

Annual Young Scientists' Conference Call for Abstracts

Jointly hosted by the:
Department of Science and Innovation
Academy of Science of South Africa
South African Young Academy of Science
National Research Foundation
Human Sciences Research Council
Nelson Mandela University

Date: **9-13 September 2024**

Theme: Educate an African fit for the 21st Century:
Building resilient education systems for increased access
to inclusive, lifelong, quality, and relevant learning in
Africa,"

Venue: Nelson Mandela University Science Centre,
Ocean Sciences Campus, Gqeberha

1. Introduction

The Department of Science and Innovation (DSI), the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf), and the South African Young Academy of Science (SAYAS), in partnership with Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), National Research Foundation (NRF) and Nelson Mandela University (NMU) will be hosting the Annual Young Scientists' Conference between 9-13 September 2024.

ASSAf, together with its partners, is seeking young scientists based in South Africa to participate in this conference. This multilateral conference will provide a platform for scientific exchange among senior and young scientists.

2. Background

In alignment with the African Union's visionary theme for 2024, "**Educate an African fit for the 21st Century: Building resilient education systems for increased access to inclusive, lifelong, quality, and relevant learning in Africa,**" the South African Young Academy of Science (SAYAS) Conference emerges as a beacon of innovation and progress. Dedicated to catalyzing the transformative potential of education, this conference embodies the continent's steadfast commitment to cultivating a new generation of African scientists poised to lead in an ever-evolving global landscape. Africa stands at a pivotal juncture, recognizing the imperative to revolutionize its education systems to meet the demands of the modern era. With an unwavering focus on inclusivity, quality, and relevance, the continent seeks to harness the boundless potential of its youth, empowering them to shape a future defined by ingenuity and resilience.

The Annual Young Scientists' Conference (AYSC) serves as a dynamic forum where budding scholars, researchers, and innovators converge to exchange ideas, forge collaborations, and chart the course for scientific advancement in Africa and beyond. Against the backdrop of rapid technological advancement and global interconnectedness, this gathering represents a critical opportunity to harness the collective intellect and creativity of Africa's brightest minds. At the heart of the conference lies a recognition of the multifaceted challenges facing African communities and the indispensable role of science in addressing them. From healthcare disparities to environmental sustainability, from technological innovation to socioeconomic development, the solutions to Africa's most pressing issues hinge upon a robust scientific ecosystem characterized by curiosity, rigor, and inclusivity.

Moreover, the conference underscores the importance of mentorship, fostering meaningful connections between seasoned experts and emerging talent. By nurturing a supportive network of mentors and mentees, the conference endeavours to cultivate a culture of collaboration and knowledge sharing that transcends borders and disciplines. As delegates from across the continent converge in celebration of scientific inquiry and discovery, they embody the spirit of Africa's rich intellectual heritage and its boundless potential for future growth and innovation. Together, they embark on a collective journey towards a brighter, more prosperous future, where education serves as the cornerstone of progress and empowerment. In the spirit of the African Union's visionary agenda for 2024, the South African Young Scientist Conference invites participants to join hands in building resilient education systems that unlock the full potential of every African child. Through collaborative effort and unwavering dedication, we aspire to educate a new generation of African scientists primed to confront the challenges and seize the opportunities of the 21st century.

Conference Sub-Themes

1. Advancing Science and Technology for Human Development:

This subtheme explores the latest advancements in science and technology and their potential to address pressing societal issues and improve quality of life.

Topics may include breakthroughs in fields such as biotechnology, renewable energy, and space exploration, as well as their implications for global development, health, and environmental sustainability.

2. Transformative Education for Lifelong Learning:

Lifelong learning is essential for adapting to a rapidly changing world, and this subtheme focuses on innovative approaches to education that promote continuous skill development and knowledge acquisition.

Discussions may centre on pedagogical innovations, digital learning platforms, and inclusive educational practices that cater to diverse learning styles and abilities.

3. Artificial Intelligence and Ethical Governance:

Artificial intelligence (AI) holds immense potential to revolutionize various aspects of society, but it also raises ethical and governance challenges. This subtheme delves into the responsible development and deployment of AI technologies.

Topics may include AI ethics, bias mitigation, privacy concerns, and the role of regulation and policy in ensuring AI serves the common good while minimizing potential harms.

4. Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Social Science and Technology:

Social sciences play a crucial role in understanding the societal implications of technological advancements and shaping ethical and equitable policies. This subtheme emphasizes the intersection of social sciences with science, technology, and education. Discussions may cover topics such as digital divide, social impacts of emerging technologies, cultural considerations in technology adoption, and the role of interdisciplinary research in addressing complex social challenges.

3. Eligibility

This call is open to early career researchers who are based in South Africa. Applicants should meet the following criteria to participate:

- Be based in South Africa
- Be under the age of forty (40)
- Be in possession of at least a Master's degree, PhD candidate, PhD Graduates and Post-docs
- Have research interests in one or more of the conference sub-themes
- Commit to be present for the duration of the conference
- Submit an abstract that is relevant to the theme of the conference and will be the basis for a presentation at the conference
- Be willing to present and share current research results at the conference

4. Conference Participation and Application

SAYAS and ASSAf invites submission of abstracts for oral and poster presentations in one of the sub-themes indicated above. As part of underscoring the importance of addressing the theme of the conference, authors should clearly articulate their focus and argumentation as well as show how their abstract aligns to the African Union 2024

theme. An inter-disciplinary approach is encouraged with an analysis of policy and recommendations for reform and programme designs where there are gaps.

All applications must be submitted here before the closing date: [AYSC 2024 Application Form](#) (you will be required to login to your Gmail account to access the form because it has an upload slot)

The online form should be completed in full and queries can be sent to kholani@assaf.org.za Tel: +27 (0)12 349 6638 by **5 August 2024**. There is no registration fee to attend the conference. Further information about the conference will be circulated to successful applicants.

5. Call for Abstracts

5.1. Abstract Format and Submission

The abstracts should follow the following format:

- Abstract must not be more than 300 words (excluding Title, Author and Institution) in the attached form
- Abstract must be written in English
- Abstract title must be in boldface, capital letters (lowercase) and centred
- Abstract font must be Century Gothic 11 with A4 set up margins
- Abstract must include the following information:
 - o Title, Author(s), Institution(s)
 - o Name of presenting-author should be underlined (Please do not underline co-authors)
 - o Institutional affiliations, city, province for all authors
 - o The superscript numbering must be in front of each initial and surname of each author
- Where appropriate, the text may be structured using the following headings:
 - o Introduction or Objectives
 - o Methods
 - o Results
 - o Conclusions

5.2. Example of an abstract title

Assessment of risk factors associated with maternal mortality in rural Tanzania ← 14 pts, centered, lowercase and bold

¹ E Allah, ²G Mbaruku, ³K Kahn ← 11pts, centered
(presenting author to be underlined, number superscript in front of initial and surname)

¹ KEMRI/CDC Research and Public Health Collaboration, ²Ifakara Health Institute, ³MRC/Wits Rural Public Health and Health Transitions Research Unit (Agincourt)
(number superscript in front of organisation)

5.3. Oral Presentations

All oral presentations will be conducted in English. full details of oral presentations will be provided in the abstract acceptance letter.

5.4. Poster Presentations

Accepted posters will be displayed at the conference venue and full details and specifications will be provided in the abstract acceptance letter.

6. Other Presentation formats

These are encouraged for submission to encourage dialogue and different ways of exploring the key issues. These can include literature (including drama, poetry, storytelling and prose), performing arts (among them dance and music), and visual arts (including film and photography). Please detail and indicate these alternative formats to the contact person below for consideration.

7. General Conference Information

For any further information on the conference please contact:

Mr Kholani Mbhiza Tel: +27 (0)12 349 6638 Email: kholani@assaf.org.za

Closing date: 5 August 2024