



Higher Education Council
Quality Education - Our Aim

POSTGRADUATE DEGREE FRAMEWORK

JULY 2026

FOREWORD

Rwanda's Higher Education Council (HEC) is a regulatory body established to oversee and enhance the quality of higher education in Rwanda. Among its primary responsibilities is guidance and oversight of postgraduate programs in Higher education institutions, to ensure that they meet established standards, thereby safeguarding the integrity and quality of higher education.

HEC is mandated to issue this Postgraduate Degree Framework (PDF). This framework provides detailed instructions for both HEC and educational institutions on implementing and evaluating higher degree programs.

This Framework seeks to expand higher education ecosystem by introducing new postgraduate programs required by labor market; has been developed to guide the current and future practice of teaching, learning and research at Higher Learning Institutions (HLI) in Rwanda.

HEC promulgates a reasonably standardised graduate education and research, drawing on the best practices, and frameworks from regional and international educational bodies. This national framework is designed to facilitate a transparent, robust and efficient academic process. It has been benchmarked on relevant literature and frameworks, including those from the East African Community, UNESCO, and other pertinent organisations.

HEC acknowledges and appreciates the contributions of all stakeholders involved in the development and validation of this framework. Such collaborative effort is critical to the improvement of the quality of higher education in Rwanda.

The HEC encourages HLIs and collaborators to consider this framework in the design of postgraduate program and other delivery, including doctors programs in Rwanda.

A blue circular official seal of the Higher Education Council of Rwanda is positioned to the right of a handwritten signature in blue ink.

Dr. Edward KADOZI

Director General

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Rwanda's Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) and Higher Education Council (HEC) contribute to national development by strengthening a knowledge-based economy through high-quality postgraduate education, research training, innovation, and professional capability development. Graduate research is central to this ambition because it produces the scholars, researchers, academic leaders, innovators, and highly skilled professionals needed to sustain the country's universities, research base, and advanced professions.

Rwanda's Second National Strategy for Transformation (NST2), 2024–2029 operationalises Rwanda's Vision 2050. Vision 2050 and NST2 place human capital development, research, science, technology, innovation, productive employment, and the quality and relevance of education at the centre of national transformation. This priority is reflected in Rwanda's Higher Education Sector Strategic Plan (HESSP) 2025–2030, which recognises doctoral scholars and graduates as essential to higher education and research.

Postgraduate study is an important mechanism for developing the advanced knowledge, skills, and research capacity required for Rwanda's social, economic, scientific, and institutional development. Research-trained academics teach students, sustain the academic workforce, generate research outputs and impact, and contribute to the development of advanced professions.

This Postgraduate Degree Framework (PDF) supports implementation of this national ambition. The PDF provides guidance on qualification types, student admissions, coursework and professional foundations, research ethics and approvals, program management and supervision, ensuring project completion, thesis requirements, and examination procedures.

The PDF provides broad national guidance for the design, accreditation, management, supervision, monitoring, examination, and completion of postgraduate programs in Rwanda. It sets out national minimum expectations and good-practice guidance for postgraduate programs.

Successful postgraduate study depends on coordinated action among stakeholders. Institutions must provide accredited programs, qualified supervisors, adequate research infrastructure, effective student support systems, ethical and quality-assured research environments, and credible examination processes. Students must meet academic, ethical, professional, and research requirements. Supervisors, examiners, program managers, and institutional leaders must work together to ensure that candidates progress successfully from admission to graduation.

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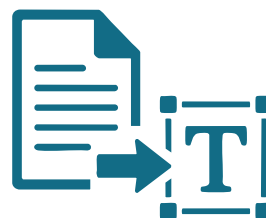
INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

Rwanda's Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) and Higher Education Council (HEC) contribute to national development by strengthening a knowledge-based economy through high-quality postgraduate education, research training, innovation, and professional capability development. Graduate research is central to this ambition because it produces the scholars, researchers, academic leaders, innovators, and highly skilled professionals needed to sustain the country's universities, research base, and advanced professions.

Rwanda's Second National Strategy for Transformation (NST2), 2024–2029, builds on the foundations of the First National Strategy for Transformation (2017–2024), and operationalises Rwanda's Vision 2050. Vision 2050 and NST2 place human capital development, research, science, technology, innovation, productive employment, and the quality and relevance of education at the centre of national transformation. In this context, postgraduate study is an important mechanism for developing the advanced knowledge, skills, and research capacity required for Rwanda's social, economic, scientific, and institutional development.

This priority is reflected in Rwanda's Higher Education Sector Strategic Plan (HESSP) 2025–2030, which recognises doctoral scholars and graduates as essential to higher education and research. Research-trained academics teach students, sustain the academic workforce, generate research outputs and impact, and contribute to the development of advanced professions. HESSP further calls for HEC and Higher Learning Institutions (HLI) to collaborate in building national programs that support doctoral candidates, early career researchers, and innovative doctoral program designs linked to foundation knowledge, research skills, investigative research projects, industry

engagement, and advanced professional capability.



This Postgraduate Degree Framework (PDF) supports implementation of this national ambition. The PDF provides broad national guidance for the design, accreditation, management, supervision, monitoring, examination, and completion of postgraduate programs in Rwanda. This PDF may be read from start to finish, but it is also designed to serve as a practical reference for HLI, academic leaders, program managers, supervisors, students, researchers, support personnel, examiners, research institutions, industry partners, and other stakeholders involved in postgraduate education and training.



Successful postgraduate study outcomes depend on coordinated action among stakeholders. HLI must provide accredited programs, qualified supervisors, adequate research infrastructure, effective student support systems, ethical and quality-assured research environments, and credible examination processes. Students must meet academic, ethical, professional, and research requirements. Supervisors, examiners, program managers, and institutional leaders

must work together to ensure that candidates progress successfully from admission to graduation.

Because postgraduate degrees have developed over many years and across different higher education systems, a wide range of terminology is used. Terms such as “viva voce”, “oral defence”, “oral examination”, “dissertation defence”, and “thesis defence” may be used differently across institutions and countries. The words “graduate” and “postgraduate” can be used interchangeably. For clarity and consistency, each HLI should define the terms it uses in plain language and communicate them clearly to candidates, supervisors, examiners, and other stakeholders. Clear expectations should be established during program accreditation, admission, supervision, progression review, thesis submission, and examination.



Postgraduate education has both independent and collaborative dimensions. Candidates are expected to demonstrate independence, originality, and scholarly integrity, while institutions must provide appropriate academic, administrative, ethical, and professional support. HEC issues this framework to strengthen consistency and quality across the sector while recognising the role of HLI in designing and managing their own accredited programs. Collaboration among HEC, HLI, research centres, professional bodies, industry, and international partners is encouraged to ensure that postgraduate education in Rwanda remain relevant, credible, innovative, and globally connected.

This framework sets out national minimum expectations and good-practice guidance for postgraduate research programs. Along with the aspirational intent of graduate education and research, institutions are meant to deliver practice which rises well above these minimum standards. This PDF does not replace applicable laws, ministerial orders, the Rwanda Qualifications Framework (RQF), any HEC accreditation requirements, professional regulations, or institutional academic policies. Where any conflict arises, the legally binding framework, the RQF, and HEC-approved accreditation conditions prevail.

Finally, this framework touches on many aspects of higher education, research, management, ethics, supervision, examination, and academic quality assurance. It touches the main stages of the postgraduate journey, from admission and supervision to progression, examination, and final award. It does not attempt to provide exhaustive treatment of every matter. HLI should therefore use this framework alongside relevant laws, regulations, accreditation standards, institutional policies, program regulations, procedures, templates, and forms. The purpose is to promote quality, consistency, innovation, and accountability in postgraduate education while allowing institutions sufficient flexibility to respond to disciplinary, professional, national, and international needs.

Throughout this Framework: “must” indicates a mandatory national requirement. “Should” indicates a strongly recommended practice. An HLI departing from it must be able to demonstrate that it achieves the underlying purpose by other means. “May” indicates a practice that is permitted but not required. Provisions in this Framework expressed using “will”, “shall”, “is required to” or “is expected to” are to be read as “must”.

QUALIFICATION TYPES

Course Accreditation



Higher Learning Institutions (HLI) can only deliver postgraduate education and research which is accredited by Rwanda's Higher Education

Council (HEC), and which aligns with the Rwandan Qualifications Framework (RQF) and other government and professional legislation, policies and guidelines.

student support services, funding/resource sustainability, quality assurance mechanisms, examination procedures, and credible completion pathways. Each accredited program should specify learning outcomes mapped to the RQF, admission requirements, credit structure, coursework and research components, progression milestones, maximum registration periods, supervision arrangements, examination model, publication expectations, and graduate destinations.

Before enrolling students into an accredited postgraduate program, the HLI should demonstrate adequate governance, leadership, management and resources. As this framework conveys, important considerations pertain to policies, supervisory capacity, research infrastructure, library and digital resources, laboratory or fieldwork facilities where relevant, research ethics governance, data protection arrangements,

HLIs will award postgraduate master or doctorate qualifications to registered candidates who have successfully completed graduate programs accredited at the academic institution. A full list of eligible qualifications is specified in the RQF. In terms of the RQF nomenclature, the current framework pertains to Level 9 masters-level work and Level 10 which is doctorate level.

Master Degrees



To be awarded a master degree, students must complete the required coursework credits or their equivalent in accordance with the RQF, present and

defend this work to the satisfaction of the selected board of examiners, and fulfil other requirements outlined in this framework and accredited program. All master degrees are at RQF Level 9 and take a minimum of two years and 180 credits. Certain fields such

as health may have distinctive professional characteristics and regulations.



A **research master** degree is awarded to a candidate who has completed master-level study and a substantial supervised research project. Master-level study includes advanced disciplinary or interdisciplinary learning, research methodology, theoretical or conceptual grounding, data analysis, research ethics,

academic writing, scholarly communication, and other research preparation required by the accredited program. The candidate must demonstrate the ability to investigate a clearly defined research problem using appropriate methods and to contribute to knowledge, practice, policy, innovation, or professional development in the relevant field. In terms of nomenclature, abbreviations for such degrees can include MA, MCom, MSc, MPhil, MEd, LLM, MS and MSS.



The **coursework master** will be awarded to a candidate who has successfully completed the requirements of an accredited coursework-based master program.

The program is mainly delivered through taught modules, seminars, practical sessions, independent study, and assessed coursework. It must also include a clearly defined research, dissertation, capstone, or equivalent scholarly component. This type of master degree should enable the candidate to deepen knowledge beyond the bachelor level, critically analyse current evidence and practice, apply appropriate

research or analytical methods, and address complex academic, institutional, professional, policy, or societal problems relevant to the candidate's field of study and national development priorities. Examples include MA, MSc, MSocSc, MComm, MLaw and MEd.

The **professional master** will be awarded to a candidate who has successfully completed the requirements of an accredited professional master program. The program is designed primarily for advanced professional practice and integrates academic study with professional knowledge, practical skills, field-based learning, workplace experience, clinical or technical practice where relevant, and practice-oriented research. The research, dissertation, capstone, professional project, or equivalent component must demonstrate that the candidate can use evidence, appropriate methods, critical reflection, and professional judgement to address a real problem in a specific profession, sector, institution, community, or area of national development. Examples include MAppCom (Taxation), MEd (School Leadership) and MMed (Paediatric Surgery).



Doctorate Degrees



A doctoral degree is awarded to a candidate who has successfully completed the requirements of an accredited doctoral program. All doctorate

programs are RQF Level 10 and take a minimum of four years and 360 credits. The candidate must demonstrate the ability to conduct independent research, apply appropriate research methods, critically engage with current knowledge, and make an original contribution to knowledge, professional practice, policy, innovation, or societal development. Where the accredited program includes taught modules, research training, professional practice, or other assessed components, these must be successfully completed before the final award is made. The candidate must submit and successfully defend a doctoral thesis or equivalent doctoral research output to the satisfaction of the appointed examiners. Certain fields such as health may have distinctive professional characteristics and regulations.

A doctorate may be structured in different ways depending on the purpose of the qualification, the discipline, and the approved program design. This PDF distinguishes between three main doctoral pathways: research doctorate, coursework doctorate and professional doctorate. All three are doctoral qualifications at RQF Level 10 and must demonstrate originality, independence, methodological rigour, theoretical, and a doctoral-level contribution. The difference between them lies mainly in the balance between independent research, taught coursework, professional practice, and the form of the final output.



The **research doctorate** is awarded to a candidate who has conducted an original and independent investigation of an approved research topic. The candidate must demonstrate advanced

understanding of the relevant theories, concepts, contexts, practices, and research methods in the chosen field. The submitted thesis must show methodological rigour, critical analysis, scholarly integrity, and a significant original contribution to knowledge. The candidate must successfully defend the thesis through an oral examination or approved alternative examination. Other completion requirements include completion of coursework and scientific publication. The research doctorate is usually denoted with the nomenclature of PhD.



A **coursework doctorate** is awarded to a candidate who has successfully completed the requirements of an accredited doctoral program that combines advanced coursework with

a supervised doctoral research component. The program should integrate doctoral-level research with professional knowledge, applied skills, critical reflection, and practice-oriented inquiry. The coursework component should provide advanced theoretical, methodological, professional, or interdisciplinary preparation. The thesis or equivalent doctoral research output should demonstrate originality, independence, and critical inquiry. The submitted thesis or equivalent doctoral research output must address a significant problem in a profession, sector, institution,

community, policy area, or area of national development. The coursework doctorate has more coursework and a smaller dissertation. The coursework doctorate is usually denoted with the nomenclature of PhD.



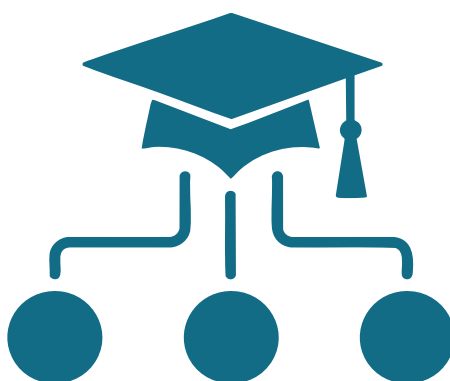
A **professional doctorate** is awarded to a candidate who has successfully completed the requirements of an accredited doctoral program that combines advanced coursework with a substantial supervised doctoral research component. The program should integrate doctoral-level research with professional knowledge, applied skills, critical reflection,

and practice-oriented inquiry. The coursework component should provide advanced theoretical, methodological, professional, or interdisciplinary preparation. The thesis or equivalent doctoral research output should demonstrate originality, independence, and critical inquiry. The submitted thesis or equivalent doctoral research output must address a significant problem in a profession, sector, institution, community, policy area, or area of national development. Examples can include DBA, DPA, DSW, MD, DDS, EngD, EdD, DEd and JD.

Degree Structures and Pathways

Regardless of their actual specification, both master and doctorate degrees involve various combinations of admission, coursework, assessment, research and examination. This PDF focuses for the most part on the research facets of these degrees, noting that coursework and research arrangements will vary. The framework is intended to articulate good practice suggestions and guiding principles for the design of particular research courses, and are not prescriptive.

Postgraduate education enables a number of pathways in terms of admission to specific programs. This framework permits pathways such as transfer from master to doctorate degrees, without seeking to be overly detailed or prescriptive. Each HLI must define its own admissions and assessment requirements in line with relevant protocols.



Research or Postgraduate Certificates



HLI may offer supplementary certificates to strengthen research capacity among candidates, supervisors, academic staff, and professional

researchers. These certificates may cover areas such as research methodology, research ethics, academic writing, data analysis, research data management, grant writing, publication ethics, intellectual property, innovation, artificial intelligence in research, supervision, and research leadership.

Such certificates may be embedded within an accredited postgraduate program as compulsory or optional research training components. They may be offered as stand-alone or continuing professional development courses for researchers, supervisors, or professionals who require specific research skills. They may form part of a stackable pathway towards a postgraduate certificate, postgraduate diploma, master degree, or doctoral preparation pathway.

Where a certificate is credit-bearing or contributes to progression within a postgraduate program, the HLI must specify its RQF level, credit value, learning outcomes, assessment requirements, quality assurance arrangements, and whether the credits may be transferred into another accredited program. Such certificates must not be presented as equivalent to the award of a master degree or doctoral degree unless they form part of a formally accredited qualification pathway approved by the relevant authorities.

Certificates of attendance or participation may be issued for non-credit training activities, workshops, seminars, or professional development sessions. These certificates should clearly state that they do not constitute an academic qualification unless the training has been formally accredited and assessed. The certificate should indicate the title of the training, duration, learning outcomes, mode of delivery, assessment status, issuing institution, date of completion, and responsible authority.

Research training certificates should support but not replace core postgraduate requirements. A candidate must still satisfy all requirements for admission, coursework, research ethics approval, supervision, progress review, thesis submission, independent examination, and final approval of the degree award.

To ensure consistency in interpretation and implementation, HLI must clearly distinguish between non-credit certificates, credit-bearing research training certificates, and formal postgraduate certificates. The status, purpose, assessment requirements, credit value where applicable, and relationship of each certificate to a postgraduate research qualification shall be specified before the certificate is offered or issued.

STUDENT ADMISSIONS

Foundations

Applying for postgraduate programs at any HLI in Rwanda is a comprehensive process that requires careful preparation and attention to detail. By following guidelines and utilizing available resources applicants can enhance chances of a successful application. An applicant may request a review of all application and admissions decisions.

All applications will be handled on merit. It is critical for Rwanda that talented people are attracted to postgraduate study regardless

of their background and are selected on competitive basis on their capacity to succeed.

All postgraduate study opportunities must be openly and publicly advertised in standard and accessible outlets on the HLI website, social media and ideally sector and national media. Comprehensive admissions procedures must be in place, and monitored and audited.

Entry Requirements

The master and doctorate are generally consecutive cycles of study, in that a master degree is generally considered a prerequisite for admission to doctoral studies. Only in specifically defined cases may a candidate be admitted to a doctorate without holding a master degree.

Entry to master and doctorate degrees have general commonalities and differences. Other specific requirements will be customised to the HLI and academic program.

Applicants seeking admission for a master degree or doctorate degree are typically required to hold a first or upper second-class undergraduate / bachelor honours degree from a university or an equivalent qualification.

Additionally, applicants can provide a minimum of two recommendation letters from academically qualified referees who can attest to their research potential and academic capabilities.

Applicants with non-English academic prior qualifications or from non-English speaking education systems must demonstrate proficiency in the English language via an approved standardised test. Specific projects may have other language requirements.

Certain disciplines may also require the submission of a portfolio showcasing previous work.

For doctorate application a research concept note must be submitted. This should generally include focus, background, problem statement, objectives, methodology, timeline and resources, and projected contributions. This concept note should attest to the applicant's seriousness to engage in the doctorate. The concept note will most likely change in the early stages of study.

Applicants must generally submit their full CV to enable full consideration of their academic background, capability and potential.

If a candidate has previously conducted research as a registered student for a research degree, the HLI may grant a reduced registration period, considering the time already spent on such research. Similarly, students with advanced standing, such as transfer students, may be granted bespoke registration periods on HLI approval. Each HLI or program must develop guidelines that provide guidance to applicants on advanced standing.

Applicants who hold a master degree may be eligible for direct admission to a doctorate program, provided that their degree is in a relevant discipline aligned with the proposed research and includes both research training and the completion of a research project.

Application Procedures

Research projects may be proposed in any field of study, provided that the proposed work is capable of leading to scholarly research and can be presented for assessment by qualified examiners. Additionally, the HLI must be able to provide the necessary resources (e.g. offices, laboratories, and workshops) and ensure adequate supervision.

Exact application procedures will vary at each HLI but must involve a series of institutional steps, committees, and senior administrative and academic personnel. By way of example:

- Prospective research degree candidates must submit their application for consideration by relevant faculty or committees;
- Doctorate and potentially master candidates can be asked to undergo an interview conducted by an academic leader, an administrative professional, and one or more prospective supervisor/s;
- The HLI will decide whether the candidate should be admitted or subjected to further admissions procedures; and
- The HLI will enrol the successful candidate in the relevant degree program.

Before approving an application the HLI must ensure that:

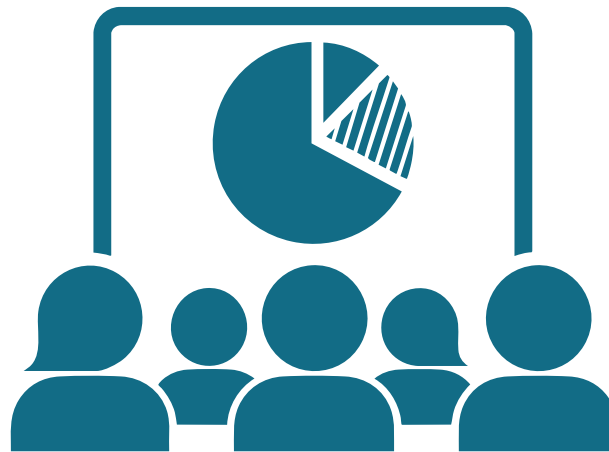
- The candidate is properly qualified for the proposed postgraduate program;
- Applicants have been advised of professional and career outcomes, including likely roles, work contracts and salary levels;
- The candidate proposes a promising and innovative research project;
- In designing their work candidates and supervisory teams have taken into account master and doctorate level descriptors for study outcomes in the RQF;
- Supervision is adequate and likely to be sustained;
- Risks associated with fieldwork have been disclosed and mitigated;
- The HLI will provide appropriate facilities and structures for the conduct of scholarly research in the area; and
- Research projects will meet the standard ethics and confidentiality requirements specified by the HLI.

At the point of enrolment the HLI must clarify for each applicant the program requirements, expected academic learning outcomes, and likely graduate professional destinations.

Group Projects

An applicant participating in a larger group research project may apply as an individual for a research degree. In such cases each individually registered project will in itself be distinguishable for the purposes of assessment and be appropriate for the award being sought. The application will indicate clearly each individual contribution and its relationship to the group project.

If a research degree project is part of funded research, the HLI must ensure that the funding terms do not compromise the achievement of the candidate's research degree objectives, learning outcomes, study period and other specific requirements.



COURSEWORK AND PROFESSIONAL FOUNDATIONS

Coursework Requirements

While postgraduate study focuses on independent research rather than traditional classes, coursework requirements also play a role. Coursework is important, for not everything can be gleaned through research. Postgraduate programs distinguish themselves not only by the quality of research they produce but also by the professional competence and capability of the graduates which they are ready for the world of academic and advanced executive work.

Coursework may be delivered in an isolated fashion or through research or postgraduate certificates. It may cover any area of relevance to the discipline. General types of coursework provided as foundations for research degrees tend to include:

- Research methodology/ethics training;
- Research ethics and bioethics;
- Courses to fill specific skill or knowledge gaps;

- Work experience and internships;
- Managing research projects;
- Publishing and social impact;
- Self-management and working with others;
- Academic skills training;
- Professional skills training; and
- Training for on-the-job learning.

Each qualification type contains a specified amount of coursework. The precise content of coursework, assessment, and the nature of exemptions or advanced standing arrangements which may be granted must be prescribed by HLI and managed by the HLI and the candidate. Often third-party interests arising from joint programs, employer/industry requirements, research institutions or international/professional standards need to be taken into account.

Doctorate Comprehensive Examination

At the doctoral level, coursework is capped by a minimum of three sub-field comprehensive examinations that assess the candidate's broader knowledge of their field and specialization and their familiarity with the relevant published research and relevant methodologies. Comprehensive examinations also evaluate the critical and analytical skills needed for thesis research and determines the student's readiness to pursue independent scholarship in the context of their thesis. The sub-fields required will be chosen by the candidate and approved by their appointed thesis supervisor.

Doctoral candidates must complete their comprehensive examinations at the end of their coursework period and before proceeding to the thesis stage. To attend the comprehensive examination the candidate should have submitted a research concept for assessment. The duration and content of the examination will be determined by the HLI. The format and procedures for these exams will vary across institutions and fields, but must include:

- Satisfactory performance in a written examination of significant literature across the chosen sub-fields, including

methodology, which is proctored and may be open or closed book;

- A research concept clarifying focus and scope, methodology, resources, fieldwork plans and ethics/risk management plans; and
- An oral report, which may take the form of an individual examination or a scholarly presentation or paper.

In addition to the supervisor and co-supervisors, the comprehensive examination committee must include at least two academic members from the HLI reflecting the (multi-) disciplinary nature of the student's research. External examiners are not required to be part of the comprehensive examination committee. All committee members must hold a doctorate and possess expertise

relevant to the field examined. If a previously appointed committee member is indisposed, an alternate faculty member with relevant expertise must be appointed.

An unsuccessful examination candidate is allowed one opportunity to retake the examination after a period of three to six months. In the case of a second failure, the candidate will be notified in writing that he or she will be required to withdraw from the degree program.



RESEARCH ETHICS AND APPROVALS

Professional and Research Integrity



M a i n t a i n i n g professional and research integrity is crucial and Rwandan HLI must have structured policies and procedures in place. All research

institutes, programs and projects must be subject to rigorous and proportionate forms of ethical approval and ongoing oversight.

Researchers are required to follow relevant laws, regulations and guidelines related to privacy and confidentiality, intellectual property, ethical research standards, professional standards, publication ethics, plagiarism policies, authorship criteria, conflicts of interest, disclosure requirements, management procedures, data standards and management, peer review, and other relevant aspects of research ethics and integrity.

Artificial intelligence may only be used in ways prescribed by the HLI, HEC or relevant professions or other agencies. As policies continue to evolve, associated policies, and standards will continuously be updated to tackle the challenges and opportunities presented by the use of generative AI technologies in research.

Each HLI providing research degrees must have basic governance and policy in place. Key elements include an independent ethics committee, freedom of speech policies, and an independent ombuds, whistle blower mechanisms, or means for handling confidential complaints and appeals.

Where either during the conduct of the examination or subsequent to the recommendation of the examiners, there emerges evidence of academic misconduct in the preparation or publication of the thesis, or other irregularities the HLI will consider the matter according to its standing procedures, if necessary in consultation with the examiners, and take relevant disciplinary action guided by the internal policy and regulation of HLI.

Personal familiarity with research guidelines is mandatory. Researchers and students must be well versed with all research requirements and guidelines. In all aspects of research academic honesty and transparency is critical and mandatory. HLI will subscribe to an ethic of personal responsibility by which individual researchers, and, in the case of students, their supervisors, should have some degree of autonomy and take personal responsibility for their research.

Research Ethics Clearance



All research involving humans and animals must abide by international (e.g. Helsinki Declaration), national, institutional and professional

standards. Types of research requiring prior ethical clearance include those involving human subjects research, animal research, and those involving sensitive data. Research ethics clearance ensures that projects are conducted responsibly and with respect for participant's rights and well-being. Formal

clearance procedures particularly through human ethics committees are essential for maintaining ethical standards. The responsibility for overseeing research ethics in research degrees will be given to a research ethics committee. The committee will consider ethical issues raised by individual projects which involve human subjects through either

experimentation or the collection of data or which impinge on people's lives and might cause harm or embarrassment. Candidates or advisors are required to identify potential risks to participants and describe how they will be mitigated and highlight measures to ensure participant safety and confidentiality.

Confidentiality Agreements



It is vital to conform to existing guidelines for higher education compliance with HLI regulations. These agreements help ensure compliance with legal and ethical standards particularly in research involving human subjects

or proprietary data agreements. Where a candidate or the institution wishes the thesis to remain confidential for a period of time after completion of the work, application for approval will normally be made to the HLI during admissions. In cases where the need for confidentiality emerges at a subsequent

stage, a special application for the thesis to remain confidential after submission can be made to the HLI. The often-complex interests of non-academic partners require careful negotiation in relation to confidentiality.

The period of confidentiality approved will normally not exceed two years from the completion of the qualification. Under special circumstances such as research related to sensitive fields a longer period may be granted. Once confidentiality expires, the thesis usually becomes publicly available in the HLI's repository. However, the thesis may still be subject to specific conditions including access restrictions in case the confidentiality was based on sensitive data, and thus a part of the thesis may remain restricted.

Intellectual Property Rights



Institutional guidelines must be consulted and clarified. In Rwanda, higher learning institutions must have specific policies regarding intellectual property rights (IP, IPR) related to research

conducted by staff and students consistent with Rwandan law. Key considerations pertain to ownership of student research, supervisor

contributions, and outputs from funded research. These considerations then flow into revenue sharing arrangements, patent procedures, commercialization pathways, and licensing arrangements for outputs from research higher degrees. In general, IP should by default belong to the candidate, whether claimed by an employer or not, and any delegation of that IP right should go to the university. Candidate's published papers and thesis are usually protected by copyright policy. If collaborating with external entities

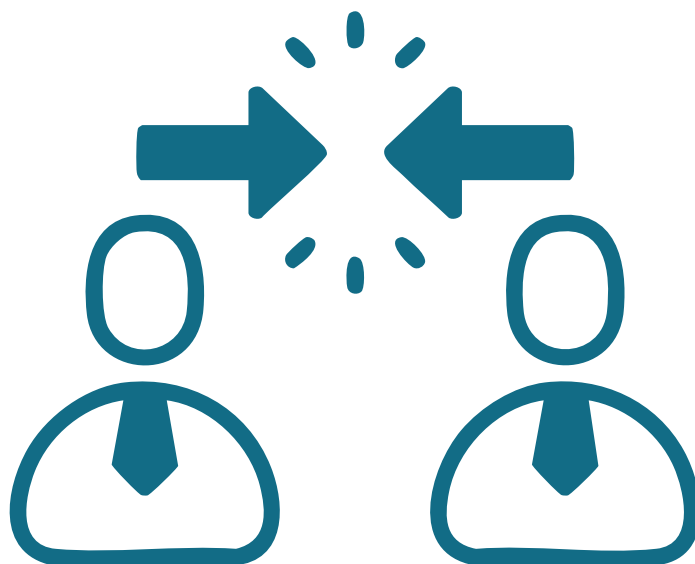
HII and candidates may be required to protect sensitive information. Each HII is required to have a person or office to handle complex IP matters, such as those involving international institutions, to ensure clarity at the start of the process and avoid disputes.

Every candidate must be given a written statement of the applicable intellectual property position and must sign it at the point of enrolment.

Conflicts of Interest

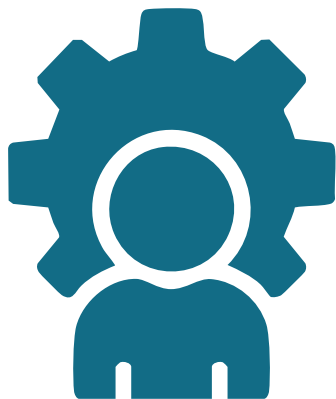
All material conflicts of interest must be disclosed, identified and addressed. Considerations of such conflicts apply to

supervisors, examiners, committee members, industry partners and funders, among others.



PROGRAM MANAGEMENT AND SUPERVISION

Program Managers

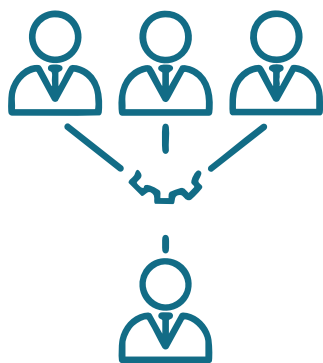


Each HLI must have professional administrators in place to manage postgraduate research programs. Ideally there will be both senior and practice-level personnel who are experienced in program design, management, and quality/compliance assurance. Academic personnel may serve in this role but ensure that their contribution is corporate/operational not academic in nature. There should be

organisational independence between these staff and academic personnel.

Program managers typically engage in day-to-day and broader activities. They will manage all administrative tasks such as applicant, enrolment, course renewals, upgrading, supervisor evaluation, and examination scheduling. They will send official reminders and track progress against student's milestones. They will process examiner nominations and examination paperwork. They should be available as the first person a candidate contacts when something goes wrong. They must have knowledge of regulations and procedures.

Supervisors and Supervision



Effective supervisors and supervision is vital to successful postgraduate research experiences and outcomes.

Supervisors for master and doctorate candidates must themselves hold a doctorate. The main supervisor must be a member of the HLI's staff and have a strong publication and supervision record in the relevant domain, specifically for PhD supervision.

A doctoral research degree candidate will have at least two and normally not more than four supervisors for internal supervision. The role of lead supervisor will be established in consultation with the candidate. For external supervision, at least one expert or one reviewer is encouraged to form equitable inclusion. At a master level, at least one supervisor is recommended.

The roles and expectations of supervisors should be clearly specified and agreed with candidates at the start of any course. The candidate, the lead supervisor and a nominated officer of the HLI must sign a written supervision agreement.

Normally, the main supervisor will meet with the candidate on a regular and frequent basis, and is the promoter of candidate's research project. The remaining additional supervisors may meet with the candidate to advise on specific technical or substantive elements.

They should be available, be fair, provide timely and constructive feedback on work.

All parties must have a clear understanding of the supervisory process, including meeting

frequency, record-keeping, progress reporting, supervisor performance evaluation, period of completion, and mechanisms for addressing poor supervision.

Supervisor Experience and Training



Academic supervisory experience involves guiding and mentoring students through their educational endeavours. A supervision team will normally have had a combined

experience of supervising not fewer than two candidates for successful completion. All supervisors should have completed approved research supervisor training.

HLI must offer resources and training for faculty to ensure their supervisory skills, including workshops on mentorship, feedback and diversity in research teams. Academics who wish to become research supervisors must normally successfully complete an

approved supervisory training program, before they undertake any supervisory role. Only in exceptional circumstances, a member of staff will be allowed to undertake supervision without such training and in that event the training program must be successfully completed.

In addition to the supervisors, an advisor may be proposed to contribute some specialised knowledge or a link with an external organisation.

Each HLI must set and publish minimum supervision standards. These should detail minimum standards around meeting frequency, written records, supervisor workload limits such as the maximum supervisory load, feedback, and student work.

A candidate for a research degree is ineligible to act as supervisor or advisor.

Doctorate Committee



Each student should have recourse to a doctorate committee. A broader doctorate committee must be put in place for each candidate to oversee supervision and the student experience, and broader evaluation. This doctorate committee should include

the supervisors and as well two additional independent academics with supervisory experience one of which is drawn from outside the HLI. This committee should meet with the candidate at milestones as defined.

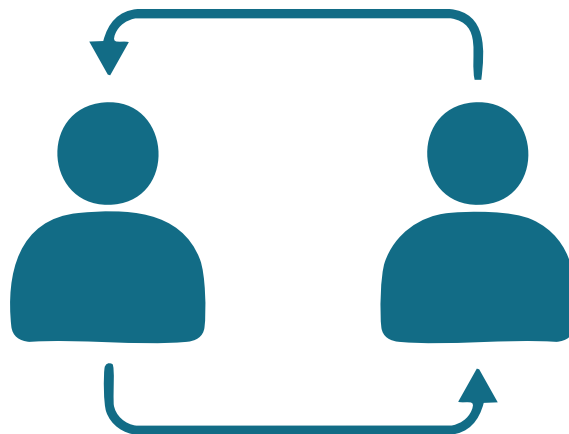
Changing Supervisors

Ideally, supervisory arrangements should remain stable throughout the duration of the degree. All efforts should be made to ensure continuity, including mediation, dispute resolution, and alternative working arrangements.

A proposal for a change in supervision arrangements will be made to the faculty or equivalent on the appropriate form. A change may be instigated either by the student or by a member of the supervisory team yet preferably by mutual agreement, and must be substantively motivated. If a supervisor migrates to another HLI, s/he may, if they

consent, be adopted as an external supervisor for the candidate. In all other cases, an alternate supervisor will be nominated.

If the supervisor retires, he/she should continue to guide the candidate already registered and ready to submit his thesis within one year. If the candidate has not submitted the thesis within one year, a replacement supervisor can be nominated. If the retiring supervisor is not able to continue to guide the candidate then the HLI must put in place alternative supervision arrangements.



ENSURING PROJECT COMPLETION

Study Milestones

Study periods for full-time candidates for master and doctorate degrees are specified in this framework.

Research study involves complex and extended engagement and key milestones must be met to succeed. Key steps include:

- Student admissions;
- Foundation coursework;
- Doctorate comprehensive examination;
- Study management plan;
- Research ethics and protocols;
- Effective supervisory experiences;
- Ongoing monitoring and review;
- Production of a successful thesis document; and
- Examination.

Each candidate must work with their advisors and other stakeholders to design a non-academic study management plan which:

- Defines the nature of their project;
- Specifies intended learning, academic and professional outcomes;
- Defines a schedule/timeline with phases, activities, milestones and deliverables;
- Specifies required resources including funds, experts and infrastructure; and
- Provides a basic risk assessment specific to the project.

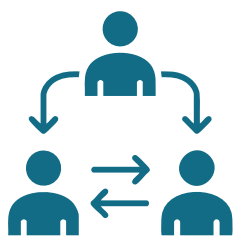
Monitoring and Review



All graduate research projects must be subject to periodic and typically quarterly monitoring and review. Key checkpoints come from supervisors, ethics committees, internal HLI panels, examination procedures, and as applicable external controls. Examples include comprehensive examination, proposal approval, ethics, data collection, draft submission and examination.

Doctorate and master students are typically required to re-enrol each academic year to maintain their student status. Subject to satisfactory progress as assessed through annual monitoring, a candidate will enrol initially and re-enrol annually and pay such fees as may be determined from time to time by the institution.

Enrolment Coordination



A candidate will submit the thesis to the HLI before the expiry of the maximum period of registration. A candidate may apply for an extension to the period of registration,

which will normally not be more than two years. A candidate may request a review of any decision not to permit the extension of registration.

Where a candidate decides to discontinue the degree program or research, the candidate will withdraw from the HLI. If the candidate fails to complete required coursework, pass examinations, or in the assessment of supervisors fails to deliver satisfactory progress in terms of research and/or within the maximum period allowed, including all possible extensions, the student will be required by the HLI to withdraw from registration.

Master to Doctorate Transfer



Transferring to higher learning institutions in Rwanda for a doctorate is a competitive process. An applicant should submit an application that effectively highlights his/her strengths and alignment with the chosen program, ensuring

they meet the institution's requirements. Applicants need to discuss the areas of research and give reasons for transferring. A candidate registered initially for a master who wishes to transfer to doctorate should apply when he/she has made sufficient progress on the work and provide evidence of progress and development. The candidate is required to prepare supporting materials for the HLI detailing the work completed. This supporting material has to be subjected to thorough assessment and evaluation by HLI academics and administrators.

Before approving any transfer from master degree to doctorate the HLI will be satisfied that the candidate has made sufficient progress and that the proposed program provides a suitable basis for work at

doctorate standard which the candidate is capable of pursuing to completion. The HLI must seek advice from two independent experts. Except in cases of doubt whether the appropriate independent expertise exists in-house, these experts may be internal to the institution, but neither should be connected with the student's project or supervision. Assessors' reports should be submitted in writing, and students and their supervisors will be given an opportunity to comment in writing on them, but the assessors' identities will remain confidential. An oral assessment may be used in appropriate circumstances as part of its assessment of the case for transfer. All transfer candidates must pass comprehensive exams.

Before approving a transfer from master degree to doctorate, the HLI should ensure that any substantial changes in the nature of experimentation/data collection since the original approval of the proposal has been considered through the appropriate research ethics procedures.

A student whose transfer to doctorate level is not approved may submit only at master and within the normal maximum registration period for master.

Master Transfer



time prior to the submission of the thesis

A student who is registered for the degree of doctorate and who is unable to complete the approved program of work may, at any

for examination, apply for the registration to revert to that for the master degree. This is only possible when it complies with all relevant HLI policies and procedures regarding admissions, enrolment and completion.

Completion Requirements

Completion requirements are related to the qualification type, and are also shaped by the field and research project. For instance, professional degrees are likely to involve greater emphasis on professional or practice-oriented outputs or creative/practice-based work such as capstones, professional project reports, policy/practice portfolios, or other applied outputs.

Altogether, the following are the criteria/milestones for a candidate to be awarded a postgraduate research qualification:

- Successfully completed prescribed coursework;
- Passed any relevant assessments, including a doctorate comprehensive examination, and thesis examination; and

- Maintained good standing in relation to human research ethics and other HLI requirements.

Ideally, as well, doctorate candidates should as much as feasible:

- Present two HLI-funded paper accepted for publication in a peer-reviewed indexed journal with an impact factor, both of which are relevant to the research project;
- Attend and present at two regional, national, and international conferences over the course of the doctorate; and
- Participate actively in regular university seminars.



THESIS REQUIREMENTS

Thesis and Oral Language



Most doctorate and master degree thesis and oral reports are required to be written and presented in English as it is the medium of instruction and scholarly communication in Rwanda. HLI can have policies for the conduct of scholarly activities in Kinyarwanda as a national language.

Permission to present a thesis in another language will normally be sought at the time of application for admission. Permission to present a thesis in a language other than English will normally be given only if the subject matter of the thesis involves language and related studies in a language other than English.

Thesis Frontmatter



There will be an abstract of not more than 500 words bound into the thesis which will provide a synopsis of the thesis stating the nature and scope of the work undertaken and of the contribution made to the knowledge of the subject treated. Three loose copies of the abstract will be submitted with the thesis. The loose copies of the abstract will have the name of the author, the degree for which the thesis is submitted, and the title of the thesis as a heading.

The candidates will confirm that the work is their own, or that certain parts were undertaken in collaboration with others, and whether any other person undertook any interviews, data collection, or experimentation on their behalf, and that the thesis has not been submitted

for a comparable academic award. The candidate is not precluded from incorporating material from a thesis of which they were the author and that was submitted for a previous lower (master, BA) degree qualification; such incorporation into a wider and higher-level thesis must be acknowledged by the candidate.

The candidate will also obtain the signatures of the supervisors indicating that they have been consulted about the submission. Where the supervisors do not think the thesis ready for examination, this will not be a bar to the candidate submitting it if he or she is determined to do so. The declaration form will be forwarded to the examiners. However, the HLI will appoint relevant committee to approve the proceedings.

Research Pre-Publication



Doctorate or master candidates are encouraged to publish their research papers before submission of the thesis for examination. The manuscript can be part of the thesis to be examined. The thesis must nonetheless constitute a coherent and integrated single work with an introduction and conclusion.

Any paper which does not relate the topic of candidate research will not be considered. Similarly, papers published in journals prior admission will not be considered, even though the paper covers a component or the entire thesis. Copies of the original published materials should either be bound in an appendix or adequately secured at the end of the thesis. The thesis submitted may consist of a published 8 work if it fulfils the requirements of the HLI and the examiners.

Thesis by Publication



Master and doctorate theses may be based on publication. Each master thesis based on publications will include at least one published or accepted for publication in an indexed academic journal. Each doctorate thesis based on publications will include at least

two published or accepted for publication in indexed scholarly journals. No candidate will be allowed to be awarded such a degree without fulfilling these requirements. The HLI will bear the responsibility to determine quality of journal and the impact factor to highlight the impact factor of the publication. No predatory journal output will be considered.

Creative Work



A candidate may undertake a research program in which their own creative work serves as a key foundation or reference point for intellectual exploration. This creative work can span various disciplines, such as fine art, design, engineering and technology, architecture, creative writing, musical composition, film,

dance, and performance. However, it must be conducted as part of the registered research program. In such cases, the presentation and submission may be partly in other than written form. The HLIs intellectual property policy should provide guidelines regarding the ownership of creative works produced by faculty, staff, and students. Typically, creators retain ownership unless the work is developed as part of their employment or with substantial university resources. In cases where the university has an interest in the work, such as patents or commercialized

projects, revenue-sharing agreements may apply between the creator and the university.

The creative work will be clearly presented in relation to the argument of a written thesis and set in its relevant theoretical, historical, critical or design context. The thesis itself will conform to the usual scholarly requirements and be of an appropriate length.

The final submission will be accompanied by some permanent record (for instance, video, photographic record, musical score or diagrammatic representation) of the creative work, bound with the thesis where practicable. The application will set out the form of the candidate's intended submission and of the proposed methods of assessment.

Thesis Length

The required length of a thesis depends on the qualification and field, as per these requirements:

- Doctorates in the Science, Engineering, Art and Design: 40,000 to 50,000 words;
- Doctorates in Arts, Social Sciences and Education: 80,000 to 100,000 words;
- Master in the Science, Engineering, Art and Design: 20,000 to 30,000 words; and
- Master in Arts, Social Sciences and Education: 40,000 to 50,000 words;

Where the thesis is accompanied by material in other than written form or the research involves creative writing or the preparation of a scholarly edition, or portfolio of professional work, the written thesis should normally be within these ranges:

- Doctorate: 30,000 to 40,000 words; and
- Master 15,000 to 20,000 words.

The text of the thesis should not exceed the required length by more than 10%.

Examination Copies



Candidates must submit a digital PDF version and then at request of HLI double-sided printed copies for examiners. The copies of the thesis submitted for examination will remain the property of the HLI but the copyright in the thesis will be vested in the candidate.

The copies of the thesis submitted for examination may be in a temporary but

fixed binding. Ring binding or spiral binding is not acceptable. Wherever possible, the thesis should be in one volume. Should it be necessary because of size to split the thesis in order to bind in a temporary format both volumes must show a title page and front cover indicating volume number.

The HLI may request that the student prepares suitable electronic files for secure examination including by international experts.

The binding will be of a fixed type so that leaves cannot be removed or replaced. The front and rear boards will have sufficient rigidity to support the weight of the work when standing upright. In at least 24 point type the outside front board will bear the title of the work, the name and initials of the candidate, the qualification, the year of submission, and the volumes numbered if the work has been split. The same information excluding the title of the work will be shown on the spine of the work, reading downwards.

Except where a specific budget has been allocated within a research project for the costs associated with binding a thesis, the candidate will be responsible for costs incurred in the submission of the thesis for examination and the final binding.

Following the award of the degree one copy of the thesis will be lodged in the HLI library and in the library of any collaborating establishment. Following the successful completion of the evaluation process and before the announcement of the award of

the Doctorate degree, the HLI will also upload the electronic version of thesis to make it available to all institutions.

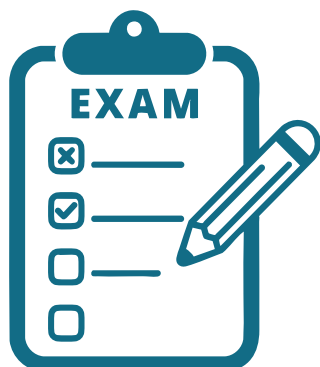
Where the HLI has agreed that the confidential nature of the candidate's work is such as to preclude the thesis being made freely available in the library, the thesis will, immediately on completion of the program of work, be retained by the HLI on restricted access and, for a time not exceeding the approved period will only be made available to those who were directly involved in the project.

The HLI will normally only approve an application for confidentiality in order to enable a patent application to be lodged or to protect sensitive/classified material. A thesis will not be restricted in this way in order to protect research leads. While the normal maximum period of confidentiality is two years, in exceptional circumstances the Senate may approve a longer period. Where a shorter period would be adequate, the Senate will not automatically grant confidentiality for two years.



EXAMINATION PROCEDURES

Examination Arrangements



The HLI will inform the candidate of examination arrangements. The HLI will inform the candidate of detailed examination procedures, and ensure any questions have been answered

regarding dates, requirements, and additional documents.

A doctorate candidate will be examined by at least three internal examiners, and at least two external examiners, one of which must be international. For the master program, only two internal examiners and one optional external examiner may be added.

A 'lead examiner' (or 'chair examiner') may be appointed by the HLI to help coordinate the process. The lead examiner can have responsibilities like chairing the meetings and coordinating examination reports, and helping examiners discuss and resolve substantial differences of opinion.

An internal examiner will be defined as an examiner who is a member of staff of the institution. No member of the candidate's supervisory team may act as an internal examiner.

Where the candidate and the internal examiner are both on the permanent staff of the same establishment a second external examiner will be appointed.

An external examiner will both be independent of the HLI or research institution, a qualified

expert, and not have acted previously as the candidate's supervisor or adviser, or normally, as transfer assessor, or research collaborator. Any prior connection with the candidate must be declared at the point of nomination as an examiner. An external examiner will normally not be either a supervisor of another candidate or an external examiner on a taught course in the same department at the Institution.

Former members of staff or former students of the HLI will normally not be approved as external examiners until three years after the termination of their employment or completion of their studies with the Institution.

The HLI will ensure that the same external examiner is not approved so frequently that his/her familiarity with the academic unit might prejudice objective judgment. Thus, an external examiner will not be appointed more than two consecutive times without a cooling off period of at least two years.

Examiners will be experienced in research in the general area of the candidate's thesis and, where practicable, have experience as a specialist in the topic(s) to be examined. Examiners should be qualified doctorate supervisors at a reputable HLI. Every effort should be made to appoint examiners to cover the academic content of interdisciplinary theses. At least one external examiner will have experience (normally two or more previous examinations) of examining research degree candidates. No candidate registered for a research degree will act as an examiner. The HLI will determine and pay the fees and expenses of the examiners.

Examination Submission



The submission of the thesis for examination, for the level of award for which they are registered, will be at the sole discretion of the candidate on the approval of the main supervisor. Supervisor/s must

agree that the thesis meets the standards before it is submitted to the examiners.

The candidate will ensure that the thesis is submitted to the HLI before the expiry of the registration period, and will ensure that each copy of the thesis is complete before submission.

The candidate will satisfy any conditions of eligibility for examination required by the HLI.

The candidate will take no part in the arrangement of the examination and will have no formal contact with external examiner(s) between the appointment of the examiners and the oral examination.

Preliminary Examiner Reports



The HLI will send a copy of the thesis to each examiner and ensure that the examiners are properly briefed as to their duties.

Each examiner will read and examine the thesis and submit

an independent preliminary report on the appropriate form seven days before any oral or alternative form of examination is held, for exchange between the examiners.

In completing the preliminary report, each examiner will consider whether the thesis provisionally satisfies the requirements of the degree and where possible make an appropriate provisional recommendation subject to the outcome of any oral examination.

The HLI will ensure that all the examiners have completed and returned the preliminary reports to the HLI before the oral examination takes place.

The content of the reports will be held in confidence between the examiners.

Where the examiners are of the opinion that the thesis is so unsatisfactory that no useful purpose would be served by conducting an oral examination they may recommend to dispense with the oral examination and refer the thesis for further work. In such cases the examiners will provide the HLI with written guidance for the candidate concerning the deficiencies of the thesis. The examiners cannot recommend that a candidate fail outright without holding an oral examination or other alternative examination.

Oral Examination



The oral examination involves the public defence of their thesis by the candidate before the duly appointed examiners. The candidate is questioned on their research,

methodology, findings, and understanding of the subject matter to assess their knowledge and the quality of their work.

A candidate will typically undergo an oral examination regarding their program of work and the relevant field of study. However, if the HLI determines that a candidate would face significant disadvantage due to illness, disability, or another valid reason, an alternative form of examination may be permitted. Approval for such an alternative will not be granted based on insufficient knowledge of the language in which the thesis is presented.

The HLI will inform the candidate, all supervisors, and the examiners of the scheduled date for the oral examination. An independent non-examining chair will be appointed for all oral examinations. An oral examination will normally be held in Rwanda in-person, or in hybrid mode based on the genuine reasons, assessed and approved by the HLI. The oral examination must be conducted in English, the medium of instruction, or in Kinyarwanda if the thesis, or dissertation was written and supervised in Kinyarwanda.

Oral examinations should be held as a public research seminar, with invitations extended to other faculty and students. Alternatively, HLI may require formal approval for non-examiners

to attend a doctorate oral examination. The candidate and supervisors should agree on the best format.

Examiners may, if circumstances warrant, and they are in agreement, permit a candidate to be absent temporarily from the oral exam. When leaving an oral examination, candidates will be accompanied by the internal examiner or observer. In the absence of either, the examiners are required to contact the HLI who would accompany the candidate. Candidates will normally be allowed up to 20 minutes absence before returning to the oral examination.

Failure to return to the oral examination will not in itself cause a candidate to be failed for the award of the degree for which the candidate is being examined. However, if the candidate fails to return within the deadline, or leaves without the unanimous agreement of the examiners, the examiners may:

- Recommend that the remaining part of the oral examination be dispensed with if they are satisfied that a recommendation on the award can be made;
- Recommend that the oral examination be rearranged within one month; or
- Deem the candidate to have failed the oral examination and require that a further viva be rearranged within one month.

Detailed records must be made of all oral examination experiences so that the examiners can refer back to the earlier discussion and take note of it during the reconvened viva.

A rearranged oral examination will be conducted as if for the first time.

The circumstances of any illness, or other reason for leaving the examination room,

including the duration of any absence, must be reported.

Consolidated Examiner Reports



Following the oral examination the examiners will, where they are in agreement, submit a joint report and recommendation relating to the award of the degree to the HLI. The preliminary reports and joint recommendation of the examiners will together provide sufficiently detailed comments on the scope and quality of the work to enable the HLI to satisfy itself that the recommendation is correct.

Following the completion of the examination the examiners may recommend one of the following, that the candidate is either:

- Awarded the degree;
- Awarded the degree subject to amendments being made to the thesis;
- Permitted to re-submit for the degree and be re-examined, with or without an oral examination; or
- Not be awarded the degree, with no possibility of re-examination.

Where the examiners are satisfied that the candidate has in general reached the standard required for the degree, but consider that the thesis requires some amendments and corrections not so substantial as to call for the submission of a revised thesis, and recommend that the degree be awarded subject to the candidate amending the thesis to the satisfaction of the internal and/or the external examiner/s, they will indicate to the candidate in writing what amendments and corrections are required.

Minor amendments constitute spelling or typographical errors, small textual corrections, reordering of material, further analysis and/or further clarification of the research but not requiring further research to be undertaken. For minor revisions a candidate will submit a corrected thesis within a month after oral examination, subject to the approval of the examiners.

Major revisions involve deeper or broader analysis, additional writing and substantiation, substantial reordering, or new writing. For a major revision a candidate may be allowed to submit a corrected thesis after three months from the date of oral examination.

The time limit for submission of amendments will be at the discretion of the examiners, subject to a maximum of four months. The time allowed depends on the nature of the amendments. The amendments must be approved by the examiners, and where relevant subject to re-examination.

Where the examiners are not in agreement, separate reports and recommendations will be submitted. Where the examiners' recommendations are not unanimous the HLI may:

- Accept a majority recommendation (provided that the majority recommendation includes at least one external examiner);
- Accept the recommendation of the external examiner; or
- Require the appointment of an additional external examiner.

Where an additional external examiner is appointed this examiner will prepare an independent preliminary report on the basis of the thesis and, if considered necessary, may conduct a further oral examination. That examiner should not be informed of the recommendations of the other examiners. On receipt of the report from the additional examiner, the HLI will make a recommendation to complete the examination.

Where the HLI decides that the degree not be awarded and that no re-examination can be permitted, the examiners will prepare an agreed statement of the deficiencies of the thesis and the reason for their recommendation, which will be forwarded to the candidate. This situation should be very unlikely to occur in practice.

Further Examination

A thesis that fails to satisfy the examiners is permitted one re-examination, subject to the following requirements:

- A candidate who fails to satisfy the examiners at the first examination, including where appropriate the oral or approved alternative examination, may on the recommendation of the examiners and with the approval of the HLI be permitted to revise the thesis and be re-examined;
- The examiners will provide the candidate with consolidated written guidance on the deficiencies of the first submission; and
- A deadline will be set for resubmission of revised thesis.

The candidate will submit the revised thesis for re-examination within the period of one calendar year from the date of the latest part of the first examination. Where the HLI has dispensed with the oral examination the re-examination will take place within one calendar year of the date of this dispensation. The HLI may, where there are good reasons, approve an extension of this period.

Where the HLI decides that the degree not be awarded, the examiners will prepare an agreed consolidated statement of the deficiencies of the thesis and the reason for their recommendation, which will be forwarded to the candidate by the HLI.



Recommendation Ratification

The HLI will ensure that all examinations are conducted, and the recommendations of the examiners are presented wholly in accordance with the HLI's regulations for oral examinations. In any instance where the HLI is made aware of a failure to comply with all the procedures of the examination process, it may declare the examination null and void and appoint new examiners.

Ultimately, the decision to award all degrees remains with the HLI. Examiners provide recommendations based on their assessment

which might include pass or fail. The HLI will make a final decision on the reports and recommendation(s) of the examiners in respect of the candidate. Degrees may be awarded with 'honours' or 'distinction'. It is imperative that HLI conduct full due-diligence on each candidate before awarding a degree to ensure that all requirements are satisfied including those relating to intellectual performance and professional integrity.



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