

**SAMRC Postgraduate Research Associate Programme
PhD Scholarships for Clinical/Health Research**

SAMRC INTRA- & EXTRA-MURAL RESEARCH UNITS AND RESEARCH CENTRES

The long-term goal of the SAMRC Postgraduate Research Associate Programme is to transform the composition of the country's health and clinical research human capital to be more representative of the demographics of the nation, by substantially increasing the number of scientists from designated groups in strategic and emerging fields within the health and clinical research where these groups are underrepresented. Within the context of the SAMRC, the purpose of the programme is to (i) contribute towards the SAMRC's transformation agenda to increase the representation of quality postgraduate scientists from designated groups, and (ii) growing the number of PhD candidates from Historically Disadvantaged Institutions (HDIs). The programme attracts young scientists of the highest calibre to complement SAMRC senior researchers and influence sustainable long-term collaboration with national and international institutions through joint supervision of South African students. This programme emphasises the training and development of emerging scientists whose research supervisors are employees or researchers at SAMRC. These research supervisors may be working for SAMRC as researchers within SAMRC intra or extra mural research units or research centres. Therefore, preference will be given to candidates of the designated groups, registered for a doctoral degree or masters in scarce skills and strategic and/or emerging fields within the health and clinical research where these groups are underrepresented, such as, but not limited to Biostatistics, Demography, Data Science, Genomics, Epidemiology, Implementation and Translational Science.

The purpose of this Request for Applications (RFA) is to attract PhD and Masters candidates within the following research fields, which will be given preference: Biostatistics, Bioethics, Bioinformatics, Data Science, Digital Health, Demography, Epidemiology, Environmental Public Health, Evolutionary Virology, Implementation and Translational Science, Health Economics, Genomics, Immunology and Structural Biology.

Level	Funding Period (Years)	Value of scholarship p.a.	Notes
PhD	3 + (1 year extra, on compelling motivation from the hosting Unit Director and Supervisor)	R250 000.00	1. Candidates will only be funded for the prescribed PhD duration (i.e., the first 3 years) notwithstanding the fact that previous years were not funded by the SAMRC. Fourth year of funding can be considered in special circumstances. 2. Candidates must i) provide proof of being registered full-time, and ii) have both PhD research approval and ethics clearance, where applicable.

Masters	1 + (1 year on compelling motivation from hosting Unit Director and Supervisor)	R200 000.00	- Candidates will only be funded for 1 year. - Only candidates who are registered in Historically Disadvantaged Institutions (HDIs) or candidates who are doing specialized Masters degrees in the following research areas will be considered for 2 years of funding: Bioinformatics, Biostatistics, Computer Science / Data Science / Epidemiology / Demography and Data analytics. - Candidates who are applying for funding for 2nd year Masters enrollment in 2026 must i) provide proof of full-time registration, and ii) have Masters research proposal approval and ethics clearance where applicable. - Candidates who will be enrolling for 1st year Masters in 2026 must provide a support letter from the proposed supervisor at the institution where they will register and admission letter.
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Requirements for the application:

PhD Candidates	Masters Candidates
<u>All PhD candidates</u> 1) South African citizen or permanent resident. 2) A fully developed and officially approved research proposal for PhD. 3) Must be registered as a full-time student at a South African university. 4) Research project must fall within the SAMRC priority research areas 5) Must provide written commitment of participation by a research unit director from SAMRC intramural unit or	<u>2nd year Masters candidates</u> 1) South African citizen or permanent resident. 2) A fully developed and officially approved research proposal for Masters. 3) Must be registered as a full-time student at a South African university. 3) Research project must fall within the SAMRC priority research areas 3) Must provide written commitment of participation by a research unit director from SAMRC intramural unit or

SAMRC extramural unit or SAMRC research centre who is willing to host the student for the entire duration of the degree. 6) Must be receiving supervisory support from SAMRC intramural unit or SAMRC extramural unit or SAMRC research centre who is willing to train and mentor the student for the entire duration of the degree. 7) The hosting research unit or supervisor must have research funding for the project and appropriate facilities for the scholar to effectively conduct the research project.	SAMRC extramural unit or SAMRC research centre who is willing to host the student for the entire duration of the degree. 4) Must be receiving supervisory support from SAMRC intramural unit or SAMRC extramural unit or SAMRC research centre who is willing to train the student for the entire duration of the degree. 7) The hosting research unit or supervisor must have research funding for the project and appropriate facilities for the scholar to effectively conduct the research project <u>1st year Masters candidates (Scarce skills and candidates registered in Historically Disadvantaged Institutions)</u> 1) South African citizen or permanent resident. 2) Admitted into a structured scarce skill Masters programme at a South African university for studies in 2026. 3) Letter of recommendation from your proposed supervisor at university. 4) Letter of recommendation from your proposed supervisor at SAMRC 5) Must provide written commitment of participation by a research unit director from SAMRC intramural unit or SAMRC extramural unit or SAMRC research centre who is willing to host the student for the entire duration of the degree. 6) The hosting research unit or supervisor must have research funding for the project and appropriate facilities for the scholar to effectively conduct the research project.
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How to apply

Opening date: 30 May 2025
Closing date: 21 August 2025, 23:59

Application Process

Application steps 1 to 3 below must be completed before or by, 21 August 2025 23:59.

- Step 1 – Applicant to complete the [online application](#).

- Step 2 – Applicant to upload all the required supporting documents.
- Step 3 – SAMRC research supervisor or proposed supervisor must complete the research supervisor's commitment form and submit the application.

The South African Medical Research Council reserves the right to disqualify ineligible, incomplete and/or inappropriate applications, change the conditions of the award, extend the closing date, or make no awards at all. Please note that only successful candidates will be contacted after completion of the review, selection, and approval processes. Should you not hear from the SAMRC by 31 December 2025, please assume that your application has been unsuccessful.

For enquiries, contact Dr Lindokuhle Ndlandla at Lindokuhle.Ndlandla@mrc.ac.za / Tel. 021 938 0442.

Scholarship Conditions

- Scholarship holders are expected to spend at least 80% of their time conducting research towards their studies.
- Teaching and clinical activities may not take up more than 20% of the time of the scholar.
- Scholarship holders may not hold full-time salaried employment during the tenure of the scholarship.
- Scholarship holders may not receive, concurrently with this scholarship, other bursaries, grants, or remuneration which bind them to enter the service of any organisation without prior agreement of the SAMRC.
- Candidates may not hold a bursary from more than one South African Government or statutory entity at any given time.
- Scholarship holders may not receive, concurrently with this scholarship, other non-binding remuneration/fellowships, and grants without prior agreement of the SAMRC.
- Scholarship holders may not register at a university other than the one stated on the application has been submitted, without seeking approval from the SAMRC.
- Once the scholarship has been awarded, the scholarship holder may not change their supervisor or research project without informing the SAMRC.
- Scholars will be expected to submit bi-annual progress reports endorsed by the supervisor.
- The scholarship is awarded for one year. Renewal of funding will be considered on an annual basis, and success thereof will be subject to satisfactory progress being made.
- Successful applicants will be required to enter into an agreement with the SAMRC to complete their studies within the specified period.
- If awarded, applicants must be able to take up the award immediately.
- The scholarship is for the specified enrolment year and therefore cannot be deferred to subsequent years.

I hereby acknowledge that I have read and understood the scholarship conditions.

Y	N
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Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA)

As of the 1st of July 2020, the new Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA) came into full effect. The law is designed to protect how all juristic persons use, store and process data. You can read the full details on the act here: <https://popia.co.za/>

The SAMRC as a responsible statutory science council will comply with POPIA. The SAMRC will receive personal information through applications submitted to the SAMRC for the purposes of applying for funding. The personal information requested on the application template is necessary for the SAMRC to fully evaluate the applications for funding. This information will be shared with members of Scholarship Selection Committees of the SAMRC and external funders and/or stakeholders where applicable as well as the SAMRC management for the purposes of processing the applications. The SAMRC will process this personal information strictly in accordance with POPIA. The SAMRC undertakes specifically to process the personal information on the basis that (a) it was provided voluntarily and (b) the information will be processed only as far may be necessary and within the limitation and ambit of the purpose of evaluating the application for funding (i.e., the purpose with which the personal information was received). The SAMRC confirms that it is lawfully processing the information since the purpose of processing is to seek quality research proposals for funding which the SAMRC is mandated to do in terms of Section 4 of the SAMRC Act 58 of 1991, thus the SAMRC is fulfilling its legislated and lawful mandate, and strategic objectives as provided for in the SAMRC Act.

I hereby authorise and consent to the organisation sharing my personal information for the purpose of evaluating my application for funding.

Y	N
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For enquiries contact: Dr Lindokuhle Ndlandla at Lindokuhle.Ndlandla@mrc.ac.za / Tel 021 938 0442

Incomplete applications will not be considered.

APPLICATION FORM (*Application form must be completed online*)

Personal Details (Mark the correct one with a tick v)

1. Title (Ms, Mr, Dr)						2. First Name:		
3. Surname:						4. Gender F / M		
5. Population group:	African	Coloured	Indian	Asian	White	6. Date of Birth: <i>Day/ Month / Year</i>		
7. Citizenship:						South African citizen	South African Permanent Resident	Other (Specify)
8. South African ID number: (insert)						Attach a certified copy of the ID document and confirm here with a tick (v) that you have attached it.		
9. Postal address:								
10. Work telephone number: (<i>where applicable</i>)						11. Mobile number:		
12. Alternative number:								
13. University e-mail address:								
14. Alternative e-mail address:								

Academic Information (Mark the correct one with a tick √)

15. Highest qualification:				
16. This application is for which degree level:	PhD		Masters	
17. PhD/Masters year of registration in 2026	1 st year Attach admission letter	2 nd year	3 rd Year	4 th Year (If this application is for fourth year of PhD registration, please attach a detailed PhD completion

				plan with clear timelines of what remains to be completed. The PhD completion plan should be signed by both applicant and supervisor.)
18. Current degree funded by:				
19. University at which you are currently registered or intend to register for your PhD/Masters:				
20. First date of registration:	Attach evidence of first date of registration. If 2026 is your first year of registration, please attach admission letter.			
21. Faculty:				
22. Department:				
23.				
24. Proposed research project requires ethics approval:	Yes Attach official evidence of approval	Under ethics review Attach official evidence of approval	No	
25. Proposed research project has been approved by the postgraduate office or equivalent office:	Yes Attach official evidence of approval	No		
26. Title of research project to be funded:				
27. Research field:	Biostatistics	Data Science		
	Demography and population studies	Digital Health		
	Epidemiology	Health Economics		
	Genomics	Immunology		
	Bioethics	Evolutionary Virology		
	Implementation Science	Structural Biology		
	Bioinformatics	Environmental Public Health		
28. Alignment of the proposed research project to the SAMRC priority research areas:	Biomedical Research	HIV, TB and other communicable diseases		
	Health System Strengthening	Health Promotion and Disease Prevention		

	Maternal child and woman health	Non-communicable diseases
	Public Health Innovation	Violence, injury and trauma
29. Potential societal impact of the proposed research study		
Science engagement activities: <i>State how you intend to communicate and engage with the wider community on the significance of your research in an effort to bridge the gap between science and society</i>		
30. SAMRC research supervisor's full name:		
31. SAMRC research supervisor is based	SAMRC Intramural Unit	SAMRC Extramural Unit
	SAMRC Research Centre	None
32. Name of SAMRC Research Unit where the supervisor is based:		
33. SAMRC research supervisor's email address:		
34. SAMRC research supervisor's contact number:		
35. University supervisor's full name:		
36. University supervisor's email address:		
37. University supervisor's contact number:		

I, _____ (full names), hereby submit my application for a full-time scholarship and am cognisant of the conditions under which this scholarship is awarded.

Checklist

Requirements and selection criteria (Please use this list to ensure that your application is complete)	Attached check (v)		
1. Suitability of the candidate: Max. 2 pages: Motivation demonstrating the candidate's suitability and describing how success in the scholarship application will impact the candidate's career. Must be written by the applicant.	Y	N	
2. Suitability of the candidate: Abridged curriculum vitae containing a full list of research outputs in the last seven years and other meritorious achievements.			
3. Quality of the science: Max. 2 pages: Abstract of the Master's or PhD research proposal outlining the aim and objectives, rationale, design, feasibility, plans for research translation and information dissemination as well as potential impact of the proposed research project. NB: Proposed research project should be aligned with the SAMRC priority research areas list on the application form.	Y	N	
4. Main supervisor's track record: Max. 2 pages: An abridged outline of publications, grants and experience of the main supervisor in research supervision of Master's and PhD students in the last five (5) years	Y	N	
5. Research environment: Max. 2 pages: Letter from the host institution or SAMRC research unit (Head of Department/SAMRC Research Unit Director) confirming availability of appropriate research facilities and project funding for the scholar to effectively conduct and complete their research project within the prescribed degree study period.	Y	N	
6. Certified copy of the applicant's South African identity document (must be certified by a Commissioner of Oaths within the last 6 months from submission of application.)	Y	N	
6. Proof of registration for the current year. If 2026 will be your first year of registration please provide official admission letter from the institution where the applicant will register.	Y	N	Additionally, applicants applying for 1st year Masters funding need to provide a support letter from the proposed main supervisor from the institution where they will register.

7. Official approval letter of the candidate's final version of their research proposal	Y	N	Not applicable for applicants applying for 1st year Masters funding.
8. Evidence of ethics clearance where applicable	Y	N	If not applicable, provide reason

IMPORTANT: An application which does not comply with ALL the above requirements will be regarded as incomplete and will not be processed.

Submit

SAMRC research supervisor's commitment form

(SAMRC supervisor/proposed supervisor will receive a link to complete the form online)

Title (Prof/Dr/Ms/Mr)			
SAMRC research supervisor's full name			
SAMRC research Unit name			
E-mail address			
Contact number			
Are you the main research supervisor of the applicant?	Yes	No	
If no, please enter the main supervisor's name and surname			
Applicant name and surname			
Has the candidate's research proposal been approved by the institution / or <u>relevant authorised</u> office?	Yes	No	
Does the proposed project require ethical clearance?	Yes	No	
Has the ethics committee approved the research proposal?	Yes	No	<i>If not applicable, state reason</i>
Does the area proposed for the research complement or directly relate to your research interests?	Yes	No	
Does your research unit have the internal facilities, infrastructure (laboratories or as appropriate) and research funding that will be required for the research to be conducted?	Yes	No	
Do you have a formal agreement with the University supervisor?	Yes	No	
Do you know if the university has signed the deeds of recordal agreement with SAMRC	Yes	No	
Does your Unit Director support this application	Yes	No	
Are there any concerns (if any please provide details)			
Comment on the feasibility of the proposed research study			
Will this research project (degree) be completed within the prescribed degree duration? (PhD = 3 years)	Yes	No <i>State reasons</i>	
Comment on the applicant's ability to conduct the proposed research project			

I _____ (supervisor's full names), hereby support the scholar's application for the SAMRC scholarship and commit to undertake the supervision of the applicant _____

(applicant's full name).

Submit

NB: This form must be submitted before the closing date.