



CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE IN REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH INNOVATION (CERHI)

Scholarship Policy and Guidelines

November 2018

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BRIEF NARRATIVE SUMMARY OF UNIBEN CERHI

Background

Reproductive health (RH) has been defined as: “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of diseases or infirmity of the reproductive system”. RH addresses the reproductive processes, functions and systems at all stages of life, and includes fertility regulation, safe motherhood, infant and child survival, sexually transmitted disease including HIV/AIDS, and the prevention of unsafe abortion. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that RH accounts for about 20% of the global burden of disease. As a result of its effects on population dynamics, its practice is a central consideration in global development. It was therefore not surprising that five of the eight Millennium Development Goals agreed to by world leaders for promoting global development at the turn of the new Millennium were founded on the principles of RH.

A major development challenge in West Africa is the poor state of reproductive health as evidenced by high rates of fertility, maternal mortality, and unsafe abortion in the region. All of the 15 countries in West Africa have some of the lowest contraceptive prevalence rates and highest population growth rates in the world, a situation which presents huge economic and social burden with adverse consequences for the region’s growth and development. Nigeria as an example currently has the second highest number of maternal deaths, the highest number of infant deaths and the second highest burden of HIV/AIDs in the world. The country also has the highest number of under-aged marriages, gender-based violence, and sex trafficking in Africa. Despite this high burden of reproductive ill-health, Nigeria has yet to integrate RH into its health and educational system due to a deficit of qualified human resources to address this developmental challenge. There are currently limited educational programs that build the capacity of undergraduate and post-graduate students to undertake service delivery and research for the purpose of improving key indicators of RH in the region. There is a need to raise an adequate number of human resources to develop and implement appropriate policies and programs for reducing rapid population growth and advancing growth and development in the region. It is only through such efforts that the region will witness genuine growth and planned comprehensive development anytime soon.

Programme Goal: The Centre of Excellence in Reproductive Health Innovation (CERHI) will build capacity within West Africa’s tertiary educational system for implementing high quality training and applied research for reproductive health professions to tackle policies and programs for reducing the region’s high burden of fertility, unsafe abortion, maternal mortality and HIV/AIDS.

CERHI’S Mission: To implement high quality training and applied research for reproductive health professionals needed to build a new cohort of human resource for reducing the region’s high burden of fertility, unsafe abortion, maternal mortality and HIV/AIDS.

CERHI’S Vision: To be a leading institution providing innovative and transformational changes on matters relating to population and development and the improvement of the living standards of citizens in Africa.

Specific Objectives of the Centre include the

- 1) Training of students and technical experts/policymakers through short courses on relevant fertility, maternal mortality, HIV/AIDS and reproductive health policy topics in the region.
- 2) Training of Masters in reproductive health, public health, health economics and nursing.
- 3) Training of PhDs in reproductive health, public health, and nursing.
- 4) Development of regional laboratory capacity to support HIV/AIDS and other reproductive health related problems.

Methodology: Under CERHI, short term courses, Masters and PhD courses of study in RH, public health, nursing, health economics, and reproductive health law will be re-designed and reviewed at 3 levels: first by the individual departments, followed by a curriculum review workshop involving regional, selected international partners and industry stakeholders and sector planners which is a novel approach to curriculum development. Finally, the Departments will team up with identified international partner institutions to finalize the curricula and the Center will then be responsible for coordinating the execution of these novel programs. The idea is to ensure that the curricular meet specific regional development needs, and that they are relevant globally to resource limited settings and are of sufficient quality they can be accredited by international accreditation bodies. Through CERHI's regional and international collaborations the best of the region's resources will be brought together making it a true Centre of excellence in the discipline of reproductive health. New applied research methodologies will also be developed and staff will be trained to use both the curricular as well as these methodologies. Faculty and students will be recruited from the West African region to build regional capacity and collaboration.

Statement on Expected Outcome and Impact: The University of Benin strongly believes that CERHI will make significant contributions to improving the quality of training of reproductive health professionals in West Africa through improving training, applied research and research infrastructure. This center will implement new short courses, masters degrees and PhD degrees in public health, nursing, reproductive health and health economics. Within the university, the academic approval system has fast tracked the center processes by designating individuals devoted to center related tasks allowing rapid development of the center. A key strategy to this is pooling resources from partner institutions for sensible and cost-effective use of faculty for teaching and student thesis mentorship. These partnerships between national, regional and international institutions will distinguish the Centre ensuring that it makes a sustainable contribution to reducing the present high rates of fertility, maternal mortality, unsafe abortion and HIV/AIDS in the region.

Key Outputs for CERHI's activities

The Key Outputs for CERHI's activities include the following:

1. New Masters and PhDs programmes in reproductive health, public health, nursing

- and health economics
2. Staff and students participating in outreach experience into the private sector and other regional partners
 3. Delivery of short courses on reproductive health related topics.
 4. Formation of regional partnerships to increase regional faculty and students at the center
 5. Increased academic productivity by center student and faculty through academic paper output and research grant applications

2. General Principles of Scholarship Provision:

These general principles are to be used for all scholarship funds held by the Centre of Excellence in Reproductive Health Innovation.

First and foremost, we reiterate that we are an open community. We view female inclusion and international participation as cornerstones to our work. We actively seek to include people from across the world, as both students and faculty, and have over the last four years offered a scholarship program to assist regional and national students who might not otherwise be able to attend. CERHI uses “transparency,” broadly, to refer to both openness and transparency; and CERHI maintains an equal commitment to both.

The purpose of these scholarships is to assist recipients with their postgraduate training at the Centre of Excellence in Reproductive Health Innovation in University of Benin.

Scholarship awards are intended to cover the full cost of school for any applicant. The amount of money available would be determined by the Scholarship Committee.

The CERHI Scholarship Committee consisting of four members of the Project Management Committee has been established. The Project Management Committee shall annually ratify members of this committee.

Scholarships shall be advertised every academic session via handbills, CERHI and University of Benin websites, emails of partners, radio and television jingles, daily newspapers, CERHI social media handles like twitter, facebook and instagram etc.

2.1- Principles Guiding Awards for Specific Scholarship Funds:

CERHI being a reproductive health program, gender is being systematically and strongly mainstreamed into the workings of the Centre. Gender inequality and inequity is at the root of the reproductive health challenges facing the West and Central African region. We believe very strongly that very little progress will be made anytime soon unless women are included and positioned in leadership for decision and policy making relating to reproductive health in the region. Thus, CERHI has decided to integrate gender in its processes and mechanisms ensuring good representation of women in the students’ intake as well as staffing of the center.

CERHI currently has 55% of its students being female students. We shall sustain this proportion through strategic advertisement for female students from the region. Being a course that is so gender specific, we believe we will have no difficulty in ensuring that this happens. Full scholarship shall be offered to regional female students to attend courses in CERHI. We will continue this policy and even improve on it through seeking grants from regional industries and international funding agencies to support the training of female students in CERHI.

The Centre of Excellence in Reproductive Health Innovation currently holds three (3) scholarship funds.

- 1. Postgraduate Scholarship:** This scholarship can only be awarded to a regional postgraduate student each year. Postgraduate scholarship awards are designated as tuition only and will be paid directly to the recipient's institution account (Centre of Excellence in Reproductive Health Innovation) upon verification of acceptance.

Also, this scholarship includes a monthly stipend which would be paid directly into the recipient's bank account for any legitimate postgraduate education expenses including books, travel, etc.

The scholarship covers the approved fees of the program.

- 2. Accommodation Scholarship:** This scholarship can only be awarded to a regional postgraduate student each year. Accommodation scholarship awards are designated as accommodation only and will be paid directly to the recipient's institution's accommodation account (CERHI Hostel) upon verification of acceptance. Females are considered first.
- 3. Internship Scholarship:** This scholarship can only be awarded to a postgraduate student once. All postgraduate students (both regional and national) of the Centre of Excellence in Reproductive Health Innovation are eligible for this scholarship award. Internship scholarship awards are designated as internship only and will be paid into the recipient's account for the sole purpose of the one-month internship which is compulsory for every student. The scholarship covers travel, feeding and local transport. The amount to be paid to each student will be determined by the student's Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA), which determines the location of the student's internship (regional, national or local).
- 4. Research Scholarship:** This scholarship can only be awarded to PhD postgraduate students and faculty (either as a group or individual). All postgraduate students (both regional and national) and faculty of the Centre of Excellence in Reproductive Health Innovation are eligible for this scholarship award based on only **novel** research work. Research scholarship awards will be paid into the recipient's account. The scholarship covers field work, research assistants' stipends and data collection. Students and faculty are encouraged to publish their research work and the cost of the publication and conference attendance is covered by the centre.

2.2- Housekeeping Procedures:

As early as possible in the new academic year, the members of the Scholarship Committee shall be made aware of the policy and guidelines, of the amount of funds available, and whether there are any restrictions on the amount available for the current year. The committee will make this information available to the Project Management Committee.

A first meeting of the committee shall be held as early as possible at the beginning of an academic year either in person or by electronic media, in order.

Forms and applications should be made available to interested students by [Deadline Date]. The Communication Officer will make applications available to regional students for the Postgraduate, Accommodation and Internship Scholarship via social media platforms, electronic media, etc.

Complete applications should be returned to the Secretariat by [Deadline Date].

The committee then meets to review the applications and then make their decision.

3. Selection Criteria and Recommendations

The goal is to award all qualified applicants, not to have to choose according to their “need” or “merit”.

The criteria include the following:

1. A completed application including application form, two letters of recommendation, a personal essay and official transcript.
2. The applicant must be from any African country besides Nigeria.
3. The applicant must meet up with the admission requirements of the program applied for. Check admission requirements below.

MSc Reproductive Health

First Degree from a University recognized by the University of Benin in Medicine, Health, Natural and Applied Sciences. with a minimum of Second Class Honours.

PhD Reproductive Health

MSc in Health Sciences or MPH from Universities recognized by the University of Benin.

MPH Public Health (with specialization in Reproductive & Family Health)

A First Degree in a Health related Science not below second class.

PhD in Public Health (with specialization in Reproductive & Family Health)

A Master Degree in Public Health or fields related to reproductive & Family Health

MSc Nursing Science (Reproductive Health)

First Degree in Nursing Sciences with a minimum of Second Class.

PhD Nursing Science (Reproductive Health)

An MSc Degree in Nursing Science with a weighted score of 60%.

MSc Health Economics (Reproductive and Child Health)

- a). A Postgraduate Diploma in Economics related courses
- b). A First Degree in Economics and relevant disciplines with a minimum of Second Class Lower Division

PhD Health Economics (Reproductive and Child Health)

MSc Health Economics

I. A Candidate for Postgraduate studies in the University of Benin must have obtained at least five (5) credits in WASC, NECO, GCE (ordinary level or their equivalents)

NOTE: A CREDIT PASS IN MATHS AND ENGLISH IS REQUIRED

II. A holder of a pass (Degree/Diploma) is not qualified for admission into the Postgraduate programme of the University of Benin. In addition, all holders of 3rd Class degree must possess PGD to be considered for admission into Masters programmes.

III. A candidate who obtained Master's degree but with weighted Average Score (WAS) between 55.0-59% can only be considered for admission into the M.Phil Programme in the first instance.

IV. A candidate applying for the PhD in any programme of the University of Benin must have obtained a minimum of 60% in the Master's Degree.

V. A candidate applying for the PhD with Master's Degree from any other University who in his/her Master's study has not previously taken the compulsory courses or their equivalents similar to the ones in the University of Benin shall on admission be required to offer and pass such courses with a minimum of 60%.

- 4. The applicant must possess an international passport.
- 5. The applicant must have been given admission into the university of Benin or is a faculty of CERHI

The scholarship awards should be determined by the amount the Scholarship Committee recommends.

Instructions to Scholarship Applicants:

- 1. Read the guidelines carefully.
- 2. Submit a personal statement/essay of no more than three typewritten pages that reflects your goals, motivation, reasons why you should be awarded the scholarship and an introduction of yourself to the committee who will review your application.
- 3. All application forms and materials should be typed.
- 4. Deliver your application and required materials to:

The Program Manager
Centre of Excellence in Reproductive Health Innovation
University of Benin
Benin City

OR via mail to: info@cerhi.uniben.edu

This application should be delivered on or before [Deadline Date for the advertised academic session] of any calendar year.

5. An official transcript(s) should be delivered to:

The Secretary
School of Postgraduate Studies
University of Benin
Benin City

This official transcript(s) should be delivered on or before the closing date of application [Closing Deadline Date].

Application Forms:

1. Application forms will be available after [Date] each year. All applications must be returned to the Centre of Excellence in Reproductive Health Innovation or sent via mail to info@cerhi.uniben.edu on or before [Deadline Date] of the same year. Applicants will be notified of awards after [Date] of the same year.
2. A new application form and required materials must be submitted each time the applicant applies for these scholarships.
 - a. If a previously unsuccessful candidate wishes reconsideration, he/she must meet the application criteria and include a statement of interim progress.

Accompanying Forms:

1. Each application must be accompanied by a personal essay/statement, not to exceed three typewritten pages, which must include the education goals of the applicant, motivation, why the applicant feels he/she should receive the scholarship, and a personal profile of introduction. Applicants are encouraged to submit other materials, which they consider relevant.
2. Each application must have two written recommendations to be mailed directly to the Centre of Excellence in Reproductive Health Innovation or sent via mail to info@cerhi.uniben.edu. The recommendation shall include:
 - a. Recommendation from a University professor.
 - b. Recommendation from an employer.
3. A recent official transcript.
4. All parts of the application must be received at the Centre of Excellence in Reproductive Health Innovation or sent via mail to info@cerhi.uniben.edu on or before [Deadline Date will be shared with each academic year's advert].

Appendix 1: Scholarship Application Form

For Office Use Only:	
Decision:	Application Status:
Amount:	Place Accepted:
Date of Receipt:	Deposit Paid:
Initials:	

2020 – 2021 International Excellence Scholarship Application

For Office Use Only:		
Title	Last Name	First Name(s)
D.O.B	E-Mail:	Telephone:
Country:		Student ID:
Please Circle the level of course you are applying for:		
MSc, PhD		
<u>Course Name:</u>		
How did you hear about CERHI, University of Benin?		
Please provide us with three reasons for choosing/applying to CERHI, University of Benin:		
1.		
2.		
3.		

How will CERHI, University of Benin benefit from having you on the course (max. 500 words)?	
Please explain why you should be awarded an International Excellence Scholarship (max. 1000 words please continue on a separate sheet if required):	
If you have been offered scholarships from other universities, please give the name and amount here:	Agent Name (if applicable):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please attach a transcript detailing your courses and grades. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please read Regulations and conditions below. • The Deadline for scholarship application is 2nd December 2020 • Please return the Application form to: info@cerhi.uniben.edu 	

ELIGIBILITY, TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. Applicants must be from African countries except Nigeria.
2. Scholarships will be used to offset tuition fees.
3. Applicants must be enrolling on an eligible course at CERHI for the first time.
4. Awards are available for the two years only of Masters degree and three years for PhD degree programme.
5. Applicants must have completed an application for a place to study at CERHI which must have been received by the Admissions Office before the deadline of application.

6. Successful candidates will be informed 1 month after their application. Candidates must confirm acceptance of their scholarship within 2 weeks of receiving the news.
7. The International Scholarship Committee may use whatever means of assessment it thinks most appropriate in order to determine which candidates are worthy of recommendation for the award of a scholarship.
8. Scholarship holders, having accepted an award, are reasonably expected to co-operate in University of Benin recruitment activities and automatically agree to their names and details being released by the University's International Development Office for marketing purposes.
9. If it is deemed necessary for a Scholarship holder to suspend their studies, the scholarship will be held on university account and carried forward to the year of resumption of studies and the candidate will be expected to pay their personal contribution on a pro-rata basis.
10. If in the view of the appropriate Head of School, a Scholarship holder's progress is deemed to be unsatisfactory, the Scholarship may be withdrawn. A Scholarship may also be withdrawn on grounds of failure to comply with any of the conditions attached to the Award. The candidate may be required to repay to the University any award which has been made, either in whole or in part, as determined by the Committee. If the scholar feels that such a withdrawal is unjustified s/he may appeal in writing to the Head of the International Development Office within 15 working days of the date of notification.
11. The International Development Office reserves the right to make, amend, withdraw, suspend or cancel without notice these and such other Regulations as may be in force from time to time and such decisions shall be final.

Appendix 2:

FORMAT FOR SUBMITTING RESEARCH PROPOSALS

- 1) Covering page – to include project title, Project dates, Total Amount of funds being requested (in Naira) and address of Coordinator of the project team
- 2) Page 2 – list team members, and their specific roles in the project. To include international and regional partner institutions
- 3) Project Abstract – not more than ½ page to include brief background, goal and objectives, summary of project methods, and expected outcomes
- 4) Project Justification – ½ page
- 5) Literature review – 1 page

- 6) Goal of the project – limit to one sentence only
- 7) Specific Objectives of the project – Not more than 4 specific objectives
- 8) Project methods – describe in detail how each objective would be achieved. Activities should be described in detail, and should be numbered consecutively: 4-6 pages
- 9) Project Administration. Describe how the project will be managed – ½ page
- 10) Monitoring and Evaluation. Describe how the project will be monitored and evaluated – ½ page
- 11) Time Line – a minimum of 6 months and a maximum of a one year projects are envisaged. Possibly, a Gant Chart should be used to present the timeline.
- 12) Expected project Outcomes. Identify at least 5 indicators for measuring the success of the project. ½ page
- 13) Masters and PhD Students to be trained under the project – Please, list provide specific names of students and project titles.
- 14) Detailed Budget, with justification for every item listed. Budget line items should include: 1) External personnel/Consultants (not for individual researchers); project activities; Data management; Communication/Transportation; and Report Writing and Publication fees. Although budget should be presented in Naira, where specific international project collaboration is required, such details should be presented in dollars.