



**MASINDE MULIRO UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE
AND TECHNOLOGY**

**DIRECTORATE OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES
REGULATIONS OF ONLINE ORAL DEFENSES
(Draft)**

April 2020

NEW OPERATIONAL RULES FOR ONLINE ORAL THESIS DEFENSES

In view of the Corvid 19 debacles the MMUST Oral defenses will now be moved online. This is in line with the general decision by the university to transfer teaching and other academic activities online. In this case the Directorate of Postgraduate Studies (DPS) has decided to undertake the defenses over the Microsoft Teams platform. The defenses within the platform will be done within different School teams (or the platform's communication folders) with each student's oral defense being done under a specific channel. DPS has successfully done the initial trials using the staff and students of Biological Department. In view of this readiness the first online defenses are due to start in the week commencing 27th April 2020.

Given that this is a new initiative, we have suggested a set of rules to add onto the existing defense rules. These new rules are to ensure that the initiative runs smoothly. The rules are as outlined below:

1. The program and protocol for the viva voce shall remain as usual. A defense shall only start if there are at least five panelists besides the student supervisor. An initial introduction of the candidate and the panelists shall be done under the guidance of the Chairperson.
2. Dress code: - You do not need to be in a suit but at the same time you shouldn't appear in a night dress. Thus, the dress code shall be formal.
3. Telephone use: - Phones cause reverberations on other panelists' laptops. Thus, phones shall be switched off or kept away at distant place.
4. Side discussions: - Side discussions with someone sitting close to you (in case you are in the same room with another panelist) shall not be encouraged. This distracts the other online participants who hear you and your side discussions.
5. Defense time limit: - The normal oral defenses take a maximum of 2 hours. The online version shall have an extra 20 minutes added to cover for any technology hitch that may arise.
6. Muting the speaker: - Panelists shall always mute their microphones when not talking.
7. Panelists shall only unmute their microphones and speak if asked by the Chairperson.
8. The soft copies of the student's examination report, the defense score sheet and the student's thesis shall be sent via email to the panelists prior to the defense. These shall also be posted as files on the Microsoft Teams' defense channel for each oral defense.
9. Panelists shall read the examiner's report and student's thesis prior to the defense and put them on their desktops for ease of access during the defense.

10. Panelists shall fill the score sheet by giving the candidate being examined a mark (out of 20). They shall also indicate, in the score sheet, how long (1, 3 or 6 months) they think the candidate shall take to do the corrections. Thereafter each panelist shall append his/her electronic signatures on the scoresheet and immediately send the scoresheet to DPS (directordps@mmust.ac.ke) via email using their laptops. This should be done **immediately** after the student finishes the oral defense presentation.
11. At the end of the session of oral defense questions to the student, the Chairperson shall **electronically remove** the student from the online meeting room for, **a maximum of ten minutes**. During this time the DPS secretariat shall tally the received scores. At the same time any confidential issues by the panelists, regarding the student's work, shall be discussed within the 10 minute break.
12. The student shall be *instructed* to wait for 10 minutes and not logout as he/she shall be **electronically recalled** back into the online meeting room for the announcement of the results.

RULES TO CURB ONLINE ORAL EXAM IRREGULARITIES

DPS recognizes that there may be a risk or danger whereby a student may feign that the internet network is poor by switching of his/her computer when he/she fails or cannot answer a question. Such acts of 'disappearances' will be curbed through the following measures:

1. The student shall be informed at the onset of the defense not to leave the meeting before it ends otherwise it shall lead to the oral exam disqualification and a re-defense being done at the student's expense.
2. Every student shall ensure that he/she has an appropriate network cover wherever he/she is based and notify this to the chairman of the department (CoD) and the DPS (via a written email notification).
3. Every student shall ensure he/she has enough bundles - It is estimated that 500MB (equivalent to 100/=) is sufficient for an entire oral defense. Should the students have difficulty in getting bundles, they shall have the option for coming to MMUST and connecting to one of the available routers in the university. The respective chairs of DGSCs and CoDs shall assist to arrange this with the ICT department e.g. using the library carrel offices or the spacious laboratory rooms.
4. Students who plan to do the online oral defense shall give soft copies of their thesis to their CoDs and the DPS at least one week before the oral defense. They shall also fill the clearance for thesis defense form which can be downloaded from the *students forms* section of the DPS website.