

MUHIMBILI UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH AND ALLIED SCIENCES



MUHAS GUIDELINES FOR EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

MAY 2020

1. INTRODUCTION

The system of engaging External Examiners to moderate the conduct and assessment of university examinations is reckoned to have started in the 19th century when the Durham University reached an agreement with the University of Oxford for it to provide examiners to meet the required demand, and to benchmark the quality of its academic awards. Subsequently newly created universities in Great Britain and Ireland adopted the practice in the later 19th century and 20th century. This practice spread to several other universities in Europe and America and currently this tradition is well established in most universities in the world (see attached Benchmark List). Initially, External Examiners were responsible for providing an independent mark for assessed work of an individual candidate. This focus has changed over time and the major role of the External Examiner nowadays is to scrutinize and evaluate a body of evidence for cohorts of students and provide an overall judgement regarding their performance as well as the quality and standard of the program.

Most universities in Africa have the external examinership system in place. Indeed, almost all universities in East Africa and certainly in Tanzania engage External Examiners for moderation of their student assessment practices. This system has been in place at Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences (MUHAS) since the time of the predecessor institutions (Faculty of Medicine and the Muhimbili University College of Health Sciences) under the University of Dar es Salaam. Unfortunately, while partial information regarding appointment and roles of External Examiners is included in various university documents (eg. University prospectus, MUHAS General Regulations and Guidelines for Postgraduate Programs etc.) MUHAS has no structured guidelines on External Examinership. This document on MUHAS Guidelines for External Examiners is therefore intended to fill the gap and provide comprehensive guidance on the various key issues related to external examinership procedures as part of good practices in quality teaching and learning at the University.

2. PURPOSE

The guidelines seek to provide direction, advice and information relating to the appointment, roles, duties, rights and responsibilities of External Examiners for courses taught in the MUHAS undergraduate and postgraduate study programs. The guidelines should be made available to all External Examiners, all heads of academic departments and all academic staff with the responsibility for the conduct of examinations.

3. PROCEDURES FOR NOMINATION AND APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERS

3.1 Eligibility

External Examiners must be: -

- 3.1.1 Senior University Faculty of the academic rank of Senior Lecturer and above.
- 3.1.2 External to the University (another University in or outside Tanzania).
- 3.1.3 Expert in the course/subject to be examined.
- 3.1.4 Active researchers, with at least 3 publications within the last three years.

3.2 Nomination

- 3.2.1 At the beginning of every new academic year the Deputy Vice Chancellor responsible for Academic, Research and Consultancy (DVC-ARC) shall direct the Deans of Schools and Directors of Academic Institutes to seek from their respective heads of academic departments, nominations for persons to act as External Examiners for that academic year.
- 3.2.2 The Head of Department shall seek recommendations for nominations through a Departmental academic staff meeting. The Head of Department may consult with the person proposed for nomination in order to seek her/his consent to be nominated and determine her/his availability to act as External Examiner. Such consultation shall be without commitment to appointment as External Examiner. In the event that External Examiners cannot be engaged for valid reasons, internal Moderators shall be recommended by the department and shall be:
 - a. Senior University Faculty of the rank of Senior Lecturer and above.
 - b. External to the Department.
 - c. Expert in the course/subject to be examined or a related course.
 - d. Active researchers, with at least 3 publications within the last three years.
- 3.2.3 The Head of Department shall recommend persons nominated for appointment as External Examiners to the Dean/Director of the respective School/Institute before the end of November in the year of expiry of engagement of previous external examiner.
- 3.2.4 Names of proposed External Examiners and Internal Moderators shall be discussed by the School/Institute Boards and recommendations submitted to DVC-ARC who shall subsequently submit to Senate for approval.

3.3 Appointment

- 3.3.1 Appointment of External Examiners and Internal Moderators shall be done by the University Senate, on the recommendations of the School/Academic Institute Board and the Senate Undergraduate Education Committee or the Senate Higher Degrees Committee.
- 3.3.2 Following appointment, the External Examiner shall be notified in writing by the office of DVC-ARC regarding their appointment. This

notification shall also include a formal written agreement between the University and the External Examiner.

- 3.3.3 The written agreement shall include the following:
- a. Dates for beginning and end of the appointment
 - b. Role(s), responsibilities and rights of the External Examiner as described in section 5
 - c. Duties to be undertaken including the meetings to be attended
 - d. Remuneration and arrangements for its payment as detailed in section 6
 - e. Information to be included in the External Examiner's report

- 3.3.4 The External Examiner shall be required to sign and return a copy of the agreement to signify acceptance of the appointment and the terms and conditions outlined in it. This copy shall be retained in the office of DVC-ARC throughout the tenure of the External Examiner.

4 DURATION OF EXTERNAL EXAMINERSHIP

4.1 Generally, the tenure of appointed External Examiners for MUHAS shall be three consecutive years. Renewal may be done three years later after the last period of serving as an External Examiner at the University.

4.2 Under exceptional circumstances, the tenure may be extended for one year by the appointing authority on recommendation of the Senate Undergraduate Committee or Senate Higher Degrees Committee for External Examiners of undergraduate and postgraduate courses, respectively.

5 ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES AND RIGHTS

5.1 Roles/responsibilities

The main purpose of inviting examiners from outside the institution or department is to appraise the whole process of quality assurance in teaching and learning as well as assessment and make sure they meet the standards expected of universities, and to ensure that students are assessed rigorously and fairly in the examination process. In undergraduate and postgraduate examinations, external examiners typically (or specifically) see and have to approve draft examination questions before the papers are set; and they will review the marks and the work of at least a sample of candidates. They are often asked to adjudicate when candidates are on borderlines or when internal examiners have disagreed about a candidate's marks. External Examiners are expected to carry out their duties in the context of their expertise and knowledge of the academic standards of other Higher Education Institutions. The main duties of an External Examiner at MUHAS are to:

- a. Comment on draft examination papers and appropriateness of the questions.

- b. Ensure assessment information is clearly articulated and can be understood by students.
- c. Confirm that all forms of assessment and the assessment process are properly designed and applied, and are supportive of achieving the intended learning outcomes.
- d. Confirm the assessment process is appropriate, fair, consistent and equitable to all students concerned in line with the University policies and procedures.
- e. Confirm standards and student's performance are comparable with those of other Higher Education Institutions.
- f. Report on the structure, content, academic standards and teaching of programs.

5.2 Rights

External Examiners appointed to examine at MUHAS shall have the following rights:

- a. To be notified of the appointment by the Department and course(s) for which they will have responsibility to examine.
- b. To be given a copy of the MUHAS Guidelines for External Examiners.
- c. To access any work submitted for assessment of any course for which she or he has examining responsibility.
- d. To request for specific items of student work if they deem there is a problem with a module or program.
- e. To be notified on the remuneration for the examining duties.
- f. To receive feedback on their reports.
- g. To report in confidence, directly to the Dean/Director, DVC-ARC or Vice-Chancellor, if they are very concerned about academic matters of particular importance relating to assessment, standards or procedures.

6 FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

It is generally acknowledged that an External Examiner does not take up an appointment for fee, rather the real benefits from being an External Examiner include the professional recognition that an appointment brings and the exposure to academic practices in other higher learning institutions. Nonetheless, certain fees have to be paid by the host university in order to ensure a smooth accomplishment of the external examination process in a manner that does not put any undue financial stress to the External Examiner. Fees payable to External Examiners shall be notified in the letter of appointment and will include examination fees and other expenses incurred in the course of carrying out External Examinership duties. These fees shall be paid in Tanzanian shillings currency, may be reviewed by the University from time to time and the most current rates shall be available in the office of DVC-ARC.

6.1 Honorarium for performing External Examination Duties

- 6.1.1 Honoraria for examination of Masters dissertations and PhD theses shall be as stipulated in the MUHAS General Regulations and Guidelines for Postgraduate Programs.

6.2 Other Expenses

In addition to examination fees, MUHAS shall pay all reasonable expenses incurred in carrying out the duties, typically the costs of travel and accommodation according to the University's financial regulations. The following expenses will also be paid:-

6.2.1 Travel from and back to home town/city

- a. Air travel: Return Economy air ticket.
- b. Taxi: Fares will be reimbursed where appropriate e.g. journey to and from the airport.
- c. Mileage: Mileage allowance at approved Government rate will be paid where car travel is essential.

6.2.2 Postage of examination papers and dissertations/theses

Postage payment can be claimed on production of the relevant receipts.

6.2.3 Accommodation

The University will make the necessary booking and payment for a reasonable quality hotel accommodation. Accommodation shall be on bed and breakfast arrangement. Food other than breakfast, mini-bar drinks, newspapers or pay-per-view films will not be covered by the University.

6.2.4 Subsistence

The daily subsistence allowance for lunch, dinner and incidentals shall be paid by the University at a rate approved by the University based on prevailing Government and institutional financial regulations.

7 EXTERNAL EXAMINERS REPORT

7.1 Report writing

Soon after completion of the assessment and before departure from MUHAS, each External Examiner and Internal Moderator shall discuss her/his report with the Head of Department, incorporate any clarifications made and forward it to the DVC-ARC with copies to the Vice Chancellor and Dean/Director of the School/Institute under confidential cover. The External Examiner's report should not identify any student or member of staff by use of any individual identifier like registration number or ID number. The report should be written by filling the

MUHAS External Examiners report form in Appendix 1 and should cover the following key aspects:

7.1.1 Standard of written examination

Examination papers shall be made available to the appointed external examiners or appointed Internal Moderators for quality checks of the examination. The External Examiners shall review and comment on the structure of the examination, clarity of instructions, appropriateness of the questions for the level of training and overall quality of the examination.

7.1.2 Organization of examination

Comments regarding arrangements of any other types of summative assessment; arrangements for assessing candidates' scripts and dissertations, set up of practical/clinical examination; arrangements for viva voce; discussion of the assessment process and outcome with staff shall be included in the report.

7.1.3 Coverage of course as stipulated in the curriculum

External Examiner to comment on suitability of course aims, learning outcomes and the extent to which these were achieved; coherence and of course structure and content.

7.1.4 Questions items format and uniformity

External Examiner shall comment on the format of the examination questions set forth and the uniformity throughout the examination.

7.1.5 Clarity of questions

External Examiner shall assess and report on clarity of questions when evaluating the examination papers.

7.1.6 Standard grammatical and spelling errors in examinations

External Examiner to check for and report on typographical and grammatical errors noted in the examination paper.

7.1.7 Appropriateness of the length of examination and allocated time

External Examiner to comment on whether the time allocated for the examination was appropriate based on the type, number and complexity of the questions.

7.1.8 Comment on the use of checklists during clinical and practical examinations

External Examiner will comment on the use of checklists for appropriateness of the design and structure of the assessment

methods during clinical and practical examinations and their effectiveness in measuring the overall learning outcomes.

7.1.9 Use of examination marking schemes

External Examiner to comment on marking criteria in terms of whether the marking scheme/grading criteria has been properly and consistently applied to ensure that the internal marking is fair and of an appropriate standard; whether the marking criteria are effective in discriminating between levels of attainment in relation to the classification of the award

7.1.10 Any serious misconduct during examinations as per University Regulations

External Examiner will report on any serious deviation from proper procedures governing assessment and any observed misconduct in accordance with the University's academic regulations.

7.1.11 Assessment process

The External Examiner is required to comment on assessment processes in terms of whether the University's processes for assessment and the determination of awards were sound and fairly conducted in line with the University's policies and regulations; whether the assessment processes measure student achievement rigorously against intended learning outcomes; overall impressions of the assessment process. The External Examiner should also indicate his/her overall satisfaction with the level of involvement as external examiner in the University's processes for determining the award of its degrees. The University would appreciate it if External Examiner could also provide comments and recommendations on good practice and innovation relating to learning, teaching and assessment and on opportunities to enhance the quality of the learning opportunities provided at MUHAS.

7.1.12 External Examiners who are completing their tenure will be expected to include in their final report an overview on their term of external examinership that shall include a summary of any significant changes in quality of learning and assessment, or academic developments that have taken place and implementation of any recommendations made.

7.2 Report discussion

Report should be submitted to departments then departments should submit to the school board discussing examination results. The Dean of the School or Director of the Institute shall then direct the respective department to discuss the report and provide reactions to the comments made. Responses to External Examiner's reports shall be discussed in the School/Institute

Boards and recommendations submitted to the senate quality assurance committee which will subsequently submit to University Senate.

8 GUIDELINES STATUS

These are new Guidelines.

9 KEY STAKEHOLDERS

8.1. The stakeholders to be consulted during development of these Guidelines include:

- a. Heads of Departments
- b. Deans and Directors

8.2. The main stakeholders of these Guidelines are:

- a. All MUHAS academic staff
- b. Heads of Academic Departments
- c. Deans and Directors

10 APPROVAL DETAILS

The MUHAS Guidelines for External Examiners were approved by the Council at its meeting held on.....

11 RELATED GUIDELINES

- 11.1 MUHAS Prospectus
- 11.2 MUHAS Guidelines for Quality Assurance
- 11.3 MUHAS General Regulations and Guidelines for Postgraduate Programs

12 RELATED DOCUMENTS

- 12.1 MUHAS Charter Rules, 2007

13 NEXT REVIEW DATE

The MUHAS Guidelines for External Examiners will be reviewed after every three years. The periodic review will ensure the guidelines are in line with the University changes that might have taken place.

14 OWNER OF THE GUIDELINES

The University Council shall own the MUHAS Guidelines for External Examiners.

15 CONTACT PERSON

The Contact Person for issues related to the MUHAS Guidelines for External Examiners shall be:-

The Deputy Vice Chancellor – Academic Research and Consultancy (DVC-ARC),
Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences,
P.O. Box 65001,
9 United Nations Road, Upanga West, Dar es Salaam, TANZANIA.