RESEARCH AND CONSULTANCY POLICY

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Responsible Offices:	Vice Chancellor & University Registrar

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immune-Deficiency Syndrome
CHANCO	Chancellor College
CoM	College of Medicine
HIV	Human Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome
IRB	Institutional Review Board
LUANAR	Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources
KCN	Kamuzu Collage of Nursing
NCST	National Commission for Science and Technology
RPC	Research and Publications Committee
URPC	University Research and Publications Committee
Pro VC	Pro Vice Chancellor
UNIMA	University of Malawi
VC	Vice Chancellor

FOREWORD

The University of Malawi (UNIMA) remains a leading university in Malawi and the Southern African region. We believe that our teaching, community services and engagement must be anchored in rigorous research and that we have a responsibility to contribute to the innovation and prosperity of our society through knowledge generation. In this regard, the research conducted in the University shall be central to solving the challenges of the country and its impact must be felt throughout our economic and political spheres. Research is also critical because "bodies of knowledge" become rapidly outdated and irrelevant and the ability to adapt to rapid change and formulate new approaches becomes problematic when what is known to be right today is considered to be right eternally.

In the University of Malawi, we do seriously understand and believe that the pursuit of both theoretical and practical research is one of the core activities of the academy; and that, research and the knowledge that it generates, are among the critical and indispensable assets in which a society can invest. Universities certainly, must educate and train students, but much more so, they must contribute to knowledge generation and dissemination; otherwise they cease being called universities.

There is the usual question that we should be keen to answer: 'what is the value of research? At the UNIMA, we strongly believe that our research not only brings economic and health benefits to society, but also allows the communities we serve to enjoy life better than they would, if there was no research. Through our research, academics make discoveries and create new understanding of things that surround us. For us, and society, this is progress.

We also recognize that there are challenges that we face and are willing to confront as we move further into the 21st Century. Research requires resources. National funding for research is, however, limited. Malawi has a choice: either she ignores the contribution of research and continues being a low income country or invests in research which has potential to move the country to the status of a middle-income economy.

We realize that there is limited capacity to turn our research into commercial products and therefore, increase innovation and the generation of financial resources from this enterprise. However, we are driven by the conviction that we can overcome this through encouraging a spirit of entrepreneurship among researchers as well as strengthening intellectual property rights of UNIMA and its researchers.

Worldwide, university rankings are derived from scores obtained in teaching, refereed journal citations, industry income, the international outlook of students and staff and their research portfolio. What should be obvious, therefore, is the central role of research in teaching since the latter needs to be informed by research. We are also mindful of the fact that industry income rises when there are relevant on-going research activities and that international faculty and students are attracted by a research-

intensive university. Our overall philosophy about the role of research in our University, therefore, is that research enterprise is key to UNIMA's academic standing and that it is also central to the strengthening of the contribution the University can make to the development of Malawi.

Professor Al Mtenje
Pro-Vice Chancellor
November, 2014

1.0 PREAMBLE

The University of Malawi (UNIMA) operates on a federal system consisting of four constituent Colleges which are administered by a central office under the leadership of the Vice Chancellor (VC). These Colleges are Chancellor College (CHANCO), College of Medicine (CoM), Kamuzu College of Nursing (KCN) and The Polytechnic. Each College is headed by a Principal. The University Research and Publications Committee (URPC), a Senate committee, is the central body for strategic planning of the research enterprise in the UNIMA. The URPC is responsible for developing and implementing the policy on research and consultancies in the University. With its various college-based Research and Publications Committees (RPCs), the URPC is also responsible for providing support to as well as monitoring of all University approved research and related activities.

In 2006 the University developed the policy on research and consultancies. It is now more than 5 years since this policy was developed. A number of changes have taken place over this period including the development of the University Wide Strategic Plan (2012-2017) and the establishment of the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR). The University Wide Strategic Plan was developed before the review of the 2006 Research and Consultancy Policy. There are quite a number of issues in the Plan that are not backed by the 2006 policy. For example, the Plan and the University Council's 2012-2014 vision on resource mobilization is to improve revenue from research and consultancies. This has, however, not been adequately captured in the 2006 policy. The establishment of new structures such as College Consultancy Bureau, the University Director of Research and Consultancy and the College Director of Research and Consultancy were not yet established and that in some cases there was resistance for the Colleges to accept these new structures. The responsibilities of the University Director of Research and Consultancy have been transferred to the Pro-Vice Chancellor. Some of the incentives that were established by the 2006 policy were not encouraging the staff to declare their consultancies. The 2006 policy does not cover intellectual property rights which are key for academic institutions such as the UNIMA. Furthermore, the rapidly changing external environment, including the emergence of new tertiary institutions with competing needs, demands that the University makes itself more marketable, forges more linkages and collaborations both nationally and internationally, and regulates the inevitable but welcome proliferation of consultancy activities. It was, therefore, obvious that there was a need to review the 2006 Research and Consultances Policy and bring it up to date.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Objects of the University

According to the University of Malawi (Amended) Act 1998, the objects of the University are:

"To advance knowledge and to promote wisdom and understanding by engaging in teaching and research and by making provision for the dissemination, promotion, and preservation of learning; by engaging in such university education and research as is responsive to the needs of Malawi and the whole world; and by offering, within the limits of its resources, to persons suitably qualified academically and who, in the opinion of the Council, are able and willing to benefit from the facilities offered by the University, an education of high university standard".

In addition to the above objects, as stated in the Act, the University's mandate includes implementation of research findings.

2.2 Functions of the University

The Act also states the functions of the University as:

a) To encourage the advancement and dissemination of learning and research;
b) To engage in such university education and research as is responsive to the needs of Malawi and the whole world;
c) To provide facilities for higher education, for research and for the advancement of knowledge in such branches of learning and study and for such persons, whether members of the University or not, as the Council may from time to time determine;
d) To provide service to the economy and the society.

2.3 Scope of Policy on Research and Consultancy

The UNIMA Policy on Research and Consultancy (hereafter referred to as the Research and Consultancy Policy) aims at ensuring consistency across the University in establishing a common mechanism for planning, implementing and monitoring of the research process. The policy shall apply to Faculties, Departments, Centres, Units and other entities within the University. Specifically, the policy shall apply to staff, students and other key stakeholders such as collaborators both inside Malawi and outside. It maps out the process of research needs identification and prioritisation and grants management.

The UNIMA Policy on Research and Consultancy also aims at providing guidance on procedures including remuneration governing the conduct of consultancies by staff members of the University of Malawi. This policy shall also apply to key stakeholders including those who have commissioned the consultancy.

The Policy also maps out the process of proposal preparation and approval procedures, projects management, intellectual property rights, monitoring and evaluation and dissemination of research results for both research and consultancies.

2.4 Role of Research and consultancies

2.4.1 Role of research

Research supports the development of the country by providing solutions to problems, explaining phenomena, as well as opening up new opportunities. Through research, new technologies are developed that help to improve the quality of life of human beings. The University is in a unique position of having a concentration of highly trained individuals who can contribute to developing new knowledge for solving problems from different approaches by data gathering, analysis, synthesis, interpretation of results and informing policy. By being pro-active through development of research proposals that respond to national priorities, as detailed in the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy, the National Commission for Science and Technology Strategic Plan and other key sectoral strategies, the University can place itself in the forefront of shaping the country's transformation in critical areas such as health, education and engineering.

2.4.2 Role of consultancies

The UNIMA recognises that the conduct of consultancies (i) provides opportunities for improving professional and academic competence for staff; (ii) enhances linkages with external agencies; (iii) provides opportunities for community engagement; and (iv) generates additional income for staff and the University. This explains why there is a need to develop a comprehensive policy that will guide engagement in consultancies by staff.

2.5 Definitions

2.5.1 **Research**: a systematic way of asking questions and obtaining knowledge or information on those questions, thus improving our fundamental understanding of whatever phenomena are involved, including the discovery or elucidation of general principles and laws (referred to as basic research) or

enabling us find solutions to a practical problem (referred to as applied research).

2.5.2 **Consultancy:** provision of service whereby an individual, group of individuals, or organisation is hired or requested to give professional advice regarding a specific issue at hand for a fee.

2.5.3 **Policy:** "Policy" means this policy on research and consultancies.

2.5.4 **The University:** "The University (UNIMA)" means the Council of the University of Malawi or any of its committees; or the Senate of the University or any of its committees; or a constituent college of the University or any of its Faculties or Departments/Centres, and includes any Unit or Section in a Department or any Centre of the University.

2.5.5 **Research Entity:** A formally recognised cluster of researchers (Group, Unit, Centre) who: share common or complementary research interests; have, as a group, established a reputation for high quality research and research training; and may operate within one Faculty or involve other Faculties and organisations.

3.0 **OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY ON RESEARCH AND CONSULTANCY**

3.1 *Goal*

To provide guidance on the conduct of research and consultancies by staff and students of the University of Malawi.

3.2 **Guiding Principles**

a. Research undertaken by the UNIMA shall be relevant to the needs of society and advancement of knowledge.
b. UNIMA shall promote the development and implementation of multi-disciplinary research projects and consultancies.
c. UNIMA shall encourage the establishment of partnerships with public and private research institutions nationally, regionally and internationally.
d. Research in the University shall be conducted following ethical guidelines as developed by the National Commission for Science and Technology from time to time.

e. The University shall defend and maintain its academic freedom and institutional autonomy on matters concerning research and development as stated in the Kampala Declaration on academic freedom.

f. The University shall develop and adhere to an Intellectual Property Policy.

g. UNIMA shall promote accountability in the conduct of research and consultancies through the institution of quality assurance systems and ensuring adherence to set standards such as in financial management.

h. The University shall ensure that the implementation of this policy takes into consideration cross-cutting issues such as gender, environment, HIV and AIDS and other emerging issues.

3.3 **Policy Objectives**

The objectives of the Research Policy are:

a. To build capacity for conducting research and consultancies among staff and students of the University.

b. To develop and implement a framework through which resources for research, consultancies, teaching and learning can be effectively mobilised.

c. To provide a framework for establishing research partnerships for staff of the University.

d. To enhance the culture of community engagement within UNIMA through the promotion of research among staff and students.

e. To regulate the conduct of research in the University.

f. To institutionalise the dissemination of research findings through local (including those arranged by the University) and international conferences and publications.

4.0 POLICY DETAILS

4.1 Research Priorities

UNIMA shall:

a. Facilitate the development of research priorities by Faculties and Departments, Research Centres and Research Units in the University in line with international, national and regional trends.

b. Facilitate and support Faculties and Departments/ Research Centres and Research Units to develop and implement their own research priorities in line with international, national and regional trends.

c. Compile an annual register which shall detail the research and consultancies (where necessary) which have been carried out in the year; and

d. Work with its constituent colleges to mobilise resources for supporting research.

4.2 Organisational Structure of Research and Consultancy, Planning and Administration

The office of the Pro Vice Chancellor shall coordinate the implementation of this policy and shall chair the University Committees responsible for Postgraduate Studies Research and Publications. The Deans of Research shall also be responsible for consultancies in their Colleges.

4.3 Research and Consultancy Functions

UNIMA shall:

a. Strengthen and support the Office of the Pro-Vice Chancellor for efficient and effective coordination of research and consultancies at the University level;

b. Split the Office of the Dean of Research and Postgraduate Studies into Dean of Research and Dean of Postgraduate Studies. The Dean of Research shall coordinate research while the Dean of Postgraduate Studies shall coordinate postgraduate studies. The Terms of Reference for these offices are detailed in the guidelines for implementation of the policy.

c. Strengthen the capacity of the Office of Dean of Research with resource management units in the constituent colleges whose sole function shall be to coordinate grants management.

d. Strengthen and support the College Research and Publications Committee at each of the constituent colleges which shall be chaired by the Dean of Research;

e. Facilitate the creation of research entities as need arises at each constituent college of the University;

f. Require that all Research Centres and projects be affiliated to relevant Faculties and are run in accordance with University rules and regulations.

g. Facilitate the formulation and regular review of guidelines for the planning and administration of research at each constituent college of the University;

h. Ensure that there is a representative of the Research Centres on the University-wide Research and Publications Committee;

i. Require that all affiliates to the University pay an affiliation fee to the host institution which shall only be waived depending on their contribution to the University.

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4.4   Funding for Research

UNIMA shall:

a. Collect information and maintain an inventory of funding agencies, including contact details and specific requirements with regard to accessing their funds;
b. Disseminate to researchers in the University information relating to funding opportunities and mode of accessing the funds from within and outside the University;
c. Actively participate in dialogue with Government for increased allocation of financial resources for research in the national budget;
d. The University shall target financial resources equivalent to at least 5% of its annual budget to **internal** research activities which shall, among other things, be used to mentor young faculty and build research and consultancy capacity in Departments/Centres;
e. Explore ways of creating linkages with industry to promote industry-university partnerships for direct financing of research and development; and
f. Encourage collaboration with external researchers, including establishment of research chairs, for purposes of mobilising financial resources.

4.5   Procedure for approval, Control and Monitoring of Research and Consultancies

4.5.1 Procedure for approval, Control and Monitoring of Research

UNIMA shall:
   a. Support the establishment of Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) in all its constituent Colleges in line with guidelines from the National Commission for Science and Technology. These IRBs shall be under the Dean of Research.
   b. Require that students and staff submit their research proposals to their IRBs for ethical clearance;
   c. Fund research projects which have been approved by recognised IRBs.
   d. Monitor the implementation of research through IRBs and Dean of Research.

4.5.2 Procedure for approval, Control and Monitoring of consultancies

UNIMA shall**:**
   a. Encourage the formation of multidisciplinary teams when preparing proposals and implementing consultancies which shall be submitted through the Deans of Research.
   b. Require that staff of the University submit the proposals for consultancies for IRB approval where appropriates.

c. Require that all staff of the University declare their consultancies to their respective Deans of Research. The University shall, therefore, not be responsible for poor quality products if consultants have been hired privately;

d. Institute appropriate disciplinary action for its staff who do not declare their consultancies.

4.6   Capacity building

UNIMA shall:

a. Organise training in research ethics for faculty members that serve on these committees;

b. Institute training programmes to improve research and consulting capabilities and skills of staff;

c. Effectively implement coordinated postdoctoral research programmes in its various Colleges.

d. Institutionalise research internship programmes in its various Colleges.

e. Create and sustain research pathways for staff.

f. Create and sustain Research Centres which shall be adequately staffed to effectively achieve their mandate.

g. Maintain Professors who are active in research and publications for purposes of advancing scholarship and mentoring young faculty.

h. Encourage collaboration with external researchers, including establishment of research chairs, to promote capacity building.

4.7   Administrative Costs

4.7.1   Administrative Costs of Research

UNIMA shall:

a. Require that administrative costs in respect of processing and implementation of research projects are built into project proposals. At least 10% of the total research budget should be allocated for institutional overheads.

b. Ensure that sharing of the contribution to administrative overheads is as follows: 5% will go to the immediate department/centre or section hosting the project; 1% will go to the College RPC; 1% will go to College Administration; and 1% will go to the College Library 1% to ICT and 1% shall go to University Central Administration Office. The College RPC will work out a mechanism with College Administration to have a transparent accounting system.

c. Ensure that it does not subsidise any **externally funded** research project or consultancy.

d. Ensure that all equipment purchased under research projects becomes property of the University.
e. If a staff member becomes unavailable because of a consultancy s/he is involved in the proceeds from the consultancy shall cover the costs for replacement.

4.7.2 Professional fees for consultancies

UNIMA shall:
a. Require that administrative costs in respect of processing and implementation of consultancies and services are built into project proposals;
b. Ensure that sharing of the professional fees from consultancies is as follows: 80% shall go to the individual(s) implementing the consultancy; 15% shall go to the executing agency namely Department, Unit or Centre where the consultancy was implemented; and 5% shall go to the College; and
c. Work out a mechanism with College Administration and University Office to have a transparent accounting system.

4.7.3 Sharing of resources including information

UNIMA shall:
a. Promote, facilitate and coordinate the sharing of research projects and consultancy resources among researchers to promote efficiency. This may involve utilisation of research project facilities such as vehicles, computers, digital cameras, photocopiers, specialised equipment, etc for other research projects and tasks, especially where the resources are underutilised;
b. Encourage openness and transparency in the utilisation of institutional time and facilities for consultancies
c. Promote, facilitate and coordinate the sharing of information and information sources both in printed and electronic forms.

4.7.4 Staff Motivation, Incentives and Research Culture

UNIMA shall:
a. Mobilise resources to modernise the college libraries;
b. Support staff to enhance their IT skills and access to information technology;
c. Encourage each staff member to present at least one research-based seminar per year;
d. Give staff an allowance of one semester for research every three years. This would require coordinated scheduling of classes/courses and would involve making a provision for more members of staff so that classes do not suffer;

e. Provide monetary incentive of 1% of the research budget to the researcher(s) where there is no donor specification for incentives;

f. Develop a research assessment and merit scheme to ensure that staff who excel in research are well recognised and supported;

g. Provide a monetary incentive of US$100 for any article published in a refereed journal. These funds will only be used to support the authors' research and related activities;

h. Introduce regular in-service research methodology courses for academic staff;

i. Develop strong training programmes in research at postgraduate level and induct senior undergraduate students in research skills;

j. Introduce improved administrative infrastructure to ensure that staff publish to improve their publication records for the purposes of promotion; and

k. Build staff capacity in consultancies and research.

l. Encourage staff to spend a third of their time on research.

4.8 Dissemination of research results

UNIMA shall:

a. Fund academic journals and conference proceedings in which research results are published;

b. Encourage and reward the publication of research results locally, while ensuring that the quality of the local journals is of international standard;

c. Support the promotion and dissemination of research outputs such as books, patents and other intellectual property.

d. All faculties in different study areas should organise annual field days;

e. Ensure that each College organises an annual research dissemination workshop where research results are discussed. Each College shall budget for the annual workshop/conference;

f. Encourage researchers to incorporate in their project proposals the dissemination of results to end-users;

g. Ensure that all research reports are peer reviewed using set guidelines before dissemination;

h. Digitise the research results and create digital repositories in all college libraries including at departmental/centre level; and

i. Compile annual inventories of research abstracts, research reports and activities of staff members for dissemination to policy makers.

4.9 Ownership of Results/Outputs, Data and Equipment

UNIMA shall:
a. Stipulate to all researchers that copyright ownership of all research results/outputs from research funded by the University rests with the University;
b. Develop criteria for sharing of copyright ownership for research output if research is financed either partially or wholly from external sources;
c. Allow copies of all raw data to be submitted to national collaborating researchers, while observing restrictions on distribution to foreign collaborators;
d. Own all data from UNIMA funded research;
e. Ensure that at the close of any University or donor funded research project, researcher/s should make available for shared use equipment and buildings which must be handed over to the researcher's department/centre as the property of the University (to be marked as such) and that preferential use of the equipment such as computers/vehicles should be given to the researcher as long as s/he is still a member of the University/department/centre and that this should apply whether or not the donor agency stipulates this.

5.0 MONITORING OF RESEARCH EFFECTIVENESS

UNIMA shall:
Set up an appropriate mechanism for obtaining feedback from society to assess the effectiveness of the research in solving problems and refining the research agenda thereof.

6.0 IMPLEMENTATION OF RESEARCH POLICY

a. The Pro-Vice Chancellor shall oversee the implementation of the Policy.
b. At college level this will be the responsibility of the Dean of Research.
c. Each College RPC will develop implementation strategies which shall be compatible with this policy.
d. The Pro-Vice Chancellor shall monitor the development of guidelines for the implementation of the policy on research and consultancies which shall be adapted by the Colleges and amended from time to time.

7.0 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Office of the Pro-Vice Chancellor shall be responsible for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of this Policy.