



RHODES UNIVERSITY

Masters bursary available 2017

One Masters level bursary (R70 000 pa) is available for an exciting interdisciplinary project in the Eastern Cape, and based at Rhodes University in Grahamstown.

Project title: A place to belong: urban planning, housing and greening

We are offering a MA bursary to a suitably qualified, motivated and enthusiastic student for 2017, to support research on topics that contribute towards enhancing our understanding of meanings and experiences that urban residents attach to nature and green spaces. This research project forms part of a collaboration of researchers from the Biocultural Diversity Conservation Programme (BCDC) and SARChI Chair in 'Interdisciplinary Science in Land & Natural Resource Use for Sustainable Livelihoods' based at Rhodes University. The research is facilitated by Professor Michelle Cocks (BCDC Research Program – Anthropology Department and Professor Charlie Shackleton (SARChI Chair – Environmental Science Department).

Our ongoing research has shown that many Xhosa speaking residents in the Eastern Cape have strong material and spiritual links to nature. Nature provides resources for utilitarian use, traditional customs, rites and religious functions and contributes to a sense of personal well-being. Indeed, the benefits of nature experience to human well-being and quality of life is increasingly acknowledged locally and internationally. Yet during the last century most urbanisation processes in South Africa have resulted in reduced areas of green space and biodiversity, especially in the poorer township and RDP areas.

We suggest that urban development in South Africa undermines the cultural needs and contexts of most South African urban residents negatively affecting quality of life, identity and place making. The project therefore aims to investigate the multiple realities of urban dwellers' worldviews, appreciation, needs and uses of urban greenspaces (in the broad sense) and elements therein. The proposed research will be undertaken in small/medium sized towns in the Eastern Cape.

Funding for a Masters bursary and related field costs will be available for two years. Students will be expected to present their findings at relevant conferences and to publish the research in peer-reviewed journals. Students with a strong academic background in social anthropology and environmental science, and an enthusiasm for doing field-based research, are encouraged to apply. Requirements include upper second and second passes (minimum of 65%) in previous degrees, fluency in isiXhosa and a driver's licence will be an advantage.

To apply please send the following information to m.cocks@ru.ac.za:

- 1-page motivation including your research interests
- Your academic qualifications and results
- CV
- Two contactable references

Please contact Michelle Cocks (m.cocks@ru.ac.za) or Charlie Shackleton (c.shackleton@ru.ac.za) for more information and to discuss the application process. Closing date for application is the 15th of February 2017.