

Call for Applications 2026 PhD Opportunities under the Chair in Municipal Finance in Africa

The [Chair in Municipal Finance in Africa](#), hosted at the [African Tax Institute](#) within the [Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences](#) at the [University of Pretoria](#), and funded by the [Lincoln Institute of Land Policy](#), invites applications from exceptional candidates for PhD studies commencing in 2026. Candidates will pursue a PhD in Economics through the [Department of Economics](#) or a PhD in Tax Policy through the [African Tax Institute](#), depending on the focus of their research and academic background.

Research Focus

We are seeking candidates whose doctoral research will contribute to advancing knowledge and practice in municipal finance in Africa from a public economics perspective. Successful applicants must demonstrate a strong background in public economics and possess quantitative research skills. The proposed research must address a real-world challenge within municipal finance and aim to contribute to sustainable, evidence-based policy reforms across African municipalities.

PhD Funding and Support

The Chair in Municipal Finance in Africa offers doctoral research bursaries for up to three (3) years to support towards tuition and living expenses. The bursary is awarded in the first, second or third year of registration for doctoral studies, and holders have to complete the degree within three (3) years in order to avoid being in breach of the signed bursary agreement. Annual renewals are not guaranteed and are subject to a report of satisfactory progress and the recommendation of the supervisor and the Head of Department/Director.

The estimated value of the Chair's Doctoral Research Bursary for 2026 is up to R158,000 per annum for South African students and up to R163,000 per annum for international students. Final award amounts will be confirmed at the Chair's discretion upon registration.

International students are responsible for covering the costs of their University of Pretoria application, study permit, SAQA evaluation, and medical insurance for each year of study.

Additional financial support for fieldwork, advanced training, and conference travel may be awarded on a competitive basis and subject to availability of funds.

The bursary may be supplemented by other funding sources, within the specific rules of these funding sources. The Chair in Municipal Finance Bursary will be the primary award for each year. A UP Doctoral student is allowed a capped value of bursaries up to R300 000.00 per annum.

To explore other funding opportunities, please visit links below:

- <https://www.up.ac.za/postgraduate-support/article/2959901/postgraduate-funding-opportunities>
- <https://www.up.ac.za/postgraduate-studies/article/3182036/funding-opportunities>
- <https://www.up.ac.za/international-cooperation-division/article/3008138/international-prospective-students>

NOTE: It is important to do your own research for other funding on the “world wide web.”

Eligibility Criteria

Applicants must:

- Have achieved a minimum of 65% average in their most recent completed degree.
- RSA and students from African countries are eligible to apply.
- Register full-time at the University of Pretoria for the PhD in 2026. In return for the Chair support, applicants are required to be full-time students.
- Not be in full-time employment.
- Not take up remunerated work for more than 12 hours per week.
- Be 35 or younger by 31 December 2025.
- Not already be in possession of a Doctoral degree
- Align their proposed research topic with municipal finance, with supervision or co-supervision by the [Chair in Municipal Finance](#), and potentially a co-supervisor from a Public Policy Hub staff member.

Application Requirements

Applicants must submit the following documents via the [Google Form link](#) provided:

1. Already applied to UP for the 2026 academic year (provide proof of your UP application # or 2026 student number as part of your supporting documents)
2. Detailed and updated CV, including academic background, research experience, and relevant publications.
3. Certified copy of ID or passport (not older than 3 months)
4. Official academic transcripts for the most recently completed degree.
5. If you have a foreign qualification from outside South Africa, you must have applied to the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) (<http://www.saqa.org.za>). Proof of your receipt to be uploaded into the Google application form.
6. Motivation letter including commitment to complete the PhD within three (3) years.
7. Research Proposal (max. 2 000 words), which must:
 - Be firmly anchored in the fields of public economics, public finance, municipal finance, fiscal decentralization, or taxation.
 - Focus on topics such as recurrent property taxation, land value capture, and land-based financing instruments within the African context; the alignment between revenue instruments and expenditure responsibilities; and the integration of fiscal tools with urban and regional planning frameworks.
 - Present an innovative methodological approach.
 - Demonstrate potential for sustainable, evidence-based policy impact.
 - Show feasibility and academic merit aligned with the programme's goals.

Application Deadline

Please submit all required documents via this [Google Form](#) before the closing date on **10 October 2025**. Successful applicants will receive a provisional bursary offer by mid-November 2025.

For more information, please reach out to the Chair in Municipal Finance in Africa, Prof Nara Monkam, via email at fn.monkam@up.ac.za and Mr Wandile Xaba at wandile.xaba@up.ac.za

We look forward to receiving your application and working with a new generation of scholars committed to strengthening municipal finance systems across Africa.