



# UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH GRANT AT MUST: CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

## Project: How Smallholder Farmers in South-western Uganda Cope with Climate Variability

The **Department of Environment and Livelihoods Support Systems, Faculty of Interdisciplinary Studies (FIS)**, MUST, is partnering with **Makerere University Centre for Climate Change Research and Innovations (MUCCRI)** to conduct Climate Change research in South-western Uganda, funded by USAID. The grant will facilitate **fieldwork** for two undergraduate students, culminating in writing excellent dissertations and publications.

### Background

Climate change can no longer be dismissed as a passing fad. Its impacts are pervasive – and the world's poorest – especially living in Sub-Saharan Africa are likely to be worst affected. Smallholder farmers particularly face heavy production losses in periods of prolonged drought and erratic rainfall, especially because the production systems are extractive and dependent on nature. As a consequence, farmers are constantly responding to climate variability/change, either through adaptation or mitigation strategies. Smallholder farmers in South-western (SW) Uganda respond to climate variability – but the strategies employed are poorly understood, anecdotal or undocumented. In this proof-of-concept investigation, we will work with **two undergraduate students in the second year** [looking to start their final year projects] to handle the following related themes [one theme per student]. Under each topic, gender aspects will be explicit.

- 1) Coping with water stress in livestock production systems
- 2) Coping with reduced crop yields in crop production systems: a critical examination of seed safety and agronomic adaptations

### Student Selection Criteria

1. The students must be registered at Mbarara University of Science and Technology, and in the second year. This is to allow sufficient time in the final year to write excellent dissertations. The project will mentor successful candidates in scientific data gathering, analysis and writing.
2. Applications will be accepted from 2<sup>nd</sup> year students offering the following BSc. programmes: Planning and Community Development, Gender and Applied Women Health, Biology.
3. A minimum CGPA of 4.0 to-date is a must.
4. The student must be hard working, self-motivated, and able to work under minimal supervision.

### Application procedures

The successful applicants will work under the supervision of Dr. Ronald Twongyirwe.

The application should include a cover letter and a statement of motivation. **The selected theme (1 or 2) should be clearly indicated.** All applications should be addressed (and submitted) to the Head, Department of Environment and Livelihoods Support Systems, Faculty of Interdisciplinary Studies (FIS), MUST **by 3<sup>rd</sup> May, 2017, 2:00 pm.** Interviews will be conducted soon after the deadline.

Successful applicants will be required to develop their proposals as soon as possible, with data gathering planned for July–August, 2017.