

HR191

# POSITION DESCRIPTION



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN  
IYUNIVESITHI YASEKAPA • UNIVERSITEIT VAN KAAPSTAD

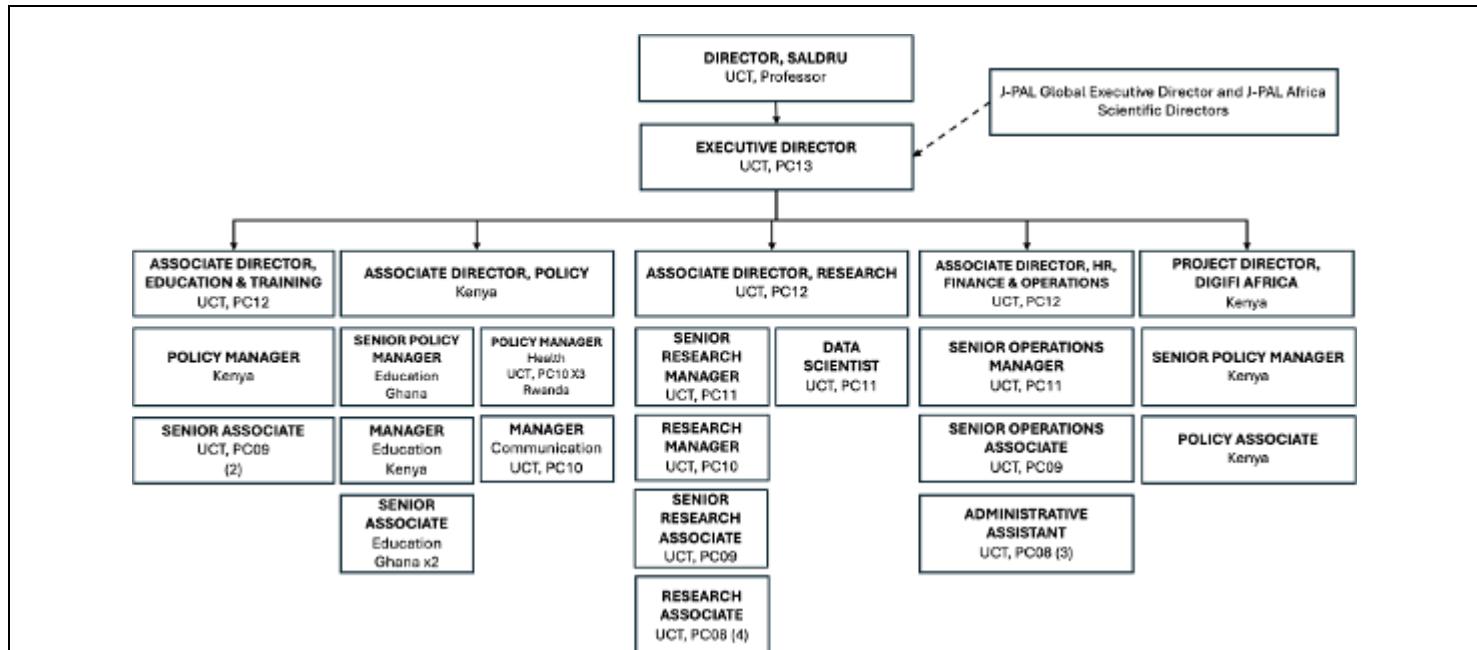
## NOTES

- Forms must be downloaded from the UCT website: <http://forms.uct.ac.za/forms.htm>
- This form serves as a template for the writing of position descriptions.
- A copy of this form is kept by the line manager and the position holder.

## POSITION DETAILS

Position title	Research Manager		
Job title (HR Practitioner to provide)			
Position grade (if known)	PC10	Date last graded (if known)	May 2019
Academic faculty / PASS department	Economics		
Academic department / PASS unit	SALDRU		
Division / section	J-PAL Africa		
Date of compilation	13 October 2025		

## ORGANOGRAM



## PURPOSE

The research manager will oversee research at J-PAL Africa within our broader labour market and social grants portfolios. This involves overseeing the implementation of randomised evaluations in South Africa, with support and oversight from the Senior Research Manager. The role involves managing the research staff who run or work on these evaluations and working closely with a range of stakeholders - notably PIs, policymakers and J-PAL staff from other divisions - to ensure effective and efficient research implementation.

CONTENT				
Key performance areas		% of time spent	Inputs (Responsibilities / activities / processes/ methods used)	
1 Assist in implementing the vision and strategic direction for the research team		10%	<p>Support with the implementation of J-PAL Africa's research strategy in collaboration with the Senior Research Manager</p> <p>Support efforts to improve how research is conducted across projects in collaboration with the Senior Research Manager</p> <p>Ensure J-PAL Africa research team adheres and contributes to wider J-PAL's objectives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A framework or system is used for operationalising the strategy of J-PAL Africa's research team</li> <li>• Significant progress is made towards implementing the strategy's key aims</li> <li>• A portfolio of demonstrable improvements to research processes are made</li> <li>• Ad-hoc requests to research team are addressed</li> </ul>

2	Project Management: Managing J-PAL Africa's evaluations	65%	<p><b>Implementation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supervise several (up to 4) impact evaluations/research projects.</li> <li>Oversee all the steps of the implementation of each impact evaluation: project management, sampling, intervention monitoring, data collection, data cleaning and analysis with support from the Senior Research Manager</li> </ul> <p><b>Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supervise the team working on a sub-set of research projects, including (Senior) Research Associates, and less directly, Interns, Project Associates and field enumerators as appropriate.</li> <li>Support Research Associates in management of other members of the research team</li> <li>Ensure rigorous hiring standards are implemented for all research positions</li> <li>Oversee timely tracking of expenditure to budget with supervision from the Senior Research Manager</li> </ul> <p><b>Stakeholders</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oversee communication and engagement with partner organizations and other stakeholders and funders</li> <li>Engage in feedback and planning with PIs</li> <li>Ensure that good planning and communication procedures are in place for implementing partners</li> <li>Oversee communication with policymaking partners on research findings and progress</li> </ul> <p><b>Academic contribution to J-PAL Africa research</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide and/or guide research staff to give direct academic input into all research projects (on e.g. study design, analysis, measurement, literature contribution, paper writing), particularly using knowledge of implementation and local context (e.g. interpretation of measures, potential for spillovers/poor compliance, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fieldwork activities are carried out as per project plans.</li> <li>The integrity of the study design is respected and field and data entry protocols are implemented.</li> <li>High quality and reliable data is collected.</li> <li>Project management systems are implemented on each study</li> <li>J-PAL research standards are met or exceeded</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Each project is run by trained and highly-skilled staff.</li> <li>Each project's budget is spent and used as planned or deviations are identified and reported early, expenses are tracked and reported to donors on a frequent basis.</li> <li>Research staff are motivated and growing through professional development opportunities</li> <li>J-PAL Africa has a stable, growing, high-delivery research team</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good relationships with partner organisations and funders are built and maintained.</li> <li>PIs and partners are constantly informed of the progress of their study and potential challenges.</li> <li>Results and findings are shared with project partners and broader stakeholders in an engaging and useful way</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>J-PAL Africa staff make a contribution to prospective and existing projects' proposals, design, measurement, analysis or other academic tasks</li> <li>Existing projects are designed, implemented and results analysed in manner that upholds high academic standards (high internal validity, good measurement practices, appropriate analyses), where possible.</li> </ul>
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3	Project Development	15%	<p><b>Partners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capacity building: Provide focused advice and support to prospective evaluators or implementers on how to approach their impact evaluations (this can include ToC workshops, meetings, custom trainings and other methods),</li> </ul> <p><b>Study development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support the Senior Research Manager in Identifying and discussing potential research design options</li> <li>Explore funding opportunities in collaboration with the Senior Research Manager</li> <li>Facilitate conversations between prospective PIs and prospective partners</li> <li>Support potential PIs in proposals for new projects, including study design, budgeting and fundraising in collaboration with the Senior Research Manager</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>J-PAL Africa has a respected presence among local evaluators and implementers</li> <li>Prospective partners have knowledge of value of rigorous impact evaluations to their organisations</li> <li>Good relationships are developed and held with a variety of local players in development/research.</li> <li>New people or organisations express interest in working with J-PAL Africa</li> <li>Workshops/presentations held and/or written pieces published on research methods/lessons. These outputs are delivered to research/related audiences.</li> <li>Specific research opportunities are identified and explored, through high quality discussions, particularly on design options</li> <li>Appropriate PIs are engaged in conversations about prospective work</li> </ul>
4	Education and training	5%	Contribute to J-PAL capacity building activities including: workshops, seminars, Executive Education courses, staff training and research resources compilation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High quality capacity building activities and resources produced</li> </ul>
5	Academic contribution to J-PAL Africa research	5%	PI on studies if opportunities allows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide academic leadership to relevant studies</li> </ul>

## MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

Minimum qualifications	A Masters in Public Policy or Economics or another similar social science including graduate level (Honours and up) courses in econometrics/ statistics, microeconomics or development economics			
Minimum experience (type and years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A minimum of two years of relevant work experience</li> <li>• Experience conducting field research in developing countries is advantageous</li> <li>• Demonstrated ability to conduct rigorous quantitative research</li> <li>• Experience in data cleaning, analysis or other programming conducted in Stata, or R, or Python</li> <li>• Experience managing complex research projects is preferred</li> <li>• Demonstrated people management experience (including managing staff at multiple levels), ideally including managing a survey team in a developing country</li> <li>• Experience in managing relationships with multiple stakeholders from different institutions or departments</li> <li>• Experience writing and managing budgets</li> <li>• Proven ability to handle multiple diverse assignments at one time, successfully complete assigned tasks and meet deadlines while conducting high-quality work</li> </ul>			
Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advanced writing and oral presentation skills in English, particularly the ability to communicate technical research considerations to policymakers in a non-technical manner</li> <li>• Strong skills in data analysis and programming using Stata and/or R and/or Python 3, including task automation</li> <li>• Familiarity with Microsoft and Google Suite</li> <li>• Familiarity with data collection software like SurveyCTO and/or Qualtrics is advantageous</li> <li>• Ability and willingness to learn new software/ programming technologies</li> <li>• Partnership building and conflict resolution</li> <li>• Project management and organisational skills, including budget management</li> <li>• Ability to think strategically and institutionalise new practices across several teams</li> </ul>			
Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong understanding of development economics, microeconomics, statistics and econometrics</li> <li>• Understanding of impact evaluation methodology, randomised evaluations is advantageous</li> <li>• Understanding of quantitative data collection best practices and tools</li> <li>• Ethics of conducting research with human subjects</li> </ul>			
Professional registration or license requirements	Not required			
Other requirements (If the position requires the handling of cash or finances, other requirements must include 'Honesty to handle cash or finances'.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Honesty to handle cash or finances</li> <li>• Driver's licence</li> <li>• Ability to travel within South Africa</li> </ul>			
Competencies (Refer to <a href="#">UCT Competency Framework</a> )	Competence	Level	Competence	Level
	Analytical thinking / problem solving	3	Communication	2
	Adaptability / flexibility	2	People management	3
	Building partnerships	2	Individual leadership	2
	Professional knowledge and skill	2	Quality commitment	3

## SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY

Functions responsible for	Overseeing implementation of J-PAL Africa research studies Managing research staff who conduct the implementation of these studies, relevant stakeholders and resources Contributing to dissemination efforts for completed studies Improving research methods and practices for J-PAL Africa
Amount and kind of supervision received	Managed by J-PAL Africa Senior Research Manager, research projects led by Principal Investigators
Amount and kind of supervision exercised	Directly manages senior research associates and research associates. Oversees and supports management of their project staff, including (senior) project associates, interns and enumerators

Decisions which can be made	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Methods of project and resource management</li> <li>People management styles, structures and performance management</li> <li>Method/content of data quality checks, data collection tools and processes</li> <li>Sizes and position structures of field teams</li> <li>Most project spending decisions</li> <li>Quantity and content of staff training</li> <li>Content, frequency and type of engagement with most stakeholders for existing or exploratory work</li> <li>Research improvement projects to pursue</li> </ul>
Decisions which must be referred	<p>The following decisions are made jointly with the Executive Director, PIs or other divisions, Associate Director of Research, and the research manager.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Final decisions on undertaking new studies</li> <li>Final hiring recommendations for research associates and above</li> <li>Major project spending decisions (e.g. external training courses, office space rental)</li> <li>Re-allocation of core research staff between projects</li> <li>Contract finalisation, major MOUs, etc.</li> <li>Drafts/proposals of core academic outputs (e.g. power calculations, pre-analysis plans, study design options, etc.)</li> </ul>

#### CONTACTS AND RELATIONSHIPS

Internal to UCT	<p>Reports to J-PAL Africa Associate Director of Research or Executive Director</p> <p>Works with J-PAL Africa research, policy, training and operations teams</p> <p>Works with UCT researchers (existing PIs, prospective PIs or other researchers with shared interests), UCT HR, UCT Finance, UCT RCIPS</p>
External to UCT	<p>J-PAL Affiliated researchers (mostly professors) and other PIs from around the world</p> <p>J-PAL Global and regional offices</p> <p>Other researchers (not in PI functions) in South Africa</p> <p>Policymakers (government officials, development partners, NGOs, etc.), primarily in South Africa</p> <p>Donors (generally international)</p>