

PASET Regional Scholarship and Innovation Fund (RSIF) PhD Scholarships

**PhD Scholarships available to support 3-4 year doctoral training
in Applied Sciences, Engineering and Technology**

Call for applications is now open.

Deadline for submission: 15th June, 2020 at 5:00 pm (East Africa time; UTC+3)

Summary

- PhD Scholarships available for study at RSIF African Host Universities in the PASET Priority Thematic Areas: (1) ICTs including big data and artificial intelligence, (2) Food security and agribusiness, (3) Minerals, mining and materials engineering, (4) Energy including renewables, and (5) Climate change.
- Eligible applicants: Citizens of any country in sub-Saharan Africa. Priority will be given to women and young academic faculty who do not have a PhD. Those with PhDs are not eligible to apply.
- Scholarship period: 3 to 4 years
- Participate in a 6-24-month sandwich placement at an international partner university, research institute or private company
- Final selection and notification of awards: September 2020.

Background

The [Partnership for skills in Applied Sciences, Engineering and Technology](#) (PASET) is an African-led initiative to strengthen skills in the applied sciences, engineering and technology to further socio-economic transformation in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). The [Regional Scholarship and Innovation Fund](#) (RSIF) is the flagship program of PASET. RSIF supports PhD students, post-doctoral scientists and universities in SSA to establish high-quality training, research and innovation environments and to develop institutional capacity for the benefit of the whole region.

The specific objectives of the RSIF program are to:

- Create a stock of highly skilled scientists, professionals and innovators in applied sciences, engineering and technology (ASET) areas
- Identify and nurture young talented Africans who wish to further their studies in ASET fields where expertise is needed most
- Address imbalances in the number of women and disadvantaged groups in ASET fields in Africa
- Build African university capacity to provide relevant ASET training and to ensure continued investment in scaling up the ASET education and workforce

RSIF is funded by contributions from African governments, the World Bank and the Government of Korea; and managed by the [International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology](#) (*icipe*), Nairobi, Kenya, as the RSIF Regional Coordinating Unit (RCU).

PASET priority thematic areas

PASET established the Regional Scholarship and Innovation Fund (RSIF) to contribute towards the training of a critical mass of PhD and post-doctoral candidates, and support research and innovation in five priority thematic areas:

- ICTs including big data and artificial intelligence:** This involves the use of information and communication technologies in a wide range of economic sectors, including big data analytics and

- artificial intelligence systems, computer programming, software development and their applications in manufacturing and service delivery.
- ii. **Food Security and agribusiness:** This includes sustainable food production systems, pest and disease control strategies, management of post-harvest losses of crops and new opportunities for agribusiness development. Other areas include new ways to improve soil fertility, conserve water for food and agricultural production, and enhancing nutrition for humans and livestock.
 - iii. **Minerals, mining and materials engineering:** This includes mineral processing and beneficiation, mining and materials engineering. Other important areas include new materials for construction, transportation, consumer goods, health care delivery and production equipment. Work involving nanomaterials and exploring novel biomaterials and related climate-smart materials would be of much interest as well.
 - iv. **Energy including renewables:** This involves new forms of energy as well as more efficient ways of using energy. Developing renewable energy sources, e.g. biomass, wind, solar, and geothermal are highly encouraged.
 - v. **Climate change:** This involves developing strategies for mitigating or adapting to climate change, including, for example, early warning systems for natural disasters and strategies for disaster management, modelling for climate change, and building climate smart or resilient systems for urban and rural communities and disaster-prone populations in Africa.

About the PASET RSIF PhD Scholarship Program

- RSIF PhD Scholarships are open to candidates interested in receiving international-quality PhD training.
- The duration of the PhD Scholarship is 3 to 4 years, including 6-24 months 'sandwich' placement at an international partner university, research institute or private company.
- Priority for the scholarships will be given to women and existing young academic faculty who do not have a PhD.
- RSIF scholarships will be awarded in September 2020.

Eligibility

To be eligible for the RSIF PhD Scholarship, applicants must:

- Have a relevant master's degree, completed less than six years before 30th April 2020.
- Meet the specific admission requirements of the RSIF African Host University where they would like to pursue a PhD (see links to the AHU PhD programs below; or go to the RSIF website <https://www.rsif-paset.org/calls/scholarships-call/>)
- Be a citizen of a sub-Saharan Africa country.
- Be willing to enroll full-time in a PhD program at an RSIF African Host University in the 2020-2021 academic year.
- Be willing to spend 6-24 months in a 'sandwich' research placement at an international partner.
- Demonstrate that their research goals are well aligned to the Priority Thematic Areas and contribute to Africa's development.

The PASET RSIF PhD Scholarship¹ covers:

- University tuition fee and research costs
- A monthly allowance to cover living expenses such as accommodation and meals while at the RSIF African Host University and while on a sandwich placement at an international partner.
- Return travel from home country to the RSIF African Host University
- Return travel from the RSIF African Host University to the International Partner Institute
- Visas and student permits

¹ The RSIF PhD Scholarship benefits are subject to change based on the discretion of the PASET Executive Board

- Annual medical insurance

The PASET RSIF PhD scholarship **does not cover**:

- Extra support for family members/ dependents, including children and spouses
- Additional return tickets to the home country for personal reasons

RSIF African Host Universities and Eligible PhD Programs

The RSIF program is implemented through RSIF African Host Universities (AHUs). AHUs are competitively selected universities in SSA that offer a PhD program in one of the PASET Priority Thematic Areas. RSIF AHUs admit and train RSIF PhD scholars.

RSIF PhD scholarships will only be awarded to applicants wishing to enroll full time in an eligible PhD program at an RSIF African Host University. A list of RSIF AHUs and PhD programs is given below (Table 1).

Table 1. RSIF African Host Universities

RSIF African Host University	PhD Program	Link to University PhD Program	PASET Priority Thematic Area
University of Gaston Berger , St. Louis, Senegal ² <i>Africa Centre of Excellence in Mathematics, Computer Science, and ICT (MITIC)</i>	Computer Science	http://www.ceamit-ic.sn/en/phd-in-computer-science/	ICTs including big data and artificial intelligence
University of Rwanda , Kigali, Rwanda ¹ <i>Africa Center of Excellence in Internet of Things (ACEIoT)</i>	Internet of Things: Embedded Computing Systems	https://aceiot.ur.ac.rw/?q=content/phd-studies	
Sokoine University of Agriculture , Morogoro, Tanzania ¹ <i>Africa Centre of Excellence for Infectious Diseases of Humans & Animals in Southern & Eastern Africa (SACIDS)</i>	Food Security and Agribusiness	http://www.sacids.org/	Food Security and Agribusiness
University of Ghana , Accra, Ghana	Applied Agricultural Economics and Policy/Agribusiness	https://www.ug.edu.gh/aea/	
Nelson Mandela African Institution of Science and Technology (NM-AIST) , Arusha, Tanzania ¹ <i>Africa Centre of Excellence: Water Infrastructure and Sustainable Energy Futures (WISE – Futures)</i>	Materials Science and Engineering	https://www.nm-aist.ac.tz/index.php/mewes	Minerals, mining and materials engineering
Kenyatta University , Nairobi, Kenya	Materials Science	http://spas.ku.ac.ke/index.php/departments/department-of-physics	
University of Port Harcourt , Port Harcourt, Nigeria ¹ <i>Africa Centre of Excellence in Oilfield Chemicals Research (ACE-CEFOR)</i>	Petroleum and Gas Engineering / Energy Economics	https://aceceforuni.port.edu.ng/	Energy including renewables

² The PhD Program is offered through the Africa Centre of Excellence (ACE) at these universities

RSIF African Host University	PhD Program	Link to University PhD Program	PASET Priority Thematic Area
University of Nairobi, Nairobi, Kenya	Physics	https://physics.uonbi.ac.ke/	
University Felix Houphouet-Boigny, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire ¹ <u>Africa Centre of Excellence for Climate Change, Biodiversity and Agriculture (CEA-CCBAD)</u>	Climate Change and Biodiversity	http://univ-fhb.edu.ci/	Climate change
Bayero University, Kano, Nigeria ¹ <u>Africa Centre of Excellence in Dryland Agriculture (CDA)</u>	Natural Resources Management and Climate Change	http://www.cda-buk.edu.ng/	

RSIF International Partner Institutions

RSIF International Partner Institutions (IPI) are advanced universities, research institutes/centres or companies (public or private) that offer sandwich opportunities for RSIF PhD Scholars from Africa. RSIF PhD Scholars must spend between 6 and 24 months at an IPI for a strategic research placement as part of their PhD programme.

Application and Selection: summary

- Applicants apply for a scholarship to conduct PhD research in a PASET Priority Thematic Area.
- The AHU and RSIF selection panels will review applications and make the final selection for scholarship awards.
- Once scholarships are awarded, successful candidates will be instructed to register with their selected AHU. Further details will be provided at this time.

Application Guidelines

Carefully read the application instructions. **Please note that only complete applications submitted online will be accepted.** Applications submitted by email or hardcopy will not be considered. Opening date for applications: April 30, 2020.

- Applications are accepted through the online application platform: <https://www.rsif-paset.org/calls/apply/>. See **Annex 1** for a description of the application form.
- Submit together with the required supporting documents (Table 2, below).
- The online platform will accept the following file types: doc, docx, pdf, jpg, jpeg, png. The maximum file size accepted for any single file is 32 MB.
- The application must be completed in English or French.
- Applications must be submitted no later than **15 June, 2020 at 5:00 pm (East Africa Time; UTC+3)**.

Table 2. Required supporting documents.

1	Certified ³ copies of bachelor's and master's degree certificates
2	Certified ² copies of university transcripts for bachelor's and master's degrees
3	Current curriculum vitae
4	Personal statement/ motivation letter (character limit, including spaces: 4,500)
5	PhD proposal abstract (character limit, including spaces: 15,000)
6	Two signed, official letters of recommendation from your employer (if currently employed) or university where master's degree was undertaken. The letters must be on official letterhead.

³ See **ANNEX 2** for instructions on how to certify your documents.

7	If applicable, an official letter confirming that you will be granted study leave from your place of employment. The letter must be on official letterhead.
8	Copy of a recognized form of identification (e.g. passport biodata page or national ID)

Please note that applications will be screened for plagiarism. Evidence of plagiarism will invalidate the application.

Conditions for application

- The applicant agrees to comply with all rules for participating in this call.
- icipe* reserves the right to reject applications that fail to meet the eligibility and selection requirements.
- All decisions made by *icipe* with approval by the PASET Executive Board (EB) are final.

RSIF PhD Scholarship Selection Process and Criteria

General principle

The RSIF student selection process adheres to the principles of scientific excellence, accountability, and transparency. In this respect, the selection of candidates will be based on merit, and the potential of the candidate and his or her PhD to make significant scientific and technological contribution that positively impacts on the development of SSA.

Key Criteria

Applicants will be evaluated on the following key criteria:

- Leadership potential: Demonstrated leadership in areas such as community service and outreach activities.
- Intellectual ability: Demonstrated through the applicant's academic track record, quality of the application, personal statement of motivation, and PhD project idea. Additionally, the applicant's creative thinking and innovative approach to problem solving will be considered.
- Research capability: Demonstrated through the applicant's research experience and quality of the application.
- Demonstrated commitment to pursue a PhD degree: Judged by the applicant's CV, personal statement of motivation and interview.

Evaluation and Selection Process

- icipe* receives applications online and screens them for completeness and eligibility against the criteria stated above.
- Each African Host University will evaluate the applications using their own admission criteria. The university will prepare a shortlist of qualifying candidates that meet the university admission requirements and forward to *icipe*.
- Independent review of RSIF PhD Scholarship applications: *icipe* will appoint committees of anonymous, internationally-recognized, independent experts to conduct an evaluation of university-shortlisted applications. Each committee will provide a ranked shortlist of preferred applicants to *icipe*.
- An independent evaluation committee (IEC) consisting of a multidisciplinary team of international experts will evaluate the final ranked lists and make recommendations for the scholarship awards.
- The IEC will then share their recommendations with the PASET Executive Board (EB) for their endorsement of the scholarship awards.
- Notification of scholarship awards: September 2020.
- Once scholarships are awarded, successful candidates will be instructed to register with their selected AHU. Further details will be provided at this time.

Further information

Contact information and support:

Email: rsifscholarships@icipe.org

The Manager

Regional Coordination Unit (RCU)

International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (*icipe*)

P.O. Box 30772-00100, Nairobi, Kenya Telephone: +254 (20) 632 000

ANNEX 1

Summary of the PhD scholarship online application form

1. IDENTIFICATION CARD/PASSPORT
 - Upload a copy of a valid national identification card or biodata page of your passport.
2. FACULTY AT A UNIVERSITY IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA
 - Are you applying for a PhD scholarship as a faculty member of a university in sub-Saharan Africa?
3. STUDY LEAVE
 - Will you require study leave from your home organisation/institution? If yes, then upload an official letter confirming that you will be granted study leave from your home organisation/institution. The letter must be on official letterhead.
4. EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND
 - List of all universities and colleges attended and qualifications obtained.
 - Upload certified copies of bachelor's and master's degree certificates (combined into one file).
 - Upload certified copies of university transcripts for bachelor's and master's degrees.
 - Give your MSc Thesis title and abstract.
5. RESEARCH EXPERIENCE
 - Describe your research experience, and why it is relevant to the application. (500 words maximum)
6. CONFERENCES AND PUBLICATIONS
 - Conferences, workshops or short-term research training attended in the last 5 years.
 - Scientific publications in peer-reviewed journals, book chapters published conference proceedings. Only list those that (i) are relevant to your application and (ii) were published within the last 5 years. Do not exceed 10 publications.
7. EMPLOYMENT HISTORY
 - List your three most recent positions, employment or gainful engagements.
8. MEMBERSHIPS
 - List up to four professional societies or other organizations in which you hold/held membership and state key roles if applicable.
9. AWARDS, SCHOLARSHIPS AND HONORS
 - List all awards, scholarships or honors that you received at university or during employment.
10. LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY
 - List your language(s) and indicate proficiency.
11. CV
 - Upload your latest CV.
12. PRIORITY THEMATIC AREA

- Select a Priority Thematic Area that is aligned with your proposed research project.

13. PhD PROJECT

- Describe the research project that you would like to pursue for a PhD, and why this would be suitable for PhD-level research (please include references). Please use this to illustrate your creative thinking and innovative approach to problem solving. Give reasons for wanting to pursue this research topic. Please note that the research topic must be in one of the PASET Priority Thematic Areas. Character limit, including spaces: 15,000.

14. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE (MOTIVATION LETTER)

- The statement of purpose/ motivation letter is an opportunity to provide more insight into your academic and professional goals. Be sure to emphasize skills such as leadership, community service, outreach activities, past teaching/supervision experience, involvement in student activities, etc. Character limit, including spaces: 4,500.

Your personal statement should answer questions such as:

- Why have you chosen to apply to the PASET RSIF PhD Scholarship Program?
- Describe why you wish to undertake a PhD and why you are well suited to research the proposed topic. Why is this program the logical next step considering previous work and academic experiences?
- How does the RSIF PhD Scholarship program align with your career goals? Demonstrate your commitment and dedication to furthering research in your field of interest. Include how you wish to contribute to society through your research and how you expect to apply the acquired skills and knowledge upon completing your PhD.
- What are your strengths? Demonstrate how you stand out from other candidates. Highlight relevant projects, dissertations thesis, presentations and contributions to society that demonstrate your academic skills and creativity.
- If you are a university faculty member, explain how a PhD will enable you to strengthen the capacity of your university.

15. ANY OTHER INFORMATION in support of your application. Character limit, including spaces: **1,200.**

16. REFERENCE LETTERS

- Two signed, official letters of recommendation from your employer (if currently employed) or university where master's degree was undertaken. The letters must be on official letterhead.
- Names and contact details of the two referees who provided letters of recommendation.

ANNEX 2

HOW TO CERTIFY YOUR BACHELOR'S AND MASTER'S DEGREE CERTIFICATE AND TRANSCRIPTS

1. Your degree certificates and all transcripts must be certified by one of the following (i) the University where you obtained the degree; or (ii) a Commissioner of Oaths (Lawyer), who may charge you a fee for their services; or (iii) Ministry of Education in the country where you obtained the degree; or (iv) Higher Education Commission in the country where you obtained the degree.
2. To get the documents certified, take the original documents and high-quality photocopies to the office of certification, and ask the certifier to:
 - a. Check the originals are genuine.

- b. Check the copies to be certified are identical copies of the originals.
 - c. Write or stamp 'Certified to be a true copy of the original seen by me' on each document, then sign and date underneath. *If the certifier is using a stamp, please make sure an ink stamp is used. An embossing stamp is not acceptable.*
 - d. Under their signature, the certifier must write their name in CAPITAL LETTERS, adding their occupation, address, telephone number and email address.
 - e. If the original is a multiple page document, each page must be checked against the copy to ensure that it is correct. The certifier can then proceed as follows:
 - i. Sign each page of the copy
 - ii. Certify the last page of the copy, as described above.
3. Scan (in colour) all pages of the certified copies. Upload onto the Online Application Platform.
4. Note: failure to certify using the instructions above will invalidate your application.