

MEDIA STATEMENT

Uplift to South African - United Kingdom higher education partnerships

Monday, 11 March 2019

The British Council, through a partnership with the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), is pleased to announce funding for 20 higher education partnerships, involving 22 South African Universities (including Universities of Technology) and 19 Universities from the United Kingdom. The partnerships are supported through a collaboration grant, providing an uplift of ZAR 3,4 million rand to help achieve the targets set by the National Development Plan (National Planning Commission, 2013, p.267) which states that by 2030, 75 per cent of university academic staff should hold PhDs.

The Minister of Higher Education and Training launched the University Staff Doctoral Programme (USDP) under the University Capacity Development Programme (UCDP) in July 2017 to help achieve these NDP targets, specifically through increasing the number of university academics who hold doctoral degrees. Dr Whitfield Green, Chief Director: Teaching and Learning Development said “The DHET views collaborations with responsive partners to be a very important enabling mechanism in its work to build capacity in the university system. The collaboration with the British Council contributes valuable resources and expertise that enable programmes such as the University Staff Doctoral Programme to have a greater impact in the sector.”

These collaboration funding grants are the first step in the USDP Phase 2, a programme of the UCDP, which addresses the need to increase the number of academics who hold PhD's. Academics with PhD's are a critical leverage point in overcoming the historical lack of supervisory capacity needed to support PhD training, critical to the development of the knowledge economy. The British Council's Higher Education Programme Manager, Ms. Anisa Khan commented that “the UK-SA partnership under the USDP Phase 2 is an exciting opportunity to explore mutual benefit through new and innovative modalities for strategic partnerships. The vast experience of UK Universities in supporting doctoral training, e.g. through joint doctoral training centres, could offer additional benefits to SA HEI's whilst the rich diversity of research programmes in South Africa could offer unique benefits to UK universities, e.g. through joint publishing and new, long-term institutional links.”

The grants will enable the scoping and establishment of partnerships required for Phase 2 of the USDP, and as a second step, which will see a further call from the Department of Higher Education and Training, in June 2019, for full partnership proposals. The USDP Phase 2 call also aims to strengthen the academic staff PhD pipeline in South African Historically Disadvantaged Institutions and Universities of Technology as each consortium will consist of 2 South African universities, one of which has to be a Historically Disadvantaged Institution or University of Technology, as well as a UK institution.

20 collaboration grants have been awarded to 16 lead universities as listed below:

- North-West University- 2 awards:
 1. Faculty of Health Sciences and
 2. Faculty of Natural & Agricultural Sciences
- Rhodes University- 2 awards:
 1. Centre for Post graduate Studies and

2. Faculty of Education
 - University of the Witwatersrand- School of law
 - University College London- Medical Sciences
 - University of Bath- Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
 - University of Johannesburg- 3 awards:
1. Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment
2. Faculty of Education
3. College of Business and Economics
 - University of Pretoria- Gordon Institute of Business Science
 - University of South Africa- Science, Engineering and Technology college
 - University of Stirling- Faculty of Health Sciences and Sport
 - University of Sussex-School of Mathematical and Physical Sciences
 - University of the Free State- Afrimontane Research Unit
 - University of Zululand- Faculty of Education
 - Coventry University-Research Centre for Global Learning
 - King's College London- Department of Chemistry
 - Loughborough University- Doctoral College and School of Social Sciences
 - Manchester Metropolitan University- Science and Engineering faculty

Notes to Editor

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