

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Digital Business Partial and Fully Funded PhD Bursaries Available for Research in AI, Business and Digital Transformation

WITS MIND INVESTEC CHAIR IN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION

WITS BUSINESS SCHOOL, UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND

JOIN A GROWING INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH AND INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM ADVANCING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, DIGITAL BUSINESS, AND SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION IN AFRICA.

The Wits MIND Investec Chair in Artificial Intelligence and Sustainable Business Transformation invites applications from outstanding candidates wishing to undertake doctoral research towards a PhD in Digital Business. Partial and fully funded bursaries are available for high-potential doctoral candidates whose proposed research focuses on artificial intelligence. The Chair seeks to develop the next generation of scholars capable of producing internationally recognised research addressing the opportunities and challenges of AI in business and society, with a particular focus on Africa and emerging markets.

ABOUT THE OPPORTUNITY

This bursary programme is designed to attract and support outstanding doctoral candidates committed to advancing research at the intersection of artificial intelligence, digital transformation, business innovation, and sustainable development. Successful candidates will join an interdisciplinary research environment that combines academic excellence with industry engagement, policy dialogue, and international collaboration.

RESEARCH THEMES

Applicants are encouraged to undertake doctoral research aligned with one or more of the Chair's thematic areas:

- AI Governance, Ethics and Responsible Innovation
- AI for Sustainable Business Transformation
- AI in Financial Services and Digital Markets
- AI, Development and Inclusive Innovation in Africa
- Data, Digital Platforms and AI Ecosystems

Successful bursary recipients will be integrated into the Chair's interdisciplinary research and innovation ecosystem through seminars, research discussions, mentorship, and networking opportunities.

WHAT THE BURSARY COVERS

- Full or partial tuition support (depending on the funding awarded)
- Academic supervision and mentorship from the Chair's academic team and affiliated researchers.
- Integration into the Chair's interdisciplinary research programme
- Participation in seminars, workshops and the AI Dialogue Series
- Opportunities to collaborate with industry and policy partners
- Support to present research at national and international conferences (subject to available funding)

SELECTION CRITERIA

- Strong academic performance
- Demonstrated research potential and the capacity to undertake independent doctoral research.
- Demonstrated interest in AI, technology, or business transformation

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

- A Master's degree (NQF Level 9) or equivalent qualification in a relevant discipline, including Digital Business, Information Systems, Informatics, Information Technology, Computer Science, Management, Economics, Finance, Public Policy, Development Studies, or a related discipline, where previous study or research demonstrates relevance to artificial intelligence, digital transformation, digital technologies, data, or the digital economy.
- Evidence of strong research capability, including analytical, conceptual, and academic writing skills, with the ability to undertake independent doctoral research.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Successful candidates will be expected to:

- Produce high-quality doctoral research
- Publish in peer-reviewed journals
- Present at academic conferences
- Participate in the Chair's seminar series
- Contribute to collaborative research activities
- Contribute to the Chair's research, industry engagement, and thought leadership activities.

Successful candidates will become part of a growing interdisciplinary community of doctoral students, postdoctoral fellows, researchers, industry partners, and international collaborators committed to advancing AI research for business transformation and sustainable development in Africa.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY

In line with the University's transformation objectives, applications from suitably qualified candidates from underrepresented designated groups are particularly encouraged. Applicants with a demonstrated interest in AI and sustainable development in African contexts are especially welcome. International applicants who meet the University's admission requirements are also encouraged to apply.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

- Curriculum vitae.
- Certified copies of academic qualifications and official academic transcripts.
- Motivation letter (maximum two pages).
- Preliminary research concept note (2–3 pages).
- Certified copy of South African ID or passport.
- Contact details of two academic referees.

SUBMISSION DETAILS

Please submit your application electronically to:

Prof Rennie Naidoo

Email: rennie.naidoo@wits.ac.za

CLOSING DATE: 31 DECEMBER 2026

Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted. The University reserves the right not to award all advertised bursaries.