DAY 1: WEDNESDAY 11, NOVEMBER, 2026

ADDRESS BY THE VICE CHANCELLOR, PROFESSOR PETER OLAMAKINDE OLAPEGBA, C. Psych., FSSAN, FNPA, fspsp, AT THE CONGREGATION ADMISSION TO FIRST DEGREES IN THE FACULTIES OF ARTS, SCIENCE, BASIC MEDICAL SCIENCES, CLINICAL SCIENCES, PUBLIC HEALTH, DENTISTRY AND PHARMACEUTICAL SCIENCES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN ON WEDNESDAY, 11 NOVEMBER 2026

Deputy Vice Chancellor (Administration)
Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic)
Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research, Innovation and Strategic Partnerships)
Registrar
Bursar
University Librarian
Provosts of the College of Medicine and of the Postgraduate College
Deans of Faculties and of Students
Directors of Institutes and Centers
Heads of Departments
Members of Senate
Members of Congregation
President and members of the Student Union Executive
Members of the Students' Representative Council
Our Honoured Graduands
Parents and Guardians of our Graduands
Gentlemen of the Press
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

It is with profound gratitude to Almighty God that I address you on this historic occasion in the life of our great University. It is indeed a pleasure to welcome you to the opening day of the 2026 Convocation Ceremony of the University of Ibadan, Nigeria's premier university. The 78th Convocation Ceremony is not merely an occasion to celebrate academic accomplishments; it is also an opportunity to reflect on our rich heritage, acknowledge the collective efforts that have sustained our progress, and reaffirm our commitment to the ideals of excellence, integrity and service upon which this great institution was founded more than seven decades ago.

Our institution remains resolute in its commitment to academic excellence, the advancement of knowledge, the development of high-level manpower and service to society. The significant achievements recorded in recent times underscore our enduring commitment to innovation, scholarship and institutional advancement, further strengthening our standing within Nigeria, across Africa and in the global academic community.

This year, a total of Six Thousand and Twenty-Five (6,025) students are graduating across all faculties, including the Distance Learning Centre and our Affiliated Institutions.

Notably, an inspiring Five Hundred and Nine (509) of these exceptional students are graduating with First Class Honours, representing excellence across our diverse disciplines.

As we look across the diverse and vibrant tapestry of our academic community today, excellence shines brilliantly in every faculty and programme. We celebrate an exceptional cohort of scholars who have attained the ultimate zenith of undergraduate success, which is the First Class Honours.

Let us proudly recognize our trailblazers: 75 brilliant minds from the Faculty of Arts, 68 from Science, 4 from Basic Medical Sciences, 19 from Clinical Sciences, and 7 from Public Health. Furthermore, through our flexible and expanded learning pathways, we honour an extraordinary 1,906 first-class graduates from the Distance Learning Centre, alongside 859 exemplary scholars from our Affiliated Institutions.

To each of these remarkable achievers, spanning every discipline and mode of study: your hard work, resilience, and intellectual rigour have set a new benchmark for greatness and this Institution is proud of you.

Congratulations to the Graduands

I send my warmest congratulations to our graduating students. Today marks the end of years of hard work, discipline, and perseverance. Graduating from the University of Ibadan gives you a head start in life. You have built confidence, skills, and strong character to take on future opportunities.

Your degree represents your capacity to make meaningful contributions to society through knowledge, innovation and effective problem-solving. As you embark on the next phase of your journey, remember that the world values competence, initiative and the ability to translate ideas into practical solutions. Remain focused, embrace challenges with determination, and pursue every endeavour with integrity and excellence that the University of Ibadan is known for. With discipline, vision and commitment, you can achieve remarkable success and make a lasting impact on society.

The Legacy of a Premier Institution

The University of Ibadan was founded in 1942 in a special arrangement with the University of London. In 1962, the University became an independent university and Nigeria's first degree-awarding institution. From these modest beginnings, UI has grown into one of Africa's most prestigious universities. Our alumni network has made great contributions to Nigeria’s progress in

education, politics, business, economics, and culture. Our graduates have served as vice president, governors, ministers, business leaders, religious figures, and cultural icons. The University of Ibadan remains a leader in learning and a symbol of national pride.

From our early days offering programs only in Arts, Science, and Medicine, we have grown into a major center for learning. We now have over 130 academic departments across 23 Faculties and Institutes, as well as 2 prominent Colleges.

Our Postgraduate College is a clear leader in postgraduate education in Nigeria and one of the largest in Africa, training skilled experts for the nation and the world, while our College of Medicine is adjudged the best in medical and clinical training in sub-saharan Africa.

We are steadily moving toward our goal of becoming an institution focused primarily on postgraduate studies producing skilled manpower to proffer professional solutions to the multifaceted and myriad challenges in the society.

Our Distance Learning Centre (ODLC) teaches over ten thousand (10,000) learners per level, making quality higher education widely accessible. Currently, it offers sixteen (16) programs across six (6) faculties.

We are proud to state that the University of Ibadan hosts The Pan African University Life and Earth Sciences Institute (PAULESI) on behalf of West Africa. PAULESI is an initiative of the African Union centred on producing high-level manpower to tackle the developmental problems of Africa. It attracts students from across the continent, strengthening the University of Ibadan's role as a major hub for African academic collaboration.

The University of Ibadan is consistently recognized among the rated universities globally. The latest universities ranking by the Times Higher Education (THE) ranked Ibadan as 1st in Nigeria, 1st in West Africa 4th in Africa and in the 800-1001 globally (THE 2026/2027). Sixty-Five (65) of our scientists were named among the top 2% of researchers worldwide in the prestigious Stanford/Elsevier Ranking.

We remain committed to academic excellence, inclusion, and updating our curriculum and research facilities so our graduates remain globally competitive. We will continue our efforts in building stronger partnerships with industry and society to turn learning into meaningful careers and community impact. Above all, we will maintain an inclusive campus where diversity is respected, hard work is rewarded, and all students and staff can thrive.

Reflections on Our Nation in 2026

The year 2026 brought both challenges and triumphs for Nigeria. We faced economic hardship and social tension. Even so, Nigerians showed remarkable resilience, unity, and hope for a better future.

The education sector faced these same struggles, dealing with funding constraints and infrastructure issues. Universities have also dealt with deteriorating infrastructure, experts leaving the country ("brain drain"), and the need to quickly adapt to rapid technological changes. While these difficulties tested our strength, they also sparked fresh ideas and made us even more committed to our goals. Despite all these challenges, the University of Ibadan has continued to thrive and excel. I must put on record the efforts of the President Tinubu-led administration to reverse the downward trend in the educational sector. Notable amongst which are, improvement in the condition of service of both the academic and non-academic staff in the university which has stemmed the tide of strikes, pushing on with NELFUND thereby making life a lot easier for students, particularly the less privileged and interventions in infrastructure upgrade through TETFund and NEEDS Assessment.

I must express my gratitude for the support from our dedicated former students (alumni). Their generous donations and practical help have played a key role in driving our progress.

As we mark another significant milestone in the history of our great institution, it is important to honour the distinguished leaders whose vision, sacrifices and commitment have shaped our legacy of excellence. I pay tribute to all former Principals of the University College, Ibadan, and former Vice-Chancellors of the University of Ibadan, whose foresight and exemplary leadership established the firm foundations upon which we continue to build.

I particularly acknowledge my immediate predecessor, Professor Kayode Oyebode Adebowale, mni, FAS, whose tenure as Vice-Chancellor ended only a few days ago. During his tenure, the University consolidated its position as Nigeria's premier university, maintained its global visibility, expanded critical infrastructure, strengthened its research capacity and broadened its international partnerships. His leadership made significant contributions to the advancement of our institutional goals and prepared the University for even greater accomplishments.

Ultimately, the true measure of leadership lies not simply in the duration of service, but in the lasting impact it makes. As the saying goes, *leadership leaves footprints long after the footsteps have faded.* Professor Adebowale's legacy remains evident in the progress of our University and in the enduring contributions he has made to its development. We express our profound appreciation for his dedicated service and commend him for his invaluable contribution to the University of Ibadan.

Academic Performance and Global Rankings

The University of Ibadan recorded an impressive performance in global university rankings this year, further affirming its position as a leading institution of higher learning. In the QS World University Rankings 2026, UI emerged as the highest-ranked university in Nigeria, a position it also attained in the Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings 2026. Furthermore, the U.S. News & World Report Best Global Universities Rankings placed the

University fourth in Africa. These distinctions are a testament to our unwavering commitment to academic excellence, high-impact research, and the advancement of knowledge. They also reinforce our resolve to strengthen the University's global visibility and consolidate its reputation as a centre of academic distinction and innovation in Africa.

In expanding our academic horizon, the Senate on August 31, 2026, approved the creation of the Faculty of Physiotherapy, making it the very first Faculty of Physiotherapy in West Africa following successful resource verification by the National Universities Commission (NUC).

Research, Innovations, and Strategic Grants

Our faculty and researchers have continued to drive scholarship with societal impact, generating over 225 peer-reviewed publications in the Faculty of Public Health alone. Epidemiology and Medical Statistics contributed over 125 publications, including contributions to the Global Burden of Disease Study 2023, with three of its academic staff ranked among the World's Top 2% Scientists. Environmental Health Sciences registered 9 patents and innovations, including an aflatoxin detoxifier and an object-detection safety vest. Health Promotion and Education attracted major international grants valued at over US$100 million (supported by NIH/NIA and MRC), hosted the ongoing SHARPER project on pandemic preparedness, and produced a Manual of Stress Management Intervention for Nigerian Police Officers.

Our departments have continued to turn out world-class graduates:

The Department of Human Nutrition and Dietetics graduated 72 undergraduate finalists. The Department of Maternal and Child Health Nursing achieved a 100% pass rate in the March and September 2026 Midwifery Professional Examinations. The Department of Environmental Health Sciences graduated 23 undergraduates and currently trained 302 students under the newly introduced Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS).

Appointments and Recognitions

Our academic staff and students have earned prestigious national and global honors over the past year:

Professor T.O. Ogundiran, Provost of the College of Medicine, was appointed to serve on UNESCO's International Bioethics Committee (IBC) for a four-year term (2026–2029).
Professor Moshood N. Tijani of the Department of Geology was awarded the prestigious UNESCO Chair on "Groundwater Assessment, Climate Change and Environmental-Socio-hydrological Systems". Professor E.O. Olapade-Olaopa was appointed by the Federal Ministry of Health to the Strategic Training & Reform Implementation Advisory Panel (STRIAP) and was elected as President-Elect of the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME), assuming office in January 2027.

Professor Godwin Ogbole of Radiology received the Senior Fellow Award from the International Society of Magnetic Resonance in Medicine (ISMRM) in Cape Town—the first African to receive this award in the society's history. Professors J.O. Olopade, Oyedunni Arulogun, and T.A. Lawal were elected Fellows of the African Academy of Sciences. Professor Olukemi K. Amodu was elected Fellow of the Nigerian Academy of Science and Fellow of the Royal Society of Biology, while Professors B.J. Brown, A.E. Orimadegun, and Olusola O. Olawoye were admitted as Fellows of the Nigerian Academy of Medicine. Professor Adebola O. Ogunbiyi received the 2026 American Association of Dermatology (AAD) Presidential Citation Award and the Distinguished Fellowship of the National Postgraduate Medical College of Nigeria. Dr. Ridwan Kolawole (Department of Communication and Language Arts) was certified as a Solutions Journalism Trainer by the Solutions Journalism Network (USA). Student Excellence: Samuel Ogunleke (400L MLS) led team PINTRA to 2nd place in the Harvard T.H. Chan Health Systems Innovation Lab global competition. Daniel Olaloye Esanju (600L MBBS) was appointed to the Student Task Force at the AMEE 2026 Conference in Vienna. Gabriel Olugbenga Matesun represented the University at the Museum Ideas 2026 Conference in London.

Institutional Infrastructure and Philanthropic Support

We express our profound gratitude to alumni, donors, and industry partners whose generous contributions continue to elevate our learning facilities.

Department of Geology: Received two HP Z2 G9 Workstations and sub-surface software licenses from Baker Hughes Oil Services; solar power installations valued at ₦2.2 million from Prof. O.

A. Okunlola, ₦5 million for binocular microscopes from Dr. Abiodun Ogunjobi, and ₦1 million from the U.I. Chevron Alumni.

Department of Zoology: Benefited from the donation of an Ecology and Environmental Biology Laboratory Building by Mrs. Bola Olajomi- Otubu (CEO, Nathan Pryce Ltd., an alumnae of our Department of Psychology) in honor of HRH Oba (Prof.) A.T. Hassan, along with inverter/solar systems donated by Hon. Dr. (Mrs.) Olaitan Victor and Mr. Olanrewaju Adeogun (valued at ₦4 million).

Researchers in the Department of Zoology continue to attract competitive grants that address critical national and global developmental challenges. Professor Aina O. Adeogun (FAS) is driving impactful research through the Tetfund National Research Fund (NRF) intervention grant.
Dr. Adeola A. Oni serves as the Ecology Team Lead for the UNESCO – IHE DELFT Institute for Water Education project focusing on sustainable and equitable development under constraints of ecosystem conservation and saltwater intrusion in large deltas (2022- 2027). Dr. A.O. Adeyi secured a TETFund NRF Grant for developing multi-potent anti venom against Nigerian snakes, alongside a TETFund institution – Based Research (IBR) Grant targeting diabetic nephropathy.
Dr. D.A Oyebamiji was awarded a TETFund IBR Grant to map parasite reservoirs and zoonotic transmission patterns at Africa's largest open dumpsite, Olusosun in Lagos.

Faculty Distinctions, Awards and Fellowships

Professor Aina O. Adeogun FAS was elected as a fellow of the Nigerian Academy of Science in May 2025, Professor A.A. Bakare FZSN, FAS, FAAS was inducted as a fellow of the African Academy of Science in July 2025, Professor Adesola A. Hassan received the prestigious Life Member Award from the Organisation for Women in Science for the Developing World (OWSD), Ibadan Branch, in May, 2025, Dr. A.O. Adeyi served as Visiting Faculty at the Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, India. Furthermore, the Onabamiro family is appreciated for establishing the Professor Sanya Dojo Onabamiro Annual Awards to honor top performing students in Parasitology.

The College of Medicine benefited from a 4K resolution teleconferencing unit (valued at ₦4.85 million) facilitated by Prof. T.A. Lawal from the NIHR Global Surgery Unit, and a 6.7 KVA solar-powered water pumping system installed in the Faculty of Public Health.

Charge to the Graduands

To our esteemed graduands,

Today marks the triumphant culmination of years of relentless hard work, quiet sacrifices, and unwavering discipline. You came, you persevered, and today you stand victorious. As you step out of the gates of the *First and Best*, remember that you do not leave empty-handed, you carry with you a proud legacy of academic excellence, impeccable character, and dedicated service.

The world awaiting you outside these halls is dynamic, complex, and fast-paced. It is a world that desperately needs innovative thinkers to challenge the status quo, ethical leaders to guide communities with integrity, and resilient problem-solvers who can turn adversity into opportunity. Never doubt the value of the rigorous training you have received here. Let it be your compass.

Go forth with courage, conviction, and passion. Be proud of your roots and strive always to be worthy ambassadors of the University of Ibadan—shining your light brightly in every sphere of human endeavor you find yourself.

Our profound congratulations go out to all our graduating students, your proud parents, supportive guardians, and the entire University of Ibadan community who have journeyed with you through thick and thin.

Thank you, and May God bless the University of Ibadan!

Professor Peter O. Olapegba, C.Psych, FSSAN, FNPA, fspsp

Vice-Chancellor