



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

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

EMERGING SCHOLAR ACCELERATOR PROGRAMME (ESAP) 2027 to 2028

This programme seeks to identify, develop and promote the next cohort of most promising and talented UFS academic staff members who have obtained a doctoral degree within the last five years. These are scholars who have opted for an academic career and who are focused and determined to become senior academics in their respective disciplines. Participation is voluntary and no nomination is required, although deans and heads of department will also be asked to invite emerging scholars to apply.

Scholars who have been identified will be invited to participate in an intensive programme of academic and professional support that includes a residential programme, exposure to leading scholars, concentrated reading and writing programmes, high-level seminar participation and presentation, publication schedules and personal mentoring and advice, including participation in the annual ESAP mock NRF rating exercise and the development of a postdoctoral project for funding submission (Thuthuka and similar).

The deadline for application is **30 September 2026** and all prospective candidates must attend an online information. Applicants will be notified of the dates for the information session and can select the session that best suits their work calendar. The outcome of the selection process will be announced on 2 November 2026. Selected candidates will commence with the programme in January 2027. The duration of the programme is two years.

Selection criteria:

1. The participant must be a permanent academic staff member who has obtained a PhD within the five years leading up to the application.
2. The participant must be able to show evidence of an active publication record.

3. The participant must have embarked on the early stages of developing a post-doctoral intellectual project that shows evidence of scholarly “potential” (as defined by the NRF Y-category).
4. The participant must be able to demonstrate an understanding of what their envisaged postdoctoral endeavours will contribute to their body of disciplinary knowledge.
5. **The participant must be prepared for FULL participation in the residential programme and its activities.**
6. In alignment with the NRF’s criteria for Y-rating, it is preferred if the scholar is **40 years or younger**, but discretion will be applied.

The programme reserves the right to nominate scholars to the programme and also to invite scholars to a panel interview in which their personal qualities, professional commitment and academic ambition will be evaluated. Participation in the programme is voluntary and open to all permanently employed UFS **academic staff** members who meet the selection criteria. Participants will be required to make a commitment to full participation, once invited.

The mentoring period will run over a cycle of two years (2027-2028).

**Deadline for applications:
Wednesday, 30 September 2026**

Application Form

Emerging Scholar Accelerator Programme 2027-2028

Deadline: Wednesday, 30 September 2026

Submit a completed application form and your CV to Mrs Riana Visser at
visserzhm@ufs.ac.za

Please complete sections A and B

SECTION A:

1.	Name and surname	
2.	Date of birth	
3.	Contact details	
	Work phone number	
	Cellphone number	
4.	Preferred email address	
5.	Your educational history	
	Title of PhD thesis	
	Graduation date	
	University that awarded the PhD	
6.	Your employment history	
	Current employment position	
	Date of appointment at UFS	
	Academic Department	
	Name and contact details of Line Manager	
	Date of your last promotion at UFS	
7.	Your current teaching and postgraduate supervising responsibilities	
	Undergraduate teaching	
	Module code	
	Course title	
	Year	
	Level	

	Postgraduate teaching	
	Module Code	
	Course title	
	Year	
	Level	
	Postgraduate Supervision:	
	PhD	
	Current Name of candidate: Starting date: Expected completion date:	
	Completed Name of candidate: Starting date: Completion date:	
	Masters	
	Current Name of candidate: Starting date: Expected completion date:	
	Completed Name of candidate: Starting date: Completion date:	
8.	Your publication record (including papers submitted/accepted and journals of publication)	
9.	Research projects and funding you have generated for your projects to date	
10.	Your Google Scholar H-Index, and your Scopus H-Index, if pertinent (some fields in the humanities, for example, do not make use of this metric).	

11.	Leadership position(s) you occupy at the UFS	
12.	Scholarly engagement activities you are involved with	

SECTION B

A brief statement of intent

The ability to connect to global academies is an important attribute for early-career scholars at research-led universities. In about **400 words**, explain what steps you would take, which literature sources you would consult, and which scholarly schools/networks you would align with in order to position yourself within knowledge networks beyond the South African academy.