8. QUALITY ASSURANCE OF POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH DEGREES

8.1 Research Degree Programmes

8.1.1 Introduction

Research degree programmes are those that lead to the award of doctorates and research master's degrees. The expectation and indicators of sound practice represent policies and procedures that are conducive to an excellent experience for research students and that support the University in maintaining high academic standards for research degrees.

8.1.2 Doctoral Degrees

Doctoral degrees are qualifications rooted in original research, i.e. the creation of new knowledge or originality in the application of knowledge. The doctorate is therefore unique in the array of qualifications offered by the University. Other key reference points for doctoral degrees are the doctoral qualification descriptors included in the Zambia Qualifications Framework (ZQF).

8.1.3 Master's Degrees by Research

Master's degrees by research may take up to two years' full-time study. Students registered on research master's degrees spend the majority of their programme undertaking independent research with supervision and guidance; they may also attend structured courses to learn about research methods in the field.

8.2 Quality Assurance Processes

8.2.1 Guidelines for Postgraduate Research

The University will ensure that current and comprehensive information is provided for postgraduate students in accordance with the Regulations for Postgraduate Studies approved by the University Senate. This shall include information on:

(a) rules guiding postgraduate research;
(b) postgraduate seminars;
(c) standardised supervision processes;
(d) preparation of dissertations and theses; and
(e) assessment and progression processes.

8.2.2 Ensuring Quality Supervision

In order to ensure quality in supervision the following shall be adhered to:

(a) each student shall be assigned one or more supervisors in accordance with the University’s postgraduate regulations; and
(b) regular contact between the supervisor and student shall be monitored using the approved Research Supervision Record Form signed by both the student and supervisor after every meeting.
8.2.3  Training of Supervisors

The following guidelines shall be used in training of supervisors for postgraduate research:
(a) the Directorate of Research and Graduate Studies (DRGS) shall regularly organise and coordinate training workshops for the supervisors to update them on new developments;
(b) all new supervisors shall attend a training course on research methodology and management, University policies and current practices with respect to supervision of postgraduate students; and
(c) the University shall put in place a *Code of Ethics for Supervisors*. The supervisors and students shall be made aware of this during induction and training.

8.2.4  External Examiners for Postgraduate Research Programmes

One external examiner from within or outside Zambia shall be appointed as a member of the Board of Examiners for a master’s and doctorate thesis. The appointment of external examiners shall be in accordance with the approved postgraduate regulations.

8.3  Postgraduate Studies Skills Development

The postgraduate skills development programme shall consist of a regular offering of workshops and events for postgraduate students. It is a central support platform aimed at strengthening postgraduate development at the University.

The aim of these workshops is to assist postgraduate students get acquainted with their research work by providing them with basic skills, information and guidelines to improve their confidence. Reference should be made to Appendix C1.

8.4  Student Assessment of Postgraduate Study

The University shall pursue a system of student feedback that makes provision for postgraduate students to regularly be given an opportunity to give feedback on their experience of individual postgraduate research experience. This feedback shall be utilised in the professional development of research supervisors. A standard questionnaire shall be used for these assessments.

8.5  Assessment of Postgraduate Research

Research degrees shall be awarded in a research environment that provides high academic standards for doing research and learning about research approaches, methods and procedures. This environment shall offer students opportunities and the support they need to achieve successful academic, personal and professional outcomes from their research degrees. Guidelines for assessment of postgraduate research are given in Appendix C2.