



African German Centre
for Sustainable and Resilient Food
Systems and Applied Agricultural
and Food Data Science

Call for Expression of Interest: Supervisors and Topics for UKUDLA PhD researchers

Advancing Research Leadership in Data Science and Food Systems

UKUDLA invites academic staff from the University of Pretoria, University of Mpumalanga, University of the Western Cape, Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources, and the University of Hohenheim to express their interest in serving as **main or co-supervisors** for **PhD researchers affiliated with UKUDLA**. Furthermore, each potential supervisor is also invited to indicate **a specific research topic that falls within the broader UKUDLA research clusters**.

About UKUDLA

UKUDLA is a collaborative, transdisciplinary initiative committed to training the next generation of research leaders at the **intersection of data science and food systems** in Africa. The network supports capacity strengthening through multi-institutional partnerships, dynamic training opportunities, and a strong focus on impactful, applied research.

Why Become a UKUDLA Supervisor?

Supervisors who join the UKUDLA Network will have the opportunity to:

- **Shape the next generation** of African scholars in food systems and data science.
- Participate in **multi-institutional research collaborations** and access a vibrant network of experts.
- **Expand their own competencies** through ongoing training opportunities in data science, transdisciplinary research, and food systems thinking.
- Contribute to solving real-world challenges in Africa's food systems.

Who Can Apply?

We welcome expressions of interest from faculties across disciplines related to:

- **Food systems** (e.g., agriculture, nutrition, economics, environment, food security, rural development)
- **Data science** (e.g., statistics, AI, machine learning, informatics, geospatial analysis)

It is essential that the topics suggested by potential supervisors reflect **integration of data science with food systems**. We particularly encourage expressions of interest from **early-career researchers** to foster inclusion and broaden supervisory networks.



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Supervision Scope and Commitment

For this particular call, supervisors may be matched with candidates at **PhD level**. The **call for applications by PhD students will be open over the next few months (late 2025 into early 2026)**.

Supervisors are expected to:

- Supervise the student for the **full duration of their PhD degree**.
- Support the student in developing their **learning roadmap** at the start of the scholarship.
- Help identify relevant opportunities at their **home institution** to support the student's academic and professional growth.
- **Sign off** on the student's progress reports.

There are **no additional formal commitments** beyond those typically associated with supervising a graduate student at your institution. Where feasible and if the main supervisor is open to it, **co-supervision across institutions and disciplines** will be encouraged to enhance collaboration and learning networks.

Supervisors will always have the **option to accept or decline** supervision requests based on capacity and alignment of interests.

How to Submit an Expression of Interest

To express your interest, please complete the **UKUDLA PhD Supervisor Expression of Interest Form** <https://universityofpretoria.glasscubes.com/form/eba24fbf-bbc9-4fb2-80a6-209b4737a500> by no later than **31 October 2025**.

We realise that some individuals who are receiving this updated call document have already completed an expression of interest form. We kindly request that you **please complete and submit a new form at the above link**, as this is a revised version of the previous form that emphasises the **identification of specific research topics** that supervisors are interested in or working on. The topics from potential supervisors will be published online, and PhD applicants will then submit an application to work on a specific topic.

For more information, please contact the UKUDLA team at: ukudla@uwc.ac.za