



LILONGWE UNIVERSITY  
OF AGRICULTURE & NATURAL  
RESOURCES (LUANAR)  
*Knowledge | Innovation | Excellence*



COLLABORATIVE  
CROP RESEARCH  
PROGRAM

MCKNIGHT FOUNDATION

CALL CENTER: 4282 | RADIO: 99.6/99.8 MHz



Call for Scholarship 2026/2027: MSc  
Scholarships for Seed Systems Project

# Seed Systems Project GRFS Grant 22-232 funded by The Mcknight Foundation

## Background

The Crop and Soil Sciences Department in partnership with other Departments of the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR), Biodiversity Conservation Initiative (BCI) and Malawi Plant Genetic Resources Centre in the Department of Agricultural Research Services a (DARS) –are implementing a **‘Strengthening farmer-managed seed systems for improved seed quality and access to preferred varieties in Malawi’**. This project is being implemented from December 2025 to July 2028 under financial support from **The McKnight Foundation Collaborative Crop Research Program**.

## Call for Scholarship Applications

The project is looking for two highly qualified candidates to be awarded a full scholarship to pursue the following programs:

- i. Master of Science in Agronomy/Plant Breeding /Seed Science/Sustainable Agriculture.
- ii. Master of Science in Agriculture Extension and Rural Development.

Both programs are offered by Bunda College of the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR).

## Areas of Research

The niche of this project is seed systems of neglected and underutilised crops species (NUS). The project builds on the previous work that focused on building the capacity of smallholder farmers in multiplication of high quality seed of preferred NUS crops, and co-creating an integrated seed system to improve production, management, storage, distribution as well as marketing of Bambara groundnut and finger millet in Eswazini EPA in Mzimba district, Chipala EPA in Kasungu district, Kandeu EPA in Ntcheu district and Mombezi EPA in Chiradzulu district.

This phase aims at strengthening farmer managed seed systems to improve seed quality and availability of diverse crops in farming communities for enhanced agrobiodiversity and sustainable food systems. The project will focus on developing and testing an agrobiodiversity based seed system model for improved access to good quality planting material of NUS crops in selected agro-ecological zones of Malawi. The research outputs are expected to contribute to strengthening the seed system for NUS crops and enhance farmers’ capacity to produce, distribute quality seed in the target communities.

## Application requirements

- a. Requirements for the position of Master of Science in Agronomy/Plant Breeding /Seed Science/Sustainable Agriculture:
  - i. Qualified Malawian candidates should have BSc Degree in Agronomy, Agriculture, crop science and/or any other relevant agricultural related field (Plant molecular biology/Biotechnology, Horticulture) with GPA of not less than 3.0.
- b. Requirements for the position of Master of Science in Agriculture Extension and Rural Development:
  - i. Qualified Malawian candidates should have BSc Degree in Agriculture extension/ Agribusiness management, Agriculture and/or any other relevant related field with GPA of not less than 3.0.

The Degree MUST have at least credit or equivalent classification from a duly recognized institution.

Those who have already been admitted/enrolled in the stated Masters programs at LUANAR will have an added advantage.

### Stipend and Research Support

The support provides research expenses based on the project budget, tuition fees and candidate upkeep, based on acceptable academic standing and research progress.

### Period of the Scholarship.

The scholarship is for a maximum period of two years. The successful candidates should therefore complete the studies within 24 months.

### Expected outputs

Successful candidates will immediately participate in project activities. The candidates will be required to develop their thesis research proposals and implement it. Expected outputs include thesis, published journal articles, presentation of research findings at scientific fora, locally and globally. The candidate will also assist with coordination of his/her research activities in the targeted project areas: Mzimba, Kasungu, Ntcheu and Chiradzulu.

### Application package

The application must include the following:

- A cover letter
- Certified copy of your first-degree certificate
- Certified copy of your first-degree transcript
- Concept note focusing on the areas highlighted above (2-3 pages' maximum)
- Updated Curriculum Vitae
- Two references from qualified referees (one should be your former research supervisor)

### How to apply.

Interested candidates are asked to submit their hard copy applications before end of business of **6<sup>th</sup> April 2026** to the following address:

**The University Registrar**  
**Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources**  
**P.O Box 219**  
**Lilongwe**

### Electronic Submission

Submission of the hard copy **MUST** be accompanied by full electronic submission of the application package and be emailed as attachment in PDF to [scholarships@luanar.ac.mw](mailto:scholarships@luanar.ac.mw) with copies to [bnddcss@luanar.ac.mw](mailto:bnddcss@luanar.ac.mw), and [ssp@luanar.ac.mw](mailto:ssp@luanar.ac.mw). The subject line for the email should be *application for the post being applied for*.