

GUIDELINES FOR RESEARCH AWARDS

In this section, specific guidelines are listed under specific categories.

1. Researcher of the year

1.1 Based on the number of research outputs

Nominees for the researcher of the year award - based on the number of research outputs - must address the following criteria for evaluation.

- a. **Quantity of Research Outputs:** The researcher should have a high volume of research outputs from reputable (nonpredatory), journals such as publications, conference papers, patents, or other scholarly works, produced during the year of award and the previous year (2 years).
- b. **Variety of Research Outputs:** The researcher should demonstrate a diverse range of research outputs, at least two publications in a year, for two years. This can include a mix of journal articles, conference papers, book chapters, patents, or other types of scholarly works.
- c. **Impact of Research Outputs:** The researcher should have research outputs that have made an impact, measured by citations, references in other researchers' works, media coverage, policy influence, or practical applications of the research.
- d. **Research Collaboration:** The researcher should demonstrate evidence of collaboration with other researchers (colleagues within and outside their institution).
- e. **Research Funding:** While not directly related to the number of research outputs, the ability to secure research funding can be an indication of the researcher's research potential and the recognition of their work by funding agencies.
- f. **Research Leadership:** The researcher should exhibit leadership qualities in research. This can include mentoring at least two (2) junior researchers, leading research projects or teams and fostering collaborations.
- g. **Research Ethics and Integrity:** The researcher should demonstrate a commitment to research ethics and integrity in the production of their research outputs.

1.2 Based on the impact of the research output produced

Nominees for the researcher of the year award - based on the impact of the research output - must address the following criteria for evaluation.

- a) **Research Impact:** During the year of award and the previous year (2 years), the researcher should have conducted research that has made a significant impact within their field of study and beyond. This can be measured by the influence of their research on advancing knowledge, solving important problems, or addressing critical societal issues.
- b) **Significance of the Research:** The research should have relevance to Malawi 2063 and applicability to real-world challenges and demonstrate the potential for practical, social, economic, or policy impact.
- c) **Citations and References:** The researcher's work should be well-cited and referenced by other researchers, indicating its influence and recognition within the academic community.
- d) **Collaboration and Partnerships:** The researcher should have engaged in collaborations and partnerships with other researchers, institutions, industry, or community organizations
- e) **Innovation and Originality:** The researcher should have demonstrated innovation and originality in their research during the specified years. They should have introduced novel concepts, theories, methodologies, or approaches that have pushed the boundaries of knowledge in their field.
- f) **Policy and Practice Influence:** The researcher's work should have informed policy-making or practice in their field or related domains leading to changes in strategies, guidelines, or regulations.
- g) **Dissemination and external recognition:** The researcher should demonstrate successful dissemination of findings especially through conferences, workshops, or other scholarly platforms besides publishing. The researcher should also have received external recognition for their research impact, for instance, invitations to speak at conferences or events.
- h) **Research Funding:** While not directly related to the number of research outputs, the ability to secure research funding can be an indication of the researcher's research potential and the recognition of their work by funding agencies.

- i) **Research Leadership:** The researcher should exhibit leadership qualities in research. This can include mentoring junior researchers, leading research projects or teams and fostering collaborations.
- j) **Research Ethics and Integrity:** The researcher should have conducted their research with the highest ethical standards, ensuring the integrity, validity, and reliability of their findings.

2 Early Career Researcher

- a. The candidate must be a tenured member at MUBAS and must satisfy at least one of the following criteria:
 - i) They should be 35 years old or younger and must have served as a tenured faculty member at MUBAS for at least two years
 - ii) They should possess MSc/MA or above conferred within three years from the date of applying for the award; out of these three years, the tenured faculty member must have served at least two years at MUBAS.
- b. The candidate must have published at least three journal papers in peer reviewed (non-predatory) journals
- c. The candidate must have had a minimum of one conference presentation.

3 Research Excellence Through Collaboration

The eligible research project in this category can be a single or multidisciplinary and must satisfy the following criteria.

- a. Demonstrate the strength of the partnership/collaboration and evidence of teamwork , i.e., evidence of one mentee, either internal or external
- b. Provide evidence of leadership within the collaboration.
- c. Demonstrate evidence of the partnership/collaboration, and the benefits and impact that it brings to the University,i.e., funds, number students trained, etc
- d. Provide evidence of learning experiences being shared for use in future partnerships/collaborations. For instance, exchange programme
- e. Provide evidence of output/outcomes from the partnership/collaboration including publications, research quality metrics and impact on society/industry e.g., citations, external research funding (including industry scholarships),

industry scholarships and supervision of research degree candidates, which resulted from this partnership/collaboration.

4 Excellence in Attracting Research Funds

The entries for this category will be by individuals/group/units. On submission, the following guidelines shall be considered for assessment:

- i) **The amount of funds:** The minimum amount of funds attracted shall be MWK 20 Million (equivalent to USD 20, 0000).
- ii) **Postgraduate students training:** Project deliverables should indicate successful training of at least one postgraduate student
- iii) **Provision of equipment/materials:** There should be evidence of some equipment procured through the project
- iv) **Involvement of junior staff:** There should be evidence that at least two junior staff were involved in the execution of the project
- v) **Infrastructure Development (if any):** There should be an evidence of one physical infrastructure developed from the project
- vi) **Research dissemination programme:** There should be documentation of at least one research programme, i.e., one conference/ seminar/ concert and three (3) publications.
- vii) **Contribution of institutional fees:** There should be proper documentation of fees paid to the university and consultants at the rates established by university or institutions
- viii) **University programme development/ reviews (if any):** There should be evidence of funds spent for university programme development/review
- ix) **Outreach activities:** There should be evidence of funds spent on outreach activities

5 Best student research award

5.1 Undergraduate

Nominees for best undergraduate research award must satisfy the following criteria.

- a) Demonstrate how the research is **aligned** with the University Undergraduate Research Handbook:
- i. Appropriate introduction with relevant background to research, problem statement, or question and significance within the scope of the undergraduate
 - ii. Appropriate and updated literature review, demonstrating the gap the research is filling
 - iii. Appropriate research methods suitable for the undergraduate level, demonstrating a grasp of the fundamental research techniques.
 - iv. Appropriate and relevant results presented clearly and in an organized manner; they should speak to the topic and objectives/questions/hypotheses
 - v. Appropriate interpretation of findings, aligning them with the objectives/questions/hypothesis, interpreting the findings
- b. **Originality:** The research should demonstrate a fresh and innovative approach to the topic, considering the student's limited exposure to the field.
- c. **Depth and breadth of analysis:** The research should showcase a comprehensive analysis within the limitations of an undergraduate study, considering the available resources and time constraints.
- d. **Presentation skills:** The research should be well-written, structured, and effectively communicate the purpose, methodology, findings, and conclusions at a level appropriate for an undergraduate study.
- e. **Contribution to the field:** The research should contribute to the existing body of knowledge within the undergraduate level, providing insights or implications that can be built upon by future research.

5.2 Postgraduate - Master

Nominees for best postgraduate (Master) research award must address the following criteria for assessment.

- a) Demonstrate how the research is **aligned** with the University Postgraduate Handbook – Master section

- i. Appropriate introduction with relevant background to research, and should address an important problem or question within the field, showcasing a clear understanding of its significance and potential impact.
 - ii. Appropriate and updated literature review which critically analyses and synthesizes existing research and scholarly works related to one's topic; it should further identify gaps or limitations in the existing literature
 - iii. The research should employ rigorous research methods appropriate for the postgraduate level, demonstrating a mastery of advanced research techniques.
 - iv. Appropriate and relevant results presented in a clear, organized, concise and objective manner; results should be in line with the topic and objectives/questions/hypotheses
 - v. Appropriate discussion, demonstrating a high level of critical, analytical skills and depth of understanding
- b) **Originality:** The research should demonstrate a novel and innovative approach to the topic, building upon existing knowledge and showcasing the student's ability to contribute original ideas.
- c) **Depth and breadth of analysis:** The research should showcase a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of the topic, incorporating advanced theoretical frameworks and analytical approaches.
- d) **Presentation skills:** The research should be well-written, well-structured, and effectively communicate complex concepts and findings to an academic audience, demonstrating a high level of academic communication skills.
- e) **Contribution to the field:** The research should make a substantial contribution to the existing body of knowledge, potentially challenging existing theories or assumptions and demonstrating potential for practical applications or further research.
- f) **Publication and dissemination:** The research should have a strong publication record of at least one (1).

5.3 Postgraduate - PhD

Nominees for best postgraduate research (PhD) award must address the following criteria for assessment.

- a) Demonstrate how the research is **aligned** with the University Postgraduate Handbook – PhD section
- ii. The introduction should address an important problem, question, or gap in the field. It should have the potential to make a significant impact on the discipline, advance knowledge, or have practical implications in relevant areas.
 - iii. Appropriate and updated literature review which critically analyses and synthesizes existing research and scholarly works related to one's topic; it should further identify gaps or limitations in the existing literature
 - iv. The research should employ rigorous and appropriate research methods, techniques, and data analysis that is well-designed, well-executed, and capable of producing reliable and valid results. The student should demonstrate a mastery of advanced research techniques and an understanding of the limitations and strengths of their chosen approach.
 - v. Appropriate and relevant results presented in a clear, organized, concise and objective manner; results should be in line with the topic and objectives/questions/hypotheses
 - vi. Appropriate discussion, demonstrating a high level of critical, analytical skills and depth of understanding
- b) **Originality and innovation:** The research should demonstrate a high degree of originality and innovation. It should contribute new knowledge, theories, methodologies, or approaches to the field of study and showcase the PhD student's ability to think critically and creatively.
- c) **Depth and breadth of analysis:** The research should showcase a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of the topic, incorporating advanced theoretical frameworks and analytical approaches.
- d) **Presentation skills:** The research should be well-written, well-structured, and effectively communicate complex concepts and findings to an academic audience, demonstrating a high level of academic communication skills.
- e) **Contribution to the field:** The research should make a substantial contribution to the existing body of knowledge in the field. The research should extend or challenge existing theories, models, or frameworks, and provide novel insights or perspectives.

- f) **Publication and dissemination:** The research should have a strong publication record of at least two (2).
- g) **Research impact and application:** The research should demonstrate the potential for real-world impact and application. It should have implications for policy-making, practice, or industry and address practical challenges or societal needs.
- h) **Presentation skills and communication:** The PhD student should have exceptional presentation and communication skills. They should be able to clearly articulate their research to both academic and non-academic audiences.

6 Long serving researcher

Nominees for the long serving researcher award must address the following criteria for assessment.

- a) **Longevity and continuity:** The researcher should have a sustained record of research excellence over a significant period. This includes consistently producing high-quality research outputs (at least one every year), such as publications in reputable (nonpredatory) journals, books, book chapters, or conference proceedings.
- b) **Impact and significance:** The researcher's work should have made a significant impact on their field of study. This can be demonstrated through citations, references in other researchers' work, or recognition from peers and experts in the field.
- c) **Innovation and originality:** The researcher should have demonstrated innovation and originality in their research. They should have introduced novel concepts, theories, methodologies, or approaches that have pushed the boundaries of knowledge in their field.
- d) **Research leadership:** The researcher should have exhibited leadership qualities in research, including mentoring and supervising other researchers (at least two) and leading research teams or projects
- e) **Research funding and grants:** The researcher should have secured at least one research funding from external sources, such as grants or fellowships.
- f) **Research collaborations:** The researcher should have evidence of successful research collaborations, both within their institution and with researchers from other institutions or disciplines.

- g) **Research ethics and integrity:** The researcher should have maintained the highest ethical standards in their research practice. This includes adherence to research ethics principles, responsible conduct of research, and transparency in reporting research findings.