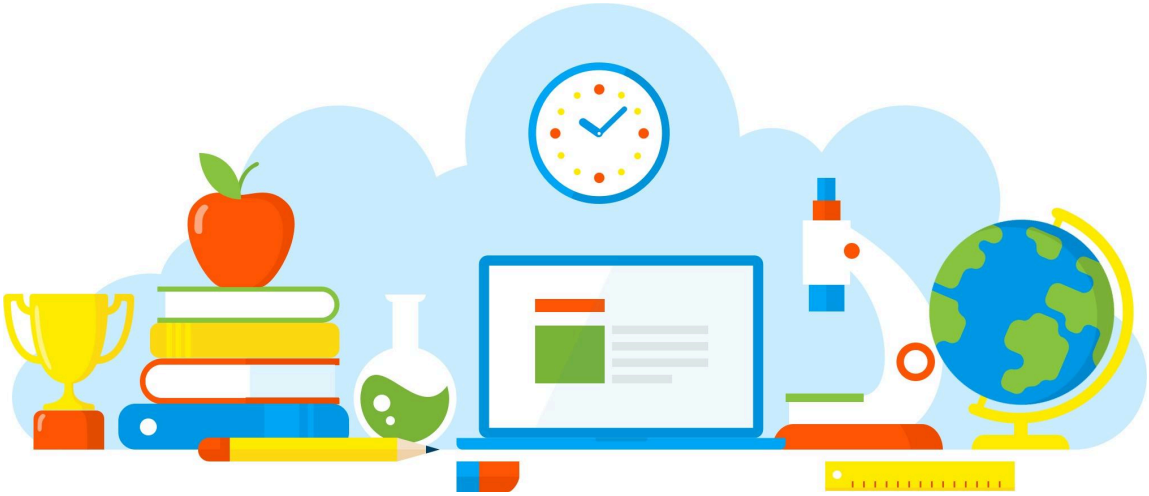


Prospective Post-Grad Guide

Data Science for Social Impact

A quick guide to us potentially working together

Last Update 22/05/2026

Data Science for Social Impact

https://www.dsfsi.co.za

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This guide outlines the professional standards and required protocols for all prospective researchers joining the **Data Science for Social Impact (DSFSI) Lab**.

Please note: To ensure fairness and administrative efficiency, the lab **does not accept unsolicited research inquiries via personal email.** All interactions regarding recruitment must go through the official application channels.

1. The Recruitment Cycle (2027 Intake)

All applicants must align their submissions with our two-phase recruitment model:

- **Phase 1 (15 May – 30 June 2026):** Dedicated to **Postdoctoral, PhD, and MSc applicants** who **require financial support** (fellowships, assistantships, etc.).
- **Phase 2 (August 2026):** Dedicated to **Honours, MITc, and self-funded MSc/PhD applicants.**

2. Application Protocol

Because we do not accept direct email inquiries, your application is your first opportunity to demonstrate your research maturity. A successful application must address the following:

I. Research Alignment

You must demonstrate a deep understanding of our research pillars (see Section 3). A generic application will not be considered.

II. Clarity of Intent

Your application must clearly state:

- **Your Level:** (e.g., PhD, MSc, Postdoc, Honours, or MITc).
- **Your Funding Status:** (e.g., "I have secured external funding" or "I am seeking lab-based support").
- **Your Commitment:** (e.g., "Full-time" or "Part-time/Working").
- **Your Status:** (e.g., "Permanent Resident" or "International/Visa required").

III. Documentation Standards

- **CV Format:** All CVs **must** follow the [DSFSI CV Guide].
- **Privacy: Do NOT** include sensitive identification such as ID numbers or Passport numbers in your CV.
- **File Type:** All documents must be submitted in **PDF format**.

3. Research Pillars

Prospective researchers must align their research proposals with one of the following core areas. We strongly recommend reviewing our recent publications (focusing on the last 2 years) before applying.

A. Data Science for Social Impact

- Applying Machine Learning to societal sectors (Education, Health, etc.).
- Innovative data gathering, collection, and socio-technical analysis.

B. Natural Language Processing (NLP)

- Deep Learning approaches for African languages.
- Model Robustness, Interpretability, and Transparency.
- NLP applications in Social Media and Web Technologies.

C. Machine Learning

- Anomaly Detection.
- Transparency and Interpretability of ML models.

4. How to Apply

All applications must be submitted via the official portal. We do not accept applications via email or social media direct messages.

Official Application Portal: 👉 https://www.dsfsi.co.za/prospective/apply/

For administrative inquiries regarding the application process, please contact:
dsfsi.info@up.ac.za

DSFSI Lab: Tips for Crafting Your Research CV

A Note to Our Prospective Members

At DSFSI, we value **potential, curiosity, and a passion for social impact** as much as we value technical expertise. We know that everyone's academic journey looks different—some of you may have extensive research experience, while others might be transitioning from different industries or disciplines.

This guide is not a test. We are not looking for "perfect" CVs; we are looking for *you*. The purpose of this guide is to help you present your unique experiences and skills in a way that helps our selection committee understand your journey and your potential to grow within our lab.

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1. The Basics: Keeping it Simple

To help us read your CV quickly and effectively, we suggest a clean, easy-to-read layout.

- **Format:** Please save your CV as a **PDF**. This ensures that your formatting stays exactly as you intended.
- **Privacy First:** To protect your identity, **please do not include** sensitive information like your ID number, Passport number, or your home address. Your Name, Email, and LinkedIn/GitHub links are all we need!
- **Length:** Don't feel pressured to write a book. For most applicants, **2 pages** is a perfect length to highlight your most important achievements.

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2. How to Tell Your Story

We suggest organizing your CV into these sections to help us understand your background:

I. Contact Information

Your name, a professional email, and links to your professional profiles (like LinkedIn or GitHub) if you have them.

II. Your Research Interests (The "Why")

Instead of a formal "Objective," tell us what excites you. What problems in the world do you want to help solve using data science?

- *Tip: Even if you are still exploring, it is okay to say: "I am interested in exploring how NLP can support local languages in education."*

III. Your Educational Journey

List your degrees in reverse order (most recent first).

- If you are a recent graduate, feel free to include your **Thesis/Capstone Project title** and the name of your supervisor. This helps us see the direction of your academic work.

IV. Experience & Projects (The "What")

This doesn't have to be only "job" experience. It can include:

- Research assistantships
- Internships
- Significant university projects
- Open-source contributions or personal coding projects
- **Tip:** Focus on what you *did* and what you *learned*. Instead of just listing a task, try to describe the impact (e.g., *"Used Python to clean a dataset of 5,000 entries, making the analysis much more efficient"*).

V. Your Toolkit (Technical Skills)

List the tools and languages you have interacted with. We want to see your "toolkit."

- Group them into categories like **Programming** (e.g., Python, R), **Data Tools** (e.g., SQL, Excel), or **Machine Learning** (e.g., Scikit-learn, PyTorch).
- **Don't be afraid to be a beginner!** If you are currently learning a tool, it is okay to list it as *"Learning: [Tool Name]"*.

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3. Final Checklist

Before you hit submit, take a quick look at your CV:

- ☐ Is it a PDF?
- ☐ Is it easy to read (clear headings, bullet points)?
- ☐ Did I remove my ID/Passport numbers?
- ☐ Does it show my passion for using data for social good/African language NLP/African context AI?

We are excited to learn about your journey. Good luck!