

TU-K PREPARES TEACHING STAFF FOR RESEARCH FUNDING

The National Research Fund (NRF) challenged TU-K teaching staff and researchers on ways to proactively design and strengthen research training.

The NRF is a statutory body under the Ministry of Education established through Science, Technology and Innovation. It is responsible for mobilizing, allocating and managing financial resources in all fields of Science and Technology for the growing economies.

Speaking during a workshop themed “Towards Effective Grantmanship” at TU-K Main Hall, the Commissioner NRF Dr. JPR Ochieng Otero emphasized the importance of Universities and research institutions to introduce and nature research-rich career paths.

In order to attain better research results, Dr. Ochieng asked universities to come up with investments and management models such as availing research resources that attract researcher to respond by writing proposals.

He further added that to ensure researchers are skilled in writing winning proposals that can resource research and training in universities, we need to ensure that our universities provide the required enabling research management environment that encourages researchers to wish to pursue proposal grant writing and do research.

“Universities and research institutions are required to invest in effect research training and management by ensuring research training is managed more effectively, making sure the graduate output is able to compete in the global market place, build skills in other areas beyond the focal discipline and universities must actively engage NRF” he added.

Dr. Ochieng emphasized that universities need to strive to turn supervisors to mentors for research career development, involve fellows in writing of papers and grants, provide career opportunities for fellows and further provide pastoral care and moral support.

The NRF operates strategic funding schemes, some of which are competitive grant awards comprising of training scholarships, postgraduate research fellowship, multidisciplinary research, institutional support grants and support for all conferences all aimed at strengthening the national research capacity.

“Requests for funding process is done by responding to national requests for funding applications (RFA) process. For those who do not follow the RFA process, rarely does the NRF consider their proposals and in cases where they do, the applicants are advised to submit a concept paper or Letter of Intent (LoI) specifying purpose and why they consider their proposal should be funded,” he explained.

All eligible funding application for NRF have to undergo a formal merit review process undertaken by experienced external and independent peer reviewers. The reviewers are selected entirely based on competence of whether they are eminent academicians and researchers, they have a wide experience in academics, research as well as in policy matters, are people of high integrity, they possess wide experience in review of research proposals and grants and possess excellent analytical and writing skills.

Afterwards they provide recommendations to the Board of Trustees of the NRF through its Technical Committee. Lastly, the NRF provides detailed feedback to applicants to assist them improve future applications submitted to NRF or elsewhere.