



National PhD Conference 2026

Call for Papers

National PhD Conference

The Economic Society of South Africa in partnership with Economic Research South Africa (ERSA) will host the third National PhD Conference. The conference will run for **two days** and will take place during the period **30 March to 1 April 2026**. We are pleased to announce that the **University of KwaZulu-Natal in partnership with the University of Zululand** has accepted the offer to host the conference, which will take place at the **UKZN Westville campus in Durban**. We encourage PhD candidates from all economics programmes at universities across South Africa to apply.

Submission of Extended Abstract

Applicants are invited to submit an extended abstract based on a completed or near-completed paper from their PhD thesis (which has not been accepted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal). Work across all fields of economics are invited. The **extended abstract (maximum of 1,000 words, excluding references)** should provide a clear indication of the research question and method used in the paper. Preliminary results may be included if available. Extended abstracts and a letter of support from the supervisor should be submitted via the following [Google Form](#) by latest the **22nd of January 2026**.

The conference scientific committee will evaluate all submissions with the help of nominated discussants, and decisions on abstracts will be communicated at the beginning of February 2026. A **maximum of 20 applicants** will be invited to present their paper at the conference. Successful applicants will be required to submit their full paper by the **9th of March 2026 to allow discussants time to review the paper**.

Conference Format

The conference will be hosted in an in-person only format to allow for maximum tacit knowledge transfer. Various researchers and practitioners from across academia, government and the private sector will be invited to act as discussants and comment on the research presented. As with our previous conferences in 2023 (University of the Fort Hare) and 2024 (University of the Western Cape), we expect this to be a memorable and productive learning and networking experience for all involved. The two-day event will include a welcome cocktail party, a conference dinner, and ample opportunity to discuss your work in a less intimidating environment!

Successful applicants who meet the paper submission deadline will have all their basic expenses including travel and accommodation covered.

Important Dates

- 9th of September 2025: First call for abstracts
- 22nd of January 2026: Deadline for extended abstract submission with letter of support by supervisor
- 9th of February 2026: Selected candidates notified of acceptance
- 9th of March 2026: Full paper required
- 30th March – 1 April: Workshop

Any queries should be directed to Kim Adonis, the ESSA Executive Secretary, at execsecretary@essa.org.za.

We look forward to receiving your submissions.

Yours sincerely

Prof. Jen Snowball
ESSA President

Mr. Fouché Venter
ERSA Executive Director

Local Co-Hosts:

Prof Harold Ngalawa
University of KwaZulu-Natal
ESSA President Elect

Prof Irrshad Kaseeram
University of Zululand
Deputy Dean: Research and Internationalisation