

Open and Distance Learning Policy for Tertiary Education Institutions in Sierra Leone



Acknowledgement

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Foreword

The Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) was created by an Act of Parliament in 2001 as the regulatory body for Tertiary Education in Sierra Leone. This series of activities is a culmination of the TEC's approach to the Commonwealth of Learning to provide support for the review and fine tuning of the Commission's regulatory policy for Open and Distance Learning provisions through its President, Prof. Asha Kanwar. Prof. Kanwar in her characteristic enthusiasm for the development of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) in the developing countries of the Commonwealth, readily approved a package of support for the TEC in May 2022 and assigned Prof. Jane-Frances Agbu, Adviser, Higher Education, as the Focal point for COL's input which included support for:

- a) an environment scan for ODL in Sierra Leone to identify gaps and lacunae in the current TEC's ODL Policy which was considered not robust enough. The identified gaps informed the policy document. The first workshop was successfully held on the 23rd of June 2022 with about 135 participants from the Institutions offering ODL programmes in Sierra Leone. The Minister of Technical and Higher Education gave the keynote address at the workshop. Six presentations were made to guide the process at the workshop. These were:
- b) Definitions, Modes, Challenges and Mitigation of Distance Education, E-learning and Online Provisions in Sierra Leone by Prof. Ekundayo Thompson, Professor of Education and former Vice-Chancellor and Principal, University of Sierra Leone.
- c) Environmental Scan and Status of ODL and Online Provisions in Sierra Leone. by Prof. Aliyageen Alghali, Former Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Njala University and Chairman, TEC.
- d) LMS platform: Its challenges and implementation in Sierra Leone by Mr. Victor Sesay. Director of Technology and Innovation, MTHE.
- e) Policy Guidelines for the provision of Online Education by International Providers in Sierra Leone. Presented by Prof. Edwin Momoh, Chairman Conference of Vice-Chancellors and Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Ernest Bai Koroma University of Science and Technology.
- f) Review and Amendments of the TEC Policy on Distance and E-Learning for Sierra Leone by Prof. Jonas Redwood Sawyer, Professor of Electrical Engineering and former Vice-Chancellor and Principal, University of Sierra Leone.
- g) Models and Framework for Effective Adoption in the Provision of Distance Education and E-Learning in Sierra Leone by Mr. Moses Musa Conteh, Quality Assurance Officer, University of Makeni.

A second workshop to prepare a more robust draft regulatory policy for the consideration of TEC and COL took place on the 31st of October and 1st November 2022. In addition to part financing the workshop, COL also graciously provided a Consultant in the person of Emeritus Prof. Olugbemiro Jegede, the foundation Vice Chancellor of the National

Open University of Nigeria and former Secretary General of the Association of African Universities.

A third workshop was held from 2nd to 4th November 2022 to provide guidelines for Programmes/Courses and Materials development for ODL delivery in Sierra Leone. The fourth part of the COL's support package will include support for selected key institutions in Sierra Leone towards mainstreaming of ODL provisions.

Prof. Aliyageen M. Alghali

Chairman, TEC, Sierra Leone

Acronyms and Abbreviations

AAU	Association of African Universities
AU	African Union
AfDB	African Development Bank
BMAS	Benchmark Minimum Academic Standards
COL	Commonwealth of Learning
CVCP	Conference of Vice-Chancellors and Principals
DE	Distance Education
DEC	Distance Education Centre
TEC	Tertiary Education Commission
ICT	Information and Communication Technology

HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
TEIs	Tertiary Education Institutions
IDL	Institute of Distance Learning
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MTHE	Ministry of Technical and Higher Education
NQA	National Qualifications Authority
NCTVA	National Council for Technical Vocational and Other Academic Awards
ODL	Open and Distance Learning
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OER	Open Educational Resources
PS	Permanent Secretary
QA	Quality Assurance
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
RENs	Research Education Networks
RETRIDOL	Regional Training and Research Institute for Distance & Open Learning
R & D	Research and Development
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TESSA	Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UU	Untrained and Unqualified
UN	United Nations
VC&P	Vice-Chancellor and Principal

1.0: Introduction

The Open and Distance Learning Policy sets the framework and parameters for the provision of enhanced access to affordable, inclusive, and high-quality education in tertiary education system in Sierra Leone. The policy is a response to the need to harmonise and provide a unified approach to the planning, development, delivery, and evaluation of the ODL programme. The Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) oversees the implementation of this policy.

TEC is charged with the responsibility for the development of Tertiary Education in Sierra Leone. TEC is committed to enabling accessible, affordable and relevant high-quality education especially at the tertiary level. TEC envisions to be a dynamic regulatory agency acting as a catalyst for positive change and innovation for the delivery of quality university education in Sierra Leone. In its mission, TEC seeks to “undertake analytical review of policies, organisational structures and administration of relevant bodies involved in decision-making in all tertiary education institutions (TEIs), to make them more effective in terms of cost, access, relevance and quality”¹. This policy therefore is a commitment to the provision of an equitable and inclusive education and training system that affords all learners access to quality tertiary education thereby enhancing the personal development of the citizen and contributing to Sierra Leone’s socio-economic growth and global competitiveness.

¹ [Mission – TERTIARY EDUCATION COMMISSION \(tecsl.edu.sl\)](https://tecsl.edu.sl)

2.0: Key Definitions

Distance Education (DE): any educational process in which all or most of the teaching is conducted by someone geographically removed from the learner, with all or most of the communication between tutors and learners being conducted through electronic or print media.

Open and Distance Learning (ODL): an approach to learning that focuses on freeing from the constraints of time, space, cost and place whilst offering flexible learning opportunities.

Open Learning: is a form of learning which considers flexibility of and access to instruction to ensure wide availability of educational opportunities to all. Openness disregards age, previous level of academic achievement, and other factors which create artificial barriers to education.

Distance Learning: is a form of instruction by a mode other than the conventional face-to-face method. It is characterized by physical separation between the teacher and the learner, instruction delivered through a variety of media including print, and other information communication technologies.

ODL Institution: an institution mandated to offer ODL programmes.

Conventional institution: an institution mandated to offer traditional face-to-face learning programmes

Blended Learning: this model employs the use of ICT or any online learning platform to complement the traditional face-to-face mode of teaching and learning.

Synchronous Online Learning: this entails teaching and learning in real-time and relies primarily on the availability of adequate and reliable internet connectivity, video conferencing and collaborative software.

Asynchronous Online Learning: here learners are not required to attend lectures or engage in any academic work in real-time. In this mode, learners are given access to learning resources and are expected to meet set milestones at their own pace.

Gender Mainstreaming: a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres, so that women and men benefit equally.

Inclusive Education: a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all through increasing participation in learning and reducing exclusion both from education and within education.

Open Educational Resources: are learning, teaching and research materials in any format and medium that reside in the public domain or are under copyright that have been released under an open license, that permit no-cost access, re-use, re-purpose, adaptation and redistribution by others.

3.0 Goal and Policy Objectives

3.1. The goal of the ODL Policy is to provide a comprehensive guideline for ODL in tertiary education in Sierra Leone thereby increasing access to quality education and training. It also strengthens commitment to ODL by government and coordinating bodies.

3.2: The overall policy objectives are to:

3.2.1: promote sustainable Open and Distance Learning development for all citizens in Sierra Leone.

3.2.2: increase access and success through quality, gender-responsive and inclusive programmes and services across the country, delivered through Open and Distance Learning.

3.2.3: provide a regulatory framework which guides TEIs in the delivery of high quality ODL programmes.

3.2.4: create a conducive environment for the delivery of effective and efficient ODL programmes.

3.2.5: safeguard potential ODL learners from inferior qualifications and fraudulent providers.

3.2.6: ensure that offshore providers of online programmes conform to professional standards, integrity and the laws governing quality tertiary education in Sierra Leone.

3.2.7: guide ODL institutions on the acquisition and use of appropriate teaching/learning materials.

3.3: In pursuant to the above goals and objectives

3.3.1: The Tertiary Education regulatory agencies shall be committed to the promotion of the ODL philosophy and practices, in Sierra Leone, within the framework of this policy document.

3.3.2: An enabling environment for ICT shall be promoted through collaboration with relevant agencies.

- 3.3.3: The higher education regulatory body shall be committed to continuous capacity building of all relevant stakeholders, including collaborations with professionals bodies and organisations for best practices in ODL.
- 3.3.4: This policy will be implemented in coordination with other relevant policies in the country.

4.0: Scope of the policy

The policy covers the following areas:

- i. Development and implementation of sustainable ODL practices
- ii. Governance and management
- iii. Funding, budgeting and resource mobilisation
- iv. Staffing, training and development
- v. Public perception of ODL
- vi. Curriculum development
- vii. Learners support services
- viii. Research development and dissemination
- ix. Quality assurance systems
- x. Inclusive education
- xi. Application of ICT in ODL
- xii. Institutional capacity
- xiii. Legal and regulatory framework

Statements for each section is presented within the following four elements:

- **Issue:** a discrepancy between the prevailing situation and the most desirable situation.
- **Justification:** this describes why the issue is important enough that it deserves to be included in a policy on ODL.
- **Policy statement:** this mandates the undertaking of a specified action and clearly spells out the entity that is accountable for ensuring the specified action is undertaken.
- **Specific objectives:** these are specific activities that must be undertaken to ensure the defined issue is adequately addressed.

5.0 Policy Statements

5.1 Development and Implementation of Sustainable ODL Practices

Issue: Due to the absence of an adequate policy framework, ODL has not been adequately mainstreamed in the tertiary education sector of Sierra Leone.

Justification: The existence of a dedicated ODL Policy demonstrates the government's commitment and allows for the mobilisation and allocation of resources needed for accessible and inclusive education in Sierra Leone.

Policy statement: The Tertiary Education Commission shall support an enabling policy environment that promotes the development and effective implementation of ODL programmes and services in Sierra Leone.

Specific objectives:

- h) To mainstream ODL into the national education and training systems.
- i) To establish a dedicated ODL coordinating directorate at the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC).
- j) To facilitate the development of institutional ODL policy documents and implementation strategies in tertiary education institutions in Sierra Leone.
- k) To link the ODL Policy to other relevant national policies.
- l) To align the ODL Policy with regional, continental and global commitments to education.
- m) To monitor the implementation of institutional ODL policy and standards.

5.2. Governance and Management

Issue: ODL governance structure at the ministerial level is insufficient.

Justification: For an effective ODL management structure in Sierra Leone, there is a need for clear and targeted distinction between the governance and management of the conventional system of education and that of the ODL mode.

Policy statement: The Ministry of Technical and Higher Education in collaboration with the Tertiary Education Commission in Sierra Leone shall enhance the capacities of ODL institutions to deliver their programmes and services through effective governance structures and management systems.

Specific objectives:

- a) To establish a dedicated Directorate of ODL at the Tertiary Education Commission.
- b) To develop effective and responsive governance structures and management systems for ODL institutions in Sierra Leone.
- c) To develop human resource capacity in governance, leadership and change management for ODL providers.

5.3 Funding, Budgeting and Resource Mobilisation

Issue: ODL has not been adequately funded in Sierra Leone.

Justification: Inadequate funding for ODL has constrained the development and delivery of programmes and services throughout Sierra Leone, despite its potential to contribute towards enhanced access to quality education.

Policy statement: The Ministry of Technical and Higher Education shall source and allocate adequate funds for ODL development in Sierra Leone

Specific objectives:

- a) To create a separate budget line for ODL provision in Sierra Leone
- b) To provide equality of opportunities through adequate funding of ODL institutions.
- c) To establish dedicated scholarships for ODL in order to address discrimination and equity issues, especially relating to underserved communities, as well as the vulnerable and disadvantaged.
- d) To determine more affordable fees schedule in order to increase access.

5.4 Staffing, Training and Development

Issue: ODL institutions in Sierra Leone lack suitably qualified ODL staff for its development and delivery.

Justification: Currently, most of the staff in ODL institutions are not adequately trained in the field of ODL. For effective ODL delivery, staff should be adequately trained and qualified.

Policy statement: The Tertiary Education Commission shall ensure that institutions offering programmes through ODL recruit and train ODL staff adequately.

Specific objectives:

- a. To institutionalise continuous professional staff development in ODL institutions.
- b. To facilitate the recruitment and training of staff for ODL institutions.
- c. To identify and explore opportunities for ODL staff development through linkages, communities of practice, exchange-study visits and in-service training.

5.5 Public Perception of ODL

Issues:

- a. There is lack of confidence by the stakeholder because the programmes lack parity.

- b. All ODL programmes currently done by all institutions are not accredited by the TEC.

Justification: Public perception is important because the 'public' are the consumers.

Policy Statement: MTHE shall support TEC in the implementation of the ODL policy and there shall be a QA unit in each institution that will give stakeholders the confidence that the inputs, processes and outputs are in line with their expectations.

Specific Objectives:

- a) National public sensitisation and awareness raising on ODL quality assurance through the various media (including local languages) will be ensured.
- b) To ensure that all current programmes are immediately submitted for accreditation by the TEC.
- c) To ensure that all future programmes are submitted within adequate time for the review and approval of the TEC before the programme is rolled out by the institutions.

5.6 Curriculum Development

Issue: There is a dearth of harmonised ODL curricula.

Justification: Harmonised curricula will ensure that ODL will be effectively delivered and standardised across all institutions.

Policy Statement: It is mandatory for all ODL programmes to be standardised and harmonised.

Specific Objectives:

- a) Conduct annual or bi-annual capacity development workshops for curricula reviews.
- b) Provide feedback mechanisms to evaluate ODL curricula, i.e., to adopt the BMAS curricula development practices for harmonisation and standardisation.
- c) To ensure that programmes are informed by needs analysis so that they speak to the needs of learners, industry and the labour market.
- d) To facilitate the integration of 21st-century skills into curricula in order to empower learners with entrepreneurship and employability competencies.
- e) To enhance good practices in the development and delivery of curricula in partnership with industry and the labour market nationally and globally

5.7 Learner Support Service

Issues:

- a) This is an issue that cuts across the academic provisions and practices.
- b) TEIs do not have enough support in terms of teaching and learning materials, access to library both manual and electronic.
- c) Very little face to face contact time between the learners and instructors.
- d) Very little or no support in terms of guidance and counselling for learners.
- e) Lack of learning and physical access to the learning centres for the physically challenged.

Justification:

- a) These issues must be addressed to enhance the quality of ODL delivery in TEIs.
- b) All statutory and legal regulations enhancing access to education, gender equality and disability should be adhered to for improvement of ODL delivery.

Policy Statement: Institutions must address all of the above issues for an efficient and effective delivery of ODL.

Specific Objectives:

- a) Ensure that facilities, infrastructure and resources are in place for effective ODL delivery.
- b) To promote the establishment and implementation of effective and efficient learner support services in all ODL institutions.
- c) Ensure that all physical structures being used for ODL programmes shall also meet the minimum requirement for the persons with disability.

5.8 Research Development and Dissemination

Issues: The TEC Needs Assessment Survey reveals that research outputs are low in the higher education institutions because of lack of institutional support and low trained staff levels.

Justification: Without R & D, quality ODL programmes will be severely constrained.

Policy Statement: Action towards promotion of R&D is urgent.

Specific Objective:

- a) Mobilise and provide funding for R&D.
- b) To develop a national and institutional research agenda.
- c) To facilitate the development and implementation of research policies, research ethics and related guidelines.
- d) To provide opportunities for research capacity building.
- e) To provide a national research repository for the dissemination of research findings.

5.9 Quality Assurance Systems

Issues: Quality Assurance Systems are central to the delivery of ODL. In the prevailing situation, there is little conformity to QA in the TEIs in Sierra Leone. The functionality of QA ranges from non-existent to fair. As a result, monitoring, evaluation and tracking systems for teaching, learning and graduate performance are challenging. There is poor sensitisation among staff on QA matters as the culture of QA management is still relatively new within the system. The facilities and services to drive QA in ODL are rudimentary and challenging.

Justification: When ODL is implemented without strong QA systems, it leads to poor quality teaching and learning, and learning outcomes are compromised. QA services need to be coordinated as quality is a continuous process. If QA is well administered, then most of the problems currently being faced in the implementation of ODL including the monitoring and evaluation components will be addressed.

Policy Statement: Every TEI shall set up a well-structured and functioning QA Unit. QA policies shall be developed in key areas to facilitate a high-quality environment for the teaching and learning of ODL in TEIs. In addition, TEC shall strengthen its coordinating mechanism for QA with a view to assuring complementary standards of QA for ODL in all TEIs.

Specific Objectives:

- a) To develop QA policies in all TEIs that are aligned with the TEC ODL policy.
- b) To strengthen QA systems and standards for the ODL teaching and learning environment in all TEIs.
- c) To strengthen the capacity of TEC to coordinate monitor and evaluate QA systems across the TEIs.
- d) To develop the capacity of QA Units in all TEIs to internally monitor and evaluate ODL programmes.
- e) To build the capacity of stakeholders to continuously improve QA systems.

5.10 Inclusive Education

Issues: Inclusiveness is an emerging reality in the educational ecosystem of Sierra Leone. Currently, there is gender imbalance and inequity in the proportion of females to males in almost all levels of the education sector (specifically, dearth of female tutors and learners). In addition, the participation of persons with disabilities at the TEIs (both tutors and learners) is low.

Justification: It is important that in the ODL Policy, all efforts be made for inclusiveness and diversity to incorporate all stakeholders, including persons with disabilities and vulnerable persons in disadvantaged communities.

Policy Statement: A learning environment will be created where no one is disadvantaged because of gender, disability, socio-economic status and or location and all stakeholders are able to participate in an enabling and friendly environment.

Specific Objectives:

- a) To promote training for staff for inclusive leadership and enhancement of special skills for inclusiveness and access.
- b) To support diversity, equity, and inclusion in TEIs through learner support services and the infrastructure.
- c) To establish flexible admission policies to encourage marginalised persons including persons with disability.
- d) To encourage equal opportunities for women and persons with disability.

5.11 Application of ICT in ODL

Issue: ICT is critical to the implementation of ODL. Currently, there is poor ICT usage in all TEIs in the delivery of ODL. Monitoring of the TEIs reveals that more efforts have to be made to apply ICT in ODL in the TEIs.

Justification: For Sierra Leone to be contemporary, and for the successful delivery of ODL, ICT usage must be pivotal. All TEIs must effectively use ICT in ODL as a support to the administrative processes, course delivery and interactions between learners and tutors.

Policy Statement: TEIs shall facilitate enhanced availability, capacity and utilisation of ICT for the efficient and effective delivery of programmes and services through open and distance learning modes. Personnel shall be trained in the production of ICT materials.

Specific Objectives

- a) To increase the capacity of tutors to manage e-learning programmes in all TEIs.
- b) To increase access to ICT services in all TEIs.
- c) To improve the ICT facilities including connectivity in all TEIs.
- d) To increase energy efficiency (e.g., solar power) in learning centres in disadvantaged areas.
- e) To develop teaching and learning materials compatible with the ODL teaching delivery.

5.12 Institutional Capacity

Issue: ODL is faced with a number of institutional capacity challenges. In the current situation, there is a mismatch between capacity and capability and a gap between intention and action. This has resulted in ODL classes being conducted sometimes in institutions with little access of the learners to course materials and other facilities such as laboratories and workshops. Most of the tutors are also not trained in the design and development of ODL teaching and learning materials.

Justification: For the ODL programmes to offer quality education, it is necessary for TEC to regularly evaluate TEIs to ensure that they have the institutional capacity to do so.

Policy Statement: TEIs shall demonstrate the capacity to effectively manage ODL in various dimensions such as: capacity building for staff, financial resources, infrastructure, technology, instructional design, support for learners, assessment of learners' work and evaluation of the curricula.

Specific Objectives:

- a) To support the professional development of staff in TEIs.
- b) To monitor TEIs to develop basic infrastructure such as resources centres, laboratories and supportive technologies.
- c) To provide the financial capacity and support for quality learning outcomes in Open and Distance education in TEIs.
- d) To provide student support through counselling services for learners in the ODL programme.

5.13 Legal and Regulatory Framework

Issues: Education is central to the growth and development of a nation. The Education Sector benefits from a number of Acts and Policies which underpin the nation's growth and human capital development. Open and Distance Learning has been playing a role in the educational system but it is currently unregulated and fraught with a lot of difficulties.

Justification: For ODL to play a key role in the education system, it is important for a regulatory policy specific to ODL be developed and implemented across the TEIs. Legal instruments, policies and international conventions and treaties the country has signed form the legal and regulatory scene in the education system. The ODL Policy is developed against the backdrop of the other policies and acts that have been developed and are being implemented in the education system.

Policy Statement: The following Policies and Acts that form the legal and regulatory framework for ODL shall be upheld and reviewed as required in line with emerging best practices in ODL: The Tertiary Education Commission Act, 2001 and the accompanying Statutory Instrument of 2008. TEC is the national regulatory organization and the generality of the functions of the TEC, as enshrined in 7 (1) of the TEC Act 2001, include "to advise government on tertiary education" and "to ensure parity of the products of tertiary education institutions". The Statutory Instrument of 2008 further empowers the TEC to set out standards for the TEIs, including "the minimum number and duration of programmes at the certificate, diploma or degree level that ought to be offered". (Section 5 (1) (b)); and in 5 (1) (d) determine "the standards of proficiency assessed in terms of content and contact hours which learners are expected to attain in respect of a certificate, diploma or degree programme". Other supporting Acts include: The Education Act, 2004, the TSC Act, 2011, the NCTVA Act of 2001, the Polytechnic Act, 2001, the Disability Act, 2011, the Radical Inclusion Policy, 2021 and the Universities Act of 2021. Policies include: the Education Sector Plan, the 2010 and the New Education Plan.

Specific Objectives:

- a) To provide a legal and regulatory framework consistent with the laws of Sierra Leone.
- b) To identify a set of policy alternatives for ODL operation.
- c) To provide direction and leadership in ODL in TEIs by TEC.
- d) To devise strategies to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the operation of ODL in TEIs.

6.0 Implementation Mechanisms

The successful implementation of the Sierra Leone ODL Policy requires high-level political support at national, ministerial and institutional levels. It requires the strengthening of existing structures and the incorporation of new structures that deal with ODL. This section describes the implementation and coordination mechanisms for the Sierra Leone ODL Policy and clarifies specific roles and responsibilities for implementing structures at the political (ministerial) and operational levels.

The main policy players in terms of implementation include:

a) Chairman, Tertiary Education Commission:

- i. provides the overall leadership and technical insight and oversight in the implementation of the policy framework
- ii. mobilises resources for effective implementation of the policy by the responsible persons.
- iii. calls for and initiates the processes and procedures for the review of the Policy on Open and Distance Learning from time to time as necessary.
- iv. reports to Cabinet on progress in the implementation of the policy

b) Director of ODL

- i. facilitates the implementation of the Sierra Leone ODL Policy through capacity building in the relevant office bearers
- ii. through various structures coordinates, supervises, monitors and evaluates the implementation of the policy at the national and institutional levels

c) Sierra Leone Tertiary Educational Institutions

- i. spearhead the implementation of the ODL regulatory Policy through broad-based participation
- ii. through relevant structures, periodically report progress to the Commission.

d) Directorate of ODL

- i. A Directorate of ODL shall be established within TEC.
- ii. A Director of ODL shall be appointed and will report to the Chairman of the TEC.

7.0 Monitoring and Evaluation

- i. The Tertiary Education Commission monitors and evaluates the implementation of this ODL Policy through the Director of ODL. Through its various structures, the TEC is expected to cascade the M&E exercise to all institutions offering programmes through ODL. This will enable the collection of similar M&E data to comprehensively report on and strengthen ODL systems at all levels and to share with key stakeholders.
- ii. The national M&E framework will ensure that implementation of the ODL Policy is undertaken systematically in obtaining relevant basic information; feedback on the progress of Policy implementation; curricular and programme process; resources; programme performance; ICT; information, education and communication; and gender mainstreaming and inclusive considerations.

8.0 Conclusion

The development of this Open and Distance Learning Policy for Tertiary Education Institutions in Sierra Leone consisted of a series of intense activities which included workshops, studies, research, and environment scan. The result of all the above is a comprehensive but succinct document which reflects the desire of Sierra Leone to pursue the establishment of an open and distance learning culture in the country, due to several past and contemporary reasons.

The document serves as a guide for ODL implementation in Sierra Leone. Its regulatory framework shall be overseen by the TEC. ODL as a virile means of achieving a sustainable development in line with the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals, the success of which will impact on reducing unemployment, eliminating poverty to the barest minimum and combating illiteracy.

The Open and Distance Learning Policy of Sierra Leone has set, in no unmistakable terms, the framework and parameters for providing enhanced access to affordable, inclusive and high-quality education to all.

