

ResearchNexus

A newsletter by the UFS Directorate Research Development



Message from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research and Internationalisation, Prof Vasu Reddy

I am delighted to introduce the inaugural edition of our Directorate Research Development newsletter, a platform designed to foster collaboration, celebrate achievements, and spotlight the cutting-edge work happening within our research community.

As the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research and Internationalisation, I am – together with you fully committed to advancing our institution's research agenda and supporting the diverse initiatives of our faculties, staff, and students.

[Read more](#)



Prof Vasu Reddy.

Index

Covered in the first edition of Research Nexus



Active citizenship needed to unlock South Africa's potential



Comments welcome on draft strategy for the Management of Research Equipment



The ICDF's role in detecting misinformation and advising national government structures



UFS research ratings celebrating excellence in research

Photo: Supplied



Dr Harlan Cloete.

Active citizenship needed to unlock South Africa's potential

By Dr Harlan Cloete

I know that there is great hype around the upcoming national and provincial elections on 29 May, some going as far as calling this our second 1994 – I get that. But I think that we might be making too much of this and forget that what counts is what takes place between elections.

For some reason, we seem to think that voting is enough to bring about change, and we can then sit back as citizens and not wait for services to be delivered to us. Or we think that the coalition government will be the saviour. That we have left it to politicians to decide our fate and we simply capitulate to their whims is beyond me. Sometimes I hear even the argument from academics that 'I do not vote because it will legitimise the current corrupt system', or 'I want nothing to do with politics' – yet politics has everything to do with you, every day.

[Read more](#)

Photo: Stephen Collett



Maricel van Rooyen.

Maricél van Rooyen co-author on guidelines for establishing animal ethics committees

By André Damons

Maricél van Rooyen, Research Ethics Adviser in the Directorate Research Development (DRD), is a co-author of the publication, Guidelines for the Establishment and Functioning of Animal Ethics Committees (AEC). The Pan-African Network for Laboratory Animal Sciences and Ethics (PAN-LASE) will host a webinar next month to launch the publication.

[Read more](#)

Photo: Arjia Aucamp



Dr Herkulaas Combrink believes the Interdisciplinary Centre for Digital Futures is in a unique position to lead the next generation of risk communication and community engagement in digital media. From the left are: Phelokazi Mkungeka, Combrink, Prof Katinka de Wet, Kgomotso Motlhakoana, Aviwe Matoti, and Elizabeth Carr.

The ICDF's role in detecting misinformation and advising national government structures

By Leonie Bolleurs

Under the leadership of Prof Katinka de Wet and Dr Herkulaas Combrink, a team from the Interdisciplinary Centre for Digital Futures (ICDF) at the University of the Free State (UFS) is involved in an elaborate data mining and model development process for the detection of misinformation, social listening, and informing risk communication and community engagement (RCCE) structures within the National Department of Health (NDoH) on a weekly basis. This includes following the infodemic management guidelines as set out by the World Health Organisation (WHO), and measuring misinformation, disinformation, and information voids within digital media related to health.

[Read more](#)



Five from UFS to present at SARIMA conference

Five colleagues in the Directorate Research Development have had their poster and oral presentations accepted for the upcoming SARIMA conference from 3 to 5 September. Maricel van Rooyen, Boemo Segoe, Mpho Masamba, and Katlego Nyaile will present posters, while Mandy Jampies will deliver an oral presentation.

The conference, which will be held in Mozambique, will focus on the theme of building on the African proverb 'it takes a village to raise a child', which emphasises the communal effort involved in a child's upbringing. Dr Andrew Bailey, Chairperson of the 2024 SARIMA conference, expresses his desire for the conference to align with the concept of 'community and collaboration for individual and institutional growth in research and innovation management'.

The Southern African Research and Innovation Management Association (SARIMA) brings together research and innovation management practitioners to strengthen these disciplines and institutional capabilities across the SADC region.

Processes



Comments welcome on draft strategy for the Management of Research Equipment

In order to maintain its competitive edge in the global scientific community, the accessibility and proper maintenance of cutting-edge research equipment is crucial. This equipment not only needs to be technologically advanced to support leading research, but also requires meticulous management within conducive institutional settings to ensure optimal utilisation by researchers.

The Directorate Research Development has drafted a comprehensive strategy, titled [Strategy for the Management of Research Equipment](#), outlining guidelines for the procurement, use, and management of expensive research equipment at the UFS. Your feedback on this draft is welcome.

Please send your comments to Sugan Moodley at moodleys4@ufs.ac.za.

[Read more](#)

Research Fund: Entity creation, management, and payment processing

In 2024, the process for the allocation and processing of Central Research Funds (CRF) was amended. In prior years, the Directorate Research Development (DRD) allocated and transferred CRF funding to faculties annually. Faculties in turn transferred funds to departments, which transferred funds to researchers based on approved applications managed at faculty level.

The process was changed in 2024 to aid better reporting, as the nature of transactions was lost in the system when transferred between entities.

The new process allows for better governance on the utilisation of the funds, ensuring that funds are disbursed with strategic intent. Further accountability is strengthened as outcomes and outputs on the initiative need to be recorded.



[Read more](#)

View documents:



Invention disclosure: protecting your ideas

Submitting an invention disclosure is a crucial step for UFS staff, honorary appointees, and students to protect their new and useful ideas with commercial potential. It is a confidential report that describes the invention and its potential applications, helping to determine whether the IP may require some form of protection, and how it can be commercialised.

This process is necessary for identifying and safeguarding the university's intellectual property, as well as sharing the benefits of commercialisation with the creators.

[Read more](#)



Present your creative output for submission

The Directorate Research Development invites the academic community to submit their creative outputs for submission to the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). DHET credits universities for quality creative outputs by academics whose work is based on practice and performance. The policy recognises and subsidises the below outputs:

Creative outputs	
Types of creative outputs	Types of innovation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Design• Film and television• Fine arts and visual arts• Literary arts• Music• Performance and dance• Theatre	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Patents• Plant breeders' rights (PBR)

More information about the DHET Policy on the evaluation of creative outputs and the implementation guidelines is available [here](#).

Read more



Understanding the process of appointing a postdoctoral fellow

The process of appointing a postdoctoral fellow is a structured journey, important to both the candidate and the host institution. We will take a closer look at the key steps involved, emphasising the importance of infrastructure, motivational submissions, and the final approval process. Let us explore the journey of appointing a postdoctoral fellow and the role of various stakeholders in this significant decision-making process.

Read more



The 'how to' of applying for ethical clearance

At the UFS, each avenue of research, including animal, laboratory, environmental, and human-related studies, is covered by one of the institutional research ethics committees. A link to the different committees is available [here](#).

Before any research activities or data collection commences at the university, it is crucial that full ethical clearance is first obtained.



To make an application, please log in to your personal RIMS account at <https://rims.ufs.ac.za> with the same details you would use for PeopleSoft. Select the appropriate research type on the left of the screen.

For any help with your RIMS account or the ethics clearance applications, please contact the RIMS office:

Heldpesk:

Zusake Sokutu – 051 401 2554 / SokutuZ@ufs.ac.za

Thabo Mokgokong – 051 401 2551 / MokgokongT@ufs.ac.za

Boemo Segoje – 051 401 7619 / SegojeBC@ufs.ac.za

Research Ethics System Administrator:

Willem Kilian – 051 401 3682 / KilianW@ufs.ac.za

RIMS Project Manager:

Maricél van Rooyen – 051 401 9451 / VanRooyenM2@ufs.ac.za

Our SARCHI Research Chairs: The best of the best

By Leonie Bolleurs

The Directorate Research Development provides a range of tools and information to help researchers identify sources appropriate to their research area and career stage. This includes funding opportunities.

The UFS currently boasts six SARCHI Research Chairs. These research chairs were awarded to:



Prof Hendrik Swart.
(Solid State Luminescent and Advanced Materials)



Prof Melanie Walker.
(Higher Education and Human Development)



Prof Maryke Labuschagne.
(Disease Resistance and Quality in Field Crops)



Prof Felicity Burt.
(Vector-Borne and Zoonotic Pathogens)



Prof Carlien Pohl-Albertyn.
(Pathogenic Yeasts)



Prof Ivan Turok.
(Strengthening Urban Economies: People, Place, Production and Policy)

They all have some interesting stories about their research journey.

[Read more](#)

Photo: Sonia Small



Prof Hendrik Swart.

ScholarGPS honours Prof Hendrik Swart as highly ranked scholar

By Leonie Bolleurs

ScholarGPS awarded Prof Hendrik Swart, Senior Professor in the Department of Physics at the University of the Free State (UFS), Highly Ranked Scholar status.

ScholarGPS celebrates Highly Ranked Scholars™ for their performance in various fields, disciplines, and specialties. Prof Swart's prolific publication record, the high impact of

of his work, and the outstanding quality of his scholarly contributions have placed him among the top 0,05% of all scholars worldwide. Prof Swart received Highly Ranked Scholar status (Lifetime) for ranking 16th in the discipline of Phosphor. Highly Ranked Scholars™ – Lifetime refers to distinguished authors, including those who are currently active, retired, or deceased.

These scholars are recognised for their exceptional lifetime scholarly contributions, placing them in the top 0,05% of all scholars. Their achievements are evaluated across four categories: overall (across all fields), within their specific field of study, within their particular discipline, and across all specialties they are associated with.

[Read more](#)

UFS has nine nominees for the NSTF awards

By Leonie Bolleurs

Eight academics from the University of the Free State (UFS) have been nominated this year for the distinguished honour of receiving a National Science and Technology Forum (NSTF) award.

According to Eleanor van der Westhuizen, Assistant Director: Grants Management in the Directorate Research Development, this is the most nominees the UFS has ever submitted. The 2023/2024 NSTF-South32 Awards finalists will be announced in May 2024.

As stated by the NSTF, persons nominated for the award have made an outstanding contribution to science, engineering, and technology (SET), and innovation in South Africa.



Prof Peter Taylor.
Department of Zoology
and Entomology,
Afromontane Research
Unit



Prof Stephen Brown.
Department of
Cardiothoracic Surgery



Dr Angèlique Lewis.
Department of
Cardiothoracic Surgery



Dr Mpho Mafa.
Department of Plant
Sciences



Dr Matlakala Ntsapi.
Department of Basic
Medical Sciences



Dr Yolandi Schoeman.
Centre for Mineral
Biogeochemistry and
Environmental
Management



**Dr Bimo Abraham
Nkhata.**
Centre for Mineral
Biogeochemistry and
Environmental
Management



**Prof Sandy-Lynn
Steenhuisen.**
Department of Plant
Sciences

The announcement of the winners will take place at the Awards Gala event, which will take place simultaneously in Cape Town and Johannesburg, as well as being broadcast live to an online audience on 11 July 2024.

[Read more](#)

Announcements



Funding opportunities/calls for applications: unlocking research potential

The Directorate Research Development provides a range of tools and information to help researchers identify sources appropriate to their research area and career stage. This includes funding opportunities.

[Read more](#)



The 'how to' of applying for ethical clearance



- RIMS opens
- Calls are sent out to faculties to capture outputs



- Capturers capture all outputs on RIMS
- Summary reports are distributed monthly



- RIMS closed
- DRD review journal outputs
- Faculties' research committees review books and chapters



- Journal articles are audited by an independent auditor



- ALL outputs are submitted to DHET

Supporting documentation:

- [DHET accredited journal lists](#)
- [DHET research outputs policy](#)



UFS research ratings celebrating excellence in research

Research excellence is not only measured by the quantity of publications, but also by the quality and impact of the research conducted at tertiary institutions across South Africa. One way this is reflected is through the National Research Foundation's (NRF) rating system, which identifies and acknowledges exceptional scientists.

[Read more](#)[View document](#)

Data systems



Sponsored Programme Information Network (SPIN): the largest funding search engine

There are three search modes available to users. This includes the following:

- Basic (text) search
- Keyword search
- Advanced search

For any queries, please contact Amanda Smith on smitham@ufs.ac.za

[Access SPIN here](#)

SciVal

Access Scival

SciVal states on their website that they provide access to the research performance of more than 24 400 research institutions and their associated researchers from 234 nations worldwide.

To access Scival, click on the link and sign in via your institution.

[Access Scival here](#)

This newsletter was produced and distributed by the Directorate Research Development.
For more information, contact Mandy Jampies on JampiesMG@ufs.ac.za

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