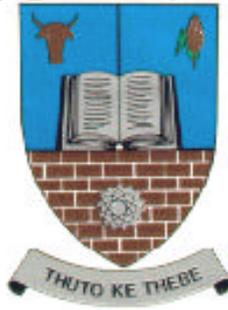


UNIVERSITY OF BOTSWANA



**HIV/AIDS
POLICY**

UNIVERSITY OF BOTSWANA



HIV/AIDS POLICY

Policy Name	HIV/AIDS Policy
Policy Administrator	Vice-Chancellor
Policy Implementers	HIV/AIDS Coordinator Health and Wellness Centre Coordinator UB HIV/AIDS Committee Deputy Vice Chancellors Director, Health Services Director, Counselling Services Director, Human Resources Director, Financial Resources Director, Student Welfare Director, Research and Development Deans Heads of Department All staff All students
Policy effective from	8th November 2002

FOREWORD

The President of the Republic of Botswana Mr. Festus G. Mogae has declared HIV/AIDS a national emergency, and the government is in the forefront in addressing the epidemic. The University of Botswana has joined the government in this endeavour. Over the years the University has committed both human and financial resources to address this epidemic. This commitment needs to be sustained as the fight against the spread of HIV and AIDS continues.

The development of the university of Botswana HIV/AIDS policy constitutes our common determination to turn this epidemic around. It brings all stakeholders together emphasising the rights and responsibilities of both students and staff to ensure an HIV free generation by the year 2016. While outlining our objectives, rights and responsibilities, this policy is also action oriented because we need to act in order to bring about change.

The objectives and components of this policy are a starting point for a new direction for the University of Botswana. They build upon our strengths and upon the common desires of our community. They are a good guide in the process of refining our strategies and implementing them to fight HIV/AIDS.

The implementation of a policy like this one requires dedicated and tireless leadership and management. The task of management is to create an environment necessary for effective implementation; ensuring availability of resources, supporting initiatives from both students and staff, maintaining focus on the objectives, building capacity at all levels, sustaining commitment and measuring progress towards our goals.

The University of Botswana, through the office of the HIV/AIDS Coordinator and other implementing structures, is committed to working with all levels of Botswana society in combating the spread of HIV/AIDS. The University of Botswana has the challenging task of producing graduates that are HIV free and at the same time producing a conducive environment for staff and students in order to cushion the impact of HIV/AIDS in their lives. We, therefore, look forward to the sustained support of the UB community and the entire nation of Botswana at large as we implement this policy.

Bojosi K. Otlhogile
Vice Chancellor

Acknowledgements

The initiation, planning, design, and development of the University of Botswana HIV/AIDS policy was a collaborative effort of the whole University Community. The University HIV/AIDS Committee, which has representation of the student community, academic and support staff associations, all faculties, units and service departments, consulted and sought contributions from the University community as a whole through meetings and seminars. Their tireless efforts have resulted in this document.

We are grateful for the contributions and guidance by the University Gender Policy and Programme Committee (GPPC), the civil society networks of the Coping Centre for People Living with AIDS (COCEPWA), and Centre for Youth of Hope (CEYOHO), and the assistance by the UNDP and NACA in the review of the policy draft.

We greatly appreciate the assistance of the Association of African Universities (AAU) Working Group on Higher Education (WGHE), who provided complementary funding for the development and dissemination of this policy.

Finally, we wish to acknowledge the leadership, inspiring commitment and support by our Vice Chancellor, Professor Bojosi Otlhogile. Re mmogo rra.

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1. POLICY CONTEXT

HIV/AIDS is one of the most serious challenges to development. In less than five years, it has emerged as a leading cause of death in Botswana, and the number of infections is escalating. It is estimated that one in three Botswana is infected with HIV, and the impact is significant as people fall sick, die and leave a growing population of orphans.

The HIV/AIDS epidemic is having far-reaching effects at household and community levels. These include increased psychosocial stress on families, escalating death rates among young and middle-aged adults and children below the age of five years, increased sickness-related absenteeism and reduced productivity in the work place, and loss of trained and skilled human resources in all sectors of the economy.

2 THE NATIONAL RESPONSE

The Botswana Medium Term plans (MTPs) for the prevention and control of HIV/AIDS have provided policy and strategic guidance for action since the inception of the National AIDS Control Programme.

The National Policy on HIV/AIDS outlines the national response to the epidemic in Botswana and it describes the role of national leaders, various government ministries, the private sector, parastatals, non-governmental and community-based organizations, persons living with HIV/AIDS and individual community members. The policy forms the basis for a national strategic plan within which different ministries and organizations are to formulate their sectoral plans, policies and projects for implementation.

The University's Response

The University of Botswana, as an institution of higher learning, recognizes the HIV/AIDS epidemic as a serious threat to the well-being and continued development of the nation. The University must not only fight the spread of this deadly disease within its own community, but must also contribute to the national effort through education, research, awareness-promotion, behaviour-change and other innovative initiatives in line with the National Policy on HIV/AIDS.

The University believes that its ability to accomplish its Vision and Mission depends on the health and well-being of staff and students. Without effective management, the impact of HIV/AIDS will affect staff and student productivity through illness and deaths, which will impact negatively on the overall quality of the work of the institution. The main goal of the University, therefore, is to promote activities that will result in an HIV free environment and develop staff

and students who are compassionate, just, caring and educated to deal with this and future epidemics.

3 OBJECTIVES

The University shall be guided by the following policy objectives with respect to HIV/AIDS prevention, care and support, research and mitigation of impact:

- a. To provide education, information and training in HIV/AIDS prevention and to reduce the rate of new infections by promoting behaviour change.
- b. To provide care and support to staff and students affected and/infected with HIV so as to alleviate fear, stigma, and discrimination surrounding HIV and AIDS.
- c. To safeguard the rights of employees and students who are affected and/or living with HIV and AIDS.
- d. To promote and support research and community outreach on HIV/AIDS prevention, care and support.
- e. To promote the health, social and spiritual welfare of the University community.

This policy applies to all employees and students of the University of Botswana.

4 DEFINITIONS

Throughout this policy, singular and plural are interchangeable and terms are defined as follows:

HIV: the Human Immunodeficiency Virus, a virus that weakens the body's immune system, ultimately causing AIDS.

AIDS: the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, a cluster of medical conditions, often referred to as opportunistic infections and cancers and for which there is no cure.

Affected persons: persons whose lives are changed in any way by HIV/AIDS due to the broader impact of the epidemic.

"Student" - any person currently registered for receipt of instruction in the University of Botswana.

“Member of staff” – any employee of the University, whether on an administrative, academic or other basis. Employee shall have a corresponding meaning.

“Members of the university community” – employees and students of the University.

5 COMPONENTS OF THE POLICY*

The policy has four (4) key components:

1. Rights and responsibilities of affected and /or infected staff and students.
2. Education and awareness.
3. Counselling, care and support services for staff and students.
4. Integration of HIV/AIDS issues into teaching, research and service activities.

5.1 Rights and responsibilities of students and employees Affected and/or infected by HIV/AIDS

The University of Botswana is an equal opportunity institution/employer and is committed to non-discrimination on the basis of HIV/AIDS status. The University has an obligation to provide a safe working and study environment in which exposure to HIV is minimized, and employees and students living with HIV and AIDS are free from stigma and discrimination.

***This policy is intended to be consistent with national government policy. Should national policy change, this policy will be reviewed accordingly.**

5.1.1 Rights of students

- a. HIV status will not be a factor in the admission of students to the University or to student residences, or to any other service, facility or activity to which the students would otherwise be admissible.
- b. No student will be required to undergo HIV testing before consideration for admission into any University programme or for access to facilities, services or activities of the University.
- c. The HIV status of a student may not be disclosed without their written informed consent. The University will treat any disclosure of positive HIV status as strictly confidential and will prohibit discrimination and victimization on that basis. Where a student voluntarily discloses his/her positive HIV status, the information may not be disclosed to others without his/her consent.
- d. No student will lose their student registration status because of their HIV status except where they are no longer physically and/or mentally able to continue with their studies.

5.1.2 Rights of staff /responsibilities of the employer

a. Pre-employment testing

The University will not require applicants to undergo pre-employment HIV testing.

b. Disclosure

No employee shall be coerced to undergo an HIV test or to disclose his/her HIV status. The University will treat any disclosure of positive HIV status as strictly confidential and will prohibit discrimination and victimization on that basis. Where an employee voluntarily discloses his/her positive HIV status, the information may not be disclosed to others without his/her informed consent.

c. Employment

No employment contract will be terminated on account of HIV/AIDS status, provided the staff member is able to work effectively. Where work is affected and after objective medical assessment, efforts will be made to provide alternative less strenuous work for the staff member. If, however, the person is no longer able to work, appropriate provisions in the conditions of service relating to termination of work on medical grounds will apply. Employees living

with HIV and AIDS will enjoy the same access to employment benefits such as medical aid and pension funds as other employees except where the conditions of such benefits are not within the control of the University.

d. Training and Promotion

Employees living with HIV/AIDS will be treated in the same manner as those with other chronic illnesses. HIV status shall not be a criterion for refusing promotion, or training, or developing staff members except where the conditions of such training are not within the control of the university.

5.1.3 Responsibilities of staff and students

- a. Every member of the University Community has the responsibility to protect themselves and others from HIV infection through all means possible. They have a responsibility to become informed about all aspects of HIV/AIDS prevention, care and support, and alleviation of impact.
- b. Students and employees living with HIV and AIDS are ethically, morally and legally obliged to behave in such a way as to pose no threat of infection to others. They are urged to seek medical advice to ensure as healthy and productive a life as possible.
- c. Unless medically justified, no student may use their HIV/AIDS status as an excuse for absence from scheduled classes, assignments and tests, examinations, study/course requirements or other academic activities. Likewise no member of staff shall use their HIV/AIDS status as an excuse for failing to come to work or complete duties.
- d. Departments or units whose academic and research programs involve risk of exposure to HIV contaminated blood and body fluids are responsible for the education and training of those potentially at risk.
- e. Disciplinary action will be taken against any student or staff member who willfully undermines the safety, privacy and dignity of another person on the basis of their known or perceived HIV status.

5.2 HIV/AIDS Education and Awareness

All staff and students will be kept informed of HIV/AIDS issues and will be involved in initiatives to promote awareness and prevention. The programme will include but is not limited to the following: -

- a. Significant days such as World AIDS day, HIV Vaccine Awareness day, month of prayer and month of youth against HIV/AIDS, will be officially commemorated, among others.
- a. All new students and employees will be provided with current and comprehensive information on HIV and AIDS through seminars, workshops and written material organised by the different sectors of the University. Peer education programs will be developed for staff and students through the Health and Wellness Centre and the Careers and Counseling Centre.
- b. All student and staff groups interested in incorporating HIV/AIDS into their activities shall be assisted through the HIV/AIDS Committee.
- c. Male and female condoms will be freely accessible through multiple channels such as the Health and Wellness Centre, Health Services, Careers and Counseling Centre and condom bins placed strategically across campus.
- d. The HIV/AIDS committee will periodically hold public debates and discussions on gender and sexuality, sexual violence and other social issues relating to HIV/AIDS.
- e. The University will continue to collaborate with other local, national and international organisations in educating the University community about issues relating to HIV/AIDS.
- f. The University will maintain, as part of its website, information on HIV/AIDS activities, and links to local and international organizations.

5.3 Counselling, care and support

- a. All staff and students will have access to free counselling and voluntary testing services on campus and off-campus, and the University encourages staff and students to know their HIV status.
- b. The University will facilitate the setting up of support groups for affected and/or infected persons on campus and in the community.

- c. Counselling and post exposure prophylaxis will be provided at the University of Botswana clinic for rape survivors and other members who become accidentally exposed to HIV risk in their occupational environments.
- d. All infected students will have access to treatment for opportunistic infections, isoniazid preventive therapy, antiretroviral treatment, and treatment to prevent mother to child transmission of HIV, as available at the University of Botswana clinic.
- e. As with other health issues, infected employees will be referred to local health facilities for treatment.
- f. The University will not be able to provide the necessary palliative care and support for the last stages of the terminal illness, thus all efforts will be made to refer the individual to an appropriate environment such as a hospital, hospice or for home-based care.

5.4 Integration of HIV/AIDS issues into teaching, research and service activities of all faculties and centres

5.4.1 Teaching

- a. The General Education programme shall include a course on HIV/AIDS, thus providing for all students, irrespective of their field of study, the opportunity to raise their awareness of HIV/AIDS issues.
- b. Support will be provided to departments and staff to develop and implement plans to integrate HIV/AIDS issues into their specific curricula.
- c. The University shall offer non-credit courses, workshops and seminars for members of the University Community on a wide range of topics related to HIV/AIDS to provide an in-depth understanding of the social context of HIV/AIDS prevention, care and support and impact alleviation.

5.4.2 Research

- a. The University is committed to providing the nation with research on as many aspects of HIV/AIDS as possible. Such research will guide policy, thus research programmes dealing with HIV/AIDS issues will be encouraged and promoted. The University will support HIV/AIDS research projects that are innovative and multi-disciplinary and fund them to the greatest extent possible.
- b. The University shall collect HIV/AIDS related data on staff and students through surveys and access to health and personnel records held by UB subject to approved security and confidentiality requirements and ethical procedures.
- c. The University shall work collaboratively with other stakeholders in promoting and conducting research in the field of HIV/AIDS.

5.4.3 Community Service

The University commits itself to collaborate with the public sector, parastatals, the private sector and civil society in the fight against HIV/AIDS. As part of this commitment, seminars and workshops that deal with topics on HIV/AIDS will be promoted for different target groups.

6 RESPONSIBILITY FOR POLICY IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- a. All employees and students of the University have an obligation to ensure that through this policy, the University of Botswana becomes an HIV free environment by 2016.
- b. The University HIV/AIDS Committee shall be responsible for policy advice, policy implementation, and policy review. The committee shall be responsible for producing an annual report that describes all initiatives undertaken by the University in HIV/AIDS prevention, care and support, and mitigation of impact.
- c. The HIV/AIDS Coordinator shall be responsible for providing leadership in the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the policy as well as identifying areas of concern that require future intervention.
- d. The University shall work to ensure that there is an adequate budget for the implementation of the policy.

- e. The HIV/AIDS Coordinator shall work closely with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Student Affairs and the Director of Human Resources to ensure that all current and future students and staff are provided with copies of this policy as well as training regarding HIV/AIDS prevention, care, support and impact alleviation.
- f. This policy, as well as the University conditions of service, shall be evaluated and regularly reviewed for relevance to national and global developments in the field of HIV/AIDS.