

## **SAMRC Researcher Development Programme**

### **PhD research funding for clinical, medical or health researchers**

The number of doctoral degrees awarded is an important indicator of progress towards the goals of South Africa's National Development Plan, reflecting the relationship between national doctoral training capacity and broader socio-economic development. Evidence indicates that countries with higher levels of PhD attainment tend to demonstrate stronger innovation capacity and economic growth. In addition, a doctoral qualification is a prerequisite for researchers who wish to supervise and train doctoral candidates. This funding instrument is intended to support individuals employed at public academic institutions, SAMRC intramural and extramural research units, and SAMRC research centres, who are engaged in health, medical or clinical research, to improve their academic qualifications. This once-off award is aimed at emerging researchers in the final 12 months of their PhD studies and is intended to alleviate pressures that may hinder the timely completion of the degree. The funds can be used to afford dedicated time to spend on research activities, either as a salary while on unpaid leave or to pay for work relief, or any other justified intervention that will facilitate PhD completion. Priority will be given to applicants who demonstrate a high likelihood of successful completion within 12 months of being awarded funding, including those with a strong publication track record or at least one accepted publication arising from their PhD research. The programme targets designated groups and is expected to increase the number of academics with PhD degrees as part of overall research capacity strengthening and transformation.

Value of the award: The maximum value of the award is R250,000

Funding period:

- Maximum of 12 months.
- Applicants within SAMRC who have secured an NRF Thuthuka grant for the purpose of obtaining a PhD may split the award over three years.

### **Requirements for all applications**

- 1) South African citizen or permanent resident.
- 2) Full-time employees of public academic institutions in South Africa or SAMRC researchers.
- 3) Officially approved research proposal and ethics clearance (where applicable) for the PhD project.
- 4) Must have at least one accepted publication emanating from their PhD studies.
- 5) Must complete their thesis write-up within twelve (12) months from the date of commencement of the award.
- 6) Research abstract to be provided (see example).
- 7) Full research proposal to be provided.
- 8) Research project must fall within the SAMRC priority research areas. See the list below:
  - Infectious diseases



- Non-communicable diseases
- Maternal, child and adolescent health
- Health systems and policy research
- Digital health and artificial intelligence
- Climate change and health
- Genomics
- Antimicrobial resistance
- Pandemic preparedness

## How to apply

**Opening date:** 18 June 2026  
**Closing date:** 18 August 2026, 23:59

## Application Process

Application steps 1 to 2 below must be completed before or by the indicated deadlines.

- Step 1 – Applicant to complete the [online application](#) by **18 August 2026**
- Step 2 – Applicant to upload all the required supporting documents by **18 August 2026**
- Step 3 – Research supervisor must complete the research supervisor’s commitment form and submit the application by **25 August 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 31 December 2026, please assume that your application has been unsuccessful.**

For enquiries, contact Dr Lindokuhle Ndlandla at [Lindokuhle.Ndlandla@mrc.ac.za](mailto: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 (RCD) of the SAMRC.
- Awardees may not register at a university other than that through which the application was submitted, without seeking approval from RCD.
- Once the award has been made, the awardee may not change the research supervisor or subject of research without informing RCD.
- Awardees are required to submit bi-annual progress reports endorsed by the research supervisor upon request.
- The award is a once-off funding for one year and is non-renewable.



- Awardees must complete their thesis write-up within twelve (12) months from the date of commencement of the award.
- Awardees are required to attend all training and support workshops organised by RCD.
- 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.
- Where the applicant requires a PhD support stipend to secure protected time for doctoral studies and research activities, a clear motivation must be provided with a cost breakdown. The stipend must be explicitly included in the submitted budget and is subject to prior review and approval by the SAMRC.
- The awardee acknowledges and agrees that any tax liability or other statutory obligations arising from the receipt of such stipend shall be the sole responsibility of the awardee. The SAMRC shall bear no responsibility for any tax, levy, penalty, or related obligation associated with the stipend.
- Any approved stipend will be administered in accordance with the Host Institution's policies and procedures governing support for full-time employed PhD candidates.
- The scholarship is for the specified enrolment year and therefore cannot be deferred to subsequent years.
- Awardees are expected to conduct their research in accordance with the approved research proposal and budget.

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 purpose 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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Checklist of required supporting documents	check (v)
<b>To start the application, the applicant must satisfy the conditions of this check list.</b>	
1) Certified copy of South African identity document <i>Must be certified within the last 6 months from submission of application</i>	
2) Proof of registration for 2026	
3) Research abstract - <b>see abstract example</b>	
4) Full research proposal	
5) Evidence of PhD project/proposal approval by Research Office or Postgraduate Office	
6) Evidence of ethics clearance (if applicable)	
7) <b>Research support letter from the employer (preferably Head of Department)</b> confirming the applicant's employment and departmental affiliation, the support that will be provided to the candidate for the duration of the award, such as granting of protected time; and/or where applicable the appointment of a suitable replacement in order to facilitate the uninterrupted work at the institution, an assurance of a position to which to return upon completion of the study leave, and highlight the anticipated benefits of the PhD to the institution	
8) <b>Supervisor's abridged curriculum vitae</b> showing supervisor's research track record in the last 5 years, focusing on research grant funding, research outputs including h-index, and number of current PhDs supervised and PhDs graduated	
9) <b>Applicant's motivational letter:</b> approximately 500–1000 words demonstrating their suitability for the award and describing how success in the SAMRC Researcher Development Award Programme application will impact on the candidate's scientific career development	
10) <b>Applicant's curriculum vitae</b> detailing all training and research experience to date, research outputs (publications, conference presentations etc.) and any meritorious achievement in the academic, clinical or research domains	
11) <b>PhD completion plan:</b> a detailed timeline for completion of the tasks that remain for finalization of the thesis in the form of a Gantt chart and must be signed by both the applicant and supervisor. This document must be accompanied by a summary of completed milestones, outstanding activities, and a realistic timeline for completion, demonstrating how the requested funding will support the successful submission and completion of the PhD.	
12) <b>Budget request indicating how the award will be utilised - see budget template</b> If a PhD support stipend is requested, a clear motivation must be provided, and the amount requested must be explicitly reflected in the submitted budget.	
13) <b>Evidence of research outputs</b> emanating from your PhD studies	



**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 number: (insert)						Attach a certified copy of the ID document and confirm here with a tick (✓) 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:								
15. Occupation:								
16. Name of the employing institution:								
17. If employed by the SAMRC, please provide the Research Unit name								
18. Details of the head of department in the employing institution:						Title		Full name
						Email address		Contact number
19. Current type of contract and part time arrangements: <i>Please detail the type of contract you currently hold (e.g. full-time fixed contract, permanent position etc.).</i>								
20. Do you have protected time in your current role/contract dedicated to your PhD studies?						Yes		No
						<i>If yes, please state the number of hours per week dedicated to your PhD studies</i>		
21. Please confirm the number of hours you propose to spend on your PhD if awarded funding:								



22. Anticipated completion date:			
23. Will you be taking sabbatical leave to complete your PhD?	Yes	No	
24. Expected start (DD/MM/YYYY) and end dates of sabbatical leave (DD/MM/YYYY):			
25. Will arrangements be in place to ensure that all your teaching, clinical, and research responsibilities are adequately covered during your sabbatical period?	Yes	No	N/A

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

26. Highest qualification:							
27. This application is for which degree:	e.g., PhD in Psychology						
28. PhD year of study in 2027:	1st year	2nd year	3rd year	4th year	5th year	6th year	7th year
29. University at which you are currently registered:							
30. First date of registration:							
31. Faculty:							
32. Department:							

**Research Project Information**

33. Title of research project to be funded:		
34. Type of Research:	Basic Science Research	Clinical Research
	Epidemiological Research	Other (specify type of research)
34. Alignment of the proposed research to the SAMRC priority research areas. Tick the appropriate areas.	Infectious diseases	Non-communicable diseases
	Health systems and policy research	Maternal, child and adolescent health



	Climate change and health	Digital health and artificial intelligence	
	Antimicrobial resistance	Genomics	
	Pandemic preparedness		
35. Potential societal impact of the proposed research:			
36. Do you have any research outputs emanating from your PhD studies:	Yes (please upload)	No	
37. Proposed research project requires ethics approval:	Yes <i>Attach official evidence of approval</i>	No	
38. Proposed research project has been approved by the postgraduate office or equivalent office:	Yes <i>Attach official evidence of approval</i>	No	
39. Attach PhD Completion Plan (signed by the main supervisor):	<i>The document should clearly detail the work completed to date, outstanding tasks, and the key milestones both achieved and anticipated. These milestones should include the literature review, data collection, data analysis, research publications, conference presentations, and final thesis submission, and must be accompanied by clear, realistic, and time-bound timelines.</i>		
40. Is your PhD research project funded by the NRF	Yes	No	
41. If your PhD research is funded by the NRF, please provide the following information	Funding instrument or program e.g., NRF Thuthuka-PhD track	Period of support e.g., (2025-2027)	Award amount per annum

**Research Supervision Information**

37. Main research supervisor's full name:	
38. Main research supervisor's institution:	
39. Main research supervisor's email address:	
40. Main research supervisor's contact number:	
41. Co-supervisor's full name (if applicable):	
42. Co-supervisor's email address:	
43. Co-supervisor's institution:	



	National	International
44. List your PhD supervisory team	Full name	Area of Expertise
45. Name and surname of the Department's student financial administrator. The person(s) responsible for issuing invoices and preparing financial reports.		
45. Email of the Department's student financial administrator.		
46. Contact number of the Department's student financial administrator.		

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



## 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	Infectious diseases	Non-communicable diseases
	Maternal, child and adolescent health	Health systems and policy research
	Digital health and artificial intelligence	Climate change and health
	Genomics	Antimicrobial resistance
	Pandemic preparedness	
27. Are there any concerns (if any please provide details)		
28. Please provide an assessment of the scholar's progress to date, highlighting key milestones achieved and outlining the remaining work required for completion (100 words)		
29. Will this research project (degree) be completed within the funding period of one year	Yes	No State reasons

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 25 August 2026.**

