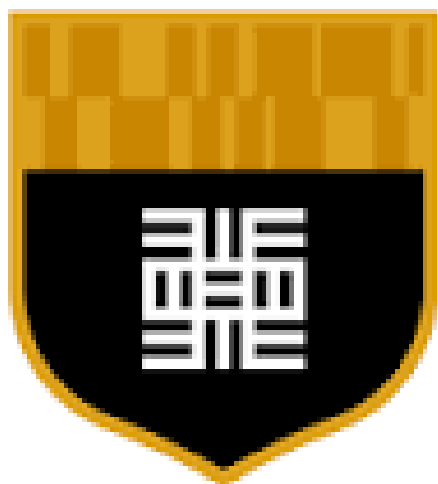




KAAF
UNIVERSITY

**GRADUATE STUDIES & RESEARCH –
STUDENT HANDBOOK**

2026

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Welcome Message from the Dean/Coordinator

Welcome to the Graduate School of KAAF University. It is my pleasure to congratulate you on your admission into one of our postgraduate programmes. Your decision to pursue graduate studies at KAAF University reflects your commitment to academic excellence, professional advancement, and impactful research. The Graduate School is dedicated to nurturing scholars and professionals who possess advanced analytical skills, ethical judgment, and the capacity to contribute meaningfully to national development and the global knowledge economy.

As a graduate student, you are expected to demonstrate intellectual independence, scholarly rigor, and adherence to the highest standards of academic integrity. The faculty and administrative staff are committed to providing an enabling academic environment that supports teaching, learning, research, and innovation. I encourage you to take full advantage of the resources and opportunities available to you and to actively engage in the intellectual life of the University.

On behalf of the Academic Board, faculty, and staff of KAAF University, I warmly welcome you and wish you every success in your graduate studies.

1.2 Purpose of the Handbook

This Graduate Studies and Research Student Handbook serves as the authoritative guide governing postgraduate education at KAAF University. It outlines the academic policies, regulations, procedures, and standards that apply to all Master's and Doctoral students. The handbook is designed to support students in understanding their rights, responsibilities, and obligations throughout their period of study.

The provisions contained herein are binding on all graduate students and should be read in conjunction with other official University statutes, regulations, and policy documents. The University reserves the right to amend or revise the handbook as necessary, and students are responsible for staying informed of updates communicated through official channels.

1.3 Vision, Mission & Values of the Graduate School

Vision

To be a centre of excellence in graduate education and research, recognized for producing highly skilled professionals, innovative researchers, and ethical leaders with local relevance and global impact.

Mission

The mission of the Graduate School is to provide rigorous, research-driven postgraduate education that integrates theory, practice, and innovation. The School seeks to advance knowledge through high-quality research, foster interdisciplinary collaboration, and develop graduates capable of addressing complex societal and organizational challenges.

Core Values

The Graduate School of KAAF University is guided by the following values:

- Academic excellence and intellectual rigor
- Integrity, honesty, and ethical scholarship
- Innovation and creativity
- Inclusivity, equity, and respect for diversity
- Professionalism and accountability
- Service to society and national development

1.4 Strategic Goals and Institutional Priorities

The strategic goals of the Graduate School are aligned with the broader mission and strategic plan of KAAF University. Key priorities include:

- Strengthening postgraduate teaching and learning through quality assurance and curriculum relevance
- Promoting high-impact research that addresses national, regional, and global development challenges
- Enhancing research capacity, supervision quality, and publication output
- Expanding partnerships with industry, government, and international institutions
- Supporting postgraduate student success, employability, and professional development
- Ensuring compliance with the standards and guidelines of the Ghana Tertiary Education Commission (GTEC)

2. ABOUT KAAF GRADUATE SCHOOL

2.1 Overview of the Graduate School

The Graduate School of KAAF University is the central academic unit responsible for the coordination, administration, and quality assurance of all postgraduate programmes offered by the University. It operates under the authority of the Academic Board and works closely with faculties, departments, and research units to ensure the effective delivery of Master's and Doctoral education. The Graduate School provides leadership in postgraduate policy formulation, student admissions, research governance, supervision standards, examination processes, and graduation requirements. It also serves as the primary interface between graduate students and the University on matters relating to academic progression, research compliance, and institutional regulations.

2.2 Graduate Education Philosophy

Graduate education at KAAF University is founded on the belief that advanced learning and research are critical drivers of innovation, competitiveness, and sustainable development. The University adopts a learner-centred and research-oriented philosophy that emphasizes critical inquiry, problem-solving, and the application of knowledge to real-world contexts. Postgraduate programmes are designed to equip students with advanced disciplinary knowledge, methodological competence, and transferable skills such as leadership, communication, and ethical decision-making. The Graduate School promotes interdisciplinary engagement, independent scholarship, and continuous intellectual growth.

2.3 Academic Calendar & Important Dates

The academic calendar defines the structure of the academic year and outlines key activities, including registration periods, commencement of lectures, examination schedules, research milestones, thesis submission deadlines, and graduation ceremonies. The calendar is approved by the Academic Board and published annually. Graduate students are required to adhere strictly to the academic calendar and to take personal responsibility for meeting all academic and administrative deadlines. Any changes to the calendar will be communicated through official University channels.

2.4 Contact Information (School Office, Support Units)

The Graduate School maintains administrative offices that provide support services to postgraduate students. Key support units include the Graduate School Office, Faculty Graduate Coordinators, the University Library, the ICT Unit, the Student Affairs Office, and the Research Ethics Committee. Official contact details, office locations, and communication channels for these units are provided in Appendix 10.5 of this handbook and on the University's official website. Students are encouraged to use approved communication channels for all formal enquiries and requests.

3. ADMISSION POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Admission into graduate programmes at KAAF University is governed by institutional regulations approved by the Academic Board and aligned with national standards prescribed by the Ghana Tertiary Education Commission (GTEC). The admission process is designed to ensure fairness, transparency, academic rigor, and appropriate alignment between applicants' academic backgrounds, professional qualifications, and the learning and research objectives of each programme. All admissions are competitive and subject to the availability of programme capacity, qualified faculty supervision, infrastructural resources, and compliance with institutional and national regulatory requirements.

3.1 Admission Criteria

Admission into graduate programmes at KAAF University is based on a holistic assessment of applicants' academic qualifications, professional experience, research potential, and overall preparedness for advanced study. The University recognizes both traditional academic pathways and relevant professional routes into graduate education, particularly for professionally oriented and applied programmes.

Accordingly, admission decisions are guided by the need to ensure that all admitted candidates possess the intellectual capacity, disciplinary grounding, and professional or research competence required to successfully complete the rigours of postgraduate training. While minimum entry requirements are prescribed, meeting these requirements does not guarantee admission, as selection remains competitive and subject to programme capacity, faculty availability, and alignment with programme objectives.

The general admission requirements outlined below apply across programmes, while additional or programme-specific requirements may be imposed where necessary to safeguard academic standards and professional relevance.

3.1.1 General Admission Requirements

3.1.1.1. Master's Programmes

Applicants seeking admission into Master's degree programmes must normally satisfy the following academic and professional criteria:

a. Academic Qualifications

Admission into Master's programmes is primarily based on applicants' prior academic preparation and demonstrated capacity for advanced postgraduate study. Accordingly, applicants are expected to meet the following academic qualification requirements:

- Possession of a Bachelor's degree from a recognized institution accredited by the Ghana Tertiary Education Commission (GTEC) or an equivalent national or international accreditation body.
- A minimum qualification of Second-Class Lower Division or its equivalent.
- Applicants with Third Class degrees may be considered where they demonstrate:

- Substantial and relevant professional experience (normally one [1] year), and/or
- Successful completion of an approved qualifying, bridging, or conversion programme recognized by the University.

b. Professional Qualifications and Experience

In recognition of diverse pathways to advanced learning and professional competence, the University may consider applicants who hold recognized professional qualifications and relevant industry experience, particularly for professionally oriented or executive Master's programmes:

- Applicants holding recognized professional qualifications may be considered for admission, particularly into professionally oriented or executive Master's programmes. Such qualifications may include, but are not limited to:
 - Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM)
 - Institute of Chartered Accountants (Ghana/UK) – ICAG, ACCA
 - Chartered Institute of Human Resource Management (CIHRM)
 - Project Management Professional (PMP)
 - Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply (CIPS)
 - Relevant health, engineering, ICT, education, or legal professional certifications
- Professional qualifications must be awarded by recognized professional bodies and assessed for equivalence by the Graduate School.
- Relevant industry or public-sector experience may be used to strengthen an application, particularly where academic performance is marginal.

c. Additional Considerations

Beyond formal academic and professional credentials, admission decisions may also take into account applicants' overall readiness for postgraduate-level study and capacity to succeed in a rigorous academic environment:

- Evidence of academic readiness, motivation, and capacity for postgraduate-level study.
- Demonstrated ability to engage in analytical thinking, independent learning, and academic writing.

3.1.1.2. Doctoral Programmes

Applicants seeking admission into Doctoral (PhD) programmes must demonstrate advanced academic achievement, research capability, and readiness to undertake independent, original research at the highest scholarly level. The following criteria shall apply:

a. Academic Qualifications

Admission to Doctoral programmes is contingent upon strong postgraduate academic performance and evidence of prior research training:

- Possession of a relevant Master's degree from a recognized institution accredited by GTEC or an equivalent body.
- Strong academic performance at the Master's level, normally evidenced by:

- A minimum cumulative grade point average (CGPA) as determined by the University, and/or
- A high-quality thesis or research project.

b. Research and Professional Competence

Applicants must demonstrate the intellectual capacity and research competence necessary to contribute original knowledge to their field of study:

- Demonstrated research competence, including one or more of the following:
 - Master's thesis of acceptable scholarly standard
 - Peer-reviewed publications, technical reports, or policy papers
 - Evidence of applied research, innovation, or professional practice with scholarly relevance
- Applicants with significant professional or industry research experience may be favorably considered where such experience demonstrates advanced analytical, problem-solving, and research skills.

c. Supervision Requirement

As doctoral study is fundamentally mentorship-driven, admission is subject to the availability of appropriate academic supervision:

- Availability of suitably qualified faculty supervision in the proposed research area is a mandatory condition for admission.

3.1.2 Programme-Specific Requirements

In addition to the general admission requirements, individual graduate programmes may prescribe programme-specific academic and professional criteria to ensure suitability and successful completion. These may include:

- Completion of specific prerequisite undergraduate or postgraduate courses.
- A minimum number of years of relevant professional, managerial, technical, or industry experience, particularly for:
 - Executive Master's programmes
 - Professional Doctorates
 - Practice-oriented postgraduate programmes
- Possession of relevant professional certifications, licenses, or registrations, where applicable to the discipline.
- Submission of a preliminary research proposal, particularly for:
 - Research-based Master's programmes
 - Doctoral programmes
- Successful performance in:
 - Entrance examinations
 - Aptitude tests
 - Interviews or presentations conducted by Faculty or Graduate Admissions Committees.

Programme-specific admission requirements are officially published in:

- University programme brochures
- The KAAF University website
- Official admission advertisements and notices issued by the Graduate School

The University reserves the right to assess all academic and professional qualifications for equivalence and relevance in accordance with institutional and national standards.

3.2 Application Requirements & Documentation

Applicants must submit a complete application package to the Graduate School within the prescribed application period. Incomplete or improperly documented applications will not be considered.

Typical application documentation includes:

- Completed application form (online or hard copy)
- Certified copies of academic certificates and transcripts
- Curriculum Vitae (CV)
- Statement of Purpose outlining academic objectives, research interests, and career goals
- Letters of recommendation (academic and/or professional)
- Certified copy of national identification card or passport
- Evidence of payment of the prescribed application fee

Additional Requirements for Doctoral Applicants:

- A preliminary research proposal outlining the research area, objectives, methodology, and significance
- Evidence of prior research outputs (publications, reports, or projects)

The Graduate School reserves the right to request additional documentation where necessary for verification or clarification.

3.3 Application Deadlines

Application deadlines are determined annually by the Graduate School and approved by the Academic Board. Deadlines are communicated through:

- The University website
- Official admission advertisements
- Graduate School notices and circulars

Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit applications well in advance to allow sufficient time for processing. Late submissions or applications received after programme capacity has been reached may not be considered.

3.4 Selection and Interview Process

All applications undergo a rigorous evaluation process coordinated by the Graduate School in collaboration with Faculty Graduate Admissions Committees.

The selection process may include:

- Assessment of academic qualifications and transcripts
- Review of professional experience and relevance to the programme
- Evaluation of statements of purpose and research proposals
- Interviews, entrance examinations, or presentations, where applicable

Interviews may be conducted in person or virtually and assess:

- Academic preparedness
- Research potential
- Motivation and alignment with programme objectives

Final admission recommendations are submitted to the Academic Board for approval.

3.5 Admission Offers and Registration

Successful applicants receive a formal admission offer from the Graduate School, which specifies:

- Programme of study
- Mode of delivery (on-campus, hybrid, or online)
- Duration of the programme
- Conditions of admission (if any)
- Registration requirements and deadlines

Applicants must formally accept the offer and complete registration within the stipulated period. Registration is deemed complete only when all academic, administrative, and financial obligations are met.

Failure to accept or register within the specified timeframe may result in withdrawal of the admission offer.

3.6 International Applicant Guidelines

KAAF University welcomes qualified international applicants. In addition to meeting general academic requirements, international applicants must comply with the immigration and residency regulations of Ghana.

International applicants may be required to provide:

- Certified academic credentials evaluated by recognized credential assessment bodies
- Proof of English language proficiency, where applicable
- Valid passport and visa documentation
- Evidence of financial capacity to support tuition and living expenses

Upon admission, international students must:

- Regularize their immigration status
- Obtain a student residence permit
- Comply with all University and national regulations for international students

The Graduate School provides guidance to international students on admission, registration, orientation, and integration into the University community.

4. ACADEMIC REGULATIONS

The academic regulations set out in this section govern enrollment, progression, assessment, and completion of all Master's and Doctoral programmes at KAAF University. All graduate students are required to familiarize themselves with and adhere strictly to these regulations throughout their period of study.

4.1 Enrollment and Registration Policies

All admitted graduate students must formally enroll and register at the beginning of each semester within the timelines approved by the Academic Board. Registration confirms a student's active academic status and eligibility to participate in lectures, research supervision, assessments, and access to University facilities.

Registration is deemed complete only when the student has:

- Registered for approved courses or research credits
- Submitted all required academic documentation
- Fulfilled all financial obligations to the University

Students who fail to register within the stipulated period may be denied access to academic services. Late registration may be permitted only with the approval of the Graduate School and may attract approved penalties. Continuous registration is mandatory, including semesters devoted solely to research.

4.2 Duration of Study and Programme Structure

Graduate programmes at KAAF University are structured to ensure academic depth, research quality, and timely completion. The duration and structure of each programme are designed to reflect the nature of the programme—coursework-based, research-based, or doctoral study—while providing flexibility for individual research progression.

4.2.1. Master's Programmes

- **Master's by Taught Course (Coursework-Based)**
 - **Duration:** Minimum of 12 months, maximum of 24 months.
 - **Structure:** Primarily coursework, with assessments including examinations, assignments, projects, and/or capstone research projects.
 - **Thesis/Project Component:** Some programmes may include a small-scale research project or dissertation (typically 20–40% of total credit load).
 - **Objective:** Develop advanced knowledge and practical skills in a specific discipline, with optional research experience.
- **Master's by Research**
 - **Duration:** Minimum of 24 months, maximum of 36 months.
 - **Structure:** Focused on independent research under supervision, including research proposal development, data collection, analysis, and thesis preparation.
 - **Coursework Component:** Limited, typically to research methodology, ethics, or discipline-specific seminars.

- **Objective:** Develop students' research competence and ability to contribute original knowledge to their field.

4.2.2. Doctoral Programmes (PhD/Doctorate)

- **Duration:** Minimum of 36 months, maximum of 72 months.
- **Structure:** Includes coursework, comprehensive examinations, research proposal development, independent research, thesis/dissertation writing, and final defense (viva voce).
- **Research Emphasis:** Original contribution to knowledge in the student's discipline, with emphasis on theoretical, methodological, or applied innovation.
- **Supervision:** Students work under the guidance of a qualified supervisor and, where applicable, an advisory committee.

4.2.3. Extensions and Programme Flexibility

- Requests for extension beyond the maximum duration must be formally justified, indicating valid reasons such as fieldwork delays, medical conditions, or research complexity.
- Extensions require approval by the Graduate School and final ratification by the Academic Board.
- Students are expected to maintain continuous engagement with coursework, research milestones, and supervisory meetings throughout the programme duration.

4.2.4. Programme Completion Milestones

All graduate programmes, whether coursework-based or research-intensive, follow structured milestones, including:

- Registration and orientation
- Coursework and seminar completion
- Research proposal development and approval
- Data collection and analysis (for research-based programmes)
- Thesis/dissertation submission
- Final defense / viva voce

4.3 Study Load and Course Registration

Graduate students are required to register for courses in accordance with the approved curriculum and credit load of their programme. Course registration must be done under the guidance of the Faculty Graduate Coordinator or Academic Advisor.

Students are not permitted to register for courses outside their approved programme or exceed the prescribed study load without prior approval. Registration for research credits is compulsory once a student enters the research phase of the programme.

4.4 Attendance, Absence, and Leave of Absence

Regular attendance and active participation in all academic activities are essential for successful completion of graduate programmes at KAAF University. This includes lectures, seminars, workshops, tutorials, laboratory sessions, fieldwork, and scheduled supervisory meetings. Attendance is a key measure of student engagement and academic commitment.

4.4.1. Attendance Requirements

- Students are expected to meet the minimum attendance requirement specified for each course or research activity, as determined by the Graduate School and Faculty.
- Attendance records may be monitored and used in the assessment of course participation, eligibility to sit examinations, or progression in the programme.
- Supervisory meetings for research-based programmes are mandatory and form part of the student's academic obligations.

4.4.2. Authorized Absence and Leave of Absence (LOA)

- Students who are unable to attend academic activities for valid reasons (such as medical conditions, personal emergencies, or work-related obligations for professional programmes) may request a leave of absence (LOA).
- Requests for LOA must be submitted in writing to the Graduate School, specifying the reason, duration, and expected date of return. Supporting documentation (e.g., medical certificate) may be required.
- Approval of LOA is granted at the discretion of the Graduate School and becomes effective only after formal authorization.
- Periods of approved LOA are not counted toward the maximum duration of study. Students must resume their programme promptly upon the expiration of approved leave.

4.4.3. Unauthorized Absence

- Absence without prior approval is considered unauthorized and may lead to academic sanctions, including:
 - Warning or reprimand
 - Suspension from classes or research supervision
 - Termination of registration in the programme

4.4.4. Responsibilities of Students

- Students must communicate with their supervisors and programme coordinators regarding anticipated absences.
- Students are responsible for catching up on missed work and ensuring that absence does not negatively impact their academic progress.
- Continuous unauthorized absence may affect eligibility for graduation, awards, scholarships, or assistantships.

4.5 Grading System and Transcripts

KAAF University operates an approved and standardized grading system applicable to all graduate programmes. The grading system ensures transparency, fairness, and consistency in the assessment of student performance.

4.5.1. Assessment Methods

Graduate student performance may be evaluated through a combination of:

- **Continuous Assessment:** Assignments, quizzes, case studies, class participation, and seminar presentations.
- **Examinations:** Mid-semester, end-of-semester, or comprehensive examinations, as specified in the course syllabus.
- **Research Work:** Thesis/dissertation progress, project reports, laboratory work, and research outputs.
- **Practical Training/Internships:** Internship, Clinical Practicum and Horsemanship
- **Presentations:** Oral presentations, defense of research proposals, and final viva voce.
- **Other Approved Evaluation Methods:** Any other assessment method formally approved by the Graduate School and Academic Board.

4.5.2. Grading Scale

The University employs a letter-grade system with corresponding grade points and performance descriptors. The grading scale, GPA calculations, and credit requirements are detailed in the programme-specific handbook or course syllabus.

Range of Marks (%)	Letter Grade	Grade Point (4.0 scale)	Interpretation
80 – 100	A	4.00	Distinction
70 – 79	B+	3.50	Pass
65 – 69	B	3.00	Pass
60 – 64	C+	2.50	Pass
55 – 59	C	2.00	Pass
50 – 54	D+	1.50	Pass
45 – 49	D	1.00	Pass (Minimum acceptable)
<45	F	0.00	Fail

Grading Components

Students shall be evaluated using a balanced assessment framework consisting of Continuous Assessment (50%) and an End-of-Semester Examination (50%), in accordance with approved academic regulations.

4.5.3. Transcripts

- Official academic transcripts are issued only upon written request and payment of the prescribed fees.

- Transcripts will only be released to students who have met all academic, administrative, and financial obligations.
- Transcripts include complete records of courses taken, grades obtained, cumulative grade point average (CGPA), and research evaluation results (where applicable).
- Requests for transcripts for employment, further studies, or professional purposes must follow the procedures outlined by the Graduate School and Finance Office.

4.6 Progression, Probation, and Retention Standards

Graduate students are expected to maintain satisfactory academic progress throughout their programme. Progress is assessed based on performance in coursework, achievement of research milestones, and supervisory evaluations.

4.6.1. Progression Standards

1. Students must achieve the minimum required grades or CGPA of 1.50 or better or as stipulated for their programme.
2. Research-based programmes require timely completion of milestones, including research proposal approval, data collection, analysis, Approval and submission of final thesis/dissertation drafts.
3. Supervisory reports and faculty evaluations will be used to monitor ongoing research performance.

4.6.2. Academic Probation

- Students who fail to meet the required academic or research standards may be placed on academic probation for a specified period, usually one semester or as determined by the Graduate School.
- During probation, students are required to meet clearly defined performance targets, including passing specified courses or completing research milestones.
- Academic support, including additional supervision, tutoring, or remedial coursework, may be provided to facilitate improvement.

4.6.3. Termination and Retention

- Failure to meet the conditions of probation may result in termination of candidature.
- Continuous unsatisfactory performance, failure to submit thesis/dissertation on time, or inability to meet research expectations are grounds for withdrawal from the programme.
- Students have the right to appeal academic decisions, including probation or termination, through the University's established appeal procedures.

4.6.4. Retention

- Students who maintain satisfactory progress will continue in good academic standing and be eligible for graduation upon meeting all programme requirements.
- Retention policies ensure that students are supported, monitored, and guided to achieve timely completion of their studies while maintaining academic quality and integrity.

4. EXAMINATIONS: RULES AND PROCEDURES

5.1 Purpose and Scope of Graduate Examinations

Graduate examinations at KAAF University are designed to assess whether students have attained the advanced academic, analytical, research, and professional competencies required for the award of postgraduate degrees. All examinations are conducted in accordance with University Statutes and Graduate School regulations

These regulations apply to:

- Taught and research-based Master's programmes
- Doctoral programmes
- All forms of coursework and research assessment, including term papers, examinations, external assessment, and viva voce

5.2 Forms of Graduate Examination

Graduate students shall be assessed through one or more of the following examinable components, as prescribed by each programme:

1. **Written Examinations**
 - End-of-semester written examinations
 - Take-home or open-book examinations, where approved
2. **Continuous Assessment**
 - Assignments and problem sets
 - Seminar presentations
 - Case studies and practical exercises
3. **Term Papers**
 - Analytical or research-oriented papers requiring critical engagement with scholarly literature
 - Independent or supervised inquiry addressing theoretical, empirical, or policy-related issues
 - Assessment of research writing, argument development, referencing accuracy, and academic integrity
4. **Projects and Capstone Assessments**
 - Applied or professional projects
 - Field-based or industry-linked research outputs, where applicable
5. **Research Examinations**
 - External assessment of thesis/dissertation
 - Final defense (viva voce)

The weighting of each assessment component shall be specified in the approved course outline and Graduate School regulations.

5.3 General Examination Regulations

1. Students must be duly registered and in good academic, administrative, and financial standing to be eligible for examinations.
2. All examinable components, including term papers, shall be submitted within approved timelines and formats.
3. Plagiarism, collusion, impersonation, or any form of academic misconduct shall attract sanctions in accordance with University disciplinary procedures.
4. Examination results are provisional until reviewed and approved by the appropriate Boards.
5. Failure to comply with examination regulations may result in invalidation of results.

5.4 Coursework and Term Paper Examination Rules

1. Coursework assessment shall normally comprise:
 - Continuous assessment, including term papers (normally 30–50%)
 - End-of-semester examinations or final course assessment (normally 50–70%)
2. Term papers shall:
 - Demonstrate advanced critical thinking and scholarly engagement
 - Be properly referenced using approved academic styles
 - Comply with ethical and originality standards
3. A student who fails a coursework component, including a term paper, may be required to:
 - Resubmit the term paper, where permitted, or
 - Resit the examination, or
 - Repeat the course, subject to Graduate School regulations
4. Persistent failure in coursework or term papers may result in academic probation or withdrawal.

5.5 Research Examination Framework

Research-based graduate programmes shall be examined through a two-stage process:

1. External Assessment of Thesis/Dissertation (First Stage)
2. Final Defense / Viva Voce (Second Stage)

This sequencing ensures independent quality assurance prior to the oral defense and aligns with internationally accepted best practice.

5.6 External Assessment of Thesis/Dissertation

5.6.1 Purpose

External assessment provides an independent evaluation of the academic quality, originality, methodological rigor, and ethical compliance of the thesis or dissertation.

5.6.2 Eligibility

A thesis or dissertation shall be forwarded for external assessment only after:

- Certification by supervisor(s)
- Internal Graduate School quality review

- Compliance with plagiarism similarity thresholds
- Fulfillment of academic, administrative, and financial obligations

5.6.3 Outcomes

External Examiners may recommend:

- Proceed to viva voce without corrections
- Proceed to viva voce subject to minor or major corrections
- Resubmission prior to viva voce
- Not suitable for viva voce (exceptional cases)

5.7 Final Defense / Viva Voce Examination

The viva voce constitutes the final academic examination for research-based graduate programmes and assesses:

- Originality and contribution to knowledge
- Theoretical and methodological mastery
- Validity and rigor of findings
- Ability to defend research independently

Only candidates with favorable external assessment outcomes shall proceed to the viva voce.

5.8 Post-Examination Requirements

1. All corrections arising from coursework, external assessment, and viva voce must be completed within approved timelines.
2. Final plagiarism verification is mandatory prior to acceptance.
3. Final approval by the Academic Board is required for graduation and degree conferral.

5.9 Examination Appeals and Review

5.9.1 Purpose of Examination Appeals

The examination appeals process provides graduate students with a formal mechanism to seek review of examination-related decisions where there are legitimate concerns regarding procedural irregularities, assessment fairness, or material errors. The process is designed to uphold transparency, academic integrity, and fairness, while preserving the authority of academic judgment.

Appeals are not intended to challenge academic judgment per se, but to ensure that examinations have been conducted and assessed in accordance with approved University regulations.

5.9.2 Grounds for Appeal

A graduate student may lodge an appeal on one or more of the following grounds:

1. **Procedural Irregularities**
 - Failure to follow approved examination regulations or assessment procedures.
 - Administrative errors affecting examination conduct, submission, marking, or recording of results.
 - Non-compliance with approved timelines, formats, or examination protocols.

2. Substantive Irregularities

- Evidence of bias, discrimination, or conflict of interest in the assessment process.
- Significant errors in the computation, transcription, or reporting of examination results.
- Failure to consider duly submitted work, corrections, or examiner reports.

3. Mitigating Circumstances (where applicable)

- Serious illness, bereavement, or other exceptional circumstances that materially affected examination performance and were not previously considered.
- Documentary evidence must be provided to support such claims.

The following shall not constitute valid grounds for appeal:

- Disagreement with academic judgment or examiner opinion.
- Dissatisfaction with marks awarded where procedures were correctly followed.
- Comparative performance relative to other candidates.

5.9.3 Scope of Appealable Examinations

Appeals may be submitted in relation to:

- Coursework examinations and continuous assessment, including term papers.
- End-of-semester examinations.
- External assessment outcomes of theses or dissertations.
- Viva voce outcomes and recommendations.
- Decisions relating to progression, probation, or termination arising from examination results.

5.9.4 Appeal Procedure

1. Initial Informal Review

- A student may first seek clarification from the Department or Graduate School within five (5) working days of the release of results.
- This stage does not constitute a formal appeal and does not suspend appeal timelines.

2. Formal Submission of Appeal

- A formal appeal must be submitted in writing to the Graduate School within ten (10) working days of notification of the examination decision.
- The appeal must clearly state:
 - The decision being appealed
 - The specific grounds for appeal
 - Supporting evidence and documentation

3. Administrative Review

- The Graduate School shall verify the admissibility of the appeal, including compliance with timelines and grounds.
- Appeals that do not meet admissibility criteria shall be dismissed without further consideration.

4. Constitution of an Appeals Committee

- An Examination Appeals Committee shall be constituted by the Academic Board or its delegated authority.
- The Committee shall comprise senior academics with no prior involvement in the case.

5.9.5 Review and Determination

The Appeals Committee may:

- Review examination scripts, term papers, examiner reports, and viva voce records.
- Seek written clarification from examiners or departments.
- Request additional documentation from the appellant, where necessary.

The Committee shall not re-mark scripts or substitute its academic judgment for that of examiners, except where procedural breaches materially affected the outcome.

5.9.6 Possible Outcomes of an Appeal

Upon completion of the review, the Appeals Committee may recommend one or more of the following:

- **Dismissal of the Appeal**

Where no procedural or substantive irregularity is established.

- **Upholding of the Appeal**

Leading to:

- Correction of administrative or clerical errors.
- Re-assessment or re-examination, where justified.
- Re-conduct of the viva voce, in exceptional circumstances.
- Revision of progression or examination decisions.

- **Partial Upholding**

Where limited corrective action is warranted without overturning the original academic decision.

5.9.7 Timelines and Communication

- Appeals shall normally be concluded within thirty (30) working days of formal submission.
- The decision of the Appeals Committee shall be communicated to the student in writing through the Graduate School.
- During the appeal process, the original examination decision remains in force unless otherwise directed.

5.9.8 Finality of Decisions

Decisions of the Academic Board, based on recommendations of the Appeals Committee, shall be **final and binding**. No further internal appeal shall be entertained once a final determination has been made.

5.9.9 Confidentiality and Integrity of the Appeals Process

- All appeal proceedings and records shall be treated as confidential.
- Students, examiners, and committee members shall adhere to principles of fairness, objectivity, and non-retaliation.
- Abuse of the appeals process, including frivolous or vexatious appeals, may attract disciplinary action.

5. GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for graduation, a graduate student must satisfy all academic, research, and administrative obligations. Specifically, a student must:

- Successfully complete all required coursework, research modules, and seminar requirements as specified in the approved programme curriculum.
- Submit and defend an approved thesis or dissertation, where applicable, demonstrating original research and scholarly rigor.
- Fulfill all financial obligations, including payment of tuition, fees, and any outstanding charges.
- Comply with all administrative requirements, such as clearance from the Library, ICT, Finance, and Student Affairs.
- Obtain final approval from the Academic Board confirming that all academic and regulatory requirements have been met.

Only students who have fulfilled all graduation requirements will be officially cleared for the award of degrees or certificates. Clearance documentation must be completed before the issuance of transcripts or participation in graduation ceremonies.

6.1. Award of Degrees and Certificates

Degrees and certificates are awarded based on the recommendation of the Academic Board and are formally conferred at officially approved graduation ceremonies. Key provisions include:

- The University reserves the right to withhold awards in cases of unresolved academic misconduct, disciplinary issues, or outstanding financial or administrative obligations.
- Conferral of degrees signifies recognition of scholarly achievement and compliance with all University regulations.
- Diplomas, certificates, and official transcripts are issued only after all requirements are confirmed and clearance procedures completed.

6.2. Transfer of Credit (Internal and External)

Graduate students may request the transfer of credits for relevant postgraduate courses previously completed at KAAF University or other recognized institutions. The following principles apply:

- Transferred credits must be equivalent in content, level, and contact hours, and must align with the approved programme of study.
- Credit transfer requests must be submitted in writing to the Graduate School and include detailed course descriptions, syllabi, and official transcripts.
- Approval is subject to evaluation by the Graduate School and ratification by the Academic Board.
- The maximum number of transferable credits is determined by University policy and may vary by programme.
- Transferred credits may affect the student's study load, tuition fees, and progression requirements.

6.3. Programme Deferral and Reactivation

6.3.1. Deferral of Admission or Programme Continuation

Graduate students at KAAF University may request a deferral of admission or temporary interruption of their programme for valid reasons, including academic, medical, personal, or professional circumstances.

Key provisions include:

- Deferral requests must be submitted in writing to the Graduate School, providing full details and supporting documentation (e.g., medical certificates, employment letters, or academic justification).
- Deferral approval is at the discretion of the Graduate School and requires formal authorization from Registry.
- The maximum allowable deferral period for graduate students is typically 12 months for Master's programmes and 24 months for Doctoral programmes, subject to review by the Graduate School.
- Requests exceeding the maximum period must provide compelling justification and require approval from the Academic Board.
- Periods of approved deferral do not count toward the maximum duration of study (see Section 4.2).

6.3.2. Reactivation of Programme

Students seeking to resume studies after an approved deferral must submit a formal reactivation request to the Graduate School. Reactivation is subject to the following:

- Confirmation of programme availability and supervisory capacity.
- Updated registration and payment of applicable tuition or fees.
- Compliance with current programme regulations, including revised curricula, research guidelines, and course sequencing.
- Students returning after extended deferral (approaching the maximum deferral period) may be required to repeat certain courses or update research proposals to align with academic standards.

6.4. Voluntary Withdrawal

Graduate students may voluntarily withdraw from their programme at any stage. Procedures and conditions include:

- Submission of a formal written withdrawal request to the Graduate School.
- Withdrawal becomes effective only after approval and completion of clearance procedures, including library, ICT, and financial clearance.
- Tuition and other fees paid prior to withdrawal are subject to the University's refund policy, prorated according to the timing of withdrawal and services rendered.
- Voluntary withdrawal does not preclude future re-admission, which must follow the re-admission policies outlined in Section 4.13.

6.5. Forced Withdrawal and Termination

The University reserves the right to withdraw or terminate a student's registration under circumstances including, but not limited to:

(a) Persistent Poor Academic Performance or Failure to Meet Progression Standards

6.5.1. Master's Programmes

- A student shall be deemed to have *poor academic performance* if:
 - The cumulative grade point average (CGPA) falls below 1.50 at the end of any academic year, **or**
 - The student fails more than two (2) courses in an academic year, **or**
 - The student fails to satisfy progression requirements after being placed on academic probation.

6.5.2. Doctoral Programmes

- A doctoral candidate shall be deemed to have *poor academic performance* if:
 - The candidate fails two (2) consecutive progress reviews or annual research assessments.
 - The candidate receives an unsatisfactory research progress report after a formal warning or probation.
 - The candidate fails to complete mandatory milestones (proposal approval, ethics clearance, data collection, or thesis submission) within approved timelines without justified extension.
 - The candidate fails a resubmitted thesis or re-examination, where applicable.

Persistent poor performance may result in academic probation, suspension, or termination, subject to due process.

6.5.3. Other Grounds for Forced Withdrawal

- Violation of academic regulations, ethical standards, or research integrity policies.
- Gross misconduct, disciplinary infractions, harassment, or other serious breaches of University rules.
- Non-compliance with financial obligations, including tuition or approved fees.

All forced withdrawal decisions shall follow established due process and require approval by the Academic Board.

6.6. Grading Scale and Academic Performance Guide

The University employs a letter-grade system with corresponding grade points and performance descriptors. This grading scale serves as a guide to students for assessing academic standing and progression.

Academic Standing Guidance

- A **minimum CGPA of 1.50** is required for satisfactory academic standing in Master's programmes.
- Courses graded **F** must be repeated in accordance with programme regulations.

- Doctoral programmes are assessed primarily on research progress, with coursework grades (where applicable) serving as supporting indicators.

Procedures for Forced Withdrawal

- All cases follow established due process, including:
 - Written notification of allegations.
 - Opportunity for the student to respond and submit supporting evidence.
 - Formal review and recommendation by the Graduate School.
- Final decisions are made by the Graduate School and ratified by the Academic Board.
- Students may appeal forced withdrawal decisions in accordance with the University's appeals procedures.

6.7. Re-admission Policies

Students who have voluntarily withdrawn or been withdrawn may apply for re-admission, subject to the following:

- Re-admission is not automatic and is contingent upon:
 - Assessment of the student's prior academic record and performance.
 - Availability of programme capacity and supervisory resources.
 - Fulfillment of any conditions imposed by the Academic Board or Graduate School, including financial clearance.
- Decisions on re-admission are final and rest solely with the University, with formal written communication to the applicant.
- Re-admitted students must comply with current programme curricula, updated research regulations, and financial policies.
- Students may be required to retake courses, revise research proposals, or meet additional academic requirements to align with the prevailing standards of their programme.

6. RESEARCH & THESIS GUIDELINES

Research is a central and defining component of graduate education at KAAF University. It is fundamental to the award of Master's and Doctoral degrees and is designed to cultivate critical thinking, intellectual independence, and the capacity to generate knowledge that advances disciplines, informs professional practice, and contributes to national and global development. The University is committed to fostering high-quality, ethical, and impactful research. All graduate research activities are governed by the policies, procedures, and standards outlined in this section to ensure rigor, integrity, and relevance.

7.1 Overview of Research Expectations

Research constitutes a core component of graduate education at KAAF University and is fundamental to the award of Master's and Doctoral degrees. The University is committed to fostering research that is original, rigorous, ethical, and impactful, contributing to knowledge advancement, professional practice, and societal development.

Graduate students are expected to undertake research that demonstrates:

- Advanced analytical and critical thinking skills, including the ability to evaluate existing theories, identify gaps, and generate evidence-based solutions.
- Methodological competence, encompassing mastery of research design, data collection, and analysis techniques appropriate to the discipline.
- Scholarly rigor, ensuring accurate, reliable, and reproducible findings that meet international standards.
- Ethical responsibility, adherence to institutional research ethics, and compliance with national and international regulations.
- Effective communication of research findings to academic, professional, and public audiences through publications, presentations, and digital media.

7.1.1. Master's Level Research

At the Master's level, research is designed to build analytical and applied skills and is expected to:

- Apply existing theories, models, and methods to practical, professional, or scholarly problems.
- Produce outputs that are analytical, evidence-based, and grounded in disciplinary knowledge.
- Develop comprehensive research proposals, collect and analyze data, and present findings in formats suitable for academic or professional dissemination.
- Generate results that can inform policy, organizational decision-making, or future research directions.
- Demonstrate academic independence while under appropriate supervisory guidance.

7.1.2. Doctoral Level Research

Doctoral research represents the highest level of scholarly inquiry and is expected to:

- Make an original contribution to knowledge through theoretical, methodological, or empirical innovation.
- Advance existing scholarship and address critical gaps or challenges within the discipline.
- Produce research suitable for publication in peer-reviewed journals or for application in professional, policy, or societal contexts.
- Exhibit autonomy, initiative, and leadership in the design, conduct, and dissemination of research.
- Uphold the highest standards of research integrity, including transparent reporting, responsible authorship, and compliance with ethical guidelines.

7.1.3. Graduate Student Responsibilities

All graduate students are expected to:

- Engage critically with relevant literature to contextualize research within existing knowledge frameworks.
- Apply appropriate and rigorous research methodologies to ensure validity, reliability, and robustness of findings.
- Maintain ethical responsibility and integrity, including obtaining approvals from the Research Ethics Committee, securing informed consent, and protecting participant confidentiality.
- Communicate research findings effectively, using written, oral, and digital media that meet academic and professional standards.
- Document and report research activities transparently, ensuring reproducibility and accountability.
- Collaborate responsibly with supervisors, advisors, and research teams, respecting intellectual contributions and authorship conventions.

7.1.4. Expected Outcomes:

By the end of their graduate programme, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate independent scholarly thinking and problem-solving skills.
- Produce a high-quality thesis or dissertation meeting international academic standards.
- Contribute to the body of knowledge in their discipline and provide evidence for informed practice or policy.
- Exhibit research leadership potential, preparing them for academic, professional, or

7.2 Thesis/Dissertation Submission Procedures

All theses and dissertations must strictly adhere to KAAF University's approved formatting, structure, and referencing guidelines. This ensures consistency, readability, and academic quality across graduate research outputs.

7.2.1. Formatting and Structure Requirements:

- **Layout and Presentation:** Standardized margins, font type and size, line spacing, headings, subheadings, pagination, table of contents, lists of tables and figures, and appendices.
- **Citation and Referencing:** Use of approved styles (APA, Harvard, or discipline-specific). All sources, including electronic materials, must be correctly cited.
- **Binding and Cover:** Soft and hard copy submission requirements, including cover design, binding type, and labeling.

7.2.2. Submission Process:

1. Prepare the thesis/dissertation according to University guidelines.
2. Submit soft copies through the approved institutional platform for initial review and plagiarism checks.
3. Submit hard copies, if required, to the Graduate School or Faculty office.
4. Obtain supervisory certification confirming readiness for examination.
5. Adhere strictly to submission deadlines outlined in the academic calendar.

7.2.3. Important Notes:

- Late submissions may attract penalties or require formal approval from the Graduate School.
- Submissions without supervisory endorsement will not be accepted.
- Theses/dissertations must demonstrate originality, proper acknowledgement of sources, and academic rigor.
- **Plagiarism Checks:** Submissions are screened using approved software (e.g., Turnitin).
 - Acceptable similarity: $\leq 20\%$ overall, with individual sections ideally $\leq 15\%$ (excluding references, methodology, and quoted material).
 - Exceeding these thresholds requires revision and re-submission before examination.

7.3 Ethical Standards and Plagiarism Policy

All graduate research must comply with KAAF University's high standards of ethics and academic integrity.

7.3.1. Ethical Standards:

- Research involving human participants, animals, sensitive data, or vulnerable populations requires prior approval from the Research Ethics Committee (REC).
- Students must follow all REC guidelines, including informed consent, confidentiality, and responsible data management.

7.4. Plagiarism, Academic Integrity, and Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The University upholds the highest standards of academic integrity and ethical scholarship in all teaching, learning, and research activities.

7.4.1. Prohibited Practices

The following constitute serious breaches of academic integrity and are strictly prohibited:

- Plagiarism, including copying without proper attribution.
- Self-plagiarism, including re-submission of previously assessed work without approval.
- Falsification, fabrication, or manipulation of data.
- Misrepresentation of findings, authorship, or research contributions.
- Unauthorized or undeclared use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools that misrepresents a student's independent intellectual effort.

7.4.2. Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The University recognizes the growing role of AI tools in academic work and permits their responsible and transparent use under the following conditions:

- AI tools (e.g., text-generation, language-editing, coding, or data-analysis tools) may be used only as supportive aids, such as for:
 - Language editing and grammar refinement
 - Structuring or formatting assistance
 - Data visualization or coding support
- AI tools must not replace independent scholarly thinking, original analysis, interpretation of data, or intellectual authorship.
- AI tools must not be used to generate substantive sections of theses, dissertations, term papers, or examinations that are presented as the student's original work.
- The use of AI to fabricate data, references, citations, or analysis constitutes academic misconduct.

7.4.3. Mandatory AI Use Declaration

- All students are required to declare any use of AI tools in assessed coursework, term papers, theses, dissertations, and research outputs.
- The declaration must clearly state:
 - The name of the AI tool(s) used.
 - The purpose for which the tool was used (e.g., language editing, data visualization).
 - Confirmation that the final work represents the student's independent intellectual contribution.
- Failure to disclose AI use, or misrepresentation of AI-generated content as original scholarly work, shall be treated as academic misconduct.

A standard AI Use Declaration Form or Statement shall be provided by the Graduate School and appended to all major submissions.

7.4.4. Plagiarism Checks and Similarity Thresholds

- All academic submissions are subjected to plagiarism detection using approved software (e.g., Turnitin or equivalent).
- Acceptable similarity thresholds:

- **Overall similarity index: $\leq 20\%$**
- **Individual sections: ideally $\leq 15\%$,** excluding references, methodology descriptions, and properly quoted material.
- Submissions exceeding approved thresholds must be revised and re-submitted before they are accepted for examination or assessment.

7.4.5. Sanctions for Violations

Confirmed cases of plagiarism, unethical AI use, or other integrity breaches may result in one or more of the following sanctions, depending on severity:

- Mandatory revision and re-submission of the work
- Academic probation
- Suspension or termination of candidature
- Nullification of examination results or withdrawal of awarded degree, where applicable

All cases shall be handled in accordance with University disciplinary procedures and principles of due process.

7.5 Supervision and Advisory Committees

7.5.1 Supervisory Arrangements:

- Each graduate student is assigned a qualified supervisor with expertise in the research area.
- Doctoral students may also have an advisory committee to provide interdisciplinary guidance and oversight.

7.5.2 Roles and Responsibilities:

- Supervisors provide guidance on research design, methodology, data analysis, academic writing, and professional development.
- Students are required to:
 - Maintain regular contact with supervisors
 - Submit periodic progress reports as specified
 - Respond constructively to feedback and implement recommendations

7.5.3 Changes of Supervisor:

- Formal requests must be submitted and approved by the Graduate School.
- Changes are permitted only under compelling academic or professional circumstances.

7.5.4 Supervisory Oversight:

- Supervisors verify compliance with plagiarism thresholds and ensure that ethical standards are met prior to submission.
- Regular progress monitoring ensures methodological rigor and timely completion of research milestones.

7.6. Research Proposal Approval Process

Purpose:

The research proposal defines the scope, objectives, methodology, and ethical compliance of the intended study. Approval is mandatory before data collection begins.

Proposal Requirements:

- Clearly defined research objectives and questions
- Relevance, originality, and significance to the field
- Appropriate and feasible research methodology
- Ethical compliance with REC guidelines
- Alignment with faculty expertise and University research priorities

Approval Process:

1. Departmental review by faculty experts.
2. Assessment by the Graduate School for compliance and alignment.
3. Oral presentation or defense may be required.
4. Written approval must be obtained before commencing data collection or fieldwork.

Important Note:

- No research activities may commence without formal proposal approval.
- Students may be required to revise proposals to meet academic, methodological, or ethical standards.

7.7. External Assessment of Thesis/Dissertation

(Pre-Viva Examination Stage)

7.7.1. Purpose of External Assessment

External assessment constitutes a mandatory pre-viva examination stage for all research-based Master's and Doctoral programmes at KAAF University. It serves as a core quality assurance mechanism to ensure that theses and dissertations meet nationally and internationally accepted standards of academic rigor, originality, ethical integrity, and scholarly contribution.

The external assessment provides an independent, impartial, and expert evaluation of the research and safeguards the credibility and integrity of the University's postgraduate awards.

7.7.2. Eligibility for External Assessment

A thesis or dissertation shall be forwarded for external assessment only after the candidate has satisfied the following conditions:

1. Successful completion of all required coursework (where applicable).
2. Certification by the supervisor(s) that the work is ready for examination.
3. Successful completion of internal departmental and Graduate School quality review.
4. Submission of the final pre-examination version in the approved format.
5. Submission of a plagiarism similarity report confirming compliance with the University's approved threshold.

6. Fulfilment of all academic, administrative, and financial obligations.

7.7.3. Appointment of External Examiners

External Examiners are appointed by the Academic Board upon recommendation of the Graduate School and the relevant Department.

External Examiners must:

- Possess recognized expertise in the relevant discipline.
- Hold a qualification at least equivalent to or higher than the degree being examined.
- Have a proven record of research publications and postgraduate supervision.
- Be independent of KAAF University and free from any conflict of interest with the candidate or supervisor(s).

For Doctoral programmes, at least one External Examiner shall be a senior academic with substantial doctoral examination experience.

7.7.4. Scope of External Assessment

The External Examiner shall assess the thesis/dissertation against established academic standards, including:

- **Originality and Contribution to Knowledge:** Novelty, significance, and contribution to theory, practice, or policy.
- **Theoretical and Methodological Soundness:** Appropriateness, rigor, and coherence of the conceptual framework, research design, and analytical methods.
- **Quality of Analysis and Interpretation:** Validity, reliability, depth of analysis, and logical consistency of findings and conclusions.
- **Scholarly Presentation and Structure:** Clarity of writing, organization, referencing accuracy, and compliance with University formatting guidelines.
- **Ethical Compliance and Research Integrity:** Verification of ethical approval, responsible research conduct, and adherence to academic integrity standards.

7.7.5. External Examiner's Report

The External Examiner shall submit a comprehensive written report to the Graduate School within the stipulated timeframe. The report shall include:

- An overall evaluation of the thesis/dissertation.
- Detailed comments on strengths and weaknesses.
- Required corrections or revisions, where applicable.
- A clear recommendation on the examination outcome.
- A recommendation on the candidate's eligibility to proceed to the viva voce.

7.7.6. Possible recommendations include:

- Proceed to viva voce without corrections.
- Proceed to viva voce subject to minor or major corrections.
- Resubmission for further assessment prior to viva voce.
- Not suitable for viva voce (in exceptional cases).

7.7.7. Confidentiality and Ethical Considerations

- All external assessment materials and reports are treated as strictly confidential.
- External Examiners must formally declare any potential conflict of interest.
- Direct communication between candidates and External Examiners is strictly prohibited and may only occur through official University channels.

7.7.8. Integration with the Viva Voce

The External Examiner's report forms a mandatory and substantive basis for the viva voce examination. It shall:

- Inform and guide the scope of questioning during the oral defense.
- Identify key issues requiring clarification or justification.
- Contribute directly to final examination decisions.

For Doctoral programmes, the External Examiner shall normally participate in the viva voce, either in person or virtually, subject to University policy.

7.8. Final Defense / Viva Voce Requirements

(Post-External Assessment Stage)

7.8.1. Purpose of the Viva Voce

The viva voce (oral defense) constitutes the final academic examination stage following successful external assessment. It provides the candidate with the opportunity to defend the thesis or dissertation before a duly constituted examination panel appointed by the Academic Board.

The viva voce seeks to:

- Confirm the candidate's independent ownership of the research.
- Test the depth of understanding of theoretical, methodological, and analytical choices.
- Clarify and interrogate issues raised in the External Examiner's report.
- Determine whether the research satisfies the standards required for the award of the relevant degree.

7.8.2. Eligibility for Viva Voce

A candidate shall be eligible to proceed to the viva voce only upon:

1. Receipt of a favourable external examiner recommendation permitting progression to viva.
2. Compliance with any pre-viva corrections specified by the External Examiner (where applicable).
3. Confirmation of continued compliance with plagiarism similarity thresholds.
4. Fulfilment of all academic, administrative, and financial requirements.

7.8.3. Composition of the Viva Voce Examination Panel

The viva voce panel shall be appointed by the Academic Board and shall normally comprise:

- The External Examiner(s).
- An Internal Examiner appointed from within the University.

- The Head of Department or a designated Chairperson.
- The Supervisor(s), who may participate in a non-examining advisory capacity.

The Chairperson is responsible for ensuring due process, fairness, and adherence to University regulations.

7.8.4. Assessment Criteria

The viva voce examination shall be assessed against the following criteria:

- Originality and Scholarly Contribution
- Theoretical and Methodological Mastery
- Validity, Reliability, and Rigor of Findings
- Scholarly Communication and Defense
- Ethical Compliance and Research Integrity

7.8.5. Possible Examination Outcomes

Following the viva voce, the panel shall recommend one of the following outcomes:

1. **Pass (No Corrections Required)**
2. **Pass with Minor Corrections** – Normally to be completed within four (4) to eight (8) weeks.
3. **Pass with Major Corrections** – Normally to be completed within three (3) to six (6) months.
4. **Resubmission for Re-examination** – Substantial revisions required; a second viva voce may be conducted.
5. **Fail** – Research deemed inadequate; may result in termination of candidature in accordance with University regulations.

7.8.6. Post-Viva Requirements

Following the viva voce:

- All required corrections must be completed to the satisfaction of the supervisor(s) and verified by the Graduate School.
- A final plagiarism similarity check must confirm compliance with the University's approved threshold.
- Ethical compliance and research integrity must be reconfirmed.
- Final corrected copies must be submitted in approved soft and hard copy formats.
- Final approval by the Graduate School and Academic Board is required for academic clearance, graduation, and degree conferral.

Failure to complete required corrections within approved timelines may result in delayed graduation or other sanctions.

7. STUDENT SERVICES & SUPPORT

KAAF University is committed to providing comprehensive academic, research, and welfare support services to enhance graduate student success, well-being, and professional development. The services outlined in this section are designed to support students throughout their academic journey and to foster a conducive environment for teaching, learning, and research.

8.1 Academic Advising

Graduate students are assigned Academic Advisors **or** Faculty Graduate Coordinators to provide personalized guidance on academic planning, course selection, research progression, and compliance with University regulations.

8.1.1. Academic advising services include:

- Assistance with course registration, curriculum planning, and programme structuring
- Guidance on academic policies, procedures, and progression requirements
- Support in addressing academic challenges, performance concerns, or conflicts
- Advice on research planning, milestone completion, and thesis/dissertation progress
- Guidance on career development and professional opportunities relevant to the student's field

8.1.2. Student Responsibilities:

- Engage proactively with academic advisors throughout the programme
- Seek guidance promptly when encountering academic or research-related challenges
- Follow recommendations from advisors to ensure timely completion of programme requirements

8.2 Library and Research Resources

The University Library provides access to comprehensive physical and electronic information resources to support graduate-level teaching, learning, and research.

8.2.1. Resources and Services Available to Graduate Students:

- Access to specialized academic databases, e-journals, theses, and institutional repositories
- Reference assistance, information literacy training, and research consultation services
- Dedicated study spaces, research labs, and collaborative work areas
- Support for data management, citation management, and research software usage

8.2.2. Student Responsibilities:

- Use library materials ethically and responsibly
- Comply with borrowing policies, copyright regulations, and access rules
- Return borrowed items promptly and maintain integrity of shared resources

8.3 IT and e-Learning Support

The ICT Directorate provides technological infrastructure and support services to facilitate teaching, learning, and research. This includes support for the Learning Management System (LMS), institutional email, research software, and collaboration tools.

8.3.1. IT and e-Learning Services Include:

KAAF University provides comprehensive Information Technology (IT) and e-Learning support services to facilitate effective teaching, learning, research, and academic collaboration. These services are designed to ensure that graduate students have reliable access to digital resources and technological tools essential for academic success in both face-to-face and online learning environments.

- Access to online learning platforms, digital course materials, and e-resources
- Technical support for virtual learning, remote access, and online research tools
- Training on the use of academic software, statistical packages, and research technologies
- Maintenance of secure, reliable, and resilient digital infrastructure

8.3.2. Student Responsibilities:

To ensure the effective and secure use of University ICT resources, students are required to:

- Use ICT resources responsibly and in compliance with University ICT policies
- Protect login credentials and sensitive research data
- Report technical issues promptly to the ICT Help Desk

8.4 Counseling and Wellness Services

KAAF University provides confidential counseling and wellness services to support the mental, emotional, and personal well-being of graduate students.

8.4.1. Services Include:

1. Academic and personal counseling to manage stress, workload, and adjustment challenges
2. Mental health support including workshops, group sessions, and individual counseling
3. Referrals to external medical, psychological, or therapeutic services when necessary
4. Wellness education programs promoting work-life balance, resilience, and healthy living

8.4.2. Student Responsibilities:

- Seek support proactively when facing personal or academic challenges
- Maintain a healthy balance between academic, research, and personal responsibilities
- Respect confidentiality and ethical guidelines when engaging in wellness services

8.5 Student Clubs and Professional Organizations

Graduate students are encouraged to participate in approved student clubs, academic societies, and professional organizations to complement academic learning, promote leadership, and expand professional networks.

8.5.1. Benefits of Participation:

- Opportunities for scholarly engagement, interdisciplinary collaboration, and innovation
- Professional development and career networking opportunities
- Leadership training, community service, and representation of graduate student interests
- Exposure to conferences, workshops, competitions, and collaborative projects

8.5.2. Operational Guidelines:

- All student organizations must operate in accordance with University regulations
- Clubs and societies must be formally recognized by the Graduate School or Student Affairs Office
- Activities must align with the University's mission, ethical standards, and academic calendar

8. FEES, FUNDING & SCHOLARSHIPS

KAAF University recognizes that financial considerations are a critical component of graduate education. The University is committed to ensuring transparency, fairness, and accountability in the determination, payment, and administration of graduate fees, as well as in the provision of funding opportunities and financial support mechanisms.

9.1 Tuition and Programme Fees

Tuition and programme fees for all graduate programmes are determined by the University and approved by the Academic Board and relevant regulatory authorities. Fees may include tuition, registration, examination, research, graduation, and other approved charges.

The approved schedule of fees is published annually and made available through official University channels. Fees may vary by programme, mode of delivery, and level of study. The University reserves the right to revise fees, subject to regulatory approval, and such changes shall apply to new cohorts unless otherwise stated.

9.2 Payment Deadlines and Policies

Graduate students are required to pay all approved fees within the stipulated deadlines for each semester or academic year. Payment deadlines are communicated through official admission letters, fee schedules, and University notices.

Key payment policies include:

- Registration is not considered complete until required fees are paid.
- Students with outstanding fees may be denied access to academic services, including course registration, examinations, and supervision.
- Late payment may attract approved penalties or surcharges.
- All payments must be made through approved University payment channels.

Students experiencing genuine financial difficulties are encouraged to engage the Graduate School or Finance Office for guidance on available options.

9.3 Fee Refund and Deferment Policies

Fee Refund Policy

- Students who voluntarily withdraw from a programme before the commencement of classes may be eligible for a full or partial refund of tuition and other fees, subject to administrative processing fees.
- Refunds for withdrawal after the commencement of classes are prorated based on the academic calendar and University policy.
- No refund shall be made for fees paid for services already rendered, including registration, library, or ICT services.
- Refund requests must be submitted in writing to the Finance Office and approved by the Graduate School.

Fee Deferment Policy

- Graduate students who are unable to pay fees on time due to documented financial constraints may request a deferment of payment.
- Deferment requests must be submitted in writing to the Finance Office prior to the fee payment deadline and include evidence of financial hardship.
- Approved deferments may include partial payment arrangements or extended payment schedules.
- Failure to comply with the agreed deferment schedule may result in suspension of academic registration until fees are settled.

9.4 Scholarships, Grants, and Financial Aid

The University facilitates access to scholarships, grants, and financial aid to support academically deserving and financially needy graduate students, subject to availability.

Funding opportunities may include:

- Merit-based scholarships
- Need-based financial assistance
- Research grants and bursaries
- Externally funded scholarships and fellowships

Eligibility criteria, application procedures, and award conditions are communicated periodically through official University channels. Recipients of financial aid are required to comply with all terms and performance conditions attached to the award.

9.5 Graduate Assistantships

Graduate assistantships may be offered to qualified graduate students based on academic merit, research competence, and institutional needs. Assistantships provide opportunities for students to gain teaching, research, or administrative experience while receiving financial support.

Graduate assistantship appointments:

- Are subject to approval by the Academic Board or designated authority.
- May involve teaching assistance, research support, or administrative duties.
- Are governed by clearly defined terms and conditions, including workload and duration.

Graduate assistants are expected to perform assigned duties responsibly and to maintain satisfactory academic progress throughout the tenure of the assistantship.

9. CODE OF CONDUCT & DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

KAAF University is committed to fostering an academic environment characterized by integrity, respect, accountability, and professionalism. All graduate students are expected to uphold the highest standards of personal and academic conduct and to comply with institutional regulations. This section outlines the policies, procedures, rights, and ethical expectations related to student conduct and disciplinary matters.

10.1 Academic Integrity Policy

Academic integrity is the foundation of scholarship and research at KAAF University. Students are expected to:

- Produce original work and appropriately credit all sources using the prescribed citation style.
- Avoid plagiarism, self-plagiarism, fabrication, falsification, or misrepresentation of data.
- Comply with examination regulations, research ethics, and intellectual property policies.
- Report any observed breaches of academic integrity promptly.

Ethical Considerations in Research:

- Students must obtain ethical clearance for research involving human subjects, animals, sensitive data, or vulnerable populations.
- Students are responsible for obtaining informed consent, ensuring confidentiality, and adhering to principles of beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice in research.
- Confirmed cases of academic dishonesty or ethical violations may result in sanctions ranging from revision, probation, suspension, or termination of candidature.

10.2 Student Code of Conduct

Graduate students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that reflects the values of the University, including:

- Respect for faculty, staff, peers, and the wider community.
- Compliance with University policies, rules, and regulations.
- Ethical engagement in academic, social, and research activities.
- Responsible use of University facilities, ICT resources, and property.

Examples of Misconduct Include:

- Theft, vandalism, or damage to University property
- Disruption of academic, research, or administrative activities
- Violation of health, safety, or security regulations
- Harassment, discrimination, intimidation, or bullying

Misconduct will attract proportional disciplinary action in accordance with University policies.

10.3 Disciplinary Actions and Appeals

Disciplinary actions follow fairness, proportionality, and transparency. Procedures include:

- Investigation of alleged misconduct by the relevant authorities.
- Written notice to the student detailing the allegations.
- Opportunity for the student to respond, provide evidence, or request clarification.
- Determination of appropriate sanctions, which may include:
 - Verbal or written warning
 - Probation or mandatory remediation
 - Suspension from academic or research activities
 - Expulsion or termination of candidature

Appeals:

- Students may appeal decisions within stipulated timelines.
- Appeals are reviewed by designated authorities and decisions communicated in writing.
- All disciplinary matters are handled confidentially and with full adherence to due process.

10.4 Harassment and Grievance Policies

KAAF University maintains a zero-tolerance policy toward harassment, discrimination, and intimidation. Students are entitled to:

- A safe and inclusive environment, free from harassment or abuse.
- File grievances regarding academic, administrative, or personal matters without fear of retaliation.
- Access institutional grievance mechanisms, including Student Affairs Office or Ethics and Compliance Unit.

All harassment and grievance cases are investigated promptly, objectively, and confidentially, and corrective measures are implemented where necessary.

10.5 Student Rights and Obligations

Student Rights Include:

- Access to quality education, supervision, and research resources
- Fair treatment in academic and disciplinary matters
- Freedom to express opinions and participate in University governance
- Protection from harassment, discrimination, or unfair treatment

Student Obligations Include:

- Compliance with academic, administrative, and ethical regulations
- Maintenance of integrity in all academic, research, and professional activities
- Respect for the rights, dignity, and well-being of others
- Responsible participation in University initiatives and programs

10.6 Academic Freedom and Responsibilities

Students enjoy academic freedom to explore ideas, conduct research, and engage in scholarly debate. Responsibilities include:

- Exercise scholarly inquiry with integrity and respect for differing viewpoints
- Ensure ethical and responsible research practices
- Avoid misrepresentation of data or claims

Limitations:

- Academic freedom does not exempt students from compliance with University policies, ethical standards, or national laws

10.7 Right to Due Process and Fair Hearing

All students involved in disciplinary proceedings are entitled to:

- Timely notification of allegations
- Access to relevant evidence and documentation
- Opportunity to present defense, evidence, and explanations
- Decisions by impartial and competent authorities

Representation:

- Students may be accompanied by an advocate during formal hearings.
- The outcome of proceedings is communicated clearly and in writing.

10.8 Student Representation in Governance Structures

Graduate students may participate in University governance through:

- Representation on Faculty Graduate Committees
- Membership in academic, research, and disciplinary boards where prescribed
- Engagement in consultative forums on academic, administrative, and policy matters

Responsibilities of Student Representatives:

1. Act responsibly and ethically
2. Communicate the interests of the student body
3. Adhere to University policies
4. Contribute constructively to decision-making and governance processes

10. HEALTH, SAFETY & CAMPUS POLICIES

KAAF University is committed to providing a safe, healthy, and secure learning and research environment for all graduate students, staff, and visitors. Students are expected to comply with all health, safety, and security protocols to ensure their own well-being and that of the University community.

11.1 Health Requirements and Safety Protocols

All graduate students must comply with the University's health requirements and safety regulations, including:

- Submission of health records or medical certificates as required for enrollment.
- Compliance with immunization or vaccination requirements, especially for programmes involving fieldwork, laboratory research, or community engagement.
- Adherence to laboratory, workshop, or field safety guidelines, including the proper use of personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Reporting of illnesses, injuries, or unsafe conditions to the Student Affairs Office or designated health personnel.
- Participation in health awareness and safety training programmes organized by the University.

Failure to adhere to health and safety protocols may result in restricted access to facilities, suspension from certain activities, or disciplinary action.

11.2 Emergency Procedures

The University maintains established procedures for responding to emergencies, including fire, natural disasters, medical emergencies, accidents, and security threats. Graduate students are required to:

- Familiarize themselves with emergency exits, evacuation routes, and assembly points.
- Follow the instructions of emergency response personnel during drills or actual emergencies.
- Report emergencies immediately to University authorities using approved channels.
- Participate in emergency drills and training sessions as scheduled.

Emergency contact numbers, protocols, and relevant guidelines are communicated to students at the start of each academic year and displayed prominently across campus facilities.

11.3 Campus Security

Campus security services at KAAF University are responsible for maintaining a safe and secure environment for all members of the University community. Graduate students are expected to:

- Carry valid University identification at all times while on campus.
- Adhere to all campus access and entry regulations, including those for restricted or sensitive areas.

- Report suspicious activity, theft, or breaches of campus security to the Security Office immediately.
- Cooperate with security personnel during investigations or routine safety checks.

The University reserves the right to implement measures, including access control, surveillance, and restricted access to certain facilities, to maintain security. Violations of campus security regulations may result in disciplinary action.

PROGRAMME TRANSFER REQUEST FORM

Section	Details
Student Information	• Full Name: • Student ID: • Current Programme: • Contact Info:
Transfer Request Details	• Programme / Specialization Requested: • Reason for Transfer: ➤ ☐ Academic ➤ ☐ Professional ➤ ☐ Personal ➤ ☐ Other: _____
Academic Status	• Current GPA: • Completed Credits / Courses:
Supervisor / Faculty Approval	• Current Supervisor (s) Name: • Approval: ➤ ☐ Yes ➤ ☐ No • Signature: • Programme Coordinator's Name: • Approval: ➤ ☐ Yes ➤ ☐ No • Signature:
Student Declaration	• I certify that the information provided is accurate. I understand that approval is subject to academic regulations and programme capacity. • Student Signature: • Date: ____ / ____ / ____
Graduate School Review	• Decision: ➤ ☐ Approved ➤ ☐ Not Approved • Comments: • Graduate School Director Signature: • Date: ____ / ____ / ____

PROGRAMME WITHDRAWAL / DEFERRAL REQUEST FORM

Section	Details
Student Information	• Full Name: • Student ID: • Current Programme: • Mode of Study: ➤ ☐ Full-time ➤ ☐ Part-time ➤ ☐ Online • Contact Info:
Type of Withdrawal / Deferral	• Type of Withdrawal / Deferral ➤ ☐ Voluntary Withdrawal (permanent) ➤ ☐ Temporary Withdrawal / Deferral • Duration of Deferral: • From ____ / ____ / ____ to ____ / ____ / ____
Reason for Withdrawal / Deferral	• Reason for Withdrawal / Deferral ➤ ☐ Academic ➤ ☐ Medical ➤ ☐ Personal ➤ ☐ Professional ➤ ☐ Financial Details:
Clearance Requirements	• Library Clearance: ➤ ☐ Completed ➤ ☐ Pending • ICT / LMS Access: ➤ ☐ Completed ➤ ☐ Pending • Financial Clearance: ➤ ☐ Completed ➤ ☐ Pending Laboratory / Research • Equipment Clearance: ➤ ☐ Completed ➤ ☐ Pending
Student Declaration	• I certify that the information provided is accurate and understand the implications of withdrawal / deferral. • Student Signature: _____ • Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Graduate School Review	• Comments: • Decision: ➤ ☐ Approved ➤ ☐ Not Approved • Dean/Coordinator Signature: • Date: ____ / ____ / ____
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