



**KABARAK UNIVERSITY**  
**INSTITUTE OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES**

**POSTGRADUATE**  
**ORAL DEFENSE PRESENTATION GUIDELINES**

**MAY 2021**

**Director, Institute of Postgraduate Studies**  
**P.O Private Bag-20157- Kabarak, Kenya**  
**Tel 254-0773265999**  
**Email: [directorpostgraduate@kabarak.ac.ke](mailto:directorpostgraduate@kabarak.ac.ke)**

**Website: <http://kabarak.ac.ke/institute-postgraduate-studies/>**

## **PREAMBLE**

It is essential that candidates prepare properly and adequately for their oral defenses. The goal of the following guidelines is to enhance effective and quality online oral defense presentations and interactions. Failure by candidates to observe these guidelines may prompt the panel to adjourn the defense.

## **GUIDELINES**

### **Candidate's Preparedness**

#### ***1.0 PowerPoint presentation***

1.1. Use font type and print color that enhance legibility and visibility of your presentation

1.2 Font size should not be less than 20 points (pts)

1.3 The slides should contain only the highlights of the study

1.4 Not more than six lines of the highlights per slide

1.5 Structure and the content of the PowerPoint presentation

1.5.1 Title/Cover Page

1.5.1.1 The title of your research paper

1.5.1.2 Your name

1.5.1.3 Name of Institution/School/Department

1.5.1.4 Name and details of area of specialization

1.5.1.5 Name of supervisors/advisors

1.5.2 Background to the Study

1.5.2.1 Contexts and debates about the topic being investigated

1.5.2.2 Statement of the problem/specific research questions being addressed

1.5.2.3. Objectives of the study

1.5.2.4. Rationale/Significance (why the questions being asked are critical)

1.5.3 Literature Review

1.5.3.1 Relevant current research and how they inform your research topic

1.5.3.2 Gaps/areas of weakness that your current study intend to address

1.5.3.3 Different theories/interrelatedness of variables and how they may apply to specific areas of one's research

1.5.4 Research Methodology

1.5.4.1 Study design

1.5.4.2 The methods selected for the study: e.g., qualitative, quantitative, or mixed

1.5.4.3 Details of the population, sampling methods, research instrumentation

1.5.4.4 Issues of reliability and validity

1.5.4.5 Data analysis methods

1.5.4.6 Research ethics consideration

1.5.5 Results

1.5.5.1 An analysis of the data collected during one's research

1.5.5.2 The results/presentation of the analysis that one has done on the collected data

1.5.5.3 Discussions highlighting the most significant findings from the collected data

### 1.5.6 Conclusion, Summary and Recommendations

1.5.6.1 Restate research questions and/or objectives

1.5.6.2 Demonstrate how the results answer the stated research questions/objectives

1.5.6.3 Illustrate and articulate the study contribution (ample proof or evidence of novelty/originality or tangible/concrete new knowledge particularly in the case of a PhD thesis)

1.5.6.4 State any limitations to the work done and provide suggestions for future research

1.5.6.5 Make any recommendations and should be derived from the discussions of the findings and conclusion of the study

## ***2.0 Mastery of Content***

2.1 Review and study each part of your thesis, every detail, and even your sources without overstressing

2.2. Bring your thesis with you as a referential material. Know the thesis in and out

2.2 Focus and answer questions appropriately. Admit if you do not know the answer

2.4 Prepare pieces of evidence to support and prove your research arguments (avoid sweeping statements)

2.5 Ensure your oral defense is not in conflict with what is written on the hardcopy you submitted.

## ***3.0 Content Delivery***

3.1 Introduce oneself and the title of the study at the beginning

3.2 Rehearse through your presentation, if possible, before an audience

3.3 Put emphasis on important pieces of information

3.4 Prepare slides only enough for the time available to you

3.5 Do not exceed time limit.

3.6 Avoid talking fast through your presentation. Panelists might not understand you

3.7 Inhale, exhale. Remember to breathe! It is fine to pause and take your time,

3.8 Work on the logical and coherent flow of ideas. Keep them organized

3.9 **DO NOT READ WORD FOR WORD THROUGH YOUR SLIDES** (the session Chair shall reserve the right to stop your presentation upon realizing such tendencies)

## ***4.0 Candidate's Disposition***

4.1 Composure and relax disposition are paramount. Remain attentive although

4.2 Familiarize oneself with examination procedures and oral defense etiquette before the defense

4.3 Your webcam should remain turned on although

4.4 Face the audience whenever you are required to talk

4.5 Keep an eye contact with the speaker addressing you

4.6 Remain objective by removing oneself from the study. Do not take examiners' comments personal

4.7 Avoid interrupting the examiners unnecessarily. It is respectful to talk only when prompted to

4.8 Remember to jot down the panelists' questions to avoid unnecessary repetitions

## ***5.0 Chairman's Role as a Moderator***

5.1 The overall function of the moderator should be to ensure that oral defenses are administered in accordance with the policies and procedures of the University. The Chair ensures that there is objectivity, fairness, and evenness in the exam proceedings

5.2 Must confirm that the panel is properly constituted before the session starts

5.3 Should obtain biographical notes for each speaker (especially the examiners)

- 5.4 Should introduce each member of the panel including the candidate and share biographical notes of each speaker. Can choose to introduce the members at the beginning of the session or whenever each speaker is called upon to address the audience
- 5.4 Facilitates consensus if differences exist between members
- 5.5 Notifies the student of the time limit and does not allow the presentation to exceed time allocated
- 5.6 Ensures that panel members do not exceed time allocated to each during cross examination
- 5.7 Ensures that there is seamless flow of activities. Should discourage unnecessary interruptions
- 5.8 Ensures that no member monopolizes the cross-examination session
- 5.9 Records key highlights of the proceedings and the outcome of oral defense
- 5.10 Helps the examiners to ensure that the candidate responds to all the questions raised satisfactorily
- 5.11 Communicates the final verdict to the candidate and the supervisors
- 5.12 Communicates to the candidate and the supervisors the corrective actions/recommendations based on the decision reached by the examiners
- 5.13 Reserves the right to adjourn the session upon realizing that the candidate or a panel member is not adhering to the laid down procedures, of course in consultation with the panel members.

**6.0 Cross Examination Process**

- 6.1 There should be strict adherence to the time allocated to each activity
- 6.2 Unnecessary repetition should be avoided during questioning unless it is a follow up question aimed at seeking further clarification
- 6.3 Examiners should ensure that they are conversant with critical details of the document
- 6.4 Examiners should avoid lecture-like cross examination
- 6.5 Examiners should prepare questions to be asked of the student and ensure the student responds to the raised questions satisfactorily
- 6.6 Examiners should demand for clear and evidence-based responses
- 6.7 Examiners should seek to determine if the student understands his/her work in and out
- 6.8 Examiners should spare fair amount of time on interrogating Chapters on: research methodology, the results, conclusion, summary, and recommendation (save for concept paper and proposal)
- 6.9 Examiners should seek to ascertain originality/novelty and significant contribution to knowledge particularly in the case of a PhD thesis
- 6.10 An examiner should ensure that at least his/her verdict reflects the level or the magnitude of concerns raised during cross examination.

.....:END:.....