

UGANDA TOBACCO TAX COALITION

CONCEPT NOTE

University Essay Competition on Tobacco Taxation

Culminating in an Award-Giving Ceremony | 26 April 2026 | Uganda

1. Background

Tobacco use remains one of the most significant and preventable public health challenges in Uganda and across the African continent. Despite advances in global tobacco control legislation, tobacco consumption continues to impose a heavy burden on health systems, household economies, and national productivity. Uganda, as a signatory to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), has committed to implementing evidence-based policies to reduce tobacco use and protect its citizens from the harms of tobacco and nicotine products.

The Uganda Tobacco Tax Coalition is a multi-stakeholder platform comprising civil society organisations dedicated to advancing robust tobacco taxation and control policies in Uganda. Recognising that meaningful, sustainable change requires the active engagement of the next generation of leaders, the Coalition is committed to building a cadre of young, informed advocates who can champion tobacco taxation policy reform at national, regional, and global levels.

University students represent a critical constituency in this effort. They are future policymakers, health professionals, economists, lawyers, and communicators whose understanding of tobacco policy will directly shape the environment in which tobacco control legislation is debated and implemented. It is within this context that the Uganda Tobacco Tax Coalition announces the University Essay Competition on Tobacco Taxation Policy and Advocacy.

2. Rationale

The essay competition serves a dual purpose: to stimulate rigorous academic thinking about tobacco taxation policy among Uganda's university students, and to surface innovative, evidence-based policy recommendations that the Coalition and its partners can use in their advocacy work. By engaging students across all universities in Uganda, the competition will:

- Foster a new generation of tobacco control advocates with a firm grounding in policy analysis.
- Generate fresh, locally-contextualized perspectives on tobacco taxation, regulation, and cessation strategies.

- Build institutional partnerships between the Coalition and Uganda’s academic community.
- Raise public awareness about the health, economic, and social costs of tobacco use among young Ugandans.
- Contribute to the evidence base that informs Uganda’s national tobacco control agenda.

3. Objectives

3.1 Overall Objective

To engage university students across Uganda in critical thinking and advocacy around tobacco taxation policy, thereby strengthening the national ecosystem for evidence-based tobacco control.

3.2 Specific Objectives

- To solicit high-quality essays from university students on themes related to tobacco policy and advocacy in Uganda.
- To reward the most outstanding contributions with prizes and public recognition at a national Award-Giving Ceremony.
- To create a repository of student-generated policy recommendations that the Coalition can use in its advocacy efforts.
- To establish the essay competition as an annual platform for youth engagement in tobacco control.
- To amplify the voices of young Ugandans in the national tobacco policy discourse.

4. Competition Theme

“Tobacco Taxation: Pathways to a Tobacco-Free Uganda”

Participants are invited to write critical, evidence-based essays exploring the state of tobacco taxation in Uganda. Submissions may address, the following sub-themes:

- Tobacco taxation as a tool for reducing consumption and generating public health revenue in Uganda.
- The role of advocacy and civil society in shaping Uganda’s tobacco control landscape.
- Youth, social media, and the tobacco industry: implications for policy.
- Implementation gaps in Uganda’s Tobacco Control Act: lessons and recommendations.
- Comparing Uganda’s tobacco tax regime with regional and global best practices.

5. Eligibility Criteria

The competition is open to all currently enrolled undergraduate and postgraduate students from any accredited university in Uganda. Participants must:

- Be a currently registered student at a recognized Ugandan university at the time of submission.
- Submit an original, unpublished essay written in English.
- Submit only one entry per individual (joint submissions are not accepted).
- Provide proof of student enrolment upon request.

6. Submission Guidelines

6.1 Format Requirements

- Word count: 2,000 – 3,000 words
- File format: Microsoft Word (.docx) or PDF.
- Font: Times New Roman or Arial, size 12, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins.

6.2 Submission Process

- Entries should be submitted **electronically** to malinga@wayforwardyouth.org .
- The subject line of the submission email should read: “ESSAY COMPETITION – [Student Name] – [University]”.
- A cover page must include: the student’s full name, institution, year of study, programme of study, and contact telephone number.
- Submissions are anonymous during the review process; the cover page will be removed before essays are sent to judges.

6.3 Key Dates

- Competition Launch / Call for Submissions: 23rd March 2026
- Submission Deadline: 18 April 2026 (by 11:59 PM EAT)
- Shortlisting & Judging: 19 – 23 April 2026
- Notification of Winners: 24 April 2026
- Award-Giving Ceremony: 26 April 2026

7. Evaluation and Judging

7.1 Judging Panel

Essays will be reviewed by an independent panel of judges comprising public health experts, tobacco policy specialists, academic researchers, and representatives from the Uganda

Tobacco Tax Coalition. All judges will sign a conflict-of-interest declaration prior to the review process.

7.2 Evaluation Criteria

Criterion	Weight	Description
Quality of Argument & Critical Analysis	30%	Clarity, logic, and depth of argument
Evidence & Use of Literature	25%	Appropriate use of data, citations, and sources
Policy Relevance & Originality	25%	Applicability to Uganda's policy context; originality
Structure & Writing	10%	Coherent structure, grammar, diction
Adherence to Guidelines	10%	Format, word count, submission requirements

9. Award-Giving Ceremony

The competition will culminate in a high-profile Award-Giving Ceremony on 26 April 2026 in Kampala, Uganda. The event will celebrate the winners, create a platform for their policy ideas to be heard by key stakeholders, and reinforce the Coalition's commitment to youth engagement in tobacco control advocacy.