

University of Malawi

**Malawi Polytechnic**

**Postgraduate Handbook**



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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>1 Admission and Application Process</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1.1 Criteria for Admission</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1.1 PhD Programmes	1
1.1.2 Masters Degree Programmes	1
1.1.3 Postgraduate Diploma/Certificate Programmes	2
<b>1.2 Application</b>	<b>2</b>
1.2.1 Application Process	2
1.2.2 Application Deadlines	3
<b>1.3 Exemption</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1.4 Fees</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1.5 Medical Certification</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2 CONDITIONS OF STUDENTSHIP</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2.1 Coursework</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1.1 Registration of programme	5
2.1.2 Registration of modules	5
2.1.3 Withdraw from module	5
2.1.4 Examination and assessment	6
2.1.5 Coursework Examiners	6
<b>2.2 Thesis</b>	<b>7</b>
2.2.1 Supervisory Committee	7
2.2.2 Major Supervisor	8
2.2.3 Duties of the Major Supervisor shall be:-	8
2.2.4 Second Supervisor	9
2.2.5 Duties of the Second Supervisor shall be:-	9
2.2.6 Research topic	9
2.2.7 Proposal	10
2.2.8 Progress report	10

<b>2.3</b>	<b>Thesis</b> -----	<b>11</b>
2.3.1	Examiners and Assessor -----	11
2.3.2	External Examiner -----	11
2.3.3	Internal examiner -----	12
2.3.4	Internal Assessor -----	12
2.3.5	Examination Process -----	12
2.3.6	Recommendations of Examiners -----	13
2.3.7	Examination of a Thesis through VIVA-----	14
2.3.8	Binding -----	15
<b>2.4</b>	<b>Duration of programme</b> -----	<b>15</b>
<b>2.5</b>	<b>Extension</b> -----	<b>16</b>
<b>2.7</b>	<b>Graduation</b> -----	<b>16</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>CONDUCT AND PRESENTATION OF ACADEMIC WORK AND EXAMINATIONS</b>	
	<b>17</b>	
<b>3.1</b>	<b>Presentation of Academic Work</b> -----	<b>17</b>
<b>3.2</b>	<b>Conduct of Examinations</b> -----	<b>19</b>
<b>3.3</b>	<b>Misconduct of Candidates in Examinations</b> -----	<b>20</b>
<b>3.4</b>	<b>Disciplinary Action</b> -----	<b>21</b>
<b>Appendix A</b>	<b>GENERIC FORMAT FOR THE STRUCTURE OF A THESIS</b> -----	<b>23</b>
<b>Appendix B</b>	<b>SPECIFICATIONS OF THESIS</b> -----	<b>30</b>

# **1 Admission and Application Process**

## **1.1 Criteria for Admission**

### **1.1.1 PhD Programmes**

The normal admission requirement to a doctoral degree programme is as follows:-

- (a) A master's degree, which must have included advanced learning in research, the execution of a research project and the writing of a thesis.
- (b) Some Departments may require postgraduate students applying for PhD degree to take oral and/or written examinations in their major and minor fields to determine overall preparation and background. The examination serves as a guidance, the results of which are used in setting up the postgraduate study programme. The examinations shall be conducted by the Department offering the programme.

### **1.1.2 Masters Degree Programmes**

The normal admission requirement to a Masters degree programme shall be one of the following:

- (a) A bachelor's degree from any recognised institution of higher learning.
- (b) Professional qualification, in a relevant discipline, recognized by the University as being equivalent to at least a four-year undergraduate degree.
- (c) Some departments may prescribe additional requirement in their programme documents.

### **1.1.3 Postgraduate Diploma/Certificate Programmes**

The normal admission requirement for a postgraduate diploma or certificate shall be one of the following:

- (a) A bachelor's degree from any recognised institution of higher learning;
- (b) Professional qualification, in a relevant discipline, recognized by the University as being equivalent to at least a four-year undergraduate degree;
- (c) Some departments may prescribe additional requirement in their programme documents.

## **1.2 Application**

### **1.2.1 Application Process**

- (a) The candidate shall submit duly completed application forms (in triplicate) to the College Registrar together with certified copies of certificates, transcripts, awards and other supporting documents and the stipulated application fee.
- (b) The Registrar shall retain one set of application documents and send the remaining two copies of application forms to the appropriate Dean of Faculty.
- (c) The Dean of Faculty shall retain one copy of the application forms and send the remaining copy of the application forms to the department concerned.
- (d) The department shall request at least two references on the applicant from the referees named in the application form.

- (e) As soon as all required documentation is available (completed application form, certificates, transcripts, and at least two references), the department shall consider the applicant's eligibility for the programme applied for.
- (f) If approved, the department shall send its recommendations to the Dean of Faculty for endorsement, and submit to the Postgraduate Committee, together with the following:-
  - (i) The candidate's application forms;
  - (ii) Two academic references;
  - (iii) The necessary transcripts and/or copies of certificates/awards;
  - (iv) Any other relevant documents.
- (g) The Head of Department or her/his representative shall present the application to the Postgraduate Committee.
- (h) The Postgraduate Committee shall accept or reject the application in the light of all available information.
- (i) The names of the accepted candidates shall be forwarded to the Vice Chancellor for approval on behalf of Senate.
- (j) The Registrar shall send letters of admission only to the successful candidates in accordance with University regulations and shall retain copies of application forms and offer letter for record keeping.

### **1.2.2 Application Deadlines**

- (a) There are no firm deadlines for applications, but students are advised to submit their applications at least 4 months before the beginning of the



desired semester of admission. Nevertheless programmes may set their deadlines for their programmes.

- (b) Applications received less than one month prior to the beginning of the semester of desired admission may not be accepted.

### **1.3 Exemption**

Candidates for postgraduate studies may be granted exemption on some modules on the basis of the following requirements:

- (a) Successful completion of the study with a minimum of credit grades in the specific courses at postgraduate level;
- (b) Thesis cannot be exempted;

### **1.4 Fees**

- (a) Any offer of a place shall be subject to confirmation that fees shall be paid.
- (b) A candidate may not proceed to extension of registration, submission of thesis, examination or award of a degree so long as he/she is indebted to the University. His/her registration may be deemed to have lapsed if fees or other debts remain unpaid for a period of three months. Reinstatement will be effective from the date of settlement of the debt.

### **1.5 Medical Certification**

- (a) Where necessary, candidates shall be required to produce a medical certificate from a doctor recognised by the University of Fitness to pursue a particular programme as specified in a programme document.
- (b) The College should be informed of any persistent illness or abnormality

which might affect the applicant's activities at College.

- (c) If any such handicap arises between the date of the acceptance of the offer and starting a course, the applicant shall inform the Registrar immediately.

## **2 CONDITIONS OF STUDENTSHIP**

### **2.1 Coursework**

#### **2.1.1 Registration of programme**

- (a) Students must register for the programme of study during the first two weeks of the first academic year and confirm, in writing their willingness to abide by the College rules for students.
- (b) Violation of the regulations subjects the student to an appropriate disciplinary or judicial action.

#### **2.1.2 Registration of modules**

In consultation with the course coordinator, the student shall be required to register for modules for the semester during the first 4 weeks.

#### **2.1.3 Withdraw from module**

- (a) Student will be allowed to withdraw from a module within the first 4 weeks.
- (b) After 4 weeks, students who withdraw from a module shall obtain an incomplete grade in the module.
- (c) A student who obtains an incomplete grade shall be required to complete the module when it is next offered. The incomplete grade will be turned into a 0 grade, if it remains incomplete for a whole academic year.

#### **2.1.4 Examination and assessment**

- (a) The assessment of course work shall be according to the criteria set by the departments which shall have been approved by Senate.
- (b) All examinations shall be internally moderated and externally reviewed.
- (c) Students will not be allowed to submit their thesis before they successfully complete their coursework requirements.

#### **2.1.5 Coursework Examiners**

- (a) The internal examiners of coursework shall be the teaching staff of the University of Malawi appointed by Heads of Department.
- (b) At least one External Examiner shall normally be appointed in courses studied by candidates for postgraduate degrees of the University.
- (c) An External Examiner must be a duly qualified person who is not engaged in teaching in the University of Malawi. A former member of staff may not normally be appointed as an External Examiner until at least two years have elapsed since leaving University of Malawi's appointment.
- (d) External Examiners of Postgraduate Programmes shall be appointed by Senate on the recommendation of the Academic Courses Committee each year and shall normally act for not more than three consecutive years.
- (e) Details of the duties of External examiner shall be those discussed and arranged between the Examiner and the relevant subject Head, subject to any rules or guidance as may be laid down from time to time by Senate.
- (f) Each External Examiner shall submit a short written report to the Vice

Chancellor on completion of his/her examining in which he/she shall comment on the general standard of the examination and on the performance of the candidate.

## **2.2 Thesis**

### **2.2.1 Supervisory Committee**

- (a) Each student for postgraduate research shall have a Supervisory Committee for the research project.
- (b) The Supervisory Committee shall have a minimum of two members for the Masters degree and a minimum of three members for the PhD degree.
- (c) The Head of Department shall recommend the Supervisory Committee for each thesis for approval by the Postgraduate Committee.
- (d) The Major Supervisor will act as the Chairperson of the Supervisory Committee and is responsible for the level of scholarship exhibited in the research work and thesis. The progress of the research must continuously be monitored and evaluated during regular meetings with the major supervisor. Students are advised in the necessary practical techniques, literature surveys and safety regulations, and helped in order that the research is completed on time.
- (e) It is the responsibility of the Chairperson and the Supervisory Committee to ascertain that the thesis of the candidate is written in Standard English, in an appropriate scholarly style and that it is carefully proof read prior to submission to the external examiner or the Postgraduate Committee. The manuscript must demonstrate a high level of professional competence and only the Supervisory Committee can give the candidate the guidance and instruction necessary to achieve this objective.

- (f) Before the defence or submission of the thesis, each member of the Supervisory Committee will certify that she/he has read the final version of the manuscript and has found it acceptable in scope and quality.

### **2.2.2 Major Supervisor**

- (a) The Major Supervisor shall be a staff member of the University of Malawi.
- (b) He or she shall have a minimum of Master's degree in relevant areas, be a specialist in the field to be studied, and an experienced researcher.
- (c) He or she shall not be registered for a higher degree at the same time and shall be available for the duration of study for higher degree, unless another qualified member of staff is available for replacement.

### **2.2.3 Duties of the Major Supervisor shall be:-**

- (a) Take the lead in supervising the candidate;
- (b) Continuous monitoring of candidate's programme;
- (c) Arranging regular meetings of the candidate with the Supervisory Committee;
- (d) Review all materials produced by the candidate;
- (e) Communicate change of title, if any, to the Dean of Postgraduate Studies for his/her approval;
- (f) Ensuring that the Postgraduate Committee is kept informed of the progress of the candidate through the Head of Department and Dean of Faculty;
- (g) A letter of transmittal to the Dean through Head of Department when thesis is first sent to external examiner;

- (h) The main supervisor through the Dean of Postgraduate Studies shall be responsible for arranging date, time and place for oral examination where applicable.

#### **2.2.4 Second Supervisor**

- (a) The Second Supervisor shall have a minimum of a Masters degree in relevant areas and an experienced researcher.
- (b) He or she shall not be registered for a higher degree at the same time.
- (c) He or she shall be available for the duration of study for higher degree, unless another qualified member of staff is available for replacement.

#### **2.2.5 Duties of the Second Supervisor shall be:-**

- (a) Complements the Main Supervisor focusing on technical and structural issues.
- (b) Holding joint meetings with the Main Supervisor and student to discuss thesis.
- (c) Maintaining a continuing interest in the research.
- (d) Giving assistance to the student where it is needed.
- (e) Constantly liaising with the main supervisor with comments/suggestions/observations on the thesis.

#### **2.2.6 Research topic**

Students are advised to choose an appropriate topic addressing thematic issues identified by the department where the study is to take place in liaison with the Supervisory Committee.

### **2.2.7 Proposal**

- (a) After approval of the topic, the student shall work on a proposal with the guidance of the appointed supervisors;
- (b) The student will be required to present the proposal at a public seminar for critiquing;
- (c) The student will be required to incorporate recommendations made during seminar.
- (d) The final proposal shall be approved by the Postgraduate Committee through Ad-hoc Postgraduate Sub-Committees on proposals;
- (e) The Postgraduate Committee shall appoint the Ad-hoc Committee comprising three members: two specialists in the subject area, one focusing on proposal structure.
- (f) The candidate shall be informed of the decision of the Postgraduate Committee by the Dean of Postgraduate Studies, at least six months before thesis submission.
- (g) Any changes in the title and bias of the intended research proposal shall be submitted to the Postgraduate Committee for approval.

### **2.2.8 Progress report**

The main supervisor shall be expected to submit progress reports every six months on the form provided by the Faculty of Postgraduate Studies. The report must contain:

- (a) Date of meetings with the student.
- (b) Dates written material was received from the student.

- (c) Description of progress achieved to date.
- (d) Comments of quality of work and enthusiasm of student.
- (e) Milestones including dates of final submission of the proposal and the completed thesis.

## **2.3 Thesis**

### **2.3.1 Examiners and Assessor**

- (a) The department shall propose names of external and internal examiners and internal assessor for each candidate to the Postgraduate Committee for approval.
- (b) Each candidate shall have the thesis examined by the External Examiner and an Internal Examiner, both of whom shall make recommendations to the Head of Department. They shall prepare independent reports on the thesis. The award of a degree will depend upon their recommendation.

### **2.3.2 External Examiner**

- (a) The external examiner shall be appointed at least 6 months before the submission of the draft thesis.
- (b) The external examiner must be from an institution other than the University of Malawi, and be of proven academic ability, qualified to be a supervisor and an expert in the field to be examined.
- (c) A former member of staff may not qualify for appointment as External Examiner until at least two years have elapsed since leaving this University's appointment



### **2.3.3 Internal examiner**

- (a) An internal examiner shall be a subject specialist in the department to which a thesis is being submitted or in a related faculty/research centre within the University of Malawi.
- (b) The examiner shall hold at least a Masters degree in the subject for which a candidate is registered, and has at least four years of relevant teaching and/or research experience.

### **2.3.4 Internal Assessor**

- (a) The internal assessor must be from another Department of the University of Malawi, not necessarily a specialist in the discipline to be examined, and must have supervisory experience.
- (b) Internal assessor shall focus on structure of the thesis.
- (c) Internal assessor shall confirm that the student has addressed the issues raised during the examination of the thesis by internal and external examiners.

### **2.3.5 Examination Process**

- (a) Student shall be required to produce a thesis following general guidelines available in the appendix.
- (b) Each thesis shall be read carefully and thoroughly; and then assessed with due regard to the following criteria:-
  - (i) Clear statement of the problem being addressed, a thorough examination of literature.
  - (ii) Adequate grasp of relevant methodological and theoretical issues.

- (iii) Logical presentation and sound analysis of data.
  - (iv) Use of clear and relevant illustrations.
  - (v) Mastery and application writing techniques.
  - (vi) Competent use and manipulation of language.
- (c) In addition to completing the standard assessment form, examiners shall be required to append to it a separate report in the order of one to three typed pages.
- (d) Examiners shall be required to reach a clear verdict about a thesis in terms of whether it is being Passed or Referred or Terminally Failed.
- (e) For any thesis being referred, examiners shall list the specific tasks a candidate should address in order to bring the work to acceptable standard.
- (f) Each examiner other than the assessor shall recommend a numerical grade for transcript purposes for Masters Degrees.

### **2.3.6 Recommendations of Examiners**

- (a) The recommendations of examiners shall be one of the following:-
- (i) Pass as is;
  - (ii) Pass (with corrections permitted or required should the need arise);
  - (iii) Referral – resubmission welcome after not more than 12 months;
  - (iv) Failed – no resubmission.
- (b) In any case where the examiners are unable to agree upon their decision, an additional (external) examiner shall be appointed whose decision shall

be final. Where the decision is 'referral' the examination of the referred theses shall be conducted wherever possible, by all appointed examiners.

### **2.3.7 Examination of a Thesis through VIVA**

- (a) After the examiner's and assessor's reports have been received, the department shall certify that the candidate is ready for the viva where applicable.
- (b) The department shall arrange a viva for a candidate and shall inform the Postgraduate Committee accordingly.
- (c) The viva shall consist of:
  - (i) a public presentation by the candidate, followed by
  - (ii) an oral examination by the panel.
- (d) The organisation of the viva will be the responsibility of the Department. The panel shall consist of the Dean of Faculty (Chair), the external examiner (if present), internal examiners, other supervisors, internal assessor, and representative of the Postgraduate Committee.
- (e) Interested persons can be admitted to attend the presentation, but not the examination.
- (f) After presentation and discussion of the thesis, the candidate and the public will be asked to leave the room temporarily and the Internal and External examiners will deliberate on the candidate.
- (g) The panel will deliberate on the results, taking into account the viva.
- (h) After the deliberations have been concluded, the panel shall call back the candidate to inform her/him about the results of the examination.

- (i) The recommendations of examiners shall be one of the following:-
  - (i) Pass as is
  - (ii) Pass (with corrections permitted or required should the need arise)
  - (iii) Referral – resubmission welcome after not more than 12 months
  - (iv) Failed – no resubmission

### **2.3.8 Binding**

If successful, the student shall be required to submit four corrected final hardcover bound copies of the thesis in maroon to the Dean of Postgraduate Studies through the Head of Department by the date stipulated in the calendar.

### **2.4 Duration of programme**

- (a) The recommended duration for a full-time Masters degree programme is 24 unless otherwise stipulated on enrolment.
- (b) The recommended duration for part-time Master's degree programme is 36 months, unless otherwise stipulated on enrolment.
- (c) The recommended duration of a Postgraduate Diploma programme is 12 months on full time and 24 months for part time unless otherwise stipulated on enrolment.
- (d) The recommended duration for all PhD programmes is 36 months for full-time students and 60 months for part-time students.
- (e) Any further extension shall have to be approved by the Department and endorsed by the Postgraduate Committee.

## **2.5 Extension**

- (a) The department can give an extension up to 6 months for full time students and 12 months for part time students under the Masters and Postgraduate Diploma programmes and inform the Postgraduate Committee accordingly.
- (b) The department can give an extension up to 9 months for full time students and 15 months for part time students under PhD programmes and inform the Postgraduate Committee accordingly.

## **2.6 Withdraw**

- (a) A student will be withdrawn on academic grounds, if she/he fails coursework as stipulated in the programme assessment rules.
- (b) A student will be withdrawn on academic grounds, if he/she fails his/her thesis.
- (c) A student will be withdrawn on academic grounds, if she/he does not complete the programme during the stipulated period.

## **2.7 Graduation**

- (a) The office of the registrar will communicate to the successful candidate the dates for graduation ceremonies. It can be in absentia or in attendance.
- (b) Certification commences, on the date Senate approve the award.

### 3 Conduct and Presentation of Academic Work and Examinations

#### 3.1 Presentation of Academic Work

(a) Various Faculties and Departments within the University have different requirements for the acknowledgement of sources. However, it is important to establish in fairly general terms what constitutes academic dishonesty so that in the event that a situation should arise there will be no equivocation. Five categories of academic dishonesty have been considered below.

(b) **Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is defined as the deliberate use of any outside source without proper acknowledgement. "Outside Source" in this respect means any work published or unpublished, by any person other than the student. This is not permitted because it is a misrepresentation of the material as the student's original work. Plagiarism can be avoided by proper use of reference, citations, footnotes or quotations of other people's work. In other words, students must clearly show which ideas are their own and those that are other people's.

(c) **Cheating in Tests and Examinations:** Cheating in tests and examinations takes two forms:-

- (i) Writing from hidden notes; and
- (ii) Communicating with fellow students.

These two practices of dishonesty are viewed seriously because students who successfully indulge in them gain unfair advantage over others and because they confound and invalidate the grading system.

(d) **Unreported collaboration on written Assignments:** If collaboration is allowed for any assignment, this fact ought to be communicated to all the students in advance of the assignment. Any collaboration must be fully

acknowledged and the extent of collaboration explained in a footnote. For example if John Phiri and Siphwe Moyo collaborate over accounting problems 1, 2 and 3 John Phiri should state in a footnote, I collaborated on this with Siphwe Moyo. She worked on problems 1 and 2 and I worked on 3. If collaboration is not allowed, the individuals should do their own work.

- (e) **False Data Submitted for Practical or Research or False Citation:** Under this act of dishonesty a student may create imaginary data for which no work was done or “improve” data in order that the results of the study are in keeping with the expected outcome or in the case of false citation, a student may deliberately attribute to a source from which the materials in question was never, in fact, obtained. Data faking is a serious matter because it is deceptive and obscures the discovery of scientific truth. Scientists working in isolation must be able to trust each other's integrity, and this means that obtained data must never be “cooked” in order to satisfy a particular hypothesis.
- (f) **Theft of another Student's Paper:** “Theft” shall be construed to mean any unauthorised use of another student's paper – even if the paper returned after use or consulted without removal from the owner or its normal location. This category is really an extension of plagiarism, only much worse than it because it may deprive the righteous student of a deserved grade in the favour of the “thief”.
- (g) All the above practices constitute academic dishonesty and are viewed seriously by the University since they are violations of University standards. The jurisdiction over violation of the regulations cited above will rest with Senate who will consider recommendations from the Faculty and the Principal of the College concerned.
- (h) **Academic fraud** is always considered a serious matter, and will be

considered especially serious if:-

- the student has submitted a paper prepared by another person or agency
- the student has brought and consulted notes during a test or an examination without authority.

- (i) **Penalty:** The penalties for academic fraud will range from deducting marks to permanent dismissal from the University. Each case will be considered on its merit, but in the case of cheating in the examinations, expulsion from the University will be mandatory. In this context “examinations” will be taken to include all final examinations, terminal and any other examinations taken during the year.

### 3.2 Conduct of Examinations

- (a) Candidates must be punctual for the examinations at the times stated in the examinations timetable. Candidates will be admitted to the examination hall not earlier than ten minutes before the start of the examination. No candidate will be permitted to enter the examination hall after half-an-hour from the start of the examination, provided that the Chief Invigilator may dispense with this rule in any case where he/she is satisfied that the candidate had no opportunity of communicating with any student who had already left the examination room.
- (b) All University students should have identity cards when entering examination rooms. Each candidate entering the examination hall is required to occupy the seat allotted to him/her.

Any candidate who is unable to attend an examination on account of illness, or other necessary cause, must send a message to the Invigilator, must consult a Medical Officer or Nursing Sister/Clinical Officer as soon as



possible, and must obtain an appropriate certificate testifying to the candidate's inability to write an examination.

- (c) No candidate will be allowed to leave the examination hall before three-quarters of an hour from the start of the examination. Except in cases of illness or other necessity. The Chief Invigilator may readmit a candidate who has left the examination hall in case of illness or other necessity if satisfied that the candidate has not communicated with any unauthorised person.
- (d) The Chief Invigilator will report to the Principal or his appointee the name of any candidate who leaves early on account of illness, and the time of leaving (for transmission to the examiners).
- (e) Candidates must not bring blotting or rough paper into the examination hall. Apart from the normal writing materials, students would be allowed to take into the examination room only such materials as specified on the examination paper, and students should be notified before the examination of any such materials.
- (f) All answers must be written in the distributed answer books, to which must be fastened any supplementary answers books/sheets. Candidates must leave all answers, rough work, and unused paper on their desks.

### **3.3 Misconduct of Candidates in Examinations**

- (a) When a candidate is found cheating in examination, the Chief Invigilator shall confiscate or impound any evidence, get another Invigilator to witness the alleged cheating and advise the candidate that until a final decision is made he/she is free to continue writing the examination if he/she so wishes.
- (b) The Chief Invigilator shall write a report on the matter as soon as practicable

and submit it to the Principal at like speed.

- (c) The examination scripts related to the examination paper in which the candidate is alleged to have cheated shall not be marked before a decision is made and the candidate shall not be informed of the results of his performance before such a decision is made.
- (d) Where an allegation of cheating is made after an examination has already been written then all the evidence shall be obtained in writing signed by the witness to the alleged cheating.
- (e) The evidence together with a written report shall be sent to the Principal as soon as practicable.

### **3.4 Disciplinary Action**

- (a) There shall be a Senate Academic Disciplinary Committee that shall be chaired by the Vice Chancellor or his/her appointee.
- (b) The Senate Academic Disciplinary Committee shall have sub-committees, one in each College that shall be chaired by the Vice Principal and in which all academic Deans at the College shall be members and also the Head(s) of Department(s) concerned.
- (c) When an alleged cheating has been reported to the Principal, the Principal shall refer the case to the sub-committee that shall report back its findings to the Principal.
- (d) The suspect shall be invited to present his/her side of the case to the sub-committee where persons who witnessed the alleged cheating shall be present as witnesses.
- (e) The Principal shall consider the report made to him/her by the sub-

committee and if he/she is satisfied with the guilt of the candidates proof beyond reasonable doubt he/she shall have the power to impose a penalty on the candidate including the power to suspend or dismiss him/her.

- (f) A candidate who is aggrieved by the decision of the Principal shall have the right to appeal to the Senate Academic Disciplinary Committee through the University Registrar.

## Appendix A      Generic Format for the Structure of a Thesis

<b>Preliminaries</b>	
<b>Title Page</b>	Your title should be short, clear and to the point.
<b>Declaration</b>	The student should declare and sign that the work presented for the thesis is their own work and that it has not been submitted for any other degree.
<b>Certificate of approval</b>	The thesis should be certified by the supervisors (2) and Head of Department.
<b>Dedication(optional)</b>	Student can write a brief statement paying tribute to the wife/husband, or other associated person.
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	It is common practice to acknowledge the contribution of everyone (especially the supervisor) who made a significant contribution to the thesis, as well as those people who supported the student during your studies.
<b>Abstract</b>	Student should summaries the main objectives of the study, the design and methodology followed as well as the key findings and recommendations. This should be one page.
<b>Table of Contents</b>	Your thesis should have a detailed “table of contents” with accurate page numbers.
<b>List of tables/list of figures</b>	It is standard practice to have separate lists of all tables, figures, acronyms and abbreviations in the thesis.

Adopted from: Babbie 2001

<b>List of Acronyms or Abbreviations</b>	It is also the best practices to list the acronyms and abbreviations used in the thesis and their meanings.
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction</b>	
<b>Developing the idea for the thesis and motivation for the study</b>	Begin by contextualizing the study. Relate how you came to decide on this topic and its relevance and importance. What are the main reasons (theoretical, empirical, practical) that led you to decide on this topic?
<b>Deriving the research topic from preliminary reading</b>	Show how your preliminary reading in the literature led to a refinement and focusing of your initial ideas. Reconstruct the development of your ideas by showing the gradual clarification of the research problem.
<b>Identifying and articulating the research problem, question or hypotheses</b>	State the overall aims and goals of the study as they crystallised during your preliminary reading and thinking about the problem. Formulate the overall and specific research objectives of the study derived from the research questions and/or research hypotheses.
<b>General indication of the research design and methodology (optional)</b>	At this stage it is appropriate to present a rough indication of the design, plan or structure of your study and the methodology that you followed in addressing your research problem.
<b>Significance of the Research</b>	Explain the rationale for conducting this research for the research community.

<b>Scope and Assumption</b>	Briefly discuss the assumptions and the scope of the research focusing on the reasons the assumptions and scope and their implication.
<b>Outline of remainder of thesis</b>	Conclude your first chapter with an outline of the rest of the thesis. Discuss briefly how your thesis will unfold and indicate the main topics that you will discuss in each of the remaining chapters.
<b>Chapter 2 Literature review/theoretical framework</b>	The chapter on the literature review in an empirical study usually also contains the theoretical framework that has informed the study.
<b>Introduction: demarcating the literature covered</b>	It is advisable to begin this chapter by indicating what literature has been covered and how you decided to demarcate the scholarship to be included in your review of the literature.
<b>Key concepts defined (where necessary)</b>	All research involves certain key concepts around which the study is built. Such key concepts need to be defined as early as possible in the study.
<b>Discussion of literature that you have read</b>	Present the literature that you have read in an organized and structured manner. Be fair in your treatment of authors. Avoid repetition or merely compiling lists of summaries without integrating your readings into a coherent text.
<b>Conclude the chapter with a summary of the main conclusions or findings</b>	The chapter should end with an overview of the main conclusions you have reached on the basis of your review of the literature. These conclusions are essential because they would have informed and influenced the empirical part of your study.

<b>Chapter 3: Research Methodology</b>	This chapter documents the design and methodology followed during your research.
<b>Hypotheses, conceptualisation, definitions, key variables</b>	Begin by defining the research hypotheses (where appropriate) and the key concepts and variable that formed part of the study. Show how such hypotheses were arrived at (derived from existing theories or borrowed from other empirical studies), which definitions of variable were chosen and on what grounds.
<b>Issues of measurement</b>	Discuss the instruments used in the measurement of the key variable of the study. Actual copies of instruments should be appended.
<b>Research Design</b>	Describe the philosophy adopted in the research, the research approach and strategies.  Describe ethical consideration used during the research data collection.
<b>Sample design and sampling methods</b>	Explain the sample design, the sampling techniques employed and the criteria used in the choice of sample size.
<b>Data collection methods and fieldwork practice</b>	Give full details of the data collection process, including gaining access to the subjects, data collection techniques and procedures used, dates and settings of data gathering.
<b>Data capturing and data editing</b>	Describe procedures used in capturing and editing data post-coding procedures, measures to minimize error.

<b>Data analysis</b>	Describe the rationale behind your selection of data analysis procedures as well as the actual procedures used.
<b>Chapters 4: Results: Presentation and discussions</b>	The chapters that follow document the results of your research and may be organised into one or more chapters, depending on the nature of the study, the research objectives, the complexity of the research design and the amount of data collected.
<b>Sample profiles</b>	A discussion of the sample and its characteristics is essential in order to understand the nature of the findings.
<b>Presentation of results (tables, graphs)</b>	Describe and summarise the main results that you obtained using tables and other visual devices (graphs, figures, plots).
<b>Discussion of results by hypothesis or theme</b>	Discuss the main trends and patterns in the data with reference to the hypotheses or research questions.
<b>Concluding interpretations</b>	Draw your discussion together by interpreting the main findings. Highlight the main results – both positive and negative.
<b>Chapter 5: Conclusions and recommendations</b>	Your concluding chapter is perhaps the most important in your thesis because it presents the end product of your endeavour.
<b>Summarise and discuss salient points</b>	Discuss the main findings that you have obtained in your study by drawing together the results from the previous chapters.



<p><b>Interpret results in terms of literature or theory</b></p>	<p>It is essential that you show how your results and conclusions relate to the literature and theory in this domain. You do this by showing the connections between your results and the literature reviewed in Chapter 2.</p>
<p><b>Discuss gaps, anomalies and/or deviations in the data</b></p>	<p>Discuss any anomalies and surprising results. Show whether your results confirm or deviate from the expected and give reasons for the latter. Be honest about ambiguities in the data. It is often impossible to explain all the results within one consistent theory or framework.</p>
<p><b>Make larger significance of results explicit</b></p>	<p>Show the larger relevance and value of your study. Also show where there are still gaps and uncertainties that might require further scholarship.</p>
<p><b>Policy and other recommendations</b></p>	<p>It is common practice to conclude with recommendations regarding further research, the implementation of findings, and possible policy implications.</p>
<p><b>List of references (not bibliography)</b></p>	<p>A bibliography is a complete list of all sources consulted. A list of references includes only those sources that you explicitly refer to (and quote) in your text. Make sure that you know which of these options is required by your supervisor or programme</p>

<b>Appendices</b> <b>Questionnaires/scales</b> <b>Covering letters</b> <b>Ethical</b> <b>documentation</b>	You may be required to append various kinds of documents, focusing on relevant documents
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## Appendix B Specifications of the Thesis

The thesis reports required in postgraduate programmes at the Malawi Polytechnic shall follow the following general specifications:

- (a) **Language of Report:** Report must be written in consistent style of English (UK).
- (b) **Typeface and Font Size:** Times New Roman typeface shall be used throughout the report. Font size of 12-point should be used for the main body of the text. A laser or other high quality printer is recommended for producing the final report.
- (c) **Paper:** High quality at least 80gm A4 size paper shall be used. The paper should be white and 'non-erasable'.
- (d) **Corrections:** Corrections of typographical errors, or changes in the text, figures or tables, must be made as cleanly and invisibly as possible. Correction fluid shall not be used. Corrections should be made on the original before recopying or reprinting the problem page.
- (e) **Margins and Spacing:** The margin on the document must measure according to the following specifications: Top: 20mm, Bottom: 20mm, Left: 30mm, and Right: 20mm. Furthermore, text should be typed, one and half-spaced, on one side of the paper only. For captions of figures and tables, single spacing can be used.
- (f) **Pagination:** Page numbers are to be placed at least 15 mm from the edge of the page at the bottom centre of the page. In addition, every page except the title page must be numbered. Title page is 'i' but is not numbered. Preliminary pages are to be numbered in lower case Roman numerals (ii, iii, iv etc). On the

other hand, the main text pages are to be numbered in Arabic numerals and all pages must be numbered consecutively and continuously.

- (g) **Illustration Material:** when photographs are to be included in the report, they shall be scanned. Pages with colour photographs should be copied on a colour photocopier.
- (h) **Captioning:** captioning for figure/charts/ illustrations should be placed below the figure while it is placed above for tables.
- (i) **Citation and Referencing:** Citation and referencing shall follow the APA style, unless otherwise stated in the programme document.