SACIDS AFRICA CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

(SACIDS ACE)

CODE OF PRACTICE

FOR

MPhil/MRes/MRes PROGRAMME

2017/2018

Acknowledgement

This document, which has been prepared by the SACIDS-ACE Research and Training Team, taking into account the baseline requirements and practices by the Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA) and Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences (MUHAS), has benefited from similar documents from the Royal Veterinary College University of London, the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, University of London and The Pirbright Institute. We thank these UK institutions for their support and permission for us to adopt aspects that we judged to be relevant to the needs of Africa.

This forms an integral part of the Smart Partnership arrangements between SACIDS and these institutions, efforts towards benchmarking the SACIDS-ACE MPhil/MRes programme to the UK research   development   framework.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Code of Practice covers the SACIDS Centre of Excellence (SACIDS ACE) regulations governing the supervision of postgraduate students, incorporating the support services and training opportunities which are provided by the Centre for the benefit of MPhil/MRes students.

The aims of the Centre's MPhil/MRes Training programme are to:

1. Equip each student with the skills they will need for a career as an independent research scientist, by undertaking a programme of novel research.

2. Contribute to the production of future scientists for the region

3. Contribute to the pool of scientists qualified to work on the various One Health related research and training activities

4. Seed collaborations with other institutions through the process of co-supervision.

5. Contribute to the intellectual vitality through training of young scientists.

6. Strengthen international links through the presence of overseas students.

This training has a three-fold purpose: to produce excellent research scientists and leaders in animal and human health; to make our unique facilities more widely available to other institutions in the region through collaboration and co-supervision; to strengthen the links between the Centre and universities.

2.0 REGULATIONS CONCERNING THE APPOINTMENT OF SUPERVISORS

2.1   A student shall have one primary supervisor from the registering university and a co-supervisor from the same university or a partner institution as part of a supervisory team. The Primary Supervisor takes overall responsibility for the studentship but supervision is a team effort between the Primary Supervisor and the Co-Supervisor.

2.2   The Primary Supervisor should have experience of PhD and MPhil/MRes student supervision or co-supervision.

2.3   Primary supervisors will normally be members of staff of the registering university and must possess a PhD degree or equivalent qualification.

2.6   Supervisors should normally act as the Primary Supervisor for no more than 8 MPhil/MRes students at any one time.

3.0 OVERVIEW OF SUPERVISOR AND STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1   **Advertising, interviewing & registration of students**
The SACIDS ACE, in collaboration with registering universities, will coordinate the advertising of studentships and the interviews; manage the selection up to and including the award of sponsorship.

Award of SACIDS-ACE sponsorship will be ONLY to those candidates who already meet registering university requirements and are formally registered with that university.

It is the student's responsibility to complete registration with the university, which may include hardcopy and on-line documentation. The supervisor at this stage may need to provide some support (if requested) to facilitate the process.

It is important to note that the start date of a MPhil/MRes project is always aligned with when payment of the stipend commences; thesis submission is therefore required within 2 years of this date.

3.2   **Finance**
The Finance Office of the Centre will oversee arrangements for payment of stipend and university tuition fees as applicable. It is the responsibility of the student and supervisor to monitor expenditure against their consumables and travel budget.

3.3   **The project**
The main responsibility for any student is to undertake and write up a programme of research that is of sufficient merit and originality to be considered for a MPhil/MRes degree. On top of this though, he/she must also develop a broad base of knowledge in the respective scientific field by undertaking relevant core courses as determined by supervisors.

The supervisor must oversee all of this, ensuring that the thesis (and the data it contains) is the student's own original work and generally supervising the research project with a view to its timely completion within 2 years of the start date of the project.

To this end, a student must develop and agree a plan of work with his/her supervisors and then keep to the timelines set. Since research rarely goes according to plan there is a responsibility on both student and supervisor to monitor the programme of work (based on results and progress) and review it accordingly.

Supervisors have the right to request written work from the student as appropriate. Students are responsible for completion and submission of this work and supervisors are responsible for the return of such work with constructive criticism within 2 weeks.

As part of the supervisor's role, he/she is required to advise the student on literature and other sources of relevant information, and to encourage participation at meetings, seminars and scientific conferences, as appropriate. It is also their responsibility to ensure, as far as is within their control, that the student's work is not impeded through inadequacies of equipment or resources or through flaws in the research plan.

3.4   **The work place**
There are regulations and policies within the registering universities and placement institutions relating to the working environment, including health and safety, biosafety, ethical research guidelines, record keeping and intellectual property. Whilst supervisors are required to ensure student awareness of these issues and advise them accordingly, it is ultimately the student's responsibility to comply with them.

3.5   **Progression**
It is vital that the student takes ownership of his/her own progress. This involves being familiar with and complying with their university's requirements, rules and regulations and consulting with their supervisory team *in advance* of all progress reports and examinations. The Centre has established monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to ensure that quality assurance and monitoring requirements are met in full and at the prescribed times as stipulated in the Students Handbook and Logbook.

The student should take the responsibility to organise formal face-to-face meetings with his/her supervisor(s), to prepare adequately for these meetings and to keep a full written / electronic record of all such meetings detailing outcomes achieved since the previous meeting and actions agreed. Such meetings should be held at least monthly during the early part of the project although this may change as the student develops greater independence. Where students are based away from the registering university, e.g. on a placement institution, supervisors are required to assist the student to organise meetings by telephone, videoconference or Skype. Notes from these meetings should be kept and made available upon request to the Centre Academic Committee (on an annual basis) for quality assurance purposes. Email trails are acceptable.

It is the student's responsibility to respond appropriately to advice given by their supervisors and by other members of the supervisory team.

It is very important that the student should take the initiative in raising problems or difficulties with their supervisors, however elementary they may seem. Similarly, it is vital that, throughout the period of study, the student knows whether their research and academic progress is considered to be satisfactory. Where progress is not satisfactory, in terms of content and/or timelines, the supervisors must advise the student where the problem lies and offer constructive help and guidance to remedy the situation.

When absent for an extended period of time, a supervisor must delegate the supervision to an appropriate member of staff and inform the university and SACIDS ACE Secretariat Research and Training Unit of this change.

3.6   **Development**
        The student has overall responsibility for his/her personal and professional development, but the supervisor has a responsibility to facilitate student attendance at appropriate training events. It is suggested that the regular student-supervisor meetings should include project specific and transferable skills training requirements as topics for discussion.

        The supervisor has a responsibility to provide guidance in project specific areas as required.

        The student must be familiar with and comply with the training requirements of the Centre and the registering university, including the need to maintain a logbook. Attendance at training events should be taken seriously; students must arrive punctually so as not to delay the start and disrupt the learning for others, and they must notify the course organiser at the earliest opportunity if attendance is no longer possible.

        Supervisors are responsible for taking the initiative in updating their own knowledge and skills to ensure they are fully equipped to supervise students. Likewise, they are also encouraged to attend training on supervision and research leadership management on regular basis.

3.7   **Miscellaneous**
        Failures in good supervisory practice will also be considered in a closed session of the Academic Committee. Where these are deemed to be serious, a detailed evidence-based report will be prepared and presented to registering university for appropriate action as per established policies and guidelines.

4.0 REGISTRATION

4.1   Students to be supported by the Centre will have to apply and be admitted by either MUHAS or SUA for the purposes of MPhil/MRes. The Centre will then select students from this pool using selection criteria approved before hand by its Academic Committee.

4.2   Stipend, registration as well as tuition and accommodation fees will be paid by the Centre according to the regulations of registering university and Centre. Registration generally entitles the student to the facilities of the university and the Centre.

  4.3 The Primary Supervisor should work with the SACIDS ACE Secretariat Research and Training Unit and the registering university to ensure that the candidate registers as early as possible to enable the minimum period of registration required by the university concerned to be completed.

4.4   All MPhil/MRes students supported by the Centre are required to attend induction events.

4.5   All MPhil/MRes Students must be completed within the funding period (2 years from the start date) regardless of the university registration date.

4.6   Details of new students must be filed with the SACIDS ACE Secretariat Research and Training Unit for entry into the student database.

4.7   It is critical that the student and supervisor familiarise themselves **at the outset** with the requirements of the registering university. Failure to do so and therefore not meet the universities' regulations and requirements could mean that the student will not be able to graduate.

5.0 TRAININGREQUIREMENTS

5.1   The MPhil/MRes training programme provides two important forms of training for the student: project-based and transferable skills training.

   5.1.1 Project-based training focuses on the development of skills required to deliver the specific research project and trains the student to become a professional research scientist.

   5.1.2 Transferable skills training that provides the student with a generic set of skills that are more broadly applicable beyond that of a student and to many careers in addition to that of an academic research scientist.

   MPhil/MRes students have varied backgrounds and prior experience; training therefore should take into account individual needs. Early on in the studentship, ideally during the induction process, the student and supervisors should meet to discuss the student's development and general educational needs. This should be revisited and re-evaluated on a regular basis and at least at the start of each year.

5.2   Attendance at university training courses and in placement institutions will be recorded. You must keep a written record of any external training courses and events attended, including seminars and journal club meetings. The Centre will provide their students with a means to record this information; this "log book" forms an important part of the annual assessment process, assuring that a student is receiving the necessary training.

5.3   Project-based training

   5.3.1 Staff within the registering universities and placement institutions is familiar with modern techniques in a wide range of areas and they will usually be prepared, upon request, to help instruct students in their particular areas of expertise.

   5.3.2 Where possible, and subject to adequate funding, students are encouraged to attend specialist practical and taught courses relevant to their discipline, both within the university and elsewhere.

5.4   Transferable skills training requirements

5.4.1 The student's registering university and the SACIDS ACE will both have set requirements covering transferable skills training. It is vital that the student is aware of these and he/she must fulfil BOTH sets of requirements. HOWEVER, there will be a high degree of overlap and similarity and hence both institutions will be flexible in recognising and accrediting the others' courses. In this way, attendance at similar events NEED NOT BE DUPLICATED; advice should be sought from the registering university.

5.4.2 The Centre's training requirements include the following:

Year 1:
- Induction week; for contents refer to the induction programme.
- Bioethics
- Biostatistics
- Research Methodology
- Planning Your MPhil/MRes
- Conference Know-How & Presentation Skills
- Effective Writing

Year 2

- Thesis Planning and Writing workshop
- *Viva Voce* workshop
- Oral presentation at the Centre's annual Student Day

PLUS in each year:
- Research seminars and journal club meetings.
- Attend as many internal and external speaker seminars when present at the university and Centre, including the student-led sessions. It is understandable that a student will not be able to attend all seminars but every effort should be made. Seminars are a very important means by which a student can learn about the wider scientific background of his/her project, providing the diversity of knowledge expected of a MPhil/MRes student. Both universities will expect attendance at such events. Registers may be taken and a continued failure to attend will be noted and action taken.
- Attend as many journal club meetings as possible AND present in journal club seminars.
- Attend all scholarly meetings and contribute through oral presentation when applicable/invited.

Details of the MPhil/MRes training programme are contained in the SACIDS ACE MPhil/MRes Handbook.

6.0   INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

6.1   Students and primary supervisors will need to submit to the SACIDS-ACE Leadership and registering university unit/Directorate that deals with Intellectual Property issues for advice on the potential for IP protection and the processes to be followed, in line with university and donor requirements

6.2   Some research developments will be easily recognised as having commercial potential, others will not. It is important therefore that students discuss all findings with their supervisors as early as possible so that a judgment can be made. If it is thought that an invention has been made, it is crucial that <u>no</u> information is made public before protection has been put into place. Giving any information about the research at any meeting outside the Centre and university can amount to disclosure and loss of our ability to win protection of inventions through patents. Even within the Centre and university disclosure may be claimed if a person who is not a member of staff hears or is told the essence of the IP.

6.3   Students working in a research laboratory will often have access to the findings of their colleagues before these are published. Students are expected not to disclose any of this privileged information without permission from the supervisors.

6.4   Good records are crucial. The source book for any patent application should be the laboratory notebook. It is therefore imperative that standard procedures are followed for the completion of laboratory notebooks.

7.0 MONITORING PROGRESS AND UPGRADING

The registering university is the degree awarding body and as such their regulations for monitoring progress and upgrading must be strictly adhered to.

7.1   MUHAS and SUA may differ slightly in their requirements and processes. However all Higher Education Institutes in Tanzania are governed by the Tanzania Commission for Universities (TCU), a national body setting strict standards for students. **It does mean though that each student and his/her supervisors must familiarise themselves with the specific processes and requirements of their registering university**.

7.2   Although the university "owns" the monitoring and assessment processes, the Centre has its own monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to ensure that Centre-specific goals are met as detailed in the SACIDS ACE MPhil/MRes Handbook and Logbook.

7.3   Please ensure that you forward copies of any official university reports or other documentation to the SACIDS ACE Secretariat Research and Training Unit.

8.0 CENTRE'S REQUIREMENTS FOR MONITORING PROGRESSION

8.1   Setting a research plan

At the start of the studentship the supervisors and student should agree their plan for the research programme, setting out the timetable and any deadlines or milestones that they can. This plan should form the basis of much of the subsequent reporting and assessment. The plan should not be 'fixed in stone' and the student and supervisors need to be flexible in adapting or modifying the plan to take account of developments in the research results or other external factors.

8.2   Progress reports

Students are required to submit quarterly progress reports using the SACIDS ACE quarterly report form. At each point, the report is shown to the supervisor, who has the opportunity to add written comments and who must sign the report. Completed reports must be returned promptly to the SACIDS ACE Secretariat Research and Training Unit.

8.3   Literature Review and Plan

Within the first three months of arriving at the Centre, students are asked to prepare a short report (1000-2000 words) for their supervisors, outlining their perception of the background, objectives and experimental approaches of the project.

8.4   End of 1st year Assessment Report

Progress is assessed before the end of the first year on the basis of a written Research Report, submitted at the latest by 10 months, and an *oral presentation* held by the end of the 11th month. A Research Report should be prepared covering the following five elements:

- A literature survey of 1,000 to 1,500 words explaining the background to the research project.

- A statement of the scientific objectives and planned experimental approaches.

- A report of the work done including a description of the materials and methods used and results obtained.

- A discussion to include prospects for the future, ideas for solving problems encountered or anticipated, an assessment of the original objectives and a timeline or plan for the remaining duration.

- References.

The target length for the completed text (excluding references) should be 2,500 words. **The report should be laid out in the same format as would be expected for the final thesis and the type face should be a minimum size equivalent to Times Romanic pt 12 with double spacing.** The report should be primarily the student's own work.

A completed *assessment* report form must be returned to the SACIDS ACE Secretariat Research and Training Unit. The outcome of this annual assessment will determine student progression from this year-to-the-next.

8.5   Second year progress assessment
The second year is aimed at completing student's research work towards successful submission and defense of thesis leading to the award of MPhil/MRes degree by the registering university. Students are expected to present complete results, prepare manuscripts for publication, submit dissertation to university and prepare for Viva Voce. Students will be expected to hold formal meeting with their supervisors to discuss progress with their dissertation and prepare quarterly progress reports to ACE Research Research and Training Unit. The Centre on its part will organize a pre-submission quality check of the thesis not later than 18th month of the studentship.

9.0 THESIS OUTLINE

Students will be asked to prepare a thesis outline together with a timetable for completion against which subsequent progress can be monitored. This should be completed at 18 months; the plan should be discussed with the supervisors such that everyone can formally consider what is required to complete the thesis for submission. The plan should provide a clear strategy and timetable for the final stage of delivering a completed thesis on time. **The timing of this report is important and should not be delayed** without specific agreement from supervisors.

9.1   Graduation within 2 years is one of the key measures of the success of a MPhil/MRes training programme used by the Centre.

9.2   **Writing up**
It is just as important to plan the writing up phase of the thesis as the research phase. The MPhil/MRes thesis outline has been included in the prospectus of the registering universities in order to ensure students and their supervisors have started to give some thought to this at an appropriate point in the programme.

9.3   **The thesis**
The MPhil/MRes thesis should be prepared in accordance with the instructions of the registering university. An electronic copy of the completed thesis must be deposited with the Centre's Research and Training Office.

Supervisors, in collaboration with relevant departments, must conduct a mock *viva voce* examination for their student based on the final thesis.

9.4   **Extension of studentship**
The Centre is not normally prepared to consider applications to extend a studentship beyond the original period of financial support.

10. FINISHING THE THESIS

10.1   Two years: the final deadline
Students must submit their thesis to the registering university within **18 months** of the date they commenced their studies to allow sufficient time for examination. Pre-

submission presentation (of the whole thesis) to the SACIDS ACE supervisory team MUST precede the official submission by at least a month. Only in exceptional circumstances will Centre support for MPhil/MRes students be extended beyond 2 years of registration at no cost to the Centre. Supervisors with a poor track record of student submissions may not be allowed to have future students.

Where a student's progress has been delayed for factors outside of their control, for example long-term illness, sympathetic consideration may be given. Students must submit, through their supervisors, a written request, ideally at least three months before the end of the studentship.

10.2 Interruption to studentship (suspension of studies)

Studentships are to be held without a break and SACIDS-ACE will only consider an interruption to a studentship in exceptional circumstances. For example, a student may wish to interrupt their studies as a result of their own persistent health problems or those of dependents. The period of suspension will normally be unfunded. Requests for an interruption arising out of personal or family reasons will receive sympathetic consideration. The Centre will be prepared to consider the interruption of an award provided that:

- The request is made in advance; retrospective requests will not normally be accepted.
- The period of interruption does not normally exceed one calendar year.
- The student's primary supervisor provides written support to the appropriate university management for the interruption of studies and certifies that this will not delay the submission of the final thesis by more than the length of the interruption.
- The registering university agrees to the interruption.

Women students will be allowed to suspend their MPhil/MRes work for 3 months as normal maternity leave.

11.0 ACADEMIC ADVICE

11.1   It is hoped that students will feel able to turn to their supervisors for advice and support on most matters but it is recognised that this is not always the case. In addition, students may benefit from expertise of the members of the department and relevant Community of Practice (CoP) – which comprises of mentors, supervisors and postdocs.

11.2   Members of the Academic Committee may be approached informally for advice; views of general concern may also be expressed to the Academic Committee through the Student Representatives.

11.3   Each student's university will also offer access to a full range of student support processes.

12.   DISCIPLINARY AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

12.1   All students are expected to conduct themselves in an acceptable and appropriate manner whilst at the university or if away from it on official business (for example, at meetings or when visiting other laboratories).

12.2   Where there is breach in conduct related to an academic issue, the Centre will liaise with the student's registering university when deciding on the process and penalties to be applied.

12.4   Similarly, if a student wishes to make a complaint or raise a grievance against another student, a member of staff they should do this through the appropriate channels.