



PROTESTANT INSTITUTE OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES (PIASS)

OFFICE OF THE VICE CHANCELLOR

P.O. Box 619 Butare Rwanda- Phone: (+ 250)788310 811

Web site: www.piass.ac.rw Email: vice.chancellor@piass.ac.rw, fathebu@yahoo.fr

PROTESTANT INSTITUTE OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES (PIASS)



PIASS STUDENTS SUPPORT POLICY



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1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF PROTESTANT INSTITUTE OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

The institution which later on became the Protestant Institute of Arts and Social Sciences was founded in 1970 by mainline protestant churches that were operating in Rwanda. The institution was then called “Ecole de Theologie de Butare: ETB” (Butare School of Theology). In 1990, it was upgraded into Faculty of Protestant Theology of Butare (FTPB) which got official accreditation in 1993 by the convention No 1552 of 09 December 1993. In the same year, the convention No 1554/09.2/01/02 acknowledged the degrees delivered by the FTPB.

In the aftermath of 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, the founders of the institution, in the collaboration with the FTPB national and international partners deployed a lot of efforts to help FTPB resume its activities in such a way that specific needs of a recovering society could be met. In that perspective, a so-called Special Program was launched in 1995 and lasted till 2001: three successive intakes of students have been trained over two years and educated in contextual and practical theological training through those kinds of crash courses. The graduates of the Special program were awarded with Diploma in Protestant Theology. As of 1999, the FTPB returned to the ordinary four years’ program of Hon. Bachelor’s degree in Protestant Theology.

In 2009, the FTPB grew up and was supplemented by two new Faculties: The Faculty of Education (FED) and the Faculty of Development Studies (FDS) within the new framework of “Institut Protestant des Sciences Humaines de Butare (IPSHB)”. Those two new fields have been chosen based on the experiences and expertise acquired by Protestant Churches in Rwanda. In 2010, the French name was changed to Protestant Institute of Arts and Social Sciences (PIASS). The new Institution (PIASS) has been respectively accredited by the Ministerial Order no 09/11 of November 2009 licensing “Institut Protestant des Sciences Humaines de Butare (IPSHB)” and the ministerial order n°29 of 19/07/2010 recognizing the Institute under the new name of Protestant Institute of Arts and Social Sciences (PIASS).



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1.1. PIASS Philosophy

PIASS holds the view that faith and science are indispensable tools for any society to survive and harness moral obligation of people to creatively improve the socio-economic environment in which they can survive and realize their potential. This can only be achieved through a well-conceptualized educational and scientific package through which everyone must rightfully experience and acquire the tools to facilitate this philosophy.

1.2. PIASS's Statement of Faith

PIASS affirms the following as fundamental to Christian belief, practice, and behavior.

1. The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as the written Word originally given by God through revelation to humans, are inspired, true, and entirely trustworthy in all that it intends to teach, and have supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct since they contain all things necessary for salvation.
2. There is ONE GOD, eternally existent in Three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
3. God is the Creator and Sustainer of the world and of life thanks to His universal sovereignty over all that He has made in heaven and on earth.
4. Our Lord Jesus Christ, incarnated God, was conceived through the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, true God, and a true man without sin. His bodily resurrection, His ascension, His present mediatorial work, and His personal return in Power and Glory to judge the living and the dead remain a firm source of our hope for the present and life to come.
5. The Holy Spirit, one of the persons of the Trinity, witnesses to Christ, regenerates, and sanctifies us. His indwelling enables us to witness and serve the Triune God and humankind through different spiritual gifts and talents.
6. Man and woman were created by God in His image, free and responsible to choose good or evil. By sin, human beings were corrupted in their nature and were separated from their Creator.



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7. Salvation for humans remains the work of God, accomplished through Jesus Christ's expiatory death and bodily resurrection. In His grace, God justifies the sinner through faith alone.
8. The unity of all those who, through believing and confessing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the Saviour of the world, form a community of children of God, the Church, the Body of Christ of which He is the Head.
9. The bodily resurrection of all the dead, the final judgment, and the establishment of the eternal kingdom of Christ.

As a Church-owned institution, PIASS's overall conviction and calling are to build a world in which the love of God for His creation and that we have for one another is visible and lived in concrete experiences. To stand firm in its faith and succeed in its mission, the following commitments and strategies are set as safeguards:

1. PIASS is committed to reading, teaching, and preaching the Holy Scriptures in their plain and canonical sense through an in-depth analysis, and to applying their message.
2. PIASS is committed to promoting Ecumenism within it and among Protestant Churches in Rwanda and beyond as an opportunity and strategy to affirm our Christian witness and fight against separatism, destructive fundamentalism, and any form of extremism.
3. PIASS is engaged in the ministry of reconciliation and search for peace within surrounding communities, in the Rwandan society, and in the Great Lakes sub-region.
4. PIASS is committed to supporting initiatives likely to improve the living conditions of communities.
5. PIASS is committed to supporting the weakest among us and to building healing communities where everyone finds a place.

1.3. PIASS Vision

“To be a reference university, fostering knowledge development and research that is relevant for the society and inspired by Christian ethics and values.”



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1.4. PIASS Mission

“To provide Society and Churches with well trained personnel who are inquisitive, solution oriented, committed and equipped with intellectual tools that enable them to meeting specific needs of societies that are moving to a global, modern and pluralistic world.”

1.5. PIASS Moto

Fides et Scientia (Faith and Science): By this moto, PIASS assumes that faith and science are interwoven to ensure the quality of life.

1.6. PIASS Objectives

PIASS as Higher Learning Institution has the following objectives:

- To develop practical and applicable knowledge in social as well as economic development.
- To impart a high-quality teaching enabling creation of employment and that proves relevant to communities is close to reality, helpful for the society at large.
- To contribute to the positive transformation of society using short teaching and training, research, consultancy and projects and respect to ethical dimension.
- To contribute to local and national sustainable development by promoting scientific and technological research as well as research for integrated development.

1.7. Principles and values

Being a Protestant institution of Higher Education, PIASS ethical values are grounded in its statement of faith.

- **Liberation:** As the Gospel of Christ liberates from all human alienations here and now, bearing witness to it cannot go without running social dialogue with the society and serving the poor.
- **Relevance:** Higher education plays a key role in construction and development of a just, equitable and stable society through the training of committed, responsible and professionally competent citizens.



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- **Unity in Diversity:** Open and respectful exchange of ideas along with evidence-based documentation is essential to higher education contribution to a pluralistic society.
- **Effectiveness and efficiency:** Finding out the optimal and cost-effective way to reach objectives, in changing environment and limitation of resources and keeps on being result and solution oriented.
- **Quality Service Delivery:** Training, research, and services to both national and international communities must be qualitative and competitive.
- **Innovation:** Teaching and learning processes are considering changing needs of churches and society and therefore programs are continually assessed and improved accordingly in a spirit of creativity and entrepreneurship at all levels.
- **Responsibility:** Teachers, students and administrative staff, to achieve their job, are expected to make decisions, act upon their choices, delegate and report openly.
- **Solidarity:** Promoting a gender balanced culture and stressing on the needs of disadvantaged groups.
- **Collaboration:** Fostering team spirit and looking for win-win partnerships with other institutions of higher learning.
- **Transparency:** Managing resources of the institution in a rigorous and transparent manner.
- **Good Governance:** Fairness, equity without discrimination, clear delegation and decentralization are adopted at all levels of the institution.
- **Prayerful life:** Prayer as a conversation with God and a means for self-examination can bring about a sense of inner peace, spiritual refreshment, and more commitment to sever God, fellow humans, and the whole creation.
- **Hard work:** The necessity for hard work is not only a way to attain prosperity and wealth for oneself and society, but it also remains a calling to fulfill the mandate given to human beings to take care of creation and fructify it in a sustainable way.
- **Equality and Inclusivity:** All members of the PIASS community are equal. We believe in a fair and respectful manner so that each member of the PIASS community has an equal opportunity to contribute to the University's operations. We promote the safety, security



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and wellbeing of society and our environment by acting in accordance with the University's equality and diversity policy.

Student Support and Guidance

The student support guidance is designed to provide accurate information on student support matters. The purpose of PIASS students support policy is to inform students about existing counseling support and guidance policies that relate to progression, retention, exchange programs, scholarships, employability and the enhancement of the student experiences. Information provided include advice, guidance, negotiation, advocacy, representation, mentoring/coaching, access and various opportunities.

Student support at PIASS is intended to provide for differences in the student's levels and their ability to learn, their social life and other challenges which the student may meet while pursuing their studies at PIASS and at partner institution hosting exchange programs. PIASS Students support mechanisms describe the approach to the delivery of careers, information, advice and guidance.

1. Student's scholarship

Part of students support, PIASS offers scholarships to students as follow:

1.1. Hitimana scholarship funds

Through Hitimana Scholarship Fund, students who performed well but with difficulties to pay their tuition fees are given scholarship covering half of the tuition fees. Students shall be selected based on the economic status, based on the ubudehe categorization.

1.2. Through Peace scholarship

Peace scholarships applicant are requested to submit their application file showing their previous records. Shortlisted candidates upon the criteria announced during the advertisement, sit for exam. The successful candidates are given full scholarship. For international students, their application files are assessed by a scholarship committee. The major decisive factors are the academic record (best performance), working experience in peace-building related positions.

1.3. Students Exchange programs

PIASS with close identified international academic institutions, sends and receives students each year for exchange program. Students from PIASS who are selected go abroad for short



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course or internship, are assisted securing passport and Visa for the stay, including accommodation and living expenses.

2. Personal tutoring system

PIASS believes that its students should have regular opportunities to review the academic, personal and professional aspects of their development as they progress through their course. Personal Academic Tutoring complements both direct course delivery by academic staff and specialist support services.

Best students in each class are identified, work close to the lecturer or HOD in charge of the program in the mentorship process for students in need

3. Personal Development Planning

The university's program specification and review processes enable programs to be delivered ensuring that specific skills and attributes are linked to employer-sector needs. The review processes take care of the specific needs of students, particularly to support the employability of students, opportunities for students to meet and work with professionals, as well as furthering their studies abroad.

PIASS identifies and understands career and future needs of students. This is gauged through partnership within the national and international higher learning Institutions, as well as employer engagement, at regional, national and international level.

4. Physical and e-library

The development of online and interactive materials in combination with e-books and audios (for language improvements), are in place in Multimedia and library. Help desk should be open at any time. This is a positive development in helping students to appreciate and develop their competencies and skills as required.

5. Student Guidance.

PIASS Shall develop a well-articulated student grievance procedure whose aim is to provide procedures for the judgment of disagreements between students and faculty. The policy shall, clearly identifies the kind of grievances that the university can handle; academic disagreements, disciplinary matters, academic record disputes, discrimination accusation among others.



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PIASS students should be provided by a Student Handbook, each student is bound to know all policies and regulations contained in the students' handbook.

Other services that the university provides include:

- Careers and alumni service.
- Extra-curricular activities.
- Communication.
- Different clubs related to their respective studies.

6. Computer Laboratories

Vulnerable students are provided laptops, in collaboration with partner organizations. PIASS has 3 computer laboratories (Wireless lab and Network lab) related to the concentrations organized.

7. Counselling services

PIASS has 1 professional counselor and career guidance officer, who help students at any matter related to student's affairs.