



**OPEN UNIVERSITY
OF KENYA**

OFFICE OF THE VICE CHANCELLOR

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SPEECH BY THE VICE CHANCELLOR DURING THE VIRTUAL ORIENTATION OF NEW STUDENTS

Deputy Vice Chancellors,

Members of Senate,

Members of the University Management Board,

Faculty members,

Non-academic staff,

Our distinguished students,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning!

It gives me immense pleasure to welcome you all to the Open University of Kenya (OUK), an institution that is revolutionizing higher education in Kenya and beyond. Today is the beginning of a remarkable journey for you as the fourth cohort of students joining us and I am delighted that you have chosen OUK as your academic home. Here, you will experience the power of integrating technology and innovation and how it can transform society.

As we virtually gather here today, allow me to reflect briefly on the incredible strides this institution has made. OUK was officially Chartered on August 3, 2023, marking a transformative moment in Kenya's higher education landscape. OUK is the first and only fully online public university in Kenya, a testament to our commitment to breaking barriers and making education accessible to all. Here, your dreams have no boundaries and your classroom is wherever you are. We make *#Masomomkononi* a reality.

Inasmuch as we are an online university, we have administrative offices at Konza Technopolis-also known as the Silicon Savannah-situated in Machakos-Makueni counties. It is the hub of technological advancement and is, thus, ideal for hosting our infrastructure which supports your virtual learning. Feel free to visit and know your university whenever you have time.

Currently,

we have a student population of about two thousand three hundred (2300). This number is expected to increase with the imminent launch of nineteen new programmes and a range of professional development courses. Our student population spans eighteen (18) countries including Kenya, Uganda, Lesotho, South Sudan, Zambia, Ukraine, Netherlands among others. With you onboard, you have become our student ambassadors. We encourage you to preach the gospel of the Open University of Kenya to your kith and kin.

Last year, we celebrated a historic milestone—the inaugural Graduation Ceremony held on Friday, November 29, 2024 here at the Konza Technopolis. It was a day filled with pride, hope and inspiration as our first cohort of students graduated, a momentous achievement not only for the graduates but for the entire OUK community. Presided over by the Chancellor, Dr. James Mwangi, the Ceremony saw the awarding of seventy eight (78) Postgraduate Diplomas to students primarily

from the School of Business and Economics and the School of Education. Their success reflects the limitless potential of an institution committed to academic excellence and innovative delivery of education.

Now, as you embark on your journey as the fourth cohort, let me assure you that you are entering a university that champions flexibility, affordability, accessibility, inclusivity, quality and driven by cutting-edge technology. At OUK, we have designed programmes and services to meet your unique needs. Our commitment is to support you every step of the way as you balance your studies with your personal and professional lives. We have invested in robust online learning platforms, a dedicated faculty and a support team ready to ensure your experience here is fulfilling and enriching.

Allow me to highlight why the Open University of Kenya (OUK) is truly unique and stands out from other institutions.

- a) As a government institution, we are dedicated to delivering **Quality** education that is accessible to every Kenyan, supporting the nation's development through lifelong learning opportunities.
- b) **Flexibility** is at the heart of our model, enabling you to learn at your own pace, on your own schedule and from any location. This makes it easy to integrate education into your busy life.
- c) **Accessibility** is another cornerstone of OUK. By eliminating barriers of geography and time, we ensure that anyone—whether in Kenya or anywhere in the world—has equal access to quality education.
- d) We are also a highly **Affordable** institution. Our fees are nearly a third of what other universities charge, ensuring that quality education is within reach for many more students.
- e) Finally, we pride ourselves on being an **Inclusive** university. We celebrate diversity and go the extra mile to provide resources and, support services to ensure that all students, faculty and staff thrive.

Dear students,

While OUK is here to empower you, your success depends on your discipline, commitment and determination. Online learning requires you to be self-motivated

and proactive. Engage actively in your programmes, interact with your lecturers, connect with your peers and utilize the wealth of resources available to you.

As the pioneers of a new era in education, you are not just students—you are trailblazers, shaping the narrative of online learning in Kenya and beyond. The skills and knowledge you gain here will equip you to solve real-world challenges and make meaningful contributions to society.

In closing,

I encourage you to make the most of your time here. Embrace the opportunities, rise to the challenges and remember that OUK is more than just an institution—it is a community that believes in your potential.

Once again, welcome to the Open University of Kenya. I wish you all the best in your academic journey.

God bless you. God bless OUK. God bless Kenya.

PROF. ELIJAH OMWENGA

AG. VICE CHANCELLOR

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