

PhD partial funding or Research Assistant opportunities for Postgraduate Students, 2025 Future Water research institute, University of Cape Town

Future Water is looking to recruit a postgraduate student (PhD candidate level) from disciplines such as **Social Anthropology, Sociology, Public Health or a related field**, with qualitative research experience/interest to join our team. Among other methodologies, the student will be called upon to engage in participant observation, conduct interviews, workshops, focus groups and make use of arts-based approaches, as well as carry out stakeholder engagement. **We are particularly looking for students with an understanding and interest in public health, environmental social sciences and in health vulnerabilities emerging from extreme weather events like flooding.**

Health Vulnerability in Flooding. This Water Research Commission (WRC) funded project requires in-depth exploration. It builds on past research where a framework for health vulnerability in the context of extreme weather events was developed and calls for testing and further development of this framework among people who have experienced flooding events.

The project abstract is as follows:

This project proposes in-depth engagement, ethnographic exploration, and a series of workshops in at least two sites to explore the frameworks, and related pathways away from exposures. Researchers on this project will work with neighbourhoods on topics of flooding, testing the indicators, but also with the aim to begin to develop local, context specific, and evidence-informed collaborations to reduce the impacts of flooding. This project aims to begin to develop a cohort of young researchers equipped with evidence-based informed practices that also take into account people's lived experiences. The research itself, especially the intended first phase of this project, will consolidate data and information drawing on an existent health vulnerability framework as starting point and engaging with available local epidemiological data around health impacts during flooding events; the overview of the first phase will be disseminated to decision and policy-makers with the hope that evidence can influence practice. Case studies and implementation experiences around co-designed interventions to improve liveability of spaces, using NbS and water sensitive design, are needed to support efforts, like the City of Cape Town's to focus on water sensitivity; decision makers with this agenda in mind need case studies to understand what does work, in which contexts and with which enabling factors. This research would contribute at minimum two case studies towards this understanding. The project aims to reorient research practice and dissemination in the final phase in such a way as to empower local residents with knowledge; to provide venues through which to share their lived experiences with flooding; to collaborate to develop ways to better respond to flooding events across local contexts (political, social, financials); to develop local interventions. For example, we aim to hire local residents who have engaged with the workshopping process or shared narratives and health pathways development to gather further data for the project, this will aid our aim in developing local capacity and transfer learning and skills so that relations of research are not just extractive. By creating a project that has local salience and in-built processes to provide locally driven pathways forward – away, in this case from extreme vulnerability, through for example, locally developed nature-based solutions – engagement, research, activism and improvement can occur together through the planned workshops. It would be in the development of the workshops and a large information sharing/engagement/activating event/s that local residents could be employed as researchers, building their capacity for this type of process-oriented output. Sustainable development solutions through nature based, water sensitive processes would be the intended outcome of our final workshop series described below – the aim being to collaboratively co-design with local residents interventions that address the pressing concerns they raise, specifically in this case, around flooding. Not only does this project work to develop human capacity in knowledge sharing with local citizens, but it also works to develop a cohort of public health and social scientists focused on water, and water-related health topics.

For more details and information on the project, email amber.abrams@uct.ac.za.

The suitable candidate will need to be registered as a PhD student at UCT in an appropriate discipline and will be expected to undertake the following tasks:

1. Relevant policy and literature reviews;
2. Data gathering, collating, cleaning and analysis;
3. Workshops, surveys, and interviews;
4. Ongoing engagement, participant observation and dedicated exploration around health vulnerability indicators ;
5. Stakeholder engagement, note taking and summarizing, including field reports;
6. Reworking of existent frameworks;
7. Final data analysis and report writing.

The candidate will be selected based on research experience/interest, a capacity for transdisciplinary, engaged research, and an ability to contribute to knowledge translation and stakeholder engagement work. The chosen candidate may use components of this research (and additional aspects they design) towards their dissertation requirements and will be expected to begin research in early 2025. Payment of a scholarship will be commensurate with the successful applicant's qualifications and experience.

To apply, candidates are invited to send a cover letter outlining their interest in the position, CV including research experience and the contact details of two appropriate referees via the [google form](#) by no later than **7 February 2025**. For any complications with submissions please email to amber.abrams@uct.ac.za and danielle.cloete@uct.ac.za (**NB: Email subject should read "FW WRC Flood researcher_YOUR SURNAME"**). Selection of the eligible candidate will be made by the Director of Future Water and a sub-committee drawn from academics in the institute. More information about the Future Water research institute is available at <http://futurewater.uct.ac.za>.

The University of Cape Town reserves the right to disqualify ineligible, incomplete and/or inappropriate applications, to change the conditions of award and to make no awards at all. In line with university transformation policies, preference will be given to applicants from designated groups.