

ADVERTISEMENT

African University PhD Programmes: *Baseline Needs Assessment Consultancy*

The Malaria Capacity Development Consortium (MCDC) led by LSHTM requires the services of a suitably qualified consultant to conduct an assessment of baseline needs for PhD programmes in five African Universities.

The consultancy is intended to assess procedures for the selection, training and monitoring of students and the institutional arrangements relevant to their PhD programmes in Ghana, Malawi, Senegal, Tanzania and Uganda. The consultant will develop assessment tools and spend 1-2 days at each site to interview staff involved in PhD training. The consultant will deliver a report stating how the MCDC can best help to strengthen the PhD programmes of the universities in question.

The consultant shall have at least 3 years experience in managing a Research Degree programme, experience of working in an African university and the technical know how to ensure the highest level of credibility. The ability to work in French as well as English and experience of supervising research degree students in the sciences will be highly advantageous. Field work must be completed by the end of April 2009 and a final report is required by the end of May 2009.

Further information about the MCDC and Terms of Reference are available at <http://www.mcdconsortium.org> or from Prof David Schellenberg (David.Schellenberg@lshtm.ac.uk – please quote reference MCDC_BNA).

Applications, of 4 pages in length, should specifically address the qualification criteria, highlight prior experience in conducting work in this area and include an outline work-plan, budget and the names of two referees who may be contacted in respect of previous work. The closing date for the receipt of applications is the 20th February 2009. Applications should be sent to Dr A Bhasin, Manager MCDC, LSHTM, Keppel Street, London, WC1E 7HT.

Strengthening PhD Programmes in African Universities

Terms of Reference for Baseline Needs Assessment

Background and Context

The Malaria Capacity Development Consortium (MCDC) aims to strengthen PhD programmes in five African universities. Approximately 20 students will receive scholarships to pursue PhD studies in universities in Ghana, Malawi, Senegal, Tanzania and Uganda. Students will be supervised by local staff who have a PhD and who collaborate closely with academic staff in one of the four participating northern MCDC institutions. During the project, the MCDC will support formal training for established scientists in a position to supervise PhD students and to participate in a mentors' programme. The aim of the baseline needs assessment is to appraise current practices, procedures and facilities for PhD students in the African universities. The output will be a report stating how the MCDC can best help strengthen the existing PhD programmes in the participating southern institutions.

Successful applicants to the new PhD programme will undertake the majority of their research in Africa. Each student will receive financial support for their research and will be encouraged to develop their own personal development programme. The MCDC aims to strengthen the infrastructure for PhD studies in parallel to the support for supervisors and new PhD students in the African universities.

The Wellcome Trust has funded the MCDC for a five year period starting July 2008 and a call for applications for PhD scholarships was made in October 2008. The MCDC is developing a monitoring and evaluation framework for its activities and this baseline needs assessment will help to shape the overall programme and the M&E framework. These terms of reference outline the requirements for the baseline assessment. The Wellcome Trust is expected to announce a series of University Strengthening Awards in early 2009. As a result, the baseline MCDC needs assessment may be of broader interest and relevance.

Partners

1. The College of Medicine, University of Malawi and the Wellcome Trust Clinical Research Programme Blantyre, Malawi.
2. Kilimanjaro Christian Medical College, Moshi, Tanzania and the Joint Malaria Programme (JMP).
3. The Faculty of Medicine and the School of Public Health, Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda and the Ministry of Health, Uganda.
4. The Faculty of Medicine, the University of Dakar, Senegal and the Ministry of Health Senegal
5. Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, Ghana.
6. The Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM),
7. The Department of Parasitology, the University of Copenhagen (CMP)
8. The DBL-Centre for Health Research and Development, University of Copenhagen (DBL), (previously the Danish Bilharziasis Laboratories).
9. The London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM).

The MCDC Steering Committee comprises representatives from each of the participating Universities.

More information on the MCDC is available at <http://www.mcdconsortium.org>.

Terms of Reference

Objective: To identify and document opportunities for the strengthening of PhD programmes in five African universities through the MCDC.

Scope of Work

1. Areas to be considered include the procedures for the selection, admission, induction and supervision of students; mechanisms for monitoring students' progress and developing their research and transferable skills; approaches to assessing and providing feedback for students; the research environment; and institutional arrangements relevant to the PhD programme. The assessment may be guided by suitably adapted precepts of the UK's Quality Assurance Agency for Higher education (www.qaa.ac.uk).
2. The consultant will develop tools (eg questionnaires, discussion guides, check lists) to facilitate the assessment, and will finalise these in conjunction with the MCDC steering committee.
3. Site visits will be made to interview staff involved in post graduate research degrees and registered PhD students, as well as to review relevant documentation. Data collection for individual assessments is expected to take 1-2 days per site.

Output

The assessment of an institution will be considered complete once a report has been provided to the MCDC secretariat. The report should conclude with a series of prioritised recommendations, short and long-term objectives and a suggested way forward for each institution. Any common needs identified across all five institutions should also be highlighted.

Qualifications

The assessment will be conducted by one (or two) people with:

- a. enthusiasm for Research Degrees training, its delivery and its development, and a strong background of excellence in provision of Research Degrees training;
- b. an excellent understanding of key issues, including pedagogical issues, relevant to delivering a high quality Research Degrees training portfolio;
- c. experience of working with an African university;
- d. a sufficient level of experience and technical know how to ensure the assessment's credibility.

The ability to work in French would be an advantage, as would direct experience of supervising research degree students in science.

Timetable

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to discuss their applications within two weeks of the closing date (20th February 2009). Field work for the baseline assessment should be completed by the end of April 2009 and the final report should be available by the end of May 2009.