



Locating children's rights in the alcohol environment

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

A PhD fellowship opportunity is available. The fellowship is funded by the University of Cape Town within the scope of the Collaboration for Harm Reduction and Alcohol Safety in the Environment (CHASE-SA) research project. CHASE-SA will contribute to a body of knowledge commonly called the Commercial Determinants of Health. Harmful alcohol use is a major public health issue globally and in the African region, most notably, Southern Africa. This project aims to improve understanding of how supply, policy, acquisition and consumption interact with social determinants to lead to harmful use of alcohol. In doing so we can contribute to more effective policy, community action and personal behaviours.

The successful candidate will be affiliated with the University of Cape Town, School of Public Health, to conduct research on locating children's rights in the alcohol environment. S/he will be directly supervised by Dr Marsha Orgill (Children's Institute, UCT), Prof Leslie London (School of Public Health, UCT), and A/Prof Nadine Harker (School of Public Health, UCT & SAMRC) and will become part of a multidisciplinary and transnational research group, including members from the University of Cape Town, the South African Medical Research Council, the Centre for the AIDS Programme of Research in South Africa, the University of Botswana, and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

The candidate will nest their PhD study within the CHASE-SA research project and will have opportunity to present study results locally and internationally

PURPOSE

The primary countries of interest for the PhD are South Africa and Botswana. The aim of the research project is to contribute to the knowledge base on where and how children are located within the alcohol environment, with the purpose of providing a rich contextual understanding that can help identify pathways for intervention within and outside the healthcare sector to improve health and reduce alcohol-related harms for children. This includes a focus on prenatal consumption by pregnant women, consumption by children and adolescents, and consequences for children secondary to others' drinking. Specifically, it will seek to identify the key stakeholders and their interests and examine how the current discourse is framed in relation to children. Discourse often bypasses children and children's rights, which consequently results in upstream policies and programmes bypassing children. The work will foreground child rights-based analyses as essential for the policy response needed for child protection. This includes children's right to health (Article 24 CRC) and the general norm that children's best interest must be a primary consideration (Article 3 CRC). The work must ensure alcohol policy development is understood as a critical part of a whole system response for child well-being that centres on children's interests.

The project includes various elements:

1. A scoping review on alcohol-related risk and protective factors for children globally, with a special interest in South Africa and Botswana
2. Identifying and mapping key stakeholders, their sources of power and influence, key interests and ideas/arguments, as they relate to children within the alcohol environment in South Africa and Botswana.
3. Applying policy analysis to examine and characterise, through a child rights perspective, why legislation and policy responses in South Africa and Botswana that impact children have not

been formulated and/or have stalled – focusing specifically on elements that are linked to protections for minors. E.g., 2013 marketing bill, 2016 liquor amendment bill. Including assessing the content of the policies as it relates to children (content analysis, gaps, etc.) and to understand policy and legal responses.

4. Identify key policy intervention points and recommendations that focus on preventing harms to children and strengthening alcohol control regulations and policies in both countries
5. Disseminate the research to relevant stakeholders

CONDITIONS

This is a four-year full-time PhD fellowship. Funding is contingent on being accepted for the relevant degree. Successful applicants will have six months to develop their proposal. They will be required to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) within six months of initial registration as per UCT's postgraduate studies policy.

Annual renewal of funding is contingent on satisfactory progress and agreed outcomes as per the signed MoU. The fellow will have six monthly formal reviews with supervisors to assess progress.

VALUE AND TENURE

Remuneration of the fellowship is R315 000 tax-free annually in accordance with the SARS rules for tax exemption, with an inflationary increase of 5% per annum.

Research travel and data collection costs for the PhD will be covered by the CHASE-SA project.

ACADEMIC CRITERIA

We are seeking a candidate with values rooted in social justice and an interest in public health, with the following minimum qualifications and skills:

- Master's degree in either public health, psychology, political science, or related disciplines.
- Evidence of some experience in qualitative research (e.g. documentary analysis and undertaking key informant interviews)
- Familiarity with reading and/or reviewing and interpreting legal and/or policy documents
- Ability to work with qualitative data, analyse data, and interpret and present results.
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills in English.
- Good organisational and interpersonal skills.
- Familiarity with rights-based approaches to analysis

Advantageous but not necessary skills/experience are:

- Previous experience with case studies, discourse and/or content analysis, and NVivo software.
- Exposure to methods and frameworks in the field of health policy analysis.
- Familiarity with structured literature reviews/scoping reviews
- Peer-reviewed journal publications
- Previous experience in alcohol or NCD research or advocacy

Given that the countries of interest in this PhD are South Africa and Botswana and will include fieldwork, it is ideal that the student be living in South Africa and/or Botswana.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Applicants are required to submit their application documents in one PDF document in this order:

- A one-page cover letter briefly describing their suitability and research interests,
- A detailed CV, highlighting their experience in each of the minimum requirements listed above, together with the name, telephone number and e-mail address of two referees.
- Examples of your academic writing including your master's thesis and any other scholarly outputs (e.g. a journal article)
- All tertiary qualification certificates and academic transcripts.

Applications must be sent directly to chase-saproject@uct.ac.za. Please use the email subject heading: **Application for Doctoral Fellowship: CHASE-SA project.**

General enquiries can be directed to chase-saproject@uct.ac.za and academic enquiries can be directed to marsha.orgill@uct.ac.za.

Closing date: 20 November 2025

Website: <https://health.uct.ac.za/school-public-health>

UCT is committed to the pursuit of excellence, diversity and redress in achieving its equity targets in accordance with the Employment Equity Plan of the University and its Employment Equity goals and targets. Our Employment Equity Policy is available at [Employment equity | University of Cape Town \(uct.ac.za\)](#).

UCT reserves the right not to appoint. Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.