



## CALL FOR PAPERS

# Writing Religion and Social Transformation in Africa: Publishing and Mentoring Workshop for Early Career Researchers

The University of Malawi, in collaboration with the University of Edinburgh and with funding from the British Academy, will hold on-line mentoring sessions followed by a five-day Writing Workshop in Malawi, between **31 March and 4 April 2025**.

Recent academic research has revealed a troubling trend: the limited presence of African scholars in top-tier international academic journals in the humanities and social sciences. This issue stems from a variety of factors, including insufficient research funding, the prohibitive cost of accessing scholarly journals, and challenges in navigating institutional protocols for submitting research to high-impact international journals. As a result, emerging academics throughout the continent frequently encounter obstacles in publishing their research in these journals and their important research may be overlooked outside the continent

### Aims

The workshop aims to enhance the writing capabilities of early career researchers (ECRs) in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries. It will give participants the space and skillset to develop high-quality publications for international journals with an assigned mentorship team and provide detailed insights and knowledge into writing successful grant applications. The researchers will be mentored in important career aspects through an in-person workshop corresponding to three thematic areas: *Religion and Public Health*, *Religion and Ecology*, and *Religion and Technology*. Mentors will guide ECR participants by preparing an article for submission to a recognised international Humanities or Social Science journal.

### Objectives

The Mentoring process will use a two-tier structure, with each successful applicant being assigned a mentor and a peer mentor, with whom they will prepare a journal article for publication in an accredited international humanities or social science journal. The workshop will consist of various interactive and collaborative activities designed to assist participants in producing their journal articles. It will also address research ethics, career development and grant applications. After the workshop, all participants will continue to receive mentorship until they submit their journal article, and they will be encouraged to develop long-term collaborative projects with mentors and other participants.

## Application process

This workshop is tailored for early-career scholars who are currently pursuing or have recently completed their PhDs in the last ten years and who are residents of southern African countries (as defined by the SADC) especially Zambia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mozambique, and South Africa.

To qualify, applicants must

1. Be working on a journal article grounded in their own original research and exhibit the capacity for critical analysis of their findings. Applicants with a publication history of two or more publications in reputable international journals will not be accepted for this program. The research must cover one of the following topics, using discipline(s) from humanities and/or social science.
  - Religion and public health
  - Religion and Ecology
  - Religion and Technology

When applying, please make sure to specify the title of your paper as well as the theme you are addressing.

2. Commit to taking part in the entire mentoring process, including 4 online sessions, the in-person workshop, and an online conference. Failure to attend the online sessions may result in forfeiting a place at the five day workshop.
3. Commit to offering peer mentorship, after receiving guidance on how to support the work of colleagues.

## How to apply

The application process is in two parts.

1. The deadline for initial applications is **Thursday, 21 June 2024**. Successful applicants will be notified by **Monday, 15 July 2024**.
2. If successful, applicants must submit a full draft of the journal article by **18 October 2024**.

The initial application should include the following:

- An abstract of your journal article (300 words in MS Word).
- A short biography detailing your research interests and career trajectory (300 words).
- A personal statement (500 words) expressing why you want to attend the programme and what you hope to gain from it.

By July, candidates will be notified of the outcome of their initial applications by the Workshop Selection Committee, which is composed of journal editors and academics from both the United Kingdom and Southern Africa.

**The submission deadline for your draft article is Friday, October 18, 2024, and it serves as a crucial element of your workshop application.**

**Your draft article should comprise an introduction and a conclusion and be within the range of 6,000 to 8,000 words. The Workshop Selection Committee will evaluate the quality of the article to determine whether or not to accept your application.**

## Funding

The workshop is funded by the British Academy's Writing Workshops 2024 scheme. **This grant will cover the full cost of travel and accommodation, as well as meals and refreshments at the workshop, for successful applicants. There is no out-of-pocket allowance for successful applicants.**

All applications should be submitted via email at [jrcmentorship@unima.ac.mw](mailto:jrcmentorship@unima.ac.mw) and copied to [dtembo@unima.ac.mw](mailto:dtembo@unima.ac.mw)

### Workshop Selection Committee

- Prof. Emma Wild-Wood (University of Edinburgh)
- Dr Elsbeth Robson (University of Hull)
- Dr Dorothy Tembo (University of Malawi)
- Dr Tiwonge Manda (University of Malawi)
- Prof. Kenneth Ross (Zomba Theological University)
- Prof. Retief Müller (VID Specialized University, Norway)

A long-list will be published in July and participants will be required to attend online sessions in August to prepare their draft article.

Following the evaluation of the draft article, a shortlist of candidates shall be created and they will be invited to attend an in-person meeting in Malawi.

For more information, please contact Dr Dorothy Tembo via email at [dtembo@unima.ac.mw](mailto:dtembo@unima.ac.mw) and/or Prof. Emma Wild-Wood at [emma.wildwood@ed.ac.uk](mailto:emma.wildwood@ed.ac.uk)