

ParentText Optimisation and Evaluation in South Africa



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
IYUNIVESITHI YASEKAPA • UNIVERSITEIT VAN KAAPSTAD

Postdoctoral Research Fellowship

We invite applications for a Postdoctoral Fellowship at the Centre for Social Science Research, University of Cape Town under the supervision of Professor Catherine Ward. The prospective fellow will be based at the University of Cape Town in South Africa for the duration of the research project and work as part of an international research team to optimise the engagement, effectiveness, and cost-effectiveness of a chatbot-led parenting programme (ParentText) within the context of existing government service delivery in South Africa: <https://globalparenting.org/parenttext-optimisation-and-evaluation-in-south-africa>.

This ambitious project, which fits within the Global Parenting Initiative (GPI): <https://globalparenting.org/parenttext> will include both formative evaluation and a mixed methods randomised controlled trial (RCT; $N = 2000$ caregivers). The study will be conducted in collaboration with the University of Oxford, NGO partners, including Clowns Without Borders South Africa (CWBSA), IDEMS International, UNICEF South Africa, and the South African government.

The appropriately qualified and experienced postdoctoral researcher will join our collaborative and innovative team on a full-time basis and play a central role in the success of this work. Their main responsibility will be to conceptualise and lead an observational component of the RCT to compliment self-report outcome measures for caregivers and their children. Key tasks would include development of a coding system, data collection, as well as observational assessment coding and analysis. The postdoctoral researcher will collaborate with other research teams and learning groups within the GPI working on observational assessments to ensure harmonisation of tools and approaches. They will also contribute to other elements of the RCT and provide support to other academic and operational colleagues at UCT and partner institutions, including the University of Oxford, IDEMs International and CWBSA.

Conditions of Award:

Eligible applicants must have completed their doctorate within the past 5 years, and may not previously have held full-time permanent professional or academic posts.

The successful candidate will have:

- PhD in public health or similar social science discipline;

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- Experience in managing or working on mixed methods RCTs (preferably in South Africa or a similar country context);
- Knowledge of behaviour change interventions, parenting or family strengthening programmes, and digital interventions;
- Experience in collecting and analysing observational assessment data, including synthesizing data for reports;
- Demonstrable proficiency in quantitative data analysis using R programme;
- Demonstrable proficiency in qualitative data analysis using NVivo;
- Excellent oral and written English communication skills, including the ability to interact and communicate effectively with a range of stakeholders and partners at all levels;
- Ability to work independently and as part of a multi-partner, international team
- Excellent organisation, problem-solving, coordination, and administrative skills
- Ability to multi-task, prioritise one's workload and operate in a deadline driven environment
- Advanced IT skills, particularly in Microsoft Office applications
- Published first-authored papers in peer-reviewed publications of their field; and
- Presented at conferences, seminars and workshops; and

Advantageous skills/experience include if the applicant has:

- Experience leading project management and administration for large-scale research projects, including budgeting, reporting, and planning;
- Experience in developing an observational coding system;
- Experience/knowledge of factorial experiments;
- Knowledge of the Agile Scrum framework and Trello
- Published papers from their PhD, and/or
- Convened courses/supervised students.

The candidate will be supervised by Prof Catherine Ward at the University of Cape Town, with support from Dr. Jamie Lachman at Oxford University.

The successful candidate will be required to complete the following deliverables:

- Conceptualise and lead the observational component of the RCT
- Contribute to other elements of the RCT and provide support to other academic and operational colleagues at UCT and partner institutions
- Present analyses at seminars, workshops, and conferences; and
- Prepare research findings for publication in peer-reviewed journal.

Moreover, the candidate:

- May not hold any other fellowships without permission of their supervisor;
- May not undertake employment of any nature without the permission of their supervisor; and

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- Must comply with the University's approved policies, procedures, and practices for the postdoctoral sector.

Value and Tenure:

The value of the fellowship is R300,000 - R450,000 per annum, depending on experience and qualifications, with no additional paid benefits (such as medical aid). The post holder will have a total of 22 days of annual leave available per annum, to be prorated accordingly if the post is held for less than a year. Flexibility on a start date can be discussed, with a preferred start between February 15, 2022, and March 15, 2023), and the fellowship amount will be prorated in line with the starting date. This position is renewable for an additional 1 year depending on a satisfactory academic progress and availability of funds.

Application Procedure:

Eligible candidates should provide the following in ONE SINGLE PDF:

- A letter describing research interest and the candidate's suitability for the fellowship and appropriate experience, which may include evidence of experience gained in employment, education, or during career breaks (such as time out to care for dependents).
- A CV (3 pages maximum) that includes details for eligibility criteria (including PhD graduation/ completion date & year), conference attendance, publications and any other scholarly research output, and the names of three referees who have taught/ supervised the candidate at university and can speak to their skills, including the current line manager/supervisor.

Enquiries and completed application should be forwarded to:

Dr. Hlengiwe Sacolo at hnsacolo@gmail.com and Paula Zinser at paula.zinser@spi.ox.ac.uk

Closing date for receipt of applications: 13 January 2023

Selection: Eligible applicants will be considered by a sub-committee convened by the CSSR.

Please reference **"2022 ParentText Postdoctoral Research Fellow"** in the email subject line.

The University of Cape Town reserves the right to disqualify ineligible, incomplete, and/or inappropriate applications, to change the conditions of award and/or to make no awards at all.