



**Request for Expressions of Interest from
U.S. Universities for Ph.D. Degree Training
of Students from Malawi
Academic Year 2015-2016**

Background

The Borlaug Higher Education for Agricultural Research and Development (BHEARD) program is funded by USAID through CIMMYT and administered by Michigan State University in collaboration with the Bureau for Food Security. The goal of the BHEARD program is to build capacity of host country agricultural research institutions by providing M.S. and Ph.D. degree and short-term training opportunities to their staff members. Inclusion of qualified women candidates is especially encouraged. The current set of participating countries includes Bangladesh, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Rwanda, and potentially Mozambique. These candidates join continuing trainees from Cambodia, Mali, South Sudan, and Uganda.

After a thorough application review and selection process involving interviews of candidates, the USAID-Malawi mission has recommended seven potential candidates from Malawi for Ph.D. degree training at U.S. universities. Funding to support Ph.D. candidates is available through the BHEARD program, for training programs to begin in Fall 2015. These candidates were selected from institutions which met the BHEARD program criteria; **a list of selected candidates and their areas of interest for graduate study is provided in Annex A.**

Copies of the students' transcripts, statements of purpose, CVs and other documents are available for download through a link to GoogleDrive:

<https://drive.google.com/folderview?id=0B7jlvGW0sasER0pBZjBPS3FrQXc&usp=sharing>

All candidates will have taken the GRE and TOEFL tests; scores obtained to date are listed in Annex B. No funding is available for English language training in the U.S., so only students receiving regular admission will be considered for the scholarship.

Program Description

The Borlaug Higher Education for Agricultural Research and Development (BHEARD) program, managed by Michigan State University invites '**Expressions of Interest**' from U.S. universities to provide Ph.D. degree training for **students from Malawi**. Candidates are employees of some of Malawi's major agricultural research institutions: Department of Agricultural Research Services (DARS), Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR), Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Water Development (MOAIWD). The desired fields of study include biometrics, crop

and soil science, human nutrition, animal, crop and soil sciences, agricultural economics, and agribusiness. For the list of candidates please see Annex A.

Degree programs should be designed with the following program parameters in mind:

1. Degrees will be awarded by a U.S. university.
2. Degree training will begin from Fall 2015. Course work and exams should be completed within three academic years, after which the candidates will return to Malawi to carry out dissertation research and write their dissertations.
3. In their academic and research programs, candidates will be mentored by a U.S. advisor; in addition to this advisor, students should identify a local consultant in Malawi to act as a mentor, such as a university faculty member or qualified researcher from Malawi.
4. The university will demonstrate flexibility in academic program requirements so as to address competency and knowledge needs as identified by the candidates' home institutions and the USAID mission for the cohort of Malawi students. The university will demonstrate innovation and flexibility by "tailoring" the degree program to meet the requirements for capacity building in the identified thematic areas, if necessary allowing academic credit for courses from different disciplines and departments, and to allow students to complete course and exam requirements within three calendar years. Program design should also take into account constraints that may be faced by women candidates.
5. Dissertation research and write-up will be carried out in Malawi during the year following the candidate's return from the U.S. Research topics should address issues of high scientific importance, but should also be consistent with the priorities of the candidate's home institution and with the priorities of USAID's [Feed the Future](#) program.
6. Candidates will be funded once during their three-year stay in the U.S., for purposes of developing their research proposal, or implementing initial research activities. The trainee's major advisor will also be able to visit the student once in Malawi, mostly likely after completion of the U.S. training phase, to provide guidance on the conduct of the research.
7. Requirements for a final dissertation defense seminar should be completed in the home country utilizing electronic and/or tele-conferencing technology to the extent possible, obviating the need for the trainee to return to the U.S. university to defend his/her dissertation.
8. Visa processing will be done by MSU through USAID's TraiNet system. All candidates will be issued J-1 visas, which carry the obligation to fulfill a two-year home country residency period at the end of the degree program.

Cost of the Training Program

Expenses associated with the graduate education of the cohort of Malawi students, including tuition, stipend, health insurance and travel will be covered by Michigan State University under the BHEARD Grant from USAID. A limited budget is also available to support the conduct of in-country research, and the U.S. advisor should expect to seek opportunities for leveraging other funds to support the student's research. Since an objective of the BHEARD program is to keep costs low so as to allow a larger number of trainees, U.S. universities submitting Expressions of Interest are encouraged to seek ways to limit their Ph.D. training costs, and to cost share. No minimum cost share is required, however. U.S. universities are encouraged to use BHEARD funding to provide graduate research assistantships for students, if it will reduce costs. More guidelines are provided in the instructions for budget preparation.

Request for Expressions of Interest

Who can submit "Expressions of Interest?"

Responses to this Request for Expressions of Interest are being sought from U.S. university administrators (e.g., Deans, Associate Deans, Directors, Department Chairs) and graduate program officers from Colleges of Agriculture or International Program Offices (or comparable units) which offer graduate programs in disciplines that match the areas of interest of the USAID mission and the candidates as profiled in Annex A. Expressions of Interest are especially sought from universities that have a demonstrated interest in Malawi as evidenced by professional faculty experience or collaborative projects in that country or the Southeast Africa region.

How to submit Expressions of Interest?

U.S. universities interested in providing Ph.D. training in the identified graduate program areas for students from Malawi should complete and submit an "Expression of Interest Submission Form" to the BHEARD Associate Director via e-mail to bheard@isp.msu.edu. If a university is interested in providing Ph.D. training in multiple graduate program areas, please list each academic department on the submission form. All questions should be directed to the BHEARD Program Office at:

By e-mail: bheard@isp.msu.edu

By mail: Anne Schneller, BHEARD Co-Director
Michigan State University
446 W. Circle Drive, Room Number 213E
East Lansing, MI 48824-1039

By Phone: (517) 355-3449

By Fax: (517) 432-1800

What is the time line for submitting the Expressions of Interest and the follow-up process?

Expressions of Interest should be submitted within one month from the date of this announcement, **February 22, 2015**. The official test scores will be sent to universities expressing interest in specific candidates as soon as they are available. Universities may express interest in candidates they find academically admissible, but no funding is available for English language training in the U.S. Since

the BHEARD program requires that the selected candidates come to the U.S. and begin their Ph.D. degree programs by Fall 2015, it will be necessary to have confirmation that the students you list in your submission form are admissible to your graduate programs. This will give the students adequate time to formally apply for admission and receive an official letter of admission, obtain the USAID-sponsored J-1 visa, make travel and all necessary arrangements for their pending study in the U.S.

Selection Criteria

The selection of a U.S. university or universities in which to place Malawi BHEARD program trainees will be based on the following criteria:

1. Ability of the university or universities to offer innovative Ph.D. degree programs in accord with the academic interests of the candidate trainees and the priorities of the USAID mission to Malawi.
2. Ability of the university to meet the program parameters outlined in the Program Description section above, including attention to issues of access for qualified women candidates.
3. Assurance of admission of selected qualified candidates to appropriate Ph.D. degree programs for a Fall 2015 start date.
4. Commitment and experience of the university and the potential faculty members to be engaged long-term in Malawi and to contribute to building sustainable institutions and increasing the competitiveness of the agriculture and natural resource sectors in Malawi.
5. National competitiveness of the Ph.D. degree program in terms of quality (i.e., faculty recognition, academic course offerings, etc.) and cost (i.e., registration and tuition fees, housing, etc.) compared to programs at other U.S. universities.
6. Competitiveness of budget for graduate training (e.g., tuition, stipend, residency requirement, etc.). Although not required, commitments by universities submitting Expressions of Interest to provide matching contributions to keep costs down (i.e., waiver of out-of-state tuition fees, support for faculty travel, support for research activities in Malawi, etc.) would be viewed favorably.
7. All university submissions will be reviewed by a team of technical experts from USAID. Reviewers will examine the strength of the proposed academic department, the match between the research interests of the proposed advisor and the student, and the department's/university's commitment to long-term collaboration in Malawi.
8. If multiple Expressions of Interest are received that meet the BHEARD program parameters and the above criteria for evaluation and selection, the ultimate decision on which university (or universities) will receive the training award(s) will be made by USAID with the local selection

committee in Malawi, which includes representatives from the target institutions that have nominated the degree candidates.

Annex A: Malawi BHEARD Scholarship Candidates for Fall 2015 Admission

Name	Institution a/	M/F	Subject
Chilungo, Sarah	DARS	F	Food Science
Khundi, Fydess	LUANAR	F	Agricultural Economics
Lungu, Edda	MOAIWD	F	Human Nutrition
Mphwanthe, Getrude	LUANAR	F	Human Nutrition
Mumba, Salome	MOAIWD	F	Irrigation
Njombwa, Chunala Alexico	DARS	M	Animal Science
Nkhata, Smith	MOAIWD	M	Food Science

DARS=Department of Agricultural Research Services; LUANAR= Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources; MOAIWD=Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development

Annex B: Finalist GRE and IELTS or TOEFL Exam Scores

Name	TOEFL Scores	GRE Scores					
	Overall Band	Verbal Raw	Verbal Percentile	Quantitative Raw	Quantitative Percentile	Analytical Raw	Analytical Percentile
Chilungo, Sarah*	-	144	22	140	8	3.0	15
Khundi, Fydess	69	142	16	144	18	3.5	38
Lungu, Edda*	-	141	13	142	12	3.5	38
Mphwanthe, Getrude	72	141	13	142	12	3.0	15
Mumba, Salome	69	140	10	140	8	3.0	15
Njombwa, Chunala Alexico	95	149	41	145	21	3.0	15
Nkhata, Smith*	-	147	33	148	32	3.0	15


**These students have recent Master's degrees from Michigan State University, and thus were not asked to provide TOEFL or IELTS exam scores*

Annex C: Description of Malawi Educational System

The following document, from World Education Services (WES: http://www.wes.org/wes_tools/index.asp), provides excellent information on the education and grading system of Malawi.

WES Resources

- [WES Country Profile](#)
- [WES Grade Conversions](#)
- [Education Systems](#)
- [Document Requirements](#)
- [Document Verification](#)
- [Ministries of Education](#)
- [WENR](#)
- [University Rankings](#)
- [WES Education Links](#)

 Research & Advisory Services

International Student Segmentation

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INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION INTELLIGENCE

Malawi

Grading Scale

Degree Classification	U.S. Grade Equiv.
First Class Honours	A
Second Class Honours, Upper Division	A-/B+
Second Class Honours, Lower Division	B
Third Class Honours	B-
Pass	C

Country Profile

- IBE: Profile of Education: <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/en/worldwide/unesco-regions/africa/malawi/profile-of-education.html?type=target>

Required Documents:

[wes.org/required/index.asp](http://www.wes.org/required/index.asp)

Document Verification Procedures

[wes.org/educators/verification.asp](http://www.wes.org/educators/verification.asp)

Ministries of Education

- Ministry of Education: <http://www.malawi.gov.mw/Education/Home%20%20Education.htm>