

UK engagement with South African HE

Doctoral partnerships for public policy & inclusive development

University of Bath – Stellenbosch University – University of Fort Hare

About the project

Building on the University of Bath’s successful Higher Education partnerships in South Africa, including the DBA in Higher Education Management (since 2016), this project supports the South Africa-UK University Staff Doctoral Programme.

An innovative collaboration model designed with Stellenbosch University and the University of Fort Hare, the project will see Bath contribute to doctoral training for academic staff in South Africa and join forces to revitalise and strengthen research-informed policy-making in the South African context.

With a focus on development economics and finance, the project aligns closely with the priorities in South Africa’s National Development Plan and reflects academic strengths among the consortium partners. Bath hosts unique expertise that links research and policy-making, especially in the areas of labour market, health, housing and education economics.

The project builds on Bath’s and Stellenbosch’s experience of delivering innovative and blended doctoral programmes for international student cohorts in the social sciences, and will allow sharing good practice developed around the UK’s Researcher Development Framework (RDF) with South Africa’s recent review of doctoral standards and PhD graduate attributes.



A wind-swept project team during the scoping workshop in Stellenbosch, 28-29 May 2019.



University of Fort Hare
 Together in Excellence

Planned activities

- Innovative part-time, blended-learning delivery and interdisciplinary approaches to research training and professional development.
- Co-supervision and supervisor-to-supervisor mobility.
- Cohort-building activities, including writing retreats, summer schools, skills training workshops, and virtual platform interactions.
- International mobility, including SA student research visits to Bath, and Bath research team visits to South Africa to develop joint research around thematic clusters with SA students and supervisors.
- International Public Policy Summer School (Bath).
- Interactions with Bath doctoral students, including at Bath residentials for the Masters in Public Policy and the professional Doctorate in Policy Research and Practice.

Impact & sustainability

- Sharing best practice in doctoral training, including new approaches to collaborative doctoral provision and for bridging academic and professional doctorates.
- Providing an innovative model for successful part-time doctoral studies for university staff in SA, including widening participation, enhanced quality of supervision, international network-building, and a tailored support structure for personal and professional development.
- Piloting doctoral training platforms and interventions with the potential for up-scaling and university-wide roll-out at South African universities.
- Encouraging stakeholder engagement across academia and policy-makers in South Africa.

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Funded by



Programme management at Stellenbosch University (Lead institution)

