



higher education  
& training  
Department  
Higher Education and Training  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



# OPTENTIA USIBA 2026

*Programme*

14-17 April

**WRITE. LEARN. CONNECT. FLOURISH.**  
*Let's write the future - together*

# Day 1

## Learning Stream 1 – Preparing for Research

- 07:15 Registration
- 08:00 Introduction (Prof. Blessed Ngwenya)
- 08:10 Welcoming (Prof. Dumi Moyo)
- 08:20 NWU Research (Prof. Jeffrey Mphahlele)
- 08:40 Scholars in conversation
- 09:00 Writing a research proposal and ethics application  
(Prof. Ian Rothmann)
- 10:00 Refreshments**
- 10:15 Ask the experts: Research proposals
- 10:45 Research planning: Setting clear goals and milestones  
(Dr. Neil Barnard)
- 11:00 AI for measurement and item generation  
(Prof. Llewellyn van Zyl)
- 12:00 Proposal writing studio
- 13:00 Lunch**
- 14:00 Structuring a literature review (Dr Lynelle Coxen)
- 14:45 Using the library (Mrs. Lezelle Snyman)
- 15:30 Refreshments**
- 15:45 Conducting reviews with ASReview (Dr. Bruno Coimbra)
- 17:00 From paradigm to research programme  
(Prof. Blessed Ngwenya)
- 19:00 Grassland Gathering Dinner**

## Learning Stream 2 – Atlas TI

- 07:45 Registration
- 08:00 Introduction (Prof. Blessed Ngwenya)
- 08:10 Welcoming (Prof. Dumi Moyo)
- 08:20 NWU Research (Prof. Jeffrey Mphahlele)
- 08:40 Scholars in conversation



- 09:00 Workshop: ATLAS.ti (Dr. Sarah Bulloch)  
**10:00 Refreshments**  
 10:15 Workshop: ATLAS.ti (Dr. Sarah Bulloch)  
**13:00 Lunch**  
 14:00 Workshop: ATLAS.ti (Dr. Sarah Bulloch)  
**15:30 Refreshments**  
 15:45 Workshop: ATLAS.ti (Dr. Sarah Bulloch)  
**19:00 Grassland Gathering Dinner**

### Learning Stream 3 – Mentored Writing Session

- 07:45 Registration  
 08:00 Introduction (Prof. Blessed Ngwenya)  
 08:10 Welcoming (Prof. Dumi Moyo)  
 08:20 NWU Research (Prof. Jeffrey Mphahlele)  
 08:25 Scholars in conversation  
 09:00 Mentored writing session  
**10:00 Refreshments**  
 10:15 Mentored writing session  
**13:00 Lunch**  
 14:00 Mentored writing session  
**15:30 Refreshments**  
 15:45 Mentored writing session  
**19:00 Grassland Gathering Dinner**

## Day 2

### Learning Stream 1 – Research Designs

- 07:15 River of Ideas Breakfast**  
 08:00 Qualitative research (Prof. Vera Roos)  
 08:45 Quantitative research (Prof. Ian Rothmann)  
 09:30 Mixed-method research (Prof. Werner Nell)  
**10:15 Refreshments**



- 10:30 Using Zotero for referencing (Prof. Ian Rothmann)  
11:30 Proposal writing studio: Writing lab, NWU  
**13:00 Lunch**  
14:00 Writing a research article (Prof. Jaco Hoffman)  
**15:15 Refreshments**  
15:30 Proposal writing studio  
**19:00 Starlight Reflections Dinner**

### Learning Stream 2 – Interviewing jamovi and Mplus

- 07:15 River of Ideas Breakfast**  
08:00 Workshop: Interviewing skills (Dr. Alfred du Plessis)  
**10:15 Refreshments**  
10:30 Workshop: jamovi/Mplus  
**13:00 Lunch**  
14:00 Workshop: jamovi/Mplus  
**15:15 Refreshments**  
15:30 Workshop: jamovi/Mplus  
**19:00 Starlight Reflections Dinner**

### Learning Stream 3 – Mentored Writing Session

- 07:15 River of Ideas Breakfast**  
08:00 Mentored writing session  
**10:15 Refreshments**  
10:30 Mentored writing session  
**13:00 Lunch**  
14:00 Mentored writing session  
**15:15 Refreshments**  
15:30 Mentored writing session  
**19:00 Starlight Reflections Dinner**



# Day 3

## Learning stream 1 – AI for Research Excellence Stream

- 07:15** **Riverbank Reflections Breakfast**
- 08:00 Designing and producing knowledge in the age of AI  
(Prof. Japie Greeff)
- 09:00 Critical scholarship in an AI era (Prof. Ewie Erasmus)
- 10:00** **Refreshments**
- 10:30 Self-care and well-being: Strategies for maintaining motivation  
(Prof. Irma Eloff)
- 11:30 AI for research impact and knowledge translation  
(Dr. Lance Bunt)
- 12:30 Questions and answers
- 13:00** **Lunch**
- 14:00 Ethical and responsible use of AI in research  
(Prof. Liandi van den Berg)
- 15:00 Mentored writing session
- 16:00** **Refreshments**
- 16:15 Mentored writing session
- 19:00** **The Scholar's Table Dinner**

## Statistical and Qualitative Tools Lab

- 07:15** **Riverbank Reflections Breakfast**
- 08:00 Workshop: ATLAS.ti (Dr. Sarah Bulloch)
- 10:00** **Refreshments**
- 10:15 Workshop: ATLAS.ti (Dr. Sarah Bulloch)
- 13:00** **Lunch**
- 14:00 Ethical and responsible use of AI in research  
(Prof. Liandi van den Berg)
- 15:00 Managing Atlas-ti, jamovi and Mplus
- 16:00** **Refreshments**
- 16:15 Managing Atlas-ti, jamovi and Mplus
- 19:00** **The Scholar's Table Dinner**



### Learning Stream 3 – Mentored Writing Session

- 07:15** **Riverbank Reflections Breakfast**  
08:00 Mentored writing session  
**10:00** **Refreshments**  
10:15 Mentored writing session  
**13:00** **Lunch**  
14:00 Ethical and responsible use of AI in research  
(Prof. Liandi van den Berg)  
15:00 Mentored writing session  
**16:00** **Refreshments**  
16:15 Mentored writing session  
**19:00** **The Scholar's Table Dinner**

## *Day 4*

### Learning Stream 1 – Proposal Showcase

- 07:15** **Dawn Drafts Breakfast**  
08:00 Final day briefing  
08:30 Final proposal drafting  
09:30 Proposals presented to panels (15 minutes per person)  
09:50 Proposals presented to panels (15 minutes per person)  
**10:15** **Refreshments**  
10:30 Proposals presented to panels (15 minutes per person)  
10:50 Proposals presented to panels (15 minutes per person)  
**11:10** **Refreshments**  
11:20 Proposals presented to panels (15 minutes per person)  
11:40 Proposals presented to panels (15 minutes per person)  
12:00 Consolidation of results  
12:20 Feedback and evaluation  
**13:00** **Lunch**  
**13:45** **Depart**



## Learning stream 2 – Methods Showcase

- 07:15 Dawn Drafts Breakfast**  
08:00 Final day briefing  
08:30 Final methods drafting  
09:30 Methods presented to panel (15 minutes per person)  
09:50 Methods presented to panel (15 minutes per person)  
**10:15 Refreshments**  
10:30 Methods presented to panel (15 minutes per person)  
10:50 Methods presented to panel (15 minutes per person)  
**11:10 Refreshments**  
11:20 Methods presented to panel (15 minutes per person)  
11:40 Methods presented to panel (15 minutes per person)  
12:00 Consolidation of results  
12:20 Feedback and evaluation  
**13:00 Lunch**  
**13:45 Depart**

## Learning Stream 3 – Chapter Showcase

- 07:15 Dawn Drafts Breakfast**  
08:00 Final day briefing  
08:30 Final chapters drafting  
09:30 Chapter presented to panel (15 minutes per person)  
09:50 Chapter presented to panel (15 minutes per person)  
**10:15 Refreshments**  
10:30 Chapter presented to panel (15 minutes per person)  
10:50 Chapter presented to panel (15 minutes per person)  
**11:10 Refreshments**  
11:20 Chapter presented to panel (15 minutes per person)  
11:40 Chapter presented to panel (15 minutes per person)  
12:00 Consolidation of results  
12:20 Feedback and evaluation  
**13:00 Lunch**  
**13:45 Depart**





*Thank you for attending the usiba  
Wishing you safe travels*