

# AfricaLics Visiting Fellows Programme

Summary of Q&A session held  
24<sup>th</sup> October 2025, Zoom



**A meeting was held on Zoom for those interested in applying for the AfricaLics Visiting PhD Fellowship programme in 2026. What follows is a list of areas where questions were asked and the details of the answers provided during the Zoom information session.**

## **1. Clarification on important dates**

- Applicants should submit applications by 15 November 2025, at 2300 hours East African time.
- Interviews for shortlisted candidates will take place on 12 December and/or 15 December 2025

## **2. Clarification on application documentation**

- Applications should contain the following documents:
  - one-page application
  - brief PhD project outline
  - CV
  - letter of support from PhD supervisor
  - letter from university administration confirming enrollment
  - one writing sample
- These should be submitted in PDF format.
- The administrative letter should confirm their current PhD enrollment and come from the University administration (e.g. Registrar's Office, Post Graduate School, Department Secretary or equivalent)
- For students who are in limbo status with their university registration (due to fee issues or other reasons), they should submit a letter from their university administration (not their PhD supervisor) explaining their situation. They should also submit a letter from their PhD supervisor detailing their PhD status.
- Writing samples should be a journal paper or equivalent wherever possible (preferably no more than 12,000 words and preferably more in line with most journal norms of around 6-8,000 words).
- For students who are in their first year, they can submit their PhD proposal document or a similar document as their writing sample. However, the word limit recommendations of the writing sample should be adhered to. It is also important to submit a condensed version of this to fulfil the 'brief PhD project outline' document requirement.

### **3. Clarification on the subject matter of the AfricaLics network/ applicant's PhD thesis topics**

- AfricaLics is a network of researchers who work at the intersection of innovation and development, i.e. they study innovation processes and how these impact (or are impacted by) developmental processes. We focus on issues of how science, technology and innovation are promoted, supported through policy, regulation, finance, etc. and implemented. We have previously supported those studying the impact of science or technology on society, or vice versa. We have also supported research on technology adoption and related issues, but this is on the fringe of our field, being more focused on issues of technology management.
- The field is interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary and therefore includes researchers sitting in/ coming from disciplinary fields including politics, history, sociology, development studies, etc., although traditionally economics is the original disciplinary base for most AfricaLics researchers.
- If you are in doubt about the relevance of your topic, we suggest you look at the journals listed in the call document, as those related to our field and see if your research would fit in any of these journals. If the answer is yes, then your application is more likely to have a strong fit with the AfricaLics network. If the answer is no, you can still submit an application; however, your chances of being shortlisted may be lower.

### **4. Clarification on those students applying from French-speaking countries**

- Applications will be accepted from applicants who are from French-speaking countries, and applications can be submitted in French. Your application will be reviewed by French speakers within the network, and if successful, you will be offered French-speaking mentors, where available.
- However, all activities during the VFP will be held in English, starting with the interview, if shortlisted. Therefore, a basic grasp of English is required. If successful in your application, submitting your work/ presenting in English during the VFP will enhance your opportunity for more engagement and feedback from other supervisors, mentors, and students in the VFP during events.

### **5. Clarification on what is meant by 'approximate time of upgrade/probation'**

- This refers to the date of when you completed/ passed your proposal defence or when you will defend your proposal.

### **6. Clarification on who is eligible to submit applications in terms of timing/ status of your PhD progress**

- Anyone can submit an application to the VFP at any stage of their PhD, but we prefer applicants to have completed their first year of PhD studies by December 2025
- If you are expected to complete and submit your thesis in 2026 (especially if your submission date is in the first half of the year), please seriously consider whether the fellowship will assist you, given how advanced you are. If you are due to submit in the first half of 2026, it is unlikely that you will be selected. If you are submitting your thesis later in 2026, please be very clear when you submit your application as to how the fellowship will benefit you.

- Please note that you will be expected to stay in South Africa for the entire period of the residential element of the fellowship (September to November 2026) and will need to be registered for your PhD at your home institution during this time.

**7. Clarification on the target number of accepted PhD students to the VFP in 2026**

- We would like to award 4-6 fellowships for the 2026 cohort, but the final number will be dependent on the quality of the candidates.