A CALL FOR APPLICATIONS
FOR
UCT'S INDUSTRY POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWSHIPS

Closing dates for receipt of applications:
15 October 2025

1. INTRODUCTION

The University of Cape (UCT) invites applications for **FIVE (5)** Fellows for two-year industry postdoctoral fellowships. The fellowships are designed to prepare the fellows either for research careers in industry or for careers in academia involving industry-related research.

2. ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

The *UCT Industry Postdoctoral Fellowship Programme* is aimed at providing a comprehensive research, development and mentorship programme for early career researchers involved in industry-relevant research and innovation.

Through the Programme, we seek to strengthen UCT's partnership with industry, in a way that:

- Provides our early career researchers with the opportunity to work closely with industry, building exposure, partnership, and appreciation of the needs of industry-based research to increase the critical mass of researchers undertaking research in strategic areas aligned to the industry's priority areas.
- Strengthens industry relevant long-term research capacity at the University of Cape Town to contribute to addressing key industry challenges; and
- Provides our postdoctoral fellows with complementary experience in the industry and an opportunity to establish professional networks beyond academia.

While the prospective fellow will be based at UCT, their research project will be built in collaboration with the industrial partner, and it is intended that each postdoctoral fellow will spend between three to eight months (as a single period or a period in each year) of their fellowship undertaking research at the facilities of the industry partner. This will be negotiated and finalised in consultation with the academic host, the industry partner and the postdoctoral fellow as informed by the requirements of the work programme.

The fellowship should allow for and promote both research to deliver impactful new knowledge and the scientific and professional development of the postdoctoral fellows. This will be achieved through
- **i)** mentorship and training to develop independent projects,
- **ii)** produce research outputs centred on both knowledge and translation for impact,
- **iii)** develop insights into the effective application of fundamental knowledge in an industry setting, and
- **iv)** build administration and project management skills in research that will set them up for a successful career. The Programme has the potential to facilitate the sharing of research and development infrastructure and equipment as well as to enable bi-directional visits and exchange of staff members for sharing of expertise in a mutually beneficial manner.

3. CALL FOCUS AREAS

The Fellowships will be awarded to **5** eligible candidates across all disciplines and industry sectors aligned with any of the five UCT's Vision 2030 research strategic focus areas as well as the cross-cutting areas:

- Building a healthy Afrika – which includes work on vaccines through low-cost biotechnology.
- Resource efficiency and nature-based solutions for sustainable development.
- On being human.
- Advancing Afrika; and
- Our southern location.

Cross-cutting areas: Artificial intelligence, data science, bioinformatics, governance, and ethics.

4. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applications will be considered from **Principal Investigators with a track record in conducting industry relevant research in partnership with industry partners.** Applicants with no such experience but who present compelling cases and prospects because of the nature of the research undertaken and who have identified an industrial partner will be considered.

4.1. The application requirements:

Academic and industry hosts

Applications must have

1. an identified Principal Investigator (PI) as an academic host who is a UCT academic member of staff, including Soft Funded Academic Research Staff on permanent conditions of service and senior research scholars or emeritus professors who are active in research and mentorship at UCT.
2. an industry mentor, preferably with a track record of collaborating with the academic PI and
3. an identified candidate as a postdoctoral research fellow.

Applications with industry partner endorsement will be prioritized. However, applications submitted without an industry partner will be considered, and, if successful, will be awarded conditionally on provision of an industry partner endorsement within three months of award.

All applications must be co-signed by the academic host as applicant, and, where available, the targeted postdoctoral fellow and a representative of the industry partner.

Nominated candidate

The fellowships will be awarded on a competitive basis. Candidates must fulfil the following **minimum requirements:**

*   Hold a PhD obtained within the last five years.
*   Applicants currently completing their doctoral dissertation for submission may apply. They should, however, have submitted their doctoral thesis for examination by 24 December 2025 for uptake in February 2026.
*   Applicants must conduct research within the areas stipulated in Section 3.
*   The candidate cannot hold another postdoctoral position at another institution.

4.2.   The application
The application must include the following in ONE SINGLE PDF:

Part 1: Hosts

*   A cover letter describing the research partnership envisaged with the industry partner and indicating the role of the postdoctoral fellow in this partnership.
*   A qualitative and quantitative demonstration of a track-record of successful mentorship of early career researchers or capacity development of postgraduate students or both.
*   Demonstration of the nature of and achievements from the previous Research and Development related collaborations with the identified industry partner.
*   A clear and integrated skills development programme including, among others, networking opportunities, research and innovation capacity development, and professional development plans, as well as a mentorship plan towards becoming an independent researcher undertaking industry relevant research, either in academia or in relevant industry sector. Preferably this will be developed with the industry host.

Part 2: The Industry Host

*   A demonstration of a track-record of successful mentorship of early career researchers and other staff and, if relevant, capacity development of postgraduate students.
*   Demonstration of the nature of and achievements from the previous Research and Development related collaborations with the identified academic partner.

Part 3: Nominated candidate

*   A cover letter describing the research interest/s of the postdoctoral candidate and their suitability for the fellowship and appropriate experience and a clear motivation on why they should be considered for the industry fellowship and why it is necessary for them to have the chosen industry partner.
*   A CV (3 pages maximum) that includes details for eligibility criteria (including PhD graduation/ completion date & year), prior conference attendance, publications to date and any other scholarly research output, evidence of prior industry interactions, (if any)

*   The names of three referees who have taught, supervised or collaborated with the candidate through their undergraduate and postgraduate degrees or during a period of work experience and who can speak to their skills, including the current line manager/supervisor.
*   A proposal (3 pages maximum) outlining the research plan for the fellowship.

Successful candidates will be expected to contribute to UCT's research productivity, innovation, and impact.

5. FELLOWSHIP VALUE AND TENURE

- The fellowship will be awarded for up to two years; funding for the second year will be released based on satisfactory progress/ performance in the first year.
- The postdoctoral fellow is expected to spend between three to eight months (as a single period or a period in each year) of their fellowship undertaking research at the facilities of the industry partner and the remainder of the fellowship conducting research resident at UCT.
- The funding will include:
  - R330 000 per annum as a stipend (non-taxable).
  - R50 000 per annum research running costs.
  - R50 000 per annum travel costs between academic and industry facilities.

Additional funding requirements will be negotiated and agreed upon with an industry partner.

Queries can be sent to Lezette Daniels at Lezette.daniels@uct.ac.za and completed applications MUST be emailed to researchfunding@uct.ac.za using the subject line INDUSTRY POSTDOC.