COMMONWEALTH *of* **LEARNING**

Open and Distance Learning Practitioner Research Training and Mentorship

Introduction

This project entails a nine-month training and mentorship programme focussed on practitioner research within the context of open and distance learning (ODL) in higher education. Research is an important aspect to support the Commonwealth of Learning's mission to help governments, institutions and organisations expand the scale, efficiency and quality of learning by using appropriate open, distance and technology-based approaches. The initiative will stimulate and support practitioner research within the ODL sphere and facilitate quality educational research. No funding support for conducting research will be provided.

Outcomes

In order to promote high-quality research on ODL, the initiative will:

- provide online training opportunities regarding practitioner research within the ODL context

- establish a network of mentors to promote high-quality research in ODL

- encourage sharing of research findings through online fora and publications

Participant eligibility

- Participants should be an academic from a public higher education institution in the Commonwealth.

- Ideally, academics who have already obtained a PhD and who are considered early-career researchers will be encouraged to enrol.

- Enrolment in the programme will be selected based on a review of their research interest related to ODL.

Course outline

- Introduction to practitioner research for ODL

- Research paradigms and designs

- Quantitative data collection, analysis, validity and reliability

- Qualitative data collection, analysis and trustworthiness

- Research ethics

- Action and evaluation research

- Planning and authoring a research proposal

- Introduction to article writing and publishing

Certification

The programme consists of three phases, and on completion of each phase, a badge will be issued, and on completion of all three phases, a certificate will be issued to the participants.

Timeline

8 March 2024	Registration ends
22 March 2024	Announcement of successful participants
March-May 2024	Phase 1: online training (asynchronous and synchronous sessions)
July 2024	Phase 2: Submission of a detailed research proposal
Aug-Nov 2024	Phase 3: Carrying out the research and preparing proposal/paper

Mentors

The following ODL experts will act as mentors for this initiative:

- Professor Jane-Frances Agbu, Commonwealth of Learning

- Professor Mohamed Ally, Athabasca University (Canada)

- Dr Carina Bossu, The Open University (UK)

- Professor Aras Bozkurt, Anadolu University (Türkiye)

- Professor Cheryl Brown, University of Canterbury (New Zealand)

- Professor Karen Ferreira-Meyers, University of Eswatini (Eswatini)

- Professor Shironica Karunanayaka, The Open University of Sri Lanka (Sri Lanka)

- Dr Evode Mukama, Commonwealth of Learning

- Dr Mark Nichols, Te Pūkenga – New Zealand Institute of Skills and Technology (New Zealand)

- Dr Betty Ogange, Commonwealth of Learning

- Dr Jako Olivier, Commonwealth of Learning

- Professor Santosh Panda, Indira Gandhi National Open University (India)

- Professor Paul Prinsloo, University of South Africa (South Africa)

- Professor Jennifer Roberts, University of South Africa (South Africa)

- Professor Francis Simui, University of Zambia (Zambia)

- Professor John Traxler, University of Wolverhampton (UK)

- Professor Geesje van den Berg, University of South Africa (South Africa)

- Professor Micheal van Wyk, University of South Africa (South Africa)

- Professor Norman Vaughan, Mount Royal University (Canada)

- Professor Denise Whitelock, The UK Open University (UK)

Application process

Applications must be submitted by 8 March 2024 on **https://forms.office.com/r/5eiMRPzDct**.

All applications received will be reviewed and assessed internally at COL. All decisions made by COL shall be final. No further queries related to non-acceptance in the mentorship programme will be entertained.