



UNIVERSITY
OF CENTRAL ASIA

Culture and Values Implementation Strategy

June 2021

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UCA OVERVIEW

The University of Central Asia (UCA) was founded in 2000 as a private, not for profit, secular university through an International Treaty signed by the Presidents of the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, and Kazakhstan, and His Highness the Aga Khan; ratified by their respective parliaments and registered with the United Nations. The Presidents are Patrons of the University, and His Highness is the Chancellor. UCA brings with it the broader commitment and partnership of the Aga Khan Development Network.

As a university focused on the development of mountain societies, UCA's undergraduate programmes are located at its purpose-built world class residential campuses in Naryn, Kyrgyzstan, and Khorog, Tajikistan near the Tien Shan and Pamir mountains, respectively. The Tekeli campus in the mountain ranges of Kazakhstan is expected to start classes at a later stage. The towns of Naryn, Khorog, and Tekeli offer culturally and ecologically rich environments and communities. By locating the campuses in secondary cities and rural settings, UCA hopes to be at the heart of an intellectual and economic transformation in the region. The campuses are also located along the Silk Road, a historic trade and transportation route, which for centuries facilitated the global exchange of goods, cultures, and ideas.

UCA is an international endeavour built on partnerships that promote the exchange of information and resources, the creation of opportunities, and the promotion of excellence in higher education within and beyond Central Asia. UCA partnerships cross political borders and sectors. Generous support from the region's governments, the international donor community, philanthropists, and His Highness the Aga Khan have enabled the University to undertake this unique endeavour.

UCA Mission

The mission of UCA is to promote the social and economic development of Central Asia, particularly its mountain communities, by offering an internationally recognized standard of higher education, and enabling the peoples of the region to preserve their rich cultural heritage as assets for the future. UCA seeks to contribute leadership, ideas, and innovations to the economies and communities of the region through educational and vigorous research programmes that produce knowledgeable, skilled, and creative graduates.

UCA General Values:

1. UCA is a secular university offering programs of education, research and related service which contribute directly to the long-term betterment of the economic and social conditions of the Central Asian Mountain Region, of mountain populations generally, and to the preservation and development of natural environments and the cultural values that sustain them.
2. UCA is open to all persons of either gender of whatever religion, race, ethnicity, nationality, or domicile, who are selected on merit reflected in the highest standards of competence, integrity, and efficiency.
3. UCA expects all its employees to act in a professional manner – perform their duties with skill, honesty, integrity, care, and diligence.
4. UCA expects all employees to conduct themselves as law abiding and responsible persons; to show respect for diversity and difference; to respect the rights of members of UCA community; and to follow all UCA rules and policies.

UCA VALUES

The UCA values supports each other, and the expected behaviours support multiple values. These six values are all anchored in the core value of Service to Humanity.

Service to Humanity

- We believe service to others is more important than self-interest.
- We understand all communities do not share the same privileges due to history and geography.
- We believe we all share the moral responsibility to serve humanity and to build capacity.
- We believe development of peoples and communities results in a richness for all.
- We believe in the equality and dignity of all persons as the foundation of ethical conduct in research, teaching, learning, and service.
- We value the volunteerism and encourage our students to volunteer on campus and in the communities in which we live.

Supporting Behaviours:

- We build capacity in our students, staff, faculty and in the communities in which we operate. This includes our campus communities and the town and country in which we operate.
- We demonstrate compassion for those who have different needs.
- We have a long-term vision for solid capacity building in Central Asia and will proactively help and support our communities.
- We consistently help others – students and colleagues, even if there is no personal benefit.
- We, students, staff, and faculty are active civic citizens and engage in volunteer work in our communities.

Entrepreneurship and Innovation

- We are knowledge driven and embrace the challenge of learning and growth opportunities from our experiences from around the world.
- We conduct research that addresses challenging problems and issues of our mountainous communities.
- We are agile and responsive to the changing needs of our students and the communities in which we operate.
- We value creativity and innovation from the genesis of ideas through to the dissemination of knowledge.
- We value and welcome learning at all stages of life and strive to provide intellectually rewarding educational opportunities to the communities we serve.



- We value academic freedom of inquiry and institutional autonomy as fundamental to open inquiry and the pursuit of truth.
- We embrace diversity and pluralism and recognize that we will need cultural humility demonstrated by open minds and open hearts to understand all those that we learn with, work with, and live with in our communities.

Supporting Behaviours:

- We anticipate and embrace change and respond with creative solutions.
- We challenge the status quo and consider failure as learning opportunities.
- We are bold, work hard, take initiative, and share ideas finding new ways to drive forward.
- We show pride in work and achievements.
- We consistently demonstrate persistence when faced with challenges.
- We support academic freedom to express ideas through respectful discourse and the pursuit of open discussion, without risk of censure.
- We avoid making assumptions and always strive to verify the situation.
- We pause, reflect, and consciously consider the risk of potential outcomes before making decisions or taking action.
- We reflect before reacting and responding to challenging situations.
- We demonstrate genuine interest in others by asking effective questions, thoughtfully and patiently listening to answers.
- We acknowledge we do not have all the answers and ask thoughtful questions to understand.

Respect

- We work to create a respectful and inclusive environment where each person feels welcomed and has a sense of belonging and can do their best work as students, faculty, and staff.
- We respect one another about their identity, their ideas, and actions, recognizing that our success depends upon the commitment, capabilities, and diversity of our team members.
- We value and respect the **history and traditions** of the mountainous peoples, our university, celebrating with pride our people, achievements, and contributions to society.
- We respect the environment and engage in individual behaviours and organizational policies and practices to protect it.
- We value our colleagues and their need, skills, and experiences.
- We are inclusive of others and show we care.



Supporting Behaviours:

- We provide development and learning opportunities for all students, faculty, and staff to create engaged and empowered colleagues to perform their work with excellence.
- We seek positive and constructive feedback.
- We listen with intent to understand.
- We respect, support each other, and uphold realistic mutual expectations of our peers and colleagues.
- We engage in individual behaviours and organizational policies and practices to protect the environment.

Collective Strength

- We know we get the best results when we can leverage the best of all of us. We work together and take the time to understand each other's roles, in support of helping each other achieve our goals and deliver the best possible outcomes.
- We believe in transparency and know open communication inspires high discretionary effort in student, staff, and faculty.
- We strive for quality in how we work with each other, and within the communities we work and live in.
- We believe working collectively build capacity in our students, staff, faculty and in the communities in which we operate.
- We value the volunteerism, and the contributions volunteers make to the strengthening of UCA and the communities in which we operate.



Supporting Behaviours:

- We trust and collaborate with each other and with others.
- We have open communication. Team members give and accept feedback as well as cultivating team spirit of constructive criticism. We work to put the right people in the right place doing the right thing.
- We commit to team leadership and accountability. Team members have certain freedom when it comes to decision-making, they accept individual accountability and personal responsibility for their actions.
- We promote open, honest, and timely communication so that everybody understands how and why decisions are made.
- We remain calm in stressful situations and support each other through those times.
- We share, recognize, and celebrate our successes and have fun.

Integrity

- We are ethical and trustworthy in our relationships with all stakeholders.
- Our faculty and employees demonstrate sound moral and ethical principles at work. Honesty and trust are central to our integrity. They act with honour and truthfulness with students, each other and all our stakeholders.
- We are responsible in conduct and actions and delivering upon our respective and reciprocal commitments. We understand how they impact others.

Supporting Behaviours:

- We do what we say we will do, and we do it the right thing for the right reasons.
- We are accountable for our actions.
- We are open, authentic, and sincere.
- We, the students, staff, and faculty, are engaged citizens and neighbours in the community. Our students learn and actively practice civic engagement.



- We own our mistakes and apologize engage in corrective actions.
- We consistently demonstrate the values of UCA.
- We consistently act in the best long-term interests of the mountainous communities in which operate.
- We do not abuse power or authority.
- We take prompt action in cases of unprofessional or unethical behaviour.

Excellence

- We value **excellence** in teaching, leaning, research, and creative activity that enriches learning experiences, advances knowledge, inspires engaged citizenship, and promotes the public good.
- We strive for quality in everything we do – research, teaching, community development and leadership.
- We are committed to responsible growth and continuous improvement.
- We overcome challenges and pursue exemplary results.

Supporting Behaviours:

- We have a “can do” spirit delivers top performance.
- We ensure our decisions and actions are thoughtfully made, considering both internal and external influences and UCA’s goals and values.
- We consistently demonstrate professional competence.
- We avoid a “that’s the way we have always done it” and look for continuously improving our systems and processes.
- We avoid shortcuts. We are disciplined in applying processes to mitigate risk.



OBJECTIVES

This implementation for the Values and Cultural Behaviours is developed to actualize the Values through the identified behaviours. The activities in the plan are intended to establish a culture to be:

- **Shared:** It resides in shared behaviours, values, and assumptions and is most experienced through the norms and expectations of a group—that is, the unwritten rules.
- **Pervasive:** Culture permeates multiple levels and applies very broadly in an organization. It is manifest in collective behaviours, physical environments, group rituals, visible symbols, stories, and legends.
- **Enduring:** Culture defines thoughts and actions of group members over the long term. It develops through the collective life of a group. People are drawn to organizations with characteristics like their own; organizations are more likely to select individuals who seem to “fit in”. Thus, culture becomes a self-reinforcing social pattern that grows increasingly resistant to change and outside influences.
- **Implicit:** An important and often overlooked aspect of culture is that despite its subliminal nature, people are effectively hardwired to recognize and respond to it instinctively. It acts as a kind of silent language.

These activities and education will:

- Foster an outstanding employee experience that honours diverse skills, experiences, and perspectives.
- Build and maintain a psychologically safe workplace for all staff, faculty, students, and volunteers.
- Ensure the workplace is respectful and inclusive of all staff, faculty, and volunteers.
- Ensure high morale of staff, faculty, students, and volunteers.
- Engage the full productivity and discretionary effort of all employees through a respectful and inclusive culture to achieve organizational goals.
- Ensure student engagement in building a positive culture.
- Ensure student learning so they take these values into the world after graduation.
- Maintain a competitive edge and be an employer of choice in the region.
- Support fair and equitable growth and development, and succession planning
- Improve the employee experience and promote employee retention.

In order to have change that is embedded into the culture and is long term we must address individual behaviours and the systems and process – the implementation plan attempts to address both these areas. The objectives and activities are aimed at increasing awareness first, so we can address the systems and processes in meaningful and effective ways.

This triangle attempts to capture the multiple areas that need to be addressed:

Ideology / Values:

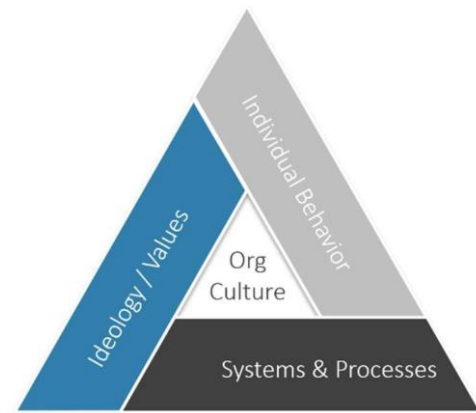
- Mission, vision, goals,
- Values
- Business principles

Systems & Processes:

- Performance management
- Succession planning
- Communication processes and tools
- Decision making processes
- Rituals and events
- Learning and development opportunities
- Recruitment of employees and volunteers
- Recognition

Individual Behaviour:

- Team behaviours, individual interactions, leader, and management behaviours
- Internal communications



This plan endeavours to reach staff, faculty, volunteers, and students in multiple areas over a four-phase plan. Phase one focuses on individual behaviour and once there is a personal awareness and understanding the work of addresses the systems and processes begins.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

We know Organizational Culture is everyone’s responsibility. It is important for all business units, faculties, and individuals – executives, leaders, staff, faculty, and students to embrace and reflect the commitment to these values in their behaviours and decision making consistently.

Along with the collective responsibilities, different levels within the organization play various roles in supporting, and implementing, the Values and Culture Implementation Plan. This ranges from, ensuring the values and cultural behaviours are part of annual individual and business unit performance plans, to ensuring the day-to-day behaviours live these values.

Executive Leadership will be provided by the Organizational Culture Committee and supported by the Director Human Resources. All Executive and Leaders will lead by example and champion efforts across the organization. All employees will demonstrate behaviours of consistent with these values.

The implementation plan assigns responsibility for specific activities.

