

Postdoctoral Research Fellowship: Maritime Education and Training (MET), Safety, Workforce Development and Engineering Education

The Systemic Transformation of Maritime and Engineering Education for Safety and Sustainability project is a multi-institutional initiative supported by Lloyd's Register Foundation. The project aims to strengthen safety-related skills, workforce development, and curriculum transformation across engineering and maritime education in South Africa and partner African countries. Through collaborations with universities, industry, regulators, and international partners, the initiative seeks to build safer and more sustainable maritime systems through education, training, and research.

About the Research Position

The fellowship is collaboratively hosted by the University of Pretoria and the University of Cape Town, led by Prof L Smith and Dr E Rzyankina. Formal partners include Stellenbosch University, the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT), Durban University of Technology (DUT), Nelson Mandela University (NMU), and University College London (UCL). The position will launch in January 2027.

The postdoctoral fellow will contribute to work focused on maritime safety, workforce development, maritime engineering education, and systems-level transformation within the maritime sector. The research will explore challenges and opportunities related to maritime education and training pathways, workforce shortages, safety culture, simulation and experiential learning, fisheries safety, qualification and accreditation systems, and institutional capacity development across South Africa and Africa.

The fellowship will also support longitudinal research and monitoring activities linked to pilot training initiatives, capacity development programmes, stakeholder engagement processes, and broader efforts to strengthen maritime education, workforce development, and safety systems.

Why Apply?

This fellowship offers the opportunity to:

- Contribute to a nationally and regionally significant maritime safety and engineering education initiative.
- Conduct impactful research at the intersection of education, safety, workforce development, and maritime systems.
- Publish collaboratively and develop an independent research profile.
- Engage with national and international maritime, engineering education, and safety networks.
- Participate in workshops, field engagements, stakeholder meetings, and collaborative research activities across institutions, industry, and regulatory bodies.
- Develop experience in systems-oriented and interdisciplinary research linked to real-world implementation challenges.

Key Responsibilities

- Conduct independent and collaborative research within the scope of the programme.
- Lead and contribute to academic publications, reports, and dissemination outputs.
- Support monitoring, evaluation, and evidence-building activities across maritime initiatives.
- Assist with stakeholder engagement, workshop coordination, and partnership activities.
- Contribute to qualitative and mixed-methods research activities, including interviews, thematic analysis, systems mapping, and longitudinal tracking.
- Engage with maritime industry, regulatory, and academic stakeholders across South Africa and partner African countries.

Eligibility Criteria

- PhD completed within the past seven years in a relevant field. These may include Engineering Education, Maritime Studies, Marine Engineering, Nautical Sciences, Higher Education Studies, Industrial Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Naval Architecture, Sociology, Educational Psychology, Information Systems, or related disciplines.
- Demonstrated interest in maritime education, workforce development, safety, educational systems, maritime studies, or engineering education research.
- Emerging publication track record appropriate for postdoctoral level.
- Strong qualitative research, systems thinking, facilitation, organisational, or project coordination skills will be advantageous.
- Ability to work independently and collaboratively across institutions and sectors.
- Have obtained their doctoral degree within the last five years at the time of application.
- Excellent communication skills in English.
- Candidates who have not yet graduated when applying must provide a letter confirming completion of doctoral requirements before commencing the fellowship.

Fellowship Details

Location: University of Pretoria, Hatfield Campus, with travel to partner institutions and maritime stakeholders across South Africa.

Duration: One-year contract, renewable based on performance and funding.

Value: Fellowship stipend of R290,000 (tax free), with limited support for approved research-related travel and development.

Start Date: Flexible, earliest start date 15 January 2027.

Please note: This is a fellowship appointment and does not constitute permanent employment. Fellows may not hold another full-time position during the fellowship period.

Application Process

Please submit the following documents to Ms Sharne Mokhethi, Project Administrator, at sharne.mokhethi@up.ac.za, with the subject line: **Postdoc Application – Maritime Safety, Workforce Development and Engineering Education**

Required documents:

- Cover letter outlining motivation, research interests, and alignment with the programme (maximum 2 pages)
- Detailed CV including publications
- Contact details of two academic referees
- One example of academic writing (published article, thesis chapter, conference paper, or technical report)

Closing date: 30 October 2026, 16h00 SAST