



MULTI-, INTER- AND TRANSDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH CONFERENCE 2026

CONFERENCE THEME

Bridging Barriers, Forging Futures

Advancing collaborative, socially responsive and future-focused research across disciplines, sectors and complex societal challenges



DATE

19 August 2026



TIME

8:00 – 17:00



VENUE

Hybrid (Microsoft Teams) and
**Equitas Senate Hall,
Bloemfontein Campus,
University of the Free State**

*Inspiring excellence, transforming lives
through quality, impact, and care.*



UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI YA FREISTATA

MESSAGE FROM THE VICE-CHANCELLOR AND PRINCIPAL

This inaugural conference embodies both our aspiration and our responsibility as a research-intensive institution. It reflects the University of the Free State's commitment to strengthening a research culture defined by intellectual openness, institutional collaboration and meaningful societal impact.

The conference takes place at a time when many of the questions before us are deeply interconnected, yet the structures through which we seek answers often remain fragmented. This gives universities a particular responsibility. We must not only produce knowledge but also create spaces where different forms of expertise can meet and difficult questions can be examined with honesty. Through purposeful exchange, new possibilities for understanding and action can emerge.

For the University of the Free State, this gathering is both timely and strategic. Our vision is to be an **innovative, research-led, student-centred and regionally engaged university that contributes meaningfully to responsible societal futures**. The theme of this conference, *Bridging Barriers, Forging Futures*, gives practical expression to that vision. It brings our commitment to collaborative innovation, research impact and societal relevance into a shared institutional space.

My hope is that this conference will do more than connect people for a day. It should prompt challenging questions, foster sustainable partnerships and enable innovative ways of working. It should strengthen our institutional capacity to turn shared insight into sustained research impact. Above all, it should deepen our resolve to translate scholarly insight into responsible and sustained action.



Prof Hester C. Kloppe

The measure of this conference will therefore lie in the quality of the conversations it initiates and the collaborations it sustains.

May this inaugural gathering strengthen our collective ability to understand complexity, act with purpose, and shape futures in which people, communities, and the planet can flourish.

Welcome to the Multi-, Inter- and Transdisciplinary Research Conference 2026. May it mark the beginning of an enduring culture of collaboration across the university.

MESSAGE FROM THE DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR: RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

Today's conference marks an important step towards strengthening collaboration across disciplines and creating new opportunities for the shared creation of knowledge. The challenges facing society, including climate change, health inequalities, artificial intelligence, sustainable development and social justice, cannot be addressed by any single field. They demand collaboration, integration and innovative thinking.

This is why multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches are so important. Multidisciplinarity brings disciplines together; interdisciplinarity enables them to learn from one another; and transdisciplinarity extends beyond academia by engaging communities, stakeholders and wider society in the co-creation of meaningful solutions.

This conference showcases the breadth of expertise across the University of the Free State. Scholars from law, education, theology and religion, health sciences, agriculture, humanities, and economic and management sciences are addressing complex questions that require diverse perspectives and collective effort.

The conference also strengthens our research ecosystem by fostering partnerships, inspiring innovation and creating opportunities for collaborative projects. In addition, it offers exposure to diverse knowledge systems and the chance to develop the broader capabilities needed for impactful research.



Prof Vasu Reddy

Research excellence depends not only on disciplinary depth, but also on our ability to connect ideas across boundaries and imagine new possibilities.

I encourage you to engage openly, challenge assumptions, build networks and explore new collaborations. Let us use this platform to generate knowledge that advances scholarship and creates lasting social impact.

Thank you for being part of this pioneering event. I wish you a productive and inspiring conference.

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CONFERENCE FOCUS AND PURPOSE

This inaugural Multi-, Inter- and Transdisciplinary Research Conference 2026 provides a university-wide forum for engaging questions that cannot be adequately understood or addressed from within a single field of study. Guided by the theme ***Bridging Barriers, Forging Futures***, the conference brings together scholars from across the University of the Free State and beyond to consider how disciplinary expertise can be placed in productive conversation with other forms of knowledge, method and experience. Its purpose is not simply to celebrate collaboration, but to examine what becomes possible when researchers work across conceptual, institutional and social boundaries while retaining the intellectual depth and rigour of their respective disciplines.

The plenary format creates a shared intellectual space in which contributions can be heard across faculties, rather than confined to parallel disciplinary conversations. The programme draws together perspectives from law, health sciences, education, the humanities, theology and religion, economic and management sciences, natural and agricultural sciences, and interdisciplinary research hubs. Collectively, the presentations engage with matters such as human development, technological change, health, education, identity, climate adaptation, biodiversity, food systems, housing, governance, public information and community well-being. They also demonstrate the value of bringing academic knowledge into conversation with communities, practitioners, policymakers, public institutions and other partners.

The conference therefore serves three closely related purposes: to deepen scholarly exchange across the UFS; to identify shared questions, methods and responsibilities; and to encourage collaborations capable of producing knowledge of public value. It also provides an opportunity to reflect critically on the structures that shape research, whose knowledge is recognised, how partnerships are formed, and how academic work can move beyond publication towards policy, practice and meaningful social impact. The emphasis is on scholarship that is contextually grounded, ethically responsible and responsive to the realities of the Free State, South Africa and the wider African continent.

In this sense, ***Bridging Barriers, Forging Futures*** is both the theme of the conference and a challenge to the university community: to connect without erasing difference, to collaborate without sacrificing disciplinary depth, and to develop forms of knowledge production that respond to present realities while contributing to more just, resilient and flourishing futures.

BRIDGING BARRIERS, FORGING FUTURES

“We face neither East nor West; We face forward”.

~ **Kwame Nkrumah**

“My humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in yours. We belong in a bundle of life”.

~ **Desmond Tutu**

“Recognizing that sustainable development, democracy and peace are indivisible is an idea whose time has come”.

~ **Wangari Maathai**

“Science, technology and innovation have always been the basis of social progress and the improvement of people’s living conditions”.

~ **Ameenah Gurib-Fakim**

“The clashing point of two subjects, two disciplines, two cultures—of two galaxies, so far as that goes—ought to produce creative chances”.

~ **C. P. Snow**

“In nature, nothing exists alone”.

~ **Rachel Carson**

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

MULTI-, INTER- AND TRANSDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH CONFERENCE 2026

BRIDGING BARRIERS, FORGING FUTURES

19 August 2026 | Plenary format | Venue: Equitas Building, Senate Hall

Time	Programme Details
07:45–08:30	Arrival, Registration and Morning Tea
08:30–08:45	Welcome and Introduction of the Vice-Chancellor and Principal Prof Vasu Reddy, Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Studies Opening Address Prof Hester C. Klopper, Vice-Chancellor and Principal, UFS
08:45–09:10	Keynote Address 1 Speaker: Prof Glenda Gray From HIV to COVID-19: Building Transdisciplinary Research Capacity for Pandemic Response in Africa Introduced by: Prof Vasu Reddy
09:10–10:10	Session 1: Bridging Barriers in Society, Policy and Human Development Chair: Prof Joyce Tsoka-Gwegweni Alternate Chair: Dr Calvin Mudzingiri Presenters
	John C. Mubangizi (<i>Law</i>) Reflections on Interdisciplinary Research with Specific Reference to Human Rights and Cognate Disciplines
	Maria Tsakeni (<i>Education</i>) Exploring Primary Pre-service Teachers' Artificial Intelligence-facilitated Metacognition in a Natural Sciences Curriculum Course
	Juanita Meyer (<i>Theology and Religion</i>) Bridging Unsafe Thresholds: Transdisciplinary Approaches to Gendered Vulnerability, Spatial Safety and Relational Flourishing
	V. Ralph Clark (<i>Afromontane Research Unit</i>) The Afromontane Research Unit—Moving Past Papers to Partnerships for Permanent Positive Change
10:10–10:25	Tea Break

Time	Programme Details
10:25–11:25	Session 2: Forging Futures through Innovation, Technology and Systems Thinking Chair: Prof Jared McDonald Alternate Chair: Prof Matseliso Mokhele Makgalwa Presenters
	Angela Stott (<i>Education</i>) Designing AI that Asks: A Multidisciplinary Approach to STEM Learning in Africa
	Tamuka Nyashadzashe (<i>Economic and Management Sciences</i>) Artificial Intelligence Bias and Fairness in Africa: Bridging Barriers to Inclusive and Trustworthy AI Futures
	Tamanda Kamwendo (<i>Law</i>) Beyond Innovation: Artificial Intelligence, Telehealth and the Need for Interdisciplinary Solutions
	Xany Jansen van Vuuren; Helen–Mary Cawood (<i>Humanities</i>) Rubbish Rhetoric: How Bordalo II Translates Plastic Waste into Public Witness
11:25–12:25	Session 3: Transforming Knowledge, Learning and Institutional Futures Chair: Prof Mahlako Makgahlela Alternate Chair: Prof Zorodzai Dube Presenters
	Arone Koloti (<i>Education</i>) Pre-service Teachers' Digital Technology Adoption Practices in Foundation Phase Teacher Education Programmes
	Nonhlanhla Nduku (<i>Education</i>) Responsiveness of Secondary Agricultural Sciences Education to Socio-Economic and Environmental Challenges: A Systematic Review of Curriculum, Pedagogy, and Outcomes
	Calvin D. Ullrich (<i>Theology and Religion</i>) The Centre for Interdisciplinary Research in Religion, Community, and Ecologies (CIRRCE)—Methodological Insights
	Herkulaas Combrink (<i>Economic and Management Sciences</i>) When Information Spreads Faster Than Truth: Why Computational Infodemiology Matters

Time	Programme Details
12:25–13:15	Session 4: Addressing Environmental and Societal Challenges through Collaborative Research Chair: Dr Kamohelo Tshabalala Alternate Chair: Prof Tameshnie Deane Presenters
	Abiodun Ogundeji (<i>Natural and Agricultural Sciences</i>) An Integrated Approach to Climate Change Adaptation
	Mamello Sekhoacha (<i>Health Sciences</i>) A One Health Framework for Biodiverse, Multidisciplinary Veterinary and Human Therapeutics, and Environmental Biosensing
	Abraham R. Matamanda (<i>Natural and Agricultural Sciences</i>) Researching on Affordable Housing in Southern Africa: A Transdisciplinary Approach
	Grey Magaiza (<i>Humanities</i>) Undisciplinary Scholarship: Rethinking Multidisciplinary, Interdisciplinary and Transdisciplinary Research in an Era of Polycrisis
	Claudia Ntsapi-Combrink and Beynon Abrahams (<i>Health Sciences</i>) An Integrative Systems Biology Framework for Bioactive Discovery across Non-Communicable Diseases
13:15–13:45	Lunch
13:45–14:10	Keynote Address 2 Speaker: Prof Narnia Bohler-Muller From Flourishing Denied to Flourishing Life: A Transdisciplinary Imperative Introduced by: Prof Sethulego Matebesi
14:10–15:10	Session 5: From Sustainability to Impact: Interdisciplinary Pathways for Community and Environmental Futures Chair: Prof Cias Tsotetsi Alternate Chair: Prof Joyce Tsoka-Gwegweni Presenters
	Felicity Burt (<i>Health Sciences</i>) Human Organoids for Investigating the Pathogenesis of Arbovirus Infection
	Aliza le Roux (<i>Natural and Agricultural Sciences</i>) From Nuisance to Nexus: Rethinking Rodents, Carnivores, and Human Well-Being
	Hilary Kennedy Nji Bama (<i>Economic and Management Sciences</i>) Bridging Heritage Interpretation and Community Futures: Interdisciplinary and Transdisciplinary Pathways for Sustainable Ecotourism Development
	Liezel Massyn (<i>Economic and Management Sciences</i>) The Missing Link in Farming System Resilience: Mapping Research on Farmers' Personal Resilience
	Boitumelo Moreeng (<i>Education</i>) The Afrocentric Conceptualisation of Postgraduate Supervision as a Process of "Ukuthwasa and Gobelisation"
15:10–15:20	Comfort and Tea Break

Time	Programme Details
15:20–16:20	Session 6: Advancing Interdisciplinary Research: Collaboration, Practice and Institutional Impact Chair: Prof Sekitla Makhasane Alternate Chair: Prof Brownhilder Neneh Presenters
	Lindi Nel; Luzelle Naudé; Diana Breshears; Rentia du Plessis <i>(IDEaS Research Hub)</i> Mapping Journeys of Self, Society, and Becoming: The Past, Present, and Future of the IDEaS Interdisciplinary Hub for Identity Research
	Ylva Rodny-Gumede <i>(Executive Director: Advancement);</i> Colin Chasi <i>(Humanities)</i> A Dying Coloniality: Academic Collaboration in a Pluriversal World
16:20–16:35	Closing Remarks Prof Tameshnie Deane
16:35	Vote of Thanks Prof Vasu Reddy

MULTI-, INTER- AND TRANSDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH CONFERENCE ORGANISING COMMITTEE

Prof Vasu Reddy (Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Studies) (Co-Chairperson)

Prof Tameshnie Deane (Vice-Dean: Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Studies – Faculty of Law) (Co-Chairperson)

Prof Joyce Tsoka-Gwegweni (Vice-Dean: Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Studies – Faculty of Health Sciences)

Prof Cias Tsotetsi (Qwaqwa Campus Vice-Principal: Academic and Research)

Prof Jared McDonald (Assistant Dean: Faculty of the Humanities, Qwaqwa campus)

Dr Kamohelo Tshabalala (Assistant Dean: Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences, Qwaqwa campus)

Prof Brownhilder Neneh (Vice-Dean: Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Studies – Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences)

Prof Sekitla Makhasane (Assistant Dean: Faculty of Education, Qwaqwa campus)

Dr Calvin Mudzingiri (Assistant Dean: Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, Qwaqwa campus)

Dr Danila Wessels (Acting Director: Centre for Graduate Support)

Prof Matseliso Mokhele Makgalwa (Vice-Dean: Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Studies – Faculty of Education)

Prof Sethulego Matebesi (Acting Vice-Dean: Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Studies – Faculty of the Humanities)

Prof Mahlako Makgahlela (Vice-Dean: Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Studies – Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences)

Prof Zorodzai Dube (Head of Department: Religion Studies – Faculty of Theology and Religion)

Ms Elma Viljoen (Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Studies)

Ms Aldi Lombard (Office of the Dean: Law)

Chrystal Francis (Communication and Marketing)

Christelle Du Toit (Assistant Director: Communication and Marketing)

Mr Angelo Arendse (Senior Marketing Officer: Law)

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES — KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



Prof Glenda E. Gray

Prof Glenda E. Gray is an NRF A1-rated scientist, South African-trained paediatrician and internationally recognised clinician-scientist. She is a Distinguished Professor and Executive Director of the Infectious Diseases and Oncology Research Institute at the University of the Witwatersrand. Previously, she served as the first female President and CEO of the South African Medical Research Council, where she led the organisation's scientific strategy and national research priorities. Prof Gray is Co-Principal Investigator of the NIH-funded HIV Vaccine

Trials Network and leads the BRILLIANT Consortium for HIV vaccine discovery and development. Her expertise spans HIV, tuberculosis, COVID-19 and oral cholera vaccine research, including clinical trials, regulatory strategy and pharmacovigilance. Her contributions have been recognised through the Order of Mapungubwe, the Nelson Mandela Health and Human Rights Award, inclusion in TIME magazine's 100 Most Influential People, and election as a Fellow of the Royal Society.



Prof Narnia Bohler-Muller

Prof Narnia Bohler-Muller is a legal scholar and social scientist specialising in constitutional law, democracy, governance, human rights, gender equality and social justice. She leads the Flourishing Life Research Theme at the University of the Free State, following her tenure as Divisional Executive of the Developmental, Capable and Ethical State research programme at the Human Sciences Research Council. Her previous appointments include professorships at Vista University and Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, as well as Research Director at the Africa

Institute of South Africa. An admitted Advocate of the High Court of South Africa, Prof Bohler-Muller has represented the country in international forums including BRICS, the Indian Ocean Rim Association and the Women20. She is an accomplished author and keynote speaker whose current research explores democratic renewal, constitutionalism and human flourishing as foundations for social justice and inclusive public policy.

ABSTRACTS

Keynote Address 1

From HIV to COVID-19: Building Transdisciplinary Research Capacity for Pandemic Response in Africa

Keynote speaker:	Prof Glenda Gray
Affiliation:	Distinguished Professor and Director, Infectious Diseases and Oncology Research Institute (IDORI), Wits University

Sustained investment in transdisciplinary HIV research created infrastructure, expertise and networks that could be rapidly redirected to COVID-19 in sub-Saharan Africa. Drawing on three decades of HIV prevention research, from interventions to prevent mother-to-child transmission to HIV vaccine and monoclonal-antibody trials, this keynote address examines how clinical medicine, vaccinology, virology, laboratory science and social science were integrated into a resilient research ecosystem. That ecosystem extended across more than 40 clinical-trial sites in 10 African countries and included expertise in adenoviral-vector platforms developed for HIV vaccine candidates. During COVID-19, these capabilities supported the co-leadership of a 43 000-participant efficacy trial of the Ad26 COVID-19 vaccine and the Sisonke implementation study, which vaccinated almost 500 000 healthcare workers. Collaboration also encompassed social-science research on gender-based violence and HIV risk, alongside genomic surveillance of variants. The experience demonstrates that research capacity built for one public-health crisis can become a critical asset for the next. By bridging disease and disciplinary silos, it advances local, equitable and future-ready pandemic response in Africa.

Keynote Address 2

From Flourishing Denied to Flourishing Life: A Transdisciplinary Imperative

Keynote speaker:	Prof Narnia Bohler-Muller
Affiliation:	Research Theme Leader: Flourishing Life, University of the Free State

In this keynote address, Flourishing Denied is presented as the gap between constitutional promise and lived reality in South Africa, where progressive socio-economic rights jurisprudence coexists with profound inequality. The argument is that this is a transdisciplinary problem requiring a transdisciplinary remedy. Grounded in the presenter's embodied experience of seeing differently, the keynote address treats all knowledge as situated: disciplines, like bodies, see from particular positions and only in part. Flourishing is constituted across legal, economic, public-health, philosophical and gendered dimensions that no single discipline can encompass. Drawing on ubuntu

philosophy and feminist situated knowledge, the keynote address proposes three constitutive moves: relational ontology, which begins with relationships rather than individuals; methodological pluralism with ethical coherence; and accountability to the future, which treats research as transformative rather than merely descriptive. The Flourishing Life Research Network at the University of the Free State is introduced as an institutional location for this work. Bridging disciplinary barriers is therefore framed as an ethical imperative for advancing flourishing life.

Session 1: Bridging Barriers in Society, Policy and Human Development

1. Reflections on Interdisciplinary Research with Specific Reference to Human Rights and Cognate Disciplines

Author/Presenter:	John C. Mubangizi
Affiliation:	Free State Centre for Human Rights, Faculty of Law, University of the Free State

Abstract

Human rights challenges cross disciplinary boundaries and cannot be understood through legal scholarship alone. This presentation reflects on the value of interdisciplinary research in human rights and cognate fields, drawing on research, teaching, academic leadership and collaborative scholarly engagement in African and international contexts. It examines intersections between human rights law and public governance, political science, development studies, environmental studies, public administration, gender studies, artificial intelligence and sustainable development. Examples concerning corruption and governance, socio-economic rights, democracy and constitutionalism, public service delivery, artificial intelligence and gender-related cultural practices show how interdisciplinary approaches deepen understanding of interconnected societal challenges. The presentation foregrounds a human rights-based approach as a conceptual and methodological framework that integrates diverse perspectives while maintaining attention to accountability, participation, equality, social justice and human dignity. It also considers how research networks, institutional partnerships and international engagement support contextually relevant, policy-responsive knowledge. By bridging disciplinary and institutional barriers, the presentation argues for scholarship that produces socially meaningful, future-focused responses to governance and development challenges in Africa and beyond.

2. Exploring Primary Pre-service Teachers' Artificial Intelligence-facilitated Metacognition in a Natural Sciences Curriculum Course

Authors:	Maria Tsakeni, Stephen Nwafor and Loyiso Jita
Presenter:	Maria Tsakeni
Affiliation:	Faculty of Education, University of the Free State

Abstract

Artificial intelligence (AI) is reshaping education, creating opportunities for meaningful learning while raising concerns about excessive reliance on technologies that can perform tasks associated with human cognition. This study explores how primary pre-service teachers use AI in a natural sciences curriculum course, with particular attention to metacognition, problem-solving and creativity. Situated at the intersection of natural science education, pre-service teacher education and AI in education, the study employed a parallel convergent mixed-methods design. Findings showed that participants collaborated effectively with AI to simulate authentic problem-solving and foster creativity through STEM pedagogies. They expressed confidence in using AI to promote meaningful learning and student engagement, but reported lower confidence in their ability to teach effectively in AI-integrated classrooms. The study therefore highlights the need for teacher education programmes to strengthen pedagogical preparation for human-centred, AI-enhanced teaching and learning. By connecting disciplinary knowledge, teacher development and emerging technology, the research addresses barriers to effective AI integration and supports future-focused knowledge production in education.

3. Bridging Unsafe Thresholds: Transdisciplinary Approaches to Gendered Vulnerability, Spatial Safety and Relational Flourishing

Author/Presenter:	Juanita Meyer
Affiliation:	Department of Practical and Missional Theology, Faculty of Theology and Religion, University of the Free State

Abstract

Gendered vulnerability in public and educational spaces is a significant but underexplored societal challenge in South Africa and the wider Southern African context. This conceptual paper examines public sanitation spaces, not only as infrastructural or policy concerns, but as relational ecologies in which safety, embodiment, identity and belonging are continually negotiated. It argues that girls and young women may internalise fear, vulnerability and restricted participation through learned vigilance, spatial awareness and recurring narratives that shift responsibility for safety onto those at risk. The paper brings pastoral theology into conversation with gender studies, trauma studies, psychology, education and spatial theory to analyse these “unsafe thresholds”. It proposes restorative ecologies of care grounded

in human dignity, relational accountability and spatial justice, while recognising the value of public health, social work and institutional governance perspectives. By bridging disciplinary and sectoral boundaries, the presentation advances safer relational environments in which vulnerable persons can participate fully in public life, contributing to gender equality, well-being and future-oriented forms of human flourishing.

4. The Afromontane Research Unit – Moving Past Papers to Partnerships for Permanent Positive Change

Authors:	The ARU Team (University of the Free State) and Partners
Presenter:	V. Ralph Clark
Affiliation:	Afromontane Research Unit, Qwaqwa Campus, University of the Free State

Abstract

Research papers do not generate societal impact unless knowledge is translated into tangible change. This presentation shows how the Afromontane Research Unit (ARU) has moved beyond academic output by building strategic partnerships with non-academic organisations and community leadership in Qwaqwa. Partnerships with Meat Naturally, the Wild Trust, Witsieshoek Mountain Lodge and the two Qwaqwa Royal Houses have supported best-practice restoration of communal rangelands for local commercial benefit, management of woody alien trees in the Namahadi Catchment, and research-related support for tourism operations. The ARU has also positioned Thabana Tsoana Tourism as custodian of the Bearded Vulture nest on the Kgoptjwane Peaks and has worked with the Royal Houses towards promulgating the Witsieshoek Community Conservation Area Natural Protected Environment. These examples demonstrate a transdisciplinary model in which agents of change and decision-making extend beyond the university. By moving from papers to partnerships, the ARU bridges institutional and community barriers and advances locally owned, environmentally responsible and socially beneficial change in mountain landscapes and societies.

Session 2: Forging Futures through Innovation, Technology and Systems Thinking

5. Designing AI that Asks: A Multidisciplinary Approach to STEM Learning in Africa

Presenter:	Angela Stott
Contributors:	Multidisciplinary collaborators
Affiliation:	Faculty of Education, University of the Free State

Abstract

Most educational artificial intelligence (AI) systems are developed outside Africa and are designed primarily to provide answers, creating a need for pedagogically effective and contextually appropriate alternatives in African settings. The AI4STEM project investigates how AI can instead function as a questioning-driven learning partner that supports continual Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics learning. Researchers in science education, STEM disciplines, educational technology and computer science work with postgraduate students, schools and university partners to develop and evaluate an AI-based application using quizzing and Socratic dialogue. The project combines desktop experiments on factors affecting precision, case studies of engagement and learning gains, and action research to optimise system design and pedagogical integration. Expected outcomes include a scalable application and an AI-human hybrid framework that promotes active engagement, conceptual understanding and teacher development while reducing dependence on externally developed educational technologies. By connecting technical design, pedagogy and African educational contexts, AI4STEM addresses barriers to locally relevant AI-supported learning and advances future-focused knowledge production.

6. Artificial Intelligence Bias and Fairness in Africa: Bridging Barriers to Inclusive and Trustworthy AI Futures

Author/Presenter:	Tamuka Nyashadzashe
Affiliation:	Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, University of the Free State

Abstract

Artificial intelligence (AI) increasingly shapes access to technologies and services, yet its benefits in Africa remain uneven because many systems inadequately reflect African realities. This scoping review examined barriers to AI bias and fairness through systematic searches of Web of Science and Scopus. The searches identified 469 records; after filtering and duplicate removal, 186 unique database records remained,

and 40 evidence items were included in the thematic synthesis. Four connected barriers emerged: representation and measurement bias; allocation and digital-footprint bias; deployment and procurement bias; and governance and accountability bias. These barriers occur across African language technologies, biometric identity, digital finance and healthcare. The study proposes a responsible AI framework based on African-governed datasets, participatory design, context-sensitive evaluation, rights-based procurement, auditability, contestability, post-deployment monitoring and institutional capacity-building. It argues that trustworthy AI in Africa requires fairness to be evaluated locally, applied sector by sector and made enforceable. This approach bridges technological, institutional and social barriers while supporting inclusive, responsible and future-focused innovation.

7. Beyond Innovation: Artificial Intelligence, Telehealth and the Need for Interdisciplinary Solutions

Author:	Kamwendo, T.A.
Programme presenter:	Tamanda Kamwendo
Affiliation:	Department of Private Law, Faculty of Law, University of the Free State

Abstract

The rapid integration of artificial intelligence (AI) and telehealth into healthcare systems offers opportunities to improve access, efficiency and health outcomes. In South Africa, these technologies may help to address workforce shortages, geographical barriers to care and unequal access to specialist services. Their implementation, however, raises interconnected questions concerning ethics, regulation, accountability, data governance, healthcare equity and public trust. This presentation argues that no single discipline can adequately resolve these challenges and uses the governance of emerging health technologies as a case for interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research. It brings legal scholarship into dialogue with healthcare practice, ethics, data science and policymaking, while recognising affected communities as essential partners in knowledge production. Such collaboration can support governance approaches that balance technological innovation with patient protection and social justice. By bridging disciplinary, institutional and community boundaries, the presentation contributes to more responsive, future-focused approaches to unequal access to healthcare and the governance of emerging health technologies.

8. Rubbish Rhetoric: How Bordalo II Translates Plastic Waste into Public Witness

Authors/Presenter:	Xany Jansen van Vuuren; Helen-Mary Cawood
Affiliation:	Faculty of the Humanities, University of the Free State

Abstract

Plastic waste is both a material consequence of consumer culture and a medium through which environmental meaning can be made publicly visible. This paper examines Portuguese artist Bordalo II's site-specific *Big Trash Animals* series, in which discarded urban materials are transformed into monumental bas-relief sculptures. Drawing on translation studies, eco-translation and phenomenology, the study interprets these works as acts of intersemiotic translation that convert consumer waste into a public ecological rhetoric. Merleau-Ponty's concept of lived experience is used to explain how the tactile and spatial immediacy of the sculptures moves beyond conventional linguistic communication and creates an embodied encounter with environmental harm. In this way, the artworks function as public witnesses, confronting viewers with the consequences of overconsumption and the entanglement of human and more-than-human life. Emerging from an interdisciplinary collaboration between translation studies and philosophy, the paper contributes to a broader critical eco-translation framework for analysing how environmental meaning is mediated, embodied and encountered across semiotic forms. By bridging artistic practice, ecological thought and translation theory, it advances public engagement with the environmental crisis.

Session 3: Transforming Knowledge, Learning and Institutional Futures

9. Pre-service Teachers' Digital Technology Adoption Practices in Foundation Phase Teacher Education Programmes

Authors:	Koloti, A.C. and Jita, T.
Programme presenter:	Arone Koloti
Affiliation:	Faculty of Education, University of the Free State

Abstract

Foundation Phase teacher education in Southern Africa faces rising demands for digital competence alongside persistent inequalities in access, support and pedagogical practice. This study investigated how pre-service teachers use digital technology within a Foundation Phase teacher education programme at a higher education institution in Lesotho. Guided by Rogers's Diffusion of Innovation Theory and the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology, it employed a concurrent

mixed-methods design comprising surveys of 292 pre-service teachers and focus groups. Findings indicated generally positive adoption practices, high performance expectancy and strong social influence, with no significant differences in acceptance across digital tools or regional locations. However, inadequate infrastructure, limited pedagogical integration, insufficient support and anxiety hindered sustainable use and exposed a gap between pre-service teachers and lecturers. The study calls for interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary partnerships among academic staff, education officials, curriculum specialists and information and communication technology departments. Structured practice opportunities and supportive policy frameworks could help to normalise effective adoption, bridge institutional and resource barriers, and strengthen future-focused teacher preparation.

10. Responsiveness of Secondary Agricultural Sciences Education to Socio-Economic and Environmental Challenges: A Systematic Review of Curriculum, Pedagogy, and Outcomes

Author/Presenter:	Nonhlanhla Nduku
Affiliation:	Faculty of Education, University of the Free State

Abstract

Secondary Agricultural Sciences education must equip learners to respond to socio-economic and environmental challenges, yet learners emerging from the nationally standardised South African CAPS curriculum remain unemployed and may lack adequate practical skills. This systematic review examined curriculum content, pedagogy and learner outcomes through an interdisciplinary synthesis of 41 empirical studies indexed in Web of Science and Scopus between 2016 and 2026, following PRISMA guidelines. The literature draws on education, environmental science, agricultural economics and sustainability studies. Findings show increasing attention to climate change, food security and sustainable resource management, but continuing gaps in contextual relevance and practical application—especially in developing regions. Implementation is also uneven because of resource constraints and limited teacher preparedness. The review calls for closer alignment of scientific knowledge, indigenous practices and socio-economic realities, supported by collaboration among schools, communities and industry stakeholders. Curriculum reform, teacher professional development and policy support are needed to bridge knowledge-to-practice barriers and prepare learners for sustainable livelihoods and environmental stewardship.

11. The Centre for Interdisciplinary Research in Religion, Community, and Ecologies (CIRRCE) – Methodological Insights

Author/Presenter:	Calvin D. Ullrich
Affiliation:	Department of Historical and Constructive Theology (Centre for Interdisciplinary Research in Religion, Community, and Ecologies – Faculty of Theology and Religion, University of the Free State)

Abstract

The Centre for Interdisciplinary Research in Religion, Community, and Ecologies (CIRRCE) was recently established within the Faculty of Theology and Religion. This presentation reflects on the collaborative process through which the centre was created and situates its formation within the Faculty's continuing historical development. Rather than reporting completed research findings, the contribution offers methodological reflections on how interdisciplinarity may shape theological and religious studies research. It focuses particularly on three guiding concepts: transversality, embodiment and empathy. These concepts are presented as fundamental to the pursuit of knowledge and as principles informing CIRRCE's emerging research orientation. The centre brings religion, community and ecologies into an interdisciplinary institutional space and uses these methodological principles to frame its approach to theological and religion studies research. The presentation shares insights from the creation of the centre and clarifies the principles identified as central to its work. Its emphasis remains on CIRRCE's founding process and guiding methodological commitments, rather than on research findings or outcomes that were not included in the submitted abstract.

12. When Information Spreads Faster Than Truth: Why Computational Infodemiology Matters

Author/Presenter:	Herkulaas Combrink
Affiliation:	Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, University of the Free State

Abstract

Digital communication has transformed how societies access, interpret and act on information, but it also enables misinformation, disinformation and information voids to spread faster than scientific evidence can be generated and communicated. These infodemics affect public behaviour, institutional trust, policy implementation and community resilience, creating a need to analyse public discourse at scale. Computational infodemiology addresses this challenge by integrating artificial intelligence, machine learning, natural language processing, network science, behavioural science and data analytics. The field examines how beliefs emerge and

spread, identifies information voids, monitors public sentiment and detects emerging societal risks. Between 2021 and 2026, the presenter developed computational methods including the Social Stress Indicator, belief-system mapping, misinformation detection and AI-enabled social listening for COVID-19. These approaches informed collaborations with government, industry and international organisations and contributed to South African Risk Communication and Community Engagement partnerships for infodemic management. By bridging computational, behavioural and institutional expertise, this work strengthens digital resilience and supports proactive, evidence-informed responses to complex information ecosystems.

Session 4: Addressing Environmental and Societal Challenges through Collaborative Research

13. An Integrated Approach to Climate Change Adaptation

Author/Presenter:	Abiodun Ogundeji
Affiliation:	Disaster Management Training and Education Centre for Africa, University of the Free State

Abstract

Climate change threatens agricultural production and water-resource management in climate-sensitive regions such as the Ceres area of South Africa's Western Cape. This study develops the Ceres Dynamic Integrated Model to assess physical and economic effects on agriculture and evaluate adaptation options. The model combines climate projections, hydrological modelling, crop-water requirements, chill-unit accumulation, farm-level economic modelling and adaptation assessment. It links regional climate scenarios with hydrological processes, irrigation demand, temperature-sensitive deciduous-fruit production and farm decisions. SAPWAT is used to estimate future crop-water requirements, chill-unit models assess temperature effects, and dynamic farm models examine changes in land use, water use and farmer welfare. The framework evaluates improved water-use efficiency, increased water storage and water rights, and water-pricing mechanisms. Results show that integrating climatic, hydrological, agricultural and economic components provides a robust basis for decision-making and for developing sustainable adaptation strategies. By bridging disciplinary models and policy-relevant choices, the work supports future-focused climate resilience in the Ceres region.

14. A One Health Framework for Biodiverse, Multidisciplinary Veterinary and Human Therapeutics, and Environmental Biosensing

Authors:	Mamello Sekhoacha, Rosemary Erhabor, Jolly Musoke, Claudia Ntsapi-Combrink, Nthatisi Nyembe, Victoria Fasiku, Joanne Karzi, Makoena Moloi, Errol Casen and Andile Faya
Presenter:	Mamello Sekhoacha
Affiliation:	Faculty of Health Sciences, University of the Free State

Abstract

South Africa's biodiversity offers opportunities for integrated responses to interconnected human, animal and environmental health challenges. This multidisciplinary project develops a One Health framework linking natural resources, human medicine, veterinary health, environmental science, botanical science and agricultural innovation. In human health, advanced three-dimensional tissue bioengineering models evaluate plant-derived therapeutic alternatives for cancer, neurodegenerative diseases and protection against drug-induced organ injury. Veterinary research investigates plant-derived therapeutics and green-synthesised carbon dots to address livestock parasitic and microbial diseases, antibiotic resistance, drug residues and zoonotic transmission, and how novel therapeutics influence the rumen microbiome. Agricultural science supports sustainable cultivation of botanical resources to prevent ecological depletion, while environmental researchers use microbial biosensing to monitor livestock runoff, soil microbiomes and potential aquatic ecotoxicity. By integrating botanical science, nanomaterials and hydrology, the project seeks affordable bio-based solutions that support sustainable livestock production, food safety and security, public health and ecosystem protection. The framework bridges disciplinary and sectoral barriers by connecting bio-based therapeutic discovery, agricultural practice, and environmental monitoring around shared One Health outcomes and sustainable livestock economies.

15. Researching on Affordable Housing in Southern Africa: A Transdisciplinary Approach

Author/Presenter:	Abraham R. Matamanda
Affiliation:	Department of Urban and Regional Planning, University of the Free State

Abstract

Affordable housing remains a major urban challenge across Africa, undermining efforts to build inclusive, safe, resilient and just cities. This presentation reflects on research into affordable housing provision in Southern Africa, with attention to policy, finance,

governance and planning models that can improve delivery. The work brings urban and regional planning into collaboration with development studies, urban geography and economics, and extends beyond academia through engagement with municipalities, non-governmental organisations, think-tanks and communities. It has also supported a network of researchers examining small-scale rental housing in the region. Because housing challenges function as “wicked problems”, the research uses an action-research approach that recognises the need to conduct research with stakeholders and develop transformative responses to societal challenges. This transdisciplinary orientation generates holistic practical and policy insights for sustainable housing development. By connecting academic knowledge, public institutions and community experience, the work bridges disciplinary and sectoral barriers and contributes to future-focused responses to housing inequality and urban development.

16. Undisciplinary Scholarship: Rethinking Multidisciplinary, Interdisciplinary and Transdisciplinary Research in an Era of Polycrisis

Author/Presenter:	Grey Magaiza
Affiliation:	Centre for Gender and Africa Studies, University of the Free State

Abstract

Ecological, social, political, technological and economic crises increasingly converge as a polycrisis, exposing the limits of fragmented disciplinary knowledge. Although multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research responds to complexity, these approaches often retain disciplines as the principal structures through which knowledge is organised, legitimised and applied. This conceptual presentation advances undisciplinary scholarship as a critical lens for rethinking that assumption. Drawing on the presenter’s scholarship, it defines undisciplinary inquiry as beginning with the problem itself rather than with disciplinary categories, and mobilising diverse forms of knowledge according to context, relationships and social purpose. The argument is not that disciplines should be abandoned: they remain important repositories of methods and techniques. Rather, effective responses to polycrisis require engagement across epistemologies, methodologies and knowledge traditions without automatically privileging particular forms of expertise. This approach also interrogates the structures and power relations that determine what counts as legitimate knowledge and whose knowledge matters. By challenging disciplinary centrality, undisciplinary scholarship offers a future-focused research praxis for addressing complex societal challenges.

17. An Integrative Systems Biology Framework for Bioactive Discovery Across Non-Communicable Diseases

Authors:	B. Abrahams, Z. Ndlovu and C. Ntsapi-Combrink
Presenters:	Claudia Ntsapi-Combrink and Beynon Abrahams
Affiliation:	Department of Basic Medical Sciences: NeuroCancerDiabetes Interdisciplinary Research Hub

Abstract

Non-communicable diseases, including neurodegeneration, cancer and metabolic disorders, are interconnected global health challenges that are often investigated in disciplinary silos. The NeuroCancerDiabetes Interdisciplinary Research Hub is developing a systems-based, translational framework to discover and prioritise therapeutic bioactive compounds across shared disease pathways. The framework combines cell-based screening in disease-relevant models with targeted transcriptomic and metabolomic profiling. Publicly available genomic and proteomic datasets are incorporated, while pathway-enrichment and network-based analyses identify convergent molecular signatures associated with bioactive activity. In-silico prioritisation then ranks candidate compounds for targeted in-vitro validation. By bringing together experimental screening, omics profiling, public datasets and computational analyses, the work bridges disciplinary and disease-specific barriers in therapeutic discovery. The framework is expected to identify shared molecular pathways, prioritise high-confidence bioactive candidates and improve the predictive value of compound-screening strategies. It offers a scalable, future-focused approach to accelerating therapeutic discovery across interconnected non-communicable diseases while addressing a major global health challenge.

Session 5: From Sustainability to Impact: Interdisciplinary Pathways for Community and Environmental Futures

18. Human Organoids for Investigating the Pathogenesis of Arbovirus Infection

Authors:	F. Burt, A. Lewies, N. Masoto and J. Botha
Programme presenter:	Felicity Burt
Affiliation:	Faculty of Health Sciences—Pathogen Research Laboratory, Division of Virology, and Cardiothoracic Surgery

Abstract

Human, animal and vector surveillance is central to outbreak preparedness because

it identifies circulating arboviruses and zoonotic viruses with the potential to cause disease. Surveillance alone, however, cannot determine whether newly identified viruses can infect human tissues or produce neurological and chronic arthritogenic disease. This collaborative project uses advanced three-dimensional cell-culture technology to develop human organoid models for pathogenicity studies. A cerebral organoid incorporating microglia will be used to determine whether viruses identified through discovery activities can infect and replicate in neural cells, indicating potential to cause neurological disease. A synovial organoid composed of fibroblasts and macrophages will model the synovial microenvironment for investigating arthritogenic alphaviruses and mechanisms associated with chronic arthritis. By connecting virus surveillance, virology and human tissue modelling, the work bridges the gap between pathogen detection and assessment of disease potential. Although organoid systems have limitations in longevity and complexity, they offer a novel alternative for studying viral pathogenesis. The project is expected to strengthen evidence for public-health assessment and future outbreak preparedness.

19. From Nuisance to Nexus: Rethinking Rodents, Carnivores, and Human Well-Being

Author/Presenter:	Aliza le Roux
Affiliation:	Department of Zoology and Entomology and Afromontane Research Unit, University of the Free State, Qwaqwa Campus

Abstract

Animals use behaviour as a rapid and flexible means of adapting to climate change and expanding human infrastructure. Large-scale analyses suggest that small, behaviourally flexible species, including rodents, primates and carnivores, will continue to thrive alongside people in the Anthropocene, creating both risks and opportunities for humans and wildlife. These interactions may intensify as human habitats shift upslope in mountain regions in search of cooler conditions. This presentation situates animal-behaviour research at the intersection of psychology and ecology, focusing on the drivers of animal decision-making. Current transdisciplinary work with students and international collaborators examines how physiology and behaviour change as animals move upslope and become more integrated into human-altered habitats. It also investigates human responses and co-created futures that could strengthen two-way connectedness with nature on a biodiverse continent. The research has implications for integrated pest management, infrastructure expansion in green cities and villages, and restorative ecological justice. By linking animal behaviour, human responses and collaborative future-making, the work reframes perceived nuisance species as part of a wider human-wildlife nexus.

20. Bridging Heritage Interpretation and Community Futures: Interdisciplinary and Transdisciplinary Pathways for Sustainable Ecotourism Development

Author/Presenter:	Hilary Kennedy Nji Bama
Affiliation:	Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, University of the Free State

Abstract

Heritage interpretation connects cultural meaning-making, visitor education, conservation awareness, place identity and community development. In many heritage and ecotourism destinations in the Global South, however, fragmented planning, limited community participation, weak institutional coordination and expert-led narratives can marginalise local knowledge. Framed within sub-Saharan Africa, this study uses a multi-case and multi-stakeholder approach to position heritage interpretation as both an interdisciplinary field and a transdisciplinary platform for inclusive, resilient tourism development. It integrates tourism studies, heritage studies, education, communication, environmental management, conservation, cultural geography and community development. Transdisciplinary practice occurs when communities, heritage custodians, protected-area managers, tour guides, policymakers, conservation agencies and visitors co-produce interpretive strategies and destination solutions. The study shows how this approach can connect academic knowledge, local knowledge, policy priorities and tourism practice. Its contribution lies in strengthening cultural recognition, local livelihoods, community voice and accountable governance while bridging barriers to more inclusive, sustainable and future-focused forms of place-based development.

21. The Missing Link in Farming-system Resilience: Mapping research on Farmers' Personal Resilience

Author/Presenter:	Liezel Massyn
Affiliation:	Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, University of the Free State

Abstract

Farmers face economic uncertainty, climate change, social pressure, policy change and market volatility, all of which affect well-being and the capacity to sustain agricultural production. This scoping review mapped research on farmers' personal resilience because of its importance to food security and farming-system sustainability. Eight relevant studies from Australia, Europe, Asia and the United States were identified; no South African studies were included. The review examined methods, conceptualisations of resilience, theoretical frameworks from different

disciplines, resilience characteristics and implications for future research. Findings show that personal resilience is understood both as a process and an outcome involving adaptation, recovery and transformation in response to adversity. The review also identifies resilience-enhancing factors and highlights the interdependence of personal, community and farming-system resilience. Research nevertheless remains limited and conceptually fragmented. Future work should validate resilience measures in agricultural settings, examine underrepresented regions such as Africa, and explore relationships between personal resilience, well-being and farming-system resilience. This agenda bridges disciplinary gaps and supports a broader, future-focused understanding of agricultural resilience.

22. The Afrocentric Conceptualisation of Postgraduate Supervision as a Process of “Ukuthwasa and Gobelisation”

Author/Presenter:	Boitumelo Moreeng
Affiliation:	Faculty of Education, University of the Free State

Abstract

Postgraduate supervision is central to developing the next generation of academics and scholars, yet dominant models often frame it through Western understandings of an experienced, knowledgeable supervisor guiding an inexperienced student towards academic becoming. In African contexts, this framing can make the supervisory process less meaningful for both student and supervisor. This conceptual paper explores an Afrocentric understanding of postgraduate supervision through *Ukuthwasa* and the role of the *Gobela*. *Ukuthwasa* is described as initiation into a calling under the guidance of a *Gobela*, a traditional healer or diviner. Bringing postgraduate education into conversation with African epistemologies and lived forms of knowing, the paper examines parallels between this process and doctoral supervision. It foregrounds supervision as relational, holistic and ethically grounded, with knowledge mutually developed within the supervisory relationship. The paper argues that recognising these African ways of knowing may enrich supervision where they form part of lived experience. By bridging Western and African knowledge frameworks, it supports contextually meaningful postgraduate education and the development of future academics and scholars.

Session 6: Advancing Interdisciplinary Research: Collaboration, Practice and Institutional Impact

23. Mapping Journeys of Self, Society, and Becoming: The Past, Present, and Future of the IDEaS Interdisciplinary Hub for Identity Research

Presenters:	Lindi Nel, Luzelle Naudé, Diana Breshears, Rentia du Plessis
Affiliation:	IDEaS Interdisciplinary Hub for Identity Research, Faculty of the Humanities

Abstract

The IDEaS Interdisciplinary Hub for Identity Research was established to investigate identity development, transformation and belonging in a rapidly changing world. This presentation reflects on the hub's past, present and future as a collaborative platform connecting scholars, students and partners across disciplines, institutions and countries. It first revisits the hub's origins and its view of identity as a dynamic process shaped by personal, relational, cultural and historical contexts. It then showcases current local and international projects on student well-being, life projects, attachment, transformation and cultural transitions. These collaborations demonstrate how interdisciplinary identity research can generate knowledge relevant to complex questions of selfhood, culture, social change and human development. Looking ahead, the presentation considers the hub's contribution to socially responsive scholarship, student development and societal innovation. By creating space for dialogue and inviting partnerships across disciplines, communities and institutions, IDEaS bridges intellectual and institutional boundaries and advances future-oriented knowledge production on identity and belonging.

24. A Dying Coloniality: Academic Collaboration in a Pluriversal World

Author/Presenters:	Ylva Rodny-Gumede; Colin Chasi
Affiliations:	Executive Director: Advancement; Department of Communication Science, Faculty of the Humanities

Abstract

Contemporary shifts in global politics, economics and knowledge production may signal a turning point in the decline of coloniality as an organising logic of power and academic authority. Drawing on decolonial thought, particularly Frantz Fanon's critique of colonial structures, and revisiting accounts of a world moving beyond the certainties of Western modernity, this paper interprets current disruptions as signs of the weakening of Western colonial hegemony. It examines the implications for academic collaboration and asks whether this transition creates conditions for more equitable South-South partnerships capable of challenging the continuing

dominance of Global North institutions and epistemic frameworks. The paper also critiques North–South collaborations that reproduce asymmetrical power relations despite commitments to inclusion. Communication and media studies provides the focal case because its transdisciplinary character offers fertile ground for collaborative knowledge production rooted in African and other Southern intellectual traditions. The paper advances reciprocity, epistemic justice and institutional equality as foundations for meaningful collaboration. By reimagining academic authority, research impact and scholarly agency, it contributes to more plural, just and globally relevant futures.

GUIDELINES FOR CHAIRS, KEYNOTE SPEAKERS AND PRESENTERS

Conference Guidelines

The following guidelines apply to keynote speakers, presenters, session chairs, alternate chairs and attendees participating in the Multi-, Inter- and Transdisciplinary Research Conference 2026.

Keynote Session Introducers will

1. briefly introduce the keynote session and its relevance to the conference theme, *Bridging Barriers, Forging Futures*;
2. introduce the keynote speaker before the address, drawing only on the key information provided in the biographical sketch;
3. avoid reading the full biographical sketch, as this is included in the conference booklet;
4. remind the keynote speaker of the allocated presentation time of 25 minutes; and
5. thank the keynote speaker upon conclusion of the address.

Keynote Speakers will

1. deliver their address within the allocated 25 minutes;
2. engage with the conference theme, *Bridging Barriers, Forging Futures*;
3. offer strategic, reflective and forward-looking insights relevant to multi-, inter- and transdisciplinary research;
4. highlight the contribution of collaboration to addressing complex societal challenges and advancing research impact; and
5. present in a manner that is accessible to attendees from a range of disciplines and professional backgrounds.

Session Chairs will

1. briefly introduce the session, its focus and the presenters;
2. explain the session format, including the presentation and discussion arrangements;
3. ensure that presenters speak in the order in which they appear in the programme;

4. ensure that standard presentations remain within the allocated 7–8 minutes and that any specially structured or joint presentation follows the allocation confirmed by the conference organisers;
5. manage transitions between presentations and protect the time reserved for discussion;
6. facilitate the moderated discussion, drawing connections between the presentations and the broader conference theme;
7. invite questions and comments from attendees and ensure that contributions remain brief and relevant to the session; and
8. thank the presenters and attendees upon conclusion of the session.

Alternate Chairs will

1. work closely with the Session Chair to support the smooth delivery of the session;
2. assist with timekeeping and transitions between presentations;
3. familiarise themselves with the session abstracts and identify possible connections between the presentations;
4. support the moderated discussion by noting key themes and possible questions;
5. be prepared to assume the responsibilities of the Session Chair if required; and
6. assist in maintaining the continuity and overall flow of the session.

Presenters will

1. deliver standard presentations within the allocated 7–8 minutes, unless an alternative arrangement has been confirmed by the conference organisers;
2. focus on the central problem or challenge, the research or initiative, its collaborative or interdisciplinary dimensions, and its principal contribution or anticipated impact;
3. highlight the most important insights rather than attempt to present a full paper;
4. communicate clearly to an audience drawn from different disciplines and avoid unnecessary technical or discipline-specific detail;
5. present in the order indicated in the programme;

6. observe the instructions and time signals provided by the Session Chair; and
7. participate in the moderated discussion following the presentations.

Discussion and Questions

Attendees wishing to contribute during a moderated discussion should:

1. wait to be recognised by the Session Chair;
2. introduce themselves by name and institution, faculty, department or unit;
3. direct the question or comment to a particular presenter, or to the session generally;
4. keep contributions brief and focused; and
5. limit each contribution to one principal question or comment so that other attendees also have an opportunity to participate.

