

KIBU/SGS/MAN/002



KIBABII UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Manual for Research Proposal and Thesis Writing *Specific to the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences*

July, 2025



Kibabii University ISO 9001:2015 Certified
Knowledge for Development

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ISSUE FOR USE ON:	MAIN TITLE: MANUAL FOR RESEARCH PROPOSAL AND THESIS WRITING	REF: KIBU/SGS/MAN/002

MANUAL FOR RESEARCH PROPOSAL AND THESIS WRITING

Approved by: Prof. Donald N. Siamba Management Representative	Sign: 	Date: 11/8/2025
Authorized by: Prof. Isaac Ipara Odeo Vice-Chancellor	Sign: 	Date: 12/08/2025

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UNIVERSITY MANDATE

Philosophy

Kibabii University embodies the view that Science, Technology and Innovation are critical for sustainable utilization of material and human resources for the posterity of the universe.

Vision

To be a global and dynamic University of excellence in Science, Technology and Innovation

Mission

To achieve excellence in generation, transmission and enhancement of new knowledge in Science, Technology and Innovation through quality Teaching, Research, Training, Scholarship, Consultancy and Outreach Programmes.

Motto

Knowledge for Development

Core Values

- i. Excellence
- ii. Accountability and Transparency
- iii. Integrity
- iv. Social Responsibility
- v. Innovation
- vi. Academic Freedom



PART I: THE CONCEPT PAPER

Before writing a research proposal, it is important to begin by writing and presenting a concept paper at departmental level for input and approval.

Contents of concept paper

The concept paper should demonstrate concisely the;

- i. “What” (broad definition of research problem);
- ii. “Where” (location of research problem);
- iii. “Why” (overview justification of proposed study); and
- iv. “How” (general explanation of research methods).

In addition:

- i. The concept paper should not exceed two pages. Besides student’s names, registration number and contact details (*E-mail and phone address*) it shall provide the following; 1. Title of proposed study, 2. Area of study (*e.g. In Linguistics, is it; Syntax, Phonetics, or Semantics*), 3. Background to the study (*what you have read or courses done that aids in thinking about topic*), 5. Statement of the problem (*what is the gap in knowledge, what is the need for research*), 6. Research Objectives, 7. Research Questions/hypotheses, 8. Theoretical Framework (*why the theory/ies, how relevant*), 9. Literature review (*List five resources; four must be journal articles no older than five years*), 10. Data required (*primary or secondary*), 11. Data collection procedures and 12. Data analysis procedures
- ii. Use font 14 Time New Romans, single spacing; and
- iii. The student shall begin drafting the research proposal only after the concept paper has been approved by the relevant Department.

PART II: RESEARCH PROPOSAL WRITING PRELIMINARY PAGES

I. Title Page

- a. The title shall:



- i. Be centred, upper case and font size 14 Times New Roman.
- ii. Normally, **not exceeding 15 words**;
- iii. Be clearly phrased leaving out words, phrases or clauses, which do not enhance the clarity of the title;
- iv. Not include unconventional and unnecessary abbreviations; and
- v. Be clear on the scope and key variables of the research.

b. The Students Name

The student shall use the official name starting with the surname.

c. Caption of degree for which proposal is made i.e.

A Research Proposal Submitted to the Graduate School in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of (e.g. Master of Arts in Literature) of Kibabii University.

d. Date e.g. March, 2024 (to come at the bottom centre of the title page)

II. Declaration and Certification page

Declaration page should be on a new page.

The student must declare in writing the originality and compliance to anti-plagiarism for the work as follows:

Student's Declaration

I declare that this research proposal is my original work and has not been presented in any other University/Institution for consideration of any certification. This research proposal has been complemented by referenced sources duly acknowledged.

Signature_____ **Date:** _____

Name

Registration number

Department



Supervisors' Certification

This research proposal has been submitted with our approval as University Supervisors.

(Then the supervisor(s), sign as shown below using at least two (2) of their names written in full, alongside their titles as well as their respective departments.)

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Name
Department
University/Institution

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Name
Department
University/Institution

III. Table of Contents page

This should be organized to match the headings and subheadings and page numbers. Subheading numbering should be up to a maximum three (3) levels.

All level three should be indented.

All level one headings as well as those of the preliminary pages must be upper case and **bolded**

Chapter number and name must be upper case and **bolded**

Dots must be used to connect the heading and the pagination

IV. Abstract page

The abstract must be guided by the following requirements:

- i. Summary of the entire research proposal should include thesis statement,



contextualized background, problem, purpose, method, justification and significance of the study;

- ii. Should not exceed 500 words;
- iii. Should not have in-text referencing; and
- iv. Should be single spaced, one block paragraph and be contained in one page.

V. Abbreviations and Acronyms page (where applicable)

The abbreviation and acronyms should be capitalized and arranged alphabetically.

VI. Operational Definition of Terms

Define terms as used in the study and NOT conventional dictionary definitions.

They should be arranged alphabetically.

The Order of Preliminary Pages:

1. Title page
2. Declaration and Certification page
3. Abstract
4. Table of Contents
5. List of Appendices
6. List of Tables (where applicable)
7. List of Figures (where applicable)
8. List of Plates (where applicable)
9. Abbreviations and Acronyms (where applicable)
10. Operational Definition of Terms

PRESENTATION OF CHAPTERS

Generally, a research proposal from FASS shall have three (3) chapters, as follows:

Chapter One: Introduction; Chapter Two: Literature Review; and Chapter Three: Methodology. However, for **Literature**, the proposal shall have one single chapter containing the introductory information, literature review and methodology as is a standard practice across universities.



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION (The title should be centred in the page and placed immediately below the chapter number).

1.1 Background of the Study

This section shall contextualize the research issue and culminate into the research problem statement and questions.

It shall lay the broad foundation for the study from a global perspective narrowing down to the actual area of the study.

1.2 Statement of the problem

The statement of the problem shall entail a logical argument generated from proceeding facts as articulated in the background section pointing out the problem to be addressed.

1.3 Purpose

The purpose of the study points out the ultimate goal or aim of the study. It should be stated in one sentence which may or may not be substantiated.

1.3.1 General Objective

The main objective should provide a specific and accurate synopsis of the overall goal of the study.

1.3. 2 Specific Objectives

- (i) Should be directly linked to the study variables as indicated in the title; and
- (ii) They should be SMART

1.4. Research Questions and or Hypotheses (as may be applicable)

Questions: They should be in line with specific objectives

Hypotheses: They should be presented as a declaration of relationships between variables.

1.5 Justification of the study

Should capture the need for the study



1.6 Significance

Should capture the contribution of the study to the body of knowledge and stakeholders.

1.7 Scope

This will set out the boundaries of the study. It gives the extent to which the study will be carried out, establishing the boundaries, exceptions and qualifications inherent in the study. It should clearly set the expectations on the study

1.8 Limitations and Delimitations

The constraints and reservations of the study and how they are overcome.

1.9 Assumptions (*where applicable*)

- (i) They are statements that help to address doubts on the validity of the study and are accepted in faith, or taken to be true without proof.
- (ii) They address the question as to what is taken for granted in the conduct of the study and why.

1.10 Theoretical and / Conceptual Framework

i. Theoretical framework

It should provide a theory or theories upon which the study is anchored and demonstrate the link between the theoretical proposition and the proposed study.

ii. Conceptual framework

It should provide the original visualization by the researcher or adaptation of an existing model used in a previous study and give direction of interactions of variables of study.

CHAPTER TWO (Should stand alone and be centred).

LITERATURE REVIEW (The title should be centred in the page and placed immediately below the chapter number).

Review current sources (*five years or newer except seminal groundbreaking work*). It should;

- i. Highlight the knowledge already existing in relation to the study;
- ii. Bring out what is unknown about the study, i.e. the knowledge gaps;
and
- iii. Demonstrate evidence of the understanding of current research on the subject under investigation through relevant and logical discussion.

CHAPTER THREE (Centred and stand-alone)

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY (The title should be centred in the page and placed immediately below the chapter number).

This chapter highlights methodological details appropriate for the study presented in an explicit convincing manner. The researcher justifies every action made in implementing the proposed study. The following subheadings are suggested although not all of them will be utilized uniformly:

3.1. Research Design

The preferred design and method(s) are stated and justified, e.g. quantitative or qualitative (relativist-interpretivist/constructivist): case study, ethnography, analytical, discourse analysis, etc.

3.2. Variables/Categories of Analysis (where applicable)

Independent and dependent variables or the units and categories of analysis for the study are clearly explained.

3.3. Site/locale of the Study (where applicable)

Describe the physical setting where the study will be undertaken and where applicable provide relevant maps and diagrams.

3.4 Target and Study Population

Describe the population, giving figures.

3.5 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

Sampling techniques include simple random, systematic, stratified, cluster, purposive, snowball, etc. The sample size is the number of participants or observations included in a study. Rationalize each choice adopted.



3.6 Research Instruments

A research instrument can include interviews, questionnaires, interview schedule, tests, surveys, or checklists etc. Justify their choice and suitability/appropriateness.

3.7 Pilot Study (where applicable)

The term “pilot study” refers to mini versions of a full-scale study (also called “feasibility” studies), as well as the specific pre-testing of a particular research instrument such as a questionnaire or interview schedule for appropriateness or efficacy.

3.8 Validity & Reliability (where applicable)

Validity and reliability are both about how well a method measures something. Validity is about the accuracy of a measure and if the results really do represent what they are supposed to measure. Reliability refers to the consistency of a measure and if the results can be repeated under similar conditions.

3.9 Data Collection Procedures

This involves setting the boundaries for the study, collecting information through observation, interviews, documents and visual materials, establishing the protocols for recording information, and setting the data parameters that will best answer the research questions.

3.10 Data Analysis Procedures

Collecting information, sorting it out into clusters, indicate that the process will be based on data reduction and interpretation, reducing data into patterns, categories or schema.

Mention a plan to represent the information in some form of matrices (array, lists, tables) which show relationships between categories of information, display categories by informants, sites, demographic variables, role ordering and many other possibilities.



3.11 Data Management and Ethical Considerations

This will entail: seeking approval of the research proposal by SGS then the research permit by NACOSTI; seeking informant/subject consent; their voluntary participation, ensuring confidentiality and anonymity of informants/subjects, their safety/self-esteem etc. There should also be statements on ethical handling of data and findings i.e. ensuring safe storage of data (no access by unauthorized persons), ethical reporting of findings and avoidance of data/findings falsification, and ethical use of findings (i.e. for intended purposes only), etc.

REFERENCES

These should be single-spaced and listed alphabetically according to APA referencing style (6th or 7th edition consistently). For citation within the text the format of author and year of publication is recommended by APA manual. Read the APA referencing manual BEFORE writing the proposal.

Examples of APA referencing entries:

Journal Article:

Edwards, A. A., Steacy, L. M., Siegelman, N., Rigobon, V. M., Kearns, D. M., Rueckl, J. G., & Compton, D. L. (2022). Unpacking the unique relationship between set for variability and word reading development: Examining word- and child-level predictors of performance. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 114(6), 1242–1256.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/edu0000696>

Online Magazine Article:

Thomson, J. (2022, September 8). Massive, strange white structures appear on Utah's Great Salt Lake. *Newsweek*. <https://www.newsweek.com/mysterious-mounds-great-salt-lake-utah-explained-mirabilite-1741151>

Authored Book:

Kaufman, K. A., Glass, C. R., & Pineau, T. R. (2018). *Mindful sport performance enhancement: Mental training for athletes and coaches*. American Psychological Association.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0000048-000>

Edited Book Chapter:

Zeleke, W. A., Hughes, T. L., & Drozda, N. (2020). Home–school collaboration to promote mind–body health. In C. Maykel & M. A. Bray (Eds.), *Promoting mind–body health in schools: Interventions for mental health professionals* (pp. 11–26). American Psychological Association.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/0000157-002>

Online Dictionary Entry:

American Psychological Association. (n.d.). Internet addiction. *In APA dictionary of psychology*. Retrieved April 24, 2022, from
<https://dictionary.apa.org/internet-addiction>

Report by a Group Author (Section 10.4)

World Health Organization. (2014). *Comprehensive implementation plan on maternal, infant and young child nutrition*.
https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/113048/WHO_NMH_NHD_14.1_eng.pdf



Report by Individual Authors:

Winthrop, R., Ziegler, L., Handa, R., & Fakoya, F. (2019). *How playful learning can help leapfrog progress in education*. Center for Universal Education at Brookings.

https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/how_playful_learning_can_help_leapfrog_progress_in_education.pdf

Press Release:

American Psychological Association. (2020, March 2). *APA reaffirms psychologists' role in combating climate change* [Press release].

<https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2020/03/combating-climate-change>

Conference Session:

Davidson, R. J. (2019, August 8–11). *Well-being is a skill* [Conference session]. APA 2019 Convention, Chicago, IL, United States.

https://irp-cdn.multiscreensite.com/a5ea5d51/files/uploaded/APA2019Program_190708.pdf

Dissertation From a Database:

Horvath-Plyman, M. (2018). *Social media and the college student journey: An examination of how social media use impacts social capital and affects college choice, access, and transition* (Publication No. 10937367). [Doctoral dissertation, New York University]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.

Preprint Article:

Latimier, A., Peyre, H., & Ramus, F. (2020). *A meta-analytic review of the benefit of spacing out retrieval practice episodes on retention*. PsyArXiv. <https://psyarxiv.com/kzy7u/>

Data Set:

O'Donohue, W. (2017). *Content analysis of undergraduate psychology textbooks* (ICPSR 21600; Version V1) [Data set]. Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research . <https://doi.org/10.3886/ICPSR36966.v1>

Film or Video:

Docter, P., & Del Carmen, R. (Directors). (2015). *Inside out* [Film]. Walt Disney Pictures; Pixar Animation Studios.

TV Series Episode:

Dippold, K. (Writer), & Trim, M. (Director). (2011, April 14). *Fancy party* (Season 3, Episode 9) [TV series episode]. In G. Daniels, H. Klein, D. Miner, & M. Schur (Executive Producers), *Parks and recreation*. Deedle-Dee Productions; Fremulon; 3 Arts Entertainment; Universal Media Studios.



Webinar:

Kamin, H. S., Lee, C. L., & McAdoo, T. L. (2020). *Creating references using seventh edition APA Style* [Webinar]. American Psychological Association.

<https://apastyle.apa.org/instructional-aids/tutorials-webinars>

YouTube Video:

Above The Noise. (2017, October 18). *Can procrastination be a good thing?* [Video]. YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FQMwmBNNOnQ>

Song or Track:

Nirvana. (1991). Smells like teen spirit [Song]. On *Nevermind*. DGC.

Radio Broadcast:

Hersher, R. (2020, March 19). *Spring starts today all over America, which is weird* [Radio broadcast]. NPR.

<https://www.npr.org/2020/03/19/817237429/spring-starts-today-all-over-america-which-is-weird>

Podcast Episode:

Santos, L. (Host). (n.d.) Psychopaths and superheroes (No. 1) [Audio podcast episode]. In *The happiness lab with Dr. Laurie Santos*. Pushkin Industries.

<https://www.happineslab.fm/season-2-episodes/episode-1>

Infographic:

American Psychological Association. (n.d.). *Data sharing* [Infographic].

<https://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/data-sharing-infographic.pdf>

PowerPoint From a Classroom Website:

Mack, R., & Spake, G. (2018). *Citing open source images and formatting references for presentations* [PowerPoint slides].

Canvas@FNU. <https://fnu.onelogin.com/login>

Tweet:

Obama, B. [@BarackObama]. (2020, April 7). *It's World Health Day, and we owe a profound debt of gratitude to all our medical professionals. They're still giving* [Tweet]. Twitter.

<https://twitter.com/BarackObama/status/1247555328365023238>

Open Educational Resource:

Fagan, J. (2019, March 25). *Nursing clinical brain*. OER Commons. Retrieved January 7, 2020, from <https://www.oercommons.org/authoring/53029-nursing-clinical-brain/view>

Webpage:

Chandler, N. (2020, April 9). *What's the difference between Sasquatch and Bigfoot?* howstuffworks. <https://science.howstuffworks.com/science-vs-myth/strange-creatures/sasquatch-bigfoot-difference.htm>



Webpage on a News Website:

Machado, J., & Turner, K. (2020, March 7). *The future of feminism*. Vox.
<https://www.vox.com/identities/2020/3/7/21163193/international-womens-day-2020>

Webpage With a Retrieval Date:

Center for Systems Science and Engineering. (2020, May 6). *COVID-19 dashboard by the Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE) at Johns Hopkins University (JHU)*. Johns Hopkins University & Medicine, Coronavirus Resource Center. Retrieved May 6, 2020, from <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html>

Print Magazine Article:

Nicholl, K. (2020, May). A royal spark. *Vanity Fair*, 62(5), 56–65, 100.

Online Newspaper Article:

Roberts, S. (2020, April 9). Early string ties us to Neanderthals. *The New York Times*.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/09/science/neanderthals-fiber-string-math.html>

Print Newspaper Article:

Reynolds, G. (2019, April 9). Different strokes for athletic hearts. *The New York Times*, D4.

APPENDICES

The appendices may include any of the following:

- (i) Letter of introduction (where applicable)
- (ii) Tools of data collection
- (iii) Work plan – Gantt Chart
- (iv) Budget
- (v) And any other relevant document



FORMATTING OF THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL

a) Margin, line spacing and paragraphing

- (i) A one-inch margin all round.
- (ii) One and Half (1.5) line spacing

b) Pagination

- i. Title page should not be numbered;
- ii. Preliminary pages should be numbered consecutively in Roman numbers lower cases (e.g. ii, iii etc.);
- iii. The main content pages (from Chapter One to Appendices) should be numbered consecutively using Arabic numbers (e.g. 1,2,3); and
- iv. Page number shall appear in the centre of the lower margin of the page.

c) Typing guidelines

Typing should be in font size 12 Times New Roman on a 80 g/m² of a white A4 size paper, and on one side of the paper

d) Heading

- i. Chapter headings should be centred in bold face; and
- ii. Sub-Section headings should not exceed 3rd level.

e) Visuals; tables, figures, charts and Plates

- i. Labelled according to chapters;
- ii. Show source at the bottom (where applicable); and
- iii. The title of tables to appear at the top and for figures, charts and plates at the bottom.

f) Language use

Consistently use Standard British English (avoid American English).

g) Length of proposal

- i. The Masters proposal should not be below 15 pages and not exceeding 25 pages, excluding Preliminaries and Appendices; and
- ii. The PhD proposal should not exceed 30 pages, excluding Preliminaries and Appendices.



PART III: THESIS WRITING

This section is to help the candidate in writing the thesis.

I. TITLE PAGE:

Title and name of candidate as appearing on the Research Proposal.

Caption of degree for which thesis is presented... i.e. A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of MA in History of Kibabii University

Date e.g. August, 2024 (indicated at the bottom of the title page, centred)

II. DECLARATION AND CERTIFICATION

Student's Declaration

I confirm that this research project/thesis is my original work and has not been presented in any other University/Institution for examination. The project / thesis has been complemented by referenced works duly acknowledged.

Signature.....

Date.....

Name

Registration number

Department

Supervisors' Certification

We confirm that the work in this thesis / project was carried out by the candidate under our/my supervision as University supervisors.

Signature.....

Date.....

Name

Department

University

Signature.....

Date.....

Name

Department

University



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III. COPY RIGHT

This thesis is a copyrighted work protected under the Berne Convention, the Copyright Act, 2001, and all other relevant international and national intellectual property laws. No part of this thesis may be reproduced in any form or by any means, in whole or in part, except for short extracts in fair dealing for research, private study, scholarly review, and only with proper acknowledgement. Written permission must be obtained from the Dean, School of Graduate Studies, on behalf of both the author and Kibabii University, for any other use or disclosure.

IV. DEDICATION

- i. Begin on a separate page
- ii. Should be dedicated to one entity

V. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Begin on a separate page after Dedication and should not exceed one page

NB: University / Institution(s) and supervisors must be acknowledged

VI. ABSTRACT

Single spaced, and font size 12 Times New Roman, full justification and one page.

The abstract should be written in past tense and shall entail on the minimum the following:

- i. Background
- ii. Problem
- iii. Purpose
- iv. Methodology
- v. Key Findings

VII. TABLE OF CONTENTS

Must be on its own page



This should be organized to match the headings and subheadings and page numbers up to maximum three (3) levels. All level three should be indented.

All level one headings in the preliminary pages must be upper case and **bolded**

Chapter number and name must be upper case and **bolded**

Dots must be used to connect the heading and the pagination

VIII. List of Appendices (where applicable)

IX. List of Tables (where applicable)

X. List of Figures (where applicable)

XI. List of plates (where applicable)

XII. Abbreviations and acronyms

To start on a fresh page and be arranged alphabetically

XIII. OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Must be on its own page

Define terms as used in the study.

PRESENTATION OF CHAPTERS IN THESIS

The number of chapters in the thesis will vary with disciplines. Generally, research findings in a thesis from FASS shall be presented in either one chapter or more. In cases where there will be more than one chapter, each specific objective may form a chapter. Except for Literature, data presentation, analysis and discussion will form Chapter Four but may extend up to Chapter Seven if every objective constitutes a chapter of analysis. The three chapters in the proposal will remain the same in the thesis but will now be written in the past tense. However, the Background of the study, Literature review and the Methodology will be more detailed than what is contained in the proposal (e.g. Literature Review in the proposal may be a quarter of what is contained in a thesis).



CHAPTER FOUR (Centred and stand-alone)

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION (The title should be centred in the page and placed immediately below the chapter number).

However, data presentation, analysis and discussion may cover chapters four to seven, depending on whether each objective requires a single chapter, for example in History Research.

CHAPTER FIVE (Centred and stand-alone. This may be Chapter Eight if analysis had gone up to Chapter Seven)

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Chapter summarizes key findings of the research study. Only the most important findings per the research objectives should be captured.

Conclusion provides summative remarks based on research questions with a clear demonstration of how the study converges or diverges with current research in the area.

It also provides recommendations based on the research findings. Recommendations should be written in point-form (numbered in roman) and targeted to the specific consumers of the research findings.

REFERENCES

Similar to what is contained in the proposal guidelines. Use APA referencing style consistently

FORMATTING OF THE THESIS

- i. The FASS thesis structure shall be by thesis publication.
- ii. The chapters for data analysis will either be in Chapter **2 (for Literature)** or **4 (the rest)**.
 - a. Typing
- ii. Font 12 Times New Roman on A4 Size paper, double-spacing, one-sided paper of 80 g/m² white in colour; and
- iii. 1.5 inch margin to be left on the left side of the paper and a 1 inch on the right side of the margin paper and 1 inch from the top of the page and should not go beyond 1 inch from the bottom.



b. Pagination

- i. Title page should not be numbered
- ii. Preliminary pages should be numbered consecutively in Roman numbers lower cases (e.g. ii, iii etc.).
- iii. The main content pages (from chapter One to Appendices) should be numbered consecutively using Arabic numbers (e.g. 1,2,3)
- iv. Page number shall appear at the centre of the lower margin of the page.

c. Length of Thesis

The number of words should be within the following ranges, excluding references and appendices:

- i. Master's thesis approximately 20,000 words
- ii. Ph.D. thesis approximately 50,000 words

NOTE: No candidate should embark on writing a research proposal or thesis BEFORE fully reading and internalizing the guidelines provided above. This is mandatory for quality written work per ISO standards and general post-graduate academic requirements.

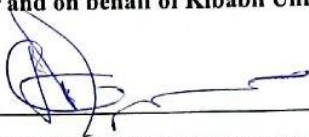
END



APPROVAL OF SGS MANUAL FOR PROPOSAL AND THESIS WRITING

This 12th Day of August 2025

Signed for and on behalf of Kibabii University Senate



VICE-CHANCELLOR OF KIBABII UNIVERSITY



Kibabii University ISO 9001:2015 Certified
Knowledge for Development