

AAP AFRICAN FUTURES RESEARCH LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Cohort 5 Call for Applicants

The Alliance for African Partnership (AAP) is seeking applicants for the fifth cohort of the AAP African Futures Research Leadership Program. This competitive visiting scholar program supports **early career researchers** from the AAP consortium to work for one year under the mentorship of faculty members from MSU and their home institution, focusing on building skills in research for impact, writing scholarly and/or policy publications, disseminating of research results, and developing grant proposals for external support. Scholars will also participate in a structured professional development program while building bridges and lasting connections with MSU contacts and across their cohort.

The main objective of the African Futures Research Leadership Program is to strengthen the capacity of a cadre of African researchers to return to their home institutions and become scientific leaders in their community, establish long-term partnerships with MSU faculty, co-create innovative solutions to Africa's challenges, and in turn become trainers of the next generation of researchers. This program aims to address the gender gap in Africa, where only 30% of researchers are women, so scholars selected for the program will be women, or men who can demonstrate they are committed to support efforts towards gender equity in higher education institutions in Africa. The research areas that the scholars will engage in during the program should be aligned to AAP's [research priority areas](#).

The AAP Management Team requests applications from early career researchers to participate in the next cohort, with work to begin virtually in February 2025. Scholars will spend September – December 2025 at MSU for the in-person portion of the program, followed by another period of virtual collaboration, ending in early 2026. The scholar and mentor team will receive a small grant for research and professional development activities including conference attendance and publication. Scholars will also receive a stipend during their time at MSU, visa application support, and round-trip travel from their home institution.

Potential Research Areas

Selected scholars will work in one of AAP's seven priority areas:

- Agri-food systems
- Water, Energy, and Environment
- Culture and Society
- Youth Empowerment
- Education
- Health and Nutrition
- Science, Technology, and Innovation

Selected scholars will be paired with an MSU mentor and commit to working with the MSU mentor and the home institution mentor for the duration of the program.

Program Benefits

- Professional development activities – AAP will offer structured professional development workshops centered on topics such as building equitable partnerships, academic time management, proposal development and budgeting, research communication, etc. to establish professional trajectories, to build research, writing, and publishing skills, and to support scholars to move through various stages of review, promotion, and growth.
- Leadership activities – this will center on a research leadership retreat to expose scholars to the key competencies of research leaders, the work that research leaders engage in, personal reflection on their characteristics and career goals to help determine the pathway to advancement to research leadership.
- Collaboration networks – the early career researcher will be co-mentored by an MSU faculty member and a faculty member from their home institution. Mentors will have the opportunity to visit their counterpart for one week during the duration of the program. The scholar will also gain access to AAP's broad network of researchers at MSU, across Africa, and beyond. Proposed activities should ultimately lead to potential long-term collaborations between MSU and the partner institution.

Expected Outcomes

Each scholar and mentors are expected to produce the following outputs, at minimum, by the end of the program:

- Submission or evidence of publication of one to three joint manuscripts
- At least one grant proposal application
- At least one conference presentation

Collaborations with mentors are meant to be long-term and continue after the end of the program. Scholars are encouraged to network with MSU faculty beyond their mentor while at MSU. Scholars are expected to submit regular progress reports to AAP and their home institution focal point. Failure to meet program and mentor expectations can result in early dismissal.

Eligibility

1. Citizen of an African country
2. Completion of a PhD degree within the last 10 years
3. Employed as an Academic Staff member at one of the [AAP African consortium universities](#) including Egerton University, Makerere University, University of Dar es Salaam, Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of Botswana, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, University Cheikh Anta Diop, University of Arts and Humanities, Bamako, United States International University-Africa, and University of Pretoria

4. Have documented approval of leave or sabbatical to participate in the program for the in-person period
5. Have a mentor at their home institution that will serve as a collaborator and mentor
6. Research must be in one of the AAP priority areas
7. Applicants may only submit one proposal to AAP in this round of funding. Prior scholars are not eligible to apply.

Application Requirements

Applicants should provide the following documents as part of their application package:

- An up-to-date curriculum vitae (CV) that provides a chronological review of their professional accomplishments
- A letter of interest that demonstrates how their research interest and experience is aligned to the AAP research priority area and how they plan to implement long-term sustainable partnership (1 pages)
 - (for male applicants) include how they have supported efforts towards gender equity in higher education institutions in Africa
- Names of potential mentors at MSU (applicants should browse relevant MSU department's website to identify up to three faculty that are aligned with their research interests. **Applicants should not contact MSU faculty directly** - AAP will reach out on the applicant's behalf)
- Two publications in refereed journals related to their research area
- Two professional references that detail the relationship to the applicant and provide specific examples of their assessment of the expertise of the applicant's research area
- A letter from the mentor at their home institution indicating willingness to serve as a collaborator during the program, travel to MSU for one week of collaboration discussions, and mentor the early career researcher when they return to their home institution (1 page)
- A written endorsement from the applicants' Head of Department approving leave (1 page)
- A letter of support from the AAP Focal Point for the scholar's application (1 page)

Selection Criteria:

- Professional merit, scientific ability, potential career impact and future collaboration goals with MSU faculty (based on CV, letter of interest, publications, Head of dept and home mentor letters, and two reference letters)
- Assurance and availability of resources from the home institution for a designated, funded position for the early career researcher upon completion of their fellowship (expressed in letter from head of Dept at the home institution)
- Commitment to return to their home country following completion of training (expressed in a letter of interest)
- The selection committee will ensure the best match of outstanding candidates and MSU mentors

- Additional selection factors may include diversity in scientific research areas and geographic origin

Applications are due on August 18, 2024

Apply: https://msu.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_a60s40TOPXGO5sq

Questions

Please contact José Jackson-Malete at jacks184@msu.edu or 517-884-8587 with any questions.