

Capacity Building Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

The Africa Centre defines capacity building as the process by which individuals develop and/or enhance skills to organize systems, resources and knowledge, as reflected in their abilities, individually and collectively, to perform functions, solve problems and set and achieve objectives. This policy provides information about both the components of and methods to access the capacity building strategies.

2. AFRICA CENTRE STAFF DEVELOPMENT GRANT

- 2.1. The grant is made possible by the Wellcome Trust, as recognition that most of the non-scientific staff members, who are from the local community, were previously disadvantaged, and require opportunities to enhance their educational qualifications.
- 2.2. The funding available from the grant is determined by the number of applications and the total tuition fees in each year, on condition the staff member pays their portion of the tuition fees first.
- 2.3. To access the grant, a staff member must apply through the Training Manager, providing evidence of admission to an academic programme recognised in the South African National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

3. DEVELOPMENT OF SCIENTIFIC SKILLS

Part of the Africa Centre mandate is to build capacity to do research. This is done through the following;

3.1. **Supporting of Masters and PhD students:**

- 3.1.1. The centre has data and expertise to supervise both masters and doctoral students in the following fields:
 - a) Population Studies and Demography;
 - b) Public Health;
 - c) Epidemiology
 - d) HIV medicine
 - e) Public Health Informatics
- 3.1.2. Due to limited scientific resources for supervision, the centre can only have 4-5 students at any given time.

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3.1.3. The support given to students include the following:

- a) Data for dissertations/thesis. For details of our datasets, visit our website at www.africacentre.ac.za
- b) Supervision and/or mentoring
- c) Infrastructural support in the form of office space, access to IT services and the ability to establish own research projects.

3.1.4. Preference is given in the order of; a) AC staff, c) University of KwaZulu-Natal students, c) students from collaborative universities and institutions, d) and any others.

3.1.5. Preference is also given to students wanting to work with AC datasets.

3.1.6. **Supervision Capacity**

3.1.6.1. Due to the centre's research commitment, each Africa Centre scientist is only able to give 5% of their time for student supervision; this is the most defining criteria for the number of students each supervisor can manage at any given time.

3.1.6.2. All masters and PhD theses supervised by an Africa Centre Scientist must fit with the Centre's research strategy, as our funding derives from it. For details about our research programmes, please see our website at <http://www.africacentre.ac.za/ResearchProgrammes/tabid/60/Default.aspx>.

3.1.6.3. The table below, which will be updated twice a year (every January and July), lists our scientists, their areas of expertise and their supervision capabilities. Details of their research interests are found on our website www.africacentre.ac.za:

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Staff	Subject matter	Supervision Capacity	Number of Current Students
Kobus Herbst	Public health Public Health informatics Community Health Registrar	1 Masters	
Graham Cooke	HIV medicine	1 PhD; 1 Masters	
Johannes Viljoen	Lab technology	1 Masters	None
Ruth Bland	Paediatric epidemiology	1 PhD; 1 Masters	1 masters
Frank Tanser	Epidemiology	1 PhD; 1 Masters	
Nuala McGrath	Epidemiology	1 PhD	1
Vicky Hosegood	Demography	1 PhD	1
William Muhwava	Demography	1 PhD; 2 Masters	
Tinofa Mutevedzi	Demography	1 Masters	None
Colin Newell	Informatics	1 Masters	None
Mitzy Gafos	Social Science	1 Masters	
Till Barnighausen	Epidemiology	1 PhD; 1 Masters	
Claudia Wallrauch	Clinical epidemiology	1 Masters	
Mbongiseni Buthelezi	Development Studies	1 Masters	None

3.1.7. Application Procedure

- 3.1.7.1. Prospective students should first contact a scientist with strength in the area of their own research interest (see 3.1.6.3 above) and a two page description of a possible research project. If the scientist agrees to supervise the student, a thesis proposal is developed with assistance of the scientist.
- 3.1.7.2. All applications will be assessed by a Committee; its decision is final
- 3.1.7.3. Access to data is subject to AC Data Access policy
- 3.1.7.4. PhD student applications will be considered on a rolling basis
- 3.1.7.5. Masters student applications will be considered in January and July of each year
- 3.1.7.6. As the centre does not provide any form of stipends, students need to be self-funded

3.2. Scientific Writing Workshops:

- 3.2.1. Periodically workshops to develop scientific writing skills, including use of statistical software packages with both external and internal facilitators are arranged.
- 3.2.2. Scientific writing workshops are announced on the intranet (<http://acintranet/default.aspx>) and/or external website (<http://www.africacentre.ac.za/>)

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4. ON THE JOB TRAINING

- 4.1. The on the job skills development program is aimed at ensuring availability of operational skills required for implementation of Africa Centre research agenda, as well as according staff opportunity to grow in the organization through a system of managed internal promotion. Specifically, training is done in the following areas:
- 4.1.1. Field-based data collection
 - 4.1.2. Good Clinical Practice (GCP)
 - 4.1.3. HIV Counselling, including specialised breastfeeding counselling
 - 4.1.4. On the job trainings are identified by line managers and training workshops are announced by email and/or through the intranet (<http://acintranet/default.aspx>)

5. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The Centre also directly develops skills in the local community:

- 5.1. Through computers donated by TELCOM, community members are trained in computer literacy. Community members interested in computer skills are identified or apply through our community liaison office. Computer classes are run in groups of 10 or more.
- 5.2. To enhance the involvement of the community in the research process, training is offered to the community advisory board (CAB) on understanding research processes, including research ethics.
- 5.3. Community members requiring the above training apply or are identified by the External Relations office.