

2018 Call for Doctoral Scholarships for Research using a Systems Analysis Methodology

Southern African
Systems Analysis Centre (SASAC)

Online applications open: 28 August 2017

Closing date: 29 September 2017

Background

The [Department of Science and Technology \(DST\)](#) and the [National Research Foundation \(NRF\)](#) have taken a strategic decision to continue investing in and expanding activities in developing systems analysis. This type of research will play a pivotal role in solving global challenges and contributing to development. In collaboration with the [International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis \(IIASA\)](#) and the [Newton Fund \(UK\)](#) – a component of which is managed by the [British Council](#) – the NRF is pleased to announce the third call for a three-year Doctoral scholarship in any field, but with a [Systems Analysis](#) methodology and approach being applied to the research topic.

South Africa, through the NRF, became a member of the [International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis \(IIASA\)](#) in 2007. A range of research and capacity building activities have been developed by South African research partners and IIASA. The Southern African Systems Analysis Centre (SASAC) was officially launched by the Minister of Science and Technology in May 2016. The SASAC initiative follows on the Southern African Young Scientists Summer Programme (SA-YSSP) that was launched in November 2011. SASAC is a multi-year initiative coordinated by the [University of the Western Cape](#), in partnership with the Universities of [Limpopo](#) and the [Witwatersrand](#), and [Stellenbosch University](#). This initiative takes cognisance of additional and multi-level systems analysis capacity interventions, and a comprehensive approach to policy-related activities in South- and Southern Africa. SASAC offers dedicated three-year bursaries for South African and African PhD students based at a South African university to complete their studies with a supervisor from South Africa experienced in systems analysis, in collaboration with a co-supervisor from a Southern African or UK-based institution associated with IIASA.

SASAC PhD Programme Objective

The aim of the SASAC PhD programme is to provide an opportunity for excellent young doctoral students to advance their research under the direct supervision of senior scientists from South African and UK-based research and higher education institutions (HEIs) and IIASA, and at the same time contribute to IIASA's ongoing scientific agenda and to the research agenda set out in the DST's strategic plan for the period 2015-2020. The SASAC PhD curriculum will provide young and emerging researchers with the following benefits:

- A three-year scholarship for 20 South African citizens and 10 African PhD students based at South African universities.
- 10 of these scholarships will be awarded to students being co-supervised by researchers based at UK HEIs, including mobility grants to support collaboration on the PhD study.
- A capacity development intervention during the early stage of their PhD studies.

- Supervision by experienced South African/African and IIASA/UK scientists, as well as contributing to collaborative research by the supervising senior scientists.
- Broadening their research into interdisciplinary and trans-boundary research relevant to national, regional, and global needs.
- Opportunities for research publications in internationally accredited/ recognised scientific journals in collaboration with IIASA/UK and senior South African scientists.
- Exposure to international research through engagements with national and international experts, participating in programmes such as seminar series.
- Exposure to local, national, regional and international research programmes.
- Opportunities to build long-lasting collaborative contacts with the senior supervisors and with other programme participants.

Collaboration with IIASA and DST

[IIASA](#) is an independent international non-governmental research organisation, headquartered in Luxemburg, Austria, that provides science-based insights into complex global, regional and national problems. IIASA conducts policy-oriented scientific research in three global problem areas, namely 1) energy and climate change; 2) food and water; and 3) poverty and equity. Its three cross-cutting research areas are 1) drivers of global transformations; 2) advanced systems analysis; and 3) policy and governance.

The following are IIASA's current [Research Programmes](#):

- Advanced Systems Analysis
- Ecosystems Services and Management
- Energy
- Evolution and Ecology
- Mitigation of Air Pollution and Greenhouse Gases
- Risk, Policy and Vulnerability
- Transitions to New Technologies
- World Population
- Water.

South Africa priority areas aligned to systems approaches:

South Africa's engagements with IIASA and specifically with regard to SASAC relate primarily to the DST's broader goal of harnessing science, technology and innovation to fight poverty, inequality and unemployment. The collaboration must contribute to key DST strategies such as the Ten Year Innovation Plan, the Bio-economy Strategy, the ICT Research Development and Innovation Implementation Roadmap and the Human Capital Development Strategy for Research Innovation and Scholarship.

Two primary cross-cutters between IIASA's and DST's agendas with regard to SASAC are human capital development with special focus on young and emerging researchers, and policy impact.

Areas of Support

This PhD scholarship is applicable to all academic disciplines, and includes the Social Sciences, Humanities, Natural Sciences, Engineering and Technology, but with a [Systems Analysis](#) methodology and approach being applied to the research topic.

Eligibility

The eligibility criteria for this funding instrument are as follows:

- The applicant must **be an academic or researcher in the higher education sector in South Africa who wishes to supervise a doctoral student;**
- The supervisor nominates a student that he/she will potentially supervise for Doctoral studies. The student must be able to work independently and be able to interact with other scientists;
- The supervisor submits the application on behalf of and in consultation with their nominated student/s who is/are registered or intends to register for doctoral studies in 2018. A supervisor (applicant) can apply for scholarships for a maximum of 2 students in this call;
- Details of the proposed research must clearly be aligned to IIASA's research programmes and DST's research priority areas;
- For those wishing to be co-supervised by a UK HEI, students must provide a letter of support from a UK-based host institution indicating support of a UK co-supervisor, including a plan for co-supervision and for proposed mobility visits. Requests for support in linking with a UK HEI [can be accessed here](#) or email Anisa.Khan@britishcouncil.org.

Conditions of the Scholarship

If the application is successful and the award is made,

The supervisor (applicant) must:

- participate for at least 3 days in the compulsory January 2018 inception meeting and for the last 5 days of the compulsory capacity development programme in June/July 2018; or whenever required in consultation with the management team of SASAC;
- be supported by the head of department in their faculty indicating that the supervisor has the applicable infrastructure, resources and funds for undertaking the research and supporting the student within their faculty/school/department;
- where applicable, work together with the UK supervisor in developing a programme of support/ co-supervision for the duration of the 3-year PhD study;
- Provide progress reports on student progress.

The student must:

- be registered for a full-time doctoral degree in 2018, and can be either a new student or in their first six months of their doctoral studies in January 2018;
- provide their Masters degree certificate or an official document from the university certifying that the student has met the requirements for the Masters degree and will graduate;
- provide proof of registration for the 2018 academic year by the deadline of 20 March 2018. Failure to do so would result in the scholarship being cancelled;
- not hold this scholarship concurrently with another NRF or government scholarships;
- ensure that the combined value of this and any other additional scholarships from other sources do not exceed their institution's capped amounts;
- participate for the full duration of both the two-week compulsory inception meeting to be held in January 2018 and the 5-week capacity development programme held in June/July 2018; or whenever required in consultation with the management team of SASAC;
- complete their doctoral studies within three years;
- submit a manuscript to an international scientific journal before graduating with the doctoral degree;
- where applicable, students must submit progress reports to the British Council following mobility visits to UK co-supervisors.

Value of the award

- For the nominated student, a doctoral scholarship to the amount of R110 000 per year, over a period of 3 years subject to satisfactory progress and meeting all the requirements of the SASAC programme;
- For both the supervisor and the student, fully paid expenses for participating in the applicable SASAC activities. These include where applicable: flights, travel visas, accommodation and meals which will be arranged by the management team of SASAC;
- All students will be able to apply for mobility grants for travel to attend conferences, research meetings or to meet with IIASA/ UK co-supervisors.

Application Procedure

- Supervisors should submit applications electronically on the NRF Online Submission System at <https://nrfs submission.nrf.ac.za>.
- Register/Log in using your ID number/Passport number and password
- Go to 'My Applications'
- Select 'Create Application'
- Select the call for which you are applying for: **SASAC Call for PhD Bursaries 2018**
- Click on the 'Apply' icon on the right
- Complete all the compulsory sections and the non-compulsory sections that are relevant to you
- Please attach the necessary documents in **PDF format**:

- **South Africans:** Copy of ID document or proof of permanent residence (if applicable) and certified academic transcripts
- **African students:** Copy of passport and certified academic transcripts
- **Letter of Support from UK HE or research institution (for those applying for the UK co-supervised PhD opportunity)**
 - Should you not follow the guidelines for attaching the necessary supporting documents, your application may not be considered
 - Remember to **submit** your application on completion
 - Incomplete applications will not be considered.

No hard copies of the application can be accepted and will automatically be disqualified by the NRF. Only applications endorsed by the research office or its equivalent at higher education or research institutions will be accepted.

Closing date

Applications must be submitted by **29 September 2017**. Late applications will not be accepted.

Contact details

Ms Gugu Dube
Professional Officer
Human and Infrastructure Capacity Development (HICD)
Email: gugu.dube@nrf.ac.za
Tel: +27 12 481 4169

For those enquiring regarding the UK co-supervised PhD opportunity:

Ms Anisa Khan
British Council Newton Fund Programme Manager
Email: Anisa.Khan@britishcouncil.org
Tel: +27 11 560 9312