ICT-4MRPQ

Co-funded by the European Union

Strengthening Capacity for ICT Usage and Policy Reforms for Relevant and Quality Masters Research Process Management in Uganda's Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) – ICT-4MRPQ



May 18, 2023 in the Faculty of Applied Science and Technology, Kihumuro campus

MAKERERE UNIVERSITY

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1.1 Introduction

Strengthening Capacity for ICT Usage and Policy Reforms for Relevant and Quality Masters Research Process Management in Uganda's Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) – ICT-4MRPQ is a project co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union. Mbarara University of Science and Technology together with other beneficiaries which include, Makerere University Business School, Stiching VU Amsterdam, Kyazze Kankaka & Co. Advocates, Makerere University, Uganda Chapter for Corporate Social Responsibility Initiatives, Universidade de Lisboa and the National Council for Higher Education are the implementers of the project. The project will run for 42 months starting from 1st January 2023 to 31st July 2026. The overall Coordinating partner institution being Makerere University Business School (MUBS) under the able leadership of Assoc. Prof. David Katamba. This report was compiled by Ms. Winfred Aliguma, the Project Administrator for MUST.

1.2 Welcome Remarks by the MUST Coordinator, Assoc. Prof. Charles Tushabomwe-Kazooba



He observed protocol and welcomed all participants to the launch and E-Supervision training for both academic and administrative staff. He gave a brief background of the project. He explained that the main objective of the ICT-4MRPQ project was to strengthen Uganda's Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) capacity to use ICT in Masters' research journey quality management processes and devise Policy reforms for relevant high-quality research outputs. He further explained that the ICT-4MRPQ project would strengthen quality and relevance of masters' students research at Uganda's HEIs through improved regulative / policy mandate of Uganda's National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) and integration of ICT usage into managing the students' research journey. Additionally, that the project would bring about E-Supervision, Mobile Application and Virtual meetings to close master's research quality gaps. He mentioned that Uganda HEIs counterparts would benefit from demonstrated increased knowledge, mobility & adoption of new technologies while the European partners would benefit from knowledge and internationalization. He noted that at least 700 staff and 1,500 students would be inter-connected on a NCHE approved Research E-Supervision Platform. The key out puts are both short and long term. The short term include timely graduation of students, reduced supervision inconsistencies, better keeping of student-interaction records and examiners would set dedicated research goals and objectives for research assessments. While the long term results include enhanced research capacity and employable graduates.

1.3 Project Overview by Mr. Ntaro Moses

He observed protocol and welcomed everyone to the E-supervision launch and training. He explained that COVID-19 pandemic devastated university education in Uganda to an extent that over 400,000 university students were (and are still) left without physical contact with their facilitators and university administrators yet there were over 20,000 masters' students who must undertake a supervised research project. That the lack of contact had affected the relevancy of masters' research, the quality of the supervision process, the quality of students graduating and those yet to graduate in the next over 5 years. He mentioned that, covid-19 just aggravated the already existing problems faced by HEIs in Uganda, specifically, the deteriorating quality of the masters' research processes. The challenges included how a master's student identifies a nationally relevant researchable area, how he/she is supervised and assessed and the way viva voce assessments are organised. He explained that the challenges in the master's research process created quality assurance gaps which were grouped by ICT-4MRPQ into policy and practice of research, innovation and management of research. The main objective of the project was to strengthen higher education institutions capacity to use ICT in Masters' research journey quality management processes and devise policy reforms for relevant high-quality research outputs at HEIs in Uganda.



The working objectives include: (i) updating the research process quality management policies and guidelines, (ii) increase capacity of Uganda's NCHE and HEIs to participate in the definition, (iii) implement and monitor master's research policy reforms necessary for setting up a national common master's student research agenda, (iv) document critical aspects of the master's student research journey which should be monitored for relevancy to national development priorities and quality both within and between Uganda's HEIs, (v) build capacity in using ICT as a digital skill inclusion mechanism which can reduce various forms of discrimination against women /girls (both students and facilitators / lecturers), (vi) increase the number of master graduates capable of conducting quality and relevant research along with increased skilled research supervisors and administrators and (vii) promote local and international mobility and cooperation in exchanging good practices among and between NCHE, individual HEIs in Uganda and HEIs in Europe at institutional level fostering systemic improvements in master's degree research process quality and innovations management.

He mentioned that the project contributes to providing solutions to the challenges encountered in the research process by ensuring better student-supervisor

interaction records management, reducing redundancies in supervisor-student skills transfer, increasing transparency in viva-voce conduct and curbing plagiarism. The project specific interventions include (i) the introduction of E-Supervision, mobile App. and (ii) proposing policy reforms at national level through the National Council for Higher Education. New courses and programs would be developed, administrative and academic staff would be trained in using ICT to manage the research process.

He concluded by mentioning some of the milestones so far registered which included the project kick off meeting on 23rd January 2023 at Makerere University Business School in Kampala, project website developed, E-Supervision web portal platform developed and currently the users being trained, project Quality Assurance Plan developed in April 2023 and the project communications and dissemination plan developed in April 2023.

1.4. Official opening by Prof. Nixon Kamukama (Deputy Vice Chancellor AA)



Prof. Kamukama thanked Prof. Charles Tushabomwe-Kazooba for inviting him, that it was a great opportunity. He thanked him for organising the event that brings to the fore the technology that was taking shape. He thanked the organisers for the initiative and the direction they were taking. He explained that the world was moving fast and therefore people needed to move with it. The E-Supervision was the way to go since the digital world was at hand. He remarked that the physical assets were becoming irrelevant and technology being developed would help to embrace the new era. He wondered why one would ask a student to come all the way from Mbale to meet a supervisor in Mbarara and when that student arrives, the supervisor starts giving excuses that he was not around, or may have misplaced the student's work. He posed some questions: who is in the kitchen? Are we ready to walk the talk? He noted that COVID-19 proved that some lecturers did not know how to use computers. He wondered that if a senior lecturer cannot use a computer then what would be expected of the rest. He noted the need to have a mindset change otherwise nothing much could be achieved. He informed participants that the CITT was in touch with the cyber school technology trying to come up with an application of IT and online teaching. That as a university, there was a need to decongest the lecture rooms without incurring data costs. That as a lecturer, why would one leave home to come to MUST to teach or a student coming from a place like Katete to attend lectures. That it was the direction where the world was going. He mentioned that much would be achieved if the project objectives were met. He noted that the cyber school had a rich package and if MUST was able to get them on board, then MUST

would go miles. He encouraged participants to forget the status quo and appreciate the new technology. He informed participants that he had been supervising students online who have graduated and therefore E-Supervision was real and the way to go. He advised that those who want to remain at the same status, the world would catch up with them. He encouraged participants about the need to put efforts together and have mindset change. He declared the training open.

2.1 E-Supervision training by Dr. Deborah Natumanya



She welcomed participants to the E-Supervision training. She explained that the system had three main users which include the Administrator who oversees the research process and in the case of MUST, it would be the Directorate of Research and Graduate Training (DRGT), the second user was the research supervisor and the third user was the masters' student.

Dr. Natumanya demonstrated how the three users (Administrator, research supervisor and student) interface with the system. The Administrator feeds in information into the system like the name of student, registration number, academic programme for which the student is registered, name of supervisor allocated to the student with their areas of expertise and research interests, monitoring the progress of the student, can see how many students allocated to the different supervisors, how many have completed, the progress of each of the students. She explained that once the administrator has assigned the student a supervisor, the supervisor receives an e-mail about the students allocated to him/her. When the student is allocated a supervisor, he/she receives an e-mail informing him/her of the supervisor he/she has been allocated to. The Administrator then monitors the supervision process of the students in all the faculties seeing their research completion rates. The Administrator is able to add any more Administrators to the system where necessary. The Administrator can give assessment criteria to use. For example he/she could add the Faculty Administrator. The criteria would be that the Administrator to be added should have an e-mail address, title e.g. Head of Department. The Administrator receives an e-mail once added to the system. The system has an option of adding or deleting an Administrator. The Administrator can also receive complaints from students and supervisors. She explained that whatever the supervisor does, the Administrator is able to see them on the system. She demonstrated how to add a student where by the Administrator inputs the student's name, selects gender of the student, academic year and research title. She explained how the

Administrator can add a reviewer following the same process as in adding a research supervisor.

She changed roles and demonstrated the side of the research supervisor and also the side of the student. She explained that students must complete each stage before moving to the next stage. She noted that every time one is assigned a role, he/she receives a notification to that effect.

2.2 Question and answer session led by Assoc. Prof. Edgar Mulogo

Suggestion: It would be good to link the system to payment so that the supervisor is paid as soon as possible. For example, if I am supervising a PhD student, I should receive my 170,000 as soon as the student completes his/her research.

Comment: The number of graduate students is becoming many, I wish if they can be incorporated with the Directorate of Research and Graduate Training (DRGT) and Faculty Administrators help to harmonise the process. This can help to synergize the process.

Question: I have seen that you have to go from research topic and then to other stages, but you cannot have a topic without a problem. I don't know whether the system can allow for someone to first identify a problem. Secondly, can't I reject a student for example if she is my wife or can't the student also reject a supervisor?

Answer: Assoc. Prof. Edgar explained that the suggestions will be incorporated into the system and comments would be looked into.

Question: Can the system detect if a student has overstayed on the program?
Answer: From what is done in Makerere University, when a registration expires, then the student has expired as well.
Supplement: When working with students, the research supervisor may not know when the student started, but the system can.

Question: If a student is being harassed, can he /she complain?
Answer: Yes, he/she can.

Question: Some students have more than one research supervisors. Is there a possibility to have all the research supervisors incorporated in the system?
Answer: At the moment, two supervisors are catered for by the system and both can see the same information.
Supplement: We are trying to integrate and the comment on some students having three supervisors will be considered.

Question: What does zero rating mean?
Answer: What zero rating mean is that we shall talk to MTN, Airtel and they zero rate under our domain. In other words we do not have to incur data costs.

Question: I have a concern. You have integrated zoom, plagiarism, have you integrated e-resources in the system?
Answer: We shall look into that.

Question: Is there an area where there is an agreement where for example a supervisor says, if I give a comment the student should respond within a given time period like two weeks?
Answer: The time period is not yet fixed but we shall look into that.

Comment: If a student is rejected by a supervisor then another supervisor takes him on. There is a tendency that some supervisors take on students at the last minute to take the credit. The system should not allow that.

Comment: I thank the people who conceived the idea. You are doing the right thing. This is a cross cutting issue and this reminds me of some scenario. In one of the universities abroad, there was a professor who had 10,000 students to supervise. There should be an entry point that provides a solution to a dilemma. Without supervision, there is a dilemma. I agree with group supervision, without the system, this may be impossible. I pick an example of COVID-19 which devastated the whole world. This was the first; we do not know which other viruses that are coming. I know some students will prefer face to face supervision. There are others who would speed up the recorded e-learning because they have other things to do. Let us not lag behind and we need to do more. This business of telling stories will soon end. I appeal to you members; this is a wakeup call for all of us. Even in preaching, we have seen this new era. When ICT languages come together KCMUC (Kilimanjaro Christian Medical University College) exams are not cheated because every 5 minutes the system shuts up. At one time, with my colleague, Prof. Maling, we visited LUND University and there was no library. When we asked, we were told that the library was with us. I thank the team; you have started in the right direction.

Question: I would be relieved of the challenges I face with the physical supervision. Does the system capture track changes and generate a report. I would also request for exposure to the system by different faculties and tailor it to the different faculty needs. Can the system generate progress reports for individual students?

Answer: Yes the system can capture track changes but have not yet generated the reports but those can be worked on.

Question: Does the co-supervisors able to see the feedback to students? Can they see the feedback from the co-supervisors? Given that I am senior, I might fear to put a comment that can be seen by the juniors.
Answer: Both supervisors can see comments from each other but maybe there is need for some privacy but this may lead to repetition where the different supervisors send same comments to the student. We thought it would be more transparent that way.

Supplement: There is a zoom link where any information can be sent.

Supplement: Where supervisors disagree, they need to first agree before sending comments to the students.

Question: Does the system cater for both humanities and science programmes since they tend to differ? In other words is the system cross cutting for all to fit in? Can the system be loaded onto our laptops and one interacts with the system as the trainer is training? If not then we can use the computer laboratory so that we do hands on training.
Answer: It can be done, though later.

Supplement: The feedback you are giving us is very important, we are going to integrate all and come up with the best fit for all universities.

Question: What I am sure about, is vulnerability potential. From what I have seen, the system gives a default password. How is it protected? I proposed the system giving a random figure with probably numbers and characters for protection purposes.

Answer: We shall look into that.

Question: Is there a provision for close communication?
Answer: Yes, there is zoom. One can also send e-mails.

Question: The Administrator before he/she approves should be after consulting others. It would be good for all those involved to have rights to the system and not just one person.
Answer: The proposal level, it is the Directorate of Research and Graduate Training (DRGT) that organises that. That is why it is the Administrator.
Supplement: There is a hierarchy through which the research approvals are done.

Question: I have an interest in plagiarism. How are you incorporating it into the system? There is Artificial Intelligence – how about that?
Answer: We have Turnitin software that will help us track plagiarism rates. It can be used at every level of research so that the student is able to work on these challenges at every stage.

Question: I need clarification on the grading criteria. As explained by the presenter, if I am a student and have addressed all comments from my supervisor, can the system generate a report about that?
Answer: Grading is set by the Administrator from DRGT.

Comment: I have not seen the Research Ethics Committee in the system. There is need to include it as well in one of the approval stages of research.

3.1 Closing Remarks by Prof. Jerome Kabakyenga



Professor Jerome Kabakyenga thanked the MUST Coordinator Assoc. Prof. Charles Tushabomwe-Kazooba for the opportunity. On behalf of the participants, he thanked the organizers for having hunted well to win the project. He noted that much as universities receive funding from the government, staff have to go out and look for resources in form of projects and grants to do what they want to do. He remarked that European funded grants were good with less indirect costs although they involve much paper work. He encouraged members to embrace such opportunities when they come across them. He gave an example of the Great Institute which he visited in 2002 in the United Kingdom that does not have a physical library. That after that visit, the LUND project was started at MUST and was the first project to have internet in the whole university. He emphasized the need to move with the technology as seen in the E-Supervision training. That the project was going to help streamline the master's research process. He noted that much as the event was named E-Supervision training, it was an insight. He informed members that the same should be adopted for the PhD students as well. He concluded by thanking the organisers for the opportunity.

Some Photos




Some of the participants at the registration desk







Some of the participants during the ICT -4MRPQ Launch & E-Supervision training

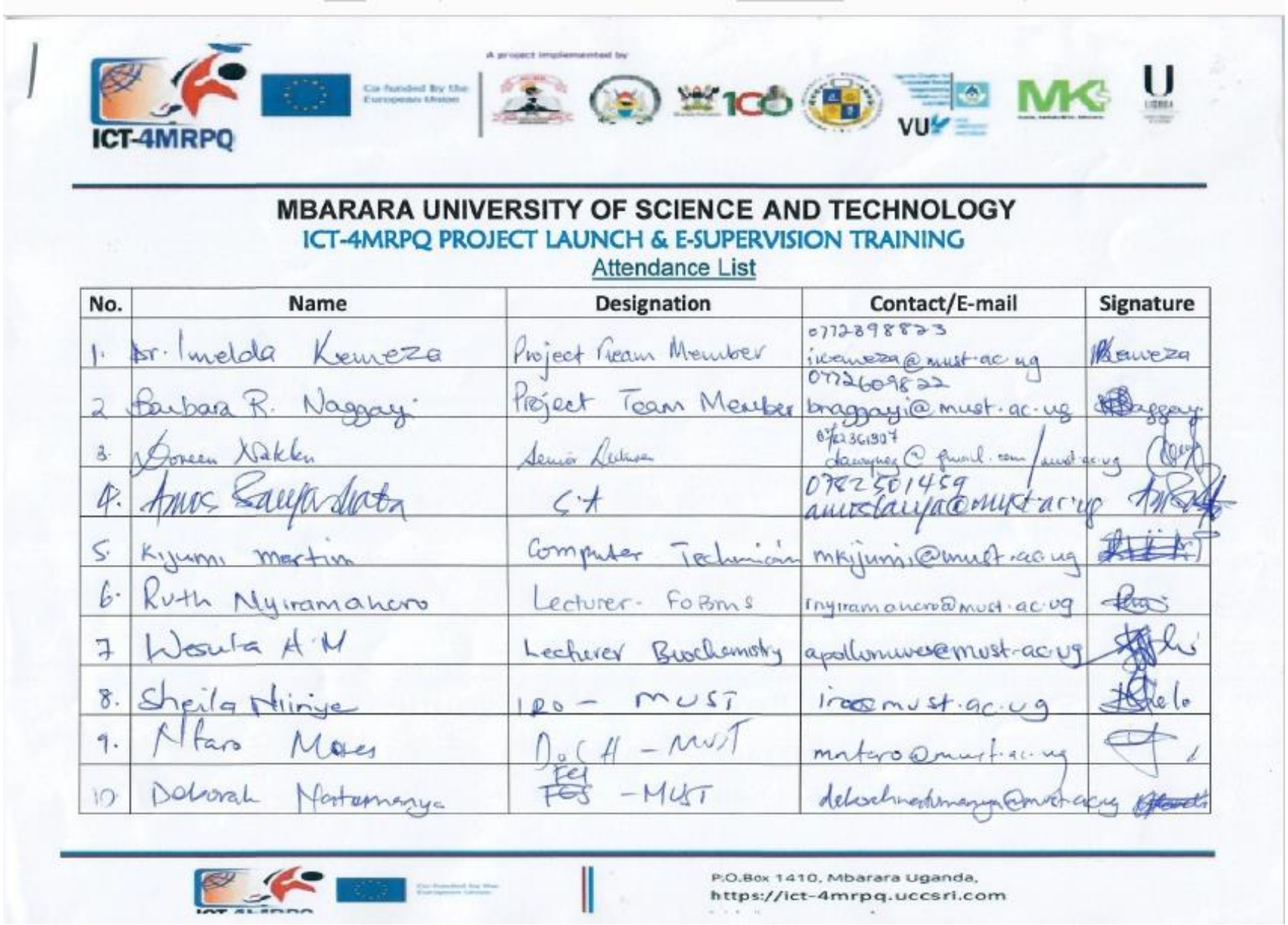
Group photo





Interactions during the tea break

Appendix 1: List of participants



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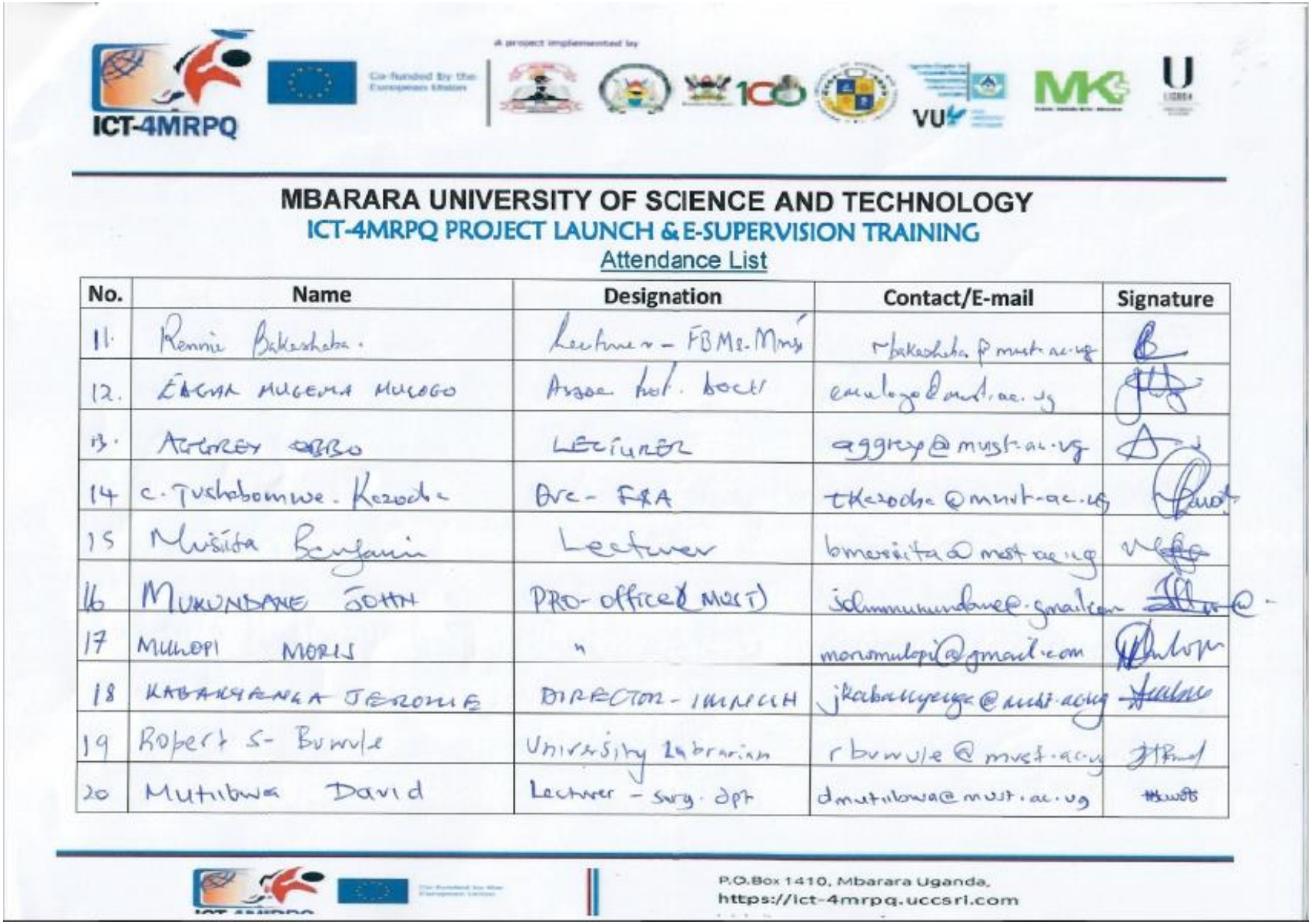
MBARARA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

ICT-4MRPQ PROJECT LAUNCH & E-SUPERVISION TRAINING

Attendance List

No.	Name	Designation	Contact/E-mail	Signature
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6.	Ruth Nyiramahoro	Lecturer- FoBMS	rnyiramahoro@must.ac.ug	
7	Wesula A.M	Lecturer Biochemistry	apollowwe@must.ac.ug	
8.	Sheila Niinye	IRO - MUST	iro@must.ac.ug	
9.	Mtaro Moses	D.C.H - MUST	mtaro@must.ac.ug	
10	Deborah Matamanya	~~FCI~~ FOS - MUST	deborahmatamanya@must.ac.ug	

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ICT-4MRPQ PROJECT LAUNCH & E-SUPERVISION TRAINING

Attendance List

No.	Name	Designation	Contact/E-mail	Signature
11.	Rennie Bakeshaba.	Lecturer – FBMS-MUST	rbakeshaba@must.ac.ug	
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MBARARA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

ICT-4MRPQ PROJECT LAUNCH & E-SUPERVISION TRAINING

Attendance List

No.	Name	Designation	Contact/E-mail	Signature
21.	JURUA EDWARD	Assoc Prof	ejurua@gmail.com	
22.	OKOT DAVIS KILAMAT	S. Lecturer	okotdavis@must.ac.ug	
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25.	Nixon Kamukama	DVC-AA	nkamukama@must.ac.ug	
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27.	Dr Mugyenyi Godfrey	Senior Lecturer	gmugyenyi@Must.ac.ug	
28	Sr. Jane Yatuha	Senior Lecturer	jyatuha@must.ac.ug	Jane Yatuha
29	VICENT RUTAGANGIRWA	A/h FAST	rutagangirs@must.ac.ug	
30	Cleophas Kasoma-Kasirime, PhD	S. Lecturer FIS	ckasoma@must.ac.ug	



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ICT-4MRPQ PROJECT LAUNCH & E-SUPERVISION TRAINING

Attendance List

No.	Name	Designation	Contact/E-mail	Signature
31.	Dr. Alice Mwesigwa	Lecturer	0782314310	
32	Denis Bbosa	Deputy Dean FAST	0778141789	
33	Joseph Nganzi	Dean, FoM	0703818336	
34	GEOFFREY MUTEBI	AUDITOR	0781496298	
35.	J. obungoloch	Dean, FAST	0775[illegible]196	
36	Magyezi felix		0772621196	
37	Wendo Mlahagwa. O.	J. Lecturer	0753717856	
38.	JOHN ZIINE	A. Lecturer	0782674242	
39.	AHEEBWE B.K EMMANUEL	PHARMBIOTRAC ADMINISTRATOR	0774373609	
40	GAD RUZAAMA	GOBERS	0772 621302	

MBARARA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

ICT-4MRPQ PROJECT LAUNCH & E-SUPERVISION TRAINING

Attendance List

No.	Name	Designation	Contact/E-mail	Signature
41	Mbabazi Margaret	Grants Officer	mmmbabazi@must.ac.ug	
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47	Aliguma Winfred	PPS/Team member	waliguma@must.ac.ug	
48	Melchi Byamukama	US	us@must.ac.ug	
49	Ezra Nuwinda	Grants finance Officer	enuwinda@must.ac.ug	
50				

Appendix 2: Programme for the day



ICT-4MRPQ PROJECT LAUNCH & E-SUPERVISION TRAINING

"Strengthening Capacity for ICT Usage and Policy Reforms for Relevant and Quality Masters Research Process Management in Uganda's Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) – ICT-4MRPQ"

Venue: Auditorium, FAST Building, Kihumuro

Date: May 18, 2023

Time	Activity	Person Responsible
08:00 – 08:40 a.m.	Arrival and Registration of Participants in the Auditorium in the Faculty of Applied Science and Technology, Kihumuro	Ms. Viola Nabaasa & Ms. Margaret Mbabazi
08:40 – 08:50 a.m.	**OPENING CEREMONY**	Ms. Sheila Niinye
09:00 – 09:10 a.m.	Welcome remarks and project brief by the MUST Project Coordinator – Assoc. Prof. Charles Tushabomwe-Kazooba	Assoc. Prof. Charles Tushabomwe-Kazooba
09:11 – 09:20 a.m.	Opening remarks by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (AA) – Prof. Nixon Kamukama	Prof. Nixon Kamukama
09:20 - 09:27 a.m.	Group photo	Ms. Sheila Niinye
	WORKING TEA	
10.00 –10:50 a.m.	E-Supervision training	Dr. Deborah Natumanya, Assoc. Prof. Edgar Mulogo, Dr. Imelda Kemeza, Mr. Moses Ntaro, Ms. Barbara Naggayi,
10.50 – 11:40 a.m.	Questions and answer session	
11:45 – 12:00 p.m.	Closing Remarks	
12:00 p.m.	**DEPARTURE**	
	Report writing	Ms. Winfred Aliguma

Appendix 3: Letter of invitation

Ref: MUST/ICT-4MRPQ

11th May 2023

Dr. Joseph Ngonzi
Dean, Faculty of Medicine
MUST

Dear Dr. Ngonzi

RE: INVITATION TO THE LAUNCH AND E-SUPERVISION TRAINING

Mbarara University of Science and Technology together with other partners which include, Stiching VU Amsterdam, Kyazze Kankaka & Co. Advocates, Makerere University, Uganda Chapter for Corporate Social Responsibility Initiatives, Universidade de Lisboa and the National Council for Higher Education won a European Union grant titled ***"Strengthening Capacity for ICT Usage and Policy Reforms for Relevant and Quality Masters Research Process Management in Uganda's Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) – ICT-4MRPQ".*** The project will run for 42 months starting from 1st January 2023 to 31st July 2026. The overall Coordinating partner is Makerere University Business School (MUBS). A team of nine (09) scientists was established at Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST) to implement the eight (08) work packages.

This is to cordially invite you to the launch and e-supervision training for administrative & academic staff scheduled for May 18, 2023 in the auditorium in the Faculty of Applied Science and Technology, Kihumuro. Attached please find the tentative program for the day.

Thank you.

……
ASSOC. PROF.CHARLES TUSHABOMWE-KAZOOBA
Project Coordinator, MUST
ICT-4MRPQ Project

Encl.

Ref: MUST/ICT-4MRPQ

11th May 2023

Dr. Joseph Ngonzi
Dean, Faculty of Medicine
MUST

Dear Dr. Ngonzi

RE: INVITATION TO THE LAUNCH AND E-SUPERVISION TRAINING

Mbarara University of Science and Technology together with other partners which include, Stiching VU Amsterdam, Kyazze Kankaka & Co. Advocates, Makerere University, Uganda Chapter for Corporate Social Responsibility Initiatives, Universidade de Lisboa and the National Council for Higher Education won a European Union grant titled ***"Strengthening Capacity for ICT Usage and Policy Reforms for Relevant and Quality Masters Research Process Management in Uganda's Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) – ICT-4MRPQ".*** The project will run for 42 months starting from 1st January 2023 to 31st July 2026. The overall Coordinating partner is Makerere University Business School (MUBS). A team of nine (09) scientists was established at Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST) to implement the eight (08) work packages.

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Thank you.

.....
ASSOC. PROF.CHARLES TUSHABOMWE-KAZOOBA
Project Coordinator, MUST
ICT-4MRPQ Project

Encl.

Appendix 4: Comments/Suggestions for improving the e-supervision platform

1. That E-supervision platform/innovation would equally benefit PhD students.
2. That E-supervision platform be linked to the payments systems so as to handle issues with tuition defaulting.
3. That monitoring of progress be emphasized
4. That a time frame be tagged to each of the research stages i.e. background, problem statement, chapter one, two, three, etc be.
5. Suggested provision for reasons for a student /supervisor rejection i.e. that there should be a procedure for rejecting to supervise a student and vice versa. This may be from institutional policies on supervisor rejecting to supervise a student and vice versa.
6. That the research process should allow reverse edits at different stages since research ideas are likely to change from time to time i.e. a student or supervisor should be able to revisit a previously completed stage and make edits.
7. That co-supervision should allow different departments or institution and also ability for co supervisors to monitor and track comments from their colleagues.
8. That e-library resources be incorporated
9. That there should be a possibility to print out an individual research progress as well as generate a progress report for individual students. These reports are usually populated at the end of every three to six months.
10. That the default 1-6 password is prone to vulnerabilities and thus a proposal of a random figure with probably numbers and characters.
11. That the approval process be included within the platform i.e how is the proposal or final thesis approved and which stakeholders are involved?
12. That the publications obtained from the research be linked to the e-supervision platform
13. Proposed that the Faculty Research Committee and Institution's Research Ethics Committee be incorporated on the platform