

Research Policy

1 Preamble

Whereas:

- The Mission of Mzuzu University is, “To provide high quality education, training, research and complementary services to meet the technological, social and economic needs of individuals and communities in Malawi;”
- Research and publication, i.e., the creation and dissemination of new knowledge, are important parts of the University’s Mission;
- Teaching and research are complementary activities, and research contributes to the quality of teaching at the University and vice versa;
- The University wishes to encourage academic staff and academic-related Library staff to engage in research and to publish and disseminate the results of this research;
- The research accomplishments of the University’s staff contribute importantly to the academic reputation of the University;
- Research and publication are important to the interests, careers, and scholarly reputation of individual members of the University’s academic staff and academic-related Library staff; and
- Formal guidelines for the conduct and management of research and scholarly publication will assist the University and its staff to achieve the University’s research Mission;

Now, therefore, the Mzuzu University Senate hereby establishes the following Mzuzu University Research Policy.

2 Research Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 Academic Staff Members

2.1.1 Responsibilities

Academic staff members and academic-related Library staff members are expected to conduct research and to publish the results, as a part of their normal University duties. They are primarily responsible for defining research topics and projects within their areas of expertise, for conducting such research projects, and for publishing the results. Other components of the University are responsible for encouraging, supporting, and facilitating such research and publication, but the primary research responsibility remains with individual staff members.

2.1.2 Research and Publication Criteria for Hiring and Promotion

Research and scholarly publication will be given due weight in decisions to hire and/or promote members of academic and academic-related Library staff. Promotion of an existing staff member to the rank of Associate Professor or above, or the hiring of new staff at these ranks, will require substantial research accomplishments, as demonstrated by a record of scholarly publication. New hires or promotion of staff to the ranks of Lecturer and Senior Lecturer will require a demonstration of research and scholarly publication or specific evidence of potential for future research accomplishments and publication. In judging research performance, greatest weight will be given to publications in peer-reviewed scholarly outlets. Weight may also be given to other publication or dissemination of research results that substantially advances the Mission of the University.

Performance of teaching, administration and other University duties will also be given appropriate weight in the hiring and promotion of academic and academic-related Library staff.

2.1.3 Grandfather Clause

Nothing in Section 2.1.2 will be interpreted to abridge the status and rank that any tenured, full time member of the University's academic staff or academic-related Library staff enjoys as of the date of enactment of this Research Policy.

2.2 Director of Research

The Director of Research is generally responsible for coordinating and overseeing the University's research and scholarly publication activities. He or she reports to the Vice Chancellor. In consultation with the Research and Publications Committee, the Director of Research will:

- Chair the Research and Publications Committee
- Develop and recommend policies and procedures for research and scholarly publication;
- Review research proposals for external or internal funding;
- Administer the University's internal research budget;
- Organize and conduct workshops, seminars, and other training activities designed to increase the research skills and capacity of academic staff and academic-related Library staff members;
- Assist academic staff and academic-related Library staff members in the preparation of research proposals and the acquisition of research funding;
- Assist Research Project Directors in the management of their research projects;
- Review reports and other work products of externally-funded research projects, to ensure compliance with donor requirements;
- Conduct liaison and represent the University with current and potential donors of research funding, with current and potential research partners, and with other research organizations and agencies; and
- Conduct other activities to encourage, facilitate and promote research and publication at Mzuzu University.

2.3 Research and Publications Committee

2.3.1 Membership

The Research and Publications Committee will consist of the following members:

- The Director of Research, who will serve as Chair of the Committee;
- One or more representatives from each Academic Department, chosen by the Department;
- One or more representatives from each other Unit with an interest in research, such as the Library, Institutes, Centers, etc., chosen by the Unit; and
- Such other members as may be co-opted by the Committee or appointed by the Vice Chancellor.

The Committee will elect from among its members a Vice Chair who will assist the Chair and serve as Acting Chair in the Chair's absence.

The Committee will hold at least one meeting per semester, to be scheduled on the University's academic calendar. The Chair, Vice Chair, or any three members may call other meetings upon reasonable notice to the membership of the Committee (e.g., at least 2-3 days).

2.3.2 Duties

The Research and Publications Committee will:

- Prepare and submit recommendations for the Mzuzu University research budget, in connection with the University's annual budget cycle;
- Review and recommend proposals for internal research funding;
- Identify needs for research facilities, equipment, and other resources;
- Recommend and prioritize expenditures for the acquisition or improvement of research facilities, equipment, and other resources;
- Act as a forum to identify and discuss research opportunities and challenges at Mzuzu University, and recommend appropriate responses
- Conduct periodic reviews of Mzuzu University research policies and procedures, and recommend appropriate changes; and
- Advise and assist the Director of Research in the performance of the duties enumerated in Section 2.2.

2.4 Academic Departments

The Head of each Academic Department, in consultation with Departmental staff, is responsible for encouraging and facilitating research within his or her Department. The Department Head will:

- Schedule Departmental classes and non-teaching duties to promote efficient use of staff time, so as to facilitate the conduct of research and publication activities;
- Identify, in consultation with Departmental staff, needs for facilities, equipment, or other research resources, and bring these needs to the attention of the Research and Publications Committee, the Director of Research, and other responsible officials.
- In accordance with Sections 2.1.1 and 2.1.2, ensure that research and publication are given appropriate weight in Departmental recommendations for hiring or promotion of academic and academic-related Library staff.

2.5 Appointments and Promotions Committee

In accordance with Sections 2.1.1 and 2.1.2, the Appointments and Promotions Committee will ensure that research and publications are given appropriate weight in all hiring and promotion decisions.

2.6 Departments that Support Research Activities

Administrative officers that help support research activities, such as the Librarian, the Registrar, and the Finance Officer, will ensure that their units are staffed, equipped, and managed to provide all feasible and necessary support for the successful conduct of research and publications activities.

The Finance Officer will institute and administer procedures for invoicing and receiving payment for staff time and other goods and services that the University furnishes to externally funded research projects (Sections 4.2.4 and 4.2.5) and for safeguarding of project financial documentation (Section 3.2).

3 Management of Research Projects

3.1 Definition

A “research project” is any organized knowledge-producing activity that is reasonably expected to result in one or more scholarly publications in peer-reviewed outlets, or other dissemination of results that substantially advances Mzuzu University’s Mission.

3.2 Responsibilities of the Project Director

Every Internally-Funded Research Project (Section 4.1) and every Externally-Funded Research Project (Section 4.2) will have a designated Project Director. The Project Director will normally be a member of the University’s academic or academic-related Library staff.

The Project Director has overall responsibility for the technical and fiscal management of a sponsored project. This includes the management of the project within funding limitations, and assurance that the sponsor will be notified when significant conditions related to project status change. Although the Project Director

may delegate certain technical or financial tasks to others, accountability for compliance with University policy and sponsor requirements ultimately rests with the Project Director.

The Project Director is thus responsible for the following:

- Management of all technical aspects of the research;
- Approval and documentation of all project expenditures, in accordance with sponsor and University requirements and guidelines;
- Preparation and transmission of financial reports required by contract;
- Oversight of safekeeping of financial documentation by the Finance Office;
- Ensuring that the University is properly compensated for goods and services furnished to the project (Section 4.2.5);
- Preparation and transmission of technical progress reports, in accordance with contractual requirements;
- Prompt notification to the sponsor of any developments that may affect the successful completion of the project;
- Preparation and transmission of the Final Project Report and/or other work products called for in the project contract; and
- Any other contractual requirements that are not specifically assigned to others.

The Project Director will give copies of all technical and financial reports to the Department Head and Director of Research at the time these reports are transmitted to the project sponsor. The Project Director will also promptly notify the Department Head and Director of Research of any developments that may affect the timely and successful completion of the project.

4 Funding for Research Projects

4.1 Internally-Funded Research Projects

4.1.1 Definition

An “internally-funded research project” is a research project that is wholly or partly funded from Mzuzu University funds.

In furtherance of its research Mission, Mzuzu University will allocate a portion of its budget specifically for the support of research projects. The University will also give substantial weight to research needs in budget and expenditure decisions for facilities and equipment. The University also encourages staff to seek and utilize external sources of funding for the support of research projects and publication activities.

Internal grants will be made for out of pocket research expenses, but not for time spent on the project by Mzuzu University staff. However, grant funds may be used, at the discretion of the Research and Publications Committee, to compensate student research assistants.

4.1.2 Evaluation Criteria

In evaluating and ranking proposals for internally funded research projects, the Research and Publications Committee will:

- Give priority to seed money projects that will likely lead to successful proposals for future external research funds;
- Recommend for funding only projects that meet all of the following criteria:
 - o The proposed research design is sound and meets appropriate academic and professional criteria;
 - o The project is likely to be successfully completed and to result in one or more academic publications, based on the staff member's previous research and publication performance or other reasonable and appropriate considerations;
 - o The proposed budget is realistic and prudent; and
 - o The proposed project is consistent with the Mission of Mzuzu University.

4.1.3 Administration of Funds

The University will include funds in the annual budget of the Directorate of Research for internally funded research projects. The Director of Research, in consultation with the Research and Publications Committee, will be responsible for administering this budget. The Director of Research will institute appropriate administrative procedures to ensure that grant funds are expended only for appropriate project expenses. Funds will be disbursed by Mzuzu University upon written approval by the Director of Research.

4.2 Externally-Funded Research Projects

4.2.1 Definition

An “externally funded research project” is a research project that is wholly or partly funded by a grantor other than Mzuzu University.

4.2.2 Administrative Procedures

Funding for an externally funded research project will be awarded to Mzuzu University, not to an individual staff member. A representative of Mzuzu University will sign the grant document or contract on behalf of the University. The University may thus assume a degree of responsibility for the administration of project funds, and for the successful completion of the project, in accordance with the terms of the grant or contract.

Monies for externally funded research projects will be administered in accordance with procedures developed by the Director of Research, in consultation with the Research and Publications Committee, the Finance Officer, and other appropriate staff, and approved by the Vice Chancellor. These procedures will be designed to ensure that project funds are kept separate from other University funds, that they are

used only for the project in accordance with contractual requirements and University policy, and that the University is fully accountable to the sponsor.

Work products generated by an externally funded research project will be subject to review by the Director of Research or his appointee, before the work products are transmitted to the project sponsor. The purpose of this review is to ensure, on behalf of Mzuzu University, that contractual requirements have been met and that appropriate quality standards have been achieved.

4.2.3 Signatures

All proposals or applications for externally funded research projects will be submitted over the signature of the Vice Chancellor or his designee. The Vice Chancellor or his designee will sign all contracts or grant documents on behalf of the University.

4.2.4 Compensation for University Staff

The time, effort, and expertise of the University's professional staff are the most important input to an externally funded research project. It is therefore the University's policy that project staff and the University should normally receive appropriate compensation for staff time, effort, and expertise that benefits the project and its funder.

Staff compensation will be in accordance with the Mzuzu University "Financial Policies for Externally Funded Projects."

4.2.5 Other Direct Project Costs

Other project costs include any identifiable expenditure for goods and services to benefit the project. The project will reimburse the University for any identifiable goods or services furnished to the project by the University (e.g., use of University vehicles, telephones, Internet access, office supplies and consumables, photocopiers, etc.), in accordance with the Mzuzu University "Financial Policies for Externally Funded Projects."

4.2.6 Provision for Administration and Overhead Costs

The University and the Department must be compensated for management and overhead costs related to an externally funded research project, in accordance with the Mzuzu University "Financial Policies for Externally Funded Projects."

5 Enactment

Approved by the Mzuzu University Senate on 25 February 2004.

Administrative Policies for External Projects

6 Applicability and General Principles

This policy applies to work by Mzuzu University professional staff on externally funded projects, consultancies, and other outside projects, whether or not for remuneration. Examples of such work include projects such as the following:

- Externally funded research projects, as defined and discussed in “Mzuzu University Research Policy.”
- Consultancies, including the creation of new knowledge, and/or the application of existing knowledge on behalf of a client’s needs.
- Teaching for institutions other than Mzuzu University.
- Leading or teaching other educational activities for institutions other than Mzuzu University, including short courses, workshops, training sessions, and the like.
- Service on outside committees, commissions, councils, boards, or other bodies, except as a representative of Mzuzu University.

7 Limit on Outside Activities

An academic staff member or academic-related Library staff member who is a full-time employee of the University may engage in outside professional activities. The staff member may also receive monetary compensation for such activities, including externally funded project work (Section 8 below) and consultancies, etc. (Section 9 below), without reduction to University salary, allowances, or other benefits.

However, all such outside activities, whether or not compensated, shall be subject to the approval of the staff member’s Department Head and Dean of Faculty (Vice Chancellor approval required for Deans). It is the responsibility of the staff member’s Dean and Department Head to verify and ensure that the staff member has made good arrangements for coverage of his or her teaching and administrative duties. Failure of an academic staff member to notify the Department Head and Dean of outside professional activities and to secure prior consent may be grounds for disciplinary action.

Approval for outside activities will normally be granted for no more than four (4) days per calendar month during the ten months covered by the staff member’s Mzuzu University employment contract. The four-day limit will not apply to the remaining two months of the calendar year. This limit is intended to ensure that the staff member devotes adequate time and attention to teaching and other assigned University duties. The Department Head and Dean of Faculty may waive the 4-day limit on a case-by-case basis, for example, when arrangements have been made for replacement staff (see below), or for other good reason.

Academic staff and academic-related Library staff may receive monetary compensation for approved external project work, without reduction to University

salary, allowances, or other benefits, subject to the conditions and restrictions of this and other Sections.

The staff member may request the Department Chair to grant relief from a portion of teaching and other University duties during the term of an external project. Such relief will not be unreasonably refused, provided that:

- The staff member has given sufficient notice to allow replacement staff to be hired to cover for the time spent on the project; and
- The University receives from the staff member an amount equal to the greater of:
 - o A pro-rata share of the salary and allowances received for the days that are spent on the project work; or
 - o The cost to the University of any replacement staff.

8 Externally Funded Mzuzu University Projects

8.1 Definition

An “Externally Funded Mzuzu University Project” is an externally funded project for which the University has a substantial management role. The University assumes some or all of the responsibility for the successful execution of the project. Examples include externally funded research projects where the University is the contracting party; and short courses, workshops, or other such educational activities where the University as an institution is responsible for the activity.

8.2 Compensation for University Staff

The time, effort, and expertise of the University’s staff are the most important inputs to an externally funded project. It is therefore the University’s policy that project staff and the University should receive appropriate compensation for staff time, effort, and expertise that benefits the project and its funder.

- In cases where the project funder does not specify or require a rate of compensation for project staff, the project budget may use suggested project compensation guidelines. These guidelines will include an hourly or daily rate for various academic ranks, based on replacement cost. The replacement cost will be calculated based on the cost to the University of hiring an adjunct teaching staff member with equivalent qualifications. The Director of Research, in cooperation with the Finance Officer, the Research and Publications Committee, and other appropriate individuals, will develop these suggested project compensation guidelines and update them periodically.
- In cases where the project funder wishes to require or suggest different daily rate(s) of compensation, the daily rate(s) will be negotiated, subject to approval by the Vice Chancellor or his designee, and by the Academic Staff members working on the project.

- Nothing in this Section 8.2 is intended to forbid externally funded projects that do not include a provision for staff compensation, if this arrangement is agreeable to the staff members affected.

8.3 Other Direct Project Costs

Direct project costs, other than staff compensation, include any expenditure for goods and services to benefit the project, such as the following:

- Travel costs, such as fares, fuel, meals, and accommodation;
- Acquisition or rental of vehicles and equipment;
- Use of University vehicles;
- Telephone usage;
- Internet access;
- Office supplies and consumables;
- Photocopying;
- Printing;
- Data processing;
- Postage and express services;
- Etc.

Project budgets will include provision for payment of all direct project costs. The project will reimburse the University for any identifiable goods or services furnished to the project by the University (e.g., use of University vehicles, telephones, Internet access, office supplies and consumables, photocopiers, etc.).

8.4 Administration and Overhead Costs

The University and the Department must be compensated for management and overhead costs related to an externally funded research project. These direct and indirect costs include the following: (1) any administrative costs associated with the release of the staff person from normal duties in order to make his or her time available to the project, such as tangible and intangible costs of recruiting and hiring replacement staff, rearrangement of schedules and assignments for other staff, etc. (2) General management costs associated with the project, including the time and attention of University management (Vice Chancellor, Director of Research, Deans, Department Heads, etc.), (3) provision of general University services such as library resources and secretarial support, and (4) indirect and untraceable costs such as electricity, water, office and laboratory space, and the like. In addition, the University is responsible for providing accounting and financial management support to the project and to all other direct and indirect services provided for the benefit of the project. Such costs are incurred primarily at the University level, but also to some extent at the Departmental level. Because it is difficult, if not impossible, to track such costs individually, it is customary to charge the project a percentage of direct project costs.

In cases where the project sponsor does not specify or require a rate for administration and overhead costs, a charge of 20 percent of direct project costs

(personnel compensation and other direct project costs, as described in Sections 4.2.4 and 4.2.5) will be added to the project budget, to be distributed as follows:

- For the University, 15 percent of direct project costs; and
- For the Department, 5 percent of direct project costs, to be administered in the same way as the Departmental share of consultancy income, in accordance with the provisions of Section 9.5.

In cases where the project funder wishes to require or suggest a different rate for Administration and Overhead costs, the Vice Chancellor or his designee will negotiate the rate, subject to approval.

9 Consultancies and Other Outside Staff Activities

9.1 Definition

A “consultancy or other outside staff activity” is any professional activity undertaken by an academic or academic-related (i.e., Library) staff member, other than teaching, research, and administrative work performed for Mzuzu University. It includes both remunerated and nonremunerated work. It does not include work on an externally funded University project, as defined in Section 8 above. Examples include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Consultancies, including the creation of new knowledge, and/or the application of existing knowledge on behalf of a client’s needs.
- Teaching for institutions other than Mzuzu University.
- Leading or teaching other non-Mzuzu University educational activities, such as including short courses, workshops, training sessions, and the like.
- Service on outside committees, commissions, boards, councils, etc., except when representing Mzuzu University.

Mzuzu University does not assume responsibility for the management or execution of consultancies and other outside activities. The individual staff member is solely responsible, in the case of individual activities (Section 9.2, or is jointly responsible with the Department, for Departmental activities (Section 9.3). If the University is responsible for the project, then it is an “Externally Funded Mzuzu University Project” (Section 8), not a “Consultancy or Other Externally Funded Staff Activity,” as described in this Section 9.

It is the University’s policy to encourage outside professional activities that are consistent with the University’s Mission. However, such activities should not interfere with the staff member’s teaching, research, and administration duties. Academic staff and academic-related Library staff must give priority to Mzuzu University teaching, research, and administrative duties.

9.2 Individual Consultancies and Other Outside Staff Activities

9.2.1 Definition

An “individual consultancy or other outside staff activity” is professional work or activity by an individual academic staff member or academic-related library staff member on behalf of an organization or client other than Mzuzu University, whether or not remunerated. The staff member, not the University, is responsible for the work.

9.2.2 Guidelines

The fact of employment by Mzuzu University is an important sign of professional qualification, and thus can help an academic staff member obtain consulting and other assignments. The staff member may identify himself or herself as an employee of Mzuzu University. However, the staff member must ensure that the client or organization is made fully aware that Mzuzu University assumes no responsibility or liability for performance of the duties.

Individual consultancies and other outside staff activities may take place using University facilities. However the staff member must reimburse the University for goods and services used in connection with these activities, such as those items listed in Section 4.2.5 (e.g., telephone calls, fax transmissions, photocopies, Internet access charges, use of University vehicles, etc.).

9.3 Departmental Consultancies and Other Outside Departmental Staff Activities

9.3.1 Definition

A “departmental externally funded staff activity” is an activity undertaken in connection with, or as the result of, a programme organized by an academic Department. The Department as a whole may play a part in marketing its expertise and developing a consulting practice or other programme. The Department, or the Department Head, may assume a degree of responsibility for the activities; however, the University does not take responsibility for the work.

9.3.2 Guidelines

Mzuzu University affiliation is an important sign of professional qualification, and thus can help the Departmental programme obtain consulting assignments or enrollees in educational programmes. However, the University cannot assume responsibility or liability for performance. The Department Head is responsible for informing clients of these guidelines.

Departmental staff activities may take place using University facilities; however the University must be reimbursed for goods and services provided the consultancy, such as those items listed in Section 4.2.5 (e.g., telephone calls, fax transmissions, photocopies, Internet access, etc.).

Although payment for consultancy services is normally made directly to the staff member, the Department Head may require that payments for Departmental consultancies be made directly to the Department.

9.4 Sharing of Income

Staff members will share external income (net of expenses incurred in performing the activity) with the University and their academic Department. The following guidelines will apply:

- For individual consultancies and outside staff activities
 - o 10 percent of the net income will be paid to the University, in compensation for facilities use and unallocable costs such as electricity, library use, etc.
 - o 5 percent will be paid to the Department, to be used for expenses such as purchases of equipment, books, travel, staff and student research expenses, etc., for support of the Department's teaching, training, and research mission; and
 - o The staff member will retain 85 percent.

- For Departmental consultancies and outside staff activities:
 - o 10 percent will be paid to the University;
 - o 10 percent will be paid to the Department; and
 - o The staff member will retain 80 percent.

9.5 Administration of the Departmental Share

The Head of any academic Department that receives a share of external staff income under the provisions of Section 9.4 or a share of research project income under the provisions of Section 4.2.6 will establish a Departmental bank account for the deposit of such funds. The Head is responsible for administering these funds, in consultation of the Department's academic staff. The Head will institute procedures to ensure that the funds are used only for expenses such as purchases of equipment, books, travel, staff and student research expenses, etc., in support of the Department's teaching, training, and research mission. Such procedures will be modeled on the University's procedures for control of research project funds.

Administration of these funds will be subject to the approval and oversight of the Director of Research. The Department Head will normally be responsible for authorizing expenditures, with the approval of the Dean of Faculty or Director of Research. The Department Head will keep accurate and up to date records of all income and expenditures, and will make these records available for inspection on request by Departmental staff, the Dean of Faculty, and the Director of Research.

9.6 Reporting and Payment

An academic staff member who engages in any consultancy or other outside staff activity will give a periodic report of such activity to his or her Department Chair, with copies to the Director of Research and the Finance Officer. The report will identify

the client, describe the nature of the outside work, and list the time spent and income earned during each calendar month. The report, and the University and Department's shares of the outside income, is due 10 working days after the staff member receives a payment.

The Department Chair will promptly forward the University's share of the payment to the Finance Officer and will deposit the Department's share in the Departmental bank account. In cases where the payment is made directly to the Department, the Department Head will arrange for prompt payment of the staff member's share.

10.0 Enactment

Approved by the Mzuzu University Senate on 25 February 2004.