Open and Distance Learning

STUDENT HANDBOOK

LUANAR ODL STUDENT HANDBOOK

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1.0 General Information

This Handbook is designed to help you find key information about your programme of study at Lilongwe University of Agriculture & Natural Resources (LUANAR). Please take time to go through the handbook.

1.1 Correspondence

Good communication between students and staff is important so that your individual needs are addressed and met. LUANAR ODL staff are always available to assist you with administrative and academic matters. In case of any inquiries please direct all your correspondences to the following address:

The University Registrar
LUANAR
P.O. Box 219
LILONGWE
Attention: The ODL Coordinator

You can also use the following contacts:
Telephone: 01277000/222
Emails
For general inquiries: odl@bunda.luanar.mw
For academic inquiries: odl-support@bunda.luanar.mw

You will mostly be communicated through emails. However, you may also be contacted through telephones and letters.

You will also find important information in your respective LUANAR regional ODL centres in Mzuzu, Lilongwe and Blantyre.
Therefore ensure that you:

- regularly check your e-mail account
- frequently check with your respective satellite centres
- inform ODL Administration office of any changes to your personal details.

1.2 Important dates to remember

There are a number of activities that you will be required to perform during your study. Please note that the actual dates of the activities will vary according to your cohort, and shall be provided to you at the beginning of each semester. Therefore, ensure that you get a semester calendar of events at the beginning of every semester.

1.3 About Open & Distance Learning at LUANAR

LUANAR introduced ODL programme to increase access in higher education.

1.3.1 Programmes

Currently, there are four academic programmes offered through ODL, namely:

- Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Economics,
- Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Extension,
- Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Innovations, and
- Bachelor of Science in Agribusiness Management

1.3.2 Mode of delivery

LUANAR uses a blended mode of ODL which is a mixture of residential face to face sessions and distance mode. The table below summarises delivery of programmes:

MODE	DURATION	ACTIVITIES
Face to face mode	2 weeks	a. Registration b. Orientation of students c. Distribution of learning materials (modules) d. Facilitation sessions through which you will be introduced to learning materials

		e. Provision of assignment with due dates f. Practical sessions
Distance mode	24 weeks	a. Studying modules and other materials assigned to you b. Writing assignments c. Participation in study circles d. Attending monthly meetings in your respective regional ODL centres e. Attending tutorials whenever arranged in your regional ODL centres

1.4 The Directorate of Open and Distance Learning

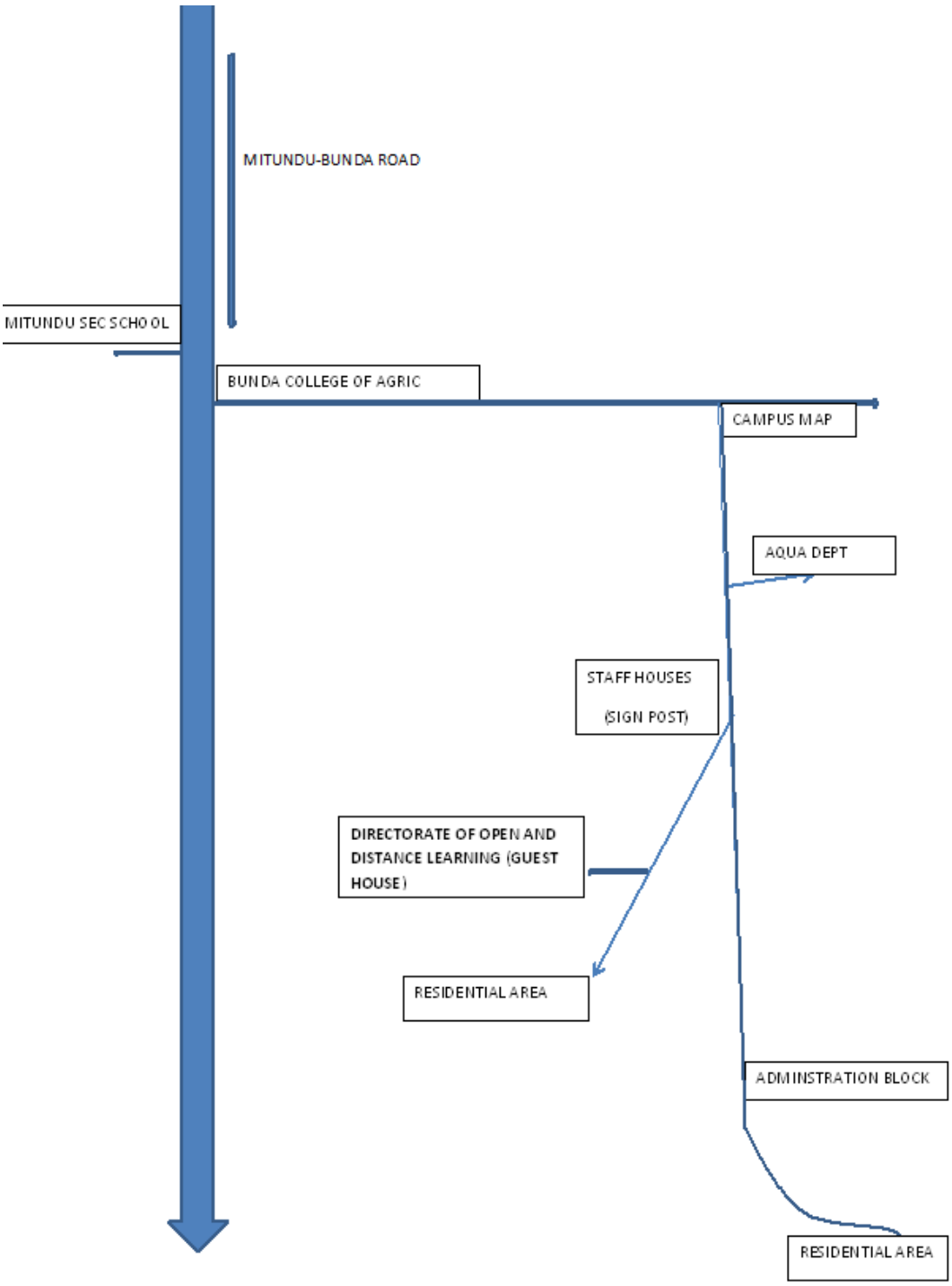
The ODL office comprises of the following persons who are available to assist you:

- The ODL Coordinator
- Centre Coordinators
- ODL Specialists
- The ODL Administrator
- Administrative Assistants
- Learning Management Systems Administrator
- ICT Technicians

These staff members are based at the ODL Directorate at Bunda campus as well as in regional ODL centres in Mzuzu, Lilongwe and Blantyre.

1.5 Location of ODL Directorate and Regional ODL Centres

The Directorate of ODL is located at Bunda campus. Currently, it is in the Forestry Guest House building. The map below will guide you to locate the Directorate.


MITUNDU-BUNDA ROAD
MITUNDU SEC SCHOOL
BUNDA COLLEGE OF AGRIC
CAMPUS MAP
AQUA DEPT
STAFF HOUSES
(SIGN POST)
DIRECTORATE OF OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING (GUEST HOUSE)
RESIDENTIAL AREA
ADMINSTRATION BLOCK
RESIDENTIAL AREA

Mzuzu Campus

Mzuzu campus is located in the MTL building near Mzuzu ADD.

Lilongwe Campus

Lilongwe campus is located along M1 road in Area 36 next to Energem filling station.

Blantyre campus

Blantyre campus is located in MTL building along Sanjika Road, off the Victoria Avenue

1.6 Payment of Fees and Registration

Tuition fees is K300,000 per year but this may change depending on prevailing economic conditions. LUANAR expects you to pay at least 50% of the semester fees (K75,000) at the beginning of a semester. For registration, you are required to present proof of fees payment in the form of a deposit slip bearing your name. Please note that only students who will have paid fees and fulfilled the registration requirements will be granted access to university services and facilities.

2.0 Student Support Services

In order to help you succeed in your studies, LUANAR has ODL centres, one in each region, where you can get various support services. The services include the following:

- Study circle discussions
- Tutoring
- Counselling
- Accessing material resources like books, periodical and magazines
- Receiving ICT Support

2.1 Study circles

Study circles gives you an opportunity to interact with your fellow students either through face to face or through electronic media. Therefore, you are expected to form small groups with fellow students of the same subject combinations in your localities. Among other

things you will use the study circles to share knowledge and discuss assignments tasks that have been assigned to you.

For you to have a successful study circle, consider doing the following:

- Do independent study of the course materials which are assigned to you. As you study the materials independently, identify areas you may find difficult to understand.
- Share what you have learned through your independent study with your colleagues during study circle meetings
- Share areas you need further support with other study groups of your class through electronic media such as WhatsApp. You may find that other groups will help you in the areas you find difficult to understand.
- In case all study groups find problems with some particular areas of your study materials, the Class Representative must contact your respective regional ODL centres to arrange for further support services.

2.2 Tutorial Services

Note that tutoring is not just any other teaching that is done wholesale on assumption that you need all the information whether you already know some information or not. Tutoring is only done to clarify the areas of a course that prove difficult to most of you in your class. Use the following procedure for requesting tutorial services:

1. Liaise with class representative on areas requiring support.
2. Using a Tutor Request Form, class representative should fill in details requiring support. (You will get this form from LUANAR website: http://elearn.luanar.ac.mw/odl or in your ODL centres.)
3. Class representative should send the completed tutor request form to Centre Coordinator.
4. You will be informed of the date for the tutoring service.

2.3 Counselling Support

Counselling support is available to assist you cope with challenges that might negatively affect your studies. You may face challenges such as social, economic and academic. You

are encouraged to consult ODL staff for support.

2.4 Resource Centre

Every regional campus has a resource centre which offers you academic support services. It has a wide range of resources including print and electronic reading materials. In addition to the reading materials, it is equipped with computers with latest application software. The centres provide access to free Internet through WI-FI or cable.

Visit your nearest LUANAR ODL centre and you will find the following in the resource room:

- Print materials such as recommended books for courses in various programmes, periodicals, and modules. You can also access resources from LUANAR library at Bunda Campus provided you have a LUANAR ID.
- Electronic resources in various electronic databases such as AGORA (for Agricultural Information), HINARI, Taylor & Francis. You can access journals and e-books from these databases by visiting the following LUANAR website: http://luanar.ac.mw/library. To access the resources remotely, request for LUANAR login credentials from your Regional Campuses. However, these credentials are not to be shared with any outsider.
- Computers with latest application software. The computers are available for your use including typing your assignments.
- Free Internet which you can access through WI-FI or cable.

2.5 Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Support

ICT support to enhance your learning is available at all ODL centres. You need to familiarize yourself with the various ICT systems like LUANAR-Students portal and Moodle. ICT personnel in these centres will provide you with assistance, where it is needed.

2.5.1 LUANAR- Students Portal Support

- LUANAR-Students portal is an online system that provides access to your admissions records, fees statement, exams results among other services.
- You are required to register for courses and examinations every semester through this online students portal via LUANAR website (http://luanar.ac.mw/studentportal) using your student ID and password.
- When you log in, the Student Dash Board screen will be displayed providing you with options to view various functionalities.

2.5.2 Moodle Support

- Moodle is the platform used as a Learning Management System (LMS) to enable you to:
  - access learning materials for your courses
  - submit assignments
  - view important announcements
  - interact with peers and course facilitators
- You can access Moodle at: http://elearn.luanar.ac.mw
- You need a computer or smart phone with Internet to access Moodle.
- Use Mozilla Firefox browser on your device for best results in accessing Moodle.
- You can install Moodle mobile application on your smartphone to allow you work offline in areas where there is limited Internet access.

If you encounter any problems while using Moodle or LUANAR-Students portal, please contact the LMS Administrator;

Phone: +2651277000/222

Email: elearn@bunda.luanar.mw

Or

ICT Technicians for your satellite centre

2.5.3 Photocopying, Printing and Scanning Services

You have the option to access photocopying, printing and scanning services at ODL centres at a fee.

3. Study Skills and Preparation for Examination

Study skills will help you prepare for examinations. You will, however, need to make regular planning to prevent confusion and also to help you to retain and organize what you are studying.

3.1 Study Skills

It is important that you build your study habits. Think about your normal daily schedule; your family, work commitment and your academic goals to determine your study skills. Below are some tips on study skills:

- Plan on how much time to devote to your academic work
- Develop a weekly study schedule that covers all the courses you are taking in the semester. Plan on which subject to study and when
- Plan on what you intend to achieve in each study session in order to accomplish your goals
- Organise your studies around **WHEN** to study, **WHERE** to study and **HOW MUCH** time to spend on study.

3.1.1 When to study

- Plan your study time: know the best time for study, know your high energy and low energy time of your day. For example, if you a morning person, make sure that you dedicate your study time in the morning.
- Ensure that you include some breaks for relaxing within your study schedule.

3.1.2 Where to study

Ensure that your choice of a place for studying must be

- as free as possible from distractions
- well lit
- properly ventilated
- of comfortable temperature

3.1.3 How much time to spend on study

Time allocated for study session depends t on subjects and how well you know it

- Study based on planned chunks of work
- Dedicate more time on areas that prove difficult to you to ensure that you grasp what you are reading

3.2 Preparation for examinations

Preparation for examination require a great deal of concentration. If you work with concentration, you will achieve more.

Here are some tips for preparing for examinations:

- Set your goals: Read the course overview to understand what the course covers and how it is assessed.
- Ensure that you adequately cover all topics in each course.
- Ensure that you complete all your assignments at least a week before the beginning of examinations
- Minimize distractions and keep your priorities right
- Aim at getting the highest marks possible for each course
- Stick to your learning style which may be quite different from others
- Use your study plan in order to manage your academic workload and achieve more
- Take notes of key information as you study so that you see a bigger picture of the subject matter
- Summarise key sections of each topic in a course
- Familiarize yourself with examination format through reviewing past papers

4.0 Assessment

Your final course assessment grade will come from a combination of continuous assessment and end of course examinations which normally comes at the end of the semester.

4.1 Continuous Assessment

4.1.1 Forms of continuous assessment

The following will be included in the calculation of your final continuous assessment grade:

- Reading
- Mid-term examinations
- Assignments
- Projects
- Research papers
- Quizzes
- Class presentations
- Practical work, etc.

You should note that:

- Every Department/Faculty will specify the type of tasks you will perform for your continuous assessment.
- Writing of the specified assignments for continuous assessment is compulsory.
- All assignments should be submitted by the due dates.

4.1.2 Receiving assignments

- The responsibility of getting all the assignments from facilitators for continuous assessment is with you.
- Ensure that you get all assignments you will be expected to do in a semester during the facilitation period or within the next two weeks after the facilitation period.

4.1.3 Writing of assignments

- Academic dishonesty in form of plagiarism, copying, and cheating is an academic offence and is not tolerated at LUANAR.
  - Plagiarism implies using words or ideas from another source without acknowledging the source.
  - Copying is taking the words, sentences, or ideas from another student and presenting the material as your own work.
  - Cheating is obtaining help for an assignment that is supposed to be done independently.
- Any assignment that has evidence of academic dishonesty shall receive a grade of zero (0).

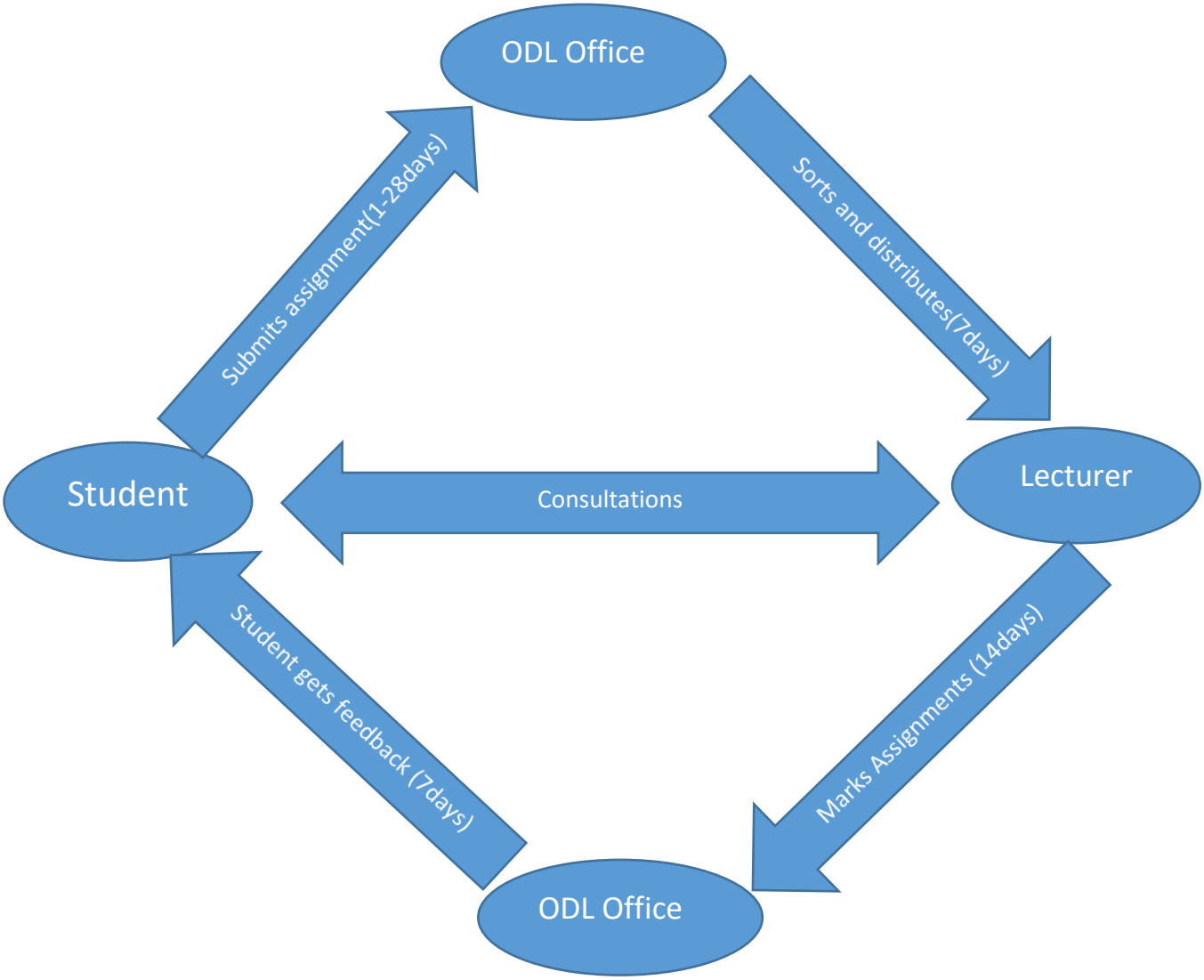
4.1.4 Submission of assignments

- You are expected to submit all your assignments through the Moodle Platform unless if stated otherwise by your facilitator.
- Ensure that you adhere to assignments' due dates.
- Any assignment that is turned in late but within the first five days of the due date will be penalized with a ten percent (10%) deduction from the total marks.
- If you miss submission due dates without valid reasons, you shall be awarded a grade of zero (0) for that assessment.
- If you are unable to submit an assignment on the scheduled date for a legitimate reason, you must inform the ODL Directorate, in writing, with supporting documents such as medical reports within three days of the due date.
- You may be asked to resubmit an assignment in an event that the one you submitted earlier is missing or has been corrupted.
- You will not be allowed to sit for end of semester examination for a course if you have not completed its assignments.

4.1.5 Getting feedback on assignments

- Marking of an assignment shall be completed within three (3) weeks from the due date of the assignment (see diagram of assignment turn around below).

FEEDBACK TO STUDENTS



- You will collect your marked assignments from your respective ODL Satellite centres.
- You should take the responsibility of checking whether marked assignments have reached your ODL satellite centres.

5.0 Examinations

5.1 Preamble

- The formal university examinations are compulsory and performance in these examinations, coupled with performance in the continuous assessment during the semester, will determine your final results.
- You are reminded that examiners may require you to attend an oral examination after the written examinations in order to clarify, or probe, further aspects relating to the written examination.

5.2 Accompanying regulations

You must read this handbook in conjunction with academic Rules and Regulations which can be accessed on student portal. http://luanar.ac.mw/studentportal.

5.3 Scheduling of examinations

- Examinations shall be administered during mid-semester, at the end of each semester, and during deferred examination time.
- All courses for which an end of semester examination is appropriate shall normally be examined at the end of the course.
- Deferred examinations shall be administered immediately after the period set for the normal examinations.
- In cases where you miss a deferred examination for genuine reasons, you will be expected to sit for the examination when it is next offered.

5.4 Timetable

- A consolidated official examination timetable shall be published through the online portals at least ten days before the commencement of the end of semester examinations.
- You must note carefully the dates, times and venues for examinations as given in the final copy of the timetable.
- It is your responsibility to check the timetable and to ensure the correct date, time and venue of each examination.
- Misreading the timetable is not an acceptable excuse for missing an examination.
- Any queries on the timetable should be directed in the first instance to the ODL Directorate.

5.5 Examination Venues

- Examination venues will be as indicated on the final timetable.
- The examinations will be administered in the regional ODL centres, unless stated otherwise.
- The chief invigilator will determine the seating arrangements for examinations.

5.6 Conduct of the End of Semester Examinations

- End of semester examinations shall be conducted under the administration and control of the University Registrar.
- You shall use only your University Registration Number and full name to identify your scripts.

5.7 Absence from or Failure to Write Examination(s)

- You are required to write examinations at the scheduled times unless you are granted prior written permission to sit for the examination at another time.
- If you will absent yourself from an examination without medical or other good cause, you shall be deemed to have failed that examination.

- If you are absent from an examination due to unforeseen circumstances, you must notify the Regional Centre Coordinator, in written form, within 72 hours from the day of the examination.
- If you absent yourself from examinations due to illness, you must submit to the Regional Centre Coordinator a written report supported by a certificate from a medical practitioner within 72 hours from the time of the missed examination
- The University will not accept any excuses for absence which are not properly substantiated and authenticated or submitted within the stipulated time.
- In cases where you fail to write an examination on medical grounds or any other good cause, you shall be allowed to sit the examination during the deferred examination time or at the time the examination is next offered. In such cases, you must submit proof such as a hospital certificate or a copy of a death certificate in the case of bereavement of a close relative, to substantiate the reason for absence have to be presented before admission into the examination.

5.8 Entry into the examination room

a) You are required to be present at the start of examinations.

b) To be admitted to any end of semester examination, you must:
   - have registered as a student of the University, in accordance with the General Academic Regulations.
   - have duly registered for examinations and obtained an examination pass from the academic office.
   - show student identity card and original examination pass.
   - have completed the requirements of the course by attendance and otherwise.

c) You may be admitted up to 30 minutes late but you shall not be given extra time to complete the examination.

d) Take note that if you get to the examination room later than 30 minutes of the start of an examination, you will not be allowed to sit for the examination and a Zero "0" will be recorded for that missed examination.

e) An examination is deemed to be in progress from the time you enter the examination room until all the scripts have been collected.

5.9 Examination Materials

- Answer books, graph papers, mathematical tables, statistical tables and reference materials or any other material required for the examinations will be provided by the Academic Office or the Faculty (Department) concerned. You are not allowed to bring these items into the examination room, nor any other similar items, unless specified prior to the examination by the examiner.
- You must bring your own writing materials (pens, pencils, rulers, rubbers, calculators, etc.).
- You are not allowed to borrow anything from another candidate during examinations.
- All authorised materials (such as basic scientific calculators) must be displayed for scrutiny by the invigilators. Electronic calculators should be portable, silent, battery-powered, nonprinting and not pre-programmable.
- You must write in blue or black ink.
- You are not allowed to bring into the examination room unauthorised material including the following:
  - bags, briefcases, parcels, pencil bags/boxes/cases, mathematical instruments, containers and other similar items;
  - papers, books, notes or equipment other than what is permitted;
  - course materials and dictionaries not supplied or permitted by the examiners;
  - radio, alarm watch, computer, cellular telephone, pager and any other communication device;
  - instruction manual for a calculator and detachable calculator case;
  - permitted materials containing unauthorised annotation;
  - course material written on permitted materials or any part of the candidate's body, clothes, etc.;
  - clothes not being worn;
  - calculators with meeting organisers;
  - hats, caps and other head gear;

- any other items as determined by the invigilator(s).

- Materials not allowed in the examination room must be left at a place specified by the invigilator(s) at your own risk.
- If you are caught with prohibited material, you will be dealt with according to the laid down regulations on misconduct.

5.10 In the Examination Room

- You must obey invigilators' instructions.
- You should maintain absolute silence from the moment you enter an examination room until the examination session ends.
- You must sign the attendance register provided.
- You are required to bring and place your LUANAR student identity cards and examination passes on your examination desks. Any person who is unable to identify himself/herself to the satisfaction of the invigilators shall be barred from the examination and a Zero "0" shall be recorded for the concerned examination.
- You must fill in your LUANAR student registration numbers and full names, clearly and correctly, and other details as required on the front cover of the main answer book, and all supplementary answer books.
- Smoking, eating and drinking are not permitted in the examination room.
- Silence must be maintained throughout the examination and, whilst in the examination room; you must not communicate with each other in any way.
- You shall not be allowed to leave the examination room, except in an emergency, during the first thirty (30) minutes and the last fifteen (15) minutes of the examination.
- You will not be allowed to leave and return to the examination room while the examination is in progress except under escort.

5.11 At the end of the examination

- You must insert the supplementary answer book inside the main answer book and must check the accuracy of all details in the answer books.
- No examination stationery should be removed from the examination room. Rough work done in the answer book must be neatly crossed out. You are allowed to take examination question papers out of the examination room except when answers are written on the question paper.
- You must remain seated until all the examination scripts have been collected by the invigilator(s).
- You must not leave the examination room during the last fifteen (15) minutes of the examination and must remain seated until the examination scripts have been collected by the invigilator(s).
- You shall not be allowed to return to the examination room after you have been out of the room, except under escort or in an emergency.

5.12 Deferred examinations

- Deferred examinations shall be governed by the same procedures for handling normal examinations.
- If for very valid reasons you fail to sit for a deferred examination, you shall be permitted to sit for another deferred examination.
- The grade earned during a deferred examination shall be the actual grade obtained at this examination inclusive of marks from continuous assessment.
- If for no valid reasons you fail to write a deferred examination, you shall be given a grade of F.