RESEARCH MANAGER: J-PAL AFRICA
(Contract position, Soft funded)
J-PAL Africa In the Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit (SALDRU),
School of Economics
Faculty of Commerce

J-PAL Africa seeks a research manager to manage multiple research projects that test the impacts of a variety of social programmes in South Africa through randomised evaluations (also known as randomized control trials). This is an exciting opportunity to contribute to the generation of scientific evidence about what works in the fight against poverty. The research manager will build the capacity of young, talented research staff, and will get hands-on experience with real-world policymakers and their programmes – all while working at the frontier of academic research.

The position will be based in the Johannesburg office of J-PAL Africa, the Africa regional office of J-PAL Global, which forms part of the Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit (SALDRU) in the University of Cape Town's School of Economics. Travel to other locations in South Africa will be required for fieldwork supervision, partner management, and work with J-PAL staff or other colleagues. The Abdul Latif Jameel Action Lab (J-PAL) aims to reduce poverty by ensuring that policy is informed by scientific evidence. J-PAL consists of a global network of academics who specialise in conducting randomised evaluations of social policies/programmes to generate this evidence.

The position holder should be a capable manager of field research projects, with excellent quantitative research and people management skills. The role involves managing the research staff who work on these studies, closely liaising with the academic researchers who design and lead the projects and ensuring that the projects are implemented with fidelity to the study design. A key component of the role involves ensuring rigorous data quality measures are in place, including high-frequency checks, back-checking, effective training and debriefs with field staff, and other measures as required. The role also involves building and maintaining strong relationships with project partners – often governments and large NGOs - and working with them to ensure study results inform their programmes and policies.

This is a 24 month, soft funded position.

Requirements:
- 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
- A minimum of two years relevant work experience
- Demonstrated ability to conduct rigorous quantitative research
- Strong skills in data cleaning and analysis or other programming including task automation using Stata and/or R and/or Python 3
- Experience managing complex research projects
- Demonstrated people management experience (including managing staff at multiple levels), ideally including managing a survey team in a developing country
- Experience in managing relationships with multiple stakeholders from different institutions or departments
- Experience writing and managing budgets
- Proven ability to handle multiple diverse assignments at one time, successfully complete assigned tasks and meet deadlines while conducting high-quality work
- Advanced writing and oral presentation skills in English, particularly the ability to communicate technical research considerations to policymakers in a non-technical manner
- Familiarity with Microsoft and Google Suite
- Ability and willingness to learn new software/ programming technologies
- Valid driver's license
- Ability to travel regularly within South Africa, and occasionally overseas

Advantageous
- Experience conducting field research in developing countries would be advantageous
- Familiarity with data collection software like SurveyCTO and/or Qualtrics

Responsibilities include:

- Project Management: managing J-PAL Africa's evaluations
  - Supervise several impact evaluations/research projects concurrently.
  - Planning and feedback with principal investigators in a timely manner.
  - Preparing budgets and financial reports for donors and project financial management
  - Manage all the steps of the implementation of each impact evaluation: project management, sampling, intervention monitoring, data collection, data cleaning and analysis
  - Hire, train and supervise the team working on each research project, including (Senior) Research Associates, and less directly, Interns, Project Associates and field enumerators as appropriate.
- Project Development: Working with prospective partners and academics to craft and fundraise for project ideas.
- Relationship Management: Oversee communication and engagement with (potential) partner organizations and other stakeholders and funders
- Support as a trainer of capacity building activities of J-PAL Africa: workshops, seminars, Evaluating Social Programmes Executive Education courses, and staff training.

The annual cost of employment in 2025, is between **R639 581** and **R752 447** dependent on qualifications and experience.

To apply, please e-mail the below documents in a single pdf file to Aman Haider at ahaider@povertyactionlab.org:

- UCT Application Form (download at http://forms.uct.ac.za/hr201.doc ;
- A letter of motivation clearly addressing your qualifications for the various responsibilities listed above;
- Curriculum Vitae (CV); and
- Transcripts of your matriculation certificate and university degrees. Note this is required even though it is not called for in the HR201.

Please ensure the title and reference number are indicated in the subject line.

An application which does not comply with the above requirements will be regarded as incomplete.
Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted and may be required to undergo an assessment.

Website: *www.povertyactionlab.org*
Reference number: E26203
Closing date: 18 February 2026

"UCT is a designated employer and 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. Preference will be given to candidates from the under-represented designated groups. Our Employment Equity Policy is available at www.uct.ac.za/downloads/uct.ac.za/about/policies/eepolicy.pdf. "

When you apply for a position at UCT, we collect your personal information to assess your application, communicate with you, and coordinate interview logistics. Information such as race, gender, nationality, and disability status is used to support our Employment Equity obligations. We also verify your references, qualifications, conduct criminal and, for certain roles, credit checks. For more information about how the University of Cape Town uses personal information and your rights, please email popia@uct.ac.za.

The University reserves the right to extend the closing date for applications if deemed necessary and reserves the right to make no appointment.