



**REGULATIONS AND GUIDELINES FOR
HIGHER DEGREES TO SUPPORT ONLINE
TRAINING AND MANAGEMENT OF
POSTGRADUATE STUDIES**

1st Edition
April 2020

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PREFACE

Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA) has a long experience in offering postgraduate training at Master and Doctoral levels since 1970s. Running of such programmes requires smooth coordination guided by appropriate regulations. Regulations and Guidelines for Higher Degrees at SUA were first developed and approved by the University Council in December 1994. Sokoine University of Agriculture has constantly revised the Regulations and Guidelines for Higher Degrees based on challenges faced and new advancement in knowledge and technologies. The last version (6th Edition) of SUA Regulations and Guidelines for Higher Degrees was approved by the Senate and University Council in September 2018.

As the number of potential postgraduate students seeking for admission and registration at SUA has continued to increase with time, coupled with advancement of the information and communication technologies in supporting learning in Higher Education Institutions, it is high time that SUA adopts and invests in using different models of offering training and management of postgraduate studies. Sokoine University of Agriculture has now developed Regulations and Guidelines for guiding higher degree students and instructors on online training and management of postgraduate matters as an alternative model of the traditional face-to-face option. I hope that these Regulations and Guidelines will be useful in supporting postgraduate students, instructors and other key stakeholders at SUA and beyond who are interested in postgraduate matters.

Prof. Raphael T. Chibunda

Vice Chancellor

DEFINITIONS OF TERMINOLOGIES

Asynchronous method - Is a method which employs online channels without real-time interaction i.e. each student chooses when to use the distance learning program, usually through archived pre-recorded materials.

Blended learning - Is a style of education in which students learn via electronic and online media as well as traditional face-to-face teaching. This method integrates face-to-face instruction and distance learning, offering the participant the best of both worlds.

Distance learning - An educational strategy that uses technology to offer access to education and training courses to participants who are not in the same location as the instructor/presenter.

Sole - One person who is allowed to work in a given space/room.
Synchronous method - Refers to the online or distance education that happens in real time i.e. all learners learn at the same time, such as in a webinar, Zoom, Skype, Microsoft Teams, video conferencing etc.

Viva Voce - An oral examination/defence, typically for an academic qualification applicable to Master by Research and PhD programmes.

INTRODUCTION

Based on current needs of alternative models of training postgraduate students at Sokoine University of Agriculture, the university has developed Regulations and Guidelines to guide higher degree students and instructors on online training and management of postgraduate matters. These Regulations and Guidelines were approved by the Chairman of Senate on 29th April, 2020 after revision of the version presented at the 264th Senate Meeting held on 20th April, 2020. It is expected that postgraduate students will utilise this opportunity to plan their study time and work at their convenience as an alternative option to the face-to-face training model. These Regulations and Guidelines are recommended to be adopted as an Addendum to the existing SUA Regulations and Guidelines for Higher Degrees (Sixth Edition, 2018).

REGULATIONS AND GUIDELINES FOR ONLINE POSTGRADUATE TRAINING AND MANAGEMENT

A. Applications and Registration of students

1. SUA will employ online admission and registration of postgraduate students using SUA Student Information System (SUASIS).
2. Payment of application and university fees will be made using online system or any other option as defined from time to time by Sokoine University of Agriculture.

B. Online teaching of postgraduate students

1. Depending on prevailing circumstances, SUA may adopt online distance training or blended learning model of teaching postgraduate students.
2. When training of postgraduate students by using online distance learning is adopted by SUA, all students will need to be reached using affordable technologies so that they can consent on using such model to support postgraduate training.
3. Postgraduate students registered at SUA who will not be reachable or those not interested in continuing with studies using online distance learning model will be considered to have postponed their studies and they will be allowed to continue with studies using traditional face-to-face or any other model that may be acceptable to the postponing student and the University when next offered.
4. For the distance support, the instructor will make sure that his/her study/training materials are accessible to all postgraduate students in his/her class using affordable technologies. Such technologies will include: emails, online platforms (Moodle, Zoom, Skype, Google Hang outs, Microsoft Teams, etc.), phone calls, social media e.g. WhatsApp etc. approved by the Senate and Council.
5. For blended learning, distance approach will be complemented by organising face-to-face sessions which will have to observe all government and SUA recommended directives and measures for conducting such training.

6. Online training will employ both synchronous and asynchronous methods to allow access to lecture notes, slides and other materials to all registered students at their convenience.

C. Evaluation of coursework

1. Coursework evaluation will employ approved online examination platforms such as Moodle, Zoom, Skype, Google Hangouts, Microsoft Teams, Emails, WhatsApp etc.
2. Online evaluation will be carried out in one or combination of the following options: Test, Assignment, Quiz or Examination.
3. The instructor will need to send invitation and clear instructions (*date, time, platform to use*) to all students at least a week before the start of evaluation.
4. For students who will not be reachable/accessible during online evaluation, the instructor (s) will explore other different arrangements to assess them and report to the Head of Department within 48 hours before the date of scheduled online evaluation.
5. Submission of evaluation will be either automated (timed out) or specified by the instructor based on nature of the evaluation.
6. Failure to submit evaluation examination/test/assignment report within allocated time will translate to score of Zero (0.0%).

7. Pass mark for each course will be as per existing SUA Regulations and Guidelines for Higher Degrees.
8. Any cheating during the conduct of examination will be dealt using existing SUA Examination Regulations

D. Conduct of research by and seminar presentation by Master and PhD students

1. For Master and PhD Students pursuing Coursework and Dissertation Programmes, the conduct of research will follow regulations of Research and Thesis Programmes.
2. For Master and PhD students pursuing Research and Thesis Programmes, the research part will be constantly guided by the supervisor(s) using affordable technologies such as: emails, online platforms (Moodle, Zoom, Skype, Google Hangouts etc,) phone calls, social media e.g. WhatsApp etc. approved by the Senate and Council.
3. Submission of semi-annual progress reports (for period **ending June and December** every year) shall be mandatory and will be done using available platforms as guided from time to time by the directorate responsible for postgraduate studies at SUA and as per existing SUA Regulations and Guidelines for Higher Degrees. Such report must reach the Head of Department hosting the student not later than 15th of the reporting month i.e. June or December.

4. Master and PhD students shall explore available options of delivering referred seminars by either Face-to-Face or Online model based on most convenient option and prevailing circumstances.
5. The student wishing to deliver referred seminar presentation by the online model shall submit a written request by email to the Head of the hosting Department (Master student) OR Principal/Dean/Director (PhD student) of the hosting College/School/Directorate who will consider and approve appropriate online platform which should support visibility of the presenter such as Zoom, Skype, Google Hangouts, Video Conference etc.
6. Evaluation of the referred Seminars will be done as per SUA Regulations and Guidelines for Higher Degrees (6th Edition, 2018)

E. Preparation, submission and Examination of Dissertations/Theses

1. Master and PhD students will comply with SUA Regulations and Guidelines for Higher Degrees (6th Edition, 2018) regarding preparation of Dissertations/Theses.
2. Submission of the “Notice of Intention to Submit” form and Dissertation/Thesis will be done electronically using SUASIS platform, by emails or any other alternative options as recommended by the directorate responsible for postgraduate studies at SUA.
3. Examination of submitted Dissertations/Theses will also be done electronically.

F. Conduct of *Viva Voce* Examinations

1. Conduct of oral defence/*Viva Voce* examinations shall comply with the SUA Regulations and Guidelines (6th Edition 2018) which will accommodate option of distance examination for students and panellists who will not be physically present at SUA campuses.
2. The student wishing to conduct oral defence by the online distance mode shall submit a written request by email to the Head of the hosting Department (Master student) OR Principal/Dean/Director (PhD student) of the hosting College/School/Directorate who will consider and approve/disapprove the request. The request must be submitted to the Head/ Principal/Dean/ Director at least 10 days before the expected date of *Viva Voce* examination.
3. Online platforms to support presentations and evaluation of postgraduate students during *Viva Voce* examinations will be those which support visibility of the presenting student such as Zoom, Skype, Google Hangouts, Video Conference etc. as it will be approved by the Principal/Dean/Director of the unit hosting the postgraduate student.
4. Members of the general public, staff and other students (inside or outside Tanzania) may be allowed to attend virtually the *Viva Voce* examination and shall be disconnected just after the Question and Answer session. Those interested to hear the outcome of the *Viva Voce* Examination may be invited back to join the outcome announcement session.

5. The Directorate responsible for Postgraduate studies in collaboration with academic unit hosting the Postgraduate Student will upload the **Public Defence notice** on SUA website using a template provided in **Annex 1** at least ONE week before the date of *Viva Voce* examination.
6. Non-panellist members who wish to attend the Viva Voce examination virtually will be required to submit requests and confirm their attendance to the Secretary of the Panel i.e. Head of Department or his/her Appointee in the academic unit hosting the student at least 2 days before the date of Viva Voce examination.
7. For the online defence mode, the defending candidate will be required to be the **sole occupant** of the room during the Viva Voce examination which will be verified by panel members using the camera of the student before the presentation starts.
8. The *Viva Voce* examination shall run between 1.5 and 2.0 Hours to accommodate: i) Introduction and orientation of the panellists by the Chairperson (*10 minutes*) before the student is connected; In case members of public have requested to join, they will be connected to the online platform before the student is connected; ii) Invite the student to make self-introduction (*5 minutes*); iii) Introduce panellists to the student (*5 minutes*); iv) Invite the student to make his/her presentation (30 minutes for Master student and *45 minutes for PhD student*); v) Short break and preparations for the Question and Answer

session (5 minutes); vi) Question and Answer session (20 minutes and 30 minutes for Master and PhD student, respectively); vii) Ending the session and **disconnect the student and Non-panellist members** (5 minutes); viii) Panellists to agree on outcome of the examination and signing of the Form (10 minutes); ix) calling back/connecting the student and Non-panellist members and provide outcome of Viva Voce Examination and conclude the session (5 minutes). *Extra time between 15 and 30 minutes* will be used to take care of any technical challenges likely to occur during Viva Voce examination.

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Template for Public Notice of Viva Voce Examination at SUA

Public Defence: PhD/MRes Candidate: Forename and Surname	Photo
[Provide 1-2 sentence(s) on biosketch of the candidate describing his/her current employment and when he/she joined SUA including hosting academic unit.	
Thesis Title:	
Supervisors:	
Date and Time of Viva Voce:	
Venue:	
Mode of Defence: Face-to-face OR Online (specify platform)	
Panellist Team	
1. Prof/Dr XXXX (Chairperson)	
2. Prof/Dr XXXX (Independent Internal Examiner1)	
3. Prof/Dr XXXX (Independent Internal Examiner2)	
4. Prof/Dr XXXX (Appointee of the Principal/Dean/Director)	
5. Prof/Dr XXXX (Head or Representative of Head and Secretary)	
Summary of the Thesis: (maximum of 120 words)	
<i>For members of the general public (including non-panel individuals) who are interested to attend/follow the Viva Voce examination virtually, kindly send your request to the Secretary of the Viva Voce Examination Panel, Prof/Dr/. XXXX at [specify email] before XXXX [date 2 days before the Viva Voce examination]</i>	

