

SAMRC Institutional Clinician-Researcher Development Programme

PhD Scholarships for Clinician-Scientists

There is a national need to develop a cadre of clinician-scientists in South Africa; these are individuals with a degree in medicine or dentistry, who possess a PhD and are equipped to conduct high-level research and aspire to hold positions of leadership in the South African academic, clinical and research sectors. Through its Division of Research Capacity Development (RCD), the South African Medical Research Council is committed to addressing this need by encouraging the development of integrated clinical/research training programs for clinicians across all South African universities. RCD invites applications for PhD research and scholarship awards from South African citizens or permanent residents who are students or graduates in medicine or dentistry who meet the requirements specified on this call.

The main objectives of this funding instrument are to:

1. Support talented clinicians who want to obtain doctoral qualifications while retaining their employment or clinical duties.
2. Assist institutions to develop innovative and effective dual-training pathways which provide the opportunity for PhD-level research alongside the conventional clinical training track.

The award is designed to offer flexible and realistic options to clinicians who want to pursue PhD studies. It may be used to provide protected research time from clinical training or clinical service obligations to support PhD studies undertaken in parallel with clinical activities. The use of funds is strictly for the purpose of research training i.e., obtaining a PhD.

Types of Awards (with specific requirements)

| Category 1: MBChB-PhD or BChD-PhD candidates in dual training | Category 2: PhD candidates |
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| R200,000 per annum to cover tuition fees and stipend Funding is for 3 years (4 th year on compelling motivation) | Up to a maximum of R300,000 per annum to cover tuition fees, protected time (salary) and project research costs Funding is for 3 years (4 th year on compelling motivation) |
| Enrolled on MBChB or BChD track specifically designed to lead to a dual clinical/doctoral degree. | MBChB/BChD holders |
| Evidence of full-time PhD and MBChB/BChD registration required | Evidence of PhD registration required |



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| <p>Institutional support letter: must provide institutional commitment letter from the Dean/dual degree training programme director, describing the combined clinical/research training programme on which the applicant is enrolled. The letter must also confirm that the proposed timeline is appropriate and practical, and that the applicant's training in both the research and the clinical domain will be actively supported by the University.</p> | <p>Institutional support letter: must provide institutional commitment letter from the Faculty/Division Head where employed, describing how the applicant will be supported as well as confirming that the applicant will be granted protected time for the duration of the award. The letter must include the percentage of time per week secured by the applicant.</p> |
| <p>Budget and research support: support letter from the PhD supervisor indicating the availability of research funding for the PhD project and appropriate facilities for the candidate to effectively conduct the research project.</p> | <p>Budget and research support: completed budget request form and should indicate other envisaged sources of funding to be utilised where appropriate, including salary support by employers or funding from university. NB: Awards do not cover overheads</p> |

Requirements for all applications

- 1) South African citizen or permanent resident.
- 2) Must be registered at a South African university.
- 3) Officially approved research proposal and ethics clearance for the PhD project.
- 4) Research abstract to be provided (See example).
- 5) Research project must fall within the SAMRC priority research areas. See list below
 - 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
- 6) **Support letter from the supervisor** who is willing to train and mentor the candidate for the entire duration of the degree. The support letter should clearly describe how the candidate will be supported for the duration of the award, available funding and other resources that the candidate requires to successfully conduct research.
- 7) **Supervisor's abridged curriculum vitae** showing supervisor's research track record in the last 5 years focusing on research grant funding, research outputs including H-index, and PhD student supervision.
- 8) **Applicant's motivational letter** of approximately 500–1000 words demonstrating their suitability for the award and describing how success in the SAMRC Institutional Clinician-Researcher Development Programme application will impact on the candidate's scientific career development as a Clinician Scientist.



- 9) **The applicant's abridged curriculum vitae** detailing clinical training received to date, any prior or current research experience, research outputs (publications, conference presentations etc.) and any meritorious achievement in the academic, clinical or research domains.
- 10) **A proposed timeline for completion** of clinical training where applicable and/or completion of the PhD (Gantt chart format). It should include a description of how the clinical training/duties and research training will be combined, including arrangements to be made where applicants are required to perform internship, community service, complete specialist training time or fulfil employment obligations incurred because of bursaries or contracts upon which training is contingent.

Institutional Support

The SAMRC has a strong expectation that the universities where awardees are registered will extend their support by:

- Partnering with the health service organisations (e.g., hospitals) where awardees are employed for the delivery of the research project/PhD including assisting with negotiating for protected time to conduct research.
- Facilitating the development of innovative and effective dual-training pathways which provide the opportunity for PhD level research alongside the conventional clinical training track.
- Supporting the awardee for the duration of the award by providing for example, co-funding, access to infrastructure, supervision, and in-house training.
- Receiving and administering the award to ensure compliance with the SAMRC regulations on the use of public funds and general terms and conditions of the award.

How to apply

Opening date: 15 July 2024
Closing date: 16 September 2024, 23:59

Application Process

Application steps 1 to 3 below must be completed before or by 16 September 2024, 23:59.

- Step 1 - Complete the [online application](#).
- Step 2 - Upload all the required supporting documents.
- Step 3 - 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 2024, please assume that your application has been unsuccessful.



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

Research Award and Scholarship Conditions

- All remuneration/fellowships and grants received concurrently with this award for the purpose of obtaining a PhD received, must be declared to the Division of Research Capacity Development of the SAMRC.
- Awardees may not, without seeking approval from the Division of Research Capacity Development of the SAMRC, register at a university other than that through which the application was submitted.
- Once the award has been made, the awardee may not change the research supervisor or subject of research without informing the Division of Research Capacity Development of the SAMRC.
- Awardees are required to submit bi-annual progress reports endorsed by the request supervisor or upon request.
- Where applicants are engaged in parallel clinical training (including undergraduate medical training, internship, community service or specialist training), they are required to submit an annual statement detailing their progress with clinical training, with an estimate for completion of training, which must be countersigned by the Dean or Programme Director.
- The award is for one year, renewal of funding will be considered on an annual basis, and success thereof will be subject to satisfactory progress being made.
- Research awardees who have not spent all funds in a particular year must specifically request the carry forward of such funding into the subsequent year within their renewal application. The SAMRC reserves the right to adjust approved research funds based on submitted annual progress reports.
- Awardees are required to attend all training and support workshops organised by the SAMRC RCD
- Successful applicants will be required to enter into an agreement with the SAMRC to complete their studies within the specified time 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 the subsequent years.
- Awardees are expected to conduct the research in accordance with the approved research proposal and budget.

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

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 as 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.

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

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

| Checklist of required supporting documents | check (v) |
|---|-----------|
| To start the application, the applicant must satisfy the conditions of this check list. | |
| All awards | |
| 1) Certified copy of South African identity document | |
| 2) Proof of registration for 2024 | |
| 3) Research abstract (see abstract example) | |
| 4) Evidence of PhD project/proposal approval by Research Office or Postgraduate Office | |
| 5) Evidence of ethics clearance (if applicable) | |
| 6) Institutional support letter | |
| 7) Support letter from the supervisor | |
| 8) Supervisors abridged curriculum vitae | |



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| 9) Applicant's motivational letter | |
| 10) Applicant's curriculum vitae | |
| 11) PhD completion plan signed by both the student and supervisor - proposed timeline for combining clinical training/duties with research training | |
| 12) Budget and research support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scholarship awards for MBChB-PhD candidates: letter indicating availability of project funds and research infrastructure (MBChB-PhD candidates only) Research awards for PhD candidates: Completed Budget Request Form (PhD candidates only) | |



APPLICATION FORM (*Application must be completed online*)

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

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---------|----------|--------|-------|-------|--|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| 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 no: (insert) | | | | | | Attach a certified copy of the ID document and confirm here with a tick (✓) that you have attached it. | | |
| 9. Postal Address: | | | | | | | | |
| 10. Occupation and speciality: | | | | | | | | |
| 11. Clinician category <i>Tick all that best describe you</i> | | | | | | Full time student | Intern doctor | Medical Officer |
| | | | | | | Registrar | Specialist | Sub-specialist |
| | | | | | | Research Officer | Academic head of department | Other (specify) |
| 12. Name of the employer (if applicable): | | | | | | | | |
| 13. Current type of contract and part time arrangements: <i>Please detail the type of contract you currently hold (e.g. full-time clinician, academic consultant, etc).</i> | | | | | | | | |
| 14. Do you have protected time in your current role/contract to conduct research? | | | | | | Yes | No | |
| | | | | | | <i>If yes, please state the number of days per week dedicated to research</i> | | |
| 15. Please confirm the number of days you propose to spend on your PhD if awarded funding (<i>Please note that it is expected you will retain at least 50% of your clinical time</i>) | | | | | | | | |
| 16. Work telephone no: (<i>where Applicable</i>) | | | | | | 17. Mobile no: | | |
| 18. Alternative no: | | | | | | | | |



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| 19. University e-mail address: | |
| 20. Alternative e-mail address: | |

Academic Information (Mark the correct one with a tick $\sqrt{\quad}$)

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| 21. Highest qualification: | | | | |
| 22. This application is for which degree: | MBChB/PhD | | PhD | |
| 23. PhD year of study in 2025: | 1 st | year 2 nd year | 3 rd year | 4 th year |
| 24. Current degree funded by: | | | | |
| 25. University at which you are currently registered or intent to register: | | | | |
| 26. First date of registration | Attach evidence of first date of registration | | | |
| 27. Faculty | | | | |
| 28. Department | | | | |

Research Project Information

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| 29. Title of research project to be funded | | |
| 30. Type of Research | Basic Science Research | Clinical Research |
| | Epidemiological Research | Other (specify type of research) |
| 25. Alignment of the proposed research 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 |
| 26. Potential societal impact of the proposed research | | |
| 27. Science engagement activities: <i>State how you intend to communicate and engage with the wider community on the significance of your</i> | | |



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| <i>research in an effort to bridge the gap between science and society</i> | | |
| 28. Research supervisor's full name | | |
| 29. Research supervisor's institution | | |
| 30. Research supervisor's email address | | |
| 31. Contact no of the research supervisor: | | |
| 32. Co-supervisor's full name (if applicable) | | |
| 33. Co-supervisor's email address | | |
| 34. Co-supervisor's Institution: | | |
| | National | International |
| 35. Proposed research project requires ethics approval | Yes Attach official evidence of approval | No |
| 36. Proposed research project has been approved by the postgraduate office or equivalent office | Yes Attach official evidence of approval | No |

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

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

Submit



Main research supervisor's commitment form

SAMRC supervisor/proposed supervisor will receive a link to complete the form online. This form must be submitted before the closing date.

| | | | |
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| Title (Prof/Dr/Ms/Mr) | | | |
| Research supervisor's full name | | | |
| Institution name | | | |
| Department | | | |
| E-mail address | | | |
| Contact number | | | |
| Are you the main research supervisor of the applicant? | Yes | No | |
| 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 | NA State reason |
| Does the area proposed for the research complement or directly relate to your research interests? | Yes | No | |
| Does the institution have the internal facilities, infrastructure (laboratories or as appropriate) and research funding that will be required for the research to be conducted? | Yes | No | |
| Are there any concerns (if any please provide details) | | | |
| Comment on the feasibility of the proposed research | | | |
| Do you endorse the submitted PhD completion plan. | Yes | No | |
| | If your answer is no please provide reasons | | |
| Will this research project (degree) be completed within the prescribed duration period (2 years for a Masters or 3 years for a PhD) | Yes | No State reasons | |
| 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

