Call for Applications
PhD Scholarships: Health among African Sexual and Gender Minority Migrants

About the Positions

Two fully funded PhD positions are available at the University of Pretoria's Centre for Sexualities, AIDS and Gender. The successful candidates' doctoral projects will be part of the *Health and Migration (HEMI)* project*: A Multi-country Study of African Male Migrants*.

The project is funded by the Research Council of Norway and implemented in collaboration among the University of Pretoria, partner universities in Norway and Tanzania, and civil society organisations in Africa and Norway. The project is affiliated with the Africa-Europe Cluster of Research Excellence in Health, Gender and Sexualities (CoRE HGS), which brings together scholars from 8 universities.

HEMI focuses on health in the context of migration among African sexual and gender minority men. The project traces migration journeys from countries of origin through transit to destinations and explores how migration shapes health, vulnerability, and resilience. It examines why people migrate, the challenges and opportunities they encounter along the way, how migrants seek to maintain their health, and the kinds of support they receive, or fail to receive, during the migration process.

Four PhD candidates will work on the project alongside an international, multidisciplinary team of senior researchers and civil society partners.

The PhD candidates selected by the University of Pretoria will primarily focus on the health, well-being, and migration experiences of migrants living in South Africa, and will work closely with GALZ in Zimbabwe and OUT LGBT Well-being in South Africa.

Successful candidates will receive a 3-year fellowship that covers tuition fees, a monthly stipend, and a contribution toward research costs.

We are seeking highly motivated candidates with a strong interest in health disparities among minority populations. The PhD fellows will be primarily based at the University of Pretoria.

More about the PhD Projects

The first doctoral project will explore the migration, health, and everyday life experiences of African migrants (SGMM) in South Africa. The second doctoral project, hosted by GALZ in Zimbabwe, will focus on the experiences of sexual and gender minority men migrating between Zimbabwe and South Africa. The scholarship for this position will be offered directly to the candidate by GALZ, the largest organisation in Zimbabwe that promotes, represents and protects LGBTI rights in the country.

The research projects will employ qualitative methods, including in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and participant observation. The projects will also involve collaboration with community actors and include elements of co-research with members of the communities being studied. The positions will involve intensive fieldwork. Using qualitative and participatory methods, you will

investigate the lived experiences of migrants and the perspectives of healthcare providers, public service workers, and civil society organisations that support them.

Throughout the fellowship, the successful candidates will collaborate with two other PhD candidates conducting related research in Norway and Tanzania and participate in regular cross-national supervision meetings and project workshops.

While the overall framework of the HEMI project will guide the doctoral research, the specific design of the PhD project will be further developed during the early stages of the fellowship in dialogue with supervisors and project partners, including refinement of research questions, theoretical perspectives, and methodological approaches. Successful candidates can therefore help shape aspects of the research within the project's overall framework.

More about the Positions

These positions are intended to help the candidates develop research competencies and obtain a doctoral degree at the Faculty of Humanities, University of Pretoria. Successful candidates are expected to complete their doctoral research and submit a PhD thesis by the end of the three-year funding period. Candidates will be based at the Centre for Sexualities, AIDS and Gender at the University of Pretoria.

In addition to conducting research, the PhD candidate will actively contribute to the HEMI project's broader research environment. This includes participating in project workshops, meetings, and presentations, as well as engaging in collaborative activities with other project partners.

Responsibilities

The successful candidates will:

- Design a doctoral project with a focus on migrant sexual and gender minority men's experiences in South Africa, including research protocol development, research design, methods, and ethical approvals, in alignment with the overall project framework
- Conduct qualitative fieldwork and data collection in South Africa and/or Zimbabwe
- Analyse qualitative data and contribute to the theoretical and methodological development of the project
- Contribute to joint publications and other outputs produced within the wider project
- Present research findings at academic conferences, seminars, and relevant policy or stakeholder meetings
- Participate actively in project workshops, meetings, and collaborative activities with international partners

Qualifications

To be admitted to the PhD programme at the Faculty of Humanities, University of Pretoria, applicants must have completed a master's degree.

Final admission to the project requires admission to a PhD degree in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Pretoria. All department-specific admission requirements must be met, regardless of whether the candidate applies to the HEMI project.

Required qualifications

To hold this position, you must:

- Hold a master's degree in sociology, social anthropology, gender studies, or a related field
- Have excellent written and oral proficiency in English
- Have strong academic writing skills
- Have the ability to contribute to the production of high-quality academic outputs
- Possess good organisational skills and the ability to manage research activities independently
- Be able to communicate complex information clearly, both orally and in writing, to different audiences

Desired qualifications

In this role, it is an advantage if you have

- Experience with migration-related research or programming
- Experience with research or work related to sexual and gender minority populations
- A sound knowledge of the South African or Zimbabwean healthcare system and the related social context, depending on the selected location
- Familiarity with qualitative research methods
- Interest in collaborative and interdisciplinary research
- Experience working across cultures or in international research collaborations

Personal Qualities

We are looking for a candidate who:

- Is committed to conducting impactful research and motivated to develop the necessary academic and research skills
- Has the ability to work effectively both independently and as part of a collaborative research team
- Is willing to actively contribute to a positive research environment among fellow PhD candidates and within the wider project team
- Communicates openly about research progress and challenges encountered throughout the research process
- Is engaged, curious, and motivated to contribute to meaningful research
- Is well organised and able to contribute constructively to the progress of the project as a whole

Application

Your application should include:

- A CV of no more than two pages.
- Full university transcripts, showing the courses/modules taken and the marks for individual

courses and/or for a master's dissertation.

- Letter of reference from academic staff who have direct experience with your work.
- A writing sample of 4,000 to 10,000 words (e.g. a coursework essay, dissertation or research article).
- A personal statement of up to three pages that addresses the following questions and issues (in any format or order):
    - Which of the two positions are you interested in and why?
    - What relevant experience do you bring to this PhD project?
    - How would you want to develop your study for this project, including any particular issues and questions you would want to explore?
    - Literature you would be interested in engaging with and contributing to as part of the project
    - Your longer-term career plans and how this project will help you progress them, including any training you hope to receive as part of the project
- A statement indicating whether any artificial intelligence tools were used in preparing your application. If so, the statement should specify which tools were used and provide an account of how and for what purposes they were applied.

General Information

Applications should be submitted online using this Google Form by 27 November 2026. The most qualified candidates will be invited to interviews. Successful candidates are expected to start their fellowships in February 2027, provided that all acceptance and other related documents are in place.

Additional Information

For additional information, please contact:

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