

RUFORUM Annual General Meeting 2019

Skills Enhancement Training for Masters Students and Emerging Scientists at
University of Cape Coast, Ghana

30th November – 3rd Dec. 2019

Thesis Proposal Development, Scholarly Writing and Presentations

Concept Note

Background

Project proposal development skills are crucial for researchers in Africa in order to mobilize research resources that are increasingly competitive, yet essential for the continued engagement of researchers and sustained performance of the agricultural research sector. Students at university particularly postgraduate students have opportunity to attain skills in proposal development as part of the training process when they develop Proposals for their respective Thesis research. Unfortunately, such skills are rarely catered for in the universities curricular and the assumption is that the students will learn through interactions with their supervisors.

Similarly competence in scientific writing and targeted packaging of information are critical ingredients for agricultural researchers to contribute meaningfully to knowledge management and to institutional visibility worldwide. Besides, meticulous writing is an attribute often cautiously or otherwise associated with high quality and credible research scholarly products. It is a major ingredient for uninterrupted reading of documents; besides being a quality associated with celebrities in science. African research institutions are presently characterized by generally poor publication levels in regional and international peer reviewed journals, owing to diminishing capacity in scientific writing skills and academic mentorship. African researchers must reposition themselves or be facilitated to do so in order to connect with the current art and design of manuscript writing, to resonate with the obtaining cutting edge frontier knowledge and readership interests.

It is in light of this that the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) organizes facilitator-led training Workshops/ Write-shops to empower students and faculty at member universities. This particular

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skills enhancement training at the University of Cape Coast in Ghana will focus on Thesis Proposal Development and Scholarly Publishing. In addition to skills in proposal development, and scholarly writing, scholars must have applicable skills in presenting their work using other avenues apart from publications. Such avenues include Workshops and Convening Events at which students are usually required to make oral presentations. At this training, a session on Effective Presentations will be held with a view to build capacity of participants to effectively deliver especially oral presentations.

Aims and Objectives of the side Event

The objective of the write-shop is to develop and/or strengthen capacity of postgraduate (Masters – level) students of the University of Cape Coast (UCC) skills and competences in proposal development, scholarly writing for journal manuscript production and presentations in order to contribute to global frontier knowledge management.

Approach and Methodology

The workshop will cover three important aspects in the training process of postgraduate students, namely, (i) thesis proposal development; (ii) manuscript development, i.e., scientific writing principles and practices, and manuscript writing itself; and, (iii) oral presentation. The approach will be largely hands-on, but frequently preceded by guiding presentations and plenary discussions led by the facilitators. A short questionnaire will be administered using the Monkey Survey prior to the workshop. The aggregated analysis of the survey will constitute a needs assessments to be used by the Facilitators to tailor the program profiles with a view to cover participants needs. Thus, the Program outline presented in Section 6 of this concept is not cast-in-stone but is subject to changes based on pre-workshop submissions by participants.

Students at postgraduate level have a broad and diverse range of experience, knowledge plurality and shaped perceptions that can either be used to leverage further attainment of skills or otherwise. The Facilitators will focus the training to achieve its objectives by using a combination of learning styles. Resource materials and literature will be made available to participants in soft copies.

A group discussion approach will be adopted to foster interdisciplinarity, harmonise the different levels of experience in scientific writing skills to enhance sharing of experiences. Group discussion outputs will be presented in plenary for inputs from facilitators and participants. A logical step by step format will be used for the three components of the workshop (Thesis proposal development; scholarly writing, and Presentations). Each day will end with an

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evaluation by the participants. The outputs of the evaluation will be presented the next day except for the last day when the overall evaluation will be discussed. In addition to daily evaluations, participants at the Closing Session evaluate the effectiveness of the workshop using a formal evaluation template. This training will be a unique experience that will offer participants a one-one interaction opportunity with the facilitators, along with working groups. For this to be achieved, it is imperative that a modest number of students will be involved. Furthermore, take-home exercises will be inevitable and the full cooperation of the participants is mandatory for the course to achieve its objectives. It is also hoped that with the final decision of RUFORUM, all diligent participants will receive certificates of attendance/performance in the course. The following resources will be needed for the successful implementation of the write-shop:

- I. Uninterrupted access to functional computers (laptops) throughout the training period
- II. Access to internet during the period of the workshop
- III. Memory stick for each participant to use during the write-shop
- IV. PPT projector, 2-3 reams of printer paper, printer loaded with a cartridge, a computer-compatible printer, access to photocopier, 2 packets of marker pens, 5 flip charts and their stands, 10 pieces of manila paper in three different colours, 2 masking tapes, a stapler and packet of staples, and package of participants stationery

**Outputs/
outcomes**

The specific outputs will of necessity depend on the needs of the client and will be outlined in the contract between the client and the contractor. Nevertheless, the following outputs are envisaged:

- a) Draft manuscripts and Thesis proposals
- b) Draft PowerPoint and Poster presentations for upcoming scientific Conference (s)
- c) A comprehensive report detailing workshop proceedings and recommendations.

**Venue and
Participants**

The side event will take place at the University of Cape Coast in Ghana. The participants will be MSC students from Ghanaian Universities who are member of the RUFORUM Network.

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**Side Event
Organizers
and Contact**

The organiser is RUFORUM and University of Cape Coast. The facilitators will be:

1. Dr. Paul Nampala, Science Editor, African Crop Science Journal, Geotropic Consults Ltd/ Scholarly Works Associates, P.O. Box 37052, Kampala, Uganda. Tel. 256-772-468919, Email: nampalap@yahoo.co.uk
2. Prof. J.S. Tenywa, Editor-in-Chief, African Crop Science Journal, c/o College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, Makerere University, P.O. Box 7062, Kampala, Uganda, Tel. +256-772-487404, Email: johntenywa@gmail.com

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Draft Program / Outlines

Time	Friday 29 November 2019	Saturday 30 November 2019	Sunday 1 st December 2019	Monday 2 December 2019	Tuesday 03 December 2019
	Thesis Proposal Development		Scholarly Writing		Presentations
0830-1015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registration Opening Ceremony Introduction of participants-UCC and RUFORUM Objectives and overview of TNA report-Facilitators Training expectations, - Facilitators Remarks from Executive Secretary, RUFORUM Opening speech by Guest of honor-UCC Group Photograph	Recap of Day 1 Developing Activities per objective <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Materials and Methods presentation Group Exercise 3: Developing Materials and Methods Section Outputs of Group Exercise 3: Plenary Presentation and Discussion 	Recap of Day 2 Literature Utilization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Literature Citation Styles, Reference Listing & Introduction to Reference Management Software Group Exercise 6: Critic of Published Paper on Lit. Review & Utilization 	Recap of Day 3 Discussion Section <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation: Tips on writing Discussion Section(s) Group Exercise 9: Writing Your Thesis Discussion Sessions Feedback on outputs from Group Exercise 9, and Plenary Discussion 	Recap of Day 4 Other Forms of Presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective Oral Presentation Poster Presentation Exercise 12: Prepare Poster
1015-1030	Health Break	Health Break	Health Break	Health Break	Health Break
1030-1300	Getting Started with Thesis Research Proposal Devt. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tips in Scientific Writing Structure Components of a Thesis Research Proposal Starting Point: Problem Identification & Analysis Group Exercise 1: Problem Analysis 	Implementation Plans <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Budget, Source of Funds & Work plan for your proposal Plenary Discussion 	Scholarly Manuscripts – Getting Started <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Types, Structure and Components of a scholarly manuscripts Moving from Projects/Thesis to MS Streamline Objective(s) and align with available data How to arrange and present Results 	Conclusion and Recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation: Tips on Writing MS Conclusion and Recommendation Sections Group Exercise 10: Critique of published Conclusion and Recommendation from published articles Plenary Presentation and Discussion of Group Exercise 10 	Rehearsal for Oral Presentation skills & Closing Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pitching by each participant Overall Evaluation Official Closure
1300-1400	Lunch Break	Lunch Break	Lunch Break	Lunch Break	Lunch Break

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1400-1515	<p>Linking Problem Analysis to Research Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outputs of Group Exercise 1: Plenary Presentation and Discussion 	<p>Compelling Introduction Section for your Thesis Proposal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction Section • Group Exercise 4: Developing Introduction Section for Thesis Research Proposal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Exercise 7: Evaluating data for relevant illustrations • Outputs of Group Exercise 7: Plenary Presentation and Discussion 	<p>Other components of MS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation – Guidelines on Revisiting Draft Methodology, Introduction, and Title Sections of project report. thesis to reflect the new orientation of the objective(s) / key message of MS 	
1515-1530	<i>Health Break</i>	<i>Health Break</i>	<i>Health Break</i>	<i>Health Break</i>	<i>Health Break</i>
1530-1645	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moving from Problem Analysis to Developing Objectives • Group Exercise 2: Developing Objectives 	<p>Your Thesis Title</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a Working Title for your Thesis Research Proposal • Group Exercise 5: Developing a Working Title for Thesis Research Proposal • Feedback on Group Exercise 5 	<p>Narrative Text for selected illustrations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation on Tips Interpretation of Results • Group Exercise 8: Writing Interpretation of Results 	<p>Pulling it all together – consolidating Draft MS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation: Tips on Writing Thesis Abstract Section • Group Exercise 11: Review given Examples of published Abstracts • Recapitulation on process of developing scholarly manuscripts and packaging 	
1645-1745	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outputs of Group Exercise 2: Plenary Presentation and Discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentation: How to write Abstract Section for a Research Proposal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plenary Discussions • Students Clinic with Facilitators 	<p>Submission to Journal and other post MS development issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying and submission of MS to an appropriate Journal for your Manuscript • Responding to Review comments • Ethics in Scholarship 	

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