



**KABALE
UNIVERSITY**

P. O. Box 317, Kabale - Uganda
Plot 364 Block 3 Kikungiri Hill
Kabale Municipality

DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH AND GRANTS

**Guidelines and evaluation framework for
Kabale University Research Grant Proposals
FY 2026/2027**

The online link (<https://grants.kab.ac.ug>) for submission opens on: 15th June 2026

Information Session: 2nd July 2026

See all important timelines on page 16

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Definition of Terms

- **Applied research:** work geared towards acquiring new knowledge that is directly aimed at achieving practical and applicable objectives.
- **Basic research:** experimental or theoretical research whose aim is to generate new knowledge, including alternative theories, analyses, or interpretations.
- **Co-investigator:** a qualified researcher who makes significant contributions to a project's scientific development or execution under the supervision of a principal investigator (PI).
- **Creative Research:** research in the arts such as music, novels, plays, poems, paintings, and sculptures.
- **Innovation:** An innovation is a new or significantly improved product, process, or service that creates value. It involves the practical implementation of new ideas, which can be either completely new or an improvement on something that already exists.
- **Principal Investigator:** the lead researcher who has full responsibility and authority for a research project's intellectual and logistical direction, management, and financial oversight.
- **Protocol:** also known as a **research proposal**, is a guide for research that describes what.
- **Research Agenda:** a declaration of planned research activities during a specified period.
- **Research Assistant:** A team member who performs specific tasks within the project under the PI's supervision.
- **Research Collaborator:** an individual or organization that works with others on a research project, pooling expertise and resources to achieve common goals.
- **Research Contribution:** the original and unique value a study adds to a field by advancing knowledge, solving a problem, or providing new insights.
- **Research Misconduct:** the fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, misappropriation of intellectual property rights of others, or any other misconduct, such as unethical behavior during the research process.
- **Research:** Any type of systematic investigation, testing, and evaluation designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge.
- **Researcher:** A member of the Kabale University community, a visiting scholar, or a collaborator who engages in research.
- **Multidisciplinary research:** A collaborative approach that involves scholars or experts from different academic disciplines working together on a common research problem, pooling their unique knowledge and tools to find comprehensive solutions. This can be inter or intra faculty.
- **Small research projects:** Grants below 70 million UGX.
- **Large research projects:** Grants above 70 million UGX.
- **Community in the context of research and innovation:** A group of people sharing a common geographic location, social identity, or set of interests who

are collectively affected by or stand to benefit from the outcomes of a project. For example, **local communities, vulnerable populations, youth groups, farmers, entrepreneurs, or other stakeholders** whose livelihoods, well-being, or environment stand to improve as a result of the project's outcomes.

1 Introduction

Kabale University is a beneficiary of Uganda Government funding for research and innovation. Since the 2021/2022 financial year, the University Council has allocated between 500 million and one billion shillings annually for this purpose. These funds are managed by the Directorate of Research and Grants and allocated through an open competitive process to Kabale University Staff and students for annual projects. Funds are disbursed to grant recipients in three or more instalments from the Bursar's office, based on contracts agreed between the researchers and the University Secretary.

In the last years, these grants have been allocated on an unrestricted basis, with decisions depending on the quality of proposals, the eligibility of the applicants and feasibility.

During the period 2023/2024, questions began to arise regarding the impact of research funded by the University. In response, several measures were instituted to ensure that allocated grants are impactful and innovative. These measures include:

- a) A decision was made to focus funding and management efforts in the 2024/2025 financial year on completing already issued projects.
- b) A decision was taken to allocate 30% of the budget to support innovations.
- c) To develop a second Kabale University Research and Innovations agenda in the financial year 2024/2025, to give direction on the areas where Kabale University intends to have an impact.

Based on these decisions, no new grants were issued in the period 2024/2025. Furthermore, management decided that 30% of the budget available for research and innovations should be earmarked for Innovations.

2 Objectives

With these guidelines, Kabale University aims to ensure that any future projects funded under the Kabale University Fund for Innovation and Research (KAB-FIR):

- a) Is developed by a team of researchers, preferably from different disciplines
- b) Leads to impactful research and innovations that address significant societal problems
- c) Supports students and early-career staff in conducting research and developing innovations that enhance their academic and professional growth

To achieve this, the following measures are proposed.

3 Grant principles

- i. **A commitment to results and impact:** The project is committed to results and impact. Researchers need to show explicitly how their project addresses the most pressing development issues, and how the findings generated from the research and innovation activities supported by this grant will be used by policy makers, program implementers, targeted communities, or the private sector. Research teams ought to demonstrate attainment of tangible and useful deliverables within 1 year of implementation. Projects that require multi-year funding must also have tangible deliverables for each year of implementation.
- ii. **Equity and inclusion:** Measures will be taken to ensure that all Faculties get the opportunity to benefit from the fund, and DRG will also encourage women researchers and junior faculty to apply. However, equity will not mean equal allocation, because: 1) KAB-RIF aims to fund the best and most impactful research proposals and competition is at the centre of its approach, and 2) the nature, capacity, and cost of research and innovation initiatives differ markedly across disciplines.
- iii. **Multi-disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity:** The development challenges we are seeking to solve require more than the effort of one sector. It is therefore important that researchers demonstrate multi-disciplinary and/or interdisciplinary approaches throughout the research continuum. Multidisciplinary needs to be reflected in contextualising the problems selected, preparation of the technical proposals, and in team composition.
- iv. **Accountability and utilization of funds:** To protect the University's and the researchers' reputation and ensure continuity of this funding, accountability for the RIF will be of utmost importance. All funds disbursed should be accounted for in a timely way and to acceptable standards (both financial and implementation-wise). The DRG will therefore regularly track all awardee performance. Names of researchers with substantial accountability arrears and those who do not utilize allocated funds will be forwarded to the University Management for disciplinary action.
- v. **Utility of innovation structures:** The Kabale University has several innovation and incubation hubs, including the Kabale University Business Incubation Centre (KABBIC), the Regional ICT Innovation Centre, and the MTN Spark Hub. All innovation projects must be registered with KABBIC, and those involving ICT need to additionally register with the relevant ICT innovation Centre.

4 Research grants

Grants will be awarded to Applied Research projects aiming to address significant societal problems, aligned to the University Research Agenda. The projects should clearly articulate the envisioned solutions to those problems in society and/or address the physical and socio-economic environment responsible for their existence. The outputs should be captured in the form of pilots/demonstrations, policy briefs, and publications, which can readily stimulate action by the targeted stakeholders.

5 Research Budgets

Projects for Research Grants are expected to require a minimum of **UGX 70,000,000** to a maximum of **UGX 250,000,000**. Multi-year projects should divide their work and budgets into discrete annual components that can be funded and implemented independently. Budgets presented in the proposal are subject to review.

Researchers can budget for salaries for critical project staff that are not paid by Kabale University or the Government of Uganda e.g., Project Coordinators, Administrative Assistants, Research Officers etc. Regular Personnel costs, excluding field research assistants, should not exceed 33% of the budget. Projects that exceed this threshold will be disqualified. Because of the observation that projects without administrative support tend to be the ones most affected by implementation and accountability delays, projects are strongly advised to include Coordination or Administrative support in their teams. Field research assistants are considered project activity costs. All salaries and all repetitive allowances will be subject to mandatory statutory deductions at source, to pay the relevant taxes.

5.1 Target for Research Grants

KAB-FIR grants primarily target staff and students of Kabale University and therefore, proposals can only be accepted if they are submitted by Research Groups whose composition is primarily (or exclusively) comprised of students and staff of Kabale University. The following conditions apply:

1. The funds for research will only be provided to **multidisciplinary research groups**. **NO INDIVIDUAL** research projects will be considered. The Group must appoint the Principal Investigator and one or more Co-Investigators, who are willing and capable of co-leading the project.
2. The Principal Investigator, appointed by the Research Group, must **be a confirmed full-time staff member of Kabale University**.
3. The project can include other staff on the team, including staff of other institutions, but this must be strongly justified (e.g., the external researchers bringing in necessary expertise that is not available among Kabale University staff, or those who help to leverage additional networks and funding).
4. Project teams should come from different disciplines to effectively address different dimensions of a problem. Proposals addressing a problem from only one discipline must be strongly justified.
5. Project teams must include support for postgraduate students, who collect data for the project and also use it towards their degree programmes.

6 Eligibility Criteria for Research Grants

To be eligible for funding, projects must comply with the following criteria.

6.1 Significance and originality

Projects must demonstrate how they will contribute tangibly to addressing significant societal problems. Each project must clearly articulate the research problem that it intends to address, the methods that will be used, and the envisaged outputs and outcomes. Projects must demonstrate how they will apply the current state of knowledge to generate a solution (or solutions) that consider the complex nature of significant societal problems, and tackle the specific problem from multiple disciplines.

6.2 Potential impact

The project must articulate its envisaged impact in terms of:

- a) **Problem-solving impact:** i.e. how does the solution proposed by the study improve on existing ways of addressing the problem? What are the social, economic, and environmental impacts of the proposed solutions on society?
- b) **Capacity development impact:** (individual, department or faculty level). i.e. how will the research improve on skills, competences, and qualifications as a result of successfully implementing the project? Or any other impact at department or faculty level.
- c) **Communication impact:** i.e. how will the project and its outcomes be used to promote Kabale University? Who is the audience and what is the message?
- d) **Sustainability impact:** i.e. how will the project outcomes be sustained? Are there prospects for attracting complementary or follow-on external funding? Does the project yield new partnerships?

6.3 Contribution to student research

Students participating in research projects benefit in several ways, including:

- a) **Research Sponsorship:** Students receive financial and logistical support for research activities such as field data collection, analysis, and report writing. Project-generated data may also contribute to their dissertations or theses.
- b) **Integration of Student Research Ideas:** Students have the opportunity to incorporate their research interests or ideas into the broader project, thereby fostering creativity, ownership, and innovation in their work.
- c) **Coverage of Research Costs:** Most expenses related to the student's research (e.g. travel, fieldwork, data analysis, and materials) are covered by the project, thereby reducing the financial burden on students.

- d) **Timely Completion of Studies:** Students benefit from structured supervision, mentorship, and access to project resources, which support timely completion of their studies and graduation.
- e) **Skills Development:** Students get hands-on experience and enhance competencies in proposal writing, grant application, research design, data collection and analysis, scientific writing, and project management.
- f) **Exposure to Multidisciplinary Research:** Engagement in research teams exposes students to interdisciplinary and collaborative approaches, broadening their understanding of complex development issues.
- g) **Networking and Mentorship:** Students interact with academic staff, external collaborators, and community or industry partners, expanding their professional networks and benefiting from mentorship opportunities.
- h) **Enhanced Employability:** By participating in practical and impactful research, students gain transferable skills and experience that enhance their competitiveness in the labour market.
- i) **Contribution to Community Development:** Students become active contributors to research that addresses real societal challenges and produces tangible benefits for communities, aligning academic training with the university's development mission.

7 Grants Administration Process for Research Projects

All applications must be submitted using an online form available on the DRG website. The form has different sections as outlined below and this guidance provides notes on what is expected in each section.

Project summary: A concise summary of what the project is about (200)

What problem you are planning to address? *Clearly articulate the problem i.e. the knowledge gap (for research-based projects) or the stakeholder needs (for applied-research projects) or the tools/skills/capacity need (for capacity enhancement projects). (200 Words max)*

What is the proposed solution? *Provide a summary of the proposed solution to address the problem described. This could be a research or capacity enhancement idea. (200 Words max)*

Relevance: *Clearly articulate the relevance of your proposed solution to national priorities, in the National development Plan IV or the SDGs. (300 Words Max.)*

Innovativeness: *What is the innovation in your idea? What is the uniqueness of your proposed idea compared to the way things are currently being done? (200 Words max).*

Objectives: *What is the overall objective of this project? What are the specific objectives (150 Words max)*

Description of the Methods: *Describe the methods you will use to achieve the set objectives.*

For research-based projects, describe with sufficient detail but concisely stated: The (1) study entities/population, (2) Study design, (3) Sample size and Sampling considerations if any, (4) Data collection methods and tools, (5) Variables to be assessed, (6) Analysis to be conducted.

For capacity enhancement projects, describe (1) The type of capacity to be built (Specialised training OR equipment), (2) Description of the content of the ecosystem enhancement activities (i.e. specialized training activities OR specialised equipment to be procured, its installation, specialized training in its use), (3) Utility of the capacities to be built/equipment to be procured after it has been installed, (4) How the research ecosystem and services will change as a result of the specialised capacity-building/equipment (Note: Training in basic research skills or procurement of simple equipment that is routinely needed for research shall not be considered unless it is part of a holistic system upgrade;).

The methods should be feasible, scientifically plausible and technically strong (750 Words max)

Outcomes/Impact/Outreach: *State the primary (Direct) and secondary (Indirect) beneficiaries of this project. State the anticipated outputs of the project (the immediate outputs of the activities of the project) and the outcomes (the outcomes of achieving the results). State the anticipated impact of the project (Note: Impact might not be achievable in one year in which case your one-year project only contributes to it). (250 Words max)*

Knowledge management and Dissemination plan: *Clearly articulate the knowledge management and dissemination plan for your project. Briefly describe the anticipated knowledge products/solutions to be developed from the project and the engagements to be undertaken to promote their uptake by the key audiences. For capacity enhancement projects, describe how the installed capacity will translate into increased/improved research services (250 Words max)*

Potential impact on policy or programs: *Briefly state the potential impact of your project on policy or how programs are implemented or how research is conducted. (250 Words max)*

Scalability: *Describe the potential for scalability of your solution (either scalability as a social venture or public good, a policy, a technical approach, a technology for use, or a commercially viable product). Describe the scaling plan and potential scaling partners (linkage to industry, implementing partners and target user communities or how such linkages will be forged and expanded). Commercial Potential and anticipated patentability (for solutions that lead to commercial products) or ability and clear incentive for wide social/policy impact (for projects that do not lead to commercial value). Scaled research services and outputs for ecosystem-enhancement projects (200 Words max)*

Sustainability: *If your project requires multi-year funding (beyond 1 year) or maintenance of equipment, indicate how the funding will be sustained after the initial year of funding. Indicate how you will leverage resources to take this work and the products from it further (150 Words max)*

Gender Considerations: *Briefly explain how your project will address gender issues and gender balance at all stages. (150 Words max)*

Ethical implications/Environmental Impact: *Does your research involve human subjects? In what ways are human participants involved? What ethical issues are likely to arise from the study and how will they be addressed or monitored? What protections are available for vulnerable groups? What certifications do you intend or have you attained? If your research involves animal subjects, in what ways are animal subjects involved and how will the animals be protected? How will animal welfare be ensured? For research that involves changes to the physical environment, researchers should explain the measures to ensure minimal damage to the environment, and to monitor and act on such damage. (200 Words max)*

Provision for capacity building: *Describe briefly how your project will build capacity for your unit, team members and participating students (250 Words max)*

Declaration of conflict of interest: *Declare if there are any competing interests or conflict of interest. Describe the sources of conflict if any. If there is no conflict of interest, indicate: 'None'. (150 Words max)*

References: *List any key references used (250 Words max)*

8 Appendices For Research Projects

The following appendices must be attached to all research proposals.

8.1 Work plan/Ghantt Chart

Must show the staging of each activity, milestones, and their anticipated dates and the amount of time it is anticipated to take. Activities must be presented chronologically. The work plan should be presented as a GANTT Chart.

8.2 Budget

This should be activity-based and effectively justified. There must be a compelling reason why an item is included in the budget. A budget guideline provided by the DRG must be followed in drafting a budget. and the budget template developed by the DRG must be used.

To note: Budgets applied for funding shall cover a period of one year. Multi-year projects should outline the full project trajectory and total budget but may only request funding for one year at a time.

Allowable budget expenses are research ethical clearance, mapping, data collection, data analysis, innovations, equipment and supplies, registration of intellectual property, printing policy briefs, printing final reports, editing, photocopying and stationery, community-based dissemination, per diem for investigators and Research Assistants, research assistant fees, no more than USD 100 equivalent as a contribution to publication and communication.

Unallowable budget expenses are payment of consultation fees for project teams, salary of PI and team members, travel for conferences, data analysis. Staff on government payroll shall not receive payment for research fees as that would constitute double payment. Research fees for project staff not on government payroll shall be allowed (if these are research assistants, research collaborators from other institutions, administrative assistants, graduate fellows).

8.3 Research Team

- a. Provide a short description of the key investigators, their qualifications, faculty, and what each one of them will be expected to do on the project. Co-Investigators of the same qualification performing the same tasks shall not be allowed.
- b. A list of students engaged in the project, the titles of their research projects, the expected qualification and year of completion should be provided. At least one postgraduate and one undergraduate student shall be attached for purposes of capacity building as part of the research teams.

To Note

1. One cannot be a PI on more than one project. However, a PI may be a team member of one other project at the same time.
2. Applicants shall have a minimum of a master's degree or professional certification from a recognized institution.
3. Selection of students for inclusion in project teams must be open and transparent.
4. The team may include non-teaching staff.
5. The team may include research personnel from other research institutions, industry, government agencies, Civil Society, and businesses.
6. The team members should come from different disciplines (multidisciplinary team) as required to effectively address the needs of the project.
7. The composition of the team must aim to have gender balance

8.4 Additional attachments

- a) Copy of Lead Applicant's National ID
- b) A copy of your letter of confirmation/contract/latest promotion

- c) Abridged CVs of key team members
- d) Participants' Consent Forms to be used in the project
- e) Research instruments/tools
- f) Evidence of faculty support for your project (minute of Faculty Research Committee consideration of the project proposal)

9 Review and Selection Process for Research Projects

The review and selection of projects for funding is conducted in two phases

9.1 Pre-submission process

1. Submission of expression of interest
2. Attendance of the mandatory information session
3. Development of proposal and presentation to the Faculty Research and Grants Committee
4. Submit proposal online <https://grants.kab.ac.ug>

9.2 Post-submission process

1. Funding applications are received by DRG and evaluated for compliance to the set criteria or eligibility check.
2. ONLY proposals that meet submission criteria shall be subjected to independent review by technical experts in the relevant disciplines.
3. Proposals and expert review reports will be reviewed by the Research Grants Technical Review Committee (RGTRC), who will provide an opinion on funding to the Research and Grants Advisory Board (RGAB).
4. RGAB shall make the funding decision.
5. Applicants shall be notified of outcomes at initial screening and RGAB decision. Following the RGAB decision, PIs shall receive a Letter of Grant Award or Regret.
6. If awarded, the PI will be required to submit an Acceptance of Award signed by all investigators on the team.
7. Every approved proposal will be subjected to a financial review, and based on this, the PI will finalise the budget and workplan.
8. Approved final budgets and workplan will form a basis for issuing and signing a research agreement with KAB.
9. The research agreement shall be signed by all co-investigators.

10 Scope of Research

The internal research grants shall support both basic and applied research that aligns with Kabale University's Research and Innovation Agenda and Uganda's national development priorities. Supported research must be impact-oriented, addressing real societal challenges and contributing to sustainable development. Priority shall be given to projects that promote multidisciplinary collaboration, strengthen local research capacity, and generate tangible outcomes.

11 Declaration of Co-funding

Applicants shall declare all sources of co-funding supporting the proposed research. This includes financial, in-kind, or institutional contributions from other organizations or partners. The declaration should specify the source, amount, and purpose of each contribution to ensure transparency and proper assessment of the project's total financial resources.

12 Ownership of Intellectual Property

Refer to the Kabale University Intellectual Property Policy (IPP) 2024, which provides detailed information concerning the management of the University's intellectual property and that of the staff, students, and collaborators of the University.

13 Research Proposal Evaluation Framework and Scoring Matrix

13.1 Preliminary screening

1. Submitted by a Research Group
2. Has a Faculty Research and Grants Committee minute attached.
3. Eligible applicants (Principal investigator (PI) is a confirmed staff member of Kabale University
4. Has a team of Co-PIs (multidisciplinary) and support for student research projects
5. Has submitted a complete set of documents
6. Passes the originality check
7. Alignment with the KAB Research and Innovations Agenda

13.2 Detailed Evaluation

This framework is intended to guide the evaluation of research proposals that are submitted for KAB internal grants and have passed the preliminary screening. It emphasizes the relevance of research, the focus on real problems, the rigorous methodology and impact. The total score shall be 100. Proposals must also demonstrate that at least the PI and Co-PIs attended the mandatory information session.

The following evaluation criteria will be used:

Category	Criterion	Score
1. The problem	Is the problem clearly articulated i.e. the knowledge gap (for research-based projects) or the stakeholder need (for innovation-based projects) or the research capacity gap (for research ecosystem development projects)?	___/10
	Does the problem clearly align to a theme within the priority NDP-IV?	___/5
2. The proposed solution	Is the proposed solution aligned to the problem? Is the proposed solution aligned to the research/innovation needs specified in the Research and Innovations Agenda	___/10
	Is the idea innovative? Does it have the potential to add substantially to knowledge (for research-based projects) or to improve the way things are done (for innovation-based projects) or to enhance research capacity (for ecosystem enhancement projects)	___/5
3. Technical approach and methodology	Are the objectives (either research objectives, or innovation objectives, or ecosystem capacity development objectives) clear and attainable?	___/5
	Is the methodology clearly articulated? Does the methodology have a sound scientific basis? Is the methodology appropriate to the research questions?	___/20
4. Anticipated results/Impact	Is there a clear articulation of results expected from the project (Outputs as well as anticipated outcomes? Note: Impact is optional given the time duration of the projects).	___/5
	Are there clear deliverables to show within 1 year and are the deliverables worth the investment?	___/5
5. Team composition	Does the research team have adequate technical capacity/expertise to execute the project, including multi-disciplinarity where needed?	___/5

	Empowerment: Are women researchers included on the team? Are young faculty included on the team?	___/3
6. Capacity building	Is there provision for capacity building through mentorship of students or young faculty?	___/5
	Does the proposal describe ways in which the capacity of the unit (Department, Institute or Unit) will be strengthened?	___/2
7. Dissemination plan and scalability	Is there a clear articulation of a dissemination plan (for research-based projects) or a scaling plan (for innovation-based projects) or a commercialization plan (for projects with a commercial orientation)?	___/5
	Does the dissemination/scaling plan show anticipated impacts to policy or programs or to society beyond the study?	___/5
8. Feasibility	Is the project viable, implementable, with the potential to have significant milestones within 1 year? Is it ethically and environmentally sound?	___/5
	Is the budget realistic and feasible? Are the budget items rational (i.e. not over-budgeted or under-budgeted)?	___/5
	Total score	___/100

14 IMPORTANT DATES FOR RESEARCH PROJECTS APPLICATION FY 2026/2027

DUE DATES	ACTION
1st June 2026	Issue the call
15 th June 2026	The Application portal opens to receive Expression of interest on https://grants.kab.ac.ug
23rd June 2026	Deadline for receiving Expression of Interest
2nd July 2026	Information session on submitting proposals for all who express interest
14th August 2026	Deadline to submit proposals online https://grants.kab.ac.ug **
21st August 2026	Complete Screening applications for compliance
11th September 2026	Independent reviewer reports completed.
15th September 2026	Research Grants Technical Review Meeting (RGTR) Meeting
24th September 2026	Research and Grants Advisory Board Meeting
29th September 2026	Notification of Grant Award Outcomes
8th October 2026	Letters of acceptance returned to DRG
19th October	Final budgets & workplans submitted
22nd October 2026	Research Grant Agreements issued
1st November 2026	Implementation start

** Faculty Research and Grants Committees should have approved the proposal evidenced by a minute. PIs should be mindful of feedback from the committee in context of technical aspects and the call conditions.