

# **Likelihood of Completion and Extended Candidature of a Ph.D: A Five-year Analysis of Studies at Makerere University**

Robert Wamala, Joseph Oonyu and Bruno Ocaya

## **Abstract**

Student persistence in graduate programs is increasingly becoming a key tool in assessing the performance of academic institutions. In addition to completion, this paper elucidates extended candidature dynamics of studies based on data for all 295 doctoral students at Makerere University in the enrollment cohorts from 2000 to 2005. The total elapsed time, from first enrollment to submission of a final copy of a thesis/dissertation after a public defense, was adopted as a measure of completion time; a five-year status was evaluated using a Multinomial Logistic Regression with withdrawal as the base-category. In the results, the completion (15.0%) and extended candidature (48.6%) estimates point to a low timely turnout of doctoral students at the university. The noted associations, investigated from an interactionist point of view in a range of candidate, candidature, discipline and institutional variables, relate student persistence in doctoral studies to factors before, on and after enrolment. Suggestions for enhancing doctoral completions were centered upon three contextual issues: (i) stepping-up measures in establishing activities that promote student interaction with peers and faculty, (ii) need for mandatory cross-cutting course to cater for the academic unprepared-ness of adult learners, and (iii) increased financial assistance for doctoral studies but with stringent measures against extensions.

**Keywords:** Completion and Attrition, Doctoral Studies, Makerere University