

Call for Applications

SA-Japan (JSPS) Joint Research Mobility Call

UCT Internal Deadline: 8 September 2025

Please direct all queries to Prince Khoza at (prince.khoza@uct.ac.za)

The complete Call Guide can be accessed [here](#)

AIMS OF THE PROGRAMME

This Programme aims to:

- Contribute to scientific advancement in both countries through the funding of joint research activities in specified research fields;
- Provide an opportunity for young researchers in the two countries to meet and interact;
- Support the advancement of basic research; and
- Contribute meaningfully to research capacity development.

FOCUS AREAS

This call will only support Joint research proposals within the Social Sciences, Natural Sciences and the Humanities.

DURATION OF PROJECTS

Projects will be supported for a maximum period of two years (2026 to 2027).

ELIGIBILITY

An application must designate two Principal Investigators (PIs), one in South Africa and one in Japan, who will bear the main responsibility for the project, including its technical and administrative coordination as well as scientific and financial reporting.

The onus is on the applicant to find their research partner. Proposals must be received in both Japan and South Africa.

South Africa:

- The UCT applicant must be in possession of a PhD.
- The application must include a research partner from an HDI. The research partner from an HDI must be in possession of a PhD and can serve as a co-applicant in the proposal.

Only the following eight universities will be recognised as HDI in line with the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) Ministerial Statement on university funding: University of Limpopo (UL), University of Fort Hare (UFH), University of Venda (Univen), Walter Sisulu University (WSU), University of the Western Cape (UWC), University of Zululand (UniZulu), Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT), and Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU).

- Joint projects involving young researchers (through reciprocal research visits and mini sabbaticals), postdoctoral fellows, and paying attention to government equity targets by ensuring a balanced involvement of female and black researchers will be positively considered and receive a higher rating.
- Each PI is allowed to submit only one proposal.
- Former PIs are welcome to participate in the call however, the project should not be a continuation of the current/past project.

Japan:

Japanese PIs must hold a full-time or equivalent position as a researcher at a university or research institute in Japan that is eligible to receive Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research - KAKENHI. However, there are cases when a researcher not employed in a full-time position may be eligible.

FUNDING

The purpose of this call is to support the mobility of researchers, scientists, postdocs, and doctoral students within joint research projects. Funding will be made available for the following activities:

- Mobility: The exchange visits of researchers, postdocs, and doctoral students, including support for research fieldwork.
- Small equipment and consumables.
- Workshops, seminars or networking events: holding meetings alternately in South Africa and Japan.

In the case of meetings, research visits and exchange of scientists, personnel and experts, as well as reciprocal visits undertaken as part of joint research projects and the attendance of seminars, symposia and other meetings funded under this agreement, the sending side will be responsible for financing international travel, visas, and medical insurance, while the receiving party will be responsible for financing the accommodation and subsistence of their international partners. Local travel and fees relating to the organisation of events (venue, catering, audio-visual equipment etc.) will be the financial responsibility of the host investigator which is to be paid from the allocation of the joint funding.

South Africa:

The total amount of funding requested from the NRF should not exceed **R900 000 (R450 000 per annum)**. Funding will be made available for a maximum of two years, to be paid in annual instalments and exclusively for research activities commencing in 2026.

Japan:

The total amount requested from JSPS should not exceed **JPY 2,500,000** per fiscal year (up to JPY 5,000,000 in total) per project.

APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION PROCESS

South Africa

The application must be completed on the **NRF Connect System**: <https://nrfconnect.nrf.ac.za>

1. Register / Login using your ORCID and password.
2. Update your CV (These Curriculum Vitae are used in the assessment processes, and incomplete or outdated inputs will jeopardise the success of the application).
3. On the Menu, click on Applications under My Applications tab.
4. Click on the + sign next to **Research Grants**.
5. Click on the *Create* button next to **Japan (JSPS) - SA Bilateral**
6. Complete all compulsory sections and the relevant non-compulsory sections.
7. Attach all the supporting documents in PDF format:
 - CVs of partner Principal Investigator.
 - Budget of partner Principal Investigator.
 - Budget division of the South African team, in particular budget sharing between UCT and the HDI.
8. Submit the application on completion.

Japan

Application forms for Japanese applicants may be downloaded from the JSPS website making use of the links:

- http://www.jsps.go.jp/j-bilat/semina/shinsei_bosyu.html
- <https://www.jsps.go.jp/english/e-bilat/call.html>

IMPORTANT NOTE

It is of utmost importance that applicants consult the [Call Guide](#) for more detailed information about the scorecard for assessment, as well as the review process and funding conditions.

The NRF recommends the use of the DCC Checklist for Data Management Plan as a guide when drafting the Data Management Plan for the application proposal. For UCT Research Data Management information and resources, please go to <http://www.digitalservices.lib.uct.ac.za/dls/services/rdm>

For technical enquiries, please contact the NRF Support Desk: Supportdesk@risa.nrf.ac.za