

Department of Taxation
School of Accounting Sciences

Excellence in accountancy

Postdoctoral Research Fellowship:

**UNDERSTANDING POSSIBLE MECHANISMS TO IMPROVE ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL
WELL-BEING OF SOUTH AFRICAN HOUSEHOLDS**

Unisa welcomes innovative contributions that address cross-cutting issues related to the enhancement of economic and financial well-being of South African households. The Postdoctoral Research position is in the Department of Taxation, College of Accounting Sciences at the University of South Africa in Pretoria. See Annexure A for more information on this research area.

The successful candidate should:

- have obtained a relevant Doctoral degree within the past 5 years.
- be younger than 50 years of age at the time of the application.
- have a proven research track record including at least one article published in an accredited journal and at least one conference presentation;
- have worked in the relevant discipline including accounting, taxation, economics, econometrics or consumer finance, or other disciplines related to the scope of the fellowship (see Annexure A).
- be an outstanding and innovative researcher whose accomplishments have the potential to make a major impact in his/her field.
- have a proven track record in both quantitative and qualitative research methods, analytics and software.
- demonstrate solid scientific proficiency, creativity, critical thinking, ability to collaborate effectively with others, and independent thought processes.



The successful candidate will be required to present a detailed research plan with clear research outputs for the period of the postdoctoral fellowship that will include the following minimum deliverables:

- submission of at least two accredited research output units to accredited journals;
- papers should be published on the focus area as presented in Annexure A and not emanate from the candidate's doctoral thesis;
- Unisa must be reflected as the only affiliated South African institution on any submissions;
- presentation of research at one international or national conference per annum;
- presentation of research at a minimum of two seminars / colloquiums per year at Unisa;
- assist with or co-supervise postgraduate students, where applicable;
- assist in organising postgraduate research workshops and seminars; and
- provide quarterly progress reports.

The postdoctoral fellowship will be valid for a maximum of three years, to be annually reviewed in respect of performance.

The successful candidate will be encouraged to conduct their self-initiated research during the fellowship tenure under the supervision of Prof Bernadene de Clercq (<https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/Colleges/Accounting-Sciences/Schools,-departments-&-centre/School-of-Accountancy/Department-of-Taxation/Staff-members/Prof-Bernadene-de-Clercq>).

Closing date: 10 May 2022

Email: Prof Bernadene de Clercq, dclerb@unisa.ac.za.

ANNEXURE A

In the aftermath of the financial crisis of 2008, policymakers, regulators, development agencies and academia around the world sought to ensure a more inclusive financial system that support households to achieve a high-level of financial wellness¹. Apart from the difficulties in the financial markets affecting the value of pension funds and investments, financial crises severely affect people's employment, incomes, and livelihoods — and these harmful impacts are more dangerous when people are poor or in a financially vulnerable position. This is also evident in the current worldwide crisis, namely the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent national lockdowns. In response to the impact on personal and household finances, policies in many parts of the world were adjusted and/or implemented to expand the existing social protection schemes and reduce tax burdens on households.

Contributing to the effort to get a better understanding of household financial circumstances is the Momentum/Unisa Household Financial Wellness Index² that has been tracking the state of South African households' financial wellness since 2011. Financial wellness is about being able to afford all your expenses over your lifetime and is calculated by measuring households' five capitals, namely, physical-, asset-, environmental-, human- and social capital. A key part of the project is to identify households who should be in a better financial position, uncover why they are worse off than they should have been and suggest ways and strategies that can assist them to reduce their financial vulnerabilities.

Depending on the discipline lens, topics of interest of this project include (but is not limited to):

- How are households using financial instruments and types of advice to progress towards or achieve a financially well position?
- Which mechanisms are the most effective to improve financial wellness and quality of life?
- How consumers' behaviours and financial literate levels affect their financial wellness?
- Developing targets to provide households with guidance on how much they should contribute towards their debt, savings and insurance to be as financially well as they can be, given different life stages and living standards.
- Which financial goals contribute to financial wellness and financial success?

¹ Although financial wellness and financial wellbeing may refer to different things, it has been used interchangeably in the literature and is assumed to refer to the same construct for purposes of this application.

² For more information on the study, please refer to <https://www.momentum.co.za/momentum/about-us/unisa-science-of-success-research/household-financial-wellness-index>

- Based on the five capital financial wellness model (i.e. physical-, asset-, environmental-, human- and social capital), what is the relationship between the various capitals towards financial wellness?
- How can a “systems thinking approach” assist in gaining a better understanding of the personal finance ecosystem with all its possible interrelated relationships?

In addition to the Momentum/Unisa Household Financial Wellness Index data, additional data sources may need to be consulted during the fellowship. These datasets could include:

- FSCA – Financial Literacy in South Africa Baseline assessments: <https://www.fscamymoney.co.za/Pages/Resources/FSCA-Research.aspx>
- StatsSA – a variety of datasets available in the public domain: <http://www.statssa.gov.za/>
- National Income Dynamics Study (NIDS): <http://www.nids.uct.ac.za/>
- Tax Statistics: <https://www.sars.gov.za/about/sas-tax-and-customs-system/tax-statistics/>
- SARB – a variety of economic and financial statistics the present an overview of the economic situation in South Africa (especially applicable to households for this project): <https://www.resbank.co.za/en/home/what-we-do/statistics>