

Prevention and Management of Examination Irregularities at Universities Level in Kenya: Challenges and Best Practices

Zipporah Mutea, Maasai Mara University, School of Education

ABSTRACT

University examinations are the yardstick used to determine how much students have mastered the content and acquired the skills envisaged in various courses. University examination results provide criteria for selection for higher learning, placement in jobs, promotion and certification. They also provide data that can be used for decision making at national level. For university examinations to perform these critical functions, they must be valid, reliable and of acceptable international standards. However, university examinations are plagued by irregularities that threaten to destroy their credibility. These malpractices are mainly driven by candidates' desperation to acquire certificates which are the springboard for higher learning and employment. Inadequate instructional facilities and poor preparation erode the learners' confidence forcing them to engage in examination misconduct. Sometimes those entrusted with securing the examinations lack skills, attitudes, ethics and values, required to safeguard them. University examination procedures are porous and susceptible to malpractices. Safeguarding examinations is a core duty of universities. Measures should be put in place to prevent irregularities and to take corrective actions to deal with irregularities when they occur. This paper: discusses some causes of examination irregularities; describes examination processes highlighting the vulnerability of examination at each stage; outlines various examination malpractices and describes the challenges involved in tackling them. Further, the paper proposes ways of sealing the loopholes by enlisting best practices in handling examination irregularities. The paper uses secondary data and related literature to guide discussion.

Key words: Examinations, Certification, Irregularities, Ethics, Standards