



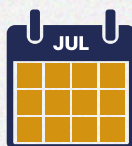
★ PROSPECTUS ★

Seventh Annual Emerging African Researcher Training Academy 2026

African Research Voices in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

Hosted by the Human Sciences
Research Council (HSRC),
Equitable Education and
Economies Division, Capacity
Growth and Innovation Unit

In partnership with the
University of Pretoria, the
University of Zululand,
and Sol Plaatje University



27-31 July 2026
Virtual via Zoom
Free



**Scan to register your
expression of interest**

Abbreviations and Acronyms

Abbreviation	Meaning
AI	Artificial Intelligence
CeSTII	Centre for Science, Technology and Innovation Indicators
CGI	Capacity Growth and Innovation
DCES	Developmental, Capable and Ethical State
DSTI	Department of Science, Technology and Innovation
EEE	Equitable Education and Economies
GIS	Geographic Information System
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
IT	Information Technology
PHSB	Public Health, Societies and Belonging
SPU	Sol Plaatje University
UP	University of Pretoria
UNIZULU	University of Zululand

Quick Reference Guide



COST:

Free of charge



FORMAT

Online delivered via Zoom



DATES:

27–31 July 2026



DAILY SCHEDULE

09:00–16:00 with breaks



WHAT DO YOU NEED?

A laptop or desktop computer, a stable internet connection, and sufficient data for online participation. You do **not** need a Zoom license



WHAT SHOULD YOU PREPARE?

Presentations, readings and resources are made available through the Academy repository to review beforehand and revisit afterwards



LANGUAGE USED

English



CERTIFICATE

A certificate of participation is issued on meeting the attendance requirements

A Message of Welcome

The Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), together with our partners, the University of Pretoria (UP), the University of Zululand (UNIZULU), and Sol Plaatje University (SPU) is delighted to welcome you to the Seventh Annual Emerging African Researcher Training Academy. We are pleased that you have joined us and look forward to learning alongside you.

This year, the Academy turns its attention to what it means for African knowledge and scientific communication to come into their own alongside artificial intelligence. AI is reshaping how knowledge is produced, communicated, and consumed, opening real opportunities to extend the reach and impact of African scholarship, while also raising pressing questions about ethics, representation, authenticity, and the future of human-centred research.

The Academy supports a new generation of African scholars who are producers of rigorous, socially relevant knowledge — and, equally, confident and purposeful communicators of it.

Over the five days of the programme, you will engage critically with both the possibilities and the limitations of AI across three interconnected dimensions: knowledge creation in African contexts, public engagement and scientific communication, and policy communication and evidence uptake. Each is explored in detail in the pages that follow and developed further through the sessions you will attend.

Our aim is to support scholars who engage the intelligence age on their own terms, drawing on emerging technologies strategically, questioning their assumptions critically, and keeping African knowledge, voices, and realities central to research that shapes policy, informs public discourse, and advances equitable, socially meaningful impact. Your participation is a strategic investment, not only in your own trajectory as a researcher but in the future and global influence of African scholarship.

We encourage you to approach the Academy with curiosity and commitment: actively engage in the sessions, use the online learning materials, ask questions freely, and connect with the scholars and facilitators alongside you. Take a moment to picture the researcher you aspire to become and the change you hope to see in your field; we hope the Academy serves as a meaningful step toward that vision.

For further information, please review this prospectus and visit the Academy webpage. For queries, contact the organising committee at academyqueries@hsrc.ac.za.

We wish you an enriching and transformative experience at the Academy 2026.

Kind regards

Dr Bongiwe Mncwango

Chief Research Specialist | Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC)

Steering Committee

The Steering Committee is comprised of HSRC Colleagues from many divisions and led by the EEE and CGI divisions, as well as distinguished colleagues from three of South Africa's foremost universities. Our partners' expertise, insight, collaboration, and commitment have and continue to provide vital leadership and perspective, greatly enriching the work



HSRC core group

Dr Bongiwe Mncwango (EEE)
Ms Shirin Motala (EEE)
Dr Jaqueline Harvey (EEE)
Dr Thandeka Mdletshe (CGI)
Dr Andrea Juan (I&C)

Ms Sylvia Hannan (EEE)
Dr Stewart Ngandu (EEE)
Mr Zaakhir Asmal (EEE)
Ms Nkateko Chauke (EEE)



HSRC committee members

Dr Mokhantšo Makoe (DCES)
Dr Sizulu Moyo (PHSB)
Ms Simpha Trudy Mathonsi (CGI)
Ms Daphny Shilwane (CGI)
Ms Liziwe Vindia Cwati (CGI)

Mr Keshan Chandamran (HSRC IT)

Ms Nondumiso Masuku (EEE)
Ms Lindiwe Malumbazo (EEE)
Ms Mokgadi Mamaleka (EEE)
Ms Lesego Monyai (EEE)

Dr Il-haam I. Petersen (EEE)
Dr Gadisa Khan (DCES)
Dr Jacqueline Borel-Saladin (CeSTII)
Dr Dane Isaacs (DCES)
Ms Ilze Visagie (Communication and Engagement)
Ms Jehan Latief (Communication and Engagement)
Mr Themba Mnisi (HSRC IT)
Mr Thabo Mphelo (HSRC IT)
Mr Moses Mohlala (HSRC IT)



Partner universities

University of Pretoria – Dr Mary Mangai
University of Zululand – Ms Zinhle Ntuli and Ms Zikhona Jacobs
Sol Plaatje University – Dr Adesuwa Vanessa Agbedahin



About the Academy

The Seventh Annual Emerging African Researcher Training Academy is a five-day capacity-building programme convened by the HSRC together with leading African universities. It exists to address a structural challenge across the continent: talented scholars often lack access to high-quality training throughout the full research lifecycle. The Academy responds by offering rigorous, practical instruction, free of charge and fully online, to scholars wherever they are based in Africa.

Since its inception, the Academy has supported hundreds of postgraduate students, early-career researchers and lecturers, building both technical skills and a sense of shared scholarly community. It is delivered through a multi-institutional partnership model that brings together seasoned trainers, mentors and promising researchers around a common goal: advancing research excellence in and for Africa.

Academy Goals

The Academy is committed to strengthening the research expertise and professional development of African scholars. Through its comprehensive core programmes, spanning research methodologies, data analysis, and academic writing, the Academy aims to equip participants with essential skills to conduct high-quality, impactful research in their fields. Beyond technical training, the Academy fosters a vibrant research community by promoting sustainable research practices across Africa, providing a collaborative platform for scholars to connect, exchange ideas, and pursue joint research initiatives. Through these efforts, the Academy empowers African researchers, enhances the quality of research outputs, and contributes to capacity building, knowledge generation, and development across the continent and beyond, with the ultimate goal of having an impact on society.

Academy History and Background

In the past, the training was conducted in-person by the HSRC, in partnership with the University of Zululand. However, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdown measures implemented in 2020, the Academy shifted to a virtual platform. This allowed the expansion of the reach of the training and further collaboration with other partners. This year, we are proud to celebrate the seventh anniversary of the Academy in its current form.

The Academy initially concentrated on building foundational research skills through introductory courses in research methodologies, data analysis, and academic writing. Over time, however, it has broadened its core offerings to include advanced and specialised topics, adapting to the changing needs of the research community.

About the Human Sciences Research Council

The HSRC is one of Africa's premier statutory research institutions, dedicated to social science research that informs public policy and development. A core part of the HSRC's mandate is to support research capacity development in South Africa and across the continent. The HSRC's Equitable Education and Economies (EEE) Research Division and the Capacity Growth and Innovation (CGI) Unit are responsible for co-hosting the Academy, drawing on the extensive expertise across the HSRC. This includes contributions from the various research divisions as well as support from shared services units, particularly the Information Technology (IT) and Communications teams.

Our Partners

In hosting the Seventh Annual Emerging African Researcher Training Academy, EEE and CGI are proud of their collaboration with three key partners in the Higher Education Sector, which contributes to the delivery of high-quality training and skills. These are:

- The University of Pretoria, School of Public Management and Administration,
- Sol Plaatje University, Centre for Teaching, Learning, and Programme Development, and
- The University of Zululand, Research and Innovation Office.

Theme

The Academy explores what it means for African knowledge and scientific communication to come into their own alongside artificial intelligence. AI is fundamentally reshaping how knowledge is produced, communicated, interpreted, and consumed. Within this rapidly evolving landscape, African scholars are not passive observers of technological change but active participants and critical contributors, whose work is grounded in lived continental realities, contextual depth, and rich knowledge traditions that no algorithm can replicate. This conviction anchors the Academy's theme and directly informs the programme design set out in the sections that follow.

The Academy recognises that AI presents unprecedented opportunities to enhance research productivity, expand access to knowledge, strengthen scientific communication, and extend societal reach. At the same time, it raises pressing questions about ethics, representation, authenticity, bias, and the future of human-centred scholarship. To engage with AI, then, is not simply to adopt new tools. It is to critically examine how such technologies can be harnessed to strengthen African scholarship while preserving the humanity, integrity, and social purpose that give research its enduring value.

Against this backdrop, the Academy is structured around three interconnected dimensions of knowledge creation and scientific communication, each examined through the lens of working alongside AI:



- Knowledge creation in African contexts — ensuring that research remains grounded in local realities, indigenous knowledge systems, social histories, and lived continental experiences, while contributing meaningfully to regional and global scholarly discourse.



- Public engagement and scientific communication — strengthening scholars' capacity to communicate research in accessible, relevant, and socially responsive ways, while engaging critically with how AI tools can expand reach and visibility yet simultaneously raise complex questions about voice, representation, credibility, and authenticity.



- Policy communication and evidence uptake — enhancing scholars' ability to translate research into clear, credible, and actionable insights for policymakers, practitioners, and institutions operating within increasingly digital and AI-mediated information environments.

Participants will engage critically with both the possibilities and the limitations of AI in advancing knowledge creation and scientific communication. In doing so, the Academy seeks to cultivate a new generation of African scholars who are producers of rigorous, socially relevant knowledge — and, equally, confident and purposeful communicators of it. Ultimately, the Academy aims to support scholars who engage the intelligence age on their own terms: drawing on emerging technologies strategically, questioning their assumptions critically, and ensuring that African knowledge, voices, and realities remain central to research that shapes policy, informs public discourse, and advances equitable, socially meaningful impact.

Targeted Beneficiaries

The Academy welcomes scholars at a range of career stages who are working in, or aspiring to, the research field in South Africa and across the African continent. It is especially well suited to:

-  Master's and doctoral candidates seeking a stronger methodological foundation;
-  Postdoctoral fellows and early-career researchers developing independent research programmes;
-  Lecturers and academic staff who wish to refresh or extend their research and supervision skills;
-  Researchers based at universities, science councils, and other public and private research institutions; and
-  Practitioners and analysts who use research evidence in policy, development or programme settings.

Participants are drawn from a broad range of disciplines. No prior specialisation is required; the Academy meets you where you are and builds from the fundamentals upward.

Learning Aims

By the close of the Academy, participants should be able to:

- 1 Apply core principles of research design, theory and ethics to define compelling research problems;
- 2 Conduct rigorous literature reviews and synthesise evidence with confidence;
- 3 Select and apply appropriate qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection and analysis;
- 4 Communicate research clearly through academic writing, presentation and science communication;
- 5 Engage artificial-intelligence tools critically and responsibly within an ethical research practice; and
- 6 Build durable professional networks across institutions and disciplines.

Learning Streams

The curriculum is designed to support participants across the full research lifecycle. The streams below outline the key thematic and learning areas around which the modules are organised. The responsible use of AI is integrated throughout the programme, with a dedicated in-depth session offered on the final day of the Academy.

Learning Stream	Indicative Focus
Research foundations	Research design, paradigms and theory; framing researchable problems; research ethics and integrity.
Literature mastery and evidence synthesis	Advanced search strategies, systematic and scoping reviews, and synthesising evidence credibly.
Quantitative methods	Measurement and sampling; descriptive and inferential analysis; interpreting results responsibly.
Qualitative methods	Designing qualitative studies; interviewing and fieldwork; coding and thematic analysis.
Data analysis and tools	Working with data and analysis software including STATA, SPSS, and Atlas.TI; reproducibility; data visualisation.
Academic and scientific writing	Structuring papers and proposals; argument and clarity; publishing and peer review.
Research and science communication	Communicating to diverse audiences; presentations, abstracts and public engagement.
AI in research (cross-cutting)	Practical, ethical use of AI across searching, analysis, drafting and review—with attention to bias, authorship and integrity.
Professional development	Research careers, funding, collaboration, supervision and academic identity.

Learning Approach

We are moving beyond traditional lectures and passive presentations to offer a more engaging and interactive approach to research training. The Academy provides a dynamic learning environment where you play an active role in your educational journey. Our goal is to create a vibrant virtual space that encourages the sharing of ideas, thoughtful questions, and meaningful discussions.

Through interactive activities like live polls, real-time chats, and group collaboration, you'll engage directly with the material. We also emphasise learning by doing, with practical exercises designed to make research concepts clearer and easier to apply. This approach represents the future of research training—hands-on, engaging, and effective.

Participants will receive a professionally designed certificate that will provide proof of your commitment to deepening your knowledge and engaging with advanced research minds in Africa. It demonstrates that you are dedicated to expanding your skills and intellectual horizons.

While this certificate does not measure your competence, it acknowledges your initiative and hard work. It signals to employers, colleagues, and yourself that you are committed to continuous learning and professional development.



Programme Structure and Format

The Academy runs over five consecutive days and is delivered entirely online via Eventee and Zoom. It is designed so that you can build a strong common foundation and then tailor the rest of your week to your own interests and level.



Day 1: Foundations for everyone. The opening day comprises core modules that all participants are expected to attend, establishing shared concepts and language for the week ahead.



Days 2–5: Parallel tracks. Each subsequent day offers two to three parallel tracks running alongside one another, so you can choose the sessions most relevant to you. You may remain in one track for the day or move between tracks as your interests dictate.



Daily rhythm: Sessions run from approximately **09:00 to 16:00** each day, with a lunch break and two short refreshment breaks built in.

Links to each track are provided in advance through the Academy Programme on the Academy website, alongside details of sessions, topics and facilitators.

Academy Repository



The repository functions as a central resource hub, providing access to materials for every module and can be found on the HSRC Academy website. It offers a rich collection of resources to support your learning before, during, and after the Academy sessions. Each module of the Academy has its own dedicated folder and will contain the following:

- Lesson plan
- Presentation
- Biosketch(es) of the trainer(s)
- Background reading materials

It may also contain links to videos, worksheets and guidelines for breakaway sessions. Please note that the trainers will upload material in due course.

We encourage you to review the materials ahead of each session to enhance your preparation and get the most out of your learning experience. The repository will remain accessible even after the Academy ends, giving you the opportunity to revisit and reinforce important concepts at your own pace.

Presenters



Sessions are led by experienced researchers and trainers drawn from the HSRC and the partner universities, complemented by invited specialists. These expert trainers are accomplished researchers with deep, practical experience in applied research. Their work spans policy implementation, data-driven insights on societal challenges, and the creation of impactful narratives.

Each session is informed by their fieldwork, data analysis and key discoveries that have shaped their respective disciplines. Beyond teaching research methodologies, trainers will also share their personal research journeys, highlighting successes, challenges, and unexpected findings. Bio-sketches for each of the trainers are available in the Academy Repository.



Online Learning Platform

In addition to the Academy website that the HSRC hosts, we will be using Eventee as a platform. You will need to register on Eventee to gain access to the Zoom links for the sessions.

How to Get Started with Eventee:



- 1 **Download Eventee**
 - For laptops/PCs: Access [Eventee](#) via your web browser.
 - For iOS devices: Visit the [App Store](#).
 - For Android devices: Visit the [Google Play Store](#).
- 2 **Log In:**
 - Use the **email address you registered** with for the Academy.
- 3 **Explore Eventee**
 - **Networking:** Connect with fellow attendees and trainers.
 - **Q&A Forum:** Ask questions and engage in discussions.
 - **Programme:** View the full Academy schedule and session details.

All academy sessions will be held on **Zoom**, allowing for interactive and accessible learning. If you are new to Zoom platform, the steps below will help you get ready ahead of Day 1.



- 1 **Downloading Zoom**
 - Visit the [Zoom Website](#)
 - Download Zoom
 - Click on the "**Resources**" tab at the top right of the homepage.
 - Select "**Download Zoom Client.**"
 - Download the appropriate version for your device (Zoom Client for Meetings for desktop or Zoom Mobile Apps for iOS/ Android).
- 2 **Install Zoom**
 - Open the downloaded file and follow the on-screen instructions to install Zoom on your device.
- 3 **Creating a Zoom Account**
 - Sign Up for Free
 - Visit zoom.us/signup.
 - Enter your email address and click "**Sign Up.**"
 - Alternatively, you can sign up using your Google, Facebook, or SSO account. Verify Your Email
 - Check your email inbox for a verification email from Zoom.
 - Click the verification link in the email to activate your account. Complete Your Profile
 - Follow the on-screen instructions to complete your profile by entering your name and creating a password.
- 4 **Joining a Zoom Meeting**
 - Via Meeting Link
 - Click on the meeting link provided by the host

Code of Conduct



The HSRC and its partners are committed to providing a respectful, inclusive, and harassment-free experience for all participants during the Academy. This Code of Conduct applies to all attendees, speakers, and organisers.

By participating in the Academy, you agree to abide by this Code of Conduct. We appreciate your cooperation in ensuring a positive and enriching experience for all.



Expected Behaviour

- Treat all participants with respect and consideration
- Communicate openly and thoughtfully, considering how your words may be perceived by others
- Be mindful of your virtual surroundings and background during video sessions
- Respect the privacy of others by not sharing meeting links or recordings without permission



Prohibited Behaviour

- Harassment or discrimination based on gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion, or any other personal characteristic
- Disruptive behaviour during sessions, including sustained interruption of speakers or other participants
- Inappropriate use of sexual language or imagery
- Any form of unwelcome solicitation or attention
- Sharing other participants' information shown during the Academy



Enforcement

Participants who violate these rules may be removed from the Academy at the discretion of the organisers. We expect immediate compliance if asked to stop any inappropriate behaviour.



Reporting

If you experience or witness behaviour that violates this Code of Conduct, please report it promptly to academyqueries@hsr.ac.za or to the Chair of the session. Provide as much detail as possible, including the nature of the incident, when and where it occurred, and who was involved.



