

Call for applications

PhD and Postdoctoral Fellowships

15 PhD and 10 Postdoctoral Research Fellowships in Clinical Trials and Epidemic Preparedness and Response Research

Building Africa's Capacity to Conduct research, prepare for and respond to epidemics.

Project Background

The African Region carries a heavy burden of infectious diseases and emergencies. Between 2001 and 2022, the region recorded 2,234 acute public health events and of which 92% of these were infectious in nature and zoonotic outbreaks rose by 87% over the period. The recent disease outbreaks repeatedly exposed the same structural weaknesses; fragmented surveillance, weak One Health integration, delayed diagnostic confirmation and slow research deployment. ACT-PREP project aims to strengthen the surveillance, ethics and pharmacovigilance capacity, diagnostic and policy foundations of Africa's Emergency Preparedness and Response (EPR) ecosystem.

The ACT-PREP secretariat in collaboration with partners, is pleased to invite applications for 15 PhDs and 10 Postdoctoral fellowships funded under the **HORIZON-JU-GH-EDCTP3**, programme in **Clinical Trials and Epidemic Preparedness and Response Research**.

The programme offers opportunities for both **PhD** and **Postdoctoral** researchers from ACTPREP partner countries. Fellows will be supported to develop research expertise in areas aligned with the project's priority themes:

1. **Clinical trials and trial readiness**
2. **Disease surveillance, modelling and artificial intelligence**
3. **Ethics and regulatory science**
4. **Laboratory and genomic surveillance**
5. **One Health**
6. **Health systems resilience**
7. **Epidemic Preparedness and Epidemic response**

The fellowship package may include tuition and fees, a monthly stipend, research support, mentorship, specialized training, and access to ACT-PREP trial sites, datasets, research networks, and alumni opportunities, subject to the specific fellowship category and applicable programme conditions.

This application package provides all information and templates required to apply. Applicants are encouraged to carefully review the **Call for Applications, Eligibility and Selection Criteria, Application Form, Institutional Endorsement Template**, and **Referee Guidance** before submitting their applications.

The fellowship programme is open to eligible nationals of the ACT-PREP partner countries:

(Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Senegal, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda)

Applicants are expected to demonstrate strong academic and research potential, a clear alignment between their proposed work and ACT-PREP priorities, commitment to research quality and integrity, and potential to contribute to the strengthening of clinical research and epidemic preparedness capacity in Africa.

Qualified female candidates are strongly encouraged to apply.

We encourage all eligible and motivated researchers to take this opportunity to join the ACT-PREP community and contribute to building sustainable African leadership in clinical trials, epidemic preparedness, and response research.

Please read the call carefully and ensure that **all required documents are completed and submitted by the applicable deadline.**

We look forward to receiving your application and to supporting the development of a strong, diverse, and collaborative community of African clinical research and epidemic preparedness researchers.

ACT-PREP Secretariat

Document A-1 — Call for Applications: PhD Fellowships in Clinical Trials and Epidemic Preparedness and Response Research (Round 1)

The ACT-PREP consortium, funded under HORIZON-JU-GH-EDCTP3, is pleased to announce a call for applications for its **PhD fellowship program**. This initiative aims to empower African researchers by strengthening clinical trial and epidemic preparedness and response research capacity. This first round of applications targets **applicants who are currently enrolled in a PhD program** at an ACT-PREP institution and are conducting their doctoral research under one of the following seven themes:

- (1) Clinical trials and trial readiness**
- (2) Disease surveillance, modelling and artificial intelligence**
- (3) Ethics and regulatory science**
- (4) Laboratory and genomic surveillance**
- (5) One health**
- (6) Health systems resilience.**
- (7) Epidemic preparedness and response**

Fellows will be required to take a set of core courses and specialized courses aligned with their research theme, and to commit to the highest standards of research quality and integrity during their fellowship. They must complete their PhD programme within **three years**.

Given the ambitious nature of this timeline within university systems, justified no-cost extensions may be granted, subject to the applicable institutional policies and approval processes.

What the fellowship offers you

- Partial or full tuition and fees to complete your PhD programme, along with a monthly stipend, and a one-time research/trial grant
- Mentorship from ACT-PREP experts
- Structured core and specialized courses to build critical skills in clinical trials and epidemic preparedness and response
- Access to consortium trial sites, datasets, and an alumni/mentorship network.

Who should apply

Nationals from an ACT-PREP country (Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Senegal, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda)

- Scientists with a relevant Master's degree (or equivalent) in a health, biomedical sciences, public health, or related field

- Currently enrolled in a relevant PhD program at an ACT-PREP partner university (Makerere University — Uganda, Somali National University — Somalia, Université de Kinshasa — Democratic Republic of the Congo, Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences — Tanzania, University of Global Health Equity (UGHE) — Rwanda, Université Cheikh Anta Diop — Senegal, University of Juba — South Sudan)
- Candidates endorsed by their home institution.
- Qualified female candidates are strongly encouraged to apply.

APPLICATION TIMELINE

Fellowship Category	Application Deadline
PhD – Round 1	15 th September 2026
Postdoctoral Fellowship	30 th September 2026
PhD - Round 2	30 th September 2026

Selection process: Application screening → Scientific evaluation → Interviews → Notification of results → Fellowship commencement

Applicants are encouraged to submit their applications well before the relevant deadline. The detailed selection timeline will be communicated to shortlisted applicants.

How to Apply

Applicants should submit the following documents:

- Completed **Application Form (Document D)**
- Copies of all relevant **academic documents**
- Updated **Curriculum Vitae (CV)**
- A **2–3-page research concept note** aligned with an **EDCTP-priority disease**
- **Institutional Endorsement Letter (Document F)**
- **Motivation Letter**
- **Two Referees (Document G)**

All applications should be submitted electronically by email to:

recruitment@act-prep.org and copy
actprep@musph.ac.ug
noahzyah@gmail.com

Selection Timeline

Applications will undergo a competitive selection process comprising the following stages:

1. Application Screening

Applications will be checked for completeness and eligibility against the fellowship requirements.

2. Scientific Evaluation

Eligible applications will undergo scientific review, including assessment of the research concept, alignment with the fellowship's research priorities, scientific merit, feasibility, and potential impact.

3. Interviews

Shortlisted candidates will be invited for an interview to further assess their suitability for the fellowship and proposed research.

4. Notification of Results

Successful candidates will be formally notified following completion of the selection process.

5. Fellowship Commencement

Selected fellows will receive information on the fellowship start date, enrolment requirements, and other onboarding arrangements. **Application Deadlines**

- **PhD – Round 1:** 15th September 2026
- **Postdoctoral Fellowship:** 30th September 2026
- **PhD – Round 2:** 30th September 2026

Applicants should ensure that their complete application is received by the applicable deadline.

Document A-2 — Call for Applications: PhD Fellowships in Clinical Trials and Epidemic Preparedness and Response Research (Round 2)

The ACT-PREP consortium, funded under HORIZON-JU-GH-EDCTP3, is pleased to announce a call for applications for its **PhD fellowship program**. This initiative aims to empower African researchers by strengthening clinical trial and epidemic preparedness research capacity. This second round targets **candidates interested in enrolling to a PhD program** at an ACT-PREP partner institution. Applicants must be willing to conduct their doctoral research under one of the following seven themes:

- (1) **Clinical trials and trial readiness**
- (2) **Disease surveillance, modelling, and artificial intelligence**
- (3) **Ethics and regulatory science**
- (4) **Laboratory and genomic surveillance**
- (5) **One health**
- (6) **Health systems resilience**
- (7) **Epidemic preparedness and response**

Fellows will be required to take a set of core courses and specialized courses aligned with their research theme, and to commit to the highest standards of research quality and integrity during their fellowship. Fellowships will be funded for **up to three years**.

What the fellowship offers

- Tuition and fees to enrol in partner-based PhD programme, along with a monthly stipend, and a onetime research/trial grant
- Mentorship from ACT-PREP experts
- Structured core and specialized courses to build critical skills in clinical trials and epidemic preparedness and response
- Access to consortium trial sites, datasets, and an alumni/mentorship network.

Who should apply

Nationals from an ACT-PREP country (Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Senegal, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda)

- Scientists with a relevant Master's degree (or equivalent) in a health, biomedical sciences, public health, or related field
- Persons eligible to register in a relevant PhD program at an ACT-PREP partner university (Makerere University — Uganda, Somali National University — Somalia, Université de Kinshasa — Democratic Republic of the Congo, Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences — Tanzania, University of Global Health Equity (UGHE) — Rwanda, Université



Cheikh Anta Diop — Senegal, University of Juba — South Sudan) (***NOTE: New PhD applicants must commit to complete their training in three years***)

- Candidates endorsed by their home institution. Candidates affiliated with an ACT-PREP institution (e.g., junior researchers) will be given priority.
- Qualified female candidates are strongly encouraged to apply.

Document B — Call for Applications: Postdoctoral Fellowships in Epidemic Preparedness and Clinical Research

The ACT-PREP consortium, funded under HORIZON-JU-GH-EDCTP3, is pleased to announce a call for applications for its **Postdoctoral fellowship program**. This initiative aims to empower African researchers by building independent research leadership in clinical trial and epidemic preparedness and response. Fellows will receive research funding for up to one year, along with mentorship from leading local and international experts. They will join ongoing research projects within the consortium, develop and lead their own research outputs, and receive mentorship towards scientific independence. Applicants must integrate clinical trial methodologies or address epidemic preparedness and response topics in their postdoctoral research, while upholding the highest standards of research quality and integrity.

What the fellowship offers

- A mentored postdoctoral position within a consortium partner institution, a monthly stipend, and research/mobility support for up to 12 months.
- Training in scientific writing, grant administration, research leadership and specialised methods (e.g. modelling, bioinformatics, real-world evidence).
- Support to publish, present at conferences, and mobilise follow-on funding.

Who should apply

Nationals of an ACT-PREP country (Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Senegal, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda)

- Researchers holding a PhD within the past 5 years in a relevant health, biomedical, or related field.
- A track record aligned with their postdoctoral career stage and endorsement by the home/host institution.
- Qualified female candidates are strongly encouraged to apply.

Document C — Eligibility and Selection Criteria

Eligibility (must be met to be considered)

Criterion	PhD fellowship	Postdoctoral fellowship
Qualification	Relevant Master's (or equivalent)	PhD in a relevant field
Institutional endorsement	Required (Document F)	Required (Document F)
Programme enrolment	Eligible to register to a PhD programme	Host institution confirmed
Research focus	Aligned to one of ACT-PREP priority research themes	Aligned to one of ACT-PREP priority research themes
Referees	Two	Two
Completeness	All required documents by closing date	All required documents by closing date

Selection criteria (used to score eligible applicants)

- Academic record and research track record appropriate to career stage.
- Quality, feasibility and relevance of the proposed research on clinical trial or epidemic preparedness and response according to EDCTP priorities
- Research capability and potential for leadership / independence.
- Fit with a host institution and mentor, and likelihood of timely completion.
- Motivation, and commitment to remain and contribute in the region (retention).
- Contribution to consortium equity objectives, including gender balance.

Equity provision

Where two candidates are scored equivalently, preference supports the under-represented gender and equitable representation across partner countries, in line with the project's gender-equity commitment.

Document D — Application Form (candidate template)

Fellowship applied for: ☐ PhD ☐ Postdoctoral

Section 1 — Personal details

Field	Response
Full name	
Sex / gender	
Nationality	
Date of birth	
Email / phone	
Current position & institution	
Nominating / home institution	

Section 2 — Qualifications

Degree	Field	Institution	Year

Section 3 — Proposed research

- Working title:
- ACT-PREP priority research theme:
- Research concept (attach 2–3 pages): rationale, objectives, methods, expected contributions, and work plan. NOTE: the work plan must be aligned with the fellowship duration as specified on the advert.
- Proposed host institution and mentor(s):

Language

Applications may be submitted in **English or French**. Both English- and French-language submissions will be accepted, particularly for applicants working with ACT-PREP francophone partner institutions, including **Kinshasa** and **Cheikh Anta Diop University**.

Section 4 — Attachments checklist

- ☐ CV (with publications for postdoc applicants)
- ☐ Research concept
- ☐ Motivation Letter
- ☐ Institutional endorsement letter (Document F)
- ☐ Two reference letters (Document G)
- ☐ Copies of degrees / certificates

Section 5 — Declaration

I confirm that the information provided is accurate and complete, and I consent to the processing of my data for the purposes of this recruitment.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Document F — Institutional Endorsement / Nomination Letter (template)

[On nominating institution letterhead]

Date: _____

To: The ACT-PREP Selection Committee

Re: Endorsement of [Candidate name] for an ACT-PREP [PhD / Postdoctoral] Fellowship

On behalf of [institution], I confirm that [Candidate name] is [a member of staff / a registered candidate / eligible to enrol] and that we endorse their application for an ACT-PREP fellowship. The proposed research aligns with our institutional priorities in epidemic preparedness and clinical research.

We confirm our willingness to host and support the fellow, to facilitate mentorship and enrolment as required, and to enable their participation in ACT-PREP training and research activities for the duration of the fellowship.

Sincerely,

[Name, title, institution, contact]

Document G — Referee / Recommendation Guidance (template)

Referees are asked to comment briefly on the applicant against the following, and to submit directly to the recruitment email by the closing date.

- How long and in what capacity you have known the applicant.
- Their research ability, independence, and suitability for the fellowship.
- Their potential for research leadership and likelihood of timely completion.
- Any relevant comment on motivation, integrity, and teamwork.

Referee name:

Position:

Institution:

Email / phone:

Signature:

Date: