

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS FOR THE MPhil IN PUBLIC MENTAL HEALTH FOR 2026

DUE DATE: 31 August, 2025

The Alan J. Flisher Centre for Public Mental Health (CPMH) is a joint initiative of the Department of Psychology at Stellenbosch University and the Department of Psychiatry and Mental Health at the University of Cape Town. CPMH is an independent inter-disciplinary academic research and teaching centre for public mental health promotion and service development in Africa. We are proud to invite applications from across the African continent for the Master of Philosophy (MPhil) in Public Mental Health in 2026.

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY IN PUBLIC MENTAL HEALTH

The MPhil in Public Mental Health is a part-time research degree that aims to develop advanced research skills, enabling participants to undertake their own research projects as well as interpret research findings for mental health policy and practice. The programme is designed to be accessible to practitioners who work full-time, and who are from a range of backgrounds including social work, psychology, psychiatry, medicine, occupational therapy, nursing, health economics, public mental health, public health, health service management, policy making and non-governmental organisations activities (NGOs). The training aims to build the professional capacity and leadership of the participants in their work, while contributing to public mental health knowledge generation in Africa.

The degree requires:

- The completion of a 3-week residential training module in research methodology for public mental health;
- Participation in a 6-week online writing course in February/March 2026;
- Participation in monthly webinars;
- The preparation of a dissertation of a minimum of 20 000 words.

3-week Residential Training Module in Research Methodology

The course will start with a 3-week residential training session in Cape Town from **19 January-06 February 2026**. Students will attend lectures, seminars and workshops at a University of Cape Town campus. The content of the training module will include research methodology for public mental health. The training includes an orientation to public mental health, quantitative and qualitative research methods, statistics and epidemiology for mental health and an introduction to the responsible conduct of research. All students are required to be available for full weekdays during the 3-week training session.

During the 3-week training session, students are also expected to meet with their research supervisors and develop their draft research proposals, which they are required to present to a review panel on Friday 06 February 2026. Following the training session, students will be provided with ongoing support and supervision via online platforms, guiding them through the process of finalising their research proposals,

gaining ethics approval for the research, gathering and analysing data for their research, and eventually completing their dissertations. During the 2-year degree programme, students attend mandatory monthly webinars from their home countries. These webinars are used to provide additional structured teaching and review research progress.

Public Mental Health Dissertation

The dissertation component aims to provide students with the opportunity to acquire specialised knowledge in a specific area of public mental health. It also provides a practical opportunity for the student to master the research process, which includes selection of a topic; self-driven but supervised investigation; data collection and management; assimilation, analysis, interpretation and critical discussion; understanding and coherent presentation. The dissertation will preferably be related to the ongoing work

conducted by participants in their respective countries. For example, students may choose to evaluate a mental health programme in their own service organisation or region. This would serve the dual function of the development of the student's research skills and service development, with ongoing support and supervision from the CPMH. Research supervisors employed by the Centre are acknowledged experts in public mental health, with a proven publication record and experience of supervising and mentoring students at master's level.

The dissertation is examined according to university regulations for the examination of master's dissertations as stipulated in the university handbook. Dissertations will be assessed by two external examiners based at South African institutions other than the one at which the student is registered and/or international academic institutions.

Registration

Registration is for a minimum of 1 year, and the programme normally takes 2-3 years to complete. Students will need to register for each year of study until dissertation submission.

Admission Requirements

Candidates for this programme should be in possession of an honours degree or an equivalent four-year qualification, or a post-graduate diploma in public mental health in a cognate discipline. In addition, candidates should:

- have experience of working in a mental health, health, social sciences or a development-related field for at least three years;
- be employed within a managerial or leadership role, or have the capacity for such a role;
- have experience in conducting research, with participation in one or more research projects;
- show evidence of adequate English language and writing proficiency for postgraduate academic studies.

Please note:

- A research programme of this nature requires dedicated time and the ability to work independently. You will require a minimum of 10 hours per week on average to complete the dissertation. Please consider this carefully before applying.
- The MPhil in Public Mental Health does not lead to a professional qualification that can be registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa or any other professional council. It is strictly an academic research degree with no clinical components. The programme is not designed as a stepping stone to further clinical study but is focused on developing research knowledge and skills.
- Students *may not be registered for another diploma/degree programme* while they are registered for the MPhil (Public Mental Health).

Funding & Fees

See the [UCT postgraduate degree funding noticeboard](#) for funding options.

The fees for this course for 2025 were as follows:

	UCT
Tuition Fees (<u>per year</u>)	ZAR 43 030
International Student Fees	ZAR 5 300
Application Fee	ZAR 100 (RSA and SADC**) ZAR 300 (rest of world)

**** SADC countries (Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe)**

Fees for 2026 will be finalised in October/November 2025. The information will be posted on the [University of Cape Town's](#) website once available.

Selection Process

Admission to the programme is highly competitive, and is based primarily on academic merit and the potential to contribute to mental health development in under-served areas in Africa. We will engage in a rigorous selection process to identify the candidates who are most likely to successfully complete the degree within the prescribed period. In addition to the written application, short-listed applicants may be requested to attend a teleconference interview. The deadline for applications is **31 August 2025**. The outcome of the selection process will be communicated to all applicants by **31 October 2025**.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

The application forms are detailed, so that we have as much relevant information possible to enable us to select the most suitable candidates. Please see this [page](#) for a list of potential supervisors. If any, indicate your preference on the form, but take note that we cannot guarantee placement with the identified supervisor.

- Download the application form by clicking on the button below.
- The application forms must be completed in full electronically and submitted with all required supporting documents **as a single PDF file, with your surname and initial as the file name**, to Songelwa.Mobo@uct.ac.za on or before **31 August 2025**.
- Each application should consist of the following:
 - Completed application form, including:
 - Photograph
 - Signed declaration
 - Research proposal (see format in the application form)
 - Names of 2 referees. We will contact them directly.
 - Certified copies of original academic transcripts
 - A letter of support from your employer for attendance of the 3-week course in January/February 2026.
 - Please do not include any additional material (such as a separate CV) in your application package. Provision has been made on the application form for all information required for the selection process.

If you have any questions about the application form or process, please contact **Songelwa Mobo** (Songelwa.Mobo@uct.ac.za). Upon selection, students will be given additional information on registration and preparations for the course.