

DSTI-NRF Call for Application Endorsements: UK-SA Bilateral Chair in Culture and Technics and the NRF SARChI Chair in Visual History and Theory.

Internal deadline: Monday 1 June 2026

The Centre for Humanities Research (CHR) at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) invites applications from candidates seeking grantholder endorsement for DSTI-NRF Master's and Doctoral Student Funding for the academic year 2027. Successful applicants will work alongside a team of leading researchers at the CHR under either the UK-SA Bilateral Chair in Culture and Technics, or the SARChI Chair in Visual History and Theory.

Successful DSTI-NRF applicants will be awarded residential fellowships at the CHR's Iyatsiba Lab, a dedicated interdisciplinary humanities research facility of the University of the Western Cape in Woodstock, Cape Town. The lab offers a supportive environment for focused study and collaborative work. It hosts an expansive network of local and international researchers. The awards are conceived to enable postgraduate students to deepen their work in culture/ technics or visual history and theory with a view to developing expertise in these fields while shaping an inquiry across the humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences.

Awardees will become fellows of the CHR linked to the relevant Chair. Fellows are required to participate in an advanced studies seminar, the CHR's annual Winter School, the Humanities in Session research seminar, reading groups and publication workshops.

Please note: this is a two-stage application process. Once candidates have received endorsements from the CHR, they are then expected to apply through the DSTI-NRF for Master's and Doctoral Student Funding for the academic year 2027.

For more information about the DSTI-NRF 2026 Applications:

<https://www.nrf.ac.za/funding/nrf-call-for-proposals-for-funding-in-2025-and-2026/>

About the CHR

Since its establishment in 2006, the Centre for Humanities Research (CHR) at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) has provided a new impetus to the role of the humanities in the formulation of ideas and experiments for building a post-apartheid society, in order to offer a new concept of freedom for the world.

A humanities inquiry informed by its location and history, the CHR lends itself to asking pertinent questions that have a significant impact on locating intellectual traditions in Africa in a global discourse on the contemporary human condition. With graduate fellowship and artist-in-residence programmes, the Centre has nurtured a humanities discourse that is responsive to the rapidly shifting terrains of the human in our global moment. The CHR has been shaping a discourse on post-apartheid freedom that explores the relationship between the human, the arts and technology in our contemporary world, especially as these relate to rapidly transforming notions of society and politics. With partnerships across and between institutions, particularly universities, schools, public arts projects, museums, archives and art galleries, the CHR nurtures future generations of humanities graduates, educators and arts and cultural practitioners energized by transhemispheric collaborations that extend the reach of local and international humanities scholarship, as well as opportunities for arts education and cultural production beyond the institutional site of the university.

About the Chairs

The UK-SA Bilateral Chair in Culture and Technics, held by Professor Premesh Lalu in the Centre for Humanities Research (CHR), convenes an international study network that traces how the exercise of power relates to the co-evolution of the human and technology. Specifically, the Chair is interested to understand the consequences of technology on culture. To this end, our study is focused on how humanistic discourse and arts practices mediate understandings of the expansion in technological resources in the scientific revolutions from the nineteenth century to the present. The Chair invites an inquiry into the cultural effects of scientific revolutions in thermodynamics, psychotechnics/psychophysics, and cybernetics, and their consequences for debates about techno-feudalism, partition and difference, ecology and environmentality, biopolitics, life philosophy, magical realism, and science fiction amongst others. The platform's first five years run along annual thematics including the urban, the university, aesthetics, and digital arts.

The SARChI Chair in Visual History & Theory, held by Professor Patricia Hayes in the Centre for Humanities Research, is a research platform that promotes a critical engagement with the image in relation to other forms of knowledge production, creativity and contest in Africa and elsewhere. The 'visual turn' too often associates visual culture with the invention of technical media, which tends to put Africa at the limit of modernity. It has been our task to rethink hegemonic histories and theories of vision from this limit, opening the way to re-theorise the humanities more globally. Visual History therefore explores inter-disciplinary approaches to images as a way of rethinking history, society, and culture.

How to apply

The application must include the following components:

- 1) Letter of motivation that clearly specifies which Chair you wish to be endorsed by
- 2) One page statement on the role of critical humanities scholarship in/of Africa
- 3) Outline of proposed research project
- 4) CV
- 5) A writing sample
- 6) One academic reference.

For more information about the DSTI-NRF 2026 Applications: <https://www.nrf.ac.za/dsti-nrf-postgraduate-student-funding-for-the-2027-academic-year/>

Applications should reach us no later than **10 June 2025**. All documents to be emailed to centreforhumanitiesresearch@uwc.ac.za for the attention of Ms Miceala Felix.