



PRESS RELEASE

Inaugural Open, Distance and e-Learning Conference 2026

The Malawi University of Business and Applied Sciences (MUBAS) will host its inaugural Open, Distance and e-Learning (ODeL) Conference 2026 from **2-3 December 2026 at the ODeL Auditorium, MUBAS, Blantyre, Malawi.**

Held under the theme **“Reimagining Higher Education: Expanding Access, Enhancing Quality, and Promoting Employability through Open, Distance and e-Learning,”** the conference will bring together academics, researchers, policymakers, university administrators, industry representatives, development partners, students, and practitioners to explore innovative approaches to transforming higher education.

The conference will be delivered through a hybrid participation model, enabling participants to engage both physically and virtually.

The MUBAS ODeL Conference 2026 will provide a platform for knowledge exchange, dialogue, research dissemination, and collaboration around the evolving role of Open, Distance and e-Learning in higher education.

As digital technologies continue to reshape how knowledge is created, delivered, and accessed, the conference will examine how institutions can leverage ODeL to expand educational opportunities while maintaining quality and ensuring that graduates acquire the skills needed to succeed in an increasingly dynamic labour market.

The conference will particularly encourage dialogue on emerging technologies, digital transformation, inclusive education, quality assurance, institutional readiness, student success, and sustainable partnerships.

Conference Sub-Themes

Authors are invited to submit papers addressing one or more of the following sub-themes:

- 1. Artificial Intelligence and Emerging Technologies in Education**
AI and digital innovations enhance teaching, learning, student support, and institutional efficiency, while addressing challenges of access and readiness.
- 2. Employability, Skills Development, and Industry Alignment**
Aligning ODeL programmes with labour market needs, fostering relevant skills, and strengthening partnerships between higher education and industry.
- 3. Digital Transformation, E-Learning Systems, and Innovative Pedagogies**
Digital platforms, learning management systems, and innovative teaching approaches reshape educational delivery.
- 4. Quality Assurance and Accreditation in ODeL**
Academic standards, credibility, and quality frameworks in distance and online education.
- 5. Access, Equity, and Inclusive Education**
Widening participation, reducing barriers, and promoting inclusive education for marginalised and underrepresented groups.
- 6. Capacity Building, Institutional Readiness, and Change Management**
Institutional capacity, staff development, leadership, and organisational transformation for effective ODeL implementation.
- 7. Student Experiences, Engagement, Success, and Future Trends**
Student participation, engagement, retention, and success and emerging trends shaping the future of ODeL.
- 8. Sustainable Models and Strategic Partnerships**
Financing models, resource mobilisation, and partnerships for long-term ODeL sustainability.

Call for Papers

The conference welcomes submissions in the following categories:

- Full research papers
- Case studies and best practices
- Conceptual papers
- Policy and position papers

Selected papers will be considered for publication in the conference proceedings and/or affiliated academic journals, providing researchers and practitioners with an opportunity to further share their work with the wider academic community.

Key Dates

Activity	Deadline
Abstract Submission	15 September 2026
Notification of Acceptance	30 September 2026
Full Paper Submission	30 November 2026
Conference	2–3 December 2026

Who Should Attend?

The conference welcomes participation from:

- Academics and researchers
- University administrators
- Policymakers
- Industry and private-sector partners
- Development partners
- Students
- ODeL and education practitioners

Registration and Participation Fees

Participation fees are:

- **Local participants:** K250,000
- **International participants:** US\$150
- **Students:** K75,000 / US\$45

The conference will offer both physical and online participation, providing opportunities for participants from Malawi and beyond to contribute to the conversation.

Join the Conversation

MUBAS invites higher education institutions, researchers, policymakers, industry stakeholders, development partners, students, and ODeL practitioners to participate in this landmark event and contribute to shaping the future of higher education in Malawi and beyond.

The inaugural MUBAS ODeL Conference 2026 seeks to strengthen collaboration and generate practical ideas for building a higher education system that is more accessible, inclusive, innovative, responsive, and aligned with the needs of society and the world of work.

Submission and Enquiries

For abstract submissions and conference enquiries, please contact:

MUBAS ODeL Conference Secretariat

Email: odelconference@mubas.ac.mw