

OFFICE OF THE VICE-CHANCELLOR



**VICE-CHANCELLOR'S INTRODUCTORY REMARKS
ORIENTATION FOR NEWLY APPOINTED HEADS OF
DEPARTMENTS/UNITS, DEANS, DIRECTORS AND PROVOSTS**

ADDRESS BY:

**PROFESSOR NANA ABA APPIAH AMFO
VICE-CHANCELLOR, UNIVERSITY OF GHANA**

**MONDAY, AUGUST 17, 2026
UNIVERSITY OF GHANA**

Registrar,

Director of Human Resource and Organisational Development,

Provosts, Deans, Directors, Heads of Departments and Units,

Colleagues,

Good morning.

Let me begin by congratulating all of you on your appointments and welcoming you to this orientation programme.

Some of you are taking up leadership positions for the first time; others have led before but are assuming new responsibilities.

Some of you have worked here at the University for several years, others are coming into these roles from outside the university.

Whatever your particular circumstance, your appointment represents the confidence that the University has placed in you.

But I want to suggest this morning that an appointment to leadership at the University of Ghana is not simply a recognition. It is a responsibility.

For the period that you occupy these offices, you become custodians of a part of this University. And the question that should occupy each of us is: when my term ends, will the unit

entrusted to me be stronger than I found it?

That, for me, is one of the simplest tests of leadership.

You should leave behind stronger systems, better-performing teams, improved programmes, stronger research and teaching environments, healthier finances, better relationships and, importantly, people who have grown because you led them.

Leadership is about people

You will discover very quickly, if you have not discovered it already,

that the most difficult part of leadership is often not the technical work. It is people.

You will lead colleagues who were your peers yesterday. You will work with people who have been in the University longer than you have. Some will agree with you enthusiastically; others will disagree with you equally enthusiastically. Some will require encouragement; others will require firm leadership. You cannot avoid difficult conversations simply because you want to be liked. At the same time, firmness must never become disrespect. Authority must never become arrogance. And disagreement must never become personal.

We must create environments in which our colleagues can do their best work. That means recognising excellence, mentoring younger colleagues, dealing fairly with underperformance, resolving conflict early, and ensuring that people are treated with dignity. And please, communicate.

Many of the difficulties that reach my office could have been avoided by a conversation much earlier. Do not allow small problems to become institutional problems because nobody was willing to have the necessary conversation.

Leadership is also stewardship

The second point I want to emphasise is stewardship. None of us owns the offices we occupy. We hold them in trust for a period.

The resources placed at your disposal - financial resources, facilities, equipment and, indeed, people's time - belong to the University. We therefore have an obligation to use them responsibly.

And stewardship is not simply about avoiding wrongdoing. It is also about making good choices.

Our resources will never be unlimited. Leadership therefore requires prioritisation. What matters most? Where can we achieve

the greatest impact? What can we do differently? What resources can we mobilise ourselves rather than waiting for Central Administration?

I want our Heads, Deans, Directors and Provosts to think increasingly as institution builders. Do not simply administer what you inherited. Improve it. Understand the University, but do not become trapped by bureaucracy

The University of Ghana is a large and complex institution. There are statutes, policies, procedures, committees and established lines of authority, and for good reason.

Over these three days, you will engage with many of these: financial and audit responsibilities, academic governance, accreditation, promotion, graduate education, our statutes and procedures, sexual harassment and misconduct, customer service, and staff wellbeing.

Please take these sessions seriously. But understanding the rules should not make us bureaucratic for bureaucracy's sake.

Sometimes the easiest answer in a university is, "This is how we have always done it."

As leaders, I expect you to ask another question: Is there a better

way of doing it? Of course, innovation must operate within our governance framework. But rules should enable the mission of the University, not become an excuse for inertia.

Keep the student at the centre

Whatever unit you lead, never lose sight of why the University exists. Our structures do not exist to serve themselves. Ultimately, they must support our core mission of teaching, learning, research and service to society.

For those of you leading academic units particularly, I want you to pay close attention to the student experience. What happens when a student enters your department? How quickly do we respond to enquiries? Are our programmes current? Are we exposing students sufficiently to industry and professional practice? Are we using technology effectively? Are we preparing them for a rapidly changing world?

Our students experience the University through their daily encounters with us. A student who cannot get a response to an email, who waits unnecessarily for a result, or who is sent from office to office experiences that as the University of Ghana.

Leadership therefore happens in those seemingly small things as

much as it does in our major policies and strategies.

And finally, lead beyond your unit

One temptation in university leadership is to become very protective of our individual territories - my department, my school, my college, my directorate. But we are one University. Your responsibility is certainly to advocate for your unit, but your leadership responsibility extends beyond it.

Sometimes what is best for your department may not be what is best for the School. What is best for the School may not be what is best for the College. And what is best for one College may not necessarily be what is best for the University as a whole.

Good institutional leadership requires us occasionally to rise above our immediate interests and ask: what is in the best interest of the University of Ghana?

Colleagues, leadership at this University is a privilege, yet it is a demanding responsibility. You will make mistakes. All leaders do. Learn from them. Seek advice. Listen to your teams. Work collaboratively with your colleagues. And when difficult decisions have to be made, have the courage to make them.

But through it all, remember the University's values - Integrity,

Commitment, Respect and Loyalty - and our motto, Integri

Procedamus: Let us progress with integrity.

My hope is that when your respective terms of office come to an end, you will be able to look back and say:

I strengthened what was entrusted to me. I developed people.

I improved systems. And I left my part of the University of Ghana better than I found it. That, I believe, is leadership worth aspiring to.

Once again, congratulations on your appointments. I wish you a productive orientation and, more importantly, a successful and impactful tenure in office.

Thank you, and God bless the University of Ghana.

Professor Nana Aba Appiah Amfo

Orientation for New Office Holders

Vice-Chancellor

August 17, 2026