

HE Ameenah Gurib-Fakim PhD scholarship Programme to award grants to African researchers in Mauritius

On Friday 6th May, President Gurib-Fakim launched the HE Ameenah Gurib-Fakim PhD scholarship Programme alongside Dr. Álvaro Sobrinho, chairman of the Planet Earth Institute at the State House. The Programme is an initiative of the Planet Earth Institute and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in partnership with the African Academy of Sciences.

The Phd Programme will begin with 10 full PhD research grants for Mauritian researchers (or African researchers studying in Mauritius). Following the pilot 10 grants, the Programme is aiming to expand across Africa to award 10,000 PhD scholarships in the coming decade, helping to equip Africa with the critical mass of scientific leaders it needs to become a continent of knowledge-based, sustainable economies.

Each grantee will benefit from time spent at both a host university in Africa and in the United Kingdom, as well as placements within industry. The areas of research eligible for the scholarship are those that the PEI, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and African Academy of Sciences believe will underpin the sustainable development of Africa, and enhance the capacity of local scientists to address the continent's greatest development challenges. They are:

- Energy
- Water and sanitation
- Agri-business
- Health
- Blue sky research

The grants awarded to the initial ten researchers will cover the entire duration of the PhD, and will include both the full cost of academic and research time required at host universities, as well as a generous living expenses stipend. The scholarship winners will be announced by 1st July and the research placements will be intended to begin in September 2016.

At the launch, President Gurib-Fakim explained that the Ameenah Gurib-Fakim PhD Programme is 'about offering a new and exciting opportunity for Mauritian researchers and also to take a further step toward Africa taking its rightful place as a leader in global science race.' Dr. Sobrinho also stressed that the PEI and Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation are committed 'to creating a world-class PhD Programme for Mauritian scientists. We have partnered with the very best universities in the world in Africa and the UK. We will now partner with the very best of the private sector to deliver the programme.'

How to apply for the scholarship

Applications are now open (as of 6th May 2016) and will close on the 31st May 2016. The final scholarship winners are expected to be announced in early July 2016, with a public event held in Mauritius shortly after. Research placements are expected to begin from September 2016.

To be eligible for the initial ten research scholarships, candidates must be:

- A Mauritian student or researcher (or an African researcher currently based in Mauritius)
- Qualified to at least undergraduate level with a strong academic record
- Proposing a research project within the core research areas: energy; water and sanitation; agri-business; health; blue sky research.

All interested candidates should email a cover letter and CV, alongside a brief research proposal (1000 words max) to agfscholarship@pei-foundation.mu.