



Bongani Mayosi

NATIONAL HEALTH SCHOLARS PROGRAMME

A partnership between the NDoH, PHEF and the SAMRC

A National Health Research Committee Initiative

Request for Applications

(2026 enrolment)

About BM-NHSP

The Bongani Mayosi National Health Scholars Programme (BM-NHSP) is an initiative by the National Health Research Committee (NHRC) and a partnership between the National Department of Health (NDoH), the Public Health Enhancement Fund (PHEF) and the South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC). The objective of the BM-NHSP is to fund the training of 1000 PhDs in health and clinical research over a 10-year period.

The aim of the BM-NHSP is to contribute positively towards efforts to strengthen and accelerate progress towards equity in research in line with the South African National Department of Health (NDoH) human resource for health strategy and the national health research priorities. The purpose is to attract and enable health professionals to access PhD research opportunities in a university environment and thereby strengthen their research profiles and consequently improve their prospects of permanent employment within the health/clinical research space. The BM-NHSP is designed to develop a vibrant and transformed health research academic pipeline in SA that is adequately equipped to train healthcare workers and inspire a new generation of health/clinical researchers.

The 2026 BM-NHSP Request for Applications (RFA)

Applications are invited for PhD scholarships for study at South African universities. Funding is towards the completion of the degree and is made available for a full degree period (i.e. prescribed time for a PhD) as a tax-free scholarship for full-time study. The value of the scholarship is equivalent to the after-tax take-

home package of the applicant, in terms of the South African Government public service professional scales applicable to the qualification(s) of the candidate (excluding overtime pay). Applicants are to note that, once the benchmarking process has been completed (based on the criteria at the time) and a scholarship amount has been awarded, it will remain fixed for the full duration of the studies, irrespective of a change in circumstances, such as, for example, additional qualifications/credentials obtained or an increase in Occupation Specific Dispensation scales.

The purpose of this RFA is to build capacity in clinical and health research through doctoral-level research training. The current funding opportunity is targeting health professionals who are registered with the Health Professional Bodies such as the Health Professional Council of South Africa (HPCSA), South African Nursing Council (SANC), South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP) and South African Pharmacy Council (SAPC): Professional nurses, Occupational therapists, Optometrists, Biostatisticians, Social Workers, Demographers, Physiotherapists, Pharmacists, Psychologists, Medical Practitioners and Medical Scientists who are currently enrolled for a PhD and conducting research in the following national research priority areas:

1. Health System Strengthening (i.e. Quality, Human Resources, Supply Chain)
2. Early Detection of Non-Communicable Diseases (e.g. access, diagnostics, surveillance).
3. Public Health Innovation towards Health Promotion and Disease Prevention (e.g. HIV Elimination)

Requirements for application (Please check your eligibility before you apply).

- 1) Must be a South African citizen or permanent resident.
- 2) Applicants must hold a master's degree.
- 3) Must have an officially approved PhD research proposal.
- 4) The PhD research proposal must already have ethics approval or be under review at the time of application.
- 5) Must be registered as a full-time PhD student at a South African university at the commencement of the award.
- 6) Must provide a written commitment of participation from an experienced research supervisor who is willing to train the student for the entire duration of the degree.
- 7) The research supervisor must have research funding for the project and appropriate facilities for the scholar to effectively conduct the PhD research project.

Requirements and Selection Criteria (Please use this list to make sure your application is complete)	Attached check (v)
1. Cover Letter: Max. 1 page: Motivation demonstrating the candidate's suitability and describing how success in the BM-NHSP application will impact the candidate's career.	
2. Curriculum vitae: An abridged curriculum vitae containing a full list of research outputs for the last seven years and other meritorious achievements. Include all awards received e.g. scholarships/bursaries, research awards, etc.	
3. Abstract (Quality of the research): Max. 2 pages: Abstract of the PhD proposal outlining the rationale, design, feasibility, plans for research translation and information dissemination as well as potential impact of the proposed research project. NB: The proposed research project must be aligned with the priority research areas for this specific call.	
4. PhD project approval letter: <i>An official approval letter confirming that the candidate's research proposal has been formally approved.</i>	
5. PhD completion plan: If 2026 is the applicant's fourth year of PhD registration, please attach applicant's PhD completion plan signed by both the applicant and supervisor.	
6. Research support Letter: Max. 1-page: A letter from the host institution confirming that it will provide the necessary facilities to enable the scholar to effectively conduct the PhD research project. The letter must also specify the availability of project research funding and clearly list all institutional contributions (financial or in-kind, e.g., laboratory space). The letter must be signed by the Head of Department.	
7. Official letter confirming the date of first registration for the degree to be funded	
8. Current proof of PhD registration	
9. Proof of ethics clearance, or an official letter confirming that the proposal is currently under ethics review.	
10. Certified copy of the applicant's South African identity document (must be certified by a Commissioner of Oaths and must not be older than 6 months)	
11. Payslip (not older than three months)	

How to apply

Opening date: 6 May 2026
Closing date: 9 July 2026, 23:59 **extended to 23 July 2026**
Supervisor submission to SAMRC closing date: 16 July 2026, 23:59 **extended to 30 July 2026**

Application Process

Application steps 1 to 3 below must be completed before the specified deadlines.

- Step 1 – Applicant to complete the [online application](#) form **by 23 July 2026**.
- Step 2 – Applicant to upload all the required supporting documents **by 23 July 2026**.
- Step 3 – The research supervisor must complete the research supervisor's abridged track record and commitment form and submit the application before or **by 30 July 2026**.

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 30 November 2026, 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.
- Teaching and clinical activities may not take up more than 20% of the time of the scholar.
- Candidates may not hold a bursary from more than one South African Government statutory entity at any given time.
- Scholarship holders may not receive, concurrently with this scholarship, other bursaries, grants or remuneration which bind them to enter the service of any organization without prior agreement of the SAMRC.
- Scholarship holders may not receive, concurrently with this scholarship, other non-binding remuneration/fellowships and grants without prior agreement on engagement.
- Scholarship recipients will be required to declare the value of any other scholarship(s) or award(s), whether in cash or in-kind or direct payments into their personal bank accounts that they may hold for the same study programme.
- Scholarship holders may not, without seeking approval from the SAMRC, register at a university other than that through which the application has been submitted.
- Once the scholarship has been awarded, the scholarship holder may not change his/her supervisor without informing the SAMRC.
- Application for renewal of funding will be considered on an annual basis, and success thereof will be subject to satisfactory progress being made.
- Continuation of funding is subject to the submission of a satisfactory progress report from both student and supervisor.
- The scholarship is for the specified enrolment year and therefore cannot be deferred to subsequent years.
- Successful applicants will be required to sign acceptance of the SAMRC Scholarship terms and 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 complies 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 applications 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.

Y	N
---	---

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

Incomplete applications will not be considered. Should you not hear from the SAMRC by 30 November 2026, please assume that your application has been unsuccessful.

Application Form [\(online\)](#)

Personal details:

1. Title (Ms, Mr, Dr)	2. First name:				
3. Surname:					
4. Gender:	Female		Male		
5. Population group:	African	Coloured	Indian	Asian	White
6. Citizenship	South African citizen		South African permanent resident	Other (Specify)	
7. ID number:	Attach a certified copy of South African identity document (not older than 6 months)				
8. ORCID iD Register - ORCID					
9. Postal address:	10. Physical address:				
11. Work telephone number: (<i>where applicable</i>)	12. Mobile number:				
13. University e-mail address:	14. Personal e-mail address:				

Academic Information:

15. Highest qualification		
16. Are you a health professional	Yes	No (end form)
17. Profession		
18. Which health professional body are you registered with?	Health Professional Council of South Africa (HPCSA),	South African Nursing Council (SANC)
	South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP)	South African Pharmacy Council (SAPC)
	Other (Please specify)	
19. Registration number		
20. Years of experience in the profession		
21. Current position (where applicable)		

22. Name of the employer (where applicable)		
23. Income per annum (pre-tax, where applicable)	Attach recent payslip (not older than three months)	
24. Alignment of the proposed research with the priority research areas of this call	Health System Strengthening (i.e. Quality, Human Resources, Supply Chain)	
	Early Detection of Non-Communicable Diseases (e.g. access, diagnostics, surveillance).	
	Public Health Innovation towards Health Promotion and Disease Prevention (e.g. HIV Elimination)	
25. Are you registered for a PhD? <i>Please mark the correct box</i>	Yes (attach evidence of current registration)	No
26. PhD registration in 2026	Full-time	Part-time
27. Have you discussed your intention to study full-time with your employer and made the necessary arrangements?	Yes	No
28. Do you intend to register full-time if funding is awarded?	Yes	No
29. Year of PhD study in 2026	First Year	Second Year
	Third Year	Fourth Year Attach completion plan signed by applicant and supervisor
30. University at which you have been accepted/registered/intend to register		
31. Date of first registration for the degree to be funded	Attach evidence	
32. Faculty		
33. Department		
34. Title of PhD research project		
35. The proposed research project has been approved by the postgraduate office or equivalent office:	Yes Attach official evidence of approval	No

36. The proposed research project requires ethics approval:	Yes, ethics already approved Attach official evidence of approval	Under ethics review Attach official evidence of submission	No
37. Research field (e.g., Digital Health):			
38. Potential societal impact of the proposed research study			
39. 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>			
40. Please comment on the progress to date if the applicant is already enrolled in the PhD programme			
41. List your PhD supervisory team	Full name	Area of Expertise	
42. Full name of the PhD supervisor			
43. E-mail address of PhD supervisor			
44. Contact number of PhD supervisor			
45. PhD co-supervisor (where applicable)			
46. Email address of PhD co-supervisor			
47. Name and surname of the Department's student financial administrator. The person(s) responsible for issuing invoices and preparing financial reports.			
48. Email of the Department's student financial administrator.			
49. Contact number of the Department's student financial administrator.			

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

Signature:	Date:
------------	-------

Research supervisor's abridged track record and commitment form

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

1. Title (Professor/Dr/Ms/Mr)		
2. Research supervisor's full name		
3. Institution name		
4. E-mail address		
5. Contact number		
6. h-index		
7. Number of citations		
8. Number of Articles in refereed/ peer-reviewed journals in the last five years		
9. Number of Books (authored or edited)		
10. Number of Chapters in books		
11. Number of Refereed/peer-reviewed conference outputs		
12. Number of Patents		
13. Number of Articles in non-refereed/ non-peer-reviewed journals		
14. Number of Technical Reports		
15. Number of Other contributions/ reports (e.g. Policy reports/briefs, Research briefs)		
16. Number of Masters candidates graduated in the last five years		
17. Number of Doctoral candidates graduated in the last five years		
18. Number of Masters candidates currently supervised		
19. Number of Doctoral candidates currently supervised		
20. Are you the main research supervisor of the applicant?	Yes	No

21. If no, please enter the main supervisor's name and surname			
22. Applicant name and surname			
23. Has the candidate's research proposal been approved by the institution / or relevant authorised office?	Yes	No	
24. Does the proposed project require ethical clearance?	Yes	No	
25. Has the ethics committee approved the research proposal?	Yes	No	If not applicable, state reason
26. Alignment of the proposed research with the priority research areas for this call	Health System Strengthening (i.e. Quality, Human Resources, Supply Chain)		
	Early Detection of Non-Communicable Diseases (e.g. access, diagnostics, surveillance).		
	Public Health Innovation towards Health Promotion and Disease Prevention (e.g. HIV Elimination)		
27. Are there any concerns (if any please provide details)			
28. Comment on the feasibility of the proposed research study			
29. Will this research project (degree) be completed within the prescribed degree duration? (PhD = 3 years)	Yes	No State reasons	
30. Please comment on progress to date if the applicant is already enrolled in the PhD programme			
31. Please 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 or by 16 July 2026.

