



MOUNTAINS OF THE MOON UNIVERSITY

DIRECTORATE OF GRADUATE STUDIES, RESEARCH & INNOVATION

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION FUND (MMU-RIF)

CALL FOR PROPOSALS 2024/2025

1.0 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Mountains of the Moon University is implementing a five-year strategic plan 2020/21 – 2025/26 with a vision to be **A centre of excellence in teaching, research and community engagement for sustainable development**. The plan under focus area 2 is geared towards strengthening research, innovation, and partnership for society transformation.

In addition, the University has put in place a Research Agenda 2023-2028 concretizing the niche areas of action plan to achieve research and innovations theory of change. The incremental delivery of high-quality research with the funds allocated in the University budget is a crucial ingredient to attracting a wider internal and external donor support and partnerships base to accelerate research-led growth of the University, the region and beyond. Projects with clear action plan for translating the research results into community solutions are highly regarded in this call.

The Directorate of Graduate Studies, Research and Innovations (DGSRI) working closely with Faculties and administrative units is fostering a paradigm shift in building its research portfolio through four strategic directions:

- i. Creating synergies with peer and premier universities nationally and beyond at institutional and individual levels.
- ii. Recruitment, development and retention of outstanding researchers at all career stages.
- iii. Production, translation and transfer of knowledge and technologies.

- iv. Adoption of a 'systems approach' to managing the research and innovation function.

National and international development agenda instruments such as, National Development Plan III (NDP III), Vision 2040, Africa Agenda 2063, the Sustainable Development Goals 2030 strongly spell out the role of research as a driver to national development aspirations. In congruence, Universities play a central role in realization of novelty research theory of change for sustainable society transformation. Therefore, the scholars are called upon to demonstrate high standards along the research value chain. University knowledge can be used to enhance economic growth in Uganda through technology/knowledge transfer, innovation, business incubation and commercialization.

The Government of Uganda (GoU) allocated special funding to MMU to support high impact research and innovations towards commercially viable products and services and community impact solutions. The overall result framework should lead to commercial products/services/community solutions geared towards contributing to NDPIII, MMU research agenda and other development aspirations.

The MMU's Top University management (TUM) paradigm shift is to consolidate big ideas over a sustained funding framework period as opposed to funding scattered piecemeal concepts that never yield impactful solutions for the society's development challenges, and therefore teams must be setup to compete for funding of larger amount. The direction taken by the university in the FY2024/25 was to consolidate the research and innovation fund under the Directorate of Graduate Studies, Research and Innovation (DGSRI). The faculties will access these funds under two clusters; one through clearly identified flagship projects in STEM and one through this RIF competitive call for proposals. The emphasis for this call is on innovative ideas worked on by multidisciplinary teams across faculties and departments geared to delivering a complete product that addresses a need in the society. Flagship projects indicated in the DGSRI workplan need not to respond to this call BUT must ensure the standards outlined in here are adhered to during implementation.

The DGSRI will provide guidance, and coordinate the research funds utilization across the entire university.

With this funding from the GoU, the MMU-RIF 2024/25 grant is expected to deliver the following outputs:

- i. Over 50 Publications
- ii. Over 5 innovations or startups rolled out to the community/commercialized annually.
- iii. Increased research capacity for staff and students
- iv. Increased number of graduates at higher degrees

The DGSRI therefore, invites applications for the MMU Research and Innovation Fund (MMU-RIF) in any priority areas in the university research agenda for the year 2024/25.

The call for proposal is published on this day Friday 19th July 2024 and will expire on Friday 2nd August 2024 at 11:59pm EAT.

The MMU-RIF grant is expected to deliver results within **6- 12 months** and will strictly support high impact research and innovation projects. Plans for involving students at all levels is required. Core team members earmarked for each proposal **MUST** commit themselves at the time of submission.

2.0 OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

2.1 Objectives

The objectives of the MMU-RIF programme include the following:

- a) To enhance staff capacity and skills to engage in research and academic writing
- b) To foster interdisciplinary research within the university research agenda thematic areas.
- c) To enhance the university's visibility through impactful project implementation and dissemination of findings.

2.2 Scope

The call will support projects within the research agenda priority areas as enlisted in section 3 of the MMU Research Agenda 2023-2028 in addition to cross-cutting issues and novelty ideas.

3.0 Grant Categories

In the FY 2024/25, eight (8) MMU-RIF projects across two categories will be awarded through a competitive selection process. Each grant will be assessed vigorously for value for money.

CATEGORIES	AMOUNT (UGX)	NUMBER OF PROJECTS	NOVELTY RESEARCH	INNOVATION DEVELOPMENT	TOTAL (UGX)
CAT 1*	60,000,000	5	2	3	300,000,000
CAT 2**	25,000,000	3	2	1	75,000,000
TOTAL		8	4	4	375,000,000

* Category 1 – Multidisciplinary/interdisciplinary Research Teams/ Project Roll out

** Category 2 – Early career Research Projects

4.0 APPLICATION AND ELIGIBILITY

4.1 Application process

i. Research proposals must be submitted electronically (by email) to MMU.RIF2024@mmu.ac.ug by Friday, 2nd August 2024, 11:59PM East African time zone.

Note: A proposal sent directly to any of the directorate's staff if found out SHALL BE Ineligible for consideration as that will have potential to cause CONFLICT OF INTEREST during processing. The Research Grants Management Committee will not consider applications submitted by any other means. Applicants are therefore advised to prepare their submissions on-time.

If an applicant experiences any challenges in the submission process, they should send an email to: kintumugenyi@mmu.ac.ug and copy to wilson.musinguzi@mmu.ac.ug

- ii. The proposal shall be written in Times New Roman with 12 as font size, single spaced and normal margins.
- iii. Proposals should not exceed 25 pages

4.2 Proposal sections

- i. Title page bearing a complete research study title of not more than 20 words, name(s) of Key Researchers and indicating the PI, department and faculty of the staff involved.
- ii. Project summary.
- iii. Background and Context.
- iv. A problem statement/development challenge of not more than half a page
- v. Objectives/research questions
- vi. Justification for the research
- vii. Research Scope
- viii. Expected outputs
- ix. Methodology
- x. An implementation plan
- xi. To include cross cutting issues of gender, climate change/environmental sustainability or management.
- xii. Relevant and up-to-date references using APA 7 edition.
- xiii. Detailed Budget with justifications
- xiv. 1- 2 pages each curriculum vitae of the principal investigator and Co-PI.

4.3 General Eligibility

- i. Lead applicants (PI) shall be full time academic staff of Mountains of the Moon University.
- ii. Individual researchers or research teams will be required to attach a letter of support from the Head of the academic unit under which the lead researcher is tenured.
- iii. Researchers from other institutions of higher learning are not eligible to neither apply as principal investigators (PI) nor as co-PI but can be collaborators.
- iv. The PI shall be active in service (not on study or sabbatical leave).
- v. Elements of mentorship must be strongly reflected in the application so that young researchers will be seen to be brought on board in the University.
- vi. A researcher cannot be a PI on more than **ONE** application in each category. It is allowable for any person to be a team member on up to a maximum of three applications.
- vii. For each application, it is a requirement to indicate a co-Principal Investigator who will be co-signatory to the contract upon award and will be jointly responsible for the results; the requirements for one to be a co-PI are like those required of a PI.
- viii. Collaborations with research personnel with a minimum of a master's degree from government agencies, civil society organizations, independent research institutions, business and industry are encouraged BUT will not benefit from the funding.

4.4 Eligible Expenses

- i. Acceptable expenses are those normally associated with research: data collection, , experimental work, analysis, report writing, computing costs; equipment; development of new research technology and dissemination (Piloting, exhibiting etc).
- ii. **Multi-year projects should indicate so but should only submit a budget for one financial year.**
- iii. Requests to fund article processing charges will be handled on case-by-case basis, however, this will only happen for manuscripts that are written and ready for publication, or in the publication pipeline

- (accepted or in press). **The grant will only cater for publications in peer reviewed journals indexed by recognized publishing houses (Index by Scopus, web of science, google scholar, ResearchGate among others)**
- iv. Under personnel costs, researchers should not budget for salaries for staff who are on government payroll because this will constitute double payment, however, a budget for key critical project staff (Graduate Fellows, Research Assistants, Project Coordinators) not under the government payroll can be included in the budget.
 - v. Researchers should submit a clear work plan with clearly marked deliverables within the project lifespan. These will be used for the budget implementation and monitoring. A budget template is provided to guide in coming up with detailed breakdown.

5.0 SELECTION AND ASSESSMENT PROCESS

5.1 Selection

The selection will follow a two-stage process:

Stage I

All proposals will undergo an eligibility check by the assigned staff of the DGSRI, and the eligible proposals will undergo an independent evaluation system; technical blind peer-review process. The reports from reviewers shall be consolidated by the Grants unit (Technical/Secretariat unit for this call).

Stage II

A technical university committee will assess the results from the reviewer(s) for each project, and applicants of recommended viable projects will be invited for face-to-face presentations to the Research Grants Management Committee (RGMC). The blind peer review will constitute 70% of the score and the oral presentation will constitute 30%. Only those proposals with a score of 42 out of 70 points shall be invited for oral presentation.

The final selection of proposals will be undertaken by the University Research Grants Management Committee (RGMC) setup and the final shortlist of awardees presented to the Projects Preparation and Grants Development

Committee (PP&GDC) and/TUM for consideration. The RGMC reserves the right to determine/change the number and size of awards based on prevailing circumstances informed by demand, quality of applications, availability of funds and level of utilization of funds by grantees. The RGMC will ensure that there is equitable distribution of the research projects.

5.2 Assessment Criteria

A Summary of assessment and merit criteria for blind peer review is given as follows:

MERIT CRITERIA	MARKS	REMARKS
Contribution to Uganda's Development Priorities	15 Marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed plan for contributing to one or more of the objectives and targets of Uganda's NDP III and Vision 2040 – scientific output, employment creation Anticipated economic social and/or environmental benefits arising from the project, period
Research problem and questions	10 Marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the problem defined? Does the research/innovation problem have a clear link to the national development priorities? Is the problem aligned with the thematic priorities of the University Research Agenda?
Objectives	5 Marks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are the objectives linked to the problem stated? Are the objectives SMART?
Methodology	20 Marks	Are the methods appropriate?
Need	10 Marks	Detailed justification of the budget; Co-contribution of resources (cash and in-kind) from partners

Main deliverable(s) & Dissemination	10 Marks	Will the project have a feasible output in terms of a journal manuscript/Utility model or patent?
TOTAL Score	70 Marks	

To this call, the pass mark for blind peer review shall be 60%, however, grants will be awarded based on the availability of funds and on a competitive basis.

6.0 NOTIFICATION OF SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS

Successful applicants will be informed by email from the DGSRI. Regrets will be sent to the unsuccessful candidates.

7.0 POST-AWARD PROCESS

Due to the urgent need of results from the grant, the DGSRI will conduct several post-award activities before the release of the funds to the grant beneficiaries:

- i. Awardees will attend an online training in financial grant management and accounting for research grant.
- ii. Since the funding is from the GoU, awardees will be required to develop a procurement plan for key project items.
- iii. All awardees will sign a contract with the Director DGSRI.
- iv. All projects will be required to provide a summary, objectives and team members to DICT for the creation of a weblink to the project.
- v. The release of project funds will be in phases subject to proper accountability and achievement of key project milestones and budget releases by GoU.
- vi. The Grants Management Unit will track project deliverables and accountability. Consistent failure to demonstrate deliverables or utilize funds might lead to the decision of issuance of unspent balances to other grantees or reserve/data bank projects.

NOTE: The Directorate of Graduate Studies, Research and Innovation operates on open door policy. Comments for continuous improvement of the University Research and Innovation fund implementation for Inclusive, equitable, transparency, value for money, and accountability dimensions are always welcome.



Assoc. Prof. Wilson Babu Musinguzi

Director

