

Training in Scientific Writing

Dates: 25th to 27th October, 2017

Venue: Bingu International Conference Centre, Lilongwe, Malawi

Hosted by: RUFORUM member Universities in Malawi and the Malawi Government

Concept Note

Background Packaging and dissemination of research outputs is one of the primary functions of a productive scientists and engaged scholar. Nonetheless, many scholars in Africa and particularly the graduate and postgraduate students lack skills in scientific writing. This constrain explains in part the limited research outputs in form of scholarly publications despite the fact that the research for development arena is overflowing with research projects and programmes. Without good writing skills, scientists stand little chance of publishing their work, obtaining funds, receiving awards, or communicating effectively to a wide audience when presenting a poster or oral talk at scientific conferences/seminars. Even the most promising discovery/impactful research means little if it cannot be communicated successfully for dissemination in development uptake pathways. In fact, it is more often the case that uptake of research outcomes is limited not by their technical merit but by ineffective articulation. Thus, good scientific writing skills is a requirement, not an option, for a productive scientist.

Rationale and Objective of the Training Most researchers are not formally trained in scientific writing, and thus have skeletal knowledge of basic scientific writing principles at best. Surprisingly, this seems to be the case among faculty at universities and this compounds the problem because they are unable to pass on skills in scholarly writing as part of mentoring students (especially the postgraduate students). Besides, most curricula at universities are loaded with disciplinary specific content and the assumption is that the learners are technically savvy with regard to aspects of scientific writing based on schooling exposure. This, however, is not the case and given the demands to meet the rigor and quality of scholarly writing, leaners need to be trained and equipped with skills including contemporary technics. The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture, Network of Universities in Africa recognizes this challenge and has over the years provided opportunities for both students and faculty to participate in Scientific Writing as a Short-Skills Training Package.

**Participation,
Venue, Date
and Agenda of
the Training**

Faculty members and postgraduate students from the RUFORUM Member Universities in Malawi will be invited to attend the three-day training scheduled for 23rd – 25th October 2017 at the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR). The Agenda will focus on Scholarly publishing and development of Journal articles in particular. It is envisaged that prior to the meeting, the designated Facilitators will interact with selected participants to prepare and tailor-make the training to suit their needs. Thus, the Training Agenda will be designed to include elements identified from this needs assessment. At a minimum, the agenda will bear all components of a Journal Manuscript. It is anticipated that participants will at the time of the training have analyzed data that will be used to package through a step-by-step process draft journal manuscripts.

**Key Outputs of
the AGM**

1. Draft manuscripts to be polished within one – two months after the training sessions in readiness for submission to appropriate peer-reviewed journals.
2. Comprehensive Report on the Training with recommendations to RUFORUM, the RUFORUM Member Universities in Malawi and other stakeholders.

**Convenor and
Contact Persons
for the Training**

The three-day Training in Scientific Writing will be conducted as a side-event at the 13th RUFORUM AGM (see Draft Programme attached). The Principal hosts of the 13th AGM will be the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR), University of Mzuzu, University of Malawi (UNIMA) and Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST) in collaboration with the Malawi Government. The Focal Point and Contact Persons for the implementation of AGM activities will be the LUANAR VC (vc@bunda.luanar.mw) who will be assisted by the Director of Research and Innovation, Dr. Limbika Matumba (limatumba@bunda.luanar.mw).

For the Training in Scientific Writing Session, the convenor will be Dr. Paul Nampala (p.nampala@ruforum.org).

DRAFT PROGRAMME
RUFORUM ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2017
 Hosted by the Government of Malawi and Malawian RUFORUM Member Universities
 Venue: Bingu International Conference Centre, Lilongwe, Malawi
 Dates: 25th to 27th October, 2017

DAY	SCHEDULE OF EVENTS							
	0800-1000	1000-1030	1030-1300	1300-1400	1400-1500	1500-1530	1530-1730	1800-2000
19 th to 21 st October, 2017	Proposal Write-shop by AWARD at LUANAR	BREAK	Proposal Write-shop by AWARD at LUANAR	LUNCH	Proposal Write-hop by AWARD at LUANAR	LUNCH	Proposal Write-shop by AWARD at LUANAR	Free Space
23 rd to 25 th October, 2017	Training in Scientific Writing for Post Graduate Students and Academic Staff at LUANAR	BREAK	Training in Scientific Writing for Post Graduate Students and Academic Staff at LUANAR	LUNCH	Training in Scientific Writing for Post Graduate Students and Academic Staff at LUANAR	BREAK	Training in Scientific Writing for Post Graduate Students and Academic Staff at LUANAR	Free Space
23 rd October, 2017	Consultations with Deans and Principals on RUFORUM Vision 2030	BREAK	Consultations with Deans and Principals on RUFORUM Vision 2030	BREAK	Consultations with Deans and Principals on RUFORUM Vision 2030	BREAK	Consultations with Deans and Principals on RUFORUM Vision 2030	Free Space



24 th October, 2017	Leadership and Management Training for Deans and Principals at BICC	BREAK	Leadership and Management Training for Deans and Principals at BICC	LUNCH	Leadership and Management Training for Deans and Principals at BICC	BREAK	Leadership and Management Training for Deans and Principals at BICC	Free Space
	Gender Training for Deans and Principals at BICC		Gender Training for Deans and Principals at BICC		Gender Training for Deans and Principals at BICC		Gender Training for Deans and Principals at BICC	Malawian Universities VCs host other VCs to a dinner
25 th October, 2017	Leadership and Management Reflection Meeting for Vice Chancellors at BICC	BREAK	Leadership and Management Reflection Meeting for Vice Chancellors at BICC	LUNCH	Leadership and Management Reflection Meeting for Vice Chancellors At BICC	BREAK	Leadership and Management Reflection Meeting for Vice Chancellors at BICC	Signing of MOU with FAO
	Meeting of the RUFORUM International Advisory Panel (IAP) at BICC	BREAK	Meeting of the RUFORUM International Advisory Panel (IAP) at BICC	LUNCH	Roundtable Meeting with Development Partners at BICC	BREAK	Roundtable Meeting with Development Partners at BICC	



	RUFORUM Technical Committee Meeting at BICC	BREAK	RUFORUM Technical Committee at BICC	LUNCH		BREAK		
26 th October, 2017	RUFORUM 16 th Board Meeting	BREAK	RUFORUM 16 th Board Meeting	LUNCH	Official Opening and Address by a Malawian by His Excellency, Prof. Arthur Peter Mutharika, State President of Malawi			Gala Dinner Hosted by Malawian Universities Malawi Traditional Dances (Kwacha Cultural Troupe)
	14 th Principals and Deans Business Meeting	BREAK	14 th Principals and Deans Business Meeting	LUNCH	Prize Awards by His Excellency, Prof. Arthur Peter Mutharika, State President of the Republic of Malawi			
27 th October, 2016	13 th RUFORUM Annual General Meeting	BREAK	13 th RUFORUM Annual General Meeting	LUNCH	13 th RUFORUM Annual General Meeting	BREAK	Free Space	RUFORUM hosted dinner



29 th October, 2016	Departures	BREAK	Meeting of RUFORUM Secretariat & Local Organising Committee and Kenyan LOC	LUNCH	Departures	BREAK	Departures	
29 th October, 2017	Leadership Training for Middle Level University Managers	BREAK	Leadership Training for Middle Level University Managers	LUNCH	Leadership Training for Middle Level University Managers	BREAK	Leadership Training for Middle Level University Managers	
30 st October, 2017	Leadership Training for Middle Level University Managers	BREAK	Leadership Training for Middle Level University Managers	LUNCH	Leadership Training for Middle Level University Managers	BREAK	Leadership Training for Middle Level University Manager	
31 st October, 2017	Leadership Training for Middle Level University Managers	BREAK	Leadership Training for Middle Level University Managers	LUNCH	Leadership Training for Middle Level University Managers	LUNCH	Leadership Training for Middle Level University Manager	
1 st November, 2017	Leadership Training for Middle Level	BREAK	Leadership Training for Middle Level	LUNCH	Leadership Training for Middle Level	BREAK	Leadership Training for Middle Level	



	University Managers		University Managers		University Managers		University Managers	
2 nd November, 2017	Departures		Departures		Departures		Departures	



RUFORUM Annual General Meetings

Every year, RUFORUM organizes an Annual General Meeting for its member universities. The RUFORUM Annual General Meeting is the supreme decision making organ of RUFORUM and provides the overall orientation of RUFORUM mission and programmes. The Annual General Meeting oversees RUFORUM's program and management and performs such functions and tasks that it deems necessary to carry out its mandate, and accomplish its mission. The 13th RUFORUM Annual General Meeting will take place from 25th to 27th October, 2017 at Bingu International Conference Centre in Lilongwe, Malawi.

This year's meeting will particularly focus on the efforts to engage governments to support Higher Education in Africa. The meeting will bring together close to 200 delegates across Africa and beyond, including development partners and Senior African Policy Makers. .

Pre-AGM Events

There will be a number of pre-conference events such as the Proposal and Scientific writing to be held at LUANAR. Secondly, there will also be a Leadership and Management and Gender Training for Deans and Principals. Thirdly, there will be a Leadership and Management Reflection Meeting for Vice Chancellors. Fourthly, there will be a Roundtable Meeting of Development Partners and fifthly, there will be a meeting of the International Advisory Panel (IAP) and lastly there will also be a meeting of the RUFORUM Technical Committee. These will be held from 19th to 25th October, 2017

Annual General Meeting (AGM) Events, Day One: Thursday, 26th October, 2017

The programs for this day includes meeting of the RUFORUM policy Organs. Firstly, there will be the Business Meeting of the Deans and Principals, Secondly, there will be the RUFORUM 16th Board Meeting. In the afternoon, there will be the official opening of the Annual General Meeting and prize awards by His Excellency, Prof. Arthur Peter Mutharika, State President of the Republic of Malawi. The prize awards include: a) IMPRESSA to three outstanding university achievers; b)

recognition awards to two outstanding young (<40 years) scientists from Malawi, and c) three outstanding farmers in Malawi.

Day Two: Friday, 27th October, 2017.

The RUFORUM Annual General Meeting will be held on this day in the morning. In the afternoon, there will be the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding with FAO.

Post Annual General Meeting (AGM) Event

RUFORUM has a specific thrust to work with its Universities to strengthen leadership and management skills of university leaders. A three day session is planned for 29st October to 1st November 2017 to work with university mid-career managers to strengthen their leadership and management skills. The purpose is to prepare them for possible roles as senior university managers.