

2012 African Doctoral Dissertation Research Fellowships

The African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC), with support from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, is pleased to announce the fifth call for applications for the African Doctoral Dissertation Research Fellowships (ADDRF). The 2012 ADDRDF seeks to facilitate more rigorous engagement of doctoral students in research, strengthen their research skills, and provide them an opportunity for timely completion of their doctoral training. The fellowship targets doctoral students with strong commitment to a career in training and/or research. The overall goal of the ADDRDF program is to support the training and retention of highly-skilled, locally-trained scholars in research and academic positions across the region.

The ADDRDF will award about 18 fellowships in 2012. These fellowships will be awarded to doctoral students who are within two years of completing their thesis at an African university. In this phase of funding and in consideration of IDRC's health programming priorities, candidates whose dissertation topics address health policy or health systems issues will be given special consideration. The Program has also reserved three fellowships specifically for doctoral students conducting research on health inequities in urban areas or the reproductive health of marginalized urban communities. These three fellowships are funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Expected outcomes

The fellowship program is expected to result in several high-quality doctoral dissertations from sub-Saharan African universities. **Successful applicants will be required to publish at least one peer-reviewed article from their dissertation within two years of completing their thesis.** The program is expected to contribute to the production and retention of skilled capacity at various academic and research institutions in sub-Saharan Africa.

Eligibility

The fellowship will primarily support research (including data collection and/or analysis). Funds will not be used to support coursework. Applicants must:

- ❖ Be citizens or permanent residents of a sub-Saharan African country;
- ❖ Be undertaking doctoral training at a recognized African university;
- ❖ Have completed all pre-dissertation requirements;
- ❖ Provide a detailed time-frame for completing their dissertation which should be endorsed by the head of department or the chair of the dissertation committee;
- ❖ Have a research topic that has been approved by their doctoral dissertation committee, as well as the official body overseeing ethical review of the research protocol; and
- ❖ Be able to complete their dissertation within 24 months of the start of the fellowship.

Selection criteria

- ❖ The fellowship will support original qualitative and quantitative research that addresses a clear research question, employs appropriate and rigorous design, and has unambiguous national or regional policy implication(s);
- ❖ Candidates must demonstrate interest in pursuing a research career and dissertations must be sufficiently linked to future research interests;
- ❖ The dissertation should ideally be related to other work going on in the department or should have received strong endorsement and support from the department; and
- ❖ Female applicants and those from Francophone and Lusophone countries are especially encouraged to apply.

Evaluation criteria

The applications will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- ❖ Candidate's scientific background and potential to develop a strong research career;
- ❖ Scientific merit of the proposed research project including originality of research question(s); clarity and adequacy of the study design; demonstrated knowledge of relevant/current literature; detailed analysis plan; ethical considerations, etc.;
- ❖ Research environment including commitment of main supervisors and department to facilitate timely completion of the dissertation; and
- ❖ Well-elaborated statement on the policy relevance of the research, and
- ❖ Budget summary and justification, including clear plan to complete the dissertation within 24 months.

Eligible fields of study include:

- ❖ Health Sector Analysis;
- ❖ Health Management and Organization;
- ❖ Health Care Financing (including health insurance);
- ❖ Quality of Care;
- ❖ Human Resources for Health;
- ❖ Health Program Evaluation;
- ❖ Health Equity;
- ❖ Cost-effectiveness of Health Care Programs;
- ❖ Community Participation in Health Care or Health Issues;
- ❖ Research to Practice and Health Policy;
- ❖ Health Information, Education and Communication;
- ❖ Pharmaceutical Policy;
- ❖ Economic Policy and Health;
- ❖ Health Information Systems;
- ❖ Health Services Utilization and Accessibility;
- ❖ Health Inequities in Urban Areas; and
- ❖ Reproductive Health of Marginalized Urban Communities.

Note that lab-based studies whose immediate relevance to health systems strengthening is not evident will not be considered.

Cost

Each individual award will be up to a maximum of US\$15,000. Specific items may include field research, a monthly stipend for up to 12 months, and other research materials (e.g., laptop computer, specialized software or books, etc). Applicants may also include the cost of one local or regional conference where the results of the dissertation may be disseminated. Successful candidates will attend at least one week-long training workshop (Attending the workshop(s) is mandatory). During the workshop, grantees will receive training and mentorship on various aspects of research (design and methods, ethics, data analyses, scientific writing, proposal development and communication of research results, etc). The students' home institutions may receive an institutional overhead to support the department and dissertation committee in ensuring timely review of dissertation chapters.

How to apply

All application materials (applications in French will be considered) must be received by **January 15, 2012** in order to be reviewed. Applications **must** include the following documents to be considered (**Applications not meeting these requirements will not be reviewed**):

1. A completed application form (can be downloaded from www.aphrc.org) (**this form must be submitted electronically in MS Word format**);
2. Proof of citizenship or permanent residence in a sub-Saharan African country (e.g. copy of passport or other national identification);
3. Two letters of reference (at least one must come from a faculty member with extensive knowledge of applicant's academic history and performance and must document how the candidate's dissertation research fits into ongoing research programs in the department). Referees' contact information must be provided in the application form; and
4. Evidence that the research protocol has undergone review and received approval from an approved ethical review board and the dissertation committee or is under review for the same.



Applications should be sent to:

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