the complex challenges facing education today. By actively engaging with diverse voices, perspectives and experiences, the College enriches its educational programmes, enhances research endeavours and contributes positively to social, cultural, and economic development. The policy covers various aspects related to interaction and collaboration between the College and the wider community, including transparency, accountability, and inclusivity in decision-making processes. It also outlines strategies for involving stakeholders such as students, staff,

alumni, local residents, media and relevant organizations in programme planning, implementation and evaluation.

To uphold transparency, fairness, and adherence to the values of Atebubu College of Education, the formulation of the Public Engagement Policy involved comprehensive consultations with the following sources:
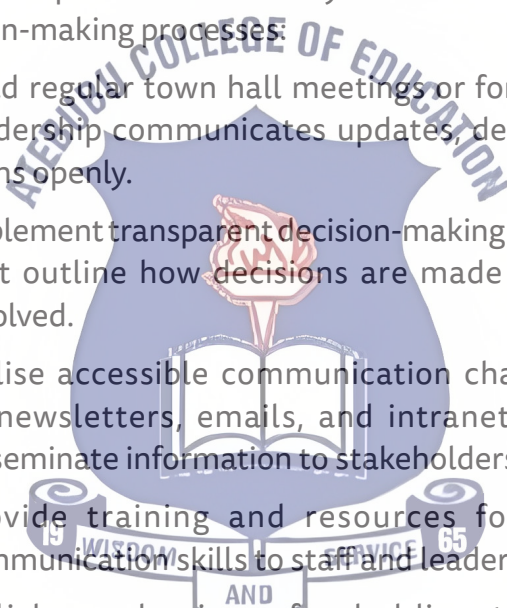
i.   Legal counsel was sought to ensure that the College's Public Engagement Policy aligns with all relevant laws and regulations.

ii. The College's previous Public Engagement Policy was reviewed and considered during the development process.

iii. Public Engagement Policies of established universities such as UG, UCC, and KNUST were examined for insights and best practices.

iv. The 1992 Constitution of Ghana was referenced to ensure constitutional compliance.

v.   The Colleges of Education Act 2012 (Act 847) was consulted to align the policy with the statutory framework.

vi. Harmonised Statutes for Colleges of Education were referenced for guidance.

vii. The Harmonised Scheme of Service for Colleges of Education was considered for its relevance to the policy.

viii. The Harmonised Conditions of Service for Colleges of Education were considered in shaping the Public Engagement Policy.

2.0 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

i. The College shall communicate openly and honestly with all stakeholders on issues about the College.

ii. All Stakeholders shall be involved in decision-making processes, providing them with relevant information.

iii. Performance and progress shall be regularly assessed in line with the goals of the policy.

iv. Individuals and the institution shall be held accountable for their actions and commitments.

v. The College shall foster an inclusive environment where diverse perspectives are valued and respected.

vi. The College shall seek partnerships with external entities that share common goals and values.

vii. Feedbacks from stakeholders shall be used to inform decision-making and adapt programmes and services.

viii. Local communities shall be engaged by the College to understand their needs and priorities.

ix. The College shall demonstrate commitment to social responsibility through meaningful contributions to local development and well-being.

3.0 OBJECTIVES AND THEIR STRATEGIES

The objectives and corresponding strategies are to:

i. Increase openness and clarity in communication and decision-making processes:

    - Hold regular town hall meetings or forums where leadership communicates updates, decisions, and plans openly.

    - Implement transparent decision-making frameworks that outline how decisions are made and who is involved.

    - Utilise accessible communication channels such as newsletters, emails, and intranet portals to disseminate information to stakeholders.

    - Provide training and resources for effective communication skills to staff and leadership.

ii. Establish mechanisms for holding the college accountable:

    - Develop a comprehensive set of key performance indicators (KPIs) aligned with the College's mission, values, and core values.

    - Regularly monitor and evaluate performance against established KPIs, and publicly report on progress.

- Implement a system of checks and balances, such as internal audits or external reviews, to ensure compliance and integrity.

- Create a clear process for addressing and resolving grievances or complaints from stakeholders.

iii. Actively involve diverse stakeholders in decision-making:

- Establish advisory boards or committees representing diverse stakeholder groups to provide input and guidance on college activities and decisions.

- Conduct outreach initiatives to engage underrepresented stakeholders and encourage their participation.

- Provide training and resources on diversity, equity, and inclusion to ensure that all stakeholders feel valued and included.

- Foster a culture of respect for diverse perspectives and experiences within the college community.

iv. Encourage partnerships and collaborations with external entities:

- Identify potential partners whose goals and expertise complement those of the College.

- Develop formal partnership agreements outlining roles, responsibilities, and shared goals.

- Facilitate networking events or workshops to connect College staff with potential external partners.

- Explore opportunities for joint projects or initiatives that leverage resources and expertise from both parties.

- Solicit for feedbacks from stakeholders for continuous improvement:

- Implement surveys, focus groups, or suggestion boxes to gather feedback from stakeholders on a regular basis.

- Analyse feedback data to identify trends, areas for improvement, and emerging needs.

- Develop action plans based on feedback to address identified areas for improvement.

- Communicate to stakeholders how their feedback has been used to drive change within the college.

- Establish a culture of continuous improvement were soliciting and acting on feedback becomes a routine practice.

v. Cultivating positive relationships with local communities and stakeholders:

- Engage in community outreach activities such as volunteer programs, community events, and partnerships with local organizations.

- Listen to the needs and priorities of local communities and incorporate them into College's planning and decision-making processes.

- Communicate the college's contributions to the local community through various channels, such as newsletters, press releases, and social media.

- Seek opportunities for collaborative projects that benefit both the College and the local community.

4.0 SUPPORTING PROCEDURE

The implementation of the Public Engagement policy is supported by the following procedures:

4.1. IDENTIFYING AND PARTNERING WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Engaging with Key Stakeholders is integral to the College's operations and essential for ensuring the delivery of quality education. The College will identify its key stakeholders, seek common ground and establish partnerships with them. Management will share the college's vision and mission with them, strengthening partnerships by actively involving them in all educational and developmental programmes. The College will maintain an active database of its key stakeholders to facilitate effective communication and consultations.

4.2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF KEY STAKEHOLDERS

To foster a positive working relationship and prevent conflicts, management will clearly define the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder. Stakeholders will be encouraged to fulfil their respective roles in maintaining high standards.

The College will enter into Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs)/Commitments with Key Stakeholders where applicable, to reinforce mutual commitment and support.

Adopting an Inclusive and Representative Approach to Public Engagement

Management will promote an inclusive and representative approach to Public Engagement. This approach will enhance equity, fairness, and gender responsiveness in delivering quality education to all. To ensure public interest and active participation, the College will carefully consider contributions from key stakeholders and incorporate them into plans and programmes, promoting ownership, a sense of belonging and the long-term sustainability of initiatives and projects.

Ensuring Stakeholders are Well-Informed

The College will establish a robust communication system to facilitate the free flow of information, enabling effective decision-making. Following the solicitation and consultation of key stakeholders for their input in planning and decision-making processes, management will provide timely feedback on the implementation progress and its impact. Ensuring that key stakeholders are well-informed in an accurate, objective, and timely manner about decisions that affect them is crucial for sustaining their interest and participation in education delivery at the College.

Maintaining High Professional Public Engagement Standards

It is the responsibility of the College to implement mechanisms that ensure professional standards and ethical values in public engagement. Management will appreciate and respect the needs, views, and concerns of the individuals involved, while also demonstrating integrity and confidentiality when necessary. Public engagement will be led and managed by committed and competent staff and agents possessing appropriate skills.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

Staff and other key stakeholders will receive education on the importance of confidentiality, information sharing and data protection. They will be required to handle any received information discreetly and confidentially, sharing it only on a need-to-know basis. Management will ensure the security and proper maintenance of college data. Only approved staff members will be permitted to communicate with the media about the College.

4.3. SANCTIONS

Members who violate the above provisions shall face appropriate sanctions. Management will ensure that such sanctions are fair and consistent with the established procedures. These sanctions may include:

i. **Verbal or Written Warning:** Issued for a first-time offense or a minor breach, clearly outlining the violation and its consequences.

ii. **Probation:** Placing the individual under closer supervision or limiting their access to sensitive information for a specified period.

iii. **Suspension:** Temporarily revoking the individual's privileges and access to specific systems or areas, or suspending them from their duties within the college.

iv. **Demotion or Change in Responsibilities:** If the individual holds a position with access to sensitive information, they may be demoted or reassigned to a role with lesser access or responsibility.
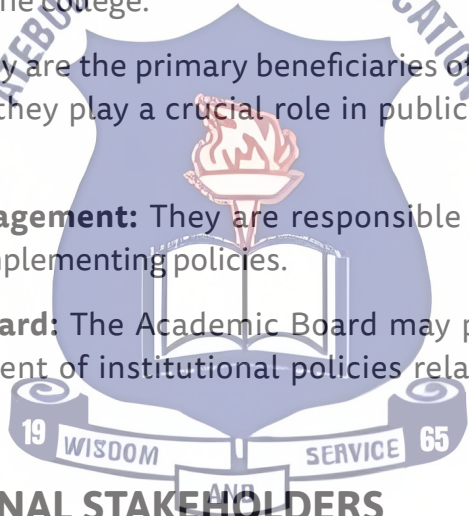
5.0 STAKEHOLDERS

5.1. INTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

The Principal: The principal serves as an advocate for public engagement both within and outside the college.

Departments and Staff: These are involved in the day-to-day operations of the college.

Students: They are the primary beneficiaries of the college's services, and they play a crucial role in public engagement efforts.

College Management: They are responsible for decision-making and implementing policies.

Academic Board: The Academic Board may participate in the development of institutional policies related to public engagement.

5.2. EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS

Governing Council: Responsible for overseeing the college's operations, finances, and strategic direction.

Partner Schools: Engage in professional development activities in collaboration with the college.

Local Community: Residents and businesses in the Atebubu area can impact the college's activities and policies and offer valuable input.

Government Agencies: The municipal Assembly exercises regulatory oversight or provides funding to the college.

Ghana Tertiary Education Commission (GTEC): monitors and evaluates the public engagement activities of tertiary education institutions to ensure compliance with established policies and standards.

Parents and Families: Relatives of current or prospective students with a vested interest in the college's success and reputation.

Alumni: Maintain strong ties with the college and contribute to public engagement initiatives.

Media: Local newspapers, radio stations, and online news outlets play a role in disseminating information about the college's activities and initiatives to the broader community.

6.0 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The monitoring and evaluation of this policy shall be overseen by the following:

i.   Central Management- Governing Council

ii. Middle Management - College Management

iii. Lower Management- Heads of Department

7.0 RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The overall responsibility for the implementation of the Public Engagement Policy is vested in the College Governing Council. The College Principal and Academic Board shall be responsible for the day-to-day administration and implementation of this policy.

8.0 RESPONSIBILITY FOR MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE

The College Principal and the Academic Board shall be delegated to ensure the compliance, monitoring, and evaluation of the effectiveness of the policy.

8.1. APPROVAL BODY

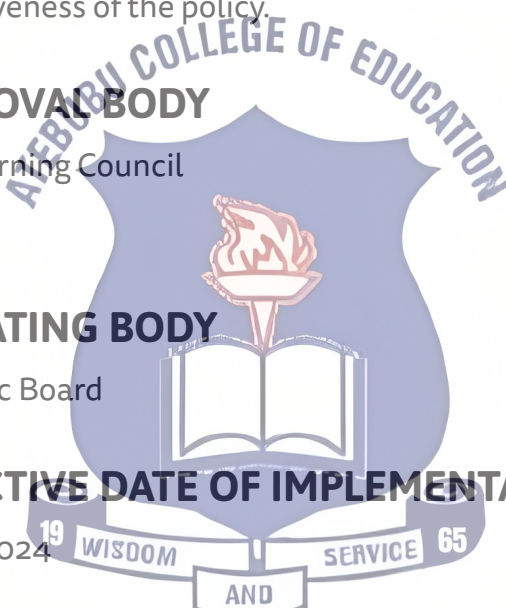College Governing Council

The principal

8.2. INITIATING BODY

The Academic Board

8.3. EFFECTIVE DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION

1st January, 2024

8.4. REVIEW DATE

3years from the effective date (January, 2024 to January, 2027)

9.0 RELATED LEGISLATION

Colleges of Education Act 2012 Act (847)

9.1. RELATED POLICY AND OTHER DOCUMENTS:

Harmonized Statues for Colleges of Education

Harmonized Scheme of Service for Colleges of Education

Harmonized Condition of Service for Colleges of Education

Students Handbook

9.2. OWNER / SPONSOR

College Governing Council

9.3. AUTHOR

Academic Board

10.0 FURTHER INFORMATION

Contact the College Principal for any further information regarding this policy document as and when necessary:

The Principal

Atebubu College of Education

P. O. Box 29

Atebubu

Bono East Region

principal@atecoe.edu.gh

12.0 SOCIAL MEDIA HANDLES

The following are the official social media handles of the College:

i.   Facebook-Atebubu College of Education
ii. X-@atecoe_official
iii. Instagram-@atecoe_official
iv. YouTube-@Atebubu College of Education
v.   WhatsApp line-0200288320