

EDITORIAL POLICY

MALAWI JOURNAL OF POLITICS AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS (MJPPA)

**POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION & DEPARTMENT OF POLITICS
AND GOVERNMENT, SCHOOL OF LAW, ECONOMICS AND
GOVERNMENT, UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI**



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This document serves as a comprehensive guide for the *Malawi Journal of Politics and Public Affairs (MJPPA)*, detailing its editorial policy. This policy was developed in consultation with the Department of Politics and Government at the University of Malawi (UNIMA) and the Political Science Association (PSA) of Malawi, and it is intended to formalize the journal's operations and meet the rigorous academic publication standards of UNIMA and the global scholarly community.

The MJPPA is a product of a long-standing and fruitful collaboration between the University of Malawi and the Political Science Association (See attached an MoU signed in June 2025). The Political Science Association (PSA) is a legally registered, non-partisan professional body established under the Trustees Incorporation Act. It boasts a diverse membership of academics and professionals dedicated to the study and advancement of political science, political philosophy, public administration, international relations, peace and security, public law, and political economy. The purpose of PSA is to contribute to the political and socio-economic development of Malawi by promoting the study and analysis of politics through research, advocacy, and policy dialogue. As stated in its constitution, PSA is a nonpartisan entity that does not take positions on partisan matters; however, it reserves the right to advocate for academic freedom when it perceives such freedoms are threatened.

The PSA actively engages in a wide array of activities to fulfill its mandate. These include organizing webinars and biennial conferences to foster scholarly debate; observing and providing expert analysis of elections, as was done during the 2025 General Elections; publishing the MJPPA; and collaborating on policy-relevant projects, such as the 2025 General Elections Book project with the Institute for Policy Interaction (IPI) and the National Initiative for Civic Education (NICE). The Association is an institutional member of the International Political Science Association (IPSA) and works closely with the African Association of Political Science (AAPS). It also invests in the future of the discipline by promoting the activities of Political Science student associations in Malawian educational institutions and by providing capacity-strengthening training for its members. The first issue of the Malawi Journal of Politics and Public Affairs was launched on 24th May 2025, and the journal is published in collaboration with the Department of Politics and Government of the University of Malawi.

This document is structured into various sections, including the journal's name, editorial team, aims and scope, editorial policy, publishing policies, submission guidelines, evaluation form, terms of reference for editorial board members, other research and scholarly activities, and a graduate mentorship program.

2.0 NAME OF THE JOURNAL

The journal shall be known as the "**Malawi Journal of Politics and Public Affairs (MJPPA)**." This title has been selected to clearly delineate its primary focus. The name "Malawi Journal" anchors the journal in the specific political, social, and historical context of Malawi, acknowledging the rich and complex political landscape of the nation. By including "Public

Affairs" in the title, the journal signals its commitment to bridging the gap between theoretical political science and its practical application in governance, policy, and public administration. The phrase "Public Affairs" encompasses a broader spectrum than just politics, including the study of public policy, administration, and the interactions between the state, civil society, and citizens.

The name is a direct reflection of the journal's core mission: to be the premier outlet for rigorous, evidence-based scholarship on Malawian politics and public affairs while remaining open to comparative and global perspectives that enrich this understanding. The inclusion of both "Politics" and "Public Affairs" ensures the journal is not narrowly defined, but rather serves as a platform for a wide range of scholarly and practice-oriented work.

To affirm its commitment to international scholarly standards, the Malawi Journal of Politics and Public Affairs (MJPPA) has been formally registered with the International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) system. The journal's print version is identified by **ISSN 3105-224X**, while its online version carries the **ISSN 3105-2258**, ensuring global discoverability and proper citation.

3.0 EDITORIAL TEAM

The editorial team is composed of esteemed scholars and practitioners with deep expertise in political science and public affairs. Their collective experience ensures the journal maintains the highest standards of academic rigor and relevance.

Chief Editors

- Prof. Happy Kayuni, *Professor of Political Science, University of Malawi* (hkayuni@unima.ac.mw)
- Dr. Boniface Dulani, *Associate Professor of Political Science, University of Malawi; Director of Surveys at Afrobarometer* (bdulani@unima.ac.mw)

Editorial Advisor

- Prof. Blessings Chinsinga, *Professor of Political Economy, African School of Governance, Rwanda*

Editorial Board

- Dr. Margaret Sikwese, *Novo Habitus Consulting*
- Prof. Asiyati Chiweza, *University of Malawi*
- Prof. Ragnhild Muriaas, *University of Bergen*
- Dr. Kim Yi Dionne, *University of California, Riverside*
- Dr. Felix Lombe, *African Institute of Corporate Citizenship*
- Dr. Henry Chingaipe, *Institute for Policy Research and Social Empowerment*
- Dr. Toendepi Shonhe, *University of South Africa*

4.0 AIMS AND SCOPE

Published by the Political Science Association of Malawi (PSA) in collaboration with the Department of Politics and Government at the University of Malawi, the Malawi Journal of Politics and Public Affairs (MJPPA) is a premier peer-reviewed journal dedicated to advancing critical scholarship and informed debate on political science and public affairs in Malawi and the global context. The journal aspires to contribute to the advancement of academic research, teaching, and public policy, making it an essential resource for scholars, researchers, students, policymakers, and practitioners in both public and private spheres.

The specific aims of the journal are to:

1. Generate ideas that stimulate critical debate and discussion in the field of political science and public affairs in Malawi and other polities.
2. Bridge the gap between theory and practice through applied research that links academic insights with practical policy implications.
3. Identify and analyze contemporary challenges and problems in Malawian society and their implications for politics and public affairs.
4. Provide critical insights into current trends and best practices in political science and public affairs.

4.1 Scope

The journal primarily focuses on evidence-based research and articles in the fields of politics and public affairs. It encourages interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary submissions, recognizing that political and public affairs issues are best understood from diverse analytical perspectives.

Manuscripts submitted to the journal undergo a rigorous double-blind peer-review process, and authors must strictly adhere to the formatting guidelines provided to have their work accepted.

5.0 EDITORIAL POLICY

The Malawi Journal of Politics and Public Affairs review process is aimed at ensuring that original, quality manuscripts that contribute to knowledge are published. Our reviewers play a crucial role in ensuring that the manuscripts published in the journal are of a high standard.

5.1 Initial Manuscript Evaluation

At this stage, all submitted manuscripts are evaluated by the editorial team. Manuscripts that do not fulfill the minimum criteria are rejected. Typically, manuscripts rejected at this stage are those that demonstrate a lack of originality, have methodological flaws that are serious in nature, possess poor grammar, or fall outside the aims and scope of the Journal. Authors whose manuscripts are not accepted during the initial stage will generally be informed of this outcome within three weeks of submission.

Manuscripts that meet the minimum criteria are then subjected to a rigorous review process by at least two experienced reviewers who have been selected based on their expertise in the relevant

subject matter. This approach ensures that only the most comprehensive and insightful feedback is provided, resulting in the highest quality output.

5.2 Double-Blind Peer Review

The Journal operates on the principle of double-blind peer review where the author remains anonymous to the reviewers and vice-versa. The articles are reviewed using the following criteria:

- The importance and originality of the content
- Contribution to knowledge
- Methodological competence
- Quality of language
- Suitability with the Journal's scope

The Reviewers can make any of the following recommendations:

- Accept the manuscript.
- Suggest minor revisions.
- Recommend major revisions.
- Reject the manuscript.

The author will be notified of the outcome of their manuscript submission, along with comprehensive feedback from the referees regarding its acceptance or rejection.

When an author receives a request to revise and resubmit a manuscript, it is expected that they complete the revisions within a three-month timeframe. The revised version should address any comments or concerns raised by the reviewers, and it is important for the author to clearly indicate where changes have been made. To facilitate this process, it is recommended that a separate table or matrix be included, outlining the specific issues addressed and the corresponding page numbers from the manuscript.

Once the revisions have been completed, the author should submit the revised manuscript to the Chief Editors for further review. It is essential that the revised version is of high quality and meets the standards set forth by the publishing guidelines. By adhering to these guidelines, we can ensure that the final product is of the utmost quality and reflects positively on all parties involved.

5.3 Publication of Manuscripts

Once a manuscript has been accepted for publication, the editorial staff takes on the task of preparing it for print. This process is comprised of two main components: language editing and author review. The manuscript is first subjected to language editing, after which it is returned to the author for review. The Chief Editors then provide the author with a set of galley proofs to review for any typographical errors within a five-day window. The entire process, from manuscript receipt to final printing, typically takes approximately 15 weeks.

6.0 PUBLISHING POLICIES

6.1 Research Integrity

The Malawi Journal of Politics and Public Affairs is committed to maintaining the utmost ethical standards in all of its publications. Our rigorous review process is designed to ensure the integrity and credibility of the journal's content, and to uphold the highest standards of academic excellence.

6.2 Plagiarism

The Malawi Journal of Politics and Public Affairs strongly opposes plagiarism in all forms, including failure to give credit for someone else's work or submitting duplicate publications. To ensure that all published materials are plagiarism-free, every manuscript is thoroughly checked with plagiarism detection software. If any plagiarism is detected, the manuscript is rejected. In the rare case that plagiarism is detected after publication, the manuscript is retracted, and an official communication of retraction is made in the next issue of the Journal.

6.3 Licensing and Publication Rights

To have their work published in the Malawi Journal of Politics and Public Affairs, authors are required to grant the journal permission to publish their work in any lawful format, language, or medium for any legitimate purpose. MJPPA is an open-access journal, and authors retain copyright of their work while granting the journal the right of first publication. Nevertheless, authors retain the right to use their published work in any way they see fit, provided that they acknowledge its initial publication in the journal. This includes making their work available on social media platforms or institutional repositories. Articles may be distributed and reproduced for non-commercial purposes provided proper attribution is given.

6.4 Research Ethics

All research done with human participants has to get approval from appropriate Ethics Committees of the institutions the authors are associated with or any internationally recognized Ethics Bodies. Authors should clearly state in their manuscript that informed consent was obtained from all participants and that the research adhered to the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki.

6.5 Competing Interests

The Journal mandates that authors disclose any relevant competing interests to editors during the review process and in the published work. This protocol mitigates potential bias that may arise from authors' financial or personal interests in any subjects related to the study. To ensure transparency, authors must disclose sources of funding and any relationship with the Journal's editors. This measure upholds the integrity of the published research and strengthens the public's confidence in the accuracy and impartiality of the findings.

6.6 Sponsorship

The Journal is published by the Political Science Association of Malawi (PSA) in collaboration with the Department of Politics and Government of the University of Malawi.

6.7 Disclaimer

The Malawi Journal of Politics and Public Affairs and its editors accept no liability for any actual or perceived loss, cost, claim or damage sustained from reliance upon any information, statement, authoritative guidance or opinion contained in its published issues. Any information or contents in the Journal remain the author's opinion and must be independently verified before reliance upon it.

7.0 SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

We welcome manuscripts that align with our aims and scope. Review will only be given to manuscripts that meet the Journal's publication standards.

7.1 Style and Formatting Guidelines

- *Word Limit*- Research Articles should be between 6,000 and 8,000 words. Policy and Practice Papers (4,000-6,000 words), Case Studies (4,000-5,000 words), Review Articles (5,000-7,000 words), Book Reviews (1,500-2,500 words), and Commentary/Opinion Pieces (1,500-3,000 words). Word counts include references, tables, and appendices.
- *File Format*- Submit manuscripts in Microsoft Word format (.doc or .docx).
- *Font and Spacing*- Use Times New Roman, 12-point font, with 1.5 line spacing and normal (2.54 cm / 1-inch) margins. Text should be justified and page numbers included.
- *Language*- Use either British or American English consistently throughout the manuscript.
- *Title*- The title should be in bold, font size 14, and centered. Only key terms should be capitalized.
- *Headings*:
 - Level 1: Bold
 - Level 2: Bold Italics
 - Level 3: Italics
- *Citation and Referencing*- MJPPA follows the latest edition of the APA Style Manual (7th Edition). Footnotes should be used sparingly. For examples of common reference formats, please see the Appendix of this document.
- *Tables, Figures, and Illustrations*- Tables and figures must be numbered consecutively and have a title. All must be cited in the text. High-resolution images should be submitted separately in JPEG or PNG format. Authors must indicate the source of externally obtained material.

7.2 Quotations

- Use “double inverted commas” when quoting from a source.

- Use ‘single inverted commas’ to quote within a quote.
- Indent and italicize quotations that are longer than 40 words.

7.3 Abstract and Keywords

- Please prepare an abstract of between 300 and 350 words that clearly states the purpose, methods, key findings, and main conclusion of the manuscript.
- Submit 4-6 keywords immediately below the abstract, distinguished with a semicolon (e.g., democratization; public policy; Malawi; governance).

7.4 Authorship

- *Originality*- By submitting manuscripts to the Journal, authors certify that the work is original, that it is not being considered for publication by another publisher, and has not previously appeared in print or online. If accepted for publication, they will not be posted online or submitted to another publication without permission from the editor.
- *Contributors*- Please provide a list of individuals who have made substantial contributions to the conception, data collection/analysis, and writing or revising of the manuscript. All authors must have made such contributions and must approve the final manuscript.
- *Changes to Authorship*- Should you wish to modify the authorship of a published article, we kindly request that you write to the editor and provide a comprehensive explanation for why the change is being requested.

7.5 Bibliographical Note

In order to maintain the highest level of accuracy and professionalism in the publication of your article, we kindly request that all authors provide a brief biographical note (max. 100 words). This note should include your current position, institutional affiliation, and email address. Furthermore, please clearly indicate the corresponding author.

7.6 Acknowledgements

It is crucial to include an acknowledgements section at the end of a manuscript to give credit to individuals who have contributed to the work, but are not considered authors. As an author, it is your duty to acknowledge any financial or logistical support that has been received.

7.7 Submission

Manuscripts must be submitted via email to the journal's designated address. Authors should submit two separate documents:

1. **Document 1: Title Page** containing the full title, full names of authors, institutional affiliations, ORCID identifiers (where available), email addresses, and corresponding author details.

2. **Document 2: Anonymous Manuscript** containing the title only, abstract, keywords, main text, references, and tables/figures. No identifying information should appear in this version.

7.8 Contact Information

Malawi Journal of Politics and Public Affairs (MJPPA)

Email: malawipsa@gmail.com

Chief Editors:

- Prof. Happy Kayuni: hkayuni@unima.ac.mw
- Dr. Boniface Dulani: bdulani@unima.ac.mw

8.0 THE MJPPA REVIEWER EVALUATION FORM

Article ID:

Article Title:

QUALITY ASSESSMENT

1. Does this manuscript present new knowledge that has not been previously published?
☐ Yes ☐ No
2. Are the results/ideas presented topical enough for publication?
☐ Yes ☐ No
3. Is the manuscript technically and methodologically correct?
☐ Yes ☐ No
4. Are the analysis, interpretations, and conclusions valid and are they supported by the data?
☐ Yes ☐ No
5. Is the article clear, comprehensible, and well-structured?
☐ Yes ☐ No

RECOMMENDATION (please tick as appropriate)

- Accept for publication in present form.
- Accept, but the authors should consider the optional amendments suggested.
- Accept provided that the author complies with the points listed.
- Revise substantially along the lines indicated; further peer-review necessary.
- Reject.

REVIEWER'S REPORT: PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING:

Comments to the editor:

[Detailed comments on the manuscript's quality, significance, and suitability for the journal. This section may include confidential remarks for the editor.]

Comments to the author(s):

[Constructive and detailed feedback for the authors on how to improve their manuscript. This should include specific suggestions for revision, pointing out strengths and weaknesses, and any other relevant guidance.]

9.0 TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR EDITORIAL BOARD MEMBERS

9.1 Chief Editors

The Chief Editors will have various roles and responsibilities, including:

- Develop and maintain the editorial policy for the Malawi Journal of Politics and Public Affairs.
- Represent the Journal in all official functions.
- Develop publicity material and engage with the media to publicise the Journal.
- Forward manuscripts to editors, reviewers, and authors in a timely manner.
- Make the final decision on the acceptance or rejection of manuscripts based on reviewer reports and editorial judgment.
- This position is available with a contract that is renewable every 5 years, contingent upon the employee's performance meeting satisfactory standards.

9.2 Editorial Board Members

Members of the editorial board will support the Malawi Journal of Politics and Public Affairs in the following ways:

- Plan events and programs to ensure the progress of the Journal and plan for its future.
- Promote and disseminate information regarding the Malawi Journal of Politics and Public Affairs in their professional and social circles.
- Identify qualified peer-reviewers to review manuscripts for the Journal.
- Provide reviews and feedback on submitted manuscripts when requested to do so.
- Contribute scholarly and original manuscripts to the Journal.
- Ensure that the Journal meets its publication standards and deadlines.
- Represent the Journal in professional settings when requested to do so.
- Approve the final version of each journal publication.

- Develop clear timelines for manuscript review.
- Provide feedback to authors in a timely manner.
- Assist the Chief Editors in all works regarding the publication of the Journal.
- This position is available with a contract that is renewable every 5 years.

9.3 Advisory Board

Members of the advisory board will support the Malawi Journal of Politics and Public Affairs in the following ways:

- Ensure that the Journal meets its publication standards and deadlines.
- Represent the Journal in professional settings when requested to do so.
- Promote and disseminate information regarding the Malawi Journal of Politics and Public Affairs in their professional and social circles.
- Provide feedback to the editorial board on all Journal's publications, especially critiquing its presentation and assessing whether or not published articles are within the aims and scope of the Journal.
- Propose new areas of research and pathways for the Journal.
- Provide academic and publication guidance to the editorial board.
- This position is available with a contract that is renewable every 5 years.

10.0 OTHER RESEARCH AND SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES

- *Special Issues*- The Journal aims to publish occasional special issues that align with the goals and scope of the publication, often on themes of contemporary significance.
- *Policy Dialogues*- The journal will support and promote policy dialogues and public engagement activities that translate academic research into actionable policy recommendations, building a bridge between theory and practice.
- *Mentorship*- Implement the mentorship plan outlined below to develop the next generation of scholars in political science and public affairs.
- *Publicity*- Develop promotional materials for the journal, engage with the media, and enhance the journal's online presence to increase its visibility and impact.
- *Funding*- Explore and pursue fundraising opportunities to support the sustainability and growth of the journal, including sponsorship for special issues, editorial support, and open access initiatives.

11.0 GRADUATE MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

The Malawi Journal of Politics and Public Affairs graduate mentorship program helps recent graduates and junior members of staff transition to independent writers and researchers. The goal

of the program is to provide graduate students and junior members of staff with the support necessary to establish themselves as independent researchers.