

FULL BURSARIES FOR MASTERS, PHDS AND POST-DOCS IN URBAN AND REGIONAL ECONOMICS AND DEVELOPMENT



CHAIR IN
CITY-REGION
ECONOMIES

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



The DSI-NRF Research Chair in City and Regional Economies at the University of the Free State (South Africa) is pleased to announce a call for applications for a range of postgraduate research positions and scholarships that cover fees, living expenses and other costs. Successful applicants will join a dynamic research community led by Professor Ivan Turok. Suitable candidates will be nominated for NRF scholarships for PhDs and Masters degrees in urban and regional economics and development. They will be registered at the UFS to start in 2026. Additional positions are available funded by the UFS with more flexible starting dates. The following research scholarships are available:

- Four full-time postdoctoral positions (R370,000 per annum for two years renewable for up to two additional years)
- Four full-time PhD degree bursaries (R220,000 per annum for three years)
- Four full-time Masters degree bursaries (R200,000 per annum for two years)

The NRF stipulates clear eligibility criteria for academic achievement (minimum 65% for previous degree), age (under 32 years old) and students must be full-time. The UFS bursaries are more flexible.

Research themes

Highly motivated and high achieving students are expected to conduct research in the broad field of urban and regional economics and development. Research topics will be mutually agreed with supervisors. Potential research areas or themes include:

- Urbanisation and economic development
- Urban housing, land and spatial inequalities
- Strategic industries and business dynamics
- The formal and informal economies of cities, including spatial patterns and trends
- Dynamic places – central cities, business nodes and township economies
- Urban labour markets, unemployment and poverty
- Urban governance, policy and practice, including public-private partnerships and civil society engagement
- The delivery and financing of urban infrastructure and essential services, including transport, energy, water, and waste services

To apply, please send the following documents by email to Nomvula Makhubu by 23 June 2025: MakhubuNY@ufs.ac.za

- CV
- Copy of university transcripts
- Copy of ID/passport
- Short proposal (500–1500 words) aligned to the field of urban and regional economics and development

If the application is selected for NRF nomination and support, the candidate will be required to fill in an online application on the NRF website.

Further particulars:

Desired skills and experience

Postdoctoral fellows

- A PhD in a discipline related to urban and regional economics, economic geography, urban planning, urban studies or a cognate subject is required.
- The successful candidate will be required to conduct original research on urban and regional economies in South Africa or elsewhere in Africa. The postdoc fellowships are open to all South African and foreign nationals, who graduated with a PhD degree in a relevant discipline within the last five years. You can also apply if you will be finishing your PhD in the next six months (your supervisor should provide a letter in this respect).
- Postdocs are expected to publish at least two publication outputs per year in the form of DHET-accredited scholarly journal articles or books/chapters in books. They will also assist with postgraduate supervision.

PhD fellows

- A Masters degree in a discipline related to urban and regional economics, economic geography, urban planning, urban studies or a cognate subject is required
- A minimum of 65% average for the Masters degree.
- The successful candidate will be required to conduct original research on urban and regional economies in South Africa or elsewhere in Africa.

Masters fellows

- An Honour's degree in a discipline related to urban and regional economics, economic geography, urban planning, urban studies or a cognate subject is required.
- A minimum of 65% average for the Bachelor's qualification.
- The successful candidate will be required to conduct original research on urban and regional economies in South Africa or elsewhere in Africa.

Note: Applicants for postdocs and PhDs should be willing to spend part of the funding period at the UFS in Bloemfontein, subject to mutual agreement.

The South African Research Chair (SARChI) in City and Regional Economies at the UFS is funded by the Department of Science and Innovation and administered by the National Research Foundation.

The programme is the leading centre for research on city and regional economies and policy in the country and throughout Africa. We host postdoctoral researchers as well as PhDs, Masters and Honours students in spatial economics and development.

For more information, contact Prof Ivan Turok: iturok@hsr.ac.za

Strict closing date: 23 June 2025

www.ufs.ac.za

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