

**SAMRC Research Capacity Development Initiative
at Selected Universities (RCDI)**

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA) 2023/24

Opening: 08 December 2023
Closing date: 22 January 2024

The South African Medical Research Council's Division of Research Capacity Development (RCD) invites applications for funding under the Research Capacity Development Initiative (RCDI), ringfenced for resource-constrained institutions, otherwise known as historically disadvantaged institutions (HDIs).

The purpose of the RCDI grant is to provide an opportunity for funding researchers at universities and research institutions previously constrained by inadequate access to resources. The RCDI grant aims to contribute and assist in accelerating the building of research capacity and scientific leadership. The resources of the programme allow the HDIs and researchers to improve their research outputs and contribute to the generation of knowledge towards the solutions to health challenges in South Africa.

This request for applications is only for the researchers based at Sefako Makgatho Health Science University (SMU) and the University of Fort Hare (UFH) to attract one new Principal investigator at each university. The purpose of the current RCDI funding cycle is to: (1) broaden the research portfolio established in the grants awarded in the first cohort in 2015/2016, (2) strengthen the potential for public health impact, and (3) build research capacity (develop research teams) in promising early and mid-stage academics at selected HDIs.

The priority research areas include Violence and Injury, Non-Communicable Diseases, Infectious Diseases, Maternal and Child Health, Health Systems, Public Health Innovation, and COVID-19. Research projects that contribute to the mandate of the SAMRC and demonstrate potential for public health impact will receive preference.

The request for applications considers Early-stage and Mid-level investigators (details below). Established Senior Researchers are advised to be co-investigators and mentors on the projects.

	Category 1: Early-stage investigators	Category 2: Mid-level investigators
Qualification (Minimum)	Doctorate	Doctorate
Experience	≤ 5 years since completion of PhD	> 5 years in academic / research post since completion of PhD
Affiliation	Must be in an established academic or research post, i.e. permanently employed, or in a long-term contract of employment (at least for the duration of the project), salaried by the university	Must be in an established academic/research post, i.e. permanently employed, or in a long-term contract of employment (at least for the duration of the project), salaried by the university

Collaboration	Must demonstrate a strong collaboration with local research-intensive universities/institutions	Must demonstrate a strong collaboration with local research-intensive universities/ institutions
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Value and duration of the award

- Sefako Makgatho Health Science University:
The research grant will be R300,000 per year for three years, with the option to extend for a further two years, subject to satisfactory performance and the availability of funds.
- University of Fort Hare:
The research grant will be R500,000 per year for two years.

Payment of the grant funding will be linked to clear milestones and deliverables and subject to the terms and conditions of the award.

Eligibility

- Only bona-fide South African citizens and permanent residents may apply.
- Applicants must be academic or research staff engaged in health/medical research at Sefako Makgatho Health Science University or the University of Fort Hare.
- Disabled individuals are strongly encouraged to apply.
- Evidence of collaboration with SAMRC research units or departments within the research councils or research-intensive universities will be an advantage when applying and mandatory once the grant is awarded.

Application process

Only the University's Research office will be able to submit applications to SAMRC. Applicants must request application forms at their University's Research Office, complete the forms (**Application form, Milestone table, Budget form and Nomination of reviewers' form**) and submit the full application to the University's Research Office for a budget check and approval before or on **18 January 2024**. A link to the forms will be sent to each Research Office.

Before approval, the Research Office must check the completeness and collate all applications under one signed cover page. The submission officers at the University's Research Office will submit the completed forms and all the required documentation to RCDgrants.applications@mrc.ac.za and cc Ms Asanele Ngcauzele (Asanele.Ngcauzele@mrc.ac.za) before **22 January 2024**.

Selection process

Eligible applications are subject to a peer-review process, and the review reports are assessed by a selection committee, which scores the application against standard objective criteria and recommends fundability.

For enquiries contact Dr Frederic Nduhirabandi (at frederic.nduhirabandi@mrc.ac.za or +27 21 938 0461).

The South African Medical Research Council reserves the right to disqualify ineligible, incomplete and/or inappropriate applications, amend the conditions of award where advisable, extend the closing date or make no awards at all.

Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA)

Please note that by submitting your application and other supporting documents, the SAMRC concludes that you are a competent person to consent and that you are giving consent to the SAMRC to process and further process all personal information contained in the application forms and supporting documents in accordance with the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA), Act No 4 of 2013 (as amended). 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 the 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.