

**ACCRA TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY**

**GRADUATE STUDENTS’ HANDBOOK**

**NOVEMBER, 2023**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

[1. INTRODUCTION 1](#_Toc164609661)

[1.1 REGULATIONS FOR THE CONDUCT OF MASTER’S AND DOCTORAL DEGREE PROGRAMMES 1](#_Toc164609662)

[1.1.1 Master’s Programme 1](#_Toc164609663)

[1.1.2 Doctoral Programme 1](#_Toc164609664)

[2.1 DURATION OF PROGRAMMES 1](#_Toc164609665)

[2.2 Programme Duration 1](#_Toc164609666)

[3. REGISTRATION OF PROGRAMMES 2](#_Toc164609667)

[4. CREDIT HOURS FOR PROGRAMMES 4](#_Toc164609668)

[5. CHANGE OF PROGRAMME OF STUDY 4](#_Toc164609669)

[6. INTERRUPTION/DEFERMENT OF PROGRAMME 4](#_Toc164609670)

[7. GRADING OF EXAMINATIONS 4](#_Toc164609671)

[8. DEFINITIONS 5](#_Toc164609672)

[8.1. Trail 5](#_Toc164609673)

[8.2 Fail (F) 5](#_Toc164609674)

[8.3 Incomplete (I, I\* or I’), (X), (Y), (Z) 5](#_Toc164609675)

[9. PASS MARK 6](#_Toc164609676)

[10. SUPPLEMENTARY EXAMINATIONS 7](#_Toc164609677)

[11. GROUNDS OF ILL-HEALTH 7](#_Toc164609678)

[12. REQUIREMENTS FOR PROGRESSION TO THESIS RESEARCH 7](#_Toc164609679)

[13. GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS 8](#_Toc164609680)

[14. ARRANGEMENTS FOR FINAL CLEARANCE OF STUDENTS LEAVING THE UNIVERSITY 8](#_Toc164609681)

[15. REMARKING OF EXAMINATION SCRIPT 8](#_Toc164609682)

[16. EXAMINATIONS BOARD AND GRADUATE SCHOOL BOARD 9](#_Toc164609683)

[17.1 REGULATIONS FOR UPGRADE FROM MASTERS TO MPHIL-CONVERSION FROM MSc/MA to MPhil 9](#_Toc164609684)

[17.1.1 Eligibility 9](#_Toc164609685)

[17.1.2 Assessment of the Application Sent to the Graduate School Board by the Head of Department/Dean of Faculty for Consideration and Approval 9](#_Toc164609686)

[17.1.3 Date of Registration 9](#_Toc164609687)

[18.1.1 Eligibility 10](#_Toc164609688)

[18.1.2 Application 10](#_Toc164609689)

[18.1.3 Assessment of the Application 10](#_Toc164609690)

[18.1.4 Date of Registration 10](#_Toc164609691)

[19. MODERATORS AND EXTERNAL EXAMINERS 11](#_Toc164609692)

[19.1 Appointment of External Examiners and Moderators 11](#_Toc164609693)

[19.2 Duties of a Moderator 11](#_Toc164609694)

[19.3 Duties of External Examiners 11](#_Toc164609695)

[20. APPOINTMENT OF SUPERVISORS 11](#_Toc164609696)

[20.1 Supervisors for Masters Programmes 11](#_Toc164609697)

[20.2 Supervisors for Doctoral Programmes 11](#_Toc164609698)

[21. PLAGIARISM TEST FOR THESES 11](#_Toc164609699)

[22. THESIS SUBMISSION FOR EXAMINATION 12](#_Toc164609700)

[23. PH.D./D.TECH DEGREE **Error! Bookmark not defined.**](#_Toc164609701)

[24. GRADING SYSTEM FOR THESES **Error! Bookmark not defined.**](#_Toc164609702)

[25. MASTER STUDENTS 13](#_Toc164609703)

[26. DETERMINATION OF THESES RESULTS 13](#_Toc164609704)

[27. DEADLINES FOR SUBMISSION OF REVISED THESES 14](#_Toc164609705)

[27.1 Referment of Submitted Thesis 14](#_Toc164609706)

[27.2 Candidate’s Thesis Declared as Failed 14](#_Toc164609707)

[28. PUBLICATION OF RESULTS 14](#_Toc164609708)

[29. CANCELLATION OF AWARD 14](#_Toc164609709)

[29.1 Degree 14](#_Toc164609710)

[30. TRANSCRIPT OF ACADEMIC RECORDS AND LETTERS OF ATTESTATION 15](#_Toc164609711)

[31. EXAMINATION INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES 15](#_Toc164609712)

[32. MISCONDUCT OF CANDIDATES DURING EXAMINATIONS **Error! Bookmark not defined.**](#_Toc164609713)

[APPENDIX 16](#_Toc164609714)

**DEFINITION OF TERMS**

The key terms in this policy have been defined as follows:

**Graduate School:** School or division of a university or college devoted entirely to graduate studies, usually having a dean and faculty of its own, and authorized to grant advanced degrees.

**Postgraduate studies**: An advanced level of study beyond a bachelor degree usually undertaken to gain more comprehensive knowledge within a particular area of a discipline, to develop new interests or to start on a new career path.

**Doctoral Progamme**:  A research-related programme of higher education study that follows a higher education degree and leads to a doctoral degree by higher education institution.

**Academic Units**: Comprises various departments, divisions, in the University offering programmes and courses leading to the award of qualification.

**Postgraduate Supervision**: the supervision or promotion of students' research activities leading in whole or in part to the awarding of a Master's or Doctoral.

**Accreditation of Teaching Faculty**: An evaluation of the qualifications, skills, competencies and attitudes of teaching staff to quality them to teach on a particular postgraduate programme.

**Course Credit**: a measure of the size of an educational [course](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Course_%28education%29), often used to determine whether the requirements for an award have been met, to facilitate transfer between institutions, or to enhance the comparability of qualifications.

**Dissertation**: a long piece of writing about a particular subject that is done to earn an advanced degree at a university

# **1. INTRODUCTION**

# **1.1 REGULATIONS FOR THE CONDUCT OF MASTER’S AND DOCTORAL DEGREE PROGRAMMES**

## **1.1.1 Master’s Programme**

A programme of study for the award of a Master’s degree, for example, MTech/MPhil/MSc /MA/MBA, shall consist of courses for each of which a number of credit hours shall be prescribed. Each module shall cover a period of not more than one semester, with the exception of theses/research project works. Departments shall submit details of course credit hours and total courses and electives for approval by the Departmental/ Faculty/College/Institute/School of Graduate Studies Boards and Academic Board.

## **1.1.2 Doctoral Programme**

In a programme of study for the award of a Terminal degree, a student is expected to register for a set of recommended courses. It is mandatory for all Doctoral students to take a Comprehensive Examination organized by the student’s Department/Faculty/School by the end of the first semester and pass with a minimum mark of 50%. When a student fails the comprehensive examination, he/she shall be given a maximum period of 60 days for re-examination. A student’s programme shall be terminated if he/she fails the re-examination.

# **2.1 DURATION OF PROGRAMMES**

A student shall be enrolled as a Graduate Student for the following duration of study indicated below:

### **2.2 Programme Duration**

**2.2.1 MBA/MA/MTech/MSc and equivalents**

Full-Time 2 Semesters (12 months)

Part-Time (18 months)

**2.2.2 MPhil and Equivalents**

Full-Time 4 Semesters (24 months)

**2.2.3 Extension of Programme Duration –**

**2.2.3.1 Master’s Programme**

After a student has exhausted the mandatory period for a master’s programme, he/she can apply for extension for a period of not more than 6 months in the first instance, and not more than 3 months in the second instance. A student shall not be eligible to apply for a third extension. Application for an extension shall be at a fee payable to the Dean of School of Graduate Studies through the Supervisor and through the Head of Department/ Dean of Faculty/Deputy for approval. Such a student shall be required to download and complete “the Application for Extension of Time of Master’s/Doctorate Degree Form” from the University portal.

**2.2.3.2 Doctoral Programme**

After a student has exhausted the mandatory period for a Doctoral programme, he/she can apply for extension for a period of not more than 1 year in the first instance, and not more than 6 months in the second instance. A student shall not be eligible to apply for a third extension. Application for an extension shall be at a fee payable to the dean of School of Graduate Studies through the Supervisor and through the Head of Department/ Dean of Faculty/Deputy for approval. Such a student shall be required to download and complete “the Application for Extension of Time of Master’s/Doctorate Degree Form” from the University portal.

# **3. REGISTRATION OF PROGRAMMES**

1. Each student must be admitted into a Department/Faculty/School for a programme of study. The student must be properly registered into the programme during the official registration period at the beginning of the semester. The student shall plan his/her courses in consultation with his/her department.
2. At the beginning of each semester, all students are obliged to do the following:
3. Settle all indebtedness for the semester.
4. Register courses by following the University’s course registration procedure.
5. Carry out registration at any of the points on campus and other designated points. Without this, the registration of courses is incomplete.
6. Print out the registration slips at the end of the registration process for the student’s Heads of Department/Dean/Deputy Director/Secretary of Graduate School for their representatives to sign.
7. Registration of students is regulated by strict deadlines beyond which fines shall be imposed. The University shall determine the value of the fine from time to time.
8. A student who does not duly register within the registration period shall be precluded from commencing the semester’s courses for the programme of study.
9. The student shall take courses equivalent to 12 to 18 credit hours. The limits apply per semester. This will be prescribed by the Departmental Board with the approval of the Faculty/School and the Academic Boards.
10. Registration for the appropriate courses shall qualify a student to participate in both continuous assessments and end of semester examinations. Where a student registers for a course(s), but fails to write the end of semester examinations, he/she shall be deemed to have failed the course(s) unless reasons acceptable to the Departmental/Faculty Examiners Board can be advanced. In this case, the student shall be graded (I) or (X) (Refer to Graduate School Policy section 17c) and be expected to take part in the next available formal examination in which the course(s) is/are written.
11. A student is required to attend at least 75% of lectures, seminars, workshops and industrial/practical attachments etc., prescribed for the courses for which he/she has registered, as a pre-condition for writing an examination.
12. Notwithstanding (g) above, any registered student who is absent from 25% or more of lectures in any course (e.g. a seminar, laboratory practical, tutorials, fieldwork, studio practice, workshop sessions industrial/practical attachments, etc.) without proper permission in any semester **shall not be allowed** to write the end-of-semester examination for that course. The candidate shall compulsorily repeat the course(s) at the next academic year.
13. Any student who did not register and is also absent from any course (e.g. a seminar, laboratory practical, tutorials, fieldwork, studio practice, workshop sessions industrial/practical attachments, etc.) without proper permission for any semester **shall not be allowed** to write the end-of-semester examinations. Such a candidate shall be deemed to have abandoned the programme. The student may reapply for the programme if he/she wishes.

# **4. CREDIT HOURS FOR PROGRAMMES**

The credit hours for a programme shall be as determined by the curriculum of the said programme.

# **5. CHANGE OF PROGRAMME OF STUDY**

The conditions specified for change of registration in the Graduate School Policy and Admission Requirements (Section 5d) shall apply.

# **6. EXTENSION OF REGISTRATION AND INTERRUPTION/DEFERMENT OF PROGRAMME**

The conditions specified for Interruption of Study Programme/Deferment in the Graduate School Policy and Admission Requirements (Section 6.2 & 6.3) shall apply.

# **7. GRADING OF EXAMINATIONS**

# **7.1 Grading for Continuous Assessment and End-of-Semester Examinations**

1. There shall be formal university examinations in programmes of study at the end of each semester. The examination in each course shall not be less than three hours. In addition, there shall be continuous assessment of courses based on any or a combination of the following: mid-semester examination, class tests, quizzes, essays, tutorials, assignments, etc. It is the responsibility of students to read the Graduate Students’ Handbook or check from the departmental programme Coordinators, examination officers, Graduate School for the grading requirements of their programmes of study.
2. The end of semester examination shall be weighted 60% and continuous assessment 40% of the total marks in any course. For project-based courses, end of semester examination shall be weighted 40% and continuous assessment 60% of the total marks.
3. Examinations in all courses shall be credited with marks to the nearest whole number. For example, a mark of 73.2% shall be scored as 73% and 75.8% as 76%.

# **7.2 Conditions for Disqualification for Writing Examinations**

A student may be prevented from writing examinations under any of the following conditions:

1. Owing of fees.
2. Not attaining the minimum hours for lectures for a course(s).
3. Failure to register for a course(s).

# **8. DEFINITIONS FOR EXAMINATION GRADES AND PERFORMANCE**

## **8.1. Trail**

A student trails a course when:

1. He/she is unable to obtain a pass mark and is, therefore,
2. Graded Incomplete (F, I, X, Y and Z)

## **8.2 Fail (F)**

A student fails a course when he/she obtains a mark less than 50% in a taught course(s) for courses registered without any tangible reason.

## **8.3 Incomplete (I, I\*), (X), (Y), (Z)**

1. A student is graded incomplete (I) for a course when he/she is unable to write an examination on grounds of ill-health with a medical report acceptable to the Director of University Health Services, provided he/she has registered for the course, or for any reason deemed acceptable to the Vice Chancellor and is acceptable to the Academic Board.
2. A student is graded incomplete (I\*) for a course(s) when he/she is ineligible to write an examination on grounds of non-registration of the course(s).
3. A grade X shall be awarded to a registered student who is unable to complete a course for reasons adjudged by the Board as unacceptable.
4. Y-Continuing: A grade Y (for Continuing) shall be awarded at the end of a semester to any student who is taking a course which continues into the next semester.
5. Z-Disqualification: A grade Z denotes disqualification from an examination as a result of an examination malpractice or offence, and shall be awarded whenever it is established that a candidate had attempted to gain an unfair advantage in an examination.

A candidate awarded a grade Z may be barred from taking a University Examination for a stated period, or indefinitely, or may be expelled from the University.

1. A student shall be deemed to have passed a course if he/she scores a grade of 50% or more, and shall be awarded the commensurate Letter Grade specified in the Graduate School Policy and Admission Requirements (Refer to section 16a).

## **8.4 Probation**

A student shall be placed on probation when the CGPA is from 1.50-1.99. A student on probation is required to improve his/her performance and be in good academic standing to be able to commence the thesis work or take part in the oral examination/Viva Voce as the case may be.

## **8.5 Repetition**

A student shall be required to repeat the calendar year in any of the following situations:

* A student with a CGPA of less than 2.00 after resit.
* A student deferring his/her programme of study. In each of the situations above, the student must take the cluster of shall be cancelled.

## **8.6 Withdrawal**

A student shall be withdrawn from a programme in any of the following situations:

* When a student’s CGPA falls below 1.50
* When a student fails to register for a major programme without any reason or requests for extension in any semester.

# **9. PASS MARK**

The pass mark for any taught course shall be 50 percent. However, a cumulated Grade Point Average (CGPA) of 2.00 must be obtained at the end of the taught course to be able to proceed with the thesis. However, for programmes whose taught courses extend into the second year and run concurrently with the theses, a CGPA of 2.00 shall be required before students are permitted to take the oral examinations/Viva Voce. Where a student does not maintain the minimum CGPA of 2.00 and/or trails one or more courses, he/she shall be required to write supplementary examinations to be in good academic standing before proceeding to start the research work or take the oral examinations/Viva Voce as the case may be.

# **10. SUPPLEMENTARY EXAMINATIONS**

1. Supplementary examinations may be conducted for each semester’s examinations and shall be determined by the University. This shall apply to a student who was unable to write the end-of-semester examination for a reason that has been accepted by the Academic Board. The conditions include:
2. A student who has written and failed (F) courses at the end of semester.
3. A student who is tagged as Deferred (Df\*) for a course(s).
4. A student who was unable to write the end-of-semester examination on grounds of proven ill-health.

# **11. GROUNDS OF ILL-HEALTH FOR SUPPLEMENTARY EXAMINATIONS**

i. Ill-health of a student shall be established with a medical report issued or endorsed by the Director of University Health Services. Such a student must have registered for the course(s), attended lectures, tutorials, practicals, etc. non-registration of course(s) as a result of owing of fees. A student shall be required to register formally and pay the requisite fees to sit and write the examination (medical cases are exempted from paying). Such payments must be made not later than two weeks prior to the date of the commencement of the supplementary examinations.

ii. Fees for supplementary examination shall be determined by the Academic Board from time to time.

**NOTE**: Students who are tagged as Deferred for a programme shall not be eligible to take advantage of the provision of supplementary examinations.

# **12. REQUIREMENTS FOR PROGRESSION TO THESIS RESEARCH**

In order to progress to thesis research, a student is required to have:

* Completed the prescribed number of credit hours in each category.
* Obtained a minimum pass mark of 50% in any taught course;
* Achieved the minimum CGPA of 2.00
* Passed all required courses in the programmes. All students with a minimum CGPA of 2.00 are deemed to have a PASS.
* Completed the prescribed number of credit hours recommended for the programme.

# **13. GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS**

In addition to the requirements for progression to the thesis research (section 12), for the award of the degree, the candidate shall have:

* Passed the Comprehensive Examination with a minimum mark of 50%. The term Comprehensive Examination refers to a rigorous assessment designed to evaluate a candidate's overall knowledge and understanding of their field of study. It often covers the core concepts, theories, methodologies, and research skills that the student is expected to have mastered before progressing to the thesis research stage.
* Submitted and successfully defended a thesis; and
* Shown evidence of submission of at least one manuscript to the University’s journal or for an approved conference at the Master’s level and two published manuscripts at the Doctorate level.

# **14. ARRANGEMENTS FOR FINAL CLEARANCE OF STUDENTS LEAVING THE UNIVERSITY**

When a student completes his/her programme of study at the University or leaves the University for any other reason, he/she shall be required to complete the clearance process. A student who does not comply will not be issued with any official document by the school.

# **15. REMARKING OF EXAMINATION SCRIPT**

Students who may not be satisfied with their examination mark may initially request through the Head of Department for a verification of their marks. If he/she is still not satisfied after the verification, may request through the Head of Department for their scripts to be remarked at a fee. If the claim of unfair assessment is substantiated, the student will have the remarking fee refunded. The new mark resulting from the re-marking shall be used to process the results.

# **16. EXAMINATIONS BOARD AND GRADUATE SCHOOL BOARD**

Examination results shall be considered by the following Boards before they are submitted to Academic board for consideration: Department Board, Faculty/School Board, and Graduate School Board, in that order.

# **17.1 REGULATIONS FOR UPGRADE FROM MASTERS TO MPHIL-CONVERSION FROM MTech/MSc/MA/MBA to MPhil**

## **17.1.1 Eligibility**

In order to be eligible for the conversion, the candidate must have:

* Enrolled on an MTech/MSc/MA/MBA programme at ATU.
* Obtained a minimum CGPA of 3.5 as at the end of the first semester; and
* Demonstrated the capacity for independent research. Additional time required to complete the MPhil programme shall be a minimum of 12 months.
* The student shall be required to pay the difference in fees between that of the initial programme and the MPhil programme.

## **17.1.2 Assessment of**

The Application shall be submitted to the Graduate School Board through the Head of Department and Dean of Faculty for Consideration.

The decision of the Graduate School shall be communicated to the student before the beginning of the MPhil programme.

## **17.1.3 Date of Registration**

Once the upgrade has been approved, the student will be deemed to have been provisionally registered for the MPhil programme from the date of registration of the MTech/MSc/MA programme.

In this instance, the student shall be deemed to have forfeited his/her right to be awarded the MTech/MSc/MA/MBA certificate.

**18.1 MPHIL TO PHD, OR MTECH TO DTECH, OR MSC TO DSC**

Pursuant to the Regulations for Higher Degrees of the University, a student currently enrolled in a Master’s programme may be upgraded to Doctoral candidacy.

## **18.1.1 Eligibility**

Students wishing to upgrade to a Doctoral enrolment must:

* + Be currently enrolled in a Master’s programme.
	+ Have passed all required taught courses and obtained a cumulative
	+ Have demonstrated the ability to exercise independent critical thinking.
	+ Not have submitted the Master’s thesis for examination.

## **18.1.2 Application**

An application should be made in writing on an approved upgrade form obtainable from the Graduate School through the Head of student’s research work and evidence of meeting the eligibility criteria set above.

## **18.1.3 Assessment of the Application**

The student presents his/her progress report and the direction of additional work to be done to a panel of three internal/external examiners, chaired by the Dean of Graduate School or his/her representative. The internal/external panel members should be experts in the student’s area of research, chosen by the Graduate School on the recommendation of the appropriate Departmental Board. In order to approve an application to upgrade, the committee must ensure that:

* + The student has gained satisfactory knowledge of the background.
	+ The student’s Master’s degree research can be extended.
	+ Adequate supervision is available (the supervisors of the Master’s)
	+ Adequate resources are available for the student’s research.

A decision should then be made within four (4) weeks of submission of the application or before the candidate completes his/her Master’s programme, depending on the situation.

## **18.1.4 Date of Registration**

Once the upgrade has been approved, the student will be deemed to have been provisionally registered for the Doctoral programme.

# **19. MODERATORS AND EXTERNAL EXAMINERS**

## **19.1 Appointment of External Examiners and Moderators**

Research Scientists of Professorial status shall be appointed by the Dean of Graduate School upon recommendation by the Departmental/Faculty and Graduate School Board. There shall not normally be more than one external examiner/moderator for each programme.

## **19.2 Duties of a Moderator**

Moderators shall be requested to advise on course structure and syllabuses relating to their areas of specialization.

## **19.3 Duties of External Examiners**

External Examiners shall, among other things, review candidates’ theses and assess their merit for the award of a degree.

# **20. APPOINTMENT OF SUPERVISORS**

## **20.1 Supervisors for Masters Programmes**

He/she shall have a Doctorate degree at Lecturer rank or above. He/she shall supervise students in his/her area of specialization.

## **20.2 Supervisors for Doctoral Programmes**

A Principal Supervisor for Doctoral Studies (PhD./DTech.) shall be a Terminal Degree holder at the rank of Senior Lecturer/Associate Professor in his/her area of specialization and a Co-Supervisor should be a Doctorate degree holder at Senior Lecturer rank and above also in his/her area of specialization.

**20.3 Student Assessment of Supervision**

The Directorate of Quality Assurance and Academic Planning (QAAP) shall request for a student to assess the quality of supervision through a questionnaire administered by the QAAP. The report shall be submitted by the QAAP to the Head of Department, who will further report to the Board of Graduate School.

**21. PLAGIARISM TEST FOR THESES (*Also Refer to the Policy on TURNITIN and Plagiarism*)**

Plagiarism is the appropriation of another person’s ideas, processes, results or words without giving appropriate credit. Some instances of plagiarism are:

* Turning in someone else’s work as one’s own

On such matters, it shall be the duty of the supervisors to hold formal meetings chaired by the principal supervisor, the Dean of Graduate School through the Head of Department/Faculty at the end of every semester to implement the policy on plagiarism.

* Copying words or ideas from someone else without giving credit;
* Failing to put a quotation in quotation marks;
* Giving incorrect information about the source of a quotation;
* Changing words but copying the sentence structure of a source
* Copying so many words or ideas from a source makes up the majority of your work, whether you give credit or not. Students are encouraged to refer to the Policy on TURNITIN and Plagiarism Guide obtainable from the University’s website. The threshold of 15% for Doctorate and 20% for master’s programme shall be strictly adhered to.

# **22. THESIS SUBMISSION FOR EXAMINATION**

1. Each copy of the thesis shall be signed by the student, supervisor(s) and Head of Department.

Master’s and Doctoral candidates shall complete the required credits in order to merit a Degree.

1. A panel comprising at least three (3) examiners shall be appointed. An internal examiner for a Master’s thesis should be a PhD/Terminal Degree holder. There shall be two internal examiners and one external examiner,
2. Bound copies of theses shall be submitted to the Head of Department. The Department shall then submit the thesis together with the names and contacts of both external and internal examiners to the Dean of the Graduate School.

For information on the grading system for theses for the programme, refer to Appendix 4 in the Guide for Preparation and Evaluation of Higher Degree by the Graduate School.

# **25. MASTER STUDENTS**

1. A candidate who submits a thesis for a Master’s degree shall have satisfied the minimum credits for the programme.
2. For this examination, there shall be a panel comprising three (3) examiners.
3. It shall be the responsibility of the candidate’s Head of Department to select the examiners.
4. The Graduate School shall write formally to inform him/her and the internal examiners about the time, date and venue of the oral examination.
5. The student shall ensure compliance with the relevant regulations governing the conduct of the oral examination at the oral examination.
6. The panel may recommend to the Graduate School that the candidate should be permitted to reappear for a further oral examination within a period not exceeding six (6) months from the date of the oral examination.

# **26. DETERMINATION OF THESES RESULTS**

One of the following recommendations of the examiners shall apply:

1. All three (3) examiners pass the thesis and the oral examination.
2. The thesis is failed by at least one of the three (3) examiners. In this case, the Board shall fix a meeting to reconsider the overall merit of the Thesis, and offer a second chance.
3. A candidate fails to satisfy the examiners at a second oral meeting. In this case, the candidate would be deemed not to merit the award of the degree.
4. A plagiarized thesis shall be rejected outright, and the candidate shall be deemed to have failed.

Recommendations of the examiners to the Graduate School Board shall be in one of the following manner:

* Pass
* Pass, subject to major or minor corrections.
* Fail

# **27. DEADLINES FOR SUBMISSION OF REVISED THESES**

1. A thesis passed subject to corrections shall be submitted to the Graduate School through the Head of Department. If a student fails to submit a thesis passed subject to corrections within the three months grace period, the following sanctions shall apply:
2. Up to four months default: 50% of the fee for extension shall be charged.
3. Four to six months default: Full fees for extension shall be charged.
4. Beyond six (6) months default without any formally communicated reason: Candidature shall be deemed to forfeit the award for the current academic year.

In this scenario, the time would have lapsed, and the student may request for re-admission and shall be required to pay the appropriate fees (fees for the next calendar year) before thesis can be re-submitted.

1. Beyond one year, a student shall not be allowed to renew his/her candidature.
2. **Referment of Submitted Thesis**
3. The candidate may be permitted to re-submit it in a revised form within twelve months.
4. The candidate shall be required to re-register and pay the appropriate fee(s).
5. **Candidate’s Thesis Declared as Failed**

The candidate may apply for re-admission to his/her programme. In such a case, the student may be granted a waiver of written and passed courses.

# **28. PUBLICATION OF RESULTS**

Results of graduate degree programmes shall be published upon the recommended by Academic Board.

# **29. CANCELLATION OF AWARD**

## **29.1 Degree**

The Academic Board may at any time cancel an award if the candidate:

1. Has impersonated someone.
2. Has been guilty of an examination malpractice;
3. Has plagiarized material in his/her thesis/dissertation.
4. Any other offences that the Academic Board may deem inappropriate fro the award of the degree.

# **30. TRANSCRIPT OF ACADEMIC RECORDS AND LETTERS OF ATTESTATION**

1. The University shall issue to the particular address provided by the student a complete transcript of his/her academic results.
2. A student applying for an academic transcript shall be required to complete the Transcript Application Form obtainable from the Graduate School.
3. An attestation can be issued to a candidate upon payment of the required fees.

**31. EXAMINATION INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES**

1. Practical and oral examinations will normally be conducted in the departments concerned.
2. All other University examination regulations shall apply.

# **APPENDIX**

**1. ATU anthem**

**2. General Undertaking**

I (Name)……………………………………………….…………… ….. .... of (Address)……………………………………........................ within the jurisdiction of (Country)…………...............................… ……………….….in consideration of my admission into (Programme)………....................at Accra Technical University’), do on this……….….…………………………day of……………….……20……. hereby undertake to fully comply with the rules and regulations governing the administration of the University, and the laws of Ghana in general while still a student in .... of.

To this end, I undertake to:

1. Comply with the rules and regulations of the University as contained in the Students’ Manual and other Statutes of the University
2. Refrain from the use of violence and/or any form of force in the ventilation of any grievance I may have;
3. Desist from destroying and/or causing any damage, or assisting anyone to damage any property belonging to the University;
4. Prevent myself from taking part in any form of procession, demonstration, protests or other gatherings organized for the purpose of protesting against any policy of the University, except where the same is authorized by the Vice-Chancellor of the University.
5. Abstain from all forms of occultism and other pseudo-religious practices which are harmful in any way to anybody or the general University community; and,
6. Assist and co-operate unconditionally with the authorities of the University in bringing violators of university rules and regulations to book.

**3. Penalty Clause**

I further undertake to suffer all stated penalties in the event of a breach of any of the aforementioned rules, regulations and undertakings on my part, from the Vice-Chancellor or any other authority appointed by him. Wherefore, I append my signature to this undertaking. ..................…………………... Sign ………………………………… Full Name Date……………………………………………….

WITNESS: (PARENT/GUARDIAN/PERSON TO BE JUSTIFIED) ………………………….

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Graduate School wishes to acknowledge the rich inputs and contributions made by the following internal stakeholders in the preparation of this policy document:

a) The Governing Council

b) Management

c) Academic Board

d) Quality Assurance and Academic Planning Directorate

e) Directorate of Research, Innovation, Publication, and Technology Transfer (DRIPTT)

f) The Planning Committee

g) Deans of Faculties and Heads of Departments

h) The Graduate School Committee

The School duly appreciates the immense contributions of all staff both administrative and teaching who contributed in diverse ways to make the formulation of this policy a success.

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