



Research towards a PhD degree at the University of Cape Town

We seek a PhD candidate to undertake research as part of the project “Building adaptive capacity to ocean change at multiple scales through promoting ecosystem-based adaptation and community engagement (Eco-ACE)”. This project is a 3-year transdisciplinary project, undertaken in collaboration with the Universities of Cape Town, Western Cape, and Nelson Mandela University. The student will be required to register at the University of Cape Town and be co-supervised by researchers from the partner universities. The PIs for the project are Prof. Lynne Shannon, Drs Louise Gammage and Kelly Ortega-Cisneros from the group around the [South African Research Chair in Marine Ecology and Fisheries](#) .

Background to Eco-ACE

The project aims to facilitate and improve the adaptive capacity of vulnerable groups in coastal communities by following a co-design and collaborative research approach that makes use of multiple methods. We take a community-based research approach to co-design and develop interventions and tools with stakeholders to foster an improvement in adaptive capacity at the local level. At the same time, decision-makers will be engaged to identify and implement interventions to promote ecosystem-based decision-making. Taking a participative modelling approach, the project will integrate social and ecological knowledge into ecosystem models. Through these various interventions, we will also facilitate science and stakeholder engagement in relation to climate change and variability, and the effects thereof. By defining and outlining a field-tested approach, our project will directly contribute to strengthening the adaptive capacity of vulnerable communities and create awareness of climate change at the local level, strengthen existing ecosystem models of the southern Benguela through the integration of small-scale fishers’ knowledge and contribute to the promotion of ecosystem-based management approaches in South Africa through capacity building at larger scales and policy recommendations.

We seek a PhD candidate to undertake the following research, starting in 2022:

Bridging the gap between people and policy: Exploring pathways to integrating local level knowledge into decision-making (supervision by project partners, to be confirmed after consultation with candidates)

This project aims to facilitate bottom-up and top-down conversations between key stakeholders and decision-makers at various scales of the governance system to unpack potential impacts of change (including climate change) and make recommendations on how governance approaches can be better aligned to facilitate whole-of-system sustainability. Through these interactions we seek to build capacity within governance systems (such as fisheries) to specifically promote better adoption of system-based management approaches within structures, particularly the ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management and marine spatial planning frameworks to which South Africa ascribes.

Requirements: Candidates should have an Master's degree (or equivalent) in Environmental Science, Sustainability Science, Geography, Anthropology, Sociology, or a related field. Being conversant with the South African fisheries landscape and marine context is an advantage. The successful candidate should have some experience with and interest in conducting mixed method research – in particular, they need to be conversant with participant-led research and methods. They should have a passion for working with diverse groups of people and an ability to work independently and collaboratively. They need to demonstrate adequate writing skills and willingness to engage across a diverse range of disciplines and bodies of knowledge related to fisheries. Candidates must be willing and able to spend extended periods of time in the field working with coastal communities as embedded researchers. Candidates must be South African citizens. A working knowledge of Afrikaans and/or isiXhosa would be advantageous but is not crucial.

Funding

Bursaries will be funded from the Eco-ACE project through the National Research Foundation. Necessary running and travel expenses will also be covered.

To apply

All interested candidates should contact email the following documents to louise.gammage@uct.ac.za (copy in Kelly.ortegacisneros@uct.ac.za) before 11h00 on **Thursday 14 April 2022**.

- a motivation letter (detailing your previous academic and work experience, and how your experiences and skills speak to the proposed research topic, as well as your specific interests with regard to the proposed project),
- a detailed CV that includes your academic record, previous work experience, any scientific publications on which you have been an author/co-author, and the names of at least two academic referees,
- transcripts of academic qualifications,
- at least one example of recent written work (e.g., a paper, report, thesis chapter).

We intend to interview selected candidates as soon as possible.

We reserve the right not to appoint.