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A Scheduled Examination Model for Reducing Students' Waiting Time for Examinations and Graduation in Cameroonian Universities

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Abstract

Cameroonian universities run on a fixed academic calendar, so every student, ready or not, waits for the same centrally set examination period, and often waits again, after finishing a program, for a delayed graduation. This slows capable students down, delays entry into paid work, and shortens the years available for creative or entrepreneurial activity. Using evidence from an official university calendar and recent Cameroonian higher-education research, this paper first shows a concrete mismatch between when students enrol, when teaching starts, and when examinations and resits actually occur. It then proposes a Scheduled Examination Model (SEM), a reform letting a student who can show she is ready request an earlier examination sitting through a rolling, on-demand booking system, while teaching content and academic standards stay untouched. The SEM draws on precedents including the GED, TOEFL, and Cisco exams and the competency-based model at Western Governors University, and rests on mastery-learning and human-capital theory. Because no Cameroonian university has piloted such a model, this paper also designs a mixed-methods instrument for assessing whether students, lecturers, and administrators would find the SEM acceptable, and sets out how it should be fielded and analyzed. The paper concludes that flexible scheduling, grounded in document evidence and a concrete testing plan, offers Cameroonian universities a low-cost, testable way to cut time spent waiting rather than learning.

Keywords: time-to-degree, examination scheduling, self-paced learning, opportunity cost, academic calendar, Cameroon higher education, competency-based education

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Introduction

Higher education in Cameroon runs on a fixed academic calendar. The Ministry of Higher Education (MINESUP) sets this calendar every year, and Cameroon's 2023 Law on Higher Education Policy confirms that examination periods are centrally regulated across public and private universities (Republic of Cameroon, 2023). Within a single academic year, a university's own calendar sets fixed windows for enrollment, for teaching, for the first set of examinations, for resits, and for the start of the next semester, and every student in a cohort moves through these windows together, regardless of how early some of them are individually ready to move on. A student who has mastered a course by week six of a fourteen-week semester, and a classmate who needs all fourteen weeks, must both wait for the same examination date set by the calendar rather than by their own progress.

A fixed calendar is not unreasonable. It makes timetabling simple, gives lecturers one teaching schedule to plan around, and lets administrators coordinate thousands of students at once. But the same feature that makes the system easy to run also makes it slow for each student. As the next section shows with a specific, document-based example, the gap between a student's own readiness and the date the calendar finally allows her to be examined is not a theoretical concern; it is visible in universities' own published calendars. Over a three-year degree, these small, calendar-driven delays add up, and, as this paper's problem statement sets out below, a further delay can follow even after a student finishes her examinations, before her degree is formally conferred. No published Cameroonian study has yet mapped this specific sequence of delays using a university's own calendar data, nor proposed a specific, testable mechanism for closing it. This is the gap this paper addresses, and it is the reason this study is worth conducting: Cameroonian higher-education research has identified weak examination systems as a general problem (Ngenge, Rofiah, Ashu, & Jude, 2025), but has not yet turned that diagnosis into a concrete scheduling reform, nor asked Cameroonian students, lecturers, and administrators directly whether such a reform would be acceptable to them.

This paper does not argue that fixed calendars should be scrapped, and it does not question their administrative value. It looks at one specific, fixable part of the calendar: when an examination happens relative to a student's own readiness. It asks whether examination timing can respond to that readiness without changing how a course is taught, and it proposes a Scheduled Examination Model (SEM) that lets ready students sit their examinations earlier, on a rolling basis. Because a model proposed on paper is not the same as a model shown to be acceptable to the people who would have to use it, this paper also designs, as its central methodological contribution, a structured instrument

for finding out directly from Cameroonian students, lecturers, and administrators whether the SEM is workable in their own universities.

Statement of the Research Problem

Students in Cameroonian universities often spend more time earning their degree than they strictly need, and part of that extra time is created well before any single examination is sat. Enrollment itself is not instantaneous. At the University of Buea, for example, the 2022/2023 official calendar shows undergraduate admissions published on 10 September 2022, with registration, including a compulsory medical examination, course registration forms, and fee payment, running from 12 to 30 September 2022 (University of Buea, 2022). Critically, the same calendar states that this registration period "runs alongside lectures," meaning teaching for the semester begins before every student has finished enrolling (University of Buea, 2022). A student who registers on the last permitted day has already missed roughly three weeks of a fourteen-to-sixteen-week semester (World Education Services, 2021) before her instruction even begins on equal footing with classmates who registered in the first week. This is the first mismatch this paper identifies: a gap between the enrollment period and the instructional period that the fixed calendar does not resolve for the individual student.

A second mismatch appears between the end of instruction and the examinations that follow it. The same University of Buea calendar shows resit registration for first-semester examinations running from 16 to 19 February 2023, resit examinations themselves from 22 February to 4 March 2023, registration for the second semester from 1 to 6 March 2023, and second-semester lectures beginning on 7 March 2023 (University of Buea, 2022). In other words, some students were still completing assessments tied to the first semester in the very same week that the second semester's lectures began. This is not a failure of any individual department; it is a structural consequence of fitting continuous assessment, main examinations, resits, and a results board meeting into a calendar that must also leave room for the next semester to start on time.

A third, and often the longest, wait comes after a student has finished all of her examinations. University regulations require that "examination results shall be released to students at the end of each examination session" and that "transcripts shall be issued to students at the end of each session" (University of Buea, n.d.), which sets out the formal timeline for releasing results and transcripts, but it says nothing about how long a formal degree certificate or a graduation ceremony itself takes to follow. Precise, published figures on this specific interval are not available in the public record for

Cameroonian universities, and this absence of data is itself part of the evidence gap this paper identifies, one that a future empirical study, building on the instrument this paper designs, should close directly. Finally, to remove any ambiguity: students do not sit examinations only once every three years. Cameroon's undergraduate programs run on a two-semester-per-year structure, with each semester closing in its own examination session (World Education Services, 2021; University of Buea, 2022), so a three-year Bachelor's degree normally involves six main examination sessions, plus any resits, not one single sitting at the end of the program.

Together, these three gaps, enrollment-to-instruction, instruction-to-examination, and completion-to-graduation, make up the excess time this paper is concerned with. Each month added by any of these gaps is a month a ready graduate cannot spend earning money, gaining job experience, or building a business. Cameroon's labor market makes this costly: a large share of Cameroonian graduates struggle to find steady, formal work, and most young workers who do find jobs end up in informal, insecure positions rather than stable ones (Ngenge et al., 2025). Evidence from outside Cameroon shows that this kind of delay has long, not just short-term, consequences: graduates who enter the labor market later, or under worse conditions, than they otherwise could have, can carry lower earnings for many years afterward (Kahn, 2010). The cost is not only financial; it also touches creativity, meaning the time and energy a young person has to try new things, take risks, and build something of her own, which is itself concentrated in the early years after study that a long, calendar-driven wait eats into.

Research Objectives

The general objective of this paper is to propose and begin validating a model that lets Cameroonian university students spend only the time they truly need to earn their degree, by making examination scheduling respond to individual readiness instead of a single, fixed calendar. Three specific objectives follow:

1. To specify clear operating rules under which a Cameroonian university could let a student sit an examination ahead of the fixed calendar period, without weakening the rigor or security of the examination. 2. To estimate, using the real structure of Cameroonian degree programs, how much time the proposed Scheduled Examination Model (SEM) could save a well-prepared student across a full degree. 3. To design a structured, mixed-methods instrument for assessing the extent to which Cameroonian university students, lecturers, and administrators consider the proposed SEM acceptable and implementable, and to set out exactly how that instrument should be fielded and

analyzed so that the model's adoption can be judged on direct evidence rather than on reasoning alone.

Literature Review

Enrollment Procedures and the Instruction Gap

Globally, enrollment is rarely treated as a neutral administrative formality; it is itself a process that can expand or compress the time a student effectively has for instruction. University of Buea's own student regulations state that "registration for courses shall not be deemed complete until a student has personally handed over all the completed registration forms to the Faculty Officer," and that a student who fails to register for a course may not sit its examination (University of Buea, n.d.). Because registration at the University of Buea runs over roughly three weeks alongside the start of lectures (University of Buea, 2022), students who register late do not simply lose administrative time; they lose real instructional time relative to classmates who registered early, a mismatch that existing Cameroonian higher-education research has not directly measured, even though it has identified examination weaknesses more broadly as a barrier to good graduate outcomes (Ngenge et al., 2025).

Waiting Time Between Instruction and Examinations

Precedents from several existing examination systems show that this waiting time is not an unavoidable feature of testing in general. The General Educational Development (GED) test in the United States runs on a rolling, on-demand basis, letting candidates book a sitting within days of being ready (GED Testing Service, 2023). Cisco's networking certification exams follow the same on-demand approach (Cisco, 2023), and the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) is offered dozens of times a year rather than on one fixed date (ETS, 2023). None of these waits for a semester to end before testing a candidate; each treats the candidate's own readiness, not an institutional calendar, as the trigger for scheduling. At the level of a full degree program, Western Governors University's competency-based model lets students sit new assessments as soon as they can show mastery of a unit of study, instead of waiting for a semester to end (Johnstone, 2009; Gervais, 2016). A recent, large-scale review of competency-based education research found that most such research and most working examples still come from the United States and Canada (Kang, Moussavi, Castle, Pittack, & McEathron, 2025), confirming that almost no published work has tested whether rolling, readiness-based scheduling would work inside a fixed-calendar, in-person system like Cameroon's. In Cameroon

specifically, the University of Buea's own calendar shows that first-semester resit examinations in 2023 were still being completed in the final week of February, days before second-semester lectures began on 7 March (University of Buea, 2022), a concrete, document-based example of the instruction-to-examination gap this paper addresses.

Waiting Time Between Program Completion and Graduation

Compared with the first two gaps, the interval between finishing a program's examinations and receiving a conferred degree is less documented globally and almost undocumented for Cameroon specifically. University regulations establish that results and transcripts are released "at the end of each examination session" (University of Buea, n.d.), which fixes the start of this interval but not its length, and no Cameroonian study identified for this paper reports how long students then wait for formal degree conferral or a graduation ceremony. This is itself a literature gap worth naming plainly: before this paper, there was no published, document-based account of how long Cameroonian students wait, at each of the three stages identified above, relative to when they are personally ready to move to the next stage.

Evidence from other developing higher-education systems suggests this stage can be lengthened by administrative processing steps that have little to do with academic merit. UNESCO (2020) identifies slow, paper-based certification and verification procedures as a common bottleneck in developing education systems generally, a pattern consistent with, though not specific to, the absence of published degree-conferral timelines in Cameroon. Because this interval has not been measured locally, this paper treats it as an open empirical question rather than assuming its length, and recommends, as part of the instrument designed under the third research objective, that future data collection ask respondents directly how long this final wait typically lasts in their own institutions.

The Opportunity Cost of Delayed Graduation

Economists treat the years spent in a degree program as an investment, with direct costs such as tuition and indirect costs, mainly the income and experience a student forgoes by not yet being in the labor market (Becker, 1964). Every extra month spent waiting for a fixed examination window or a delayed graduation, rather than being productively engaged in study or paid work, adds to this indirect cost without adding to the student's actual skills. In the United States, a well-known finding is that students who enter the labor market later, or into worse conditions, than they otherwise could have, suffer earnings losses that persist for many years afterward (Kahn, 2010), and a separate line of

research has shown that rising time-to-degree in that same country is driven mainly by structural scheduling bottlenecks rather than by weaker students (Bound, Lovenheim, & Turner, 2012). A rare Sub-Saharan African study on the same question, conducted in Kenya, found that most research on time-to-degree comes from wealthy countries and should not be assumed to transfer automatically to African universities (Mwangi, 2017), which is exactly why this paper grounds its argument in Cameroon-specific calendar evidence rather than relying on foreign findings alone. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals link quality education directly to labor market outcomes, calling for a large increase in the number of young people with skills for employment, decent jobs, and entrepreneurship (United Nations, 2015); by this standard, a system that keeps a ready graduate needlessly waiting at any of the three stages identified above is not delivering quality education as efficiently as it could.

The Cameroonian Institutional Context and the Gap This Paper Fills

Cameroon's academic calendar is fixed each year by ministerial order, and its 2023 Law on Higher Education Policy formally establishes the country's system of accreditation and quality assurance, including examination regulation, across public and private institutions (Republic of Cameroon, 2023). A large, recent mixed-methods study of Cameroon's higher-education sector, drawing on a structured survey of 109 students, graduates, lecturers, and administrators, found that institutional expansion has not been matched by a similar rise in quality, and it names flawed examination systems, alongside underfunding and outdated curricula, as specific barriers graduates face (Ngenge et al., 2025). The same study reports that curriculum reform was the single most requested fix among its respondents, which suggests Cameroonian stakeholders themselves already favor practical, structural reform over broad policy statements, an indirect but encouraging signal for a concrete scheduling reform of the kind this paper proposes. Older work on Cameroon's education system points in the same direction: Tambo (2012) shows that the basic organizing logic of Cameroon's education policy has changed little even as enrollment and youth-unemployment pressures have grown sharply, and UNESCO (2020) names rigid, one-size-fits-all program structures as a common barrier to efficient education across developing systems generally.

Taken together, the literature supports a specific, three-part gap that this paper fills. First, no published study, Cameroonian or international, has used a Cameroonian university's own calendar data to document the enrollment-instruction-examination-graduation sequence of delays described above. Second, while flexible, readiness-based examination scheduling has already worked at the scale

of single exams and of a full university elsewhere, it has not been proposed or tested for a fixed-calendar, Francophone-and-Anglophone system such as Cameroon's. Third, no Cameroonian study has yet asked students, lecturers, and administrators directly, through a structured instrument, whether such a model would be acceptable in their own institutions, which is precisely the contribution this paper makes under its third research objective.

Research Design and Methodology

This paper follows a two-phase, mixed-methods design-and-validation approach, chosen because a scheduling reform that has never been tried in Cameroon cannot be evaluated against existing field data; it must first be specified precisely enough, and grounded closely enough in real institutional evidence, that it can then be put to the people who would have to use it. Phase One, reported in full in this paper, develops and internally grounds the model. Phase Two, which this paper designs in detail but does not yet report the results of, is the direct empirical test of whether Cameroonian stakeholders find the model acceptable; Phase Two is now the central aim of this study, consistent with the third research objective above, and its results, once gathered, will determine whether the SEM is recommended for adoption.

Phase One proceeds in three steps. The first step is document analysis: this paper examined Cameroon's 2023 Law on Higher Education Policy, the University of Buea's own 2022/2023 calendar of activities, and its official student regulations, to establish, with primary institutional evidence rather than general description, exactly where the enrollment, instruction, examination, and graduation stages of the academic year meet and where they do not. The second step is comparative benchmarking against four already-working examination systems: the GED, Cisco, and TOEFL exams, and the Western Governors University degree structure. This comparison is deliberately narrow in scope: it is not a claim that online, self-paced, or competency-based learning is equivalent to Cameroon's in-person, lecture-based instruction, and the SEM does not propose to change how or where Cameroonian students are taught. The comparison is used only to confirm that specific administrative mechanisms, rolling registration, readiness certification, and item banking, which keep an examination secure and fair when it is offered on different dates to different candidates, already work in practice, regardless of how the candidates were taught beforehand. The third step is model

synthesis, shown as a process diagram in Figure 1 and explained in the next section, in which the findings of the first two steps are combined into the SEM's specific operating rules.

Phase Two is the instrument this paper designs for the model's empirical validation. It has three parts. The first part is a structured questionnaire, to be administered to three respondent groups, students, lecturers, and administrators, across a sample of Cameroonian public and private universities stratified by region and by the Anglophone or Francophone subsystem, following the same stratification logic used in the only comparable recent Cameroonian stakeholder survey (Ngenge et al., 2025). The questionnaire asks each group to rate, on a five-point scale, the SEM's perceived fairness, its administrative feasibility, its likely effect on examination security, and their willingness to use or support it, mirroring the acceptability dimensions already used in that survey. The second part is a short, semi-structured interview protocol for a smaller number of lecturers and examination-office administrators, focused on the specific operational concerns Phase One's benchmarking step cannot resolve on paper, such as staff workload and item-bank feasibility in their own departments. The third part is the planned analysis: questionnaire responses would be summarized descriptively by respondent group and tested for differences between groups, while interview responses would be analyzed thematically, and the model would be treated as provisionally supported only where a clear majority of each respondent group endorses it and no administrator raises a feasibility objection that Phase One's rules do not already answer.

This design does not yet produce new quantitative or qualitative findings of its own, and this paper does not claim that it does. Its contribution is to turn the model from an untested proposal into a specific, fieldable instrument, so that the next step, administering it to real Cameroonian respondents, can produce the direct evidence the third research objective calls for.

Fielding Phase Two would also require the ordinary safeguards of any study involving human respondents: institutional research-ethics approval from the host university, informed consent from every student, lecturer, and administrator who takes part, and anonymized reporting of individual responses so that no participant's specific rating or comment can be traced back to them. These safeguards are listed here, ahead of fielding, because a credible test of stakeholder acceptance depends as much on respondents trusting the process as on the instrument's own design; a questionnaire that collects honest answers about a proposed reform to examination practice is only useful if lecturers and administrators believe their individual responses cannot be used against them.

Two further issues worth stating plainly bound this design, as distinct from the model it will test. First, a single-university pilot, while the fastest and cheapest way to generate first evidence, would use a sample whose results cannot automatically be assumed to hold for Cameroon's wider mix of public, private, Anglophone, and Francophone institutions, which is exactly why the sampling plan above stratifies by region and subsystem rather than drawing respondents from one faculty alone. Second, self-reported willingness to support a model in a questionnaire is not the same as observed behavior once the model is actually running, so even a strongly positive Phase Two result would still leave the phased rollout recommended later in this paper, starting with a small, closely monitored pilot cohort, as the appropriate next step rather than an immediate, full-scale launch.

Findings

The Proposed Model: A Scheduled Examination Model (SEM)

Figure 1 shows the SEM's process flow before the rules behind it are explained in prose. Under the Standard Track, shown on the left, a student waits for the fixed, centrally set examination period, sits her examination on that date, and progresses on the standard calendar. Under the Scheduled Track, shown on the right, a student who an instructor certifies as ready submits a request through the faculty examinations office, receives an approved version of the examination from an item bank, and sits her examination early, typically within two to three weeks of her request. Both tracks converge on the same outcome: credit awarded and progress toward graduation, on exactly the same academic standard.

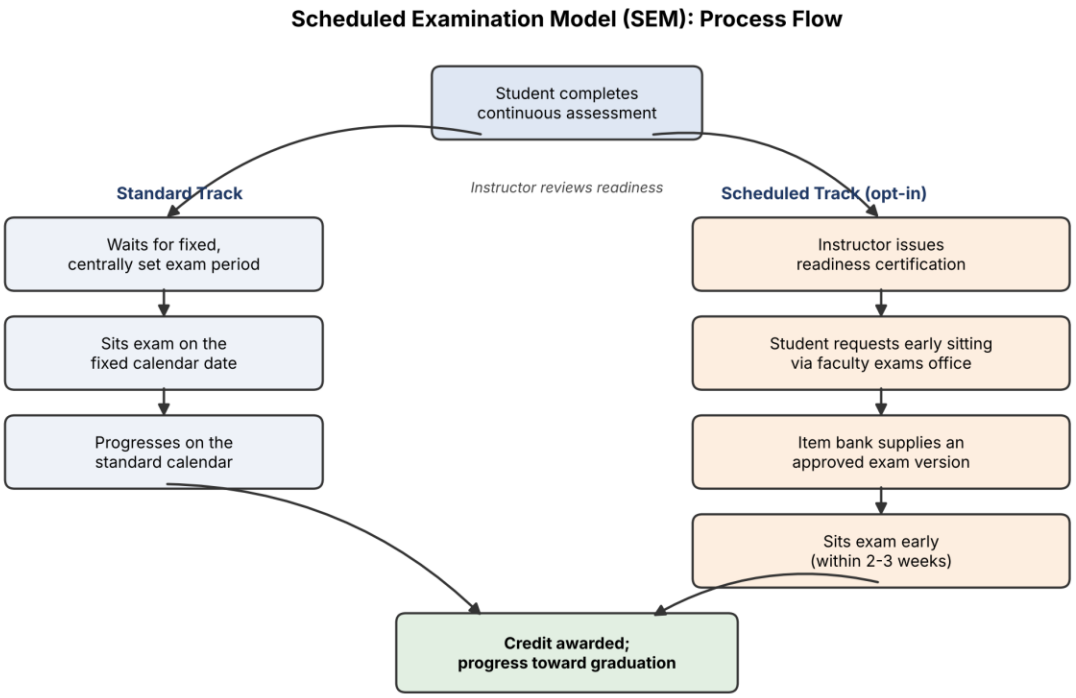


Figure 1. Scheduled Examination Model (SEM) process flow, showing the Standard Track and the opt-in Scheduled Track converging on the same academic outcome.

Theoretical Foundation and Originality

The SEM is an original synthesis rather than an adaptation of any single existing model; no prior publication has proposed this specific combination of rules for a fixed-calendar, Francophone-and-Anglophone university system. It draws its operational features from four independent precedents already used elsewhere for rolling or on-demand assessment, the GED, TOEFL, and Cisco examinations, and Western Governors University's competency-based structure, and it rests on two established bodies of theory. The first is mastery learning theory, which holds that most students can reach the same standard of mastery given the right amount of time and support, so that holding time fixed and letting mastery vary, as a single fixed calendar does, is the wrong variable to fix (Carroll, 1963; Bloom, 1968). The SEM reverses this: it holds the standard of mastery fixed and lets the time to reach it vary, which is the specific theoretical basis for separating examination timing from the calendar. The second is human capital theory, which treats years spent in education as an investment whose return depends partly on how quickly that investment can be converted into labor-market participation (Becker, 1964);

this is the theoretical basis for treating avoidable waiting time, not just the quality of instruction, as a cost worth reducing.

Core Principle

The SEM rests on one rule: the teaching content, credit load, and academic standard of a Cameroonian degree program stay exactly the same. Only the timing of the examination, for material a student has already covered, becomes flexible. Under the SEM, a student still attends the full set of lectures, practicals, and continuous assessments that make up a course; what changes is that, once she can show she has finished and understood that material, she no longer has to wait for the university's single, fixed examination period to be tested on it.

Two Parallel Tracks

The SEM does not replace the current calendar; it runs beside it, as Figure 1 shows. Every university adopting the model keeps offering the Standard Track at no extra cost, for any student who prefers it or needs its structure. Alongside it, the university offers a Scheduled Track, joined by choice, through which a student registers her intent to sit a given examination ahead of the fixed period. Because the Scheduled Track needs extra invigilation, extra exam-paper preparation, and extra coordination outside the normal calendar, the university may charge a modest program-readjustment fee for it, the same way Cameroonian universities already charge extra fees for services such as hostel accommodation or resit examinations.

Readiness Certification and Registration

Eligibility for an early sitting is not left to the student's own judgment alone. A student who wants to sit early must first get a readiness certification from her course instructor, based on the same continuous-assessment records already used in the Standard Track. Once certified, she submits a request through the faculty examinations office, naming her preferred date, subject to an available invigilator and an approved examination version. The faculty confirms or adjusts the date within an agreed window, typically two to three weeks, matching the turnaround already used for resit examinations today.

Assessment Security Under a Rolling Calendar

The main technical change the SEM introduces is that a course can no longer rely on one examination paper set once a semester, since different students would sit it on different dates. Item banking solves

this directly: each examinable course keeps a bank of several examination versions of matching difficulty and identical coverage, checked once by the department's examination board at the start of the year, from which the right version is drawn for each Scheduled Track sitting. This is the same method that already lets the GED, Cisco, and TOEFL examinations run securely on a rolling basis across many candidates and dates (GED Testing Service, 2023; Cisco, 2023; ETS, 2023).

Illustrative Effect on Time-to-Degree

To show, rather than simply claim, how much time the SEM could save, consider a typical Cameroonian Bachelor's program made up of six semesters across three years, with roughly six examinable courses per semester. Suppose, cautiously, that only two of these six courses per semester are suited to item banking in the program's early years of adoption, and that a well-prepared student in the Scheduled Track sits each of those two exams four weeks ahead of the fixed period. Four weeks earlier on two courses per semester, across six semesters, adds up to roughly twenty-four weeks, close to six months, saved across the full degree, before counting any further saving at the completion-to-graduation stage identified in the problem statement above, where delays are least documented and potentially largest. This estimate rests on the specific assumptions stated here; it is not a measured result, and Phase Two of this paper's methodology is the step that would test it directly.

Institutional Roles and Responsibilities

Three groups carry clear duties under the model. The instructor certifies, using continuous-assessment records she already keeps, that a student requesting an early sitting has genuinely covered and understood the material. The faculty examinations office keeps the item bank current, schedules invigilation for Scheduled Track sittings, and enforces the same security rules already used for the Standard Track and for resits. The university administration sets the program-readjustment fee and decides, faculty by faculty, which courses are technically ready for item banking.

Phased Rollout

Because rolling examination scheduling is new to the Cameroonian context, the SEM is best introduced in phases. In phase one, a single faculty pilots the Scheduled Track in a small number of high-enrollment courses assessed mainly by written or computer-based examinations. In phase two, guided by what the pilot shows, the faculty adds more courses. In phase three, once a faculty has run

the model successfully for a full academic year, other faculties and universities can adopt it using the first faculty's item banks and workflow as a template.

At each phase, the faculty examinations office should track a small set of monitoring indicators, including the number of students certified ready, the number who actually request an early sitting, the average turnaround time between request and sitting, and any examination-security incidents under the Scheduled Track compared with the Standard Track. These indicators cost little to collect, since they rely only on records the examinations office already keeps for the Standard Track and for resits, and they give administrators an evidence-based basis for deciding whether to expand the model beyond its initial pilot courses, independent of the acceptability evidence Phase Two is designed to gather.

Discussion

This discussion is grounded in the literature reviewed above rather than in the model's own mechanics, which the previous section has already set out. The clearest existing evidence on how Cameroonian stakeholders view structural reform comes from Ngenge et al. (2025), whose survey of 109 students, graduates, lecturers, and administrators found that curriculum reform, a comparably structural change to teaching practice, was the single most requested fix for Cameroon's higher-education problems, ahead of smaller or purely financial measures. Because a scheduling reform like the SEM is, in this sense, a similarly structural but narrower and cheaper change than full curriculum reform, this existing finding offers an indirect but reasonable signal that Cameroonian stakeholders may be receptive to concrete structural fixes generally; it is not, and this paper does not present it as, direct evidence that stakeholders support the SEM specifically. Mastery learning theory (Carroll, 1963; Bloom, 1968) predicts that instructors, who already use continuous assessment to judge readiness, should find the certification step administratively familiar rather than burdensome, since it asks them to apply a standard they already hold, not a new one. Human capital theory (Becker, 1964) predicts that students, who bear the opportunity cost of delay most directly, should be the respondent group most favorable to the model, while administrators, who bear its implementation cost, are the group most likely to raise the feasibility concerns that Phase Two's interview protocol is specifically designed to surface. Whether these literature-grounded expectations hold is precisely what fielding the Phase

Two instrument, designed above, would establish; this paper's contribution at this stage is the reasoned expectation and the instrument to test it, not a claim to already know the answer.

It is worth being explicit about the limits of this indirect evidence rather than letting it stand in for the direct evidence this paper has not yet gathered. The Ngenge et al. (2025) survey was not designed around the SEM and did not ask respondents about examination scheduling specifically, so its finding on curriculum reform shows only that Cameroonian stakeholders are generally open to structural change, not that they would rate this particular reform favorably once its mechanics, its fee, and its demands on instructor time are explained to them in full. Mastery learning and human capital theory, similarly, predict how different respondent groups are likely to react in principle, but theory of this kind has been built and tested mainly in other countries' education systems, and Mwangi's (2017) caution against assuming Western findings transfer automatically to African universities applies with equal force to these theoretical predictions as it does to the empirical time-to-degree literature reviewed earlier. Both forms of evidence used in this discussion are therefore best read as a reasoned basis for the Phase Two instrument's specific design choices, such as which questions to ask administrators versus students, rather than as a substitute for running that instrument.

Recommendations

The recommendations below follow directly from the discussion above, rather than restating the model's own rules. First, because Phase Two has not yet been fielded, the single most important next step is to administer the questionnaire and interview protocol designed in this paper to a stratified sample of students, lecturers, and administrators in at least one Cameroonian university, since only that step can convert the literature-grounded expectations in the discussion into direct evidence. Second, because the discussion above expects administrators to be the most skeptical respondent group, any pilot should prioritize collecting their interview data early, so that feasibility objections can be addressed before a full questionnaire round is run, rather than discovered afterward. Third, because Ngenge et al. (2025) found curriculum reform to be stakeholders' top-requested fix, any communication about the SEM to respondents should explicitly frame it as a structural, not merely financial, reform, since that framing is what the existing evidence suggests Cameroonian stakeholders already respond to. Fourth, the model should not be recommended for university-wide adoption until the Phase Two data described above shows clear majority support across all three respondent groups and no unresolved administrator objection, exactly as the third research objective requires. Fifth, whichever university pilots the SEM should begin, from the first semester of adoption, collecting and

publishing the operational monitoring indicators set out above, since the absence of any such published data for Cameroonian universities is itself one of the gaps this paper has identified; doing so would let later researchers assess the model's real effect on time-to-degree directly, rather than relying solely on the illustrative estimate offered in this paper.

Conclusion

This paper has documented, using a Cameroonian university's own calendar and regulations, a concrete and previously unmapped sequence of delays between enrollment, instruction, examination, and graduation, and has shown that this sequence carries a real opportunity cost supported by labor-economics evidence on the cost of delayed labor-market entry. It has proposed a Scheduled Examination Model, grounded in mastery learning and human capital theory and built from operational features already proven in four independent precedents, that targets this delay directly without touching teaching content or academic standards. Because no Cameroonian university has yet tried such a model, this paper's central contribution is not a claim that the SEM already works, but a specific, fieldable instrument for finding out directly from Cameroonian students, lecturers, and administrators whether it would. The paper's recommendations are built around fielding that instrument as the immediate next step, so that the SEM's adoption, if it comes, rests on direct evidence from the people who would use it, not on reasoning alone.

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