

ISO LOMSO FELLOWSHIPS: CALL FOR APPLICATIONS 2025

Application deadline:

15 February 2025

Shortlist selection:

30 April 2025

Final selection:

31 May 2025

Enquiries:

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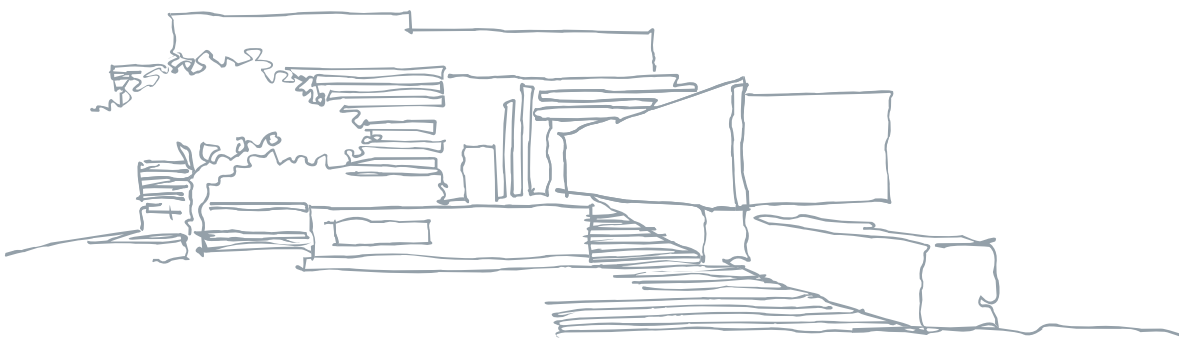
The STIAS Iso Lomso Fellowship Programme

Iso Lomso Fellowships provide an exceptional early career opportunity for Africa's brightest minds in academia. Fellows will enjoy:

- a three-year attachment to STIAS during which time they may spend a total of ten months in residence at STIAS to develop and pursue a long-term research project;
- the possibility of a residency at a partner institute for advanced study or another research-intensive institution abroad;
- funding to attend up to two international conferences or training workshops;
- support to convene a workshop with collaborators at STIAS;
- lecturer replacement subsidy for the fellow's home institution during residency periods.

The programme is aimed at African scholars who have obtained a doctoral degree within the preceding seven years and who hold an academic position at a university or research institution anywhere in Africa. Candidates should have established a research programme and have completed a post-doctoral fellowship or equivalent post-PhD programme. All disciplines are considered.

A CREATIVE SPACE FOR THE MIND



About STIAS

The Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Study is a high-level research institute dedicated to innovative thinking, the production of new knowledge and the nurturing of emerging academic leaders. It was established in 1999 as an independent Public Benefit Organization with its own Board of Directors. Over the past decade STIAS has emerged as a prime research destination on the continent of Africa.

Its aim is to provide a creative space for the mind where leaders in their respective disciplines can devote their undivided attention to innovative projects of their own choosing, free from lecturing and administrative responsibilities.

While it belongs to the consortium of Institutes for Advanced Study located in Princeton, Berlin, Uppsala, Stanford, Harvard, North Carolina, Nantes, Amsterdam, and Jerusalem, STIAS is distinguished by three aspects: It serves all disciplines, not only the natural sciences, social sciences or the humanities; it encourages interdisciplinary discourse and projects; and it has a special focus on Africa.

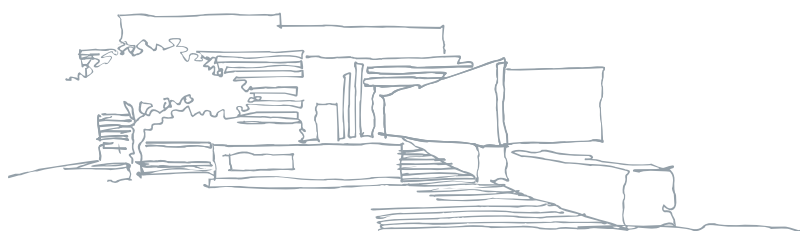
Offering a variety of fellowships and scholarships, STIAS provides a uniquely supportive space for thinking, reading, debating, and writing. While in residence, established and early-career researchers and artists meet daily over lunch, present and participate in weekly seminars, and may organise conferences for a wider audience. In creating and curating this space, STIAS provides ideal conditions for innovative and original thinking to thrive.

Since its inception, STIAS has grown steadily, winning local, regional and international recognition as an influential hub dedicated to Africa's long-term development. By attracting leading thinkers, including Nobel laureates, prominent international and local scholars, as well as African next generation researchers, the institute has fostered a successful research programme involving numerous larger projects and, by 2022, had hosted over 750 research fellows.

Up to twenty-six research fellows are hosted at the STIAS Wallenberg Research Centre at any one time. The Institute strives to provide an interface between the global research community and research communities in Africa.

Fellows are expected to be present at STIAS for the duration of their STIAS residency, with no academic obligations other than pursuing the proposed research project and participating in fellow activities.

More information about applying for the regular fellowship programmes at STIAS is available at stias.ac.za/fellowships.



A CREATIVE SPACE FOR THE MIND

About Iso Lomso

An important priority for STIAS is to strengthen a culture of research on the continent. It is especially important to nurture a new generation of African scholars to provide the intellectual leadership needed for future development. For this purpose, STIAS has established an early career research fellowship programme called *Iso Lomso*. The translation of the isiXhosa words 'iso lomso' is 'the eye of tomorrow' and connotes seeing into the future, working towards the future, preparing for the future, and laying foundations for tomorrow.

Iso Lomso aims to address the gap that exists between completion of the PhD and becoming an established scholar in Africa. While there is increasing support for doctoral study and for post-doctoral fellowships, it is during the extended post-doctoral period that the greatest loss of talent occurs.

Iso Lomso takes its cue from the ethos and objectives of STIAS. It does not offer an alternative programme to the regular fellows' programme, but complements and builds on the proven and successful model of the Institute. It aims at enhancing the existing cross-fertilization of minds by broadening its scope through the inclusion of a younger generation.

Moreover, the programme will be guided by the Institute's emphasis on interdisciplinary research and its goal of creating research networks within and beyond Africa.

True to the nature of an Institute for Advanced Study, STIAS does not provide access to experimental facilities or facilitate field work. *Research projects with a predominantly experimental methodology will in general only be considered where the experimental or field work is funded by the home or another institution. In such cases, the proposal must provide information on existing funding and a clear indication of the research aspects of the project that will form the focus of the STIAS residencies.*

The Fellowship

Iso Lomso fellowships provide a three-year attachment to STIAS to enable fellows to develop and conduct a long-term research programme of their preference. The aim is to facilitate and support them towards becoming established scholars in their fields.

The main means of support is STIAS residencies. Residential periods will be agreed mutually between the fellow, his or her home institution and STIAS, and may vary between six weeks and five months per residency. A first period of residency will typically be of longer duration to be taken up during 2026, followed by two further residencies through 2028. While in residence fellows receive regular STIAS fellow support which includes:

- an economy return flight;
- comfortable accommodation within walking distance from the institute;
- individual offices equipped with a PC, telephone and printer;
- a monthly stipend for daily living costs;
- access to the Stellenbosch University library (including electronic resources) and a high-speed internet connection;
- participation in the regular STIAS fellows programme, including daily lunch, weekly fellows' seminars, STIAS public lectures and social events;
- a child care subsidy for fellows accompanied by young children while in residence.

Iso Lomso fellows' home institutions will be eligible to apply for a lecturer replacement subsidy of R50 000 during residency periods. It will be the fellow and the home institution's responsibility to recruit replacement lecturers.

While not in residence at STIAS, Iso Lomso fellows will continue their regular academic duties at their home institution. During these periods fellows may apply for a range of research sponsorship interventions. These elements will be considered in a flexible manner to ensure that each fit optimally into the research programme. They may include:

- a subsequent residency at a sister Institute for Advanced Study or relevant research institution in North America, Europe or elsewhere (this will form part of the ten months' residency allocation; the fellow's preferences for potential host institutions will be considered);
- funding to attend up to two relevant academic conferences or research training events (covering travel, accommodation and participation fees);
- limited project funding for key interventions in the research programme;
- the possibility of hosting a workshop at STIAS or at the fellow's home institution, as a means of strengthening the fellow's scholarly network and research impact.

Applicants are encouraged to consider which of these elements they would like to include in the pre-proposal timeline. These elements will be planned and finalised with Iso Lomso fellows during their initial period of residency.

Eligibility and selection

To be eligible, applicants must:

- be a national of any African country;
- be born after the 1st of January 1983;
- have an affiliation at a research or higher education institution in an African country, and continue to do so for the foreseeable future;
- have obtained a doctoral degree from any recognised higher education institution (worldwide) after the 1st of January 2017;
- have completed a post-doctoral fellowship or equivalent post-PhD research programme;
- be in a position to commence a first period of residency at STIAS during 2026.

All disciplines will be considered. Applicants from non-Anglophone African countries may conduct their research in the language of preference; however, the application documents must be completed in English. Applications will be evaluated and selected on the basis of the following criteria:

- **Level:** the applicant's academic excellence and the originality and scholarly strength of the proposed research project;
- **Innovation:** the project's promise of new insights and the potential to produce new knowledge;
- **Interdisciplinarity:** whether the project methodology allows for drawing from different disciplines and its potential to facilitate an interdisciplinary discourse;
- **Relevance:** the project's relevance for scholarship and knowledge production in Africa;
- **Feasibility:** whether the research design and the research plan are convincing and realistic.

During final selection, additional consideration will be given to:

- gender representation;
- diversity of nationalities;
- diversity of disciplines;
- participation in previous or current research projects;
- previous international experience.

Submission of applications

To apply, eligible candidates must complete the Iso Lomso 2025 application form which can be downloaded at stias.ac.za/iso-lomso

Send the application form together with the following as separate PDF documents:

- A motivational cover letter with a description of the applicant's academic career and current institutional position, and the ideas and experiences that have shaped and motivated his or her intellectual work.
- A pre-proposal for a three-year research project. This is a short essay of two to three pages which provides (i) a summary of the applicant's current research/work, (ii) the main thesis of the proposed research project, including the problem statement and aim of the project, (iii) an overview of existing literature and other sources for the project, (iv) the project's theoretical background and methodological approach, (v) the significance/relevance of the project for African scholarship, and (vi) a provisional time framework with proposed periods of residency at STIAS, additional activities, and research outputs.
- One or two recent writing examples authored by the applicant (articles or book sections) related to the proposed project.
- A copy of the applicant's doctoral certificate.
- A letter of support from the applicant's home institution confirming the applicant's academic position and an assurance that the applicant will be released for residential research periods. *STIAS provides teaching replacement funding to home institutions during periods of residency.*
- An up-to-date Curriculum Vitae
- Two letters of recommendation from scholars who are familiar with the applicant's work, preferably one from the applicant's current home institution and one from another institution. The letter should be printed on an official institutional letterhead and should include the name of the recommender, the academic position of the recommender, an indication of how long and in what capacity the recommender has known the applicant, and an evaluation of the merit of the applicant's proposed project and ability to complete the proposed work during three years. The letters of recommendation will be confidential and should be sent by the recommender directly to isolomso@sun.ac.za.

Applications may be submitted electronically via email to isolomso@sun.ac.za by the end of Friday, 14 February 2025 (Central African Time). For entries by postal service, courier or facsimile, please contact the Iso Lomso Coordinator in advance by email or telephone to confirm delivery arrangements.

Shortlisted candidates may be contacted during May 2025 for any additional information that may be required about their proposed projects. A final selection will be made by the end of May 2025 and successful candidates will be contacted during June 2025.

Any changes to these dates shall be updated on the STIAS website at stias.ac.za/iso-lomso