



KAMUZU UNIVERSITY
OF HEALTH SCIENCES

KUHeS POSTGRADUATE POLICY

MARCH 2023

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Employees Subject to this Policy	Faculty, students, and collaborators of the University
Responsible Office(s):	Director of Institute of Postgraduate Studies and Research, Executive Deans, Heads of Department, Postgraduate Coordinators
Responsible Officer(s)	Deputy Vice Chancellor

Table of Contents

1.	FOREWORD	ii
2.	PREFACE	iii
3.	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
4.	LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	v
5.	BACKGROUND AND SCOPE	1
6.	THE RATIONALE FOR THE POLICY	2
7.	KUHeS VISION	3
8.	KUHeS MISSION	3
9.	AIMS OF THE POLICY	3
10.	OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY	3
11.	POLICY PRIORITY AREAS	4
12.	GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR IMPLEMENTATION	15
13.	FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	15

1. FOREWORD

Kamuzu University of Health Sciences is the leading University for health in Malawi and aspires to be in the top 20 Universities in Africa. The University is significantly contributing towards sustainable and equitable, social, economic, and technological development envisaged in both the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) and the National Education Sector Investment Plan (2020-2030) (NESIP) through the implementation of its Postgraduate Policy and related policies, guidelines, and organisational structures on postgraduate programs and Ethical issues.

Our graduates shall, in the end, be the pioneers and implementers of health policies that shall strengthen the nation's and the world's health. The University Council shall ensure a shared commitment to improving the standards of postgraduate studies and research. Effective Policy implementation requires an unwavering commitment from all stakeholders. It is my sincere hope that all stakeholders will continue to support the Council's efforts to improve students' academic and practical experiences. Therefore, the KUHeS Council is excited to be part of this Postgraduate Policy and approves it in its entirety.



Professor Francis Moto
Chairman of Council

2. PREFACE

KUHeS is one of the public universities established by the Government of Malawi (GoM) to provide higher education in the country through teaching, research, consultancies and public outreach. The University is a merger of the former College of Medicine and former Kamuzu College of Nursing which were part of the University of Malawi. The mandate for the development of the KUHeS Postgraduate Policy was derived from the KUHeS Strategic Plan. This Policy development has necessitated several developments, including the rising demand for postgraduate studies:

It is therefore envisaged that the policy will be a tool to guide the development, implementation, and review of postgraduate programs. It should also provide guidance on awarding postgraduate degrees. It is expected that this Postgraduate Policy framework shall be a catalyst in the effective running of postgraduate and research programmes which shall enhance the image of the University and the country both locally and internationally.

Therefore, I urge all stakeholders to support this policy and ensure that it achieves its purpose and objectives for the benefit of students, staff members, the university, and our country.



Professor MacPherson Mallewa
Vice Chancellor

3. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Policy was developed using input from many individuals and offices. We acknowledge the support of the Management of KUHES in the development of this Policy. Secondly, the tireless efforts of the following members of the task force that developed the Policy should also be acknowledged: Professor Angela Chimwaza, Dr Gertrude Mwalabu, Dr Lot Nyirenda, Professor Victor Mwapasa, Professor Ellen Chirwa, Professor Wakisa Mulwafu, Dr Anthony Mwakikunga, Professor Fanuel Lampiao, Associate Professor Genesis Chorwe, Professor Janelisa Musaya, Associate Professor Martha Kamanga, Dr Patrick Mapulanga, Ms Sipiwe Lino, Mr Misheck Issa and Mr Wilson Kumwenda. It was their dedication and hard work which made it possible for the Policy to be developed and to take the present shape. Finally, the University would like to acknowledge the valuable input of Management, Staff and Students Welfare Sub Committee of Council and University Council for their contribution to the Policy

4. LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

COM	:	College of Medicine
GoM	:	Government of Malawi
KCN	:	Kamuzu College of Nursing
KUHeS	:	Kamuzu University of Health Sciences
MDGS	:	Malawi Growth and Development Strategy
MMed	:	Master of Medicine
NESIP	:	National Education Sector Investment Plan
SADC	:	Southern Africa Development Community
UNIMA	:	University of Malawi

5. BACKGROUND AND SCOPE

Kamuzu University of Health Sciences (KUHeS) was established by an Act of Parliament, the Kamuzu University of Health Sciences Act, 2019. KUHeS was established as a result of delinking and subsequent merger of two constituent colleges of the University of Malawi (UNIMA): College of Medicine (COM) and Kamuzu College of Nursing (KCN). It was formally constituted on 4th May 2021.

KCN and CoM started offering postgraduate programs in 2008 and 2003, respectively, before merging as KUHeS. Presently, there are several postgraduate programs at the master's and doctoral levels, and all programs are tailored to meet the health needs locally and internationally and to produce healthcare leaders, researchers, and consultants. In the KUHeS set-up, there is a need to increase the number of postgraduate programs; hence, there is a need for this policy to guide the development of such programs.

Global trends indicate that postgraduate education is a vital asset and source of skilled human resources for modern knowledge-based societies and economies at national, regional, and international levels. However, there is evidence that planning postgraduate education and research provision in low- and middle-income countries is a complex process. This situation obliges governments and higher education institutions to strategically choose programs and delivery, likely to:

- a. Sustained national development priorities.
- b. invest prudently in available resources.
- c. provide quality assurance measures; and
- d. foster career opportunities for postgraduate students. Additionally, countries must retain highly skilled graduates.

In developing postgraduate programs, schools are requested to be mindful of the purposes and objectives of such programs, which include the following:

- a. Fostering independent and original thinking, analytical and interdisciplinary approaches to problem solving, training in modern teaching and research techniques, and the ability to draw logical conclusions.
- b. Training specialists and professionals who can bring the latest theories and scientific principles to address societal problems
- c. Strengthening the teaching and research activities of Schools and Departments.
- d. Fostering the creation of academic excellence centres.
- e. Advancing frontiers of knowledge through discovery types of research.
- f. Strengthening collaboration and linkages with other institutions.

6. THE RATIONALE FOR THE POLICY

This Policy provides guidelines for the approval and operation of new and existing postgraduate programs, as well as related research at KUHeS. The Policy shall serve as the foundation for expanding the number of high-quality, competitive, and internationally appropriate postgraduate programmes and research through which the University can effectively respond to the diverse needs of the community.

Postgraduate education is an important catalyst for strengthening a university's ability to address national and global needs, trends and knowledge gaps. For example, postgraduate training provides high-quality training to build leadership capacities. Research programs are a source of improved technologies and increase new knowledge to be transmitted to potential beneficiaries; thus, they are a major component of postgraduate education. Quality and relevance are, therefore, the kingpins of research and learning. Therefore, post-graduate training is pivotal in this process.

7. KUHeS VISION

A world-class university and centre of excellence in health education, research, and innovation.

8. KUHeS MISSION

To advance knowledge, professional competencies, skills, and innovations in health sciences through high-quality student-centred and innovative education and research that responds to and influences national and global policies, health, and development needs in an efficient, sustainable, and result-oriented manner.

9. AIMS OF THE POLICY

The overall aim of the Policy is to provide guidance on the development of an academic and managerial environment conducive to the delivery of postgraduate studies and research.

10. OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY

This Policy provides guidance that shall help to promote and foster the academic and managerial environment conducive to undertaking postgraduate studies and research. The specific objectives are to:

- a. Promote equitable access, quality and relevance of postgraduate studies, research and outreach
- b. Enhance the profile, marketability, and marketing of postgraduate programs.
- c. Promote cost-effectiveness and financial sustainability of postgraduate training and research.
- d. Promote high-impact publications of research data from postgraduate students which would improve universities' world ranking.

- e. Establish new programs of good quality and relevance nationally, regionally, and globally.
- f. Strengthen the governance and management of postgraduate programs.

11. POLICY PRIORITY AREAS

The following priority areas guide the Policy:

11.1 Policy Priority Area 1: Promote equitable access, quality and relevance of postgraduate studies, research and outreach

Policy issue: Promoting equitable access, high quality outcomes and relevance in postgraduate education demands innovative strategies, resources allocation and stakeholder collaboration to cultivate an inclusive and impactful postgraduate ecosystem.

Policy statement: KUHeS acknowledges the critical importance of promoting equitable access, maintaining high standards of quality and enhancing the relevance of postgraduate studies, research and outreach initiatives. By prioritising these aspects, KUHeS commits to creating an inclusive environment that supports the diverse needs and aspirations of all stakeholders, fosters academic excellence and contributes meaningfully to societal development and progress.

Policy strategies

The Policy shall aim to:

- a. Ensure that entry into postgraduate programs is based on merit and is non-discriminatory on any factors, including gender, race, age, religion, and special needs.
- b. Set the minimum admission criteria for KUHeS, but each School should be encouraged to develop its own elaborate and course-specific criteria within the context of university-wide guidelines.

- c. Develop guidelines for online distance learning, evening, weekend, and vocational postgraduate studies.
- d. Mobilise funds for the development of physical research and welfare infrastructure in priority areas of postgraduate programs for expansion of teaching space, lecture and seminar rooms, teaching laboratories, office space for academic staff, and welfare facilities for postgraduate students.
- e. Provide links to funding organisations for scholarships and grant awards to postgraduate students.
- f. Obtain accreditation and benchmarking of all postgraduate programs to offer programs and courses that meet acceptable international standards, especially in the SADC region.
- g. Subject candidates to both internal and external assessments.
- h. Promote a culture of conducting and participating in seminars and conferences.
- i. Establish online repositories of journals and books to support postgraduate programs.
- j. Develop research skills of staff and students through links, multidisciplinary projects, and regional/international programs.
- k. Establish efficient IT systems to support postgraduate teaching and learning.
- l. Set up an academic writing unit to support postgraduate students and staff.
- m. Ensure that courses are offered by experts with relevant credentials, educational backgrounds, and experiences.

- n. Develop partnerships at national, regional, and international levels to support, monitor, and evaluate postgraduate programs.
- o. Develop courses on entrepreneurship for postgraduate programs.
- p. Ensure that programmes make research an important instrument for the development of relevant knowledge and technology.
- q. Monitor and evaluate the implementation of postgraduate programs in KUHeS to accommodate adult learning needs, the country's development plans, and global needs.

11.2 Policy Priority Area 2: Enhance the profile, marketability and marketing of postgraduate programmes

Policy issue: Effectively communicating and enhancing the profile, marketability and marketing of postgraduate programmes amidst competitive educational landscapes and evolving stakeholder expectations.

Policy statement: KUHeS is committed to strategically enhancing the visibility, appeal, and marketing of its postgraduate programs, adapting to changing educational landscapes and stakeholders demands. Through targeted initiatives and robust engagement strategies, KUHeS aims to showcase the unique strengths and opportunities of its postgraduate offerings, ensuring their relevance, attractive, and impact in a competitive academic landscape.

Policy strategies

The Policy aims to:

- a. Develop prospectuses for a targeted audience and digital marketing (website, Twitter, Facebook, etc.) for postgraduate programs.
- b. Advertise and regularly update websites for the programs to attract quality national, regional, and international students. This would be facilitated by the office of the School Postgraduate Coordinator.
- c. Benchmark fees with other regional and international universities remain competitive in line with SADC protocols.
- d. Periodically review postgraduate programs for marketability and realign the curricula to conform to industry and societal needs with the participation of relevant sector partners.
- e. Organise University open days and program launches, developing postgraduate programs, visual aids, and banners to be displayed in all departments and schools fostering awareness and engagement.
- f. Sensitise the health user sector to professional graduates coming out of postgraduate programs who can fill jobs that require skilled staff.
- g. Lobby for governmental endorsement of the integration of postgraduate training programs with strategic focal points outlined in the National Education Sector Investment Plan (NESIP), the National Strategy for Sustainable Development, and the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy II.
- h. Aim at admitting 20% international students into postgraduate programmes to promote internationalisation.

11.3 Policy Priority Area 3: Promote cost effectiveness and financial sustainability of postgraduate training and research

Policy issue: Striking a balance between financial sustainability and maintaining high academic standards and research innovation in postgraduate programmes requires meticulous resource allocation and the implementation of innovative cost management strategies, while maintaining the integrity of educational and research standards.

Policy statement: KUHeS strives to balance cost effectiveness with academic excellence and research innovation in postgraduate training and research optimising resource utilisation while upholding the integrity of educational and research standards.

Policy strategies. The University shall:

- a. Prescribe appropriate fees for postgraduate programs with cost recovery as the ultimate aim, considering regional trends.
- b. Ensure that postgraduate programs admit adequate numbers of students that make economic sense, aiming for at least 40% of the university student population.
- c. Institute regular academic audits and needs assessments to identify training gaps and the modernisation of programs in line with regional and international trends.
- d. Engage academic staff in research centres to take on greater responsibility in postgraduate training through student supervision.
- e. Improve the infrastructure and conditions of staff services so that the best qualified staff are retained to run advanced postgraduate courses.
- f. Strengthen collaboration and linkages with other institutions that shall lead to generation of funds for the University through research, joint programmes, exchange visits and other partnerships among others.

- g. Conduct regular tracer studies of postgraduate products from KUHeS that maintain relevance and ensure the sustainability of the programs.
- h. Maintain links with alumni to promote the generation of funds for the sustainability of programs.
- i. Attract grants in areas including fellowships, research, infrastructure, scholarships, and capacity-building opportunities.

11.4 Policy Priority Area 4: Promote high impact publications from postgraduate students which would improve the University's ranking

Policy issue: Fostering an environment conducive to impactful research by postgraduate students entails providing support, resources, mentorship, promoting interdisciplinary collaboration and aligning research goals with the University's strategic objectives to bolster its global standing and recognition.

Policy statement: KUHeS commits to enhance its ranking by promoting high impact publications from postgraduate students, emphasising the cultivation of excellence in research and scholarly output among our graduate community through support, resources, mentorship, interdisciplinary collaboration and alignment of research goals with strategic objectives.

Policy strategies

University shall:

- a. Conduct regular manuscript writing workshops to assist students and staff in enabling publication in peer-reviewed journals.
- b. Establish and maintain institutional journals so that they have a high impact factor.

- c. Strengthen the teaching and research activities of faculties/schools and departments.
- d. Conduct advanced innovative and high-impact research that feeds into local, regional and international health policy and leads to patents or trademarks.
- e. Recognise the role of the supervisor through the co-authorship of research manuscripts with students.

11.5 Policy Priority Area 6: Strengthen governance and management of postgraduate programmes

Postgraduate Studies and Research shall be structured in a manner that recognises offices and other entities responsible for the management of research. These elements shall be adequately resourced and supported in terms of specialised management structures, finances and human resources including Deans or appropriate officers to provide oversight for Postgraduate Studies and Research.

- a. Each School shall have a Postgraduate Coordinator.
- b. Each program shall have a Postgraduate Tutor and or a Coordinator depending on the number of students.

11.6 Policy Priority Area 5: Establish new programmes of high quality and relevance nationally, regionally and globally

Policy issue: Developing new programmes of high quality involves identifying emerging needs and opportunities, aligning with industry demands and academic standards, securing resources and expertise, navigating regulations and forming strong partnerships to develop and sustain new programmes meeting the highest standards of quality and relevance on local, regional and global levels.

Policy statement: The University commits to achieve cost effective excellence and innovation in postgraduate training and research,

maintaining integrity while developing high quality programmes that meet industrial demands and academic standards, through efficient resource use, regulatory navigation, and impactful partnerships on local, regional and global scales.

Policy strategies

The University shall:

- a. Develop new quality postgraduate programs in line with identified needs.
- b. Encourage multiple entries and exits of postgraduate programs.
- c. Develop postgraduate students' skills in knowledge translation.
- d. Ensure national accreditation and encourage international accreditation of programs.
- e. Encourage affiliation of programs for international recognition.

11.6.1 Postgraduate Programmes (Postgraduate Certificates, Diploma Programmes, Master's and PhD Degree Programmes)

Authorisation to start new postgraduate programmes at Master's level shall be granted when the following conditions are met:

- a. Departments mounting postgraduate programmes have attained staff with the requisite capacity.
- b. Adequate library facilities as well as laboratory space and equipment where relevant.
- c. For each candidate, there should ideally be a supervisor who holds a PhD and/or other comparable qualification in a relevant discipline.
- d. The faculty to guide postgraduate students should preferably have their research programs, but split-site programs are recognised and encouraged to safeguard and enhance quality.

In addition to the requirements set for Master's degree programs, the following conditions apply to PhD programs:

- a. There should be at least two specialists holding a PhD in the area where training is to be offered; therefore, capacity in this regard needs to be developed over time. As seniority of academics is required for this level, at least one of the supervisors should be of professional or associate professional rank, which can be facilitated by joint postgraduate programs with collaborative supervision. The program as a whole should be structured to emphasise the research component.
- b. The foregoing notwithstanding, faculties should be modest in the number of students that they recruit into their programs to ensure that quality standards are maintained.

11.6.2 Curriculum Consideration

When developing a curriculum for a postgraduate programme, the following shall be taken into consideration:

- a. Ensure that courses are responsive to local and global needs, trends, and knowledge gaps.
- b. Promote teamwork in teaching, research, and outreach.
- c. Promotes leadership-building skills.
- d. Support professional development planning.
- e. Research components of programs can emanate from students' initiatives or can be part of ongoing research programmes/projects or contract research of departments, faculties, or cooperation among wider consortia, including national and international partners.
- f. Achieve a balance between theory and practice.

- g. Subject students to both internal and external assessments which for master's and PhD degree theses shall include submission to an open or viva voce presided by a panel of examiners and chaired by the School Executive Dean. A master's viva voce can be done at the departmental level, but other members from the school shall be invited.
- h. The timeline for the master's degree shall be two years (18-24 months) with up to two extensions of six months each with fees applicable at the school level.
- i. Only in exceptional circumstances shall extensions be considered beyond one year, with approval from the Postgraduate Committee.
- j. For MMed programs, the degree shall be for a minimum of four years and up to six years.
- k. The PhD shall be for three years (36 months) with extensions of up to two years (24 months); only in exceptional circumstances shall extensions be considered beyond this, and this applies to part-time scholars.

11.6.3 Content/Structure

- a. Postgraduate programs should be subjected to internal and external evaluations and reviews.
- b. Students for a taught master's degree shall be required to present a copy of a published manuscript in a peer-reviewed journal/book chapter or certification of a publishable manuscript.
- c. Guidelines for a master's degree by publication shall be developed.

- d. Guidelines for a master's degree that recognises innovation should be developed.
- e. For a PhD degree, candidates are required to publish at least two papers in a peer-reviewed non-predatory journal.
- f. Certification for publishability is one of the reference terms for external examiners.
- g. Postdoctoral programs shall be vehicles that can facilitate further publications related to PhD programs. To the extent that these need to be supported by the university, there is a requirement that candidates undertake teaching and/or supervisory activities, as directed by the Heads of Department.
- h. Where necessary and deemed to be in line with international best practices, postgraduate programmes shall be designed to incorporate a variance that requires postgraduate students to participate in periodic tutorials for undergraduate students to earn stipulated credit hours.
- i. The thesis for Master's and MMed candidates shall have a minimum word count of 20,000 and a maximum of 40,000, whereas that of a PhD candidate shall have a minimum word count of 40,000 and a maximum of 80,000.

11.6.4 Process for Approval

- a. The department proposes and develops the curriculum document.
- b. Schools scrutinise the content, structure, mode of delivery, and viability and recommend the document to the Postgraduate Committee.
- c. The Postgraduate Committee examines the viability, feasibility, and marketability of the proposed program.

- d. The Senate approves the programme. If there are issues, they shall be resolved by the Deans Committee which is a delegated subcommittee of the senate.
- e. The Deans Committee shall be the committee of All Deans.

11.6.5 Delivery

- a. Observe that faculties have the autonomy to determine the delivery of postgraduate programs in specific areas of specialisation.
- b. Encourage collaboration and sandwich programs to produce graduates adequately prepared to meet local and global needs and demands.
- c. Provide a conducive learning and research environment and discipline to ensure the effectiveness and continuity of programs.

12 GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The University, through the University Postgraduate Committee, shall have the overall responsibility to support and lead the implementation of the Postgraduate Policy for KUHeS. This is achieved by:

- a. Establishing a budget for implementation.
- b. Making the Policy available to all stakeholders in the KUHeS Schools.
- c. Briefing Schools Deans, Heads of Departments, students and academic staff through the Deans of Postgraduate Studies.
- d. Ensuring that School Deans make sure that all members in their Schools are made aware of this Policy.

13 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- a. There shall be a budget for the development of the Policy implementation guidelines and dissemination of the Policy.

- b. Postgraduate programs should be funded through postgraduate fees.
- c. The schedule for allocation of postgraduate fees shall be provided from time to time.