

URC Postdoctoral Research Fellowship 2027

Join the SALDRU Youth & Social Policy Research Team

The URC Postdoctoral Research Fellowship is a two-year, UCT-funded award that gives outstanding recent doctoral graduates dedicated time and support to build an independent research career. SALDRU's Youth & Social Policy research team invites applications from candidates whose research experience closely matches our focus on youth deprivation, employment and comprehensive social protection mechanisms, as set out below.

ABOUT THE RESEARCH TEAM

SALDRU's Youth & Social Policy research team, led by Assoc. Prof. Ariane De Lannoy, works at the intersection of research and policy to improve the life chances of South Africa's young people. The team's current work spans:

- **Youth Multidimensional deprivation:** building and applying multidimensional poverty and deprivation measures to capture the overlapping disadvantages young South Africans face beyond income alone.
- **NEET youth:** understanding the scale, drivers and lived experience of youth disconnection from education, training and the labour market, and co-designing comprehensive support mechanisms that can reconnect them.
- **Basic Package of Support ("Leave No Youth Behind"):** implementing, monitoring and evaluating a comprehensive, EU Youth-Guarantee-style system of outreach, guidance, referral and case management for young people who are Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET). This work runs as a priority project of South Africa's Presidential Youth Employment Intervention and informs national and international conversations on integrated social protection mechanisms for youth.
- **Youth Explorer:** SALDRU's national data and mapping platform (<https://youthexplorer.org.za>) that visualises youth well-being, service availability and economic context by locality, again informing the Presidential Youth Employment Intervention and its partner organisations.

WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR

We welcome applications from recent doctoral graduates whose research experience and interests are closely aligned with the team's focus areas above. We invite candidates with relevant quantitative and/or qualitative research experience to apply, particularly those with a background in:

- Economics, Sociology, Social Policy, Demography, Development Studies or a related discipline, with a demonstrated interest in youth transitions, poverty and deprivation, or labour markets;
- Quantitative and/or mixed-method research, including household survey data analysis (e.g. Stata) and/or qualitative research with young people;
- An interest in policy-engaged, applied research and in contributing to a collaborative, multi-stakeholder research environment.

As set out in the URC criteria below, close alignment between the candidate's research experience and the objectives of the host unit is essential to a competitive application.

URC ELIGIBILITY & CONDITIONS (SUMMARY)

- PhD awarded no earlier than June 2023; candidates who have not yet graduated must have submitted their thesis by 15 September 2026, with a supervisor's letter confirming the degree is likely to be awarded (revoked if not conferred within 6 months of registration).
- Not currently in a full-time, permanent academic or research post, and not holding another postdoctoral fellowship elsewhere (a maximum of 50% of another award may be held concurrently, with prior DVC approval).
- South African and international candidates are eligible. Preference may be given to applicants from historically disadvantaged South African groups, and to those who graduated (or whose PhD department/division/research group differs) from outside UCT's SALDRU.
- Applicants' research interests and proposed research focus must align closely with the objectives of the SALDRU Youth & Social Policy research team — this fit is a key selection criterion, alongside academic excellence and research expertise and productivity.
- Two-year, full-time fellowship (R350 000 p.a., no relocation/other benefits); satisfactory 6-monthly progress reports; limited optional teaching only — no service obligations to the host department; expected to produce scholarly outputs, present at one conference or undertake one international visit per year, and join UCT's researcher development / OPGS / ERP training.

HOW TO APPLY

Send a CV (with full publication/output list), a brief cover letter describing how your research experience aligns with the team's focus areas, and contact details for three referees to: **Joanna Grotte:** joanna.grotte@uct.ac.za.

- **Deadline: COB Wednesday 2 September 2026.**
- Shortlisted candidates will be supported to complete the full URC application form and referee reports for submission to pdocs@uct.ac.za ahead of the official URC closing date of 15 September 2026.
- Please ensure that you meet the URC eligibility criteria before reaching out to us.