



Higher Education in Malawi

2024 Education Sector Performance Report

The background of the slide is a blurred photograph of a desk. In the foreground, the pages of an open book are visible, fanned out. To the left, a white cup is partially visible. The overall lighting is warm and soft, creating a professional and academic atmosphere.

Outline

- Introduction
- Sector performance in the higher education sub-sector
- Recommendations

Introduction

Higher Education shapes leaders, fosters vibrant communities and drives societal progress.

The sub-sector seeks to expand equitable access for students to higher education by removing barriers and creating opportunities for all; enabling learners to contribute to national development as well as regional and global agenda.

A Key focus is aligning higher education with industry needs to ensure graduates acquire practical skills for workforce integration and economic growth.

Establishment of efficient governance and streamlined management systems are prioritized to improve institutional effectiveness while supporting the achievement of Malawi's long term goals and aspirations set in MW 2063 , MIP 1 and NESIP

As we approach NESIP's mid-term in 2025, the report assesses progress to date , highlights challenges and additional initiatives required to meet the sub-sector targets set for 2030.



*Increased
equitable
access for
students to
quality
Higher
Education*



Strategies for increasing equitable access to higher education include: expansion & introduction of ODeL programmes, expansion of existing infrastructure, provision of support to socio-economically disadvantaged students and students with special needs; and construction of new universities.

Enrolment and Gender Parity to date

NESIP set the enrolment target for both public and private Higher Education Institutions at 60,800 by 2030 and mid-term target of 45,500 in 2025

From a baseline of 30.790 in 2019, the enrolment has risen to 74,414 in 2024, surpassing both the mid-term and end target set for 2025 and 2030 respectively

In public HEIs alone enrolment has steadily increased for Male students from 21,246 in 2023 to 29,676 in 2024, and for female students from 13,809 to 19,519.

On GPI, the Ministry aspires a GPI value of 0.8 in public universities by 2025 and 0.9 by 2030. To date, significant disparities exist: KUHeS has the highest GPI at 1.6, followed by MZUNI at 0.97.

UNIMA, MUBAS, LUANAR, and MUST show GPIs below 1, with LUANAR and MUST at 0.49 and 0.46, respectively.

The overall GPI of 0.65 indicates fewer females enrolled in public HEIs, highlighting the need for targeted policies to enhance female participation in higher education

Name of institution	GPI
KUHeS	1.6
MZUNI	0.97
UNIMA	0.67
Overall GPI	0.65
MUBAS	0.64
LUANAR	0.49
MUST	0.46

Source: EMIS

Enrolment and Gender Parity in Private HEIs

Private HEIs complement Government efforts in increasing access to higher education and expanding opportunities for students.

From 2023 to 2024 there has been a drop in female enrolment from 14,272 to 13,332 and for male students from 14,206 to 11,887

For the GPI value in private HEIs the available data demonstrates strong female representation in most of the institutions as depicted in the table.

In this case with only Skyway University displays GPI value of 0.6 showing under representation of female students.

Need for targeted initiatives to attract and retain female students in HEIs particularly in STEM subjects

The initiatives could include mentorship programmes, targeted scholarships and outreach campaigns that promote higher education for women.

Name of institution	GPI
EMMANUEL UNIVERSITY	2.18
DMI ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST	1.86
CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY	1.08
AFRICAN BIBLE COLLEGE	1.03
BLANTYRE INTERNATIONAL UNI	1.01
UNIVERSITY OF LIVINGSTONIA	0.75
SKYWAY UNIVERSITY	0.60

Source: EMIS

Enrolment and Gender Parity for ODeL

Expansion and introduction of ODeL programmes remains one of the NESIP strategies to increase access to higher education and expand opportunities

The available data shows that a total of 10,918 (Male 6,305 & 4,613 Female) were enrolled under ODeL programmes in 2024, and there has been about 25% increase in enrolment

The GPI value for students under ODeL programmes in the private HEIs demonstrates a smaller gap between female and male enrolments compared to public HEIs as depicted in the table.

In this case, private HEIs display a GPI value of 0.88 while the GPI for public HEIs stand at 0.59 showing under representation of female students in ODeL programs.

There is need for targeted initiatives to attract and retain female students in ODeL programmes

The initiatives could include promoting the flexibility of ODeL through awareness campaigns and increase offering scholarships specifically for female students in ODeL programmes, as this the case under SAVE project.

INSTITUTION TYPE	GPI
PRIVATE	0.88
PUBLIC	0.59
AVERAGE	0.73

Source: EMIS

Enrolment for students with Special Needs

Expanding opportunities for students with special needs to access higher education remains one of the key interventions for the education sector as we implement the NESIP.

The available data shows that a total of 331 (185 males & 146 Female) with special needs were enrolled in 2024 in both public and private HEIs.

The type of impairments include low vision, blindness, physical disabilities, albinism, learning difficulties, hard of hearing and deafness

Currently, it is UNIMA that enrolls the highest number of students with special needs due to its supportive infrastructure and facilities in place,


With establishment of establishment of SNE units and disability friendly infrastructure in the other HEIs, it is expected that that this will increase the enrolment.

By 2025 the Ministry aspires to have 10 HEIs with special needs education facilities.

Progress is behind schedule, and the Ministry will continue to enforce implementation of policies and programs to support students with special needs to access higher education.

INSTITUTION TYPE	TOTAL
PRIVATE	56
PUBLIC	275
TOTAL	331

Source: EMIS



Number of new public universities established

The Ministry aspires to establish seven new public universities by 2030, with four targeted by 2025.

Strategies include:

Restructuring of the federal University of Malawi which led to establishment of KUHeS and MUBAS

Establishment of Open University Malawi

Construction of other new universities including Inkosi Ya Makhosi Mbelwa Univesrity .

Public HEIs are expanding through projects like PSIP, the SAVE Project, and support from the development partners, e.g. Japanese Government, which has expanded Domasi College of Education.

Provision of loans and scholarships to needy, vulnerable and deserving students in both public and private HEIs remains one of the key strategies that the Ministry endeavors to implement and support through HESLGB to ensure equitable access to higher education.

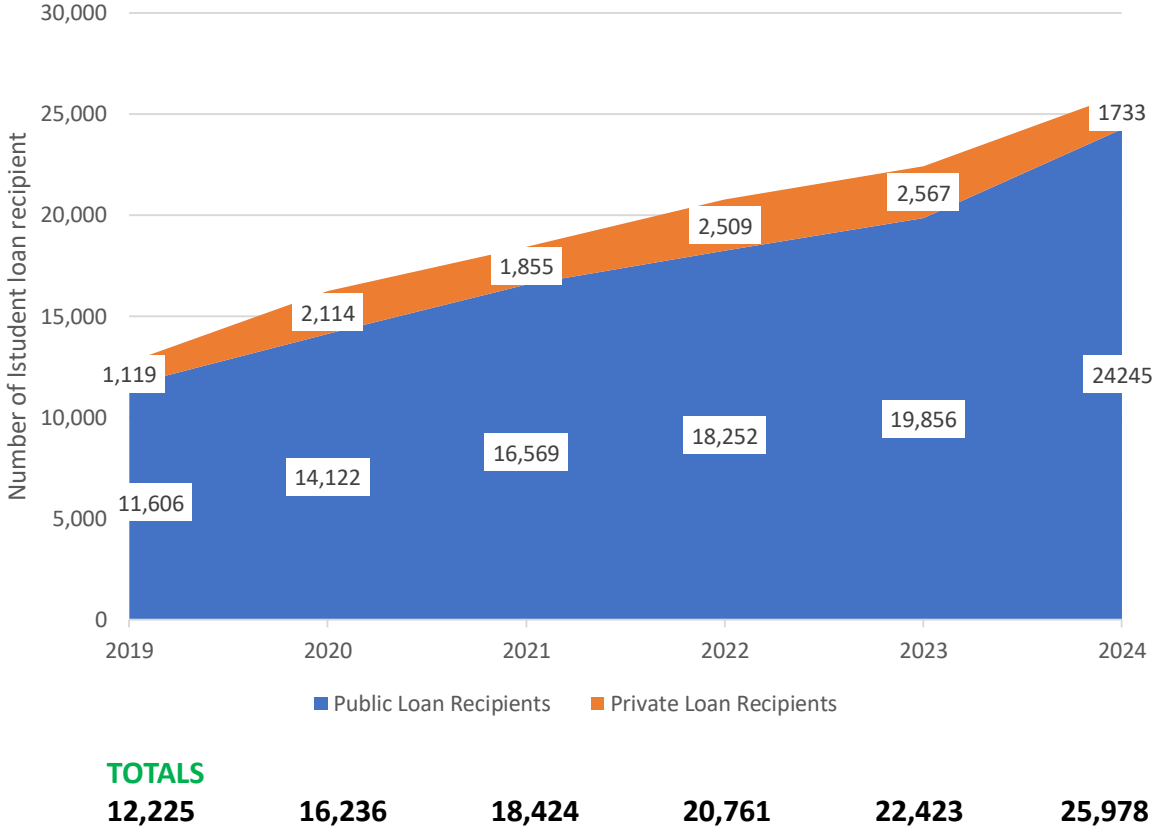
Loan beneficiaries have increased from 12,725 in 2019 to 25,978 in 2024,

The general trend is that we are on track to achieve the 2030 end-line target of 32,500. By 2021 the NESIP mid-term target of 17,065 had already been exceeded because government offered loans to 18,424 beneficiaries.

Loan approval rates in 2024 were high and nearly equal for males (93.7%) and females (92.8%) showing inclusivity in loan disbursement

Government also revised students upkeep loans from K350,000.00 to K560,000.00 effective 1st April, 2024 representing 60% increase

Total number of students offered loans



Source: HESLGB



Improved Skills, Quality and
Relevance of Higher Education
for Industry or Market



Percentage of accredited institutions of higher learning with quality assurance mechanisms

The Ministry through NCHE promotes, coordinates, and monitors quality in Malawi's higher education.

Target is to have 70% of accredited institutions with Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) units by 2025.

Currently, 31 of 52 HEIs are accredited, with 20 having IQA units, achieving 64.5 % of the target. However, most of these require strengthening.

To track progress, NCHE plans a mapping exercise by end of 2024 to evaluate existing IQA units and is finalizing guidelines to standardize quality practices, including training of quality assurance officers.

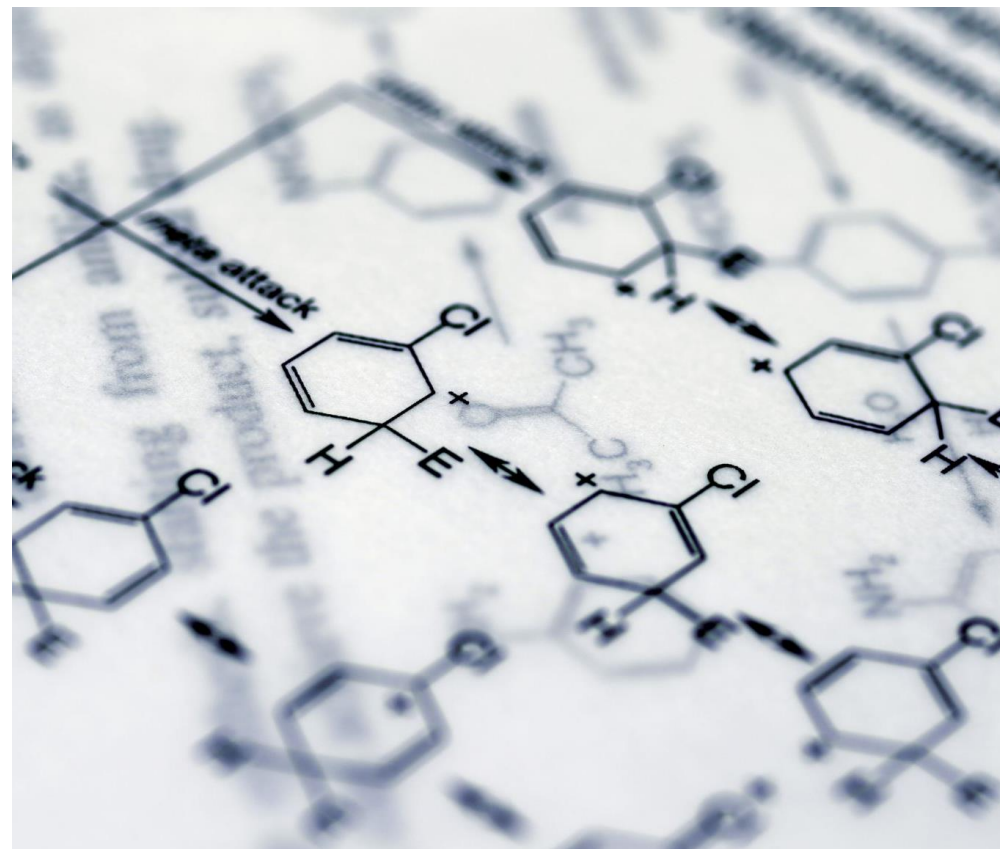
Establishing and strengthening existing IQA units and standardized practices will improve HEI credibility and educational outcomes, with ongoing monitoring essential to meet quality goals

Number of Research Areas Published

The Ministry recognizes the important role played by research and publications in informing policy. Research publication numbers reflect higher education's progress in knowledge generation and impact.

Data from institutions shows steady increase in publications between 2020 and 2024, oscillating between 211 and 617 publications per year, surpassing the conservative midterm target of 198, and 2030 target of 300 as set in NESIP.

This accomplishment underlines the commitment of higher education institutions to advancing knowledge through research; and contributing efforts to find solutions for the progress of humanity.



Number of Business Innovation and Technological Incubation Centers Established

NESIP targets 17 Business Innovation and Technology Incubation Centres to be established by 2030 and 9 by 2025. To date, 13 have been established and are active.


On track and surpassed the mid-term target of 9 by 2025

These centers support start-ups and link academia to industry, fostering innovation and economic growth.

Development of a framework for academia-industry collaboration is underway, aligned with NESIP 2020-2030 and Malawi 2063 goals.

No	Business Innovation and Technological Centre	Host University
1	University Innovation Pod (UniPod)	MUBAS
2	Business Incubation Centre	MUBAS
3	Design Studio	MUBAS
4	Innovation Hub	MUBAS
5	African Drone and Data Academy (ADDA)	MUST
6	MUST Technology & Innovation Garage	MUST
7	Centre for Artificial Intelligence & STEAM	MUST
8	ICT Incubation Centre	MZUNI
9	Tourism SMEs Incubation Centre	MZUNI
10	Test and Training Centre for Renewable Energy	MZUNI
11	TACE Agri-Business Hub	LUANAR
12	Centre of Excellence in Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturing	KUHeS
13	Technology and Innovation Support Centre (TISC)	UNIMA

Source: NESIP



Efficient and effective
governance and
management system
established

Percentage of Higher Education institutions aligned to the NQF

The Malawi Qualifications Framework (MAQF) has been successfully developed, integrating the qualifications frameworks from General Education, Teacher Education, and TEVET. The MAQF has been cleared for PS's presentation before final approvals.

NESIP's mid-term target of 50% of HEIs aligned with the MAQF depends on NQF endorsement.

Besides NQF, development of Higher Education Overarching Bill has been resuscitated with key stakeholders consultations done in October, 2024; and all stakeholders consultations planned for November, 2024. The plan is to have ready for the February sitting of Parliament.

Development of the Higher Education Management Information System is on course with first modules to be ready by December, 2024.



Recommendations

Advance gender-equitable access to higher education to improve the GPI.

Enhance data collection and analysis.
Finalization of HEMIS is key

Prioritize the Open University of Malawi

Establish and strengthen IQA units in institutions without one

Prioritize accreditation of all registered HEIs, including digitalisation of the accreditation process

Allocate resources for research and dissemination.

Establish more incubation centres

Finalize and operationalize NQF

Finalize the HEOB



CONCLUSION

No country has developed without deliberate investment in higher education.

**THANK YOU FOR
YOUR ATTENTION**