



ARUA EARLY-CAREER RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS 2025

Fellowship Start: **1 July 2025**

 www.arua.org



1. About the Fellowship

The African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA), with support from the Mastercard Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation of New York, is launching this Early-Career Research Fellowship program. The initiative will fund up to **forty-two (42) early-career researchers** to conduct globally competitive research at the host and affiliated institutions of ARUA's thirteen (13) Centres of Excellence (CoEs).

Each fellowship will last six months, *between July 2025 and June 2026*. A maximum of four fellows will be assigned to each CoE, with all positions filled by December 2025. *At least 70% of the fellowships are reserved for female candidates, and applicants must be no older than 35 years at the time of application.*

The program aims to enhance the capacity of early-career researchers at African universities by providing them with time away from teaching duties at their home institutions to collaborate with highly experienced and distinguished researchers at ARUA Centres of Excellence (CoEs). Each CoE is expected to host research fellows from countries other than its own.

1.1 About ARUA

The African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA) is a network of leading universities from different African countries with different historical backgrounds but with a common vision. This vision is to make African researchers and institutions globally competitive while contributing significantly to the generation of knowledge for the socio-economic transformation of the continent. The network, right from inception, was intended to be different from any other regional university network in Africa. The difference was to come largely from the approach to be employed, namely bringing together a number of peer African institutions that were willing to work together by pooling their limited resources to generate a critical mass that could more effectively support their limited but growing numbers of researchers. Underlying the approach was the conviction that they could leverage their resources effectively for additional resources from outside. ARUA is currently pursuing this vision through its thirteen (13) CoEs that vary across various science and non-science disciplines.

1.2 About the Mastercard Foundation

The Mastercard Foundation is a registered Canadian charity and one of the largest foundations in the world. It works with visionary organizations to advance education and financial inclusion to enable young people in Africa and Indigenous youth in Canada to access dignified and fulfilling work. Established in 2006 through the generosity of Mastercard when it became a public company, the Foundation is an independent organization separate from the company, with offices in Toronto, Kigali, Accra, Nairobi, Kampala, Lagos, Dakar, and Addis Ababa. Its policies, operations, and program decisions are determined by the Foundation's Board of Directors and leadership. For more information on the Foundation, please visit www.mastercardfdn.org.

1.3 About the Carnegie Corporation of New York

The Carnegie Corporation of New York is one of the United States of America's oldest grant-making foundations, established by Andrew Carnegie to promote the advancement and diffusion of knowledge and understanding. In keeping with this mandate, the Corporation's work focuses on the issues that Andrew Carnegie considered of paramount importance: international peace, the advancement of education and knowledge, and the strength of democracy. The Corporation supports four key program areas, including education, democracy, international peace and security, and higher education and research in Africa.

2. Background

ARUA has established thirteen (13) Centres of Excellence (CoEs) across various disciplines to support its vision. These CoEs reflect the current priority areas of ARUA, and they are expected to significantly enhance research and graduate training. Currently, the CoEs are organized as follows: (i) *Energy*, (ii) *Unemployment and Skills Development*, (iii) *Non-Communicable Diseases*, (iv) *Inequality Research*, (v) *Notion of Identity in Africa*, (vi) *Migration and Mobility*, (vii) *Sustainable Food Systems*, (viii) *Urbanization and Habitable Cities*, (ix) *Climate and Development*, (x) *Good Governance*, (xi) *Post-Conflict Societies*, (xii) *Water*, and (xiii) *Materials, Energy & Nanotechnology (MEN)*.

To support the activities of these centres, ARUA is announcing a residential Early Career Research Fellowship that is expected to last for **6 months**. During this period, prospective research fellows are expected to stay at the host or affiliated university of the respective CoE and conduct research related to their existing projects. Successful candidates are also expected to explore new lines of research with the approval of the Centre's Director. Prospective candidates are encouraged to visit the ARUA website (<https://arua.org/centres-of-excellence/>) as well as those of the 13 CoEs to familiarize themselves with their ongoing research projects.

ARUA views this Early Career Research Fellowship as critical to consolidating the progress made by the CoEs, which aligns with the main visions of the network as well as the institutions supporting the fellowship. ARUA, therefore, seeks to use this opportunity to enhance the relevance of postgraduate training for early-career researchers.

3. Roles and Responsibilities of the Research Fellow

The key roles and responsibilities of the research fellow are as follows:

- Work with other researchers to undertake various relevant studies at the Centre under the guidance of an assigned mentor.
- Write and publish a minimum of one (1) academic paper¹ (*a jointly authored paper where the fellow is the first/lead author can be acceptable*) in a high-impact journal (*at least, indexed in Scopus or Web of Science*), with an accompanying policy brief or blog post on the appropriate platforms of the respective host institution.
- Deliver at least two (2) presentations and participate in technical workshops with fellow researchers and other stakeholders.
- Assist in creating and bolstering new partnerships between the respective Centre of Excellence and other relevant bodies.
- Assist in disseminating research findings of the Centre.

4. Selection Criteria

- Applicants must be African nationals who have a PhD in a discipline/sub-discipline related to the thematic area of the Centre of Excellence.
- Applicants must be within 5 years of completing their PhD,
- Applicants should be young faculty (or research) members at an ARUA university. Female postdoctoral fellows will be considered in limited cases.
- The applicant should not be more than 35 years old at the time of applying.
- Applicants should have a highly competitive track record relevant to the opportunity and be willing to develop a strong international standing and research reputation.
- Applicants must be available to spend 6 months away from their home university and be able to return to their home institution.
- Applicant must be working on an ongoing project related to the CoE and have readily available data to accomplish the main roles and responsibilities (see section 3)
- Eligible women are strongly encouraged to apply. ***At least 70% of the fellowships will be awarded to female candidates.***

5. Contract and Remuneration

Successful candidates will be contracted by ARUA for 6 months. The research fellowship shall provide a monthly stipend of US\$2,000, modest payment for accommodation, and travel support (return ticket to host institution). *There are no relocation expenses.* Additional financial support is available for eligible women who may require adjustment assistance (e.g., for childcare). The host CoE will provide the research fellow with office space.

6. Application Process

To apply for this research fellowship, please submit the following documents:

- **Cover letter** outlining your reasons for applying for the position and details of how you will achieve the roles and responsibilities of the position (*see section 3*). This should include an overview of your experience in the relevant field and how you meet the eligibility criteria. The candidate must specify the particular ARUA Centre of Excellence to which they are applying. If an applicant has previously spent time at the

¹ In limited cases, a full draft manuscript may be accepted. But this must be subjected to some review process by the ARUA Centre of Excellence and considered publishable.

proposed CoE (e.g., as a student, postdoc, etc.), the cover letter should include a motivation for how this visit will build on the pre-existing relationship. Applicants should also outline if they require a visa to visit the host or an affiliated institution of an ARUA CoE and, if so, what is required and the estimated processing time.

- **Full CV**, including applicant details (e.g., date of birth, passport number, country of origin, citizenship, etc.), particulars of doctoral degree, qualifications obtained, research output, a description of the applicant's contribution in jointly authored publications, and details of two referees. In the case of shortlisted applicants, applicants will be required to ask the referees to submit a brief report assessing the applicant's suitability for the fellowship. Referees should not be based at the proposed host CoE.
- A **Letter of Support** from the applicant's permanent/home institution, including an indication of suitability for the position and that the candidate will return to the home institution.
- Evidence of **Award of PhD**.
- A **Brief Concept Note** (max. 1,500 words, including references) outlining your proposed research project/plan and its alignment with the ambitions of the host CoE. Candidates who can demonstrate that they possess the necessary data or research materials to support their role will have a significant advantage.
- **Two (2) academic writing** examples. This should not be a chapter from a doctoral thesis. In the case of a jointly authored piece, you should describe your contribution.

7. Selection Process

- The selection of successful candidates will be conducted by the Director of the relevant ARUA Centre of Excellence to which the candidate applies, in consultation with the host institution's Deputy Vice-Chancellor.
- Applications should be submitted via the online submission portal (<https://arua.org/early-career-research-fellowships-2025/>).
- ARUA will continue to accept applications for the 42 positions until they are all filled, with a **deadline of December 2025**. However, candidates who apply before May 15, 2025, will be considered for the first batch of positions. Successful candidates from this batch will be notified by **June 1, 2025**, and are expected to start their fellowships on **July 1, 2025**.
- Fellowship selection is highly competitive and based, in the first instance, on excellence in the context of the applicant's academic standing, research experience, productivity, and output and, secondly, on the relevance and fit of research experience and proposed focus to the host CoE's research focus and objectives.