



**MERU UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

**BOARD OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES**

**Office of the Director**

**Guidelines to Management of Masters and PhD programmes**

**Revised September 2022**

## **Preamble**

The Board of Postgraduate studies shall endeavour to harmonise the management of postgraduate programmes in the University. This will include the period from admission of postgraduate students to award of the degree. Various schools that are currently offering postgraduate programmes have their defined ways on how this is done. In some instances, it may not be clear what should actually be done. This gap forms part of what the board of postgraduate will endeavour to bridge. Whereas each curriculum gives guidelines on how postgraduate programmes are managed, these guidelines define the various processes as well as the roles played by each of the stakeholders in the process of managing the postgraduate students. As a result, the synergy between the Board and the teaching Schools shall ensure that the programmes and students will be well managed to enable the University attain the desired excellence in Science and Technology.

## **Mandate**

The Board is mandated on the following:

- a) The co-ordination of postgraduate syllabuses and regulations.
- b) The admission of postgraduate students.
- c) The administration of postgraduate scholarship.
- d) The administration and processing of postgraduate theses, projects or research papers.
- e) The proper conduct and supervision of the postgraduate studies programme.
- f) The general welfare and discipline of postgraduate students.

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## 1.0 REGULATIONS FOR THE MASTERS DEGREES

### 1.1 Eligibility

1. The following shall be eligible for registration for the Master's degrees in Meru University of Science and technology:
  - a) Holder of a Bachelor's degree of the Meru University of Science and Technology with at least 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Honours (Upper Division) in the relevant field or an equivalent qualification from an Institution recognised by MUST Senate.
  - b) Holder of a Bachelor's degree of the Meru University of Science and Technology with 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Honours (lower Division) in the relevant field or an equivalent qualification from an Institution recognised by MUST Senate and at least two years relevant experience.
  - c) Holder of a Pass in Bachelor's degree of the Meru University of Science and Technology or from an Institution recognised by MUST Senate for Degrees that are not classified.
  - d) A holder of a relevant postgraduate diploma from MUST or an Institution recognised by MUST Senate.

### 1.2 Mode of study

The Master's degrees will be offered either

- a) through coursework, examinations and thesis either by full-time or part-time attendance, where the entire second year of the programme is devoted to the thesis;
- b) Or coursework, examinations and a project either by full-time or part-time attendance;

### 1.3 Duration of Study

The Masters programme shall normally extend over a period of two (2) academic years from the date of registration.

#### **(a) Minimum Duration**

A candidate registered for Masters degree shall carry out a programme of original study or research over a minimum period of one (1) academic year after completion of required coursework and examination and shall submit a thesis or project based on the

study provided that for part-time candidates the minimum period shall be two (2) academic years.

**(b)Maximum Duration**

No candidate for Masters degree shall be registered as a full-time student for more than four (4) academic years or as a part-time student for more than five (5) academic years without submitting his/her thesis/project, except by permission of Senate.

**1.4 Other requirements**

1. Subject to the approval of Senate, Schools/Institutes may require the candidate to attend such a course or courses in the candidate’s area of study or to endow the candidate with specialized skills or knowledge to assist him in his study or research. Performance in courses offered may be assessed.
2. On the recommendation of the Institute/School Board concerned and within the first one year, the Senate may permit a candidate to change his registration status from part-time to full-time student or vice versa once only, in which case regulation 1.3(b) above shall apply to such a candidate as if he/she had initially been admitted to the status he/she now seeks.

## 2.0 REGULATIONS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

### 2.1 Eligibility

The following shall be eligible to apply for registration for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the University:

Either

i) a holder of Master’s degree from the Meru University of Science and Technology;

Or

ii) a holder of a Master’s degree or equivalent academic qualifications of another institution recognised by MUST Senate.

Subject to the approval of Senate, Schools/Institutes may formulate regulations requiring applicants to have obtained such academic or equivalent qualifications as are considered necessary for registration within the academic area of interest of the School/ Institute and

may require applicants to submit to such tests or interviews as the School/Institute regulations permit.

## **2.2 Mode of study**

The Doctor of Philosophy Degrees will be offered through coursework, examinations and thesis also involving full-time/part-time attendance, and where the entire second year and third year of the programme is devoted to the thesis.

In the first year of study the candidate shall attend courses in their academic area of study or to endow the candidate with specialized skills or knowledge to assist him in his/her study or research.

## **2.3 Duration of Study**

### **(a) Minimum Duration**

A candidate registered for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy shall carry out a programme of original study or research over a minimum period of two (2) academic years after completion of required coursework and examination and shall submit a thesis based on the study of research done, provided that for part-time candidates the minimum period shall be three (3) academic years.

### **(b) Maximum Duration**

No candidate for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy shall be registered as a full-time student for more than five (5) academic years or as a part-time student for more than seven (7) academic years without submitting his/her thesis, except by permission of Senate.

On the recommendation of the School Board concerned and within the first one (1) year from the time of registration, the Senate may permit a candidate to change his/her registration status from a part-time to full-time student or vice versa once only, in which case regulation 1.3(b) above shall apply to such a candidate as if s/he had initially been admitted to the status s/he now seeks.

## **3.0 COMMON REGULATIONS FOR THE MASTERS AND DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREES**

### **3.1 Submission and Processing of Applications**

Applications shall be submitted and processed as follows;

### 3.1.1 Expectations: Student

The prospective student shall submit application for admission on the prescribed forms upon payment of requisite fees to the University.

### 3.1.2 Expectations: Department

The department shall through the school/ Institute recommend candidates for registration provided that:

- (i) The proposed field of study is academically sound and can be pursued under the supervision of the University.
- (ii) The candidate has adequate opportunities for consulting his/her supervisor(s) at least once a month.
- (iii) The candidate can obtain access to material relevant to his/her study or research.
- (iv) The candidate has adequate facilities for practical work, where this is applicable.

### 3.1.3 Expectations: School/ Institute

The school/ institute shall recommend and forward the application for admission to BPS.

### 3.1.4 Expectations: BPS

The Board of Postgraduate Studies shall: -

- a) Receive all applications on the prescribed forms.
- b) Process applications in consultation with the Departments in which registration is sought.
- c) Forward to Registrar ASA for registration.

## 3.2 Conduct of Studies and Supervision

### 3.2.1 Expectations: Department

Each department shall have a departmental post graduate committee which shall;

- (i) Create a forum where candidates' concept papers are discussed and topic approved
- (ii) Process recommendations on the appointment of supervisors as guided by the commission for university education guidelines and then forwarded to the BPS through the School/Institute.

To supervise a Masters degree, one shall have a relevant earned Doctorate degree, with at least three (3) years of teaching experience and evidence of research inclination through individual research, supervision of research and theses and involvement in peer reviewed publications. To supervise a Doctorate degree, one shall have an earned Doctorate degree, with at least five (5) years of teaching experience, and evidence of research inclinations



through individual research, supervision of research and theses and involvement in peer reviewed publications.

Unless otherwise stated, two (2) or more supervisors will be appointed for each candidate, from among the academic staff of the Institute/School concerned. However, Institute/School may appoint additional supervisor(s) as they deem necessary in individual cases. Where an additional supervisor is appointed from outside the University, such a supervisor should avail evidence that he/she is competent in the candidate's subject area of study through publications produced since obtaining his/her degree. The curriculum vitae for the proposed external supervisor shall be provided. Allocation of students for supervision to academic members of staff should be done in a fair and equitable manner taking into consideration the area of specialization, funding, teaching load and other related research activities.

- (iii) After the candidate has finalized the proposal, appoint readers and organize for an oral presentation. After oral presentation of the proposal in the department, there should be minutes forwarded together with the refined proposal to the Director Board of Postgraduate Studies through the Dean or Director of School/Institute.
- (iv) Assess the candidate's progress and keep candidates in constant touch through seminar presentations, the frequency to be determined by the department. Any problem facing candidate's supervision should be addressed as soon as it is reported.
- (v) Process recommendations on the appointment of both internal and external examiners for the thesis and then forwarded to the BPS through the School/Institute.

### 3.2.2 Expectations: School/Institute

Each School/ Institute shall have a School/ Institute post graduate committee which shall;

1. receive recommendations on the appointment of supervisors from the Departmental postgraduate committee and then forwarded to the BPS
2. Approve the thesis examiners appointed by the department and appoint two board members for defence after the candidate has given notice to submit the thesis to Board of Postgraduate Studies.
3. Assess the candidate's progress by attending seminar presentations organised by the departments.

4. Meet all postgraduate candidates at the beginning of first, second and third year in the case of PhD.
5. Meet once every three months and as regularly as the demands may arise.
6. Members of the School Post Graduate Committee are valuers of proposal defense corrections at the assigned departments. In their capacity as valuers, they are supposed to read proposals and attend proposal defenses in the assigned department on behalf of the board of post graduate studies and oversee that the corrections recommended by the departmental board members are implemented. Ensure that oral presentations by candidates are conducted in a friendly atmosphere meant to help the candidates and not to humiliate them. Try to give advice on any reported problem with regard to candidates' supervision.
7. Where the progress of a given candidate is so unsatisfactory as to result in his/her being de-registered, such a candidate shall be given a written warning by the Dean/Director of the Institute/School to the effect that unless he shows signs of improvement within three months he would have to be de-registered. A recommendation for a de-registration shall be made to the Senate through the BPS after two consecutive negative reports following the warning.

### 3.2.3 Expectations: Student

The postgraduate student shall: -

- 1) Consult their supervisor(s) at least once a month and to submit every three (3) months (for full time students) a written quarterly progress report and to submit every six (6) months (for part time students) a written half yearly progress report to the Director, Board of Postgraduate Studies through the Supervisor, the Chairperson of the Department and the Dean/Director of the School/Institute with an advance copy to the Director (BPS).
- 2) Give a minimum of two (2) seminar presentations (for Masters students) and four (4) seminar presentations (for Doctorate students) on a regular basis.

### 3.2.4 Expectations: Supervisors

A supervisor shall: -

1. Assess the candidate's progress and keep candidates in constant touch through seminar presentations
2. Direct and supervise the work of the student in so far as it relates to the programme of study by
  - a) Maintaining constant and effective contact with the candidates assigned to him/her
  - b) Submitting individually or jointly with other supervisors' academic reports through the relevant Chairpersons of Department and Dean/Director of Institute/School to the BPS on the progress of each candidate every three months;
  - c) Informing the BPS through the relevant Department promptly, if in his/her opinion a given candidate is unlikely to reach the standard required for the award of a Masters degree or Doctor of Philosophy degree.

### 3.2.5 Expectations: BPS

The board of postgraduate studies shall: -

1. Appoint a supervisor(s) provided the proposed supervisor(s) are competent in the candidate's subject area and the proposed field of research and are also competent to supervise the candidate.
2. Seek Proof of successful presentations of seminars by candidates before submission of the thesis.
3. Appoint proposed supervisor(s) as replacement for deceased and/or departed supervisor(s).
4. In the event that there is a disagreement between the student and his/her supervisor(s), the BPS shall appoint an arbitration committee to arbitrate on the matter.

### 3.3 Examination of Candidates

1. All coursework shall be examined at the end of the semester in which the course units were taken.
2. Candidates shall be examined in all the courses for which they have registered during the particular year of study.
3. Masters candidates
  - a) by thesis shall have the coursework examined during the first year of study; while the second year of study shall be devoted to research, seminars, and the preparation of a thesis.

- b) By project shall have the coursework examined during the first, second and third semesters and fourth and fifth semesters of study shall be devoted to research, seminars, and the preparation of a project.
  - c) PhD candidates shall have the coursework examined during the first year of study; while the second and third years of study shall be devoted to research, seminars, and the preparation of a thesis.
4. Assessment of coursework during any year of study will be done during the semester in which the courses are taken (unless otherwise specified in the programme's curriculum) consist of:
- a) A written examination which shall constitute 60% of the total marks in each course; and
  - b) Continuous coursework assessment based on essays, laboratory assignments and such other tests as the regulations of the Institute/School concerned may prescribe, constituting 40% of the overall course assessment.
5. The pass mark in all Schools/Institutes shall be 50%. Candidates taking the first year examinations shall be required to pass in all the courses for which they are registered before they can proceed to the second year. Supplementary/special examinations, if any, shall be governed by Institute/School regulations approved by Senate.
6. All course-work examinations results shall be processed through the Department and Institute/School concerned and submitted to Senate for approval.
7. Candidates undertaking project shall be internally examined through the department and Institute/School concerned and results submitted to Senate for approval.

### **3.4 Appointment of Examiners**

The University shall through the Director BPS appoint three examiners for each Masters and PhD candidate. These shall consist of two internal examiners as well as one external examiner for both masters and PhD thesis.

For Masters by project, there shall be two internal examiners and one external examiner.

#### **3.4.1 a. Internal Examiners Must:**

- (i) be a member of the University's academic staff with a relevant doctoral degree, with at least three (3) years of teaching experience and evidence of research inclination through individual research, supervision of research and theses and involvement in peer reviewed publications.

- (ii) have expertise relevant to the student's area of research and must be an experienced researcher demonstrated through research publications or have equivalent professional experience
- (iii) be familiar with University policies and specifically have knowledge of the senate regulations for the degree under examination.
- (iv) be members of the academic staff with experience of supervising and examining research degrees. If it is necessary to appoint an inexperienced internal examiner, departments should ensure that the internal examiner has significant experience of research degree examining

#### 3.4.1 b. Internal Examiners Must Not:

- (i) have or have had a personal relationship with the candidate to be examined, any member of the student's supervisor(s) or other member of the examination board
- (ii) be the candidate's past or present supervisor
- (iii) have had substantial involvement in the work of the candidate including co-authoring and collaborative activities
- (iv) have their own work as the focus of the work of the candidate to be examined

#### 3.4.2 a. External examiners must:

- (i) have an earned PhD in the relevant field, with at least five (5) years of teaching experience, and evidence of research inclinations through individual research, supervision of research and theses and involvement in peer reviewed publications.
- (ii) be able to demonstrate relevant expertise through publications.
- (iii) have experience of supervising and examining postgraduate degrees.

#### 3.4.2.b External examiner must not:

- (i) have been involved in the three years immediately before the external examination in any collaborative project, including co-authoring, with any of the supervisors of the candidate to be examined or any other member of the examining team
- (ii) be a member of the University's staff.
- (iii) have or have had a close personal relationship with the candidate to be examined.
- (iv) have or have had a close contractual relationship with the candidate to be examined.

## 3.5 Submission and Examination of Thesis

### 3.5.1 Expectations: Candidate

- a) A candidate shall give notice in writing with an abstract of the work to the Director, Board of Postgraduate Studies at least three months before the intended date of submission with copies to the Dean and Chairperson of Department.
- b) Submit a thesis for examination in four (4) copies in loose bound and the prescribed format given in 3.6
- c) Candidates shall be required to present themselves for oral examination.

### 3.5.2 Expectations: School/ Department

- a) The Board of the School concerned shall recommend to Senate the appointment in respect of each candidate presenting a thesis, a Board of Examiners.
- b) The Dean of School shall inform the candidate of the time and place of the meeting of the Board of Examiners.

### 3.5.3 Expectations: Internal and External Examiners

1. The examiners must acknowledge receipt and acceptance to examine the thesis within two (2) weeks of submission of the thesis failure to which the thesis shall be recalled within two (2) months.
2. The external examiner and each of the internal examiners shall be required to submit within two (2) months an independent written assessment of the thesis direct to the Director (BPS) indicating:
  - a) Whether or not the thesis is adequate in form and content;
  - b) Whether or not the thesis reflects an adequate understanding of the subject and displays original thought;
  - c) Whether or not the degree should be awarded;
  - d) Any corrections to be made before the award of the degree;
  - e) Whether or not the thesis makes a distinct, significant and substantial contribution to the existing knowledge (for the case of a PhD)

### 3.5.4 Expectations: BPS

1. The Director BPS shall appoint examiners from those recommended from the Schools for each candidate.

2. The verdict of the board of examiners shall be either
  - a. Pass with minor corrections
  - b. Pass with major corrections
  - c. Resubmit theses
  - d. Fail
3. Within a month upon receipt of the examiners' reports, the Director (BPS) shall convene a meeting of the Board of Examiners in consultation with the Dean/director of School/Institute concerned at which the examiners' reports, other academic matters arising from the thesis, and the candidates defence shall be considered.
4. A consolidated report and appropriate recommendation shall be prepared for submission to Senate through the BPS within two weeks.
5. Release of provisional results to the candidate shall be done after the meeting only where the recommendation of the Board of Examiners is unanimous.
6. Where the recommendation of the Board of Examiners is unanimous for or against the award of the degree, and where such unanimous recommendation is consistent in all respects with the reports of the external examiners, and the results of an oral examination, the Director of BPS shall forward such recommendation to the Vice Chancellor for approval on behalf of the Senate.
7. Where the recommendation of the Board of Examiners is not unanimous or the recommendation is not consistent in material respect with the matters referred to in (1) above, it shall be referred to the full BPS for an appropriate recommendation to Senate.
8. The Senate may, on the advice of the Board of Examiners and the BPS, invite a candidate to correct/re-submit a thesis. Re-submission shall be between six (6) and twelve (12) months and shall be subjected to the normal processes of the Senate.
  - a. The period of re-submitting a Masters thesis shall be up to three (3) months for minor corrections and between three (3) and six (6) months for major corrections.
  - b. The period of re-submitting a Doctorate thesis shall be up to four (4) months for minor corrections and between four (4) and eight (8) months for major corrections.

### 3.6 Prescribed Format of Theses for Examination

- a) Requirements for each of the Four (4) copies in loose bound thesis submitted for examination shall include;
  - i) A declaration by the candidate confirming that the thesis has not been submitted for a degree in any other Institution,
  - ii) A declaration that the contents of the thesis are the original work of the candidate.
  - iii) The signature of the supervisor(s) certifying that the candidate has pursued his/her study in accordance with the regulations and recommending the thesis for examination.
- b) The final version of the thesis (4 copies) in bound form after examination shall remain the property of the University.
- c) A thesis submitted for the Master's degree must be adequate in form and content. It must also include full bibliography of the materials used in its preparation whether published or otherwise, and it must also conform to the regulations for the submission of thesis of the University.
- d) A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy must make a distinct, significant and substantial contribution to the knowledge and show understanding of the subject and display originality of thought. It must also include a complete bibliography or references to the materials used in its preparation, whether published or otherwise and it must also conform to the regulations for the submission of theses of the University.

### 3.7 Constitution of Board of Examiners

The Senate shall, on the recommendation of the Board of the Institute/School concerned, appoint in respect of each candidate presenting a thesis, a Board of Examiners consisting of:

- a) Dean/Director of the School /Institute of the concerned department as a chair of the Board of Examiners;
- b) An external examiner(s); in case the external examiner is unable to attend, his/her report shall suffice.
- c) Two internal examiners who examined the thesis.
- d) Two other persons competent in the discipline related to the candidate's area of research, at least one of whom should be external to the Department;



- e) The Director Board of Postgraduate Studies or a representative. The Board of postgraduate studies shall provide the secretariat.
- f) Chairman of the Department shall be in attendance.
- g) A supervisor(s) shall be in attendance.

A supervisor shall not serve as a board member. In the case where the Chairman is also a supervisor to a candidate then He/she shall delegate the responsibility to a Chairman of department or another board member.