



## **GUIDELINES ON GRADUATE AWARDS AND PRIZES**

Approved by Academic Senate meeting of 14<sup>th</sup> November 2017

## Table of Contents

1. Purpose .....	2
2. Definitions .....	2
3. Scope .....	2
4. Guidelines Statement.....	2
5. Key Principles .....	3
6. Sponsorship.....	3
7. Eligibility criteria.....	3
8. Decision- making processes .....	4
9. Roles & Responsibilities .....	5
References.....	5

## 1. Purpose

The purpose of this document is to set out the University of Rwanda (UR) Guidelines on Graduate Awards and Prizes held in recognition of academic performance. These guidelines establish the eligibility criteria, decision-making processes and the roles and responsibilities of concerned organs.

## 2. Definitions

**2.1 Academic achievement:** *Academic achievement* represents performance outcomes that indicate the extent to which a person has accomplished specific goals that were the focus of activities in instructional environments, specifically in school, college, and university (Steinmayr, Ricarda; MeiBner, Anja; Weidinger, Anne, F.; and Wirthwein, Linda., 2015).

**2.2. Academic excellence:** *Academic excellence* is the demonstrated ability to perform, achieve, and/or excel in scholastic activities. Academic excellence has been identified with achieving high grades and superior performance (California State University, Fresno , 2017)

**2.3. Award:** A prize or other mark of recognition given in honour of an achievement.

**2.4. Eligible Graduate:** A Graduate who meets the eligibility criteria for the relevant University prize.

**2.5. Prize :** A sum of money or a specified article awarded to a student, normally for academic achievement while studying for a degree, diploma or certificate of the University

**2.6. Sponsor:** A person or entity providing a University prize.

**2.7. University prizes:** Prizes made to students in recognition of academic merit on their part in the course of their studies at UR.

## 3. Scope

These guidelines apply to all students of UR in all academic programmes and registered for different qualifications (Diploma, Bachelors degree, Postgraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma, and Masters Degree).

## 4. Guidelines Statement

4.1. UR strongly supports the provision of awards and prizes, and is committed to maximising opportunities for recognising and rewarding outstanding academic achievements by its students and to fostering partnerships with external donors.

4.2. In accordance with these guidelines, a prize and/or an award is only granted for a Graduate on the basis of academic achievement. If necessary, the university may decide to organize a prize awarding ceremony separate from the graduation ceremony.

4.3. In recognition of academic excellence as established by the Cumulative Average Mark of the last 6 trimesters or semesters of study leading to Graduation, UR shall award **Certificates** and may offer prizes of an amount to be fixed by the University Management to those students who are eligible to graduate and have demonstrated outstanding performance in their studies.

4.4. In addition, sponsored prizes or prizes offered by external stakeholders may be accepted at the discretion of the College Academic Council and University Senate for students who have demonstrated academic excellence or exemplary services rendered to the community or the nation.

## 5. Key Principles

The main objective of these Guidelines is to provide a comprehensive and consistent framework for the administration of the awards and prizes. The framework is based around each Graduate award or prize having the following key principles:

- a. Clear criteria for the determination of Graduates eligible for prizes or awards;
- b. Clear, identifiable, equitable and transparent processes;
- c. Procedural fairness; and
- d. Recognition of academic excellence

## 6. Sponsorship

In relation to a prize being established as a result of a donation, UR:

6.1. must ensure that sponsors are aware of the contents of these guidelines;

6.2. may recognise the generosity of donors in supporting prizes, the importance of these relationships for UR and will acknowledge donors through:

- a. naming opportunities where requested;
- b. relevant print and online publications;
- c. invitations to prize giving ceremonies and other stewardship events; and
- d. formal notification of prize recipients to the donors.

## 7. Eligibility criteria

To be eligible to the UR Awards and Prizes, the winner shall:

7.1. Be the top performer in each of the Diploma, Bachelors degree, Postgraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma, Masters Degree programmes.

7.2. Have obtained at least a Cumulative Average Mark for the last 6 semesters or trimesters of 80%

7.3. Have obtained at least 65% in each module at a first attempt.

In the case, two or more students have obtained the same Cumulative Average Mark in the same programme and prizes are offered, both graduates should get a prize of equal price.

7.4 The following categories of top performers shall generally be recognized:

- a. Overall best performer per each Masters' degree Programme
- b. Overall best performer per each Postgraduate Diploma programme
- c. Overall best performer per each Postgraduate Certificate Programme
- d. Overall best performer per each Bachelors' degree Programme
- e. Overall best performer per each Diploma or Advanced Diploma Programme

As mentioned in point 4.4, the University Senate may decide to recognize students who have demonstrated exceptional performance in other areas such as service to the community or nation, Innovative Final year Research projects or Dissertations and others.

## 8. Decision- making processes

8.1. On the basis of the Cumulative Average Mark for the last 6 semesters or trimesters and of marks per each individual module, the College Registrar shall present and recommend to the College Academic Council during the approval of awards meeting the list of top performers eligible for University Awards and Prizes as well as the list of sponsors for approval.

8.2. The list of Graduands eligible to University Awards and Prizes as well as the list of sponsors shall be submitted to the Office of DVC AAR for onward transmission to the University Senate for consideration and approval.

8.3. The DVC AAR shall present and recommend to the University Senate a list of top performers eligible for University Awards and Prizes as well as a list of sponsors for approval.

8.4. The University Senate shall discuss and approve the list of students accepted for the University Awards and Prizes and, sponsored prizes.

8.5. The University Senate shall consider the reputation and suitability of each sponsor, particularly whether it is appropriate for the University to be linked with the sponsor, and approve suitable sponsorship.

## 9. Roles & Responsibilities

The University Senate and College Academic Councils have responsibilities to:

- 9.1. ensure that these guidelines are accessible to all staff and students;
- 9.2. ensure that these guidelines are implemented and applied consistently across all Schools and Colleges; and
- 9.3. promote good practice in considering Graduate Awards and Prizes, including;
  - a. fairness and equitable consideration;
  - b. respect for privacy; and
  - c. clear information on rights and responsibilities in relation to Graduates and prizes.

## References

California State University, Fresno, (2017). Academic Excellence. Retrieved at [http://www.csufresno.edu/honorsocieties/phi\\_kappa\\_phi/Academic\\_Excellence.htm](http://www.csufresno.edu/honorsocieties/phi_kappa_phi/Academic_Excellence.htm)

Steinmayr, Ricarda; MeiBner, Anja; Weidinger, Anne, F.; and Wirthwein, Linda (2015). Academic achievement. Retrieved [15 May 2017] from <http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199756810/obo-9780199756810-0108.xml>

  
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