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Challenges Affecting the Implementation of Examination Rules and Regulations in Public and Private Universities in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya

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Abstract

Examinations serve as the primary mechanism for assessing student learning outcomes, certifying academic achievement and maintaining the credibility of university qualifications in Kenya. However, their effectiveness depends on consistent implementation and enforcement. This study examined the challenges affecting the implementation of examination rules and regulations in public and private universities in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. The study was guided by Institutional Theory and adopted a cross-sectional mixed-methods survey design. The target population comprised 3,020 students, Heads of Departments (HODs), and Examination Officers from four selected universities. A sample of 464 respondents was targeted, comprising 379 students, 45 HODs and 40 Examination Officers. Data were collected using questionnaires and interviews. Quantitative data were analysed using frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, while qualitative data were analysed thematically. The findings showed that 89.0% of students considered examination rules necessary. However, implementation was inconsistent across specific regulations. Rules concerning books, bags and unauthorized materials were relatively well implemented (81.6%), while restrictions on mobile phones (44.7%), eligibility requirements (28.9%) and prohibition of rough paper (21.1%) were less consistently implemented. Among HODs, technological changes were the main key challenge (79.1%), while Examination Officers identified overcrowding and inadequate examination facilities (76.3%) and lack of student cooperation (71.1%) as major challenges. Qualitative findings further revealed concerns about smartwatches, wireless earbuds, staff workload and fatigue, inadequate examination spaces, weak visibility of rules and inconsistent sanctions. The study concludes that the major challenge is not the absence of examination regulations but the gap between formal rules and their consistent implementation. The study recommends strengthening technological controls, examination staffing, infrastructure, communication, student

sensitization, monitoring and consistent application of sanctions to enhance examination integrity in universities.

Keywords: Examination rules, examination malpractice, academic integrity, examination enforcement, universities, challenges, Kenya

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Introduction

Globally, universities rely on examination rules and regulations to safeguard academic integrity, ensure fairness in assessment, and maintain the credibility of qualifications awarded to students (Mattar, 2022; Dawson, 2020). These regulations are intended to guide the conduct of students, lecturers, invigilators, and examination administrators throughout the assessment process (Rwezaura, Sarakikya & Okendo, 2023; Awoniyi, Amankwah & Osei-Tutu, 2024). Despite the existence of such policies, institutions of higher learning across many countries continue to experience difficulties in enforcing examination regulations due to changing student behaviors, technological advancements, and institutional challenges.

The implementation of examination regulations has become increasingly complex because higher education institutions operate in rapidly changing technological and educational environments. Conventional forms of examination misconduct, such as unauthorized materials, collusion, impersonation and communication during examinations, now occur alongside technology-enabled forms of academic dishonesty. Mobile phones, online communication platforms and generative artificial intelligence have created new opportunities for unauthorized assistance and have complicated the distinction between legitimate and illegitimate technology use. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2026) notes that generative artificial intelligence is transforming assessment in higher education while creating challenges for academic integrity, institutional policies and assessment practices. Consequently, examination regulations must be sufficiently clear and adaptable to address emerging technologies while maintaining fairness and transparency.

Empirical evidence demonstrates that the effectiveness of examination regulations depends on their implementation rather than their mere existence. Zhao et al. (2024), using randomized field experiments with

university students in China, found that cheating was influenced by examination arrangements and academic-integrity interventions. Their findings showed that pre-examination reminders concerning academic integrity could reduce dishonest behaviour, indicating that effective examination management requires more than physical supervision. Student awareness and commitment to examination expectations are therefore important components of regulatory implementation.

Technology presents an additional implementation challenge. Johnston et al. (2024), in a study of 337 Australian university students, found considerable use of generative artificial intelligence for assessment-related activities and differences in students' understanding of whether such use constituted academic misconduct. The findings demonstrate that regulations can be difficult to enforce when institutional policies do not keep pace with technological developments or when students and academic staff have different interpretations of acceptable technology use. Similarly, Neald et al. (2024) demonstrated the increasing capacity of generative-AI tools to perform different higher education assessment tasks, highlighting the need for institutions to continually review assessment controls and academic-integrity procedures.

The capacity of examination personnel to enforce institutional rules is another important consideration. Awoniyi et al. (2024), examining examination invigilation at a Ghanaian university, found that invigilators experienced intimidation, blackmail and threats while enforcing examination requirements. Such experiences demonstrate that implementation can be undermined where staff responsible for examination administration lack adequate institutional support and protection. Examination integrity therefore depends not only on students' willingness to comply but also on the capacity of institutions to provide competent personnel, appropriate procedures and an enabling environment for enforcement.

Across Africa, examination malpractice continues to challenge higher education institutions despite the existence of formal examination policies. Mireku et al. (2024), in a systematic review of 96 studies from Sub-Saharan Africa, identified inadequate preparation, peer influence, weak invigilation, inadequate examination security, societal pressure for academic qualifications and weaknesses in institutional enforcement among the factors associated with examination malpractice. The review also found that research was heavily concentrated in West Africa, particularly Nigeria and Ghana, suggesting that evidence from other African higher education contexts remains comparatively limited. These findings indicate that examination integrity is influenced by interacting student and institutional factors rather than by student behaviour alone.

Evidence from Ghana further illustrates the difficulties involved in translating examination policies into practice. Hammond et al. (2026), in a study at the University of Mines and Technology involving 140 undergraduate students and 40 lecturers, found that administrative delays, inconsistent application of penalties and unclear guidelines were important challenges to enforcement. The study also reported concerns among students regarding the fairness of policy application. These findings suggest that even where examination regulations are established and known by institutional actors, implementation may be weakened by

procedural inefficiencies, unclear responsibilities and inconsistent enforcement.

Adem et al. (2024), in a study involving four public universities in Kenya, reported a 56.2% prevalence of examination malpractice and found significant associations with school, home, course and student factors. The findings indicate that examination misconduct is influenced by conditions surrounding students and institutions rather than being exclusively an individual behavioural problem. Mulongo et al. (2025), studying 380 university students in the Mount Kenya region, similarly found unauthorized materials, copying and looking at other students' work among the common forms of examination malpractice. The persistence of these practices suggests that the existence of examination controls does not necessarily result in effective compliance.

Studies examining examination administration provide further evidence of implementation weaknesses. Adan (2024), using a mixed-methods approach involving students, tutors, examination officers and principals in public tertiary institutions in Mandera County, found weaknesses in the adoption of examination-setting, distribution, invigilation, marking and grading procedures. The findings demonstrate that implementation challenges can occur at multiple stages of the examination cycle and may affect the integrity of examination outcomes. Adan et al. (2024) similarly identified weaknesses in examination-setting practices, emphasizing the importance of considering the experiences of different institutional actors involved in examination administration.

Recent Kenyan evidence has also begun to consider differences between institutional categories. Muriuki et al. (2026), examining examination supervision among fourth-year Bachelor of Education students in public and private universities, found that security measures, seating arrangements and supervision were associated with examination malpractice. The study also identified differences in institutional policies and organizational cultures between public and private universities. Such findings suggest that institutional ownership may influence how examination rules are interpreted, administered and enforced.

The national regulatory framework provides a formal basis for examination governance in Kenya. The Commission for University Education (CUE), established under the Universities Act, No. 42 of 2012, is responsible for regulating university education and promoting quality and standards in universities. The Universities Regulations, 2014 and related standards provide a framework for university governance, quality assurance, student conduct and institutional accountability (Commission for University Education [CUE], 2014). The continuing review and development of university regulations also demonstrate that the regulatory environment is evolving in response to emerging challenges within higher education (CUE, 2026).

Despite this regulatory framework, examination irregularities remain a significant concern. The CUE University Statistics Report for 2024/2025 recorded 3,352 examination-irregularity cases out of 3,841 reported student disciplinary cases, meaning that examination irregularities accounted for approximately 87.3% of reported disciplinary cases. The reported cases included cheating, possession of unauthorized materials, impersonation and collusion (CUE, 2025). This evidence is important because it demonstrates that

formal examination regulations have not eliminated examination irregularities and raises questions about the practical challenges that universities face in implementing and enforcing their examination requirements.

The challenge extends beyond the occurrence of examination malpractice to the broader academic-integrity environment. Odongo et al. (2026), examining postgraduate students in Kenyan public universities, found differences between students' awareness of academic-integrity requirements and their actual practices and identified emerging concerns relating to AI-generated content and paraphrasing. Simiyu et al. (2024) similarly demonstrated that examination malpractice continues to occur despite institutional measures and emphasized the importance of understanding how students and educational personnel perceive examination misconduct. These findings suggest that effective implementation requires continuous communication, stakeholder awareness, institutional commitment and consistent enforcement rather than reliance on written regulations alone.

Institutional capacity may further determine whether examination rules can be implemented consistently. Adequate examination rooms, secure handling of examination materials, sufficient invigilators, appropriate student identification, effective monitoring and clear procedures for reporting and resolving irregularities are necessary for effective examination administration. Where resources, staffing or supervision are inadequate, implementation may be compromised. Thus, examination integrity should be understood as an institutional process involving policies, people, resources, procedures and enforcement mechanisms.

These concerns are particularly relevant in public and private universities operating within the same geographical setting. Although both categories of universities operate under the national regulatory framework, they may differ in institutional size, governance structures, staffing, resources, organizational culture, student populations and examination-management procedures. Such differences may shape how examination rules are communicated, monitored and enforced. Comparing public and private universities can therefore provide evidence on whether implementation challenges are common across institutions or are associated with differences in institutional organization and capacity.

Uasin Gishu County host a diverse university environment comprising public and private institutions. However, existing Kenyan studies have largely examined the prevalence, causes or forms of examination malpractice, or have focused on particular aspects of examination administration. Less attention has been directed towards the practical challenges encountered by universities in implementing their established examination rules and regulations. It is against this background that the present study examined challenges affecting the implementation of examination rules and regulations in public and private universities in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya**.**

Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on Institutional Theory, which was developed within organizational sociology and institutionalized through the seminal work of Meyer and Rowan (1977) and further developed by DiMaggio and Powell (1983). Meyer and Rowan (1977) posit that organizations adopt formal structures, policies and

procedures not only to improve technical efficiency but also to demonstrate conformity with socially and institutionally accepted expectations. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) extended this argument by proposing that organizations operating within the same institutional environment tend to become increasingly similar through coercive, normative and mimetic isomorphism. Coercive pressures arise from laws, regulations and requirements imposed by powerful institutions; normative pressures emerge from professional standards and shared expectations; while mimetic pressures occur when organizations imitate practices perceived to be legitimate or successful under conditions of uncertainty (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Scott, 2014). In higher education, examination rules can consequently be understood as formal institutional structures through which universities respond to regulatory requirements, professional expectations and societal demands for credible and fair assessment (Scott, 2014; UNESCO, 2025). However, Institutional Theory has been criticised for placing considerable emphasis on institutional conformity and external pressures while giving comparatively less attention to organizational agency, internal power relations and the possibility that organizational actors may selectively interpret, resist or decouple formal policies from actual practices (Oliver, 1991; Greenwood et al., 2008). The concept of decoupling is particularly relevant because organizations may formally adopt policies to maintain legitimacy while their day-to-day practices do not fully correspond with those policies (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; Bromley & Powell, 2012). Thus, the theory does not assume that the existence of formal rules automatically produces compliance; rather, implementation depends on how institutional requirements are translated into organizational routines and practices.

Institutional Theory was relevant to this study because examination rules and regulations represent formal institutional structures whose effectiveness depends on their translation into consistent practices by university administrators, Examination Officers, Heads of Department, lecturers, invigilators and students. The theory provides a framework for understanding the relationship between formally established regulations and their practical implementation within university settings (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Scott, 2014).

Methodology

The study was conducted in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya, and focused on selected public and private universities within the county. The county was chosen because it hosts both public and private universities, making it suitable for examining the implementation of examination rules and regulations across different institutional settings.

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design using a mixed-methods approach. Data were collected at one point in time to assess the challenges affecting the implementation of examination rules and regulations. Quantitative data provided information on students' perceptions and implementation practices, while qualitative data from Heads of Departments (HODs) and Examination Officers offered deeper insights into institutional challenges and enforcement practices.

The target population comprised students and university personnel involved in examination administration in the selected universities. The student

population consisted of 3,020 Education students from four universities, including two public and two private institutions. The study also targeted Examination Officers and Heads of Departments because of their key roles in managing and supervising examinations. The sample size comprised 379 students, 40 Examination Officers, and 45 HODs, giving a total of 464 participants.

The student sample size was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sampling approach, resulting in 379 students from the population of 3,020. Proportionate allocation was subsequently used to distribute the student sample according to the size of each university's student population. The allocation was calculated using (n_i=(N_i/N)n), where (n_i) represents the sample allocated to each university, (N_i) represents the population of the respective university, (N) represents the total student population, and (n) represents the total student sample. The resulting allocation was 15 students from University A, 101 from University B, 113 from University C, and 150 from University D as indicated in Table 1.

Both probability and purposive sampling procedures were employed. The universities were first categorized into public and private strata, from which two universities were selected from each category using simple random sampling. Proportionate sampling was then used to determine the number of students selected from each institution, followed by simple random sampling to select individual student participants. First- and fourth-year Education students were purposively included because they represented different levels of exposure to university examination procedures. First-year students provided perspectives based on relatively recent entry into university examination systems, whereas fourth-year students had accumulated greater exposure to examination procedures. Examination Officers and HODs were purposively selected because of their direct responsibilities and experience in examination administration and implementation of examination regulations.

Table 1: Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

University Code	Institution Type	Target Student Population	Students Sampled	Examination Officers Sampled	HODs Sampled	Total Sampled
PRA	Public	120	15	4	3	22
PRB	Public	800	101	8	10	119
PUC	Private	900	113	10	12	135
PUD	Private	1,200	150	18	20	188
Total		**3,020**	**379**	**40**	**45**	**464**

Eligible participants included first-year and fourth-year Education students enrolled in the selected universities who had experience with university examination procedures. The study also involved Examination Officers and Heads of Departments (HODs) because of their direct responsibilities in examination administration and supervision. Participants who were unavailable during data collection or declined to provide informed consent were excluded. These criteria ensured that all respondents possessed relevant knowledge and experience regarding the implementation of examination rules and regulations. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and interview

guides. To ensure validity, the research instruments were subjected to expert review. Three experts from the School of Education and the Research Department at the University of Eldoret evaluated the questionnaire and interview guides for clarity, relevance, adequacy, and alignment with the study objectives. Their recommendations guided the revision of ambiguous and repetitive items, thereby improving the ability of the instruments to measure the intended constructs.

A pilot study involving 22 students from a university that was not included in the main study was conducted to establish reliability. The pilot helped assess the clarity and consistency of the questionnaire items and identify areas requiring improvement. Internal consistency was determined using Cronbach's alpha in SPSS, which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.749, indicating acceptable reliability. Necessary revisions were made before the final administration of the instruments.

Quantitative data were coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize the data. Findings were presented using tables and narrative descriptions.

Qualitative data obtained from interviews were analyzed thematically. The process involved organizing responses, identifying recurring patterns, coding similar statements, and developing themes related to the study objectives.

Results

Response Rate

The study achieved an overall response rate of 77.6%, with 360 out of the 464 sampled participants successfully participating in the study. Of the 379 students sampled, 279 returned completed questionnaires, resulting in a response rate of 73.6%. Examination Officers recorded a response rate of 95.0% (38 out of 40), while Heads of Department achieved a response rate of 95.5% (43 out of 45), as shown in Table 2. Hence, the response rate achieved in this study was satisfactory and sufficient to support reliable interpretation of the findings.

Table 2: Response Rate

Respondent Group	Sampled	Responded	Response Rate (%)
Students	379	279	73.6
Examination Officers	40	38	95.0
Heads of Department	45	43	95.5
Total	464	360	77.6

Respondents' Demographic Information

The demographic characteristics of respondents are presented to provide context for the findings on the implementation of examination rules and regulations. The characteristics considered included gender, university category and, for staff respondents, duration in the respective administrative position.

Students' Demographic Information

Among the 279 student respondents, 141 (50.5%) were male, 136 (48.7%) were female and 2 (0.7%) did not indicate their gender. Regarding year of study, 140 (50.2%) were first-year

students and 139 (49.8%) were fourth-year students. By university category, 148 (53.0%) respondents were from private universities and 131 (47.0%) were from public universities. The relatively balanced representation of students from private and public universities provided perspectives from both categories of institutions included in the study.

Table 3: Students' Demographic Information

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	141	50.5
	Female	136	48.7
	No response	2	0.7
	Total	279	100.0
Year of Study	First year	140	50.2
	Fourth year	139	49.8
	Total	279	100.0
University Category	Private	148	53.0
	Public	131	47.0
	Total	279	100.0

Examination Officers' Demographic Information

Among the 38 Examination Officers who responded, 22 (57.9%) were male and 16 (42.1%) were female. Twenty-five (65.8%) were from public universities and 13 (34.2%) were from private universities. Twenty-four (63.2%) had served as Examination Officers for one to two years, while 14 (36.8%) had served for more than three years. The representation of officers with varying periods of experience provided perspectives from respondents who had direct responsibilities for examination administration and enforcement of examination regulations.

Table 4: Examination Officers' Demographic Information

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	22	57.9
	Female	16	42.1
	Total	38	100.0
University Category	Private	13	34.2
	Public	25	65.8
	Total	38	100.0
Years as Examination Officer	1–2 years	24	63.2
	Over 3 years	14	36.8
	Total	38	100.0

Heads of Department Demographic Information

Among the 43 Heads of Department who participated in the study, 25 (58.1%) were male and 18 (41.9%) were female. Twenty-five (58.1%) were from public universities, while 18 (41.9%) were from private universities. The respondents represented different academic departments, with Curriculum

Instruction accounting for the largest proportion at 37.2%, followed by Educational Psychology at 25.6%. Regarding experience in the position, 27 (62.8%) had served as Heads of Department for one to two years, while 16 (37.2%) had served for more than three years.

Table 5: Heads of Department Demographic Information

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percent (%)
Gender	Male	25	58.1
	Female	18	41.9
	Total	43	100.0
University Category	Private	18	41.9
	Public	25	58.1
	Total	43	100.0
Department	Information Technology	2	4.7
	Special Needs Education	3	7.0
	Educational Psychology	11	25.6
	Education Management	4	9.3
	Physical Education	2	4.7
	Curriculum Instruction	16	37.2
	Languages and Literature	5	11.6
	Total	43	100.0
Years as HoD	1–2 years	27	62.8
	Over 3 years	16	37.2
	Total	43	100.0

Students' Perception of the Necessity of Examination Rules and Regulations

Students were asked whether examination rules and regulations were necessary. This was included to establish whether implementation challenges were associated with rejection of the rules by students.

Table 6: Students' Perceptions of the Necessity of Examination Rules and Regulations

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	248	89.0
No	31	11.0
Total	279	100.0

The findings in table 6 show that the majority of the students, 248 (89.0%), indicated that examination rules and regulations are necessary, while only 31 (11.0%) reported that they were not necessary. These results demonstrate a high level of student recognition of the importance of examination regulations in guiding examination conduct and maintaining order during assessments.

Student-Perceived Factors Associated with Examination Malpractice

To understand why academic dishonesty persists despite institutional policies, students were asked to identify key factors contributing to examination malpractice. A summary of their responses is presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Student-Perceived Factors Associated with Examination Malpractice

Perceived Factor	Yes, n	Yes, %	No, n	No, %
Anxiety/peer-group pressure	149	53.4	130	46.6
Failure to cover the syllabus	101	36.2	178	63.8
Failure to convey laws/regulations	51	18.3	228	81.7
Fees not cleared on time	2	0.7	277	99.3
Fear of failure	67	24.0	212	76.0
Pressure to meet job-market requirements	29	10.4	250	89.6

Anxiety and peer-group pressure were the most frequently identified factors, reported by 149 (53.4%) students. Failure to cover the syllabus was identified by 101 (36.2%), while fear of failure was reported by 67 (24.0%). Failure to adequately convey examination laws and regulations was identified by 51 (18.3%) students. Fees not being cleared on time was the least frequently identified factor, reported by only 2 (0.7%) students. These findings indicate that examination misconduct may partly arise from pressures surrounding academic performance. Students who feel inadequately prepared or fear poor performance may be more likely to consider unauthorized assistance, particularly where peer influence creates opportunities or normalizes misconduct.

The findings correspond with Adem et al. (2024), who found significant relationships between school, home, course and student factors and examination malpractice in Kenyan public universities. They are also consistent with Mireku et al. (2024), who identified societal pressure and the pursuit of academic qualifications among the most frequently reported causes of examination malpractice in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Heads of Department Perceptions

Heads of Department were asked to indicate the institutional and administrative challenges affecting the implementation of examination rules and regulations. The findings are presented in Table 8.

Table 8: Challenges Affecting Implementation of Examination Rules and Regulations as Reported by Heads of Department

Challenge	Agree n	Agree, %	Disagree n	Disagree %
Inadequate staff	14	32.6	29	67.4
Ignorance of some staff members	10	23.3	33	76.7
Negligence by some staff members	23	53.5	20	46.5
Changes in technology	34	79.1	9	20.9

The findings presented in Table 8 indicate that changes in technology were the most significant challenge, with 34 (79.1%) of the respondents agreeing that technological developments had affected the effective implementation of examination regulations. This finding suggests that universities are increasingly

confronted with new forms of examination misconduct facilitated by technological advancements. The widespread availability of smartphones, internet-enabled devices, and artificial intelligence tools has created additional difficulties in monitoring examinations and detecting academic dishonesty. As a result, institutions are required to continuously review and update their examination policies and enforcement mechanisms to respond to emerging technological threats.

The findings support those of Johnston et al. (2024), who found that a substantial proportion of university students used generative artificial intelligence tools to assist with assessment tasks and that many students did not necessarily regard such use as academic misconduct. Similarly, the OECD (2026) observed that the rapid adoption of artificial intelligence in higher education has raised concerns regarding academic integrity, the reliability of assessment outcomes, and the adequacy of existing institutional policies. These observations suggest that technological developments are transforming the examination environment and challenging traditional approaches to examination management.

Negligence among some staff members was identified as the second most significant challenge, with 23 (53.5%) Heads of Department indicating that it affected the implementation of examination regulations. This finding highlights the importance of human factors in ensuring effective enforcement of examination policies. Regardless of how comprehensive examination regulations may be, their effectiveness largely depends on the commitment and vigilance of those responsible for implementing them. Where staff members fail to adequately supervise examinations, enforce regulations consistently, or perform their duties diligently, opportunities for examination malpractice may increase. This finding is consistent with Awoniyi et al. (2024), who reported that challenges faced by examination personnel can weaken the effectiveness of examination control measures and compromise academic integrity.

Inadequate staffing was reported by 14 (32.6%) Heads of Department as a challenge affecting implementation. Although fewer respondents identified this issue compared to technological changes and staff negligence, the finding suggests that staffing levels remain an important consideration in examination management. Limited staffing may increase supervisory workloads and reduce the effectiveness of monitoring during examinations, particularly where large numbers of students are involved. In such circumstances, adherence to examination procedures may become difficult to maintain consistently.

Ignorance of examination rules among some staff members was identified by 10 (23.3%) respondents. While this was the least frequently reported challenge, it nevertheless points to the need for continuous staff training and sensitization on examination policies and procedures. Lack of adequate knowledge of examination regulations may result in inconsistent interpretation and enforcement of the rules, thereby weakening implementation efforts. According to UNESCO (2025), effective examination management depends on appropriate institutional procedures, adequate supervision, staff competence, and continuous efforts to safeguard examination integrity.

Examination Officers Perceptions

Examination Officers were asked to identify challenges affecting the implementation of examination rules and

regulations. The findings are presented in Table 9.

Table 9: Challenges Affecting Implementation of Examination Rules and Regulations as Reported by Examination Officers

Challenge	Agree n	Agree, %	Disagree n	Disagree %
Inadequate staff	13	34.2	25	65.8
Ignorance of some staff members	6	15.8	32	84.2
Overcrowding due to inadequate lecture halls	29	76.3	9	23.7
Changes in technology	2	5.3	36	94.7
Lack of student cooperation	27	71.1	11	28.9

The findings in Table 9 show that overcrowding of examination halls was the most frequently reported challenge, with 29 (76.3%) respondents agreeing that inadequate examination space hindered effective implementation. This suggests that limited infrastructure reduces effective supervision and increases opportunities for examination malpractice. The finding is consistent with UNESCO (2025), which emphasizes the importance of adequate examination facilities and supervision in maintaining examination integrity.

Lack of student cooperation was identified by 27 (71.1%) Examination Officers, making it the second most frequently reported challenge. This finding suggests that non-compliance with examination instructions and regulations remains a significant barrier to effective implementation. Similar findings were reported by Adem et al. (2024), who found that student-related factors significantly influenced examination malpractice in Kenyan universities. Likewise, Mireku et al. (2024) found that student behaviours and attitudes were among the major contributors to examination malpractice in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Inadequate staffing was reported by 13 (34.2%) respondents, indicating that staff shortages may limit effective monitoring of examinations, especially where large numbers of students are involved. Ignorance of examination regulations among some staff members was identified by 6 (15.8%) respondents, suggesting the need for continuous training to promote consistent enforcement of examination rules.

Only 2 (5.3%) Examination Officers identified technological changes as a challenge. This contrasts with the views of Heads of Department, who considered technology a major implementation challenge. The difference may reflect variations in responsibilities, with Examination Officers focusing more on operational challenges such as overcrowding and student behaviour than on broader policy concerns associated with emerging technologies.

Implementation of Specific Examination Rules and Regulations

Examination Officers were asked to indicate the extent to which specific examination rules and regulations were being implemented in their universities. The findings are presented in Table 10.

All respondents (100%) reported that smoking was prohibited in examination rooms, candidates were not allowed to remove answer scripts from examination venues, and plagiarism through reproducing another person's work without acknowledgement was prohibited. High levels of implementation

were also reported for student identification checks (94.7%), signing of attendance registers (94.7%), compliance with invigilators' instructions at the end of examinations (92.1%), and restrictions on obtaining assistance from other candidates (86.8%).

The findings suggest that universities have established effective mechanisms for enforcing procedural examination regulations aimed at maintaining order, accountability, and academic integrity during examinations. These results are consistent with UNESCO (2025), which emphasizes the importance of examination security procedures, candidate identification, attendance verification, and supervision in safeguarding the credibility of assessment processes.

Table 10: EO's Perceptions of the Implementation of Examination Rules and Regulations

Statements	Implemented	Not Implemented
Candidates display their student identification on their desks during examination.	36 (94.7%)	2 (5.3%)
Candidates who do not have examination cards are not allowed to sit for examination	26 (68.4%)	12 (31.6%)
Examination registration cards should be conspicuously displayed	28 (73.7%)	10 (26.3%)
Books , bags or any other such material should not be carried into an examination room	31 (81.6%)	7 (18.4%)
Mathematical tables and calculators should not be brought to the examination room, unless there is provision to the contrary for a particular examination	24 (63.2%)	14 (36.8%)
Candidates should display their student identification on their desks during examination.	35 (92.1%)	3 (7.9%)
Smoking is forbidden in the examination room	38 (100%)	0
Candidates must stop writing and assemble their scripts at the end of the examination on the instruction of the invigilator	35 (92.1%)	3 (7.9%)
Candidates are not allowed to communicate with each other either verbally or through other means, during an examination without permission from the invigilator	20 (52.6%)	10 (26.3%)
Candidates are not allowed to remove answer books from the examination room	38 (100%)	0
Candidates are not allowed to reproduce the works of another person or other persons without acknowledgement and with the intent to deceive	38 (100%)	0
Invigilators should, before each examination inform candidates of the seriousness with which examination irregularities shall be dealt with	27 (71.1%)	11 (28.9%)
Reading or permitting another to copy from or make use of one's paper is not allowed	32 (84.2%)	6 (15.8%)
Obtaining or attempting to obtain assistance from another candidate and / or giving or attempting to	33 (86.8%)	5 (13.2%)

give assistance to another candidate directly or indirectly is prohibitive		
A candidate found engaging in examination malpractice is discontinued.	22 (57.9%)	16 (42.1%)
Candidates eligible for semester/ trimester examinations must have sat for CATs and have attendee all lectures	11 (28.9%)	27 (71.1%)
Students do not carry mobile phones to examination rooms	17 (44.7%)	21 (55.3%)
Candidates' use of rough paper is not permitted. All rough work is done in answer booklet.	8 (21.1%)	30 (78.9%)
Each candidate signs examination attendance register bearing his/her name and registration number and signature which is collected by the invigilator.	36 (94.7%)	2 (5.3%)
Candidates should settle in examination room at least 10 minutes before the start of an examination.	31 (81.6%)	7 (18.4%)
Candidates are not allowed to leave examination venue during examination sessions and once a candidate leaves he/she is not permitted to return to the examination hall	25 (65.8%)	13 (34.2%)
Food and /or drinks are not allowed in the examination room.	22 (57.9%)	16 (42.1%)

Despite the high implementation of many examination rules, notable gaps were evident in specific areas. A majority of Examination Officers indicated that the prohibition of rough paper use was not implemented (78.9%), while 71.1% reported that requirements for students to attend lectures and sit Continuous Assessment Tests (CATs) before qualifying for examinations were not consistently enforced. In addition, 55.3% reported that restrictions on carrying mobile phones into examination rooms were not effectively implemented.

These findings suggest that while universities have largely succeeded in enforcing traditional examination procedures, challenges remain in areas requiring continuous monitoring and compliance by students. The inadequate enforcement of mobile phone restrictions is particularly significant given growing concerns regarding the use of digital technologies to facilitate academic dishonesty. Studies by Johnston et al. (2024) and the OECD (2026) have similarly highlighted the increasing challenges posed by emerging technologies and artificial intelligence to academic integrity in higher education.

The findings further show that only 57.9% of Examination Officers reported consistent implementation of disciplinary actions for examination malpractice. This raises concerns regarding the consistency of enforcement mechanisms, as weak or inconsistent sanctions may reduce the deterrent effect of examination regulations. Similar observations have been reported by Adem et al. (2024), who found that institutional factors play an important role in influencing examination malpractice in Kenyan universities.

Overall, the findings indicate that examination rules and regulations are largely implemented in the selected universities. However, gaps remain in the

enforcement of technology-related regulations, eligibility requirements, and some disciplinary measures. These areas require greater institutional attention to strengthen academic integrity and improve compliance with examination regulations.

Qualitative Findings

The qualitative findings generated from interviews with Heads of Departments (HODs) and Examination Officers revealed that implementation of examination rules and regulations was affected by several interrelated institutional, technological, infrastructural and behavioural challenges. Six major themes emerged: technological changes and emerging forms of malpractice, staff workload and vigilance, inadequate examination infrastructure, student cooperation and compliance, communication and visibility of examination rules, and inconsistent enforcement and sanctions.

Technological Changes and Emerging Examination Risks

Technological advancement emerged as an important challenge to the implementation of examination rules and regulations. HODs particularly expressed concern that students increasingly use small and discreet electronic devices that are difficult for invigilators to identify during examinations. Smartwatches, wireless earbuds, mobile phones and other compact communication devices were identified as creating new opportunities for examination malpractice. The quantitative findings support this concern, with 79.1% of HODs agreeing that changes in technology posed a challenge to examination management.

One HOD explained:

"*Technology has made examination supervision more difficult because some students use very small devices which are not easily noticed. A student can have a smartwatch or wireless earbud and still appear to be following the examination rules."* (HOD 03, Public University)

Another participant observed:

"*The problem is that the devices keep changing. By the time the university develops a way of detecting one device, students may already be using another method.*" (HOD 07, Private University)

These accounts suggest that conventional invigilation procedures may not adequately address technologically enabled forms of malpractice. The challenge is therefore not only the availability of examination rules, but also the capacity of institutions and examination personnel to adapt enforcement mechanisms to emerging technologies.

Staff Workload, Vigilance and Negligence

The interviews also indicated that the effectiveness of examination supervision was influenced by staff workload and the ability of invigilators to maintain continuous vigilance. Participants noted that where large numbers of candidates are assigned to relatively few invigilators, it becomes difficult to monitor all students simultaneously. Fatigue and competing responsibilities were also perceived to affect the consistency of supervision.

An Examination Officer stated:

"*When one invigilator is responsible for a large number of candidates, it becomes difficult to observe everyone throughout the examination. You may concentrate on one side of the room and something happens on the other side*." (Examination Officer 05, Public University)

Similarly, an HOD remarked:

"*Sometimes the problem is not that staff do not know the rules. They know them, but workload and fatigue can affect how*

closely they supervise the examination." (HOD 11, Private University)

The qualitative findings therefore provide an explanation for the quantitative finding that 53.5% of HODs agreed that negligence by staff was a challenge. Although inadequate staffing was reported by a smaller proportion of HODs, the interviews indicate that the effectiveness of available personnel may also be affected by workload, fatigue and the demands of sustained examination surveillance.

Inadequate Examination Infrastructure and Overcrowding

Inadequate examination infrastructure emerged more strongly from the interviews with Examination Officers. Participants reported that limited availability of suitable examination rooms and overcrowding could make it difficult to arrange candidates in a manner that facilitates effective supervision. This finding is consistent with the quantitative results, in which 76.3% of Examination Officers identified overcrowding arising from inadequate lecture halls as a challenge.

One Examination Officer explained:

"*The number of students is sometimes higher than the capacity of the available rooms. When you have to use a crowded lecture hall, maintaining adequate spacing and monitoring every candidate becomes difficult.*" (Examination Officer 02, Public University)

Another participant stated:

"*The physical environment affects enforcement. If students are seated too close together, it becomes easier for them to communicate or share materials, while invigilators have limited space to move around*." (Examination Officer 09, Private University)

These statements indicate that examination integrity is partly dependent on the physical environment in which examinations are administered. Even where examination personnel understand and intend to enforce the regulations, inadequate examination facilities may constrain their ability to implement them effectively.

Student Cooperation and Compliance

Lack of student cooperation was another significant challenge reported by Examination Officers. Participants indicated that some students did not consistently comply with examination procedures, particularly regulations concerning unauthorized materials, identification documents and movement during examinations. This finding corresponds with the quantitative result in which 71.1% of Examination Officers identified lack of student cooperation as a challenge.

An Examination Officer noted:

"*Some students understand the rules but still try to test the limits. You may ask them to remove unauthorized items or follow a particular procedure, but they sometimes resist or argue with the invigilator.*" (Examination Officer 06, Public University)

Another participant explained:

"*The challenge is not necessarily that students are unaware of the rules. Many know what is required, but compliance becomes a problem when they think they can get away with breaking a particular rule*." (Examination Officer 12, Private University)

The qualitative evidence is important because 89.0% of students indicated that examination rules were necessary. This suggests that acceptance of examination regulations does not automatically translate into consistent compliance. The challenge therefore appears to involve the gap between students' recognition of the legitimacy of examination rules and their actual adherence to those rules during examinations.

Communication and Visibility of Examination Rules

The interviews further revealed weaknesses in the communication and visibility of examination rules at the point of examination. Although examination rules were formally communicated through answer booklets and other institutional mechanisms, participants indicated that rules were not always visibly displayed within examination venues. The quantitative findings showed that all respondents reported that examination rules were printed in answer booklets, but only 31.6% indicated that the rules were displayed in every examination hall.

One participant stated:

"*The rules are available in the examination materials, but students do not always see the full set of rules displayed in the examination room. Having them clearly visible would remind both students and invigilators of what is expected*." (Examination Officer 04, Public University)

An HOD similarly observed:

"*Communication of the rules should happen before and during the examination. If students only receive the rules in documents, some important instructions may not receive enough attention*." (HOD 08, Private University)

The findings indicate that formal communication and practical communication are not necessarily equivalent. The existence of written regulations does not guarantee that students and examination personnel will have continuous access to the relevant rules during examination administration.

Inconsistent Enforcement and Sanctions

Another important theme concerned inconsistency in the enforcement of examination regulations and application of sanctions. Participants indicated that some rules were strictly applied because they were relatively easy to monitor, whereas others were more difficult to enforce consistently. This pattern was reflected in the quantitative findings. Rules concerning display of identification cards and prohibition of books, bags and unauthorized materials recorded relatively high implementation levels, while rules concerning mobile phones, rough paper, eligibility requirements and discontinuation of candidates involved in malpractice were less consistently implemented.

An Examination Officer explained:

"*Some rules are easy to enforce because you can immediately see whether a student has an examination card or unauthorized material. Other rules require closer monitoring and follow-up, and that is where enforcement becomes more difficult*." (Examination Officer 10, Private University)

On sanctions, one HOD observed:

"*There are cases where malpractice is identified, but the follow-up process is not always straightforward. The rules may provide for a particular penalty, but implementation depends on how the case is handled after it is reported*." (HOD 14, Public University)

This finding provides qualitative context for the relatively low proportion of respondents reporting that students found engaging in malpractice were discontinued. It suggests that the challenge may extend beyond identifying violations to ensuring that reported violations proceed through a consistent and predictable disciplinary process.

Institutional Capacity and the Implementation Gap

Taken together, the interviews revealed that challenges affecting examination rules and regulations were multidimensional. They involved the interaction of technological

developments, staff capacity, examination facilities, student behaviour, communication mechanisms and institutional enforcement procedures. The findings also demonstrated that the existence of formal examination regulations did not necessarily translate into uniform implementation across examination settings.

An Examination Officer summarized the challenge as follows:

"*The rules themselves are generally clear, but implementation depends on whether you have enough staff, suitable rooms, cooperation from students and a system that follows up cases when violations occur*." (Examination Officer 15, Public University)

Similarly, an HOD stated:

"*For the rules to work, the whole institution has to support them. It cannot be left to the invigilator alone because there are issues of staffing, facilities, technology and disciplinary procedures*." (HOD 16, Private University)

The qualitative evidence therefore complements the quantitative findings by demonstrating that examination integrity is shaped by the interaction of institutional capacity and individual compliance.

Conclusion

The study concludes that examination rules and regulations are generally recognized as necessary within public and private universities in Uasin Gishu County, but their implementation is affected by several institutional and operational challenges. Although most students acknowledged the importance of examination regulations, implementation was not uniform across all rules and examination settings. Rules that were easily observable and monitored, such as displaying identification cards and restricting books and bags, were implemented more consistently than rules concerning mobile phones, rough paper, examination eligibility and sanctions for malpractice.

The findings further demonstrate that implementation challenges are multidimensional. Technological developments, particularly the use of smartwatches, wireless earbuds and other discreet electronic devices, have created new forms of examination risk. Staff workload and fatigue may also limit effective invigilation, while overcrowding and inadequate examination facilities constrain supervision. In addition, lack of student cooperation, limited visibility of examination rules and inconsistent application of sanctions weaken enforcement. The study therefore concludes that having formal examination regulations is insufficient; their effectiveness depends on institutional capacity, appropriate infrastructure, effective communication, technological preparedness and consistent enforcement.

Recommendations

1. Institutions should regularly review examination procedures to address emerging forms of technology-enabled malpractice. This should include clear regulations on smartwatches, wireless earbuds, mobile phones and other unauthorized electronic devices, together with appropriate screening and monitoring procedures that respect students' rights.
2. Examination Officers should ensure that invigilator-to-candidate ratios are manageable and that invigilators receive regular training on examination procedures, detection of emerging malpractice techniques and appropriate handling of violations. Adequate staffing

would reduce fatigue and improve continuous monitoring.

3. Institutional management should provide sufficient examination rooms and organize seating arrangements that allow adequate spacing and easy movement of invigilators. Overcrowding should be minimized because unsuitable examination environments can undermine effective enforcement of examination regulations.
4. Universities should display examination rules prominently in every examination venue in addition to printing them in answer booklets. Students should also receive regular sensitization before examination periods, with particular attention to prohibited electronic devices, unauthorized materials, identification requirements and examination conduct.
5. Clear procedures should be established for reporting, investigating and determining examination malpractice cases. Where violations are confirmed, sanctions should be applied consistently and in accordance with institutional regulations. This would strengthen deterrence and enhance confidence in the fairness of the examination system.
6. Universities should involve students in academic-integrity programmes that explain the purpose of examination rules, consequences of malpractice and acceptable examination conduct. Such programmes should begin before examinations rather than relying only on instructions provided on examination day.
7. Internal examination audits and periodic reviews should be conducted to determine whether approved rules are being implemented consistently across departments and examination venues. Findings from such reviews should inform corrective measures, staff training and revision of examination procedures.
8. Future research should investigate the effectiveness of technology-based measures for preventing examination malpractice, particularly in relation to smartwatches, wireless earbuds, mobile phones and emerging digital technologies.

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