



CHIEF RESEARCH OFFICER: DATA ADVOCACY (16-month contract) **African Centre for Cities (ACC)** **School of Architecture, Planning and Geomatics** **Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment**

The African Centre for Cities (ACC) at the University of Cape Town invites applications for a fulltime **Chief Research Officer: Data Advocacy** post on a 16-month contract (March 2026 – June 2027) with the possibility of renewal. The successful appointee will work as part of the African Mayoral Leadership Initiative (AMALI) (see <https://amalities.africa/> for more details), located within the African Centre for Cities (ACC).

ACC was established in 2007 at the University of Cape Town as an urban research institute. The ACC is based in the School of Architecture, Planning and Geomatics in the Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment, but is interdisciplinary in scope, drawing on expertise on urban issues from across the university. AMALI, located within ACC, focuses on supporting African Mayors in their legacy goals and involves in-depth and ongoing technical and skills support over the course of a calendar year.

The Chief Research Officer: Data Advocacy will lead the AMALI Data Advocacy Programme. The AMALI Data Advocacy Programme is a pan-African initiative supporting national statistical organisations (NSOs) in adopting shared standards and practical tools for producing reliable city-level data. The programme complements the AMALI Data Track by working at national and continental levels to close a critical gap: most African cities still lack credible subnational data to guide planning, investment, and advocacy.

The Chief Research Officer: Data Advocacy role will include: (1) planning and managing a multi-faceted research and policy advocacy programme on urban data collection in Africa, in close collaboration with the broader work of the African Centre for Cities (ACC), the African Mayoral leadership initiative (AMALI) and Bloomberg Philanthropies; (2) Undertaking research on urban data collection tools and practices (particularly in Africa), identifying good practices and reasons for their success, identifying obstacles to reforming urban data collection (by NSOs in Africa and other relevant organisations), and identifying key pathways for improving urban data collection and the use of urban data in Africa; (3) Engaging with key stakeholders to develop and implement protocols for the collection of urban data in Africa that will assist in decision-making by city leaders/ policy makers; (4) Ensuring that initiatives to transform urban data collection in Africa are documented and reflected on, and that key lessons are disseminated to city leaders/ policy makers elsewhere; and (5) Engaging with regional and global processes to create a more enabling environment for better urban data collection in Africa, for example, through the development of public discourse and policy recommendations.

Requirements for the job:

- PhD in a discipline of relevance to urban data.
- A minimum of five years relevant work experience in research or policy work related to urban data.
- Extensive knowledge of the collection and analysis of quantitative urban data, especially national censuses and national household surveys, and understanding of and ability to communicate stories about the impact data usage has on the public sector.
- Good knowledge of urban issues in Africa.
- Evidence of academic writing ability.
- A strong understanding of qualitative and quantitative research methods, and the ability to work with, and understand, complex datasets.
- Excellent verbal, written and presentation skills.
- Extensive familiarity with government stakeholders in Africa, and ability to develop, manage, and thrive in relationships with public sector executives and senior staffers.
- Familiarity with presenting complex quantitative and qualitative research and analytical findings.
- Computer literacy: experience with Microsoft Office, G Suite, and project management applications.

The following would be advantageous:

- Knowledge of how to create data visualizations in, for example, RStudio or Tableau.
- Skills in website development/maintenance and the use of data management / analysis and statistical software (such as GIS and SPSS).
- Fluency in French.

Work Location:

- This position will be based at the University of Cape Town in Cape Town, with some international travel as required.

Salary:

- The 2025 annual cost of employment range is between R658,807 and R1,378,741.

To apply, please e-mail the below documents **in a single pdf file** to Aaliyah McQuire at aaliyah.mcquire@uct.ac.za with "AMALI Chief Research Officer: Data Advocacy" in the e-mail subject line:

- UCT Application Form (download at <http://forms.uct.ac.za/hr201.doc>)
- A 1-2-page motivation letter specifying the relevance of experience for the position.
- A detailed curriculum vitae.
- A published article in an academic journal or chapter in a scholarly book or a peer-reviewed paper.

An application which does not comply with the above requirements will be regarded as incomplete and might not be considered. Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted and may be required to undergo competency assessments.

Telephone: 021 650 7198

Website: www.africancentreforcities.net

Reference number: E25980

Closing date: 28 January 2026

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When you apply for a position at UCT, we collect your personal information to assess your application, communicate with you, and coordinate interview logistics. Information such as race, gender, nationality, and disability status is used to support our Employment Equity obligations. We also verify your references, qualifications, conduct criminal and, for certain roles, credit checks. For more information about how the University of Cape Town uses personal information and your rights, please email popia@uct.ac.za.

The University reserves the right to extend the closing date for applications if deemed necessary and reserves the right to make no appointment.