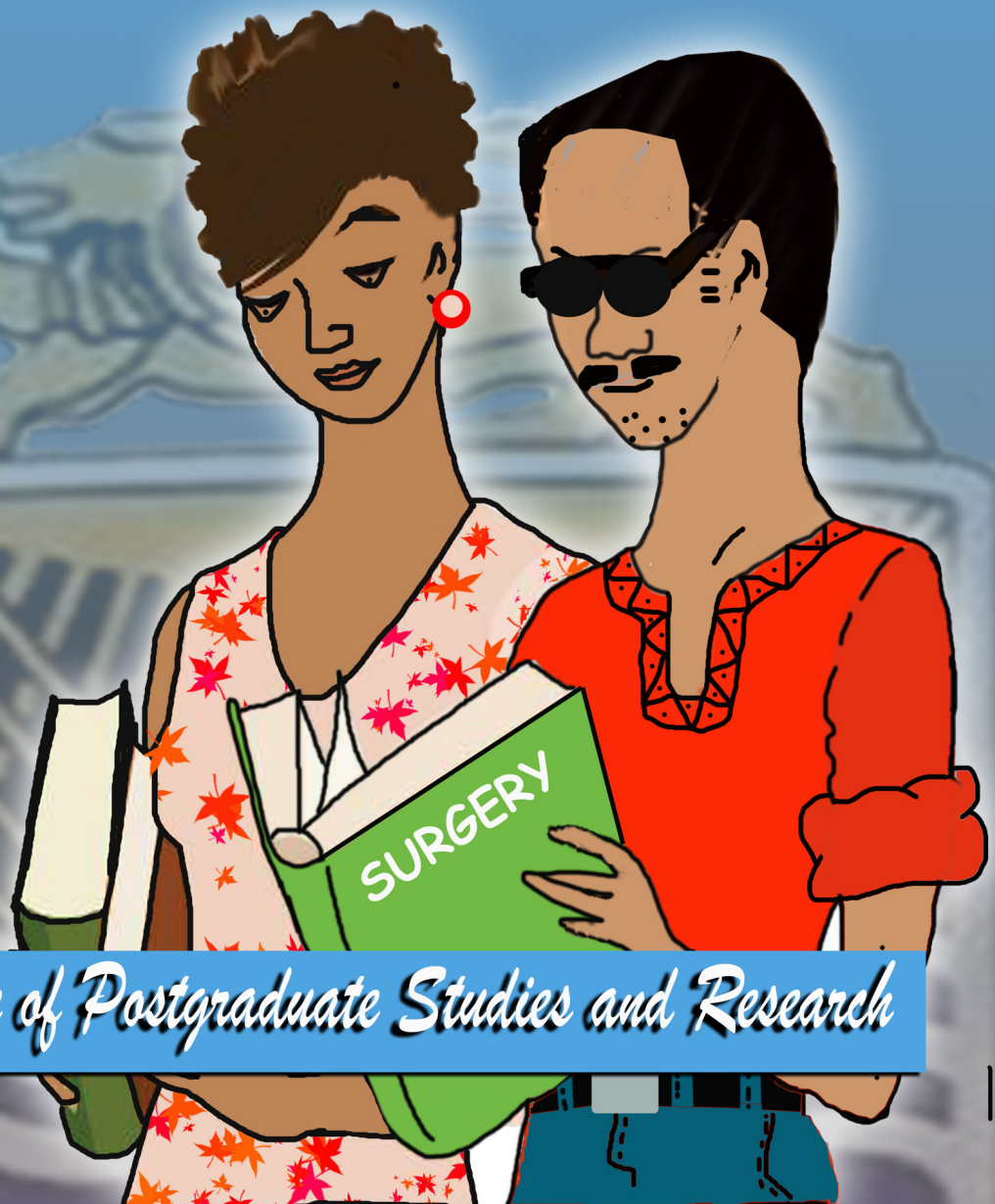




University of Malawi
COLLEGE OF MEDICINE

MMed Student HANDBOOK



Office of Postgraduate Studies and Research

MMed Handbook

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Welcome Remarks



Dear students,

I sincerely welcome you to the College of Medicine (CoM), a regional centre of excellence for training professionals in the provision of health services and conducting policy-relevant research. Your successful application to our Master of Medicine (MMed) programme means that you have a great potential to become a world-class clinical specialist. The CoM is committed to providing you with supervision, mentorship and an academic environment

of the highest quality that will assist you achieve your academic ambitions and begin the journey of becoming a leading clinical specialist. I urge you to take full advantage of the environment and expertise available at the CoM to make your clinical and academic experience enjoyable and fruitful.

Besides assisting you to become a clinical specialist, the MMed degree programme will equip you with the leadership and team-building skills for establishing high clinical standards and protocols in health facilities. In addition, the programme will inculcate in you a clinical research culture that is necessary for generating novel clinical interventions and approaches for management of patients. It is for this reason that the MMed programme requires all students to have Personal Development Plans and to develop and implement research projects and publish the findings.

Although clinical specialist training is highly demanding, I urge to find time to interact with non-clinical academics to broaden your perspective about health and to acquire other non-clinical skills that will enable you make a broader impact on people's life. I also encourage you to use the CoM recreational facilities for your own physical, social and psychological wellbeing.

This handbook provides you with guidance on how to navigate through the CoM environment, access various supportive services and understand rules and regulations that govern the MMed programmes. It also provides you with the framework for developing your academic plans.

I wish you all successful and enjoyable MMed studies.

Professor Victor Mwapasa

DEAN, POSTGRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

Introduction



The College of Medicine (CoM) launched its Master's of Medicine (MMed) degree programme with a key objective of addressing the critical shortage of specialists in various disciplines of clinical medicine and, ultimately to improve the quality of clinical care in health facilities. Although the programme focuses on clinical specialties relevant to the needs of Malawi, the ultimate aim of the programme is to train a cadre of high quality clinicians in various health-related disciplines who will lead the development and implementation of high clinical standards and protocols in Malawian health facilities.

The Postgraduate Committee (PGC) coordinates the formulation, review and implementation of MMed policies and regulations at the CoM. It consists of representatives from all academic departments and faculties and postgraduate students. Its key responsibilities include reviewing and approving the selection and registration of MMed students and monitoring their academic progress. The Office of Postgraduate Studies and Research (OPSR) serves as the secretariat of the PGC and oversees the day-to-day running of postgraduate programmes across all departments. The OPSR collaborates with the Academic Registrar's office, which manages the administrative aspects of MMed studies such as the registration of postgraduate students and the organization of graduation ceremonies.

MMed students receive training and implement studies within specific departments, which provide the necessary facilities and supervision, as approved by the Head of Department (HoD). However, you are encouraged to seek services, resources and expertise from any CoM department that can add value to your studies and research project and deepen or broaden your expertise. Similarly, you are required to have formal and informal interactions with fellow postgraduate students to share experiences or skills and identify common solutions to challenges. Note that various departments and the CoM Research Support Centre (RSC) run seminars, journal clubs and courses that are open to you. Your supervisor and colleagues can help you identify relevant fora that can improve your academic knowledge and skills.

1.1 Key Contact Details

During the course of your studies, you will mostly work with clinicians, supervisors, faculty members and fellow students on clinical, academic and research matters. However, to ensure that you are complying with the CoM policies and regulations, and that you are taking full advantage of the academic environment at the CoM, you need to liaise with several key offices outside your department and faculty. Below is a list of contact details of key officials dealing with different aspects of your degree programme.

Applications

- Admissions Office (Anatomy Building, Room No. 112): admissions@medcol.mw

Registration

- Registration Executive (Anatomy Building, Room No. 112): ceoacademic@medcol.mw

- Postgraduate Studies Executive Officer (Anatomy Building, Room No. 112): eopostgraduate@medcol.mw

Academic regulations, policies and procedures

General inquiries

- Administrative Assistant for OPSR (Chimutu Building, Room No. 862): postgraduateadmin@medcol.mw

Specific inquiries

- If you have any clinical or academic matters that can't be resolved by the Departmental Postgraduate Coordinator or the HoD, you may contact the Dean of Faculty on the following email: deanmedicine@medcol.mw. As a matter of courtesy, you need to inform the HoD your intentions to meet the Dean of Faculty.
- If you have any policy, regulatory or procedural matters that can't be resolved by the OPSR Administrative Assistant, you may contact the Dean of Postgraduate Studies and Research **only after booking an appointment through the Administrative Assistant**. Additionally, you need to forward the agenda ahead of time to the following email address: postgraduate@medcol.mw. You may also see him in person in Room No. 861, Chimutu Building.

ICT Support

- General Inquiries (Chimutu Building): ict@medcol.mw
- Support and comments (Chimutu Building): support@medcol.mw

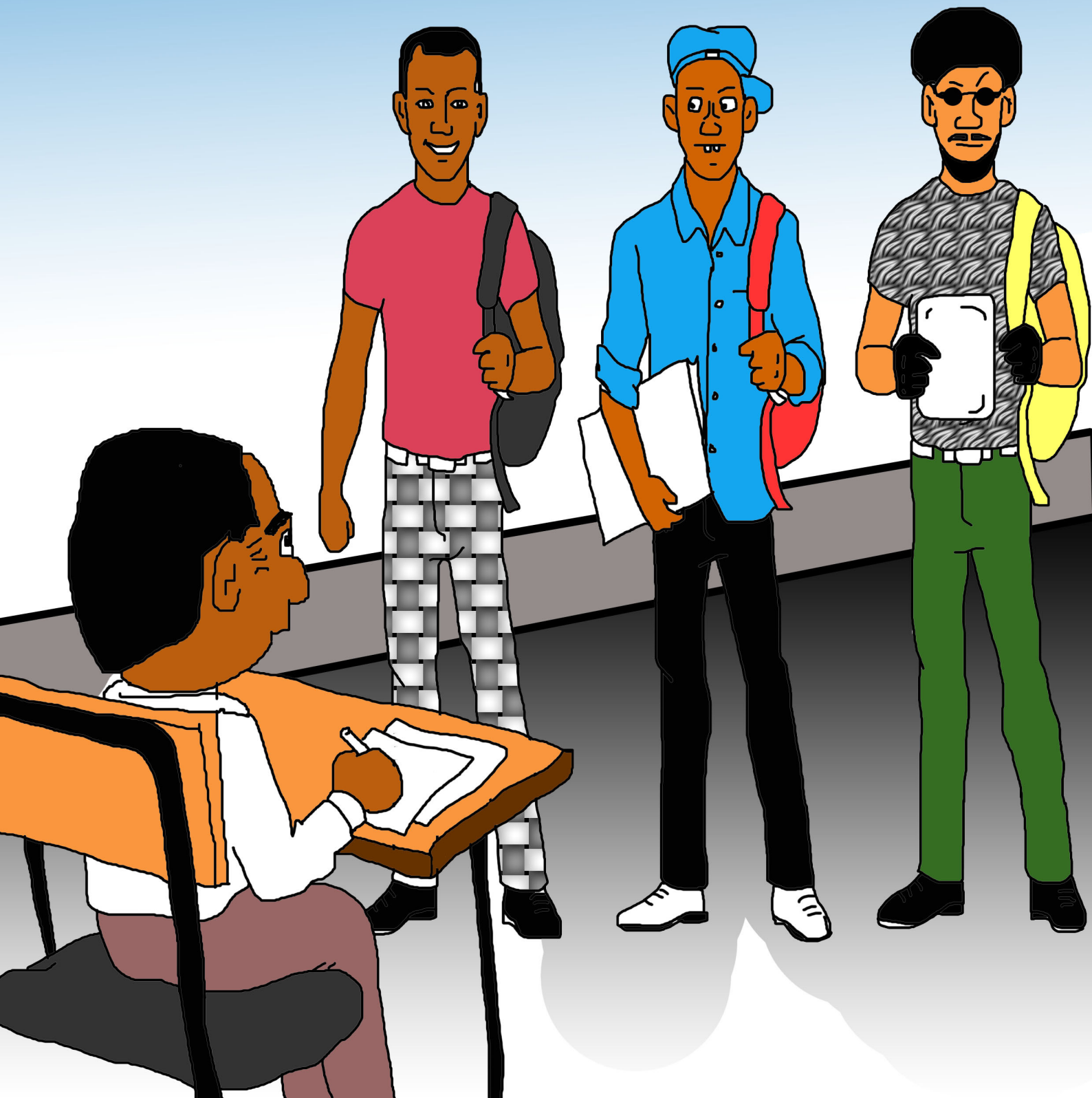
Library Support

- Librarian (Second Floor, Library): library@medcol.mw

Personal issues

- Dean of Students (Physiology Building, Room No. 712): deanofstudents@medcol.mw
- Relevant HoD
- Postgraduate Studies Executive Officer: eopostgraduate@medcol.mw

Registration



- Prior to starting the MMed programme, you must complete all CoM registration formalities.
- Registration takes place at the beginning of each year through the office of the CoM Registrar. Your registration is not complete until you have paid your tuition fees.
- You must register at the beginning of every academic year. You will **NOT** be allowed to register in any postgraduate programme more than one month after the official date of commencement the academic year. Any exceptions to this regulation must have the written endorsement of the Dean for Postgraduate Studies and Research.
- Once you have completed your registration, you can report to the Head of the clinical department where you will undertake your studies. He/she will provide you with details of all required clinical rotations and formal classes/seminars, as prescribed in the regulations governing your specific MMED programmes and also how your performance will be monitored and assessed.
- You will not be entitled to special pro-rated tuition if, for any reason, you are allowed to enter or return late to the programme. Note that a **“late registration” fee will apply to those who fail to register within 14 days of the academic year, at a rate prescribed by the CoM.**
- Once you have enrolled into the MMed programme, you will be required to use the same names with which you were registered throughout the postgraduate programme unless such names are officially altered e.g. by marriage. You need to submit any such name changes, in writing, to the CoM Registrar.
- At the time of registration, the Postgraduate Studies Executive Officer will organise an orientation session to introduce you to key resource persons and to make you aware of various academic and administrative facilities. After registration, you will receive your student registration number, which will be your unique identifier throughout the programme. You are required to renew your registration status at the beginning of every academic year.

3. TYPES AND DURATION OF THE POSTGRADUATE PROGRAMMES

3.1 Types of postgraduate programmes

The CoM offers MMed programmes in the following disciplines:

- Paediatrics and Child Health,
- Internal Medicine
- Family Medicine,
- Obstetrics and Gynaecology,
- General Surgery,

- Anaesthesia,
- Ophthalmology,
- Otorhinolaryngology (Ear, Nose and Throat),
- Emergency Medicine,
- Psychiatry,
- Family Medicine

3.2 Duration of the programmes

The duration of the MMed programmes range from 4 to 6 years. In exceptional circumstances, with the approval of the Postgraduate Committee, an MMed student may be allowed to take 1 year out of the programme to undertake other academic-related activities. During this time, enrolment in the MMed programme is suspended. In that case, the maximum period for obtaining the MMed qualification is 7 years.

In a few departments, students may sub-specialize in a specific field. Currently, students registered in the MMed (Internal Medicine) programme can sub-specialize in Renal Medicine or Oncology. In such cases, duration of the Master of Medicine (Medicine + sub-speciality) programme will range from a minimum of 4 years to a maximum of 7 years.

In addition to undergoing clinical specialist training, MMed students are required to implement a clinical research project and submit a dissertation. Thus, you need to identify a clinical mentor and dissertation supervisor as early as possible, preferably before the end of the first year of the programme. You should identify a dissertation supervisor who is an expert in your chosen research thematic area and is available for regular planned meetings. Ideally, a supervisor should be someone with whom you can develop a good working relationship. The HoD hosting your degree programme will facilitate the process of identifying your research supervisor. You will need to enter into an agreement with all supervisors by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), (refer to Appendix I). The MoU is a formal verification of mutual commitment between the student and supervisor to engage in the MMed dissertation preparation and a means of clarification of their respective responsibilities and expectations. It provides a foundation for building an effective working relationship. The HoD hosting your degree programme is required to endorse the MoU before submission to the PGC for approval. You will be required to submit CVs of dissertation supervisors along with the MoU to the Office of Postgraduate Studies and Research

In addition to the dissertation supervisor, the HoD may also assign you a clinical mentor who will support in your clinical duties. If you are not assigned a clinical mentor, you will report any issues that arise in your clinical studies to the HoD.

Academic Supervision Structure And Requirements



4.1 Respective Roles and Responsibilities of Students and Supervisors

As a postgraduate student, you will have the ultimate responsibility of planning and developing your own research and academic activities. You should complete your clinical rotations to the satisfaction of your clinical mentors and submit a dissertation of an acceptable standard, in a timely fashion. Beginning from 2016, you will be required to make an oral defence of your dissertation. Please refer to the MMed general rules and regulations for more details about your responsibilities as an MMed student.

Your research supervisor/s is/are critical in supporting you accomplish your planned activities and meet your milestones on time. However, you need to play a useful role in the supervisory arrangement. Your key responsibilities are as follows:

- i. discussing and agreeing with your supervisor on the schedule of supervisory meetings and the appropriate type and extent of guidance and feedback;
- ii. taking the initiative in discussing any problems or difficulties with your supervisors;
- iii. ensuring that reasonable efforts are made to maintain satisfactory progress, at all times, with respect to your research project, clinical studies and any programme of work agreed upon with your supervisors;
- iv. identifying your own development and training needs and communicating these to your supervisor for review and guidance;
- v. liaising with your supervisor to identify teaching and learning facilities and fora that can meet your training needs;
- vi. submitting written work at specified and agreed times for review by your supervisors;
- vii. developing, in consultation with the supervisors, a timeline for achieving specific academic milestones and submitting your dissertation in a timely manner;
- viii. preparing an academic progress report, in liaison with your supervisor and submitting the same to the HoD for endorsement and then to the Dean of Postgraduate Studies and Research;
- ix. ensuring that any circumstances which might require the mode of study to be modified or the college registration to be extended, suspended or withdrawn, are brought to the attention of your supervisor(s) as soon as possible;
- x. ensuring that the CoM's requirements on intellectual property rights of your research and academic outputs are respected in full;
- xi. obtaining written agreement of all authors (including members of the Supervisory Team, as appropriate) of any publication of work contained in your dissertation, to protect against improper presentation of any publication in a form not agreed to by one of the authors;
- xii. deciding when to submit your dissertation taking due account of your principal supervisor's opinion and advice and in accordance with the agreed timelines.

You will be required to record dates, summary discussions and action points of all meetings with your supervisors in a web-based (electronic) supervisory logbook.

The responsibilities of your supervisor(s) include:

- i. **Involvement:** to encourage and stimulate your research ideas and plans by referring to his/her own research experiences and by discussing philosophical as well as technical issues with you;
- ii. **Encouragement:** to provide academic and pastoral support when you are facing challenges. He/she is expected to use his/her experience and network of collaborators to identify and rectify any difficulties at an early stage;
- iii. **Participation:** to ensure that you are not isolated during the course of your studies but feel part of a larger team of clinicians and clinical researchers. In this respect, he/she is expected help you to establish links with other research work and researchers, not necessarily in the same area, theme or discipline;
- iv. **Constructive criticism:** to provide constructive criticism of your research and academic output. The supervisor will avoid adopting an over-sympathetic or uncritical approach to supervision;
- v. **Critical approach:** to actively encourage you to critically question existing literature and the assumptions of and results from your project;
- vi. **Ownership:** to encourage you to develop ownership of the research project as it progresses at all stages through to completion and ensure that you are not over-dependent on him/her for the content of the dissertation.

In summary, your supervisor will be responsible for monitoring your dissertation progress and reviewing all your draft and final research and academic outputs.

4.2 Handling Conflicts with Supervisors

It is your responsibility to initiate discussions with your principal supervisor/s and clinical mentor/s on any problems arising during the course of your clinical and research activities. If you consider that your work is not proceeding satisfactorily for reasons beyond your control, you may approach the Departmental Postgraduate Studies Coordinator (or the HoD). If the problem remains unsolved at that level, you may contact the Dean of Faculty and/or the Dean of Postgraduate Studies and Research.

If you consider that you have not established or do not have an effective working relationship with your clinical mentor and supervisor, you may initiate an amendment to the supervisory arrangements. In this case, you should initially discuss the matter with Departmental Postgraduate Coordinator (or the HoD). A supervisor may also initiate an amendment to the supervisory arrangements by following similar consultation procedures.

Occasionally, a situation can arise in which your clinical mentor or supervisor retires, transfers to another institution or is absent from CoM or UNIMA for an extended period owing to illness, sabbatical leave or other reasons. In such circumstances, the Departmental Postgraduate Coordinator (or the HoD) will make alternative arrangements to ensure continuity of supervision. The HoD will then appoint a replacement clinical mentor or principal research supervisor until such a time that the original mentor or supervisor is able to resume his/her role.

4.3 Available Academic Support and Facilities

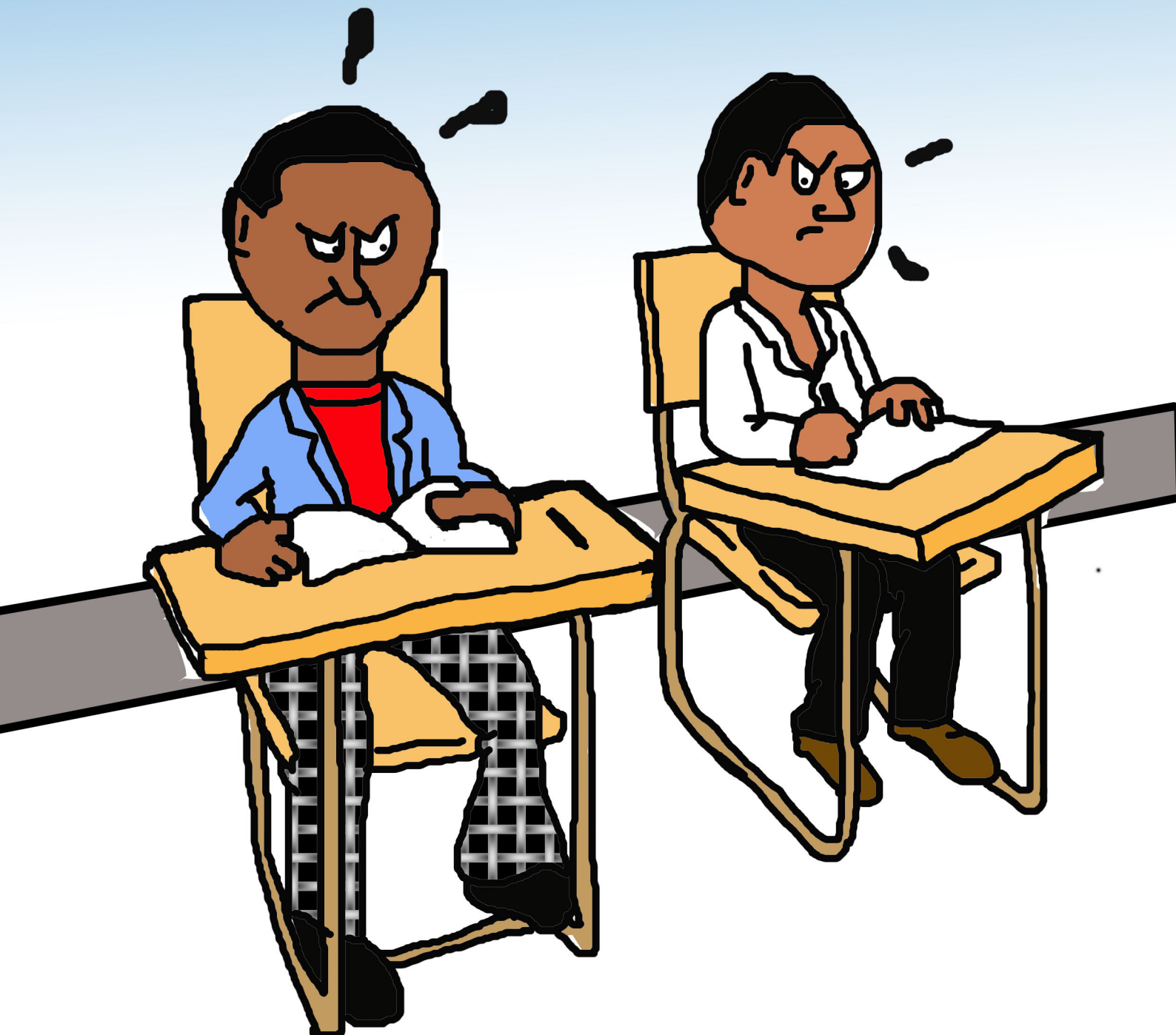
The facilities made available to support your academic studies will inevitably vary from one department to another depending on a number of factors, including the nature of the research undertaken. Your HoD will provide appropriate information on the types of facilities available to support your clinical and research work.

At the beginning of your studies, the Postgraduate Executive Officer will take you on a tour of the College of Medicine to enable you to familiarize yourself with key facilities outside of your department that you may wish to utilise. These include:

- library resources, including the use of the Inter-library loans system and access to internet-based databases;
- relevant information technology resources, including word processing facilities, spreadsheet packages, statistical and graphics packages, electronic mail and access to the Internet;
- working space including a desk and associated storage facilities
- photocopying facilities and, where directly relevant to your clinical and research work, appropriate internal and external telephone networks. Unless specified otherwise, the department will charge students for using any of these facilities, in full or in part. The department will provide information about the actual amounts charged prior to registration.
- laboratory facilities, laboratory consumables, scientific instrumentation and photographic services commensurate with the nature and possible scope of your research.



General Examination Procedures



5.1 Examination for MMed Programme:

During the course of your MMed programme, the following methods will be used to assess your academic progress;

1. *Continuous assessment*: this will be based on senior clinicians' impression of your general professional conduct and technical competence in performing specific clinical and academic tasks during ward rounds, clinics, theatres (if applicable) and handover meetings.
2. *Written Examinations*: these may consist of written, practical or oral examinations and consist of Parts I and II examinations, administered at the following times;
 - a. Part I examinations can be taken only after completing at least 18 months of clinical rotations and passing continuous assessments of your clinical performance
 - b. Part II can be taken at least 18 months after passing Part I examination and 2 months after submitting a dissertation.
3. *Dissertation*: this involves undertaking an independent clinical research project and writing a research report. Your dissertation must be on a topic in the same branch of the medical specialty in which you are registered and must be based on a study for which your work was commenced while you were registered as a postgraduate student

The Registrar's office will communicate official examination results to you only after review by the CoM Board of Examiners and formal approval by the UNIMA Senate. However, the HoD will communicate results for continuous assessments.

5.2 Grading Scheme

In general, the CoM uses the grading scheme shown in the Table 1, below, for all assessments. Nevertheless, you are required to refer to the MMed General Rules and Regulations (available on the Postgraduate Office website) for details about the grading scheme used in your department.

Table 1: MMed Grading Scheme

Percent	Grade	Interpretation
75 - 100	A	Distinction
65 - 74	B	Credit
50 - 64	C	Pass
0 - 49	D	Fail

In general, a mark of 50% is a pass. If you obtain 50% or more in all the prescribed examinations taken for the year, you will be allowed to proceed to the next level after you have achieved all milestones outlined in the regulations for passing various components of a specific programme. Thus, you must read the programme-specific regulations and, if you have questions, contact the Departmental Postgraduate Coordinator or HoD at the beginning of your programme.

5.3 Failure to Satisfy the Examiners

If your clinical, academic and professional performance is unsatisfactory, the HoD and CoM Board of Examiners will recommend to the UNIMA Senate that you “repeat a specific module/rotation” or “withdraw” or “write supplementary examination(s)”. The meanings of these terms are as follows;

- *Repeat the module/rotation:* you will not proceed to the next level of study but instead you will repeat the module/rotation in which you failed.
- *Withdraw:* you must leave the programme permanently because of poor academic performance.
- *Write supplementary examination(s):* you have to write a supplementary examination before considering whether or not you can proceed to the next level.

5.4 Conditions for Students who are writing supplementary examinations

To be eligible for a supplementary examination, you must satisfy and comply with the specifications outlined in the MMed regulations. Normally, supplementary examinations will be written approximately within 3 months after the results have been released. This is at the discretion of the Board(s) of Examiners. Where supplementary examination(s) have been granted within 3 months of official release of examination results, your original continuous assessment mark shall remain valid as you are attempting your supplementary examination(s).

Supplementary examinations are graded as “Pass” or “Fail” and the overall maximum mark awarded and recorded in a supplementary examination is 50%. In other words, a “Credit” or “Distinction” cannot be obtained in any forms of supplementary examination.

If you are eligible for supplementary examination(s), you will be required to pay tuition and/or examination fees at a rate determined by the CoM.

5.5 Conditions for Students who are Repeating a Module/Rotation

If you are repeating a rotation or an academic year, **continuous assessment results for the previous (failed) year of study or failed rotation will not be valid**. Only assessment results obtained from the repeated year or rotation will contribute to your overall assessment mark. You may proceed to the next level as soon as you have been officially notified that you passed examinations for the repeated year.

You will be allowed to repeat a rotation only once. If you are repeating a module

or rotation on academic grounds, you will be on probation during that module or rotation. **The repetition of a module is equivalent to a “serious warning”. If your performance remains unsatisfactory during the repetition year, the UNIMA, without any further warning at any time, can withdraw you from the programme.**

5.6 Failure to Take Examinations

If you fail to take examination(s) without acceptable reason(s), you will be awarded a mark of “zero” which is a “Fail” for that examination. Extra-curricular or extramural activities, misreading of the examination timetable(s) *et cetera*, will not be accepted as valid reasons.

Normally, valid reason(s) for failure to take examination(s) include sudden illness, involvement in an accident or bereavement by a member of the immediate family (first degree relationship). Under those circumstances, **you must obtain permission from the Registrar PRIOR to the examination; and in the case of sudden illness you must submit to the Postgraduate Dean a medical certificate from a practitioner approved by the CoM.** Your supervisor, HoD and Registrar should be copied in such communication.

5.7 Withdrawal from College due to Unsatisfactory Academic Performance

If you fail in your assessment or examination(s), you will be withdrawn if you have been “seriously warned” by the College during the course of the level/year that your work was unsatisfactory. Any one of the following shall constitute a serious warning:

- Failure in any examination;
- A letter of warning from the HoD/Postgraduate Tutor/Postgraduate Deans office concerning poor academic performance;
- Repeated a module/rotation before. As stated above, any prior failure is an automatic “serious warning” which does not require an additional warning letters;
- Failure to appear for examination(s) without valid reason(s).

If you would like to lodge any appeals against your withdrawal on academic grounds, you should write to the **University-wide Appeals Committee** through the Vice Chancellor.

5.8 Withdrawal on Grounds of Misconduct

If you are suspected involved in any act of misconduct, you will be called for a disciplinary hearing which will follow normal CoM procedures. Recommendations from the disciplinary hearing will be forwarded to the CoM PGC or Principal for further consideration or approval.

The CoM PGC has the power to investigate and exercise authority in respect of misconduct by you and then make recommendations to the College Principal.

5.9 Withdrawal from the College on other Grounds

Any other withdrawal e.g. on grounds of pregnancy or ill health is interpreted by the college as “Temporary Withdrawal”. If you are on temporary withdraw you may be readmitted to the program upon applying for readmission. Note that if you are unable to attend classes or other prescribed assignments for health reasons for a duration longer than 24 hours, you have to notify the relevant HoD. For absences of more than 48 hours on grounds other than health, you must obtain prior permission from the Departmental Postgraduate Coordinator who shall in turn inform the HoD concerned.



Dissertation Writing And Submission



6.1 Planning the Writing of the Dissertation

Writing a dissertation is never easy, but you can make this process less painful through careful planning and using the following guidelines:

- Select a dissertation topic and supervisor, early, preferably before the end of the first year of your programme.
- Work with your research supervisor to define your research training needs and develop a research training plan.
- Attend research methodology and other research-related courses available in various CoM departments, CoM research affiliates and at the Research Support Centre.
- Work with your supervisor to prepare a detailed work plan from development of the research concept to submission of your dissertation.
- Present your research concept or proposal at any departmental/faculty/CoM research fora during the first year of your programme. This will permit timely peer review of your proposal or concept.
- Identify potential sources for MMed research funding and apply for funding early.
- Assume final responsibility for and ownership of the submitted work. Although your supervisor does have a duty to assist and advise on the presentation of the dissertation, it is your responsibility to decide when to accomplish various research-related milestones outlined in your work plan. In all your activities, you need to take into account your principal supervisor's judgment and advice in consultation, where appropriate, with other supervisors.
- Read carefully the "*Research/Dissertation Guidelines for the MMed Programme*" available on the Postgraduate Website and seek any clarifications from your supervisor, Departmental Postgraduate Coordinator or HoD. Occasionally, you may be referred to the Postgraduate Dean's office for further clarifications on matters that cannot be resolved at departmental level.
- If your writing skills need further development, you may seek additional language assistance apart from your supervisor. The person (or persons) to provide such assistance should not be an expert in the relevant academic field. He/she may advise you to amend only the English and not the content of your dissertation. It is entirely your responsibility to liaise with a language expert or an individual person for such assistance, including any payment involved.
- Where language assistance has been provided, other than that given by the supervisor(s), you are required to acknowledge the help which you have received in the "Acknowledgement" section of the dissertation.

Table 2 below provides some guidance on timelines for achieving specific dissertation milestones for a student wishing to write the MMed Part II examination at the end of Year 4.

Table 2: Dissertation milestones and deadlines

Milestone	Deadline (<i>from initial registration</i>)	Responsible Person/s
Memorandum of Understanding with supervisors signed and approved	6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student • Supervisor • HoD
Dissertation research concept approved	12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student • Supervisor
Full research protocol approved	24 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student • Supervisor
Research funding secured	28 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student
Data collection completed	32 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student
Data analyses completed	36 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisor • Student
Draft dissertation submitted to supervisors	40 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student
Dissertation examiners identified	43 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisor • HoD
Final dissertation submitted for marking	46 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supervisor • HoD

To achieve these milestones, you are required to dedicate several hours every week working on your dissertation. *The Head of Department in collaboration with the Departmental Postgraduate Coordinator should permit you to take time off your clinical duties to concentrate on the dissertation.*

Your supervisor needs to ensure that you have submitted a high quality dissertation. Note that the UNIMA Postgraduate Policy, approved in April 2015, requires that your Master's dissertations should meet the standard of a "publishable manuscript". Accordingly, you will also be required to make an oral defence of dissertation before a panel of examiners chaired by the Faculty Dean. The CoM will organise the oral presentations in March or September each year after the written MMed Part II examinations.

6.2 Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty

Plagiarism is the use of words or ideas from someone else as if they were your own. **Universities consider plagiarism to be a serious offence, and you need to take great care to avoid it.** Your sources should be acknowledged every time the point that you make, or the data or other information that you use, is **substantially** that of another

writer and not your own. As a very rough guide, while the “Introduction” and the “Conclusion” of your dissertation might be largely based on your own ideas, within the main body of your dissertation, you would be expected to be drawing on, and thus referencing to the work of others. You are encouraged to attend classes on plagiarism which the CoM Library regularly organises. Note that the CoM will require you to submit your dissertations through the “Turnitin” software which can reliably detect any plagiarism.

Besides plagiarism, you should avoid any forms of academic dishonesty including the forms summarised below;

1. Cheating in Tests and Examinations
2. Unreported collaborations on written assignments
3. Submission of false or fake data
4. Theft of another student’s paper

According to the UNIMA regulations, all practices described in this section are considered “violations of university standards”. The penalties for these violations range from deducting marks to dismissal from the University. You may consult the Academic Registrar in order to obtain details about UNIMA policies on academic dishonesty.

6.3 General Outline of the Dissertation

At the beginning of your MMed research project, you should be familiar with the general outline of an MMed dissertation, which is summarised as follows is as follows;

- Title Page
- Declaration Page
- Abstract
- Table of Contents
- Introduction
- Literature Review
- Statement of the Problem
- Methods
- Results
- Discussion
- Conclusions
- References
- Appendices

For more details about the content of each section, please refer to the “*Research/ Dissertation Guidelines for the MMed Programme*” and, where necessary, consult your supervisor, departmental Postgraduate Coordinator or HoD. Occasionally, they

may refer you to the PGD's office if they cannot resolve matters at departmental level.

6.4 Word Length of the Dissertation

Your dissertation should be as concise as possible with proper presentation of the material and of a satisfactory literary standard. Normally, the word count for your dissertation should range from 5,000 to 20,000 words. These limits only apply to the body of the dissertation ("Introduction" to "Conclusion") and exclude "Table of Contents" page, abstract, reference list and appendices. Therefore, the finished bound volume should not exceed 70 pages. You must remember that an extensive report is unlikely to impress examiners, particularly if it could have been condensed without loss of information.

6.5 Format and Presentation of the Dissertation

Your dissertation should be in keeping with the following specifications:

- Your dissertation should be word processed in 12 font size, Times New Roman font, with double spacing and printed on an A4 size paper using a good quality printer. No secretarial assistance will be provided for you, and you are responsible for compiling the report.
- Use indents, spacing, headers, footers, page numbers, titles and index page, bold face, italics, and other editing facilities, where appropriate.
- Make sure you have 'spell-checked' and 'grammar-checked' the document.
- Margins - A margin of 4 cm must be present on the left hand side to allow for binding. On the right hand side, top and bottom, a 3 cm margin will ensure that the final guillotining of pages after binding does not encroach on the text.
- Illustrations, graphs etc. - These may be inserted in the text, or placed on the left hand pages to face typescript, in which case there should be no typescript on the reverse of the left hand page. You should take care to position illustrations and tables so that they are adjacent to the text which refers to them. With the new word processing capabilities, it is possible for illustrations and tables to be embedded in the text.
- It is not desirable to group all the illustrations together, as is sometimes recommended.
- All your illustrations, figures and tables must be accompanied by a caption which gives sufficient information for the reader to be able to understand their contents without referring to the text.
- Numbering - Right hand pages only should be numbered in one continuous sequence from the title page. Blank pages on the reverse of illustrations should be numbered.

6.6 Procedures for the Examination of your Dissertation

You and your supervisor must complete the "Intent to Submit" form (see Appendix II)

and submit it to the HoD who will endorse and forward the same to the Postgraduate Dean's Office **at least three months in advance of your intended date of submission of the dissertation**. The Postgraduate Office requires your department to recommend potential internal and external examiners for your dissertation and submit to the Postgraduate Dean's office the examiners' CVs and the "Intent-to-Submit" form. The department needs to adhere to UNIMA procedures for the appointment of external examiners (summarised in Section 6.7.1, below). Note that external examiners need to be approved by the UNIMA Senate before they can examine your dissertation. Normally it takes 2-3 months to have the examiners approved.

After senate approval of the examiners, you will be required to complete a "Dissertation Submission" form (Appendix III) and submit for marking **FOUR** bound hard copies of the dissertation and an electronic copy to the PGD's Office. Ideally, this submission should be done **at least 2 months** before taking the MMed Part II examinations. You must request your primary Supervisor to submit a letter supporting your submission. Your dissertation must include a confirmation, signed by you, indicating that it is your own work. The dissertation must also include a page of signatures for the Head of Department, Supervisor, Internal Examiner and PGD.

The PGD will submit your dissertation to the examiners with a standardised "Dissertation Marking" form (Appendix IV). The two examiners will mark the dissertation and award grades independently. Where two examiners have more than one grade difference in their marking, a third examiner will be asked to mark the dissertation as a tie-breaker. Normally, it takes three weeks for the examiners to mark the dissertation.

6.6.1 Publications

The UNIMA Postgraduate Policy, approved in April 2015, requires Master's students to develop a "publishable manuscript" before graduation. Thus, you may insert any original papers that you have published or submitted for publication in your dissertation after the "Declaration" section. Please ensure that you have discussed and agreed with your supervisors the number and order of the authors in any publication emanating from your MMed research project.

6.7 Guidelines on Grading the Dissertation

6.7.1 Appointment of Examiners

Normally, the department will select three examiners to mark your dissertation, two of whom will definitely examine your dissertation (one of these will be an external examiner) while the third will be used if required. Your supervisor cannot examine your dissertation.

Your supervisor/s will nominate the examiners and submit a recommendation to the HoD for endorsement. In turn, the HoD will circulate the nominated examiners CVs to at least three members of the department who will recommend the endorsement of the examiners. Upon departmental approval of the examiners, the HoD will seek further approval of the nominated examiners from the Dean of Faculty. Thereafter, the Faculty Dean will forward examiners' CVs and proof of their departmental and

faculty endorsement to the PGD's office who will review the documents on behalf of the Postgraduate Committee. If the PGD is satisfied with the nominated members, he/she shall write to the CoM Principal to seek UNIMA Senate approval of the external examiners (note that internal examiners do not need UNIMA Senate approval).

Upon senate approval of the external examiners, the PGD will submit your dissertation to the internal and external examiners for grading. Normally, the examiners are required to provide their feedback within a period of three weeks from the day they receive copies of your dissertation. They shall mark your dissertation based on the "Dissertation Marking Sheet" (Refer to Appendix IV) and submit completed marking sheet to the PGD. He/she who will, in turn, compile the grading sheets from the two examiners and send them to you, together with an official memo explaining the meaning of the grades and further actions that you need to undertake. Depending on the grade, you will either be passed or asked to do remedial work to correct the dissertation.

6.8 Appeals by research students against academic assessment

If you are not satisfied with your examination grades approved by the UNIMA Senate, you may lodge an appeal to the Senate Appeals Committee. The grounds for appeal may be any of the following:

- i. circumstances existed which affected your performance of which the Postgraduate Committee or the Examination Board was not aware when it took its decision;
- ii. there were procedural irregularities in the conduct of the assessment;
- iii. there is evidence of a significant administrative error;
- iv. there is evidence of prejudice or bias on the part of one or more of your examiners;
- v. the arrangements for supervision were inadequate;
- vi. the decision of the Postgraduate Committee or the Examination Board was such that no reasonable body of people could reasonably have arrived at that decision.

You may only appeal on the first five of these grounds only if there is a good reason why you did not inform the PGD, in writing of all relevant circumstances in advance of the Postgraduate Committee meeting.

6.9 Printing and Binding your Dissertation

Once your dissertation has been passed, you will be expected to arrange for four (4) bound copies of the dissertation which must be signed by you and your supervisors and an electronic copy. Binding services are available at Chancellor College in Zomba or any UNIMA-certified publisher. The dissertation shall be bound between boards, covered with a cloth of a colour specified by the Postgraduate Committee. The spine shall bear the dissertation title (in abbreviated form if necessary), your name in full, the abbreviation for the title of the degree for which your dissertation is submitted, and the year. Lettering shall be in gold or black. It is also your responsibility to get the certificate of approval page signed by the PGD, HoD, Supervisors and Internal Examiner.

After approval by the CoM PGC, these bound copies will be forwarded to the UNIMA Senate, through the UNIMA PGC, for final approval.

Appendices



Appendix I: Memorandum of Understanding between Students and Supervisors



College of Medicine

Memorandum of Understanding for Master's Dissertation Supervision

The following is a **template** memorandum of understanding (MOU). While it has been developed to include the experimental aspects of science and biomedical science research projects, please feel free to add items or to delete inappropriate or not applicable items. Some departments have developed their own departmental versions of the MOU and, if so, you should use that version.

The MOU should be regarded as something to help in the planning and conduct of dissertation Master's study rather than as an administrative imposition. It represents statements of intent only, and the implied obligations are only what a supervisor(s) and student could reasonably be expected to meet under normal circumstances.

If the project changes substantially, a new MOU should be drawn up with the changes highlighted.

Complete the form by typing or printing. Indicate agreement with suggested details, where relevant. Hand the signed MOU to the Head of Department when all signatures are complete, and all signatories should hold a final copy of the MOU.

1 Student Name:

2 Course Details:

Start date: Part- or Full-time:

Expected submission date:

3 Department:

4 Title of Project:

(<20 words)

5 Brief Description of Project:

(<100 words)

6 Supervisor(s) Name (s):

Primary supervisor:

Co-supervisor:

Co-supervisor:

- 7 What is the supervisor's contribution to **preparing the project**? Also, it is important that the respective contributions of **each** of the supervisors should be clarified here (a summary of their roles should be provided). *(Suggestion: provides student with an introductory reading list, ensures the student understands the nature of the project, discusses best way to tackle the project, provides initial training in the technical skills required, etc.):*

- 8 How many **hours per week** is the student expected to spend in the lab or field and on the project as a whole? Indicate breakdown into literature searching/reading, draft writing, bench work in lab/field, and data analysis. Part-time students should ensure that they allow for adequate blocks of time to be devoted to their studies.

Lab/field:

Literature:

Analysis:

Writing:

Total:

- 9 How often or when will the student have **regular meetings** with the supervisor(s)?

(Suggestion: a formal meeting at least monthly with the supervisor(s))

- 10 Who will take responsibility to arrange a **new time for missed meetings**?

- 11 How will the student access the supervisor(s) for **unscheduled meetings** or advice?

- 12 **Where will the research be conducted**, and at **what times** of the day/week/year is access to space and equipment normally available?

Where:

What times:

- 13 What is the **cost** of the project? Where are the funds coming from?

- 14 Where **shared or departmental equipment** is being used, who will undertake to book the equipment or otherwise ensure it will be available?

(List shared equipment)

- 15 Who will write the first draft of the application for **human or animal ethical approval**? When will the application be submitted? *(The primary supervisor must submit the final application. No work involving human or animal subjects can begin until ethics approval is obtained. Update this section each time new applications are submitted and use this section as a record, e.g. approval numbers, etc.)*

- 16 Who will meet **obligations to funding bodies**, such as writing interim and final reports? What are the dates for meeting such obligations?

- 17 What will be the **role of the supervisor(s) in obtaining and analysing the data**? *(Examples: initial training; continuing active assistance; passive supervisory)*

- 18 Outline briefly the **amount of data** that you hope to obtain for the dissertation (including sample size, tests or analyses).

- 19 When will the student table a **written proposal** and give a **seminar** on the proposal?

Written proposal:

Seminar:

- 20 What model will be followed for the **layout** (chapter headings) and **style of the dissertation** (hierarchy of headings, referencing style)?

(e.g. APA, or name a past dissertation)

- 21 Indicate the **approximate dates of submission of the first drafts** of the Introduction, Literature Review, Methods, Results and Discussion sections of the dissertation or each chapter. *(Update each year)*

Introduction:
Methods:

Literature Review:
Results:

Discussion:

- 22** How many drafts of each section of the dissertation will the supervisor(s) review?
- 23** When preparing the data for **publication**, who will write the first draft of the manuscript, who will be corresponding author, and what will be the order of the authors?
- 24** If the student is **dissatisfied with supervision** and has been unable to resolve it with the supervisor(s), who will the student consult? *(This item does not limit the right of the student to use the normal disputes procedures within the University)*
- 25** Outline **any other issues** that are relevant to this project.

Signatures

The student and supervisor(s) have met and agreed the above issues.

Student: **Date:**

Supervisor: **Date:**

Supervisor: **Date:**

Supervisor: **Date:**

I have read the Memorandum of Understanding and am satisfied with the arrangements.

Head of Department: **Date:**

Appendix II: Intent to Submit Form

Examination for the Degree of Master of Medicine

FORM A: INTENTION TO SUBMIT FORM

This form is to be completed by the Primary Supervisor. Please complete the form electronically and submit a hand signed printed copy (which may be scanned and emailed) to the Dean of Postgraduate Studies and Research, College of Medicine, Private Bag 360, Chichiri Blantyre 3 Malawi, Email: postgraduate@medcol.mw **within 3 calendar months of the intended submission date**

Student Name			
Student Number		Faculty/School	
Start Date for MMed (dd/mm/yy)		Department	
Title of Dissertation			
Primary Supervisor		Primary Supervisor	
Secondary Supervisor		Primary Supervisor	
Secondary Supervisor		Department & University	
Intended Date of Submission (dd/mm/yy)			

PROPOSED EXTERNAL EXAMINERS DETAILS

Surname		First Name	
Department & Faculty		University	
Email		Telephone	
Official Address			
Mailing Address (for courier delivery if different from above)			
Have you contacted the Examiner prior to this submission? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			

PROPOSED INTERNAL EXAMINERS DETAILS

Surname		First Name	
Department & Faculty		University of Malawi	
Email		Telephone	
Official Address			
Mailing Address (for courier delivery if different from above)			
Have you contacted the Examiner prior to this submission? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			

For Official Use:

This section is to be completed by the Office of Postgraduate Studies and Research. This is required to contact the potential examiners and obtain their full curriculum vitae (CV) and attach to this form before sending it to the Head of Department and Dean of Faculty for their approval

Does the Head of Department approve the examiners? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
Comments			
Name of Head of Department			
Signature of Head of Department		Date (dd/mm/yy)	
Does the Dean of Faculty approve the examiners? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
Comments			
Name of Dean of Faculty			
Signature of Dean of Faculty		Date (dd/mm/yy)	
Does the Postgraduate Dean approve the examiners? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
Comments			
Name of Reporting Officer			
Signature of Reporting Officer		Date (dd/mm/yy)	

Appendix III: Dissertation Submission Form

Examination for the Degree of Master's in Philosophy or Medicine and Doctor in Philosophy FORM B: DISSERTATION SUBMISSION FORM

This form is to be completed by the Primary Supervisor and signed off by the candidate and Primary Supervisor. Please complete the form electronically and submit a hand signed printed copy (which may be scanned and emailed) to Dean of Postgraduate Studies and Research, College of Medicine, Private Bag 360, Chichiri Blantyre 3 Malawi, Email: postgraduate@medcol.mw **within 3 calendar months of submitting the Intention To Submit Form and before Date of End of program.**

Student Name			
Student Number		Faculty/School	
Start Date for MMed (dd/mm/yy)		Department	
Title of Dissertation			
Primary Supervisor		Department & University	
Secondary Supervisor		Department & University	
Secondary Supervisor		Department & University	
Date of Submission (dd/mm/yy)		Postgraduate Program	<input type="checkbox"/> MMed

Submission Checklist

Student to check that he/she has included the following with this form (*please tick appropriately*):

- ☐ Four (4) temporary bound copies of the dissertation
- ☐ One (1) electronic copy of the dissertation (*in a flash drive*)

STUDENT DECLARATION

- I authorise that the dissertation presented by me for examination for the above specified Degree of University of Malawi shall, if a degree is awarded, be deposited in the College library and that, subject to the conditions set out below, my dissertation be made available for public reference, inter-library loan and copying.
- I authorise the College authorities as appropriate to supply a copy of the abstract of my dissertation for inclusion in any published list of theses offered for higher degrees in the University of Malawi or in any supplement thereto, or for consultation in any central file of abstracts of such theses.
- I authorise the College, or their designated agents, to make microform or digital copies of my dissertation for the purposes of inter-library loan, the supply of copies and as the archival copy for permanent retention in substitution for the original copy.
- I warrant that this authorisation does not, to the best of my belief, infringe the rights of any third party.
- I understand that in the event of my dissertation not being approved by the examiners, this declaration would become void.

Name and Signature of		Date
Candidate		(dd/mm/yy)

PRIMARY SUPERVISOR DECLARATION

- I declare that I have read and reviewed the final dissertation and approve that it be submitted for assessment.

Name and Signature of Supervisor		Date (dd/mm/yy)
----------------------------------	--	--------------------

For Official Use:

This section is to be completed by the Office of Postgraduate Studies and Research.

Checklist of items officially received in PG Office	<input type="checkbox"/> Four (4) temporary bound copies of the dissertation <input type="checkbox"/> One (1) electronic copy of the dissertation		
Name of Receiving Officer in PGD Office			
Signature of Receiving Officer		Date received (dd/mm/yy)	
Has the VC approved the examiners? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No (If No, then wait until approval before sending dissertation to examiners)			
Have examiners officially been contacted by the PG Office and accepted? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
Has the dissertation been sent to examiners? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No			
Deadline for receiving results (not be more than 3 months later)	Date (dd/mm/yy)		
Name of Sending Officer in PGD Office			
Signature of Sending Officer		Date sent (dd/mm/yy)	

Appendix IV: Dissertation Marking Sheet

Master's of Medicine - Mark Page for Mini-dissertation

Title of mini-dissertation	
Main supervisor	
Name and initials	
Student number	
Student signature	
Received by	
Date:	

Assessment:

CONTENT		
Dissertation	Mark	Available marks
Summary		5
Introduction background		10
Literature review (including appropriate references)		15
Methods		20
Results		20
Discussion (including conclusions)		20
Presentation (comprehension, grammar, logical flow, format)		10
Total		100

Grading system for all parts of the MMED course

Feedback Grade	Percentage	Criteria
Excellent	75 - 100	Outstanding achievement. A comprehensive discussion of the topic giving all the relevant information, showing in-depth critical understanding of the topic, going beyond conventional answers, and bringing in additional ideas or material.
Very Good	65 - 74	Very good pass . A full discussion of the topic that includes all relevant information and critical evaluation.
Good	55 - 64	Good pass . The major points are discussed, but relevant though less important considerations are omitted.
Satisfactory	50 - 54	Sufficient relevant information to pass is included but not all the major points are discussed and there may be some errors or interpretation.
Unsatisfactory	45 - 49	Borderline Fail . A few points are included but real lack of understanding shown and often use irrelevant points.
Fail	0 - 44	Outright Fail . None of the major points present, many irrelevant points included, serious lack of understanding or not submitted or submitted after deadline without extension granted.

Notes on dissertation marking

1. A pass of 50 marks or more does not require a mandatory rewrite although a voluntary one can be recommended.
2. A mark of less than 40 is unlikely to pass after a referral and is usually graded fail.
3. A mark between 40 and 49 can be referred for a rewrite and often passes eventually.

Comments

Introduction including appropriate literature review and clear study objectives	
Appropriate choice and description of methods	
Sound analysis and logical presentation of data including the use of tables and figures	
Discussion assessing findings in relation to literature and local situation.	
Appropriate conclusions following an adequate grasp of relevant methodological issues and limitations of the study	
Recommendation	
Pass/refer/fail	

Marked by:

Signature: Date: