

Bursaries and fellowships in the field of global change and sustainability, for 2015

The Global Change and Sustainability Research Institute (GCSRI) at the University of the Witwatersrand, invite applications for the following funding opportunities:

1. Water-related research

The focus of this call is in the broad water research domain, and we invite applications for masters', doctoral and postdoctoral support, from all disciplines. Bursaries and running costs are supported. Water is a key part of everyday life and it connects people, places and problems across a variety of sectors, industries and disciplines. This connectedness of water, physically through waterways and distribution infrastructure, and conceptually across disciplinary boundaries, makes it an ideal test case to explore new ways to do research, and to do so while aiming for real implementable solutions. With the awards in this call, we want to explore the water connectedness theme and associated systems behaviour in the context of global change and sustainability.

2. African Food Systems

Within a funded, Africa-wide research network, Wits focuses on "Urban-rural food system dynamics in the face of climate change". In Africa, understanding urban-rural transitions is one of the key challenges to ensure a sustainable future on the continent. Masters'-, doctoral and postdoctoral support are available, together with project running costs. There is opportunity to conduct comparative research at sites in South Africa (the Siyakhana food garden in Johannesburg and the Knowledge Hub for Rural Development at the Wits Rural Facility), and with partners at the University of Dar es Salaam and the University of Ghana.

3. Open call

Within the broad field of global change and sustainability, GCSRI has a number of postdoctoral positions and doctoral bursaries available. Interesting, cross-cutting projects will be considered, especially those that show specific links and demonstrable impact on decision-support systems in the context of rapid global environmental change. Doctoral bursaries in this open category are aimed at senior doctoral students without other funding, who will hand in a complete thesis by September 2016.

In addition, there is a research fellowship position in this open category, for an exceptional applicant with an outstanding scientific track record. This fellowship is funded at a higher level than postdoctoral positions, and the successful candidate will be expected to participate in a broader range of academic-, teaching- and decision-support activities.

Applications will be evaluated on a competitive basis using the following equal criteria:

1. Academic excellence. A proven publication record and/or peer recognition of achievements would be considered as supporting evidence.
2. Interdisciplinarity. Applicants have to show that they understand the interdisciplinary nature of the global change challenge, and that they have access to, or will develop, appropriate support networks for this type of research.
3. Novelty and relevance to the theme. Applicants should demonstrate clearly which funding stream they want to be considered for, and how the proposed research will make a novel knowledge contribution.

Electronic applications are preferred and should be sent to david.roche-kelly@wits.ac.za

A complete application consists of:

1. A complete CV with names and contact details of at least two referees.
2. For postdoctoral applications only: confirmation from the postdoc host at Wits, to host the applicant.
3. A concept note (maximum 3 pages without references) on the proposed research, containing a rationale, aims & objectives, methods, and expected (or current) outcomes.

The deadline for applications is 27 March 2015. The value of the awards will be approximately: postdoctoral fellow – R220000 per year (annually renewable based on performance), doctoral students – R160000 per year (maximum three years) and masters' level student - R85000 per year (maximum two years). Wits retains the right to adjust the final bursary amounts in response to foreign exchange fluctuations, and the number of applications received. All awards include additional running costs. Research group leaders who would like to apply for more than one bursary for a larger research problem, are welcome to do so, provided they have already identified students by name. Successful applicants will be expected to attend and contribute to seminars, workshops and discussions as determined by GCSRI. Wits retains the right to not make an award. GCSRI may engage with applicants to ensure a better fit between concepts notes and donor requirements. GCSRI will inform all applicants of the outcome of their applications. Applicants from historically disadvantaged communities are encouraged to apply.
