



FACULTY STUDENT PROGRAM GUIDELINES

August 2024- v1



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1. GENERAL INFORMATION

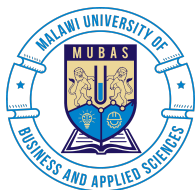
1.1. About the UniPod

The University Innovation Pod (UniPod) at the Malawi University of Business and Applied Sciences (MUBAS) is a state-of-the-art facility championing the translation of local ingenuity into business opportunities. Its primary objective is to support innovators with cutting-edge infrastructure that caters to innovation prototyping, experimentation, and small-scale manufacturing. The UniPod aims to foster the creation of prototypes that hold significant potential for transforming into commercially successful products.

The UniPod goes beyond a mere provision of equipment and programs within the university environment; it adopts a comprehensive strategy. This strategy includes enhancing the entrepreneurial mindset among innovators through the Business Nursery programs and also reinforcing the university's Technology Transfer Office (TTO). Additionally, it involves establishing the capability to implement Intellectual Property registration and royalty programs.

At the core of the UniPod's conceptual foundation is the establishment of a symbiotic interplay among Ideation, Design, Fabrication, and Collaboration, all working in harmony to propel impactful innovations. The UniPod encompasses various key spaces, including a collaborative ideation space, Design Lab and a Makerspace featuring five specialized labs: electronics fabrication, mechanical fabrication, Computer Numerical Control Fabrication, wood workshop, digital creative arts lab. Furthermore, the UniPod encompasses a business nursery and a dedicated technology transfer office, further enriching its offerings.

1.2. What is FSP



The FSP is an initiative designed by UniPod to translate the outcomes of academic research into commercially viable products. It seeks to provide students with practical skills and hands-on experience in developing marketable products based on validated academic research findings.

In Malawi, the academic landscape has a rich tradition of producing scholarly work that advances knowledge across various fields. Malawian universities and research institutions have been pivotal in generating valuable insights that contribute to global and local understanding. However, the translation of these insights into practical applications that directly benefit national economic development remains limited.

1.3. Thematic Areas

- i. Healthcare solutions
- ii. Agricultural technology
- iii. Disaster management
- iv. Education technologies
- v. Creatives
- vi. Financial technologies

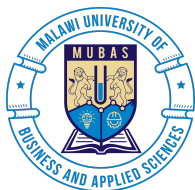
1.4. Team composition & Benefits

The FSP is a 6 months program that enrolls teams comprising of 1 faculty member and 2 students (ensuring gender balance) at the UniPod. FSP teams will have access to the following;

- i. Rapid prototyping, CNC machines, wood workshop, design facilities, electronics laboratories, and technical support.
- ii. An intellectual property (IP) library and technology transfer office (TTO)
- iii. Business development services and access to local and international innovation funding.

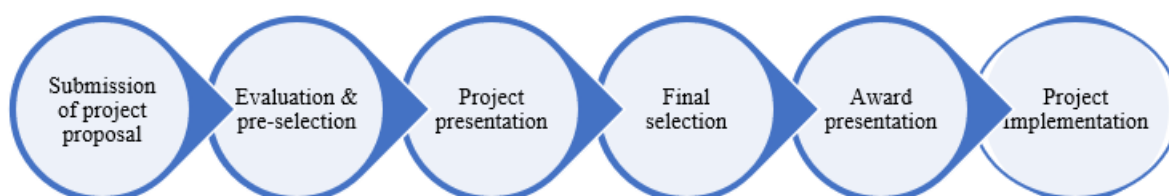
1.5. Eligibility

- i. The applicant should be an academic staff member from an accredited tertiary institution in Malawi.
- ii. Have successfully completed research that can be translated into product development.



- iii. The Academic member, serving as the main applicant and team lead, must be of Malawian origin and must be in country during the entire period of the program.

2. PROGRAM OVERVIEW



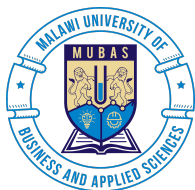
2.1. Submission of project proposal

Please follow these steps in submitting your application:

- i. Fill in all the fields of the FSP proposal and budget template. While the use of the provided budget template is optional, applicants must categorize their costs as direct or indirect, similar to the template format, if they choose to develop their own budget structure. Applications without budgetary information will not be considered for funding.
- ii. The FSP proposal should be submitted as a word document and the budget as an excel document. Submissions in formats other than .doc or .xls/.xlsx will be discarded.
- iii. The word limits indicated in the proposal template should be adhere to.
- iv. The faculty member and students shall be required to submit copies of valid national and university IDs in PDF format.
- v. The faculty member should be required to submit a CV in PDF format separate to the proposal.
- vi. All submitted applications should accompanied by a support letter signed by the office of the Director of research and outreach or equivalent office or the vice chancellor.
- vii. Completed applications should be submitted to applications@unipod.ac.mw by 11:59 PM, 11th September 2024. All applications received after the stipulated time will be disregarded.

2.2. Evaluation and pre-selection

The UniPod shall pre-screen the submitted documents to ensure compliance with the application requirements.



2.2.1. Selection Committee

A diverse selection committee comprising experts from industry, education, development partners and government shall be formed to assess the submitted proposals and pre-select teams for presentation. The selection committee shall use a UniPod adopted evaluation matrix.

2.3. Project presentations

Pre-selected applicants shall be required to present their projects to a selected panel of experts. Team leads shall be required to make in-person presentations on behalf of their teams at the UniPod. All required logistics for participating team leads will be covered by the UniPod.

2.4. Final Selection

The panel of experts described under 2.3 shall conduct a final assessment and select teams that will be awarded the grants.

2.5. Award Presentation

A formal award ceremony shall be conducted at the UniPod. After which a grant agreement detailing the scope of the project, funding amount, payment schedule, reporting requirements, and other terms shall be reviewed and signed by both parties (grantor and the grantee) to symbolize the start of the FSP program.

3. GUIDELINES FOR WRITING THE PROPOSAL

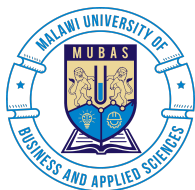
3.1. Cover page

Indicate the title of the project and the university where the team is based.

3.2. Participant information

Provide contact details of the research team, including both faculty members and students. Clearly identify the faculty member as the primary contact person and team lead. This section should also include brief biographies (80 words max) highlighting relevant experience and expertise.

3.3. Project summary



Summarize the project's motivation and its potential impact (200 words max). This section will be used to communicate the essence of the project to stakeholders and may be published on the UniPod website if the project is successful.

3.4. Introduction

3.4.1. Background (100 words max)

Provide a brief overview of the proposed innovation in the context of the development challenge (FSP thematic areas) the innovation is addressing. Highlight the prior research findings that demonstrate the potential for developing a tangible innovative prototype.

3.4.2. Rationale (150 words max)

Explain the importance of transforming the prior research findings into a tangible prototype, underscoring the novelty/improvements that the prototype will address in the existing development challenges and market needs.

3.5. Objectives (50 words max)

Clearly state the objectives of the proposed project ensuring that they are specific, measurable, achievable and relevant (SMART).

3.6. Approach/Methodology (150 words max)

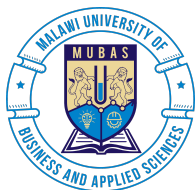
Describe Outline the approach or methodology that will be used to implement the project. Describe key activities, strategies including student involvement and tools that will be employed. Explain how the prior research findings will be translated into an innovative prototype.

3.7. Target Audience/Beneficiaries (20 words max)

Identify the target audience or beneficiaries of the innovation. Specify who will directly benefit from its development, such as specific industries, communities, or demographic groups.

3.8. Implementation Plan

Provide a detailed timeline in Gantt chart format for implementing the project. Include key milestones, responsibilities, and resources required at each stage of innovation development.



3.9. Sustainability (50 words max)

Discuss the sustainability of the innovation beyond the initial prototype development phase. Explain how the team will ensure the innovation's long-term viability, including strategies for maintaining financial stability, continued stakeholder engagement, and potential translation into business.

3.10. Budget

Provide a budget breakdown for developing the expected prototype. Budget template can be downloaded from the website. For more details on budget guidelines refer to section 6 of this document.

3.11. Partnerships/Collaborations (20 words max)

Highlight any existing or potential partnerships or collaborations that will support the development of the expected prototype.

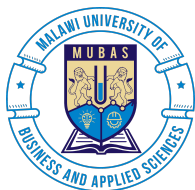
3.12. Conclusion (50 words max)

Summarize the key points of the innovation and reiterate its significance. Emphasize the potential for achieving the stated objectives.

4. EVALUATION CRITERIA

The UniPod gives equal opportunities to researchers across Malawi, and project proposals are assessed based on the criteria below:

- **Alignment with Thematic Areas:** This criterion assesses how well the proposed innovation aligns with the thematic areas specified by the FSP. Proposed innovation must address one of the thematic areas of the program (refer to section 1.3).
- **Innovation and Impact:** This evaluates the project's potential to introduce novel/better ideas, methods/processes, or products and the significance of its anticipated impact. Projects should demonstrate creativity and originality, offering new solutions or improvements to existing challenges.
- **Feasibility:** This examines the practicality and likelihood of successfully implementing the proposed project. This includes assessing the clarity and detail



of the implementation plan, the adequacy of resources and timelines, and the team's ability to overcome potential challenges.

- **Student Involvement:** This criterion evaluates the extent and quality of student involvement in the project. Projects should provide meaningful opportunities for students to engage in the project, enhancing their skills and knowledge. Proposals should detail how students will be involved, their roles, and the expected benefits to their educational and professional development.
- **Collaboration and Interdisciplinary Approach:** Collaboration and interdisciplinary approach assess the project's ability to leverage partnerships and integrate knowledge from multiple disciplines. Proposals should highlight existing or potential collaborations with other institutions or organizations.
- **Economic Viability:** Economic viability evaluates the financial aspects of the proposed project, including cost-effectiveness, potential return on investment, and long-term sustainability.

5. BUDGET GUIDELINES

The **maximum** funding level for successful proposals is 10 million Malawi Kwacha (MK10,000,000) per innovation. In light of this, all applicants are required to adhere to the following:

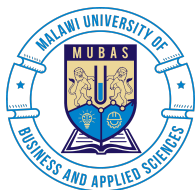
- i. The grant amount cannot be increased beyond the specified limit.
- ii. Any unspent funds remaining after the grant award shall be retained by UniPod.
- iii. Projects demonstrating clear value for money will be given priority in the evaluation process.

5.1. Budget Review

UniPod performs a thorough review of all project costs, and budgets may be subject to discussions. UniPod does not allow for changes to budgets post-project approval to account for exchange rate fluctuations.

5.2. Direct Costs

Direct costs are those costs that can be directly allocated to the project. These include equipment and material costs, data collection costs, travel expenses for project-related



activities (e.g., field visits, site inspections, community meetings), and any other direct project costs associated with project-related activities.

5.3. Indirect Costs

Indirect costs, also known as overheads, are those costs that are not directly attributable to specific project activities but are necessary for the general operation of the project. The UniPod FSP allows for the inclusion of indirect costs, but they must be clearly justified. Ensure that these costs are reasonable and essential for the successful completion of the project.

5.4. Cost Sharing Arrangements

UniPod will cover meals for participants on the days they are at the UniPod facility, as well as direct and indirect costs as stipulated under section 5.2 and 5.3. Any costs associated with accommodation and travel will have to be covered by the home university of the faculty member. It is important for applicants to coordinate with their home institutions to secure the necessary support for these expenses.

5.5. Funding Disbursement

UniPod prioritizes providing materials or paying suppliers directly to meet project needs rather than giving funds to teams for management. In cases where cash payments to teams are necessary, such payments will be made upon proper justification and explanation.

6. Intellectual Property Rights

Intellectual Property (IP) rights will remain with the applicant. However, if the innovation is commercialized through UniPod funding, there shall be room for discussions between UniPod and the applicant regarding potential benefit-sharing arrangements.

7. TERMS & CONDITIONS

- i. Commitment to the Project: Once the grant agreement is signed, applicants are expected to complete the project as outlined. Should an applicant decide to stop the project without a valid and concrete reason, they will be required to refund the project funds.
- ii. UniPod reserves the right to terminate or suspend funding if there is insufficient progress or commitment from the applicant.



- iii. All equipment and materials purchased under the project, excluding the final prototype or product, will remain the property of UniPod. The final prototype or product developed through the project will be retained by the applicant.