

# Terms of Reference for the School Postgraduate Studies Committee

Approved by UR Senate on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2019

## Introduction

The University of Rwanda Senate Postgraduate Studies Committee, following the Operationalization of the University of Rwanda Centre for Postgraduate Studies (UR CPGS) and the UR Senate resolution to develop the Terms of Reference of the School Selection and Admission Committee, in its sitting on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2018, recommends that each School/Centre of Excellence/Research Centre offering postgraduate programs, should have an active **Postgraduate Studies Committee** as a School Council Committee. The School Postgraduate Studies Committee shall have two subcommittees:

- Subcommittee in charge of applications, selection and admissions
- Subcommittee in charge of postgraduate students' performance, including monitoring and evaluation

The following are Terms of Reference for both subcommittees:

### A. Terms of Reference for the Subcommittee in charge of applications, selections and admissions

#### I. Objective

The objective of the Terms of Reference (ToR) is to:

- a. Provide a framework for ensuring integrity, transparency and equal treatment of potential candidates during the selection and admission processes;
- b. Set clear responsibilities, accountabilities, reporting and appointing authority for the School Postgraduate Studies Committee for applications, selection and admission processes;
- c. Ensure that selection, admission processes, performance monitoring and decisions are consistent and fair.

#### II. Scope

These ToRs are applicable to the applications, selection and admissions of potential applicants to the University of Rwanda accredited postgraduate programs.

#### III. Authority

- a. The appointing authority for the members of the School/Centre of Excellence/Research Centre Selection Committee shall be the Dean of School/Director of the Centre.
- b. The School Council and the College Academic Council shall approve the report of the selection process, together with the list of recommended and non-recommended candidates for admission, before it is forwarded by the Principal to the Director of the Centre for Postgraduate Studies (UR CPGS).

- c. The duration of this selection process shall not exceed two weeks, from the time of receipt of applications. The Dean can approve the recommended list on behalf of the School Council and the Principal can approve the recommended list on behalf of the College Academic Council subject to the ratification in next regular meeting.
- d. The Director of UR CPGS, based on the report mentioned in III.b, shall issue the admission letters not later than a week after receiving the report with approved lists from the College.

#### IV. Principles of selection

- a. The University of Rwanda (UR) is committed to maintaining internationally recognised high academic standards in its postgraduate programs. To this end the Sub Committee shall select:
  - i. Students from among the pool of applicants received and forwarded by the Directorate of UR CPGS and those who are deemed most likely be able to succeed in their programmes of choice;
  - ii. Students for research programs with appropriate supervisory expertise and resources are available.
- b. The School, in addition to the general entry requirements, can put specific entry requirements in the call for applications. Entry requirements not specified in the call for applications shall not be considered during the selection process.

#### V. Minimum entry requirements

- a. The minimum entry requirements are those highlighted in the program proposal and program specifications as accredited by the Higher Education Council (HEC).
- b. For a jointly awarded PhD or a Double awarded PhD, the terms of the student's enrolment and admission, joint supervision and examination shall be defined in an agreement between the two institutions. The student shall be required to pay fees at one institution only and this shall be also clarified in the agreement.

#### VI. Selection and Admission

- a. A selection committee shall be responsible for selection into more than one postgraduate program enrolment.
- b. The Director of the University of Rwanda Centre for Postgraduate Studies may withdraw a potential candidate from the recommended list upon genuine and justifiable reasons or cancel the admission and enrolment of a candidate.
- c. The Director of the University of Rwanda Centre for Postgraduate Studies or the School Postgraduate Coordinator must provide all information necessary for applicants to accept an offer.
- d. Members of the Selection Committee shall take into account all relevant legislation when analysing applications.
- e. In cases where applicants have to be interviewed, as part of the selection process, it is the responsibility of the Selection Committee to make arrangements for foreign students to do their interviews on Skype or any other kind of online video communication. The requirement of interviews shall be stated in the call for applications
- f. The relevant Dean/Centre Director and Principal must approve, on behalf of the respective School and College Councils, the report with the list of



recommended and non-recommended applicants before an offer of admission is made.

- g. The Dean/Centre Director is responsible for ensuring that appropriate supervision, facilities and resources are available to the applicants for timely completion of their studies.
- h. It is the responsibility of the applicants to familiarize themselves with the academic regulations for postgraduate studies, modules, courses, research process as set out in the Students Handbook.
- i. The academic integrity must be observed.

#### **VII. Conflict of interest**

- a. All admissions officers and members of the Selection Committee shall disclose in writing to the Chair of Selection Committee with a copy to the relevant Dean/Director of the Centre any close personal relationship, significant philanthropic or financial interest pertaining to any applicant for admission to the University of Rwanda Postgraduate Programs prior to the selection of candidates.
- b. Staff must not participate in any decisions affecting applicants where a potential, perceived or actual conflict of interest arises due to a relationship with an applicant.
- c. Selection committee members must not participate in any way in decisions affecting the selection and admission of an applicant where a potential or actual conflict of interest has been identified.
- d. If at any stage during the selection and/or admissions process a staff member becomes aware or is made aware of a potential conflict of interest, the disclosure statement must be updated to reflect the change in circumstances; and appropriate action taken to prevent any improper influence on the selection and admission process.
- e. Where a selection committee member becomes aware of a conflict of interest after the selection process is underway they must inform the chair of the selection committee immediately.
- f. Members of Selection Committee who fail to disclose a potential or actual conflict of interest, or who are found to have participated in a selection or admission process where a conflict of interest arises, may be subject to disciplinary proceedings under University of Rwanda rules and regulations.
- g. The Chair of the Selection Committee, acting on advice of the committee members, must determine an appropriate course of action.
- h. The Chair must ensure that the agreed course of action is accurately recorded in the committee minutes.

#### **VIII. Confidentiality**

- a. The University of Rwanda retains the right to contact the employer after the student has been admitted if concerns arise as to authenticity of the presented documents.
- b. Except as required by law:
  - i. All materials related to the application supplied by persons other than the applicant, including recommendation letters and employer references, are regarded as confidential and are not available except to university staff or Government organization with a genuine need to access them for the purposes of selection, quality assurance, or unsatisfactory progress investigation;

- ii. All materials supplied by the applicant in connection with the application, including personal statements, folios and work samples, are regarded as confidential and are not available except to university staff or Government organization with a genuine need to access them for the purposes of selection, quality assurance, or unsatisfactory progress investigation;
- iii. Confidential application-related materials that the university does not seek to retain shall either be disposed of in a manner appropriate for confidential material, or returned to the person who supplied them

#### IX. Composition of the Selection Committee

- a. Members of the Selection Committee are appointed from among academic staff from that or other related School/Centre of Excellence/Research centre.
- b. Members of the Selection Committee must be at least at Senior Lecturer level.
- c. The College Registrar and the College DTLE shall be members of all Schools/Centres of Excellence/Research Centres Selection Committees.
- d. The Rapporteur of the School Selection Committee shall be the School Postgraduate Studies Coordinator.

#### X. Guiding Principles

- a. Selection committees meetings may be held as face-to-face meetings or by circulation of documentation (serial processing), or a combination of the two.
- b. The School Postgraduate Studies Coordinator shall ensure that formal records documenting selection committee minutes and decisions are kept and filed.
- c. The English language standard must be met.
- d. All applications are assessed and one of the following selection decisions made:
  - 1. Recommended for admission;
  - 2. Recommended under special circumstances (to be specified);
  - 3. Not Recommended for admission.
- e. A conditional admission may be made if an applicant has not completed a module which is required for the program entry;
- f. Applications must be assessed by a minimum of 3 persons, at least one of whom is qualified to be a supervisor.
- g. If an applicant wishes to vary the terms of an offer of admission, including a change in the research project, supervisory arrangements or study rate, the request must be made to the Dean/Director of the Centre of Excellence/ Director of Research Centre; and will be considered in good faith, but there is no guarantee that the request will be accommodated.

#### XI. Cancellation or withdrawal of an admission

The Director of the University of Rwanda Centre for Postgraduate Studies may withdraw or cancel the admission of an applicant where the:

- i. Person fails to provide documents or to fulfil other requirements specified in the offer of admission by the specified date;
- ii. Offer of admission has been made based on incomplete, inaccurate or fraudulent information provided by the person or a third party on behalf of the person;
- iii. Person fails to enrol in accordance with the offer of admission by the specified date;



- iv. Program is withdrawn from offer as a result of a University of Rwanda Senate decision.

Any action taken under this section must be notified in writing to the student.

#### **XII. Quality assurance and record keeping**

- a. Selection committees shall keep minutes of their meetings, including records of their decisions.
- b. The UR Senate, through its standing committees, shall maintain quality assurance of the selection by receiving regular reports of selection committees.

#### **XIII. Review and Appeal**

- a. A person who is dissatisfied with a selection decision may lodge an appeal for review of the decision with the University of Rwanda Centre for Postgraduate Studies.
- b. A person who is dissatisfied with the outcome of the review conducted by the Directorate of the University of Rwanda Centre for Postgraduate Studies may lodge an appeal with the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Research.

#### **XIV. Final Provisions**

- a. The University of Rwanda Senate remains with his rights to review this document at any time considered necessary.
- b. The custodian of this document is the University of Rwanda Centre for Postgraduate Studies.

### **B. Terms of Reference of the subcommittee in charge of monitoring and evaluation of postgraduate programmes and students' performance**

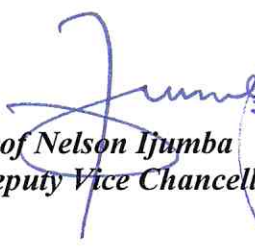
#### **I. Objective**

- a. All Schools, Centres of Excellence and Research Centres offering postgraduate programs, shall have a functioning Postgraduate Studies Committee.
- b. All postgraduate students will have, at a minimum, an annual assessment to review their progress and provide feedback.
- c. Processes for monitoring and evaluation of programmes conduct and student performance shall be as specified in the relevant regulations and handbooks.
- d. The postgraduate students progress reviews should normally be a positive and constructive experience for the student and supervisor(s).
- e. In cases where the postgraduate students progress review is unsatisfactory, students shall have a subsequent supplementary review with specific guidance on targets to be met in a defined time period.
- f. Should such a supplementary review indicate that progress is unsatisfactory, the General Academic Regulations for Postgraduate Studies shall apply.

#### **II. Roles and Responsibilities**

- a. To have oversight of, report and recommend to the School Council on Postgraduate Programs Performance, Postgraduate Students performance, quality and academic standards underpinning UR Postgraduate Programs strategic objectives and targets.
- b. To identify and promote the enhancement of the quality and standards within the School, Centre of Excellence or Research Centre.
- c. To monitor and support the performance with regard to the postgraduate studies

- d. To consider and recommend to the School Council all program proposals and program specifications for new programs of study, postgraduate students progress, suspension or discontinuation
  - e. To consider and recommend to the School Council the postgraduate programs review
  - f. To consider and recommend the nominations for Supervisors and External Examiners
  - g. Students should be notified by their Supervisor(s) at the commencement of their studies that the postgraduate studies committee will monitor their progress.
- To ensure that regulations as well as processes and procedures as properly interpreted and applied

  
***Prof Nelson Ijumba***  
***Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs and Research***

