

Dear colleagues

**\*PLEASE NOTE NEW INTERNAL DEADLINE – 23 September 2025\***

The Department of Higher Education & Training (DHET) has released its funding call for applications for Phase 6 (Cohort 1) of the University Staff Doctoral Programme (USDP) for PhD candidates. The main purpose of the USDP is to support **academics and professional staff (PASS)** at South African universities to undertake and complete doctoral studies within a maximum period of five years or less.

A maximum amount of **R500 000** for a period of 3 years of support will be provided to a successful candidate. Funding for USDP support may include the following:

1. Registration and tuition fees, if not studying through UCT;
2. Research costs;
3. Teaching buy-out;
4. Travel and accommodation costs (for data collection, international mobility etc.); and
5. Conference attendance (a paper or poster must be presented for the candidate to attend).

The following **eligibility criteria** will apply. The applicant should:

- Hold a full-time permanent or long-term contract (minimum of five years) post within the university;
- Be a South African citizen or permanent resident in South Africa (work permit is not permissible);
- Have registered or intends to register for a doctoral degree in the year of application;
- Have achieved an average of 65% or above in the preceding Master's degree.
- Undertake research aligned with national/regional/global research priority areas and development goals.
- Have identified a home institution mentor, who will support and/or endorse the application.

The application process is as follows:

- i. Applications ([HERE](#) – please download a copy of the application form and save it to your PC) for USDP funding close on the **23 SEPTEMBER 2025**. Note that only fully completed applications will be considered. These should include approvals from the relevant Head of Department. Late applications will not be considered.
- ii. Supporting documentation, to be submitted, with the application form as **1 PDF document** are:
  - Three (3) referee letters one of which **MUST** be from your supervisor or prospective supervisor.
  - Academic records for your postgraduate qualification/s
  - A valid ID copy
  - USDP Application [Checklist](#)
- iii. Fully completed applications and supporting documentation should be submitted to [ucdp@uct.ac.za](mailto:ucdp@uct.ac.za)
- iv. A maximum of 10 applications may be submitted to the DHET.
- v. Note: DVC approval is only required for shortlisted applications. The UCDP Office will obtain such approval from the DVC: Research on behalf of shortlisted applicants.
- vi. Application outcomes will be communicated as soon as the institution has received a decision from the DHET.

The full USDP [Funding Framework](#) with more detail is attached. Any queries may be referred to [Dheshnie.Keswell@uct.ac.za](mailto:Dheshnie.Keswell@uct.ac.za) or [Lisa.Devos@uct.ac.za](mailto:Lisa.Devos@uct.ac.za).