

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

SAMRC INTRA- & EXTRAMURAL RESEARCH UNITS, RESEARCH CENTRES AND PLATFORMS

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) grow 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 foster sustainable long-term collaboration with national and international institutions through joint supervision of South African students. This programme promotes 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's intramural or extramural research units, research centres, or platforms. Therefore, preference will be given to candidates of the designated groups, registered for a doctoral degree or master's 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 Master's candidates within the following research fields, which will be given preference: Behavioral Sciences, 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 of study), notwithstanding that the previous years were not funded by the SAMRC. Funding for the fourth year is not automatic and will be contingent upon demonstrated progress and a compelling motivation. 2. Candidates must i) provide proof of being registered full-time, ii) have PhD research approval, and iii) ethics clearance, where applicable.

Masters	1 + (1 year on compelling motivation from the hosting Unit Director and Supervisor)	R200 000.00	- Candidates will only be funded for the prescribed MSc duration (i.e., maximum of years of study), notwithstanding that the previous year was not funded by SAMRC. Funding for the second year is not automatic and will be contingent upon demonstrated progress and a compelling motivation. - Candidates who are applying for funding for 2nd year Masters enrollment in 2027 must i) provide proof of full-time registration, ii) have a master's research proposal approval, and iii) ethics clearance where applicable. - Candidates who will be enrolling for 1st year of a master's degree in 2027 must provide i) a support letter from the proposed supervisor at the institution where they will register, and ii) an admission letter.
---------	---	-------------	---

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. 3) Must be registered as a full-time student at a South African university. 4) The research project must fall within the SAMRC priority research areas 5) A written commitment of participation by a research unit director from the SAMRC intramural unit or SAMRC extramural unit or SAMRC research centre or platform who is willing to host the student for the entire duration of the degree. 6) The candidate must receive supervisory support from a researcher based at the SAMRC intramural unit or SAMRC extramural unit or SAMRC research centre or platform, who	<u>2nd year Masters candidates</u> 1) South African citizen or permanent resident. 2) A fully developed and officially approved research proposal. 3) Must be registered as a full-time student at a South African university. 4) The research project must fall within the SAMRC priority research areas 5) A written commitment of participation by a research unit director from the SAMRC intramural unit or SAMRC extramural unit or SAMRC research centre or platform who is willing to host the student for the entire duration of the degree. 6) The candidate must receive supervisory support from a researcher based at the SAMRC intramural unit or SAMRC extramural unit or SAMRC research centre or platform, who

is committed to training and mentoring 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.	is committed to training and mentoring 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</u> 1) South African citizen or permanent resident. 2) Admitted into a Master's programme at a South African university for studies in 2027. 3) Letter of support from your proposed supervisor at the university. 4) Letter of recommendation from your proposed supervisor at SAMRC 5) A written commitment of participation by a research unit director from the SAMRC intramural unit or SAMRC extramural unit or SAMRC research centre or platform 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.
---	---

How to apply

Opening date: 22 July 2026
Closing date: 22 September 2026, 23:59
Supervisor submission to SAMRC closing date: 29 September 2026, 23:59

Application Process

- Step 1a – External Applicants and Supervisors must [register](#) or [login](#) to the Research and Innovation Management System (RIMS) **by 22 September 2026**.
- Step 1b – Internal Applicants must [login](#) to the Research and Innovation Management System (RIMS) **by 22 September 2026**.
- Step 2 – All Applicants to complete the online application and upload all the required supporting documents by **22 September 2022**. *All required supporting documents are listed in this document.*
- Step 3 – The SAMRC research supervisor must complete the research supervisor's commitment form and submit the application by **29 September 2026**.

Please refer to the [Applicant](#) and [Supervisor](#) Manuals for a comprehensive step-by-step guide guidance on completing the application process.

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 / 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.
- Scholarship recipients will be required to sign acceptance of the SAMRC scholarship terms and conditions.

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

Y	N
---	---

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
---	---

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: [External Applicants](#) or [Internal Applicants](#))

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 (not older than 6 months) 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 (e.g., MSc Neurobiology):		
16. ORCID iD Register - ORCID		
17. This application is for which degree level:	PhD	Masters
18. Full name of the degree to be funded (e.g., PhD in Neurobiology):		
19. First date of registration for the degree to be funded:		

20. PhD/Masters year of registration in 2027	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).
21. Current degree funded by:				
22. University at which you are currently registered or intend to register for your PhD/Masters:				
23. Faculty:				
24. Department:				
25. Proposed research project requires ethics approval:	Yes Attach official evidence of approval	Under ethics review Attach official evidence of approval		No
26. Proposed research project has been approved by the postgraduate office or equivalent office:	Yes Attach official evidence of approval	No		
27. Title of research project to be funded:				
28. Research field:	Behavioural Science		Bioinformatics	
	Biostatistics		Bioethics	
	Data Science		Digital Health	
	Demography and population studies		Epidemiology	
	Evolutionary Virology		Environmental Public Health	
	Genomics		Health Economics	
	Implementation and Translational Science		Immunology	
	Structural Biology			
29. Alignment of the proposed research project to the SAMRC priority research areas:	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	Behavioural science in relation to the uptake and use of health interventions
30. Abstract: Attach a concise overview (maximum two pages) outlining the aims, objectives, methodology, data accessibility, and feasibility	Attach abstract	
31. Potential societal impact of the proposed research study		
32. 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>		
33. Please comment on the progress to date if the applicant is already enrolled in the PhD programme		
34. SAMRC research supervisor's full name:		
35. The SAMRC research supervisor is based	SAMRC Intramural Unit	SAMRC Extramural Unit
	SAMRC Research Centre	SAMRC Research Platform
	None (not eligible-end)	
36. Name of the SAMRC Research Unit where the supervisor is based:		
37. SAMRC research supervisor's email address:		
38. SAMRC research supervisor's contact number:		
39. University supervisor's full name:		
40. University supervisor's email address:		
41. University supervisor's contact number:		
1. Name and surname of the Department's student		

financial administrator. The person(s) responsible for issuing invoices and preparing financial reports.	
2. Email of the Department's student financial administrator.	
3. 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.

Checklist: List of required supporting documents

Requirements and selection criteria (Please use this list to ensure that your application is complete)	Attached check (v)		
1. Cover letter: 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. Applicant's abridged curriculum vitae: Applicant's CV containing a full list of research outputs in the last seven years and other meritorious achievements. Include all awards received e.g. scholarships/bursaries; research awards.			
3. Abstract (Quality of the research): Max. 2 pages: Abstract of the PhD research proposal outlining the aim and objectives, rationale, design, methodology, feasibility, plans for research translation and information dissemination, and the potential impact of the proposed research project. NB: The proposed research project must be aligned with the SAMRC priority research areas listed on the application form.	Y	N	
4. Main (university) supervisor's abridged CV (Supervisor CV template can be found here): Max. 2 pages: An abridged outline of research outputs, 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 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/or running costs and clearly list all institutional contributions (financial or in-kind, e.g., laboratory space). The letter must be signed by the SAMRC Research Unit Director.	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 OR an official admission letter from the institution where you intend to register if 2027 will be your first year of registration.	Y	N	
7. PhD/MSc project approval letter:	Y	N	

<i>An official approval letter confirming that the applicant's final version of their research proposal has been formally approved.</i> OR (Only applicable to MSc candidates resuming studies in 2027) <i>A letter from the research supervisor confirming the approval of the candidate's research proposal concept note by both SAMRC and academic supervisors. The letter should clearly outline any coursework to be completed, together with the research component including key milestones such as proposal development and approval, literature review, data collection, data analysis, and final thesis submission. Each milestone should be accompanied by clear and realistic timelines.</i>			
8. Evidence of ethics clearance, where applicable, or an official letter confirming that the project proposal is still under ethics review.	Y	N	If not applicable, provide a reason
9. Official letter confirming the date of first registration for the degree to be funded. <i>Only applicable to currently registered applicants.</i>			
10. PhD completion plan (Gantt Chart): <i>If 2027 is the applicant's fourth year of PhD registration, please attach the applicant's PhD completion plan signed by both the applicant and the supervisor. This must be accompanied by a letter that clearly outlines the work to be completed (including any required coursework where applicable) with clear timelines.</i>			

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

Submit

Research Supervisor's Commitment Form (including abridged research track record)

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

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

23. If no, please enter the main supervisor's name and surname (and attach the main supervisor's CV- (see Supervisor CV template))			
24. Applicant name and surname			
25. Has the Unit Director approved the hosting of the candidate?	Yes Please attach the research support letter signed by the Unit Director	No	
26. Has the candidate's research proposal been approved by the institution / or relevant authorised office?	Yes	No	
27. Does the proposed project require ethical clearance?	Yes	No	
28. Has the ethics committee approved the research proposal?	Yes	No	If not applicable, state reason
29. Alignment of the proposed research with the priority research areas for this call	Health Economics and National Health Insurance (NHI)	Brain, Behaviour, and Mental Health (including neuroscience and brain injury)	
	Disease Prevention and Health Promotion	HIV and TB and other infectious diseases	
	Maternal, Infant, Child and Adolescent Health	Non-Communicable Diseases	
	Behavioural science in relation to the uptake and use of health interventions	Vaccines, Diagnostics and Drug Discovery	
	African Traditional Medicines	Climate change, Environmental Health, Occupational Health and One Health	

30. Do you have any concerns regarding the applicant's candidature? (if any please provide details)		
31. Comment on the feasibility of the proposed research study		
32. Will this research project (degree) be completed within the prescribed degree duration? (PhD = 3 years)	Yes	No State reasons
33. Please comment on progress to date if the applicant is already enrolled in the PhD programme		
34. 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 the closing date.