

JOB TITLE	Researcher/Senior Researcher - Ecologies	INCUMBENT	
DEPARTMENT	Rhodes University African Studies Centre (RASC)	REPORTING STRUCTURE	Director RASC
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES			
JOB TYPE (ACADEMIC/SUPPORT)	Academic	POSITION CODE	
PERMANENT OR CONTRACT (IF CONTRACT – LENGTH OF CONTRACT)	Contract – 2 years, renewable subject to satisfactory performance and availability of funding	FULL-TIME OR PART-TIME (IF PART-TIME, HOW MANY HOURS PER DAY)	Full-time
COUNCIL FUNDED POST OR OUTSIDE FUNDED	Outside funded	DATE APPROVED	12 July 2026 (The P&C Director and Dean)

MAIN JOB OBJECTIVE/S

Research is the main focus, and teaching is not a core function. Where the researchers are on contract, raising funds for their employment, contract research shall be regarded as equivalent to more traditional forms of research.

In assessing the candidate's scholarship for promotion, consideration will be given to the individual's track record. While disciplinary differences are considered, the candidate must demonstrate standing within the discipline through their research and student research. This could mean that the individual has demonstrated leadership, made a major contribution to research projects, served as the lead author on publications, or consistently contributed to multiple publications throughout their academic career.

JOB REQUIREMENTS

EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

Researcher	Senior Researcher
PhD in Environmental Sciences, Physical Geography, Ecology, Climatology, Hydrology, Water Resource Science, Political Ecology, Environmental Humanities, Environmental Education and Learning, or related fields.	
Some experience in areas related to the Research Section's research, especially in inter- and transdisciplinary research linking bio-physical methods and concepts in the Natural Sciences with methods and concepts in the Humanities and Social Sciences.	Evidence of extensive experience and demonstrated expertise in areas related to the research of the Research Section, especially in inter- and transdisciplinary research linking bio-physical methods and concepts in the Natural Sciences with methods and concepts in Humanities and Social Sciences.
Emerging publication profiles in leading journals in the field of study, with some of these publications addressing inter- and/or transdisciplinary topics.	A strong publication record in leading journals in the field of study, with a special focus on inter- and transdisciplinary topics.
No postgraduate research supervision is required.	Research supervision of at least a Master's degree is required. Supervision at the PhD level will be an added advantage.
Some experience in participating in interdisciplinary and/or collaborative projects and/or programmes.	Experience in leading and/or coordinating interdisciplinary and/or collaborative research projects and/or programmes
Evidence of attendance and presentation at local conferences. Presentation at international conferences will be an added advantage.	Evidence of attendance and presentation in local and preferably international conferences.
	Emerging national profile in the discipline.
Some administrative experience, albeit in informal contexts, e.g., student or sports clubs work experience.	Track record of administration, management, and/or leadership roles (leadership roles may be informal).

COMPETENCIES

The job-specific competencies are embedded within the key responsibility areas and the standards listed below. Candidates must

demonstrate evidence of meeting the required standards relative to the post level (e.g., Senior Lecturer or Senior Researcher) and the nature of the application (e.g., Good for Research, Good in CE, and Satisfactory in Leadership, Management, and Admin).

COMPETENCIES SPECIFIC TO THIS POST

- Ability to develop a positive rapport and promote an affirming relationship with support staff, academic research staff and students
- Excellent organisational and coordination skills
- Ability to design and conduct own independent research
- Ability to work constructively and collaboratively in a diverse research team and complex research contexts
- Ability to translate research findings into an accessible language for the public
- Ability to convene and coordinate complex meetings, including workshops and seminars

PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES for all levels of posts

- Commitment to collegiality
- Commitment to transformation and a valuing of diversity
- Respect for others and behaving in a way that respects the dignity of others
- Honest and ethical
- Evidence of being a reflexive practitioner with openness to change
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills
- Ability to work independently
- Appreciation of the role of support staff

POST-LEVEL CONSIDERATIONS FOR APPOINTMENT AND PERSONAL PROMOTION

It is acknowledged that not all applicants will have had working experience in a Higher Education institution and that not all applicants will have had similar opportunities to teach, supervise postgraduate students, and undertake research. Selection committees will consider applicants' backgrounds and opportunities to demonstrate their merit.

It is also acknowledged that academics follow different career trajectories. In considering academics for employment, the totality of what an applicant can contribute to Rhodes will be assessed, bearing in mind the minimum requirements for certain levels of posts, as shown below. Each post level has several options/categories listed next to it, reflecting possible intersections among post requirements for teaching and learning, research, community engagement, professional involvement, leadership, administration, and management. Applicants must meet the criteria for one of these relevant post-level categories.

In making an application, the academic needs to describe themselves in the relevant areas of academic life. There are four levels of achievement: Outstanding, Very Good, Good, Satisfactory, and Unsatisfactory (corresponding to 4, 3, 2, 1, and 0 on minimum qualifying scores).

Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Very Good	Outstanding
This marks an unsatisfactory or non-existing level of achievement. While this might be understandable for new academics in some areas or for other more established ones in particularly specialized posts, this level does indicate an area in which An academic must improve.	This indicates a level of performance that is better than unsatisfactory but not more than What can be expected of an academic. It might, however, point to a promise that might substantiate itself over time.	At this level are those achievements which are above average and more than is expected of an academic.	At this level are those achievements which, while not quite outstanding are significantly greater than the average.	This level describes the top achievements of academics in a particular discipline in South Africa. Here is where the most outstanding researcher will be placed, the top teacher in a Faculty, exemplary practice in Community engagement, the most significant contributions to the disciplines outside of the University, and the most dynamic accomplishments in leadership, management, and administration.
0	1	2	3	4

The five categories of achievement apply across all levels of promotion. Where the committee places a candidate on the achievement scale is influenced by context - the context of the discipline, the length of time the person has been in the service of Rhodes University and academia (rate of contribution), and what has changed since the last promotion. Generally speaking, higher ratings (very good and outstanding) are awarded for sustained contributions, and lower ratings (satisfactory and good) are awarded for less sustained contributions. The Academic Personal Promotions Committee manages the tension that can arise from a single performance scale across all academic ranks.

Personal promotion criteria	Researcher	Senior Researcher	Associate professor	Professor
Focus	Research is the main focus, and teaching is not a core function. Where the researchers are on contract, raising funds for their employment, contract research shall be regarded as equivalent to more traditional forms of research. In assessing the candidate's scholarship for promotion to Professor, consideration will be given to the individual's overall track record. While disciplinary differences are considered, the candidate must demonstrate standing within the discipline through their research and supervision of student research. This could mean that the individual has demonstrated leadership, made a major contribution to research projects, served as the lead author on publications, or consistently contributed to multiple publications throughout their academic career.			
Research	Good (2)	Very good (3)	Very good (3)	Outstanding (4)
Community Engagement	Performance in these categories is such that the overall achievement equals or exceeds a score of 4.	Performance in these categories is such that the overall achievement equals or exceeds 6.	Performance in these categories is such that the overall achievement equals or exceeds 9.	Performance in these categories is such that the overall achievement equals or exceeds a total score of 12.

DESCRIPTION OF KEY ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND STANDARDS EXPECTED

Research including: -

1. Develop and conduct a research project in the field of interdisciplinary ecological studies.
2. Contribute to collaborative research activities within the Research Section.
3. Publish in peer-reviewed journals and contribute to joint publications.
4. Participate in conferences, workshops, Africa Multiple events and other national and international events to share research results.
5. Engage in science communication and the dissemination of results to the wider public.
6. Identifying and accessing funding sources to support one's own and, where feasible, student research.
7. Assumes leadership responsibilities as they relate to research.

Research coordination

8. Work with the Research Section representatives and the Steering Committee to implement the research programme of the Research Section.
9. Convene and coordinate regular Research Section meetings in collaboration with the Research Section Representative. Coordinate workshops, seminars, and collaborative research activities at the level of the Research Section.

Administration

10. Circulate meeting agendas, document discussions, and monitor follow-up actions.
11. Assist the Steering Committee in the distribution of funds allocated to the Research Section (e.g. events, conference travel, publication support), including administrative processes connected to the accounting for funds.

Satisfactory

For appointment

Evidence of ongoing involvement in research, which may be the completion of a Master's or a PhD
 Ability to publish, preferably presented at national conferences or an ability to do so
 The ability to do further research, including pursuing a PhD, if one does not yet have one
 Ability to supervise post-graduates and to achieve at least local recognition.

Once in the job

Evidence of ongoing involvement in research, which may be the completion of a PhD
 Presents at national conferences
 A record of publications in academic and/or professional journals
 Uses journals with moderate IF, some papers with some citations, and/or some evidence of field-based impact.
 Some success in initiating, managing, and supervising postgraduate students, possibly as a co-supervisor
 Local and preferably national recognition

Good

A good research and publication record in appropriate academic and/or professional journals, and/or contributes book chapters relative to others in the same field.
 Regularly presents at national conferences. Uses journals with good IF
 Some papers have good citations and/or some evidence of field-based impact.
 Good reputation for supervising at the graduate level
 Consistently graduates with students with Master's and may have graduated doctoral students within the minimum expected time. Assessment of supervision is good
 Capacity building with students from disadvantaged educational backgrounds: Evidence of fundraising for research
 Well-known in the field nationally
 Invited to present at national conferences
 NRF rating good (likely to be C or Y) for the discipline

Very Good

Substantial research and publication record in appropriate academic and/or professional journals, and/or contributes book chapters relative to others in the same field.
 Regularly presents at national and international conferences.
 Uses journals with good, and sometimes high, IF.
 Some papers with high citations and/or some evidence of high field-based impact.
 Very good reputation for supervising at the postgraduate level.
 Assessment of supervision is always very good.
 Graduates are mostly Master's and doctoral students within the minimum expected time.
 Very good record of graduates who have become successful in their own right; some students graduate with distinction.
 Significant evidence of capacity building with students from disadvantaged educational backgrounds.
 Well-developed ability to raise funds for research fundraising
 Strong national profile, with some international recognition and a clear trajectory of continued international growth.
 Invited to write review papers for national and international journals.
 Invited to present at national and international conferences. Invited contributions to local books
 NRF rating very good (likely to be B or C1) for the discipline.
 National research awards.

Outstanding

Outstanding publication record in appropriate academic and/or professional journals relative to others in the same field (nationally & internationally).
 Regularly presents papers at international conferences and as the author/editor of a leading work or contributions to a leading work. Uses the top journals in the field, many papers with high citation, and/or research with high field-based impact, and public emanation of work
 Outstanding reputation for supervising at the postgraduate level; supervision assessment is always excellent; consistently attracts and graduates Master's and doctoral students within the minimum expected time.
 Excellent record of graduates who have become successful in their own right
 Excellent track record of capacity building with students from disadvantaged educational backgrounds
 Evidence of a high level of fundraising for research
 Amongst the top researchers in the field, nationally and internationally
 Regularly invited to write review papers
 Regularly invited to present plenary papers at international conferences.
 Invited to make contributions to major books as author or editor.
 Considered a public commentator with particular expertise.
 NRF rating (likely to be A or B), outstanding for the discipline.
 National and International awards for research excellence

Community Engagement includes: -

This may be associated with teaching and learning through credit-bearing service-learning (SL) courses or non-credit-bearing community-engaged learning activities, or with research through engaged research. (see <http://www.ru.ac.za/communityengagement/>)

SatisfactoryFor appointment

No CE is expected for someone with no prior academic work experience, but some involvement as a student would be preferable.
 For those who have worked as academics, the standard below is expected.

Once in the job

Participates in a Service learning (SL) course run by the Department and involved in the SL initiative for at least six months and/or supervising at least one post-graduate student who is utilizing engaged research models, e.g., social learning groups knowledge generated has been appropriately disseminated at the various levels (student or academic), and/or participates in a CEL initiative run by the department and is disciplined based
 Involved in the CEL initiative for at least six months.

Good

Co-coordinator of an SL course run in the Department aligned to all the principles of good practice listed above.
 The SL initiative should have run for at least one year and/or conducted engaged research resulting in reciprocal benefits, i.e., the discipline's knowledge and the knowledge amongst the community partner/s have been expanded (grown) through the research

activities, and the knowledge generated has been appropriately disseminated at various levels. Evidence of at least one year's commitment to engaged research practices, although the results of working with a community partner may not be measurable. There is evidence that the researcher is working towards a sustainable, engaged research model and/or coordinator of a CE initiative run in the department that adheres to all the principles of good practice listed above. Involved in this CE initiative for at least one year.
Very Good Demonstrates leadership by establishing (or reshaping) and leading a SL course within the department. Involved in SL for at least two years. Has involved other staff members in the initiative and/or conducts engaged research. This results in reciprocal benefits, i.e., discipline knowledge and the knowledge amongst the community partner/s have been expanded (grown) through the research activities, and the knowledge generated has been appropriately disseminated at the various levels. The researcher is involved in an engaged research partnership that has grown over at least two years and/or demonstrates leadership by establishing (or reshaping) and leading a Community Engaged Learning initiative (discipline-based) within the department. Involved in Community Engagement Learning for at least two years. Other staff members have been involved in the initiative.
Outstanding Demonstrates Outstanding Leadership by designing, establishing, and leading a SL course. The SL course has been embedded into the departmental/disciplinary curriculum, so it is not dependent on any individual lecturer or researcher. This results in measurable growth in the community partner's knowledge of the area of work and in the discipline/University's knowledge of it. Evidence of effective formal or informal mentoring of less experienced staff in SL and/or conducting engaged research results in reciprocal benefits, i.e., discipline knowledge and the knowledge amongst the community partner/s has been expanded (grown) through the research activities, and the knowledge generated has been appropriately disseminated at the various levels. Evidence of effective formal or informal mentoring of less experienced staff or inclusion of them as an active member in the research team and/or demonstrates Outstanding Leadership by designing, establishing, and leading a CE learning activity that is not dependent on an individual lecturer or researcher, this results in measurable growth of knowledge about the area of work for the community partner and the discipline/ University, e.g., Publication or evidence of shifting practice. Evidence of effective formal or informal mentoring of less experienced staff in CE.
Administrative and/or leadership responsibilities may include: - 1. Assuming administrative and/or leadership duties in the department, such as course coordinator; coordination of particular programs, e.g., PhD and Master's programs; coordination of specific research projects; tutor selection and coordination. 2. Serving on departmental, faculty and/or University committees. <u>As a member of the senior leadership of the faculty and institution, the Professor is responsible for:</u> 1. Championing the academic endeavour and ensuring that this remains the institution's focus and that decisions are made that support (and do not undermine) these endeavours. 2. Participating in the key debates related to the current and future functioning of the institution.
Satisfactory <u>For an appointment as a researcher with no prior work experience</u> Involvement in student life must demonstrate an ability to administer and manage. For those with work experience, the standard below applies. <u>Once in the job</u> Assumes administrative responsibilities in the department, Faculty, and/or University. Has competently fulfilled a management role in a department and/or faculty and served on University committees. Some contribution to leadership and transformation in the department, faculty, and/or University.
Good Good execution of important administrative or management responsibilities in the Department, including being HoD, Faculty (as Dean or Deputy Dean), and/or in terms of service to University committees. Provide academic leadership in the department, faculty, and/or university with a record of contribution to the transformation of the department, faculty, or university.
Very Good Very good execution of important administrative or management responsibilities in the Department, including being HoD, Faculty (as Dean or Deputy Dean), and/or in terms of service to University committees. Provide very good academic leadership in the department, faculty, and/or university with a sustained record of contribution to the transformation of the department, faculty, or university.
Outstanding Outstanding execution of important administrative or management responsibilities in the Department, including being HoD, Faculty (as Dean or Deputy Dean), and/or in terms of service to University committees Provision of inspiring and outstanding academic leadership in the department, faculty, and/or University with an outstanding record of contribution to the transformation of the department, faculty, or University
Professional Involvement: - In addition, it is understood that the academic will contribute to the discipline and profession through: 1. Being of service to other universities, e.g., external examining, assisting with curriculum reviews, organising conferences, and collaborations on inter-university projects. 2. Being of service to professional bodies, e.g., serving on national bodies, journal servicing (being editor or referee).

3. Being of service to other stakeholders such as government or NGOs, e.g., serving on advisory bodies, contributing to policy formulation and review.	
Satisfactory <u>For appointment</u> No professional involvement is expected from junior researchers or researchers. For those who are seeking appointments at higher levels, the standard below is the minimum expected. <u>Once in the job</u> Some contribution to other universities, professional bodies and/or other stakeholder bodies	
Good Good contribution record to other universities, professional bodies and/or other stakeholder bodies.	
Very Good Substantial contribution record to other universities, professional bodies and/or stakeholder bodies. Sought out by these other bodies.	
Outstanding: Distinguished contribution record to other universities, professional bodies and/or other stakeholder bodies. Often plays a leading role or is a leading contributor. Highly sought out by these other bodies.	
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RemChannel Code	1084 (R), 1083 (SR)
Note: Any changes to the job profile (other than the incumbent's name, position code, and OFO code) must be approved by the P&C Director and Dean.	

