



## Malawi-Liverpool-Wellcome Programme (MLW) PhD Training Opportunity Call for Applications: PhD Studentship

### **Choice of Anti-Malarial drugs for chemoPrevention (CHAMP Drug Trial)**

The Malawi-Liverpool-Wellcome Trust Programme (MLW) is a leading international centre for research, training, and capacity strengthening, jointly led by Malawian and international scientists. Our mission is to generate high-quality evidence to improve health outcomes in Malawi and the wider region.

MLW has a distinctive translational research portfolio that links laboratory science, clinical trials, population-based research, and policy engagement. Research activities are organised across six thematic areas:

1. Infection Biology
2. Maternal, Neonatal, and Child Health
3. Clinical and Experimental Medicine
4. Vaccines
5. Population Health
6. Social Science

Researchers are organised into 22 active research groups. More information is available at: <https://www.mlw.mw>

### **Background and Rationale**

Malawi has committed to eliminating malaria by 2030. Achieving this goal is increasingly challenged by:

1. The growing threat of antimalarial drug resistance, including reduced efficacy of current first-line therapies.
2. Persistent and heterogeneous malaria transmission, influenced by climate variability, intervention coverage, and parasite-vector dynamics.

Seasonal malaria chemoprevention (SMC) and other preventive drug strategies offer promising tools for reducing malaria burden in high-risk populations. However, evidence is urgently needed to guide optimal drug choice, deployment strategies, and long-term effectiveness in the Malawian context.

### **The CHAMP Drug Trial**

Choice of Anti-Malarial drugs for chemoPrevention (CHAMP Drug) trial is a large, factorial, randomised controlled trial designed to evaluate alternative antimalarial drugs and combinations for chemoprevention in children. The trial is embedded within Malawi's national malaria control priorities and is conducted in close collaboration with the National Malaria Control Programme (NMCP).

CHAMP Drug provides a unique platform for high-impact doctoral research combining clinical trial data, epidemiology, and advanced analytical methods.

### **PhD Studentship Opportunity**

MLW invites applications from highly motivated candidates for a fully funded PhD studentship embedded within the CHAMP Drug trial and hosted in the Infectious Disease Epidemiology Group (Malaria Group) at MLW, with registration at the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine.

### **PhD Research Focus**

The successful candidate will develop a doctoral project aligned with the CHAMP Drug trial, which may include:

- Evaluation of the effectiveness of alternative antimalarial drugs and combinations for chemoprevention
- Analysis of clinical malaria, hospitalisation, and safety outcomes in children
- Assessment of heterogeneity of chemoprevention impact across space and time
- Integration of trial data with routine surveillance and contextual covariates (e.g. climate, transmission intensity)
- Generating policy-relevant evidence to inform malaria prevention strategies in Malawi

The exact PhD research questions will be refined jointly by the student and supervisory team.

### **Ideal Candidate Profile**

Applicants should meet the following criteria:

- A medical degree (MBBS or equivalent)
- MSc (or equivalent) in Epidemiology, Biostatistics, Public Health, Medicine, Pharmacy, Health Sciences, or a related quantitative discipline
- Strong interest in malaria research, clinical trials, or infectious disease epidemiology
- Demonstrated ability to work with quantitative data (e.g. R, Stata, or similar statistical software)
- Excellent analytical, writing, and communication skills
- Strong motivation to pursue a research-focused academic or policy-oriented career
- Eligibility for PhD registration at the host university

Prior experience with clinical trial data, malaria research, or modelling is an advantage.

### **What We Offer**

- A fully funded PhD studentship (fees, stipend, and research support, aligned with MLW PhD training packages)
- Close mentorship from LSTM/MLW-based supervisors and international collaborators
- Direct engagement with the National Malaria Control Programme (NMCP)
- Access to high-quality clinical trial and surveillance datasets
- Opportunities for capacity development, short courses, and international collaborations
- Support for publications and conference presentations
- A strong platform for post-PhD academic or policy careers

### **Application Process**

Interested candidates should submit the following documents by email to [training@mlw.mw](mailto:training@mlw.mw) with the subject line:

#### **“CHAMP Drug PhD Application – [Your Name]”**

1. A motivation letter (max. 2 pages) outlining your background, research interests, and career aspirations
2. An updated CV, including academic achievements and research experience
3. Certified copies of academic certificates and transcripts

For informal enquiries, please contact: [training@mlw.mw](mailto:training@mlw.mw) The deadline for application is 1 Feb 2026