



## COLLEGE OF MEDICINE

### CALL FOR APPLICATIONS: **M-HIRST RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP AND DOCTORAL PROGRAMS**

#### BACKGROUND

The College of Medicine (CoM) was established in 1991 as a constituent college of the University of Malawi. Its mission is “*to be an academic centre of excellence in the training of doctors and other health professionals in clinical service and medical research, responsive to the health needs of Malawi and its neighbours within the Southern African region*”. Through postgraduate training, CoM expects to develop and mentor clinicians, public health practitioners and scientists who will become leaders and game-changers in their areas of speciality to transform the health sector in Malawi and globally. Since 2015, the National Institutes of Health-Fogarty International Centre in the USA has been funding the CoM and University of North Carolina to establish and roll-out the Malawi HIV Implementation Science Research Training (M-HIRST) Program which aims at building and strengthening local capacity for conducting implementing research studies to generate evidence that accelerates the scale up of evidence-based HIV interventions. In 2020, the Kamuzu College of Nursing (KCN) joined the M-HIRST program which will now operate until 2025.

#### A. **Research Fellowships**

The M-HIRST Program wishes to fund fellowships which **will enable Malawians achieve excellence and leadership in the area of HIV implementation science research**. Specifically, the fellowships will support academics/research scientists employed at the CoM or KCN, research institutes or non-governmental organizations (NGOs) implementing HIV programs to **develop their implementation science skills and other research-related soft skills so that they can progress towards research independence and secure implementation research grants**. The M-HIRST program will offer a 2 year fellowship which includes a modest part-time salary to support protected research time for developing a research grant application (maximum: 1 day per week); access to pilot research funding through the M-HIRST and other small grant schemes; participation in Implementation Science or other relevant short courses and mentorship from Implementation Science experts. Applicants’ research plans must focus on any high priority areas highlighted in any of the following strategic documents:

1. Malawi National HIV Strategic Plan 2020-2025 (NSP 2020-2025) which outline Malawi government’s priority HIV strategies and interventions.
2. US Presidential Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) Country Operating Plan (2020-2021).
3. Global Fund-supported HIV interventions for the period 2021 to 2024.

#### **Application eligibility criteria:**

- Employees of the CoM, KCN, Malawian-based research institutes or NGOs implementing HIV programs **and** any of the following;
  - a. Completed Master of Medicine (MMED) or equivalent in relevant subject or
  - b. PhD in relevant subject or
  - c. Medical degree with Masters in Public Health or equivalent or
  - d. MSc in Adult Nursing, MSc in Midwifery, MSc in Reproductive Health, MSc in Child Health Nursing, MSc in Community Health Nursing.

## Submission requirements:

Interested candidates should submit the following documents;

1. An application cover letter,
2. An HIV implementation research concept to be developed during the fellowship.
3. Updated curriculum vitae,
4. Bio-sketch of supervisors and/or mentors
5. Letter of support from their supervisors and/or mentors
6. A Personal Development Plan (PDP), which outlines implementation science and other soft skills to be developed, expected outputs and timeframe (access link for the PDP is [here](#)). The PDP should be based on results of research skills needs *self-assessment* (access to the tool is [here](#)).
7. Budget which may include part-time salary for protected research time; travel and/or telephone expenses to participate in research-related short courses or conferences; any expenses which will facilitate preparation of submission of a research grant application to research-funding agencies.

**Incomplete applications with missing documents will automatically be considered as ineligible and will not be reviewed.**

The documents must be submitted as a single PDF document to the CoM M-HIRST Project Coordinator – ([mhirstcoordinator@medcol.mw](mailto:mhirstcoordinator@medcol.mw)). The deadline for receiving applications will be on **Monday, 26<sup>th</sup> October 2020 at 23:59 hrs**

## B. Master of Philosophy (MPhil) / Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Fellowship

The M-HIRST Program will provide tuition, stipend and research funds for applicants wishing to pursue MPhil/PhD degree program at the CoM focussing on HIV-related implementation science. Interested candidates must fulfil the eligibility criteria outlined below and must have research concepts focussing on high priority areas highlighted in any of the following strategic documents:

1. Malawi National HIV Strategic Plan 2020-2025 (NSP 2020-2025) which outline Malawi government's priority HIV strategies and interventions.
2. US Presidential Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) Country Operating Plan (2020-2021).
3. Global Fund-supported HIV interventions for the period 2021 to 2024.

Applicants are **strongly** advised to have preliminary discussions with M-HIRST Program Directors (through [mhirstcoordinator@medcol.mw](mailto:mhirstcoordinator@medcol.mw)) to enable matching of prospective applicant with supervisors or research groups and to develop research concepts before submitting an application.

**Applicants without approved research concepts and/or supervisors will not be shortlisted.**

The CoM accepts MPhil/PhD applications all year round but candidates can commence their studies on 1<sup>st</sup> January, 1<sup>st</sup> April, 1<sup>st</sup> July and 1<sup>st</sup> October each year.

## Eligibility requirements

1. Master's degree in a relevant subject from any recognized university or;
2. A medical degree or its equivalent, or an appropriate honors degree in the first or upper second division in a relevant discipline
3. Approved research concept.

**Submission requirements** *(after approval of the research concept)*

1. A completed postgraduate application form. The forms are available at [www.medcol.mw/application-forms/](http://www.medcol.mw/application-forms/) or CoM Central Registry
2. Sealed academic transcripts
3. Authenticated copies of academic certificates
4. Authenticated copies of professional registration certificates where applicable
5. A copy of the approved research concept.
6. Reference letters (one academic and one professional)

A non-refundable application fee of MK10000.00 should be paid to the following bank account:

COM POSTGRADUATE POOL  
NATIONAL BANK OF MALAWI  
CHICHIRI BRANCH  
ACCOUNT NUMBER : 698881  
CURRENT ACCOUNT

Application forms that do not meet the requirements stated above will not be processed.

**Completed application should be sent:**

The Registrar  
College of Medicine  
Private Bag 360  
Chichiri  
Blantyre 3, Malawi  
Attention: Assistant Registrar (Academic)

Tel: + 265 (0) 1 874 107, Fax +265 (0) 1 874 700