



UNIVERSITY *of*
RWANDA



Laidlaw Scholars
Undergraduate Research and Leadership Programme

**Laidlaw Undergraduate Research and Leadership Scholarship
Programme in the University of Rwanda**

Concept Note

Kigali, May 2019

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Laidlaw Undergraduate Research and Leadership Scholarship Programme in the University of Rwanda

1. Vision of the Laidlaw Scholarship Programme



Lord Laidlaw of Rothiemay

The long-term vision for the *Laidlaw Scholarship* is to create a wide-reaching and diverse international network of leaders who will reinvest their skills, knowledge and experience to help students, peers and colleagues.

The Laidlaw Scholarship¹ owes both its name and existence to Lord Laidlaw of Rothiemay. It was his vision and unswerving commitment to student development that led to the founding of this unique programme. Following a £9 million investment into the Laidlaw Library at the University of Leeds, where Lord Laidlaw was an undergraduate in the 1960s, the university became the first to deliver the Laidlaw Scholarship in 2014. Since then it has gone from strength to strength.

2. Aim of the Laidlaw Scholarship Programme

The *Laidlaw Undergraduate Research and Leadership Scholarship* equips self-motivated and ambitious undergraduate students with the knowledge and skills to become future leaders in their chosen fields.

More specifically, this unique scholarship program helps today's exceptional undergraduates develop the right blend of knowledge and experience to fulfil their true potential in whatever career they choose.

3. Implementation of the Undergraduate Laidlaw Research and Leadership Scholarship Programme in the University of Rwanda

In 2019, the University of Rwanda has been selected to be part of The Laidlaw Undergraduate Research and Leadership Scholarship Programme, joining a network of leading research-intensive universities where the programme is already implemented. This is part of the long-term vision for the scholarship to create a wide-reaching and diverse network of international scholars who will reinvest their knowledge,

¹ For more information about the Laidlaw Scholarship Program, please visit <https://laidlawscholars.com/>

skills and experiences amongst their peers, colleagues and networks. The Network of leading universities includes: *University of Columbia, Durham University, National University of Singapore, Trinity College Dublin, Tufts University, University College London, The University of Hong Kong, University of Leeds, University of Oxford, University of St Andrews, University of Toronto, University of York.*

4. The three pillars of the Laidlaw Scholarship Programme

The Laidlaw Scholar Program provides opportunity to highly motivated and talented students to gain a variety of knowledge, skills, and attitude building on three strong pillars, namely *research, leadership training, and networking.*

Research

The programme enables students to complete two fully funded six-week periods of intensive research in the summer holidays of their first and second years of study. Students can choose a summer project from the list that is published by researchers and academic staff attached to the various schools and centres. These usually form part of a larger research project that the supervisors are running. Alternatively, students can apply for any project that interests them - it does not even have to relate to their current area of study. However the key criteria for that project must be met – these are listed on the University of Rwanda College of Science and Technology Website. Students are requested to find a suitable member of academic staff to supervise them.

Leadership training

Laidlaw Scholars will attend a series of meetings – some during the summer sessions and some during the second year – which will provide training on leadership skills and attributes that can be used in a variety of settings. These meetings may take the form of workshops, trainings, retreats, and events with guest speakers, as well as mentoring opportunities between past and present Laidlaw Scholars.

Networking

Participation in the scholarship provides the opportunity to develop a network of academics and fellow scholars, past and present. Working on the research project will offer the opportunity to connect and learn from academics in a collaborative and supportive environment. Involvement in the leadership training provides the chance to meet and learn from leadership experts whilst developing communication and networking skills with fellow scholars. Seminars and university events throughout

the scholarship present the opportunity to connect with scholars from different faculties, universities and countries.

5. Expected outcomes and impact of the Laidlaw Scholarship Programme

Building on the success and momentum of the Undergraduate Laidlaw Research and Leadership Scholarship Programme in various universities in the world, the University of Rwanda is expected to benefit a lot from the programme in the following areas:

Strengthening of UR graduate attributes

The University of Rwanda (UR) has developed a set of ten graduate attributes that are part of the expected learning outcomes from all the programmes run by the University. They have been developed in line with UR's statement and concept in which the University strives to "*support the development of Rwanda by discovering and advancing knowledge, by being committed to the highest standards of academic excellence, and by creating a place where students are prepared for lives of service, leadership and solutions*"². This is also in line with UR's vision "*to be a leading University that develops highly enterprising graduates prepared and dedicated to building a more just and sustainable society locally, nationally and globally, with appropriate innovations that advance quality of life*"³.

UR Graduate Attributes



² UR Statement and Concept: <https://ur.ac.rw/?UR-Statement-and-Concept>

³ UR Vision and Mission: <https://ur.ac.rw/?Vision-and-Mission>

Supporting the overall objectives of a Challenge-Driven Education (CDE)

The UR College of Science and Technology has embarked into a process of integrating the concept of Challenge-Driven Education (CDE) with the aim of allowing the University education to incorporate societal needs that strengthen learning outcomes and render graduate skills suitable for the labour market. In the context of CDE, students are expected to work on specific challenges and trained to develop solutions with focus on sustainability.

Overall expectation from the Laidlaw Scholarship Programme

Based on the objectives under each of its three pillars, there is strong expectation that the Laidlaw Scholarship Program will support UR's vision and mission statement while helping to equip its students with the right knowledge, skills and attitudes that are in line with UR Graduates Attributes.

The University of Rwanda wishes to leverage the opportunity offered by the Laidlaw Research and Leadership Scholarship Program to allow its talented students to work on projects that train them to provide sustainable solutions to societal challenges. Emphasis will also be put on building the next generation of responsible leaders ready to contribute to the achievement of the sustainable development goals. The program is also expected to equip students with core 21st century skills such as critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration.