

# **GUIDELINES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DOCTORAL COMMITTEES**

## **1.0 The Purpose**

A Doctoral Committee (DC) will establish acceptable standards for PhD and other doctoral programme, monitor enrolment; serve as the student's advisory and performance assessment committee and monitor the student's progress throughout the study period on behalf of the Higher Degrees and Research Committee. The purpose of this Committee is to discuss the student's progress and provide additional guidance on research and overall professional development and shall support timely completion of the Ph.D. Such a committee exposes the student to high quality research in an intellectually diverse, stimulating, active and friendly environment. Such a system will advance academic transparency.

*A doctoral committee shall substitute departmental higher degrees committee and external vetters (although departmental committee shall be retained for masters students) and involve senior staff from other departments/units*

## **2.0 Membership of Doctoral Committee**

A doctoral committee shall be set up at department/unit level, principally constituted by at least two members from the major field of study (two may be supervisor(s) or potential supervisor(s), HOD or Dean and two other experts (minor field) deemed helpful in the pursuit of the study in question.

The contributions by such committee members should be recognized by the University (*e.g. at promotions, appointment etc*).

It is mandatory to have at least one external member. The committee chair should be identified at the first meeting with an input from the doctoral student.

Committee membership need not necessarily be based on PhD qualification but, rather expertise in the field of research, experience and productivity that shall enrich the proposed research. Therefore evidence of seniority (senior lecturer/equivalent) in terms of research and publications in the related field are more important with the exceptions to the proposed PhD supervisors.

***Membership (including the supervisors) shall not exceed five individuals and shall not be less than three at any one time.***

The Committee should be formed and (endorsed by School Higher Degrees and Research Committee or the Chairperson i.e. Dean, immediately after approval of synopsis of a PhD/doctoral applicant or following successful completion of the qualifying exams (where applicable). The Doctoral Committee may decide to meet several times during the full proposal writing stage.

This committee should meet on a regular basis (*2-4 times in year 1; 1-2 times in year 2 and 2-3 times in year 3 during data analysis and final reporting period*). It is the student's responsibility plus supervisor to draw out a work plan and ensure that regular meetings take place.

**A minimum of three-five progress reports from this committee plus an evidence of at least two manuscripts (or equivalent) accepted in peer reviewed journal will be the expected key outputs from a PhD/doctoral research before a candidate is awarded degree.**

The Doctoral Committee ceases when the candidate has passed the final viva voce (oral examination) and has a dissertation approved by the Directorate of Research and Graduate Training (DRGT).

A staff member who has accepted to be on such a committee will be available for consultations by the student according to agreements they may informally make. However, a student is free to consult anybody whether in the committee or outside the committee.

### **3.0 Guidelines for the Committee**

#### **3.1 Assessment of research project synopsis and final proposal**

Whereas the supervisor(s) would have been involved much earlier in the inception and synopsis production, the DC shall assess the following.

- (i) The applicant's credentials and worthiness for PhD based on (a) the set university criteria (b) Past experience, performance and past records, recommendations and other attributes (c) Evidence of ability to write clearly and concisely is particularly important.
- (ii) The synopsis and final research proposed for its academic character, feasibility/achievability within the time limits and depth (advancement of human and scientific understanding is essential). And either recommend or reject the synopsis/proposal or recommended revision.
- (iii) High risk projects may only be acceptable if the applicant indicates alternative strategies, should the initial plan of action prove unfeasible.
- (iv) Assess the intellectual challenges and merits of the proposed research.
- (v) Assess the quality and range of research opportunities and the training environment and facilities available at the unit or within the university.
- (vi) Assess and make sure that safety/ethical/legal considerations have been covered and adhered to.



- (vii) Assess the student's competences/skills and needs and recommend PhD / doctoral courses that is envisaged to be of high relevance for the applicant or his/her ability to audit courses from other Units.

### 3.2 Identification of supervisor(s)

- (i) The DC shall identify and nominate amongst themselves with an input from the candidate a minimum of two supervisors to the School Board and for approval by the DRGT. At least one supervisor should be Makerere University based but the other could be anywhere in the world as long as the person is accessible to the candidate.
- (ii) Build linkages and forge collaborations to broaden the Network of the student and guidance in career.
- (iii) Supervisor-s' roles shall be active involvement, field visits, guidance/support, mentoring the student, active grant searching, networking with others.

### ***Performance Monitoring***

- (i) The committee will review the independent reports from student and supervisors and send recommendations directly to the School HDRC and DRGT.
- (ii) Monitor timely progress reporting,
- (iii) Identify external examiners and recommend to the DRGT for approval.
- (iv) Identify other academic and research opportunities both inside and outside the university (such as academic conferences, workshops, training, collaborating industries, research centres/labs etc).

### ***4.0 Viva Voce***

The DC shall form part of the Viva voce committee with two - five additional independent members (From Firms, Industries, Retired Academicians, Relevant Ministry etc). However, the presentation will be **OPEN** to the public although the final assessment is by the committee members.

### ***5.0 Others Matters***

*A student who feels dissatisfied with his/ her committee may, given that they have good reasons, consult their Dean or in serious cases the Director, DRGT.*