

OFFICE OF THE VICE-CHANCELLOR



**VICE-CHANCELLOR'S ADDRESS AT THE UPCOMING OFFICIAL LAUNCH &
SUMMIT OF 33RD GRASAG UG WEEK CELEBRATIONS**

ADDRESS BY:

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WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 19, 2026

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

The Chairperson of the University of Ghana Council,

Honourable Ministers and Government Officials present,

The Governor of the Bank of Ghana,

**The Presidential Advisor on the 24-Hour Economy and Accelerated Export
Development Programme,**

The Chief Executive Officer of the Environmental Protection Authority,

The Dean of the School of Graduate Studies,

Provosts, Deans, Directors and Heads of Department,

Invited dignitaries and guests,

National and institutional leaders of GRASAG,

The President and Executives of GRASAG-UG,

Our graduate students,

Members of the media,

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning.

It is a great pleasure to join you for the GRASAG-UG 2026 Summit and the Official Launch of the 33rd GRASAG-UG Week Celebration.

I am particularly pleased to chair this occasion because the theme, **“Beyond Graduate School: Curating Knowledge, Innovation, and Entrepreneurial Skills in the 24-Hour Economy,”** asks an important question about the purpose of graduate education: What should graduate education ultimately produce? Of course, it should produce advanced knowledge. It should produce rigorous scholarship and excellent theses. But if graduate education ends with the thesis, the publication or the certificate, then I believe we have missed an important part of its purpose.

Graduate education should produce people who can think deeply, ask difficult questions, generate new knowledge and, importantly, use that knowledge to solve problems. It should produce researchers, innovators, entrepreneurs, policy actors, professionals and thought leaders who are equipped to make a difference in society.

That is why I particularly like the expression in the theme, “Beyond Graduate School.” It challenges us to think beyond completing a programme to what we do with the education we have received.

From knowledge to impact

At the University of Ghana, this question is central to our own aspirations as a research-intensive university. We want to produce excellent research. But increasingly, we are asking another question: what difference does our research make? Does it influence policy? Does it improve lives? Does it help industry solve problems? Does it generate new products, processes or enterprises? Does it deepen our understanding of society? And does it prepare the next generation of researchers to ask even better questions?

This thinking underpins our commitment to Impactful Research, the second strategic priority of our 2024–2029 Strategic Plan, and it is reflected in the University's first comprehensive Research Strategy.

We are deliberately seeking to strengthen the environment within which research and graduate education take place: promoting interdisciplinary research; strengthening research support; encouraging collaboration with industry, government and communities; expanding opportunities for innovation and entrepreneurship; and creating spaces in which ideas can move from conception to application.

We also recognise that the environment for knowledge production is changing very rapidly. Digital technologies and artificial intelligence are transforming how we teach, learn, conduct research and work. At the University of Ghana, we are therefore paying deliberate attention to digitalisation and to the

responsible use of AI in teaching, learning and research. Our recently approved AI Policy is one part of that effort.

But technology by itself is not innovation. Innovation begins with the capacity to identify a problem, think differently about it and develop a solution that creates value. That is why we are also strengthening opportunities for our students to develop entrepreneurial and innovation capabilities. Through initiatives such as the Student Venture Support Programme and other innovation and industry-engagement activities across the University, we want our students to see themselves not only as people preparing to enter the labour market, but also as people capable of creating opportunities, enterprises and solutions.

And here, I want to issue a particular challenge to our graduate students. Your participation in some of these innovation and entrepreneurship opportunities has been relatively limited. Yet you are precisely the group generating advanced knowledge and undertaking research on complex problems. We need to see more of that knowledge finding its way into innovation and enterprise.

So perhaps one outcome of this year's GRASAG Week should be greater participation by our graduate students in the University's innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem.

Strengthening graduate education

For our graduate students specifically, we recognise that an enabling

environment goes beyond admission into a programme.

It includes the quality of supervision you receive; access to research infrastructure and resources; opportunities to participate in scholarly networks; exposure to interdisciplinary perspectives; opportunities to present and publish your work; appropriate mentorship; and an institutional culture that allows creativity and intellectual curiosity to flourish.

It also requires us to recognise the practical realities of undertaking research. Research costs money. Fieldwork costs money. Data collection costs money. And these costs can become significant obstacles to the timely completion of otherwise excellent graduate research.

It is partly in recognition of this that the University established the University of Ghana Graduate Research Fund, the UGGRF, which provides partial financial support to MPhil and PhD students towards thesis fieldwork and data collection.

The Fund cannot meet every research cost, and we certainly need to continue expanding the resources available for graduate research. But it represents an important institutional commitment: if we expect high-quality research from our graduate students, we must also work to create the conditions that make high-quality research possible.

An enabling environment also includes wellbeing. Graduate education can be demanding. The pursuit of academic excellence should not require us to

disregard the human being pursuing that excellence. As we strengthen graduate education, we must therefore pay attention both to academic standards and to the conditions that enable our graduate students to thrive.

The School of Graduate Studies, working with our Colleges, Schools and Departments, has an important responsibility in this regard, and Management remains committed to supporting the continuous improvement of graduate education at the University.

We certainly have more work to do. But our direction is clear: we want the University of Ghana to be an environment in which serious scholarship, creativity, innovation and intellectual risk-taking can flourish.

The 24-hour economy

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, this brings me to the other important dimension of today's theme—the 24-hour economy.

I am pleased that we have with us today people who can speak authoritatively to different dimensions of this agenda - from graduate education and public communication to artificial intelligence, financial innovation and the opportunities that the 24-hour economy may create. I will therefore resist the temptation to do their work for them! But I will make one observation.

A 24-hour economy cannot simply mean doing the same things for longer

hours. If it is to transform productivity and create new opportunities, it must also be about doing things differently and doing some new things altogether.

That requires innovation. It requires technology. It requires entrepreneurship. It requires efficient institutions, reliable systems and appropriate financing. And above all, it requires people with the knowledge and skills to make these things happen.

Universities therefore have an important role to play. And graduate students, in particular, should not see yourselves merely as beneficiaries of Ghana's development agenda. You should see yourselves as contributors to shaping it. Your research should help us understand the challenges. Your expertise should help us design solutions. Your innovations should create new possibilities. And some of you should build the enterprises that will employ others.

Knowledge must travel

I often speak about the importance of knowledge democratisation. The knowledge generated within universities must travel. It must travel from the laboratory to industry. From the thesis to public policy. From the journal article to the community. From an idea developed by a student to an enterprise capable

of creating jobs. And sometimes, from one discipline to another, because many of the problems confronting society do not respect the disciplinary boundaries that universities have created.

So, to our graduate students, my challenge to you this morning is simple: Do not allow your knowledge to end where your thesis ends. Ask yourself: What problem does my research help us understand or solve? Who needs to know what I have discovered? How can my expertise create value? And perhaps most importantly: What can I do with what I know? We quite rightly ask students, “What have you learnt?” But perhaps graduate education should increasingly ask: “What will you do with what you have learnt?”

Make the week count

I therefore commend the leadership of GRASAG-UG for selecting a theme that pushes us to think about graduate education in this broader way. I also encourage our graduate students to make this celebration count. Attend the activities, certainly. But do more than attend.

Engage. Ask questions. Challenge ideas. Meet someone outside your discipline. Speak to the policymakers, industry leaders, researchers and entrepreneurs who will participate. Share your own ideas.

One conversation may lead to a research collaboration. Another may generate a business idea. Another may introduce you to a mentor. And another may cause

you to look at your own research in an entirely different way. That, too, is part of graduate education.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I look forward to the conversations we will have today. My hope is that we will move beyond discussing the future of work to considering seriously how knowledge, research and innovation can help us create that future.

To the leadership of GRASAG-UG, congratulations on the 33rd anniversary of your Week Celebration, and thank you for continuing to create platforms that contribute to the intellectual, professional and social development of our graduate students. I wish us all a stimulating and productive Summit.

Thank you very much.

Prof. Nana Aba Appiah Amfo
Vice-Chancellor
August 19, 2026