

NESP NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2024

Celebrating the growing
success of NESP



01

*NESP at the forefront of
career development and
actualising dreams*

02

*Meet the
NESP Scholars*

INTRODUCTION

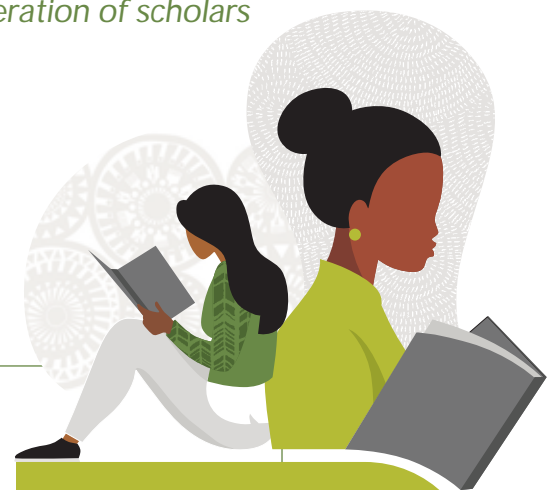
NESP at the forefront of career development and actualising dreams

The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) continues to advance the transformation of the higher education system as one of its priorities since its establishment in 2009. Nurturing Emerging Scholars Program (NESP) is one of the nationally led sub-programmes within the University Capacity Development Programme (UCDP) responding to build the pipeline of a new generation of scholars who will pursue academic careers.

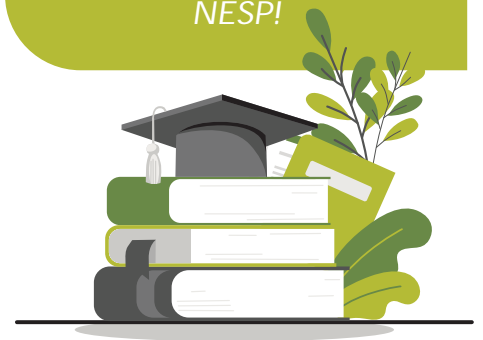
NESP emphasizes on recruiting graduates with an appropriate level 8 Qualification who demonstrate academic ability and express an early interest in an academic career. NESP scholars are awarded a full cost scholarship to undertake an Honours/ Masters qualification in South African Universities, or at a publicly funded international university (currently in France). A minimum of forty (40) NESP positions are allocated to all South African Universities each year.

It has been an incredible journey observing NESP grow since its inception in 2020. Through the teething problems experienced during the pilot stage, that was disrupted by the onset of COVID-19, NESP has been growing stronger and better, and this is accoladed to the hardworking and tireless staff, the Implementation Support partner - Rhodes University and the partner universities. So far, there is approximately one hundred and twenty-eight (128) successfully awarded NESP scholars at various stages of their studies and internship.

Celebrating the first cohorts of NESP scholars who have successfully completed the program - two-years Masters degree and one-year Internship, during the UCDP colloquium, brings a wave of content and affirmation that the NESP, is indeed a breath of fresh air, in the field of academia. Since its inception, NESP currently boasts a total of twenty-six (26) scholars who have successfully completed the Programme and are at various stages in academia; with the majority pursuing their PhDs, while others employed as lecturers or associate lecturers in the respective universities that hosted them. This is a significant achievement for NESP.



NESP currently boasts a total of **twenty-six (26) scholars** who have successfully completed the Programme and are at various stages in academia - a significant achievement for NESP!



higher education
& training

Department:
Higher Education and Training
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

MEET THE NESP SCHOLARS



Tlotlo Radebe
NESP Scholar, CUT

My journey began when I applied and was awarded the prestigious NESP scholarship that aimed to assist in my masters studies and promote academic development and collaboration within an institution department for a trajectory to become an academic. Receiving the scholarship was a moment of immense pride and excitement. It validated my research and academic efforts and opened the door to opportunities I could have only dreamt of. I focused on how my research The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) continues to advance the transformation of the higher education system as one of its priorities since could benefit from international perspectives and how my participation could foster growth into academic collaboration.

"Participating in an international conference and lecturer exchange program through the NESP academic scholarship has been a transformative experience. It not only advanced my academic and professional skills but also enriched my personal life."

I attended an international conference in Tokyo, Japan, where leading scholars from around the world gathered to share their latest research and insights. This conference was a melting pot of ideas, with sessions covering a wide range of topics related to my field of study. I had the privilege of presenting my research, which was met with constructive feedback and sparked engaging discussions.

I participated in a lecturer exchange program at Namibia University of Science and Technology in Windhoek, Namibia. The experience of teaching in a foreign academic environment was both exciting and rewarding. It allowed me to step out of my comfort zone and adapt my teaching methods to suit a different cultural and educational context.

I was also able to publish an article from my studies in an international journal.

Participating in an international conference and lecturer exchange program through the NESP academic scholarship has been a transformative experience. It not only advanced my academic and professional skills but also enriched my personal life. The knowledge, connections, and insights I gained from this opportunity continue to influence my work and have opened doors to new academic endeavours.

For anyone considering applying for this scholarship, I highly recommend it. The experience will challenge you, broaden your horizons, and equip you with the tools to succeed in the global academic community.



Emilia Sarupdeo
NESP Scholar, DUT

Being a recipient of the Nurturing Emerging Scholarship Program (NESP) scholarship has been a transformative experience that has profoundly impacted my life. This was more than just financial aid- it served as validation of my hard work and aspirations. This program not only encouraged my personal growth, it also provided me with significant recognition in the academic realm, affirming my potential and dedication. I had the opportunity to engage with various esteemed colleagues within the institution from various disciplines, creating a rich network, gaining motivation through shared knowledge and experiences.

The NESP program not only encouraged my personal growth, it also provided me with significant recognition in the academic realm, affirming my potential and dedication.

The Centre of Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) at DUT, offered an enriching academic induction program during my internship year, where I engaged with the facilitators and was provided with effective methods and innovative strategies for teaching and learning. I am sincerely grateful to CELT for the support in my internship year.

The NESP scholarship changed the trajectory of my personal and academic career by affording me the space to concentrate on my Master study titled, *"Analysing Instagram pages of South African fashion models with Vitiligo using multimodal communication for a practice-based study"*. I presented my Master study, at the Commonwealth Fashion Education Symposium in 2022; including a collaborative participation at DUT's CELT Annual Teaching and Learning Imbizo conference in 2023, to present on *Cultivating the use of Living Educational Theory Research* for enhancing multimodal professional practice and reshaping the future of higher education.

I am grateful for the Nurturing Emerging Scholarship Program and would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Khaya Mchunu and co-supervisor, Dr. Ernestina Maleshoane Rapeane-Mathonsi for their unwavering support which was a great source of encouragement throughout my academic journey. I successfully graduated with my Master of Applied Arts in Fashion, Cum Laude.



Samkele Monakali
NESP Scholar, MUT

I had the privilege of being part of the Nurturing Emerging Scholars Programme (NESP) and I can confidently say that the journey was filled with opportunities for both my personal and academic growth. Before joining the NESP, I had spent most of my professional life working in the corporate sector and always harboured a deep-seated desire to transition into academia. NESP was the perfect gateway into my desired career path, allowing me to embark on this journey.

Graduating cum laude, at the top of my class was an achievement, the culmination of years of hard work, dedication, and the unwavering support I received from the NESP team.

In 2023, I embarked on the academic internship component of the NESP and this was an eye-opening experience for me. I had the opportunity to learn from the ground up, starting with administrative tasks and moving on to more complex responsibilities such as setting academic papers and overseeing the progress of lectures. I had the privilege of attending two (2) conferences, which significantly contributed to my academic and professional development and provided me with invaluable exposure to the latest research and allowed me to engage with leading experts in my field. Currently, I am working on publishing my research and preparing to present my paper at upcoming conferences.

In April 2024, I graduated cum laude at the top of my class. This achievement was the culmination of years of hard work, dedication, and the unwavering support I received from the NESP. Graduating with such high honours was a deeply fulfilling moment for me. Building on this success, I am now registered for my PhD at Nelson Mandela University. The transition from my Masters to PhD studies has been a seamless progression. I am excited to delve deeper into my research interests and continue contributing to the academic community.

I can confidently say that NESP program has had a profound positive impact on my academic and professional trajectory.



Silindile Mkize
NESP Scholar, MUT

Participating in the Nurturing Emerging Scholars Program (NESP) has been a transformative journey, both personally and professionally. This experience has been instrumental in shaping my career path, allowing me to grow as an academic and to develop a deeper understanding of the demands and rewards of a career in higher education.

One of the most significant aspects of my NESP journey was the comprehensive support system that surrounded me. I received unwavering guidance from my academic supervisor, Prof Msomi. His mentorship was crucial in helping me navigate the complexities of my research, providing both academic insight and personal encouragement, as I transitioned into my role as a lecturer. My experience was further enriched by the support of my supervisor, Dr. Kotelana. She played a pivotal role in my development as an educator, offering me the opportunity to engage deeply with the academic environment, by ensuring I was involved in the day-to-day responsibilities of lecturing, and in the broader aspects of academia, including curriculum development, student engagement, and research.

NESP highlighted the importance of building strong relationships with colleagues and students, which are essential for fostering a positive and productive academic environment.

My internship was a profound learning experience. The structured support from NESP and the mentorship I received allowed me to teach several courses, engage with a diverse student body, and conduct research that contributed to my academic portfolio. Each lecture, assignment, and interaction with students provided me with insights into the teaching profession that can only be gained through experience. One of the key reflections from my time in the NESP internship is the realization of the importance of continuous learning and adaptability in academia. The experience also highlighted the importance of building strong relationships with colleagues and students, as these connections are essential for fostering a positive and productive academic environment.

The NESP is a remarkable initiative that provides aspiring academics with the tools and opportunities to develop their careers. The transition from internship to full-time employment can be challenging, and providing a pathway to secure academic positions would greatly benefit participants and ensure that the investment in their development continues to yield results. In conclusion, my time in the NESP has been a period of significant growth and learning.

NESP offers a unique and invaluable opportunity to develop both personally and professionally, and I am proud to have been a part of this transformative program.



**Innocentia Queen
Zintle**
NESP Scholar, NMU

The Nurturing Emerging Scholars Programme (NESP) scholarship, has been instrumental in shaping my academic journey. I remain grateful for the scholarship's financial and developmental opportunities; the scholarship allowed me to grow in ways I hadn't expected. I gained critical research development through external mentorships, and the exposure to conferences was invaluable for my career; these experiences were pivotal in shaping my early career as an academic.

I have collaborated with the NESP mentors on research projects and paper submissions to journal articles, a testament of the transformative experience in my development as an emerging academic aligns with my long-term goals of contributing to higher education

During my NESP internship, I had the opportunity to present my research on the teaching of mathematics using an African language in the Foundation Phase at both local and international conferences, an experience that broadened my academic network and gave me a global perspective on education.

I am currently employed as a lecturer at a private college and am working towards transitioning into the public university sector.

I have collaborated with the mentors I gained through the NESP on research projects and paper submissions to journal articles, a testament of the transformative experience in my development as an emerging academic aligns with my long-term goals of contributing to higher education, specifically in the areas of decolonization and the use of African languages as languages of instruction in higher education.

The support I received from the NESP has laid a solid foundation for my academic and professional growth, making this transition a natural next step in my career.



Ntsikohlanga Kitsili
NESP Scholar, RU

My NESP Academic Internship Year with the Faculty of Education offered me ample opportunities to grow as a person and as an emerging scholar. I was groomed into coordinating one of the 2023-year cohort of students who were registered for a part-time course called Advance Certificate in Early Literacy (ACE). Looking back, I think this experience prepared me so well for my current role within the department. I am now a multilingual lecturer in the department and also coordinate the second-year cohort of students in the full-time Bed FP program.

I am planning to register for PhD next year and am looking forward to growing more opportunities that will nurture me into becoming an excellent scholar.

The second aspect of my internship involved writing an academic paper from my Med study, initially this was very challenging as I battled to distinguish the difference between a thesis and an academic paper. I appreciate the support I received from my mentor who journeyed with me through this experience of turning my thesis into an academic paper. This process was very hard and intense especially the many versions I had to revise and refine even when the paper was submitted to the journal, it came back with more notes and instructions of what need to be edited and refined. There were moments of wanting to give up but having come so far and seeing how close I was to finishing my paper gave me strength to hang in there until the process was done. My paper with my supervisor which is titled, *"The challenges of incorporating new methods: The case of a group guided reading in South Africa"*, reported on the kinds of knowledges required to teach group guided reading and the extent to which teachers enacted this knowledge in their practice, using Shulman's (1986/7) knowledge categories as our framework. I was lucky to have been given an opportunity to present our paper in Kenya at an international conference called PALFA.

I am planning to register for PhD next year and am looking forward to growing more opportunities that will nurture me into becoming an excellent scholar, with multiple publications and graduated postgrad students that I supervised.

I would highly recommend this program to anyone who wants to grow as a scholar. It is well structured and there are lots of opportunities to travelling sharing one's work and meeting very interesting people.



Thabang Christopher Chama
NESP Scholar, TUT

My journey as a NESP scholar has been one of transformation, mentorship, academic growth, and professional achievements. I am excited to continue contributing to the academic community through teaching, research, and mentorship, with the goal of making a lasting impact in the field of marketing in South Africa.

I had the honor of receiving guidance I received from my mentors, Dr. GAP Drotsky and Prof. JW de Jager, who were both instrumental to my career development; the invaluable guidance and support of Prof. AT Roux, one of the most prominent postgraduate supervisors and lecturers in our department and one of the critical readers for my Masters study and an inspiration throughout my academic journey, and I completed my Masters degree with a *cum laude* distinction.

The academic internship year offered by the NESP program was an invaluable period of growth and discovery.

One of the most significant opportunities I experienced during this journey was being appointed as the subject coordinator and lecturer for Work Integrated Learning (WIL) in Marketing at Tshwane University of Technology (TUT). Coordinating WIL allowed me to hone my organizational and leadership skills, and it highlighted my potential for future growth within academia. Presenting my Masters dissertation at the 25th Annual Global Business and Technology Association (GBATA) Conference in Lisbon, Portugal, was another milestone. The academic internship year offered by the NESP program was an invaluable period of growth and discovery. I was presented with the opportunity to teach a variety of marketing subjects, such as Consumer Behavior, Sport Marketing, and Professional Selling. This experience allowed me to develop my teaching skills and provided me with valuable insights into student engagement and curriculum development.

The unwavering amount of support that I received from Dr. EM Wannenburg, Head of the Department (HOD) also played a crucial role during my tenure as she would always ensure that I could rely on her and her team for support.

Lastly, and most importantly, I'd like to extend my heartfelt gratitude towards the staff of the University Capacity Development Programme (UCDP), particularly my UCDP manager, Amelia Vuyokazi Rorwana, and UCDP officer, Sisanda Sithole. Their crucial assistance with administrative tasks and their seamless coordination between me, my supervisors, the university (TUT), Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), and the NESP coordinators made this journey as seamless as possible. Their unwavering patience, guidance, and support were invaluable.



Bulelwa Stemele
NESP Scholar, UFH

I was a mathematics teacher prior to enrolling in the program, and my objective was to do a transition into the academic sector of higher education. The initial phase involved the acquisition of a Masters degree, which a PhD should follow. As a consequence of NESP funding, I was able to initiate the process of obtaining a Masters degree. The NESP program enabled me to pursue my academic and professional development without financial constraints. I also received substantial assistance with the editing of my Masters degree paper. I am currently enrolled in a PhD program at Wits University, and I am proud to have successfully completed my Masters degree with a distinction.

Completing a Masters degree is a time-consuming process that may cause one to want to give up, but my contract with NESP, motivated me to continue, as I didn't want to risk losing it.

My internship was at the University of Fort Hare. Prof. Hendricks was an excellent mentor who assisted me in adjusting to my new surroundings. My tasks included evaluating fourth- and third-year student teacher portfolio files, assisting second and third-year students in grading their final November examinations, and lectured second and third-year students at the start of the 2024 semester.

During my school experience, my mentor and I drove to different high schools to evaluate mathematics lessons for fourth-year students. Following the conclusion of my internship, my contract was extended for two (2) months. I am now a Time on Task lecturer at the University of Fort Hare until October 31, 2024.

Initially, the journey was challenging. Completing a Masters degree is a time-consuming process that may cause one to want to give up, but my contract with NESP, motivated me to continue, as I didn't want to risk losing it. Because I was unemployed and had received a full scholarship, NESP assisted me in completing my Masters degree on time. NESP provided me with information about university procedures, particularly lecturing and academic writing skills. I published my Masters thesis paper, which I believe would not have been possible without the program's generous assistance.

I am grateful to my supervisor, Dr. Zaheera, for guiding me through this process.



Esona Nohaya
NESP Scholar, UFH

My name is Esona Nohaya, a NESP beneficiary. I graduated with a Master of Law degree, specialising in Competition Regulation from the University of Fort Hare. Participating in NESP Scholarship programme has been a transformative experience. It provided me with invaluable opportunities for growth, both personally and professionally. As a NESP Scholar, I have enjoyed financial support, networking, mentorship and guidance, academic opportunities, and professional development.

The skills and experience that I gained through the NESP scholarship has expressively influenced my career path.

Through the programme, I acquired advanced skills in legal research and analysis. For instance, I became proficient in critically analysing the legal framework governing the competition regulation, which enhanced my ability to interpret and present research findings.

Further, working with a broad range of academics and professionals helped me develop a strong network and engaging with my supervisor provided me with valuable insights into navigating the academic landscape and expanded my professional connections. The only challenge was balancing multiple responsibilities, including research and coursework. This taught me valuable time management skills and the importance of prioritising tasks effectively.

The skills and experience that I gained through the NESP have expressively influenced my career path. I am now more focused on pursuing a career in legal research and policy development. I am set to begin my tenure as Academic Intern at the University of Fort Hare.

In summary, the Nurturing Emerging Scholar Program has been a transformative experience, providing me with essential skills and insights that have prepared me for a successful career in the academic profession. The opportunities for growth and learning have been invaluable.



Phindile Shinga
NESP Scholar, UFH

The journey of being a NESP Scholar has been nothing short of transformative, offering me a myriad of development opportunities that have not only enriched my academic knowledge, but also profoundly impacted my personal and professional growth.

The NESP scholarship provided a platform for me to delve deeper into my research interests, explore new avenues of inquiry, and contribute to the academic community.

One of the most significant aspects of my journey was being selected as one of the five (5) scholars in the France Cohort. This opportunity allowed me to engage in international academic environments, broadening my perspective and enhancing my research skills in ways I could have never imagined. This experience came with its own set of challenges. We had to leave for France during the COVID-19 Pandemic. There was also a language barrier issue. The sudden disruption due to the pandemic was a test of resilience and adaptability, as we had to navigate the uncertainties of continuing our studies and research under unprecedented global circumstances.

A major highlight of my NESP journey was the Academic Internship year at the University of Fort Hare, which spanned from 2022 to 2023. This year was designed to bridge the gap between theory and practice, providing me with the opportunity to apply my academic knowledge in a real-world context. During this period, I produced a research paper that contributed to my field, collaborated with esteemed colleagues, and even co-supervised Honours students. These experiences not only honed my research and teaching skills but also gave me a deeper appreciation for the collaborative nature of academic work. It also allowed me to connect with a network of like-minded individuals who shared my passion for knowledge and innovation. The NESP scholarship provided a platform for me to delve deeper into my research interests, explore new avenues of inquiry, and contribute to the academic community. These connections have been invaluable, leading to collaborative projects and discussions that have enriched my research and broadened my perspectives.

In conclusion, my time as a NESP Scholar has been a period of profound growth and development.



Chumasande Dapula
NESP Scholar, UFS

During the NESP programme, I experienced incredible growth and development in the process of emerging as a well-developed young scholar. In the first two (2) years of the programme, I was enrolled for a Master of Commerce with specialisation in Business Management at the University of the Free State. My interest in women entrepreneurs led me to undertaking my study titled *"Work-family conflict and the performance of women-owned businesses: the role of work-family centrality"*. A major challenge I encountered along my journey was obtaining the large number of respondents to complete my questionnaire. NESP broke this barrier by covering the costs of my fieldworkers.

NESP has provided me a well-rounded experience and exposure as an emerging scholar which would have taken many years to achieve on my own.

As a NESP intern, I got the opportunity to assist my supervisor in a peer mentorship group called *She Believe* she founded during COVID. I gained vast experience in areas of presenting classes, formulating study material, and setting and marking assessments, supervision, and guiding honours students through the mini-dissertation process for the fulfilment of their Honours degree in Business Management. I attended an international academic conference in Namibia, 24 - 27 September 2023, where my supervisor, Prof Brownhilder Neneh (Vice Dean: Research, Engagement and Internationalisation), and I presented our paper based on my Masters dissertation. The experience gave me exposure to an academic conference resulting in me having a publication under my name.

NESP has provided me a well-rounded experience and exposure as an emerging scholar which would have taken many years to achieve on my own. I am very grateful and blessed to have been part of Phase 1 of the programme. I have been acknowledged as the first to have completed NESP at the university of the Free State which would have not been possible without Prof Neneh's dedication to nurturing me and providing me with all the knowledge and support, the Centre for Graduate Support that kept in constant communication with me, enquiring about my progress each step of the way, as well as my parents, who have always believed in me and invested so much to ensure that I have access to the best opportunities and I excel.

As a result of the experience and academic qualifications obtained through NESP, I am currently a lecturer and a PhD Candidate at the University of the Free State, and I now look forward to what lies ahead in the future with a renewed faith and belief.



**Manamele D.
Mashabela**
NESP Scholar, UJ

One of the most significant benefits of NESP has been the mentorship I've received from experienced and well-established academics such as Prof. Abidemi Kappo and Dr. Msizi Mhlongo, who also served as my MSc (and current PhD) supervisor. This mentorship has not only enhanced my research skills but has also deepened my understanding of academia as a whole, from effective teaching techniques to publishing in high-impact journals. With their guidance, I have been able to contribute to several publications, and secured an opportunity to attend an international conference, the 20th Annual Metabolomics Conference hosted in Osaka, Japan in June of 2024. The financial support from NESP has alleviated personal worries, enabling me to fully focus on my research and academic development.

The scholarship's support has enabled me to publish eight papers in high-impact factor peer-reviewed journals, with more currently under review, and several others in progress.

During my academic internship, I had the experience of lecturing under the supervision of experienced faculty members which provided me with hands-on knowledge that cannot be obtained in the classroom alone, curriculum development, administrative responsibilities and student assessments. The guidance I received throughout the internship year equipped me with the confidence and skills necessary for success as an academic while sparking the desire to learn more and develop myself in this journey.

The NESP scholarship has been the foundation of my academic journey, facilitating milestones that have significantly shaped my career, personal life and my own outlook on life. Through the program, I successfully completed my MSc. and have since secured a three-year contract as an assistant lecturer. I have also registered for my PhD, marking the next phase of my academic career. The scholarship's support has enabled me to publish eight (8) papers in high-impact factor peer-reviewed journals, with more currently under review, and several others in progress.

Throughout this journey, the NESP coordinators at the University of Johannesburg have been incredibly supportive, addressing any challenges swiftly and providing continuous encouragement.

My greatest gratitude goes to Dr. Mmamajaga Angie, Magabane and Ms Meagan Strydom, who have been instrumental in the establishment and smooth operation of this programme at UJ. I would also like to extend my gratitude to Prof. Lizelle Piater, Prof. Abidemi Kappo, Dr. Msizi Mhlongo and the Department of Biochemistry at UJ for all their support, motivation, encouragement and guidance throughout this journey, not forgetting the DHET, NESP and all who have been an integral part of this programme from inception to date.



Nosipho Dlamini
NESP Scholar, UKZN

I had the privilege of joining the Phase 1 cohort. My research was a case study approach to “develop integrated climate change adaptation strategies using the Water-Energy-Food (WEF) Nexus approach” at catchment-scale. During the two -year academic phase of the NESP programme, I encountered some challenges. As the programme was new, it wasn’t widely known, and even fewer academic leaders understood its aims and objectives. This made finding a right-fit mentor difficult. However with the support of the NESP team, who were quick to address any concerns I raised, along with the guidance of my supervisors, Dr. Aidan Senzanje and Prof. Tafadzwanashe Mabhaudhi, I was able to overcome this obstacle and successfully complete my MSc(Eng) within time. In addition to finishing my degree, I also published two (2) papers from my research in Q1-rated journals. These milestones that I have achieved through the help of the NESP programme are of greatest significance in my fledgling academic career.

I gained valuable insight into the art of teaching, particularly in breaking down complex scientific terms, processes, and techniques into digestible pieces for young minds.

During the one-year NESP internship phase, I gained experience in teaching and had the opportunity to work alongside Dr. Ashiel Jumman and my mentor Prof. Tilahun Seyoum Workneh, in producing teaching and learning material for a 3rd and 4th year engineering module “Soil and Water Conservation Engineering”.

I gained valuable insight into the art of teaching, particularly in breaking down complex scientific terms, processes, and techniques into digestible pieces for young minds. This experience gave me great confidence in the quality of students that the University of KwaZulu-Natal is producing and in the promising future engineers that South Africa is fostering. In addition to teaching, I published a book chapter and the last chapter of my MSc(Eng) thesis. I also had the opportunity to travel to Spain for a three-month exchange program at the University of Valladolid, where I learned System Dynamics Modelling (SDM). Engaging with international students and lecturers was an enriching experience that went beyond acquiring the technical skill of SDM.

As my time with NESP concludes, I have embarked on my PhD proposal under the Water-Energy-Food Nexus Centre of Excellence project with UZKN. I am deeply grateful to the NESP team for their support and for exposing me to the world of research and academia.



Tebogo Mokwana
NESP Scholar, UL

Participating in the program has been a truly enriching experience for me. The financial support from NESP, including the coverage of my fees and the monthly allowances, has been invaluable. It has afforded me the necessary time and resources to focus on my studies, particularly in reading and writing.

I believe that a two-year internship could provide scholars with more comprehensive experience and opportunities for development.

During the period from July 2023 to December 2023, I had the opportunity to observe and assist with Mathematics 3B and the Method of Mathematics 3B. My role involved helping with the marking of tests and examination papers, which provided me with valuable insights into assessment practices and academic standards. From January 2024 to March 2024, my responsibilities expanded to conducting online lectures under the supervision of a mentor, preparing and delivering content in a virtual setting, development of test and examination items, and marking guidelines, through collaborative efforts with my mentor.

I assisted at-risk learners in face-to-face settings by facilitating support sessions for students who needed additional help and providing consultations to a select group of students on Advanced Calculus.

Regarding my own research, I am currently working on a draft paper with my supervisor.

Reflecting on the duration of the internship, I believe that a two-year internship could provide scholars with more comprehensive experience and opportunities for development. An extended period would allow for more in-depth proposal development, greater involvement in departmental activities, and additional time to work on publications.

This extended timeframe could significantly enhance the learning and professional growth of interns, preparing them more thoroughly for their future careers in academia.

My involvement in the program has been a highly educational and rewarding experience, and I look forward to starting my academic journey, grateful for the experiences gained and am optimistic about the future.



Kukhanyile Mali
NESP Scholar, UWC

I became part of the Nurturing Emerging Scholars Program (NESP) in 2021. I appreciate the financial support from the NESP scholarship particularly with my living and accommodation expenses. Additionally, an allowance for electronic devices assisted me procure a device that I am using to this day for my PhD.

I had several responsibilities that added to my personal and professional development and I was also assigned a mentor who guided me throughout the year.

The Scholarship had funding for several developmental opportunities both domestic and international. Unfortunately, I was unable to exploit any of these opportunities. My masters and PhD had a unique focus on South African infrastructure, and I would have loved an opportunity to engage with scholars about the importance of infrastructure development. More importantly, travelling and observing how other countries with more efficient infrastructure have managed to unlock and sustain economic development and growth was an area of particular interest.

My academic internship began in 2023. As an intern, I had several responsibilities that added to my personal and professional development and I was also assigned a mentor who guided me throughout the year. I was appointed as the lecturer for first-year Microeconomics and second-year Mathematical economics. Conducting assessments, simplifying difficult concepts for students and finding creative ways to deliver content to a new generation of students was exciting. Other responsibilities included having to supervise two (2) honours students, assisting with the planning of the May inter-varsity Postgraduate mini conference, a two-day curriculum advice duty to students end of January, and writing the Economics department quarterly newsletters. At the mini-conference, I presented my PhD proposal titled *South African Infrastructure Development: potential partners, risks and growth prospects*.

Overall, the program was fantastic. Many thanks to the NESP team for making such an opportunity available to students! My Masters journey would not have been so smooth without the financial support which was provided.



Faranani Gethe
NESP Scholar, WITS

I have always aspired to transition from industry to academia, and the NESP opportunity came at the perfect time when I was figuring out how to make this change.

The program enabled me to pursue and complete my MSc in Real Estate, which I achieved with distinction. During the program, I had the chance to attend two (2) academic conferences, where I presented and published two (2) conference papers and one (1) journal article with the program's support.

The NESP Scholarship also prepared me for an academic career, enhancing my competitiveness.

The one-year internship following my master's degree gave me the opportunity to develop both teaching and course development skills.

Through the mentorship provided during the internship, I was able to develop and present my first PhD proposal within the same year.

The program also prepared me for an academic career, enhancing my competitiveness.

Immediately after the internship, I was appointed as a sessional lecturer, and just seven (7) months later, I secured a full-time Lecturer position.



Lerato Mapela
NESP Scholar, WITS

The NESP program offered me an opportunity to pursue my masters qualification full-time in 2021, and provided the critical stepping stone I needed, ultimately allowing me to pursue my passion for teaching and learning full-time. My studies were a success. My work has been published in a high-impact journal in my field; the *South African Journal and Management Science* (SAJEMS).

The NESP programme assisted with the necessary fees required for this publication, and the sponsorship of an academic conference in Cape Town.

The NESP Scholarship was a catalyst that transformed my career and allowed me to fully embrace my passion for teaching and academia.

Upon completion of my Masters in Finance, I embarked on an academic internship sponsored by NESP. That's when I started lecturing undergraduate and postgraduate courses whilst also involved in research. My internship year began on 1 June 2022 ended 30 June 2023. After my internship contract, I was immediately offered a full-time position, a success that would not have been possible without the invaluable opportunity provided by NESP.

Since then, the following were my noteworthy achievements to date:

Received a **research grant** together with my supervisor to conduct research for the South African Reserve Bank (SARB) in 2023 on shadow banking activities and Fintech. This work was also presented at the SARB policy dialogue workshop and is currently under review for publication.

Appointed as a Panel Chair for the Inauguration of FirstRand chair event, 15 April 2024, University of the Witwatersrand.

Appointed as Panel Chair for the Liberty in collaboration with Wits University Fintech Hub Launch event, 6 May 2024.

As I reflect on my journey, I am profoundly grateful for the opportunity the NESP program provided. It was the catalyst that transformed my career and allowed me to fully embrace my passion for teaching and academia. All that I have achieved so far, from the joy of engaging with students to the fulfilment of pursuing my true calling, would not have been possible without the support and guidance of NESP.

This program has not only helped me realize my professional dreams but has also reaffirmed the importance of following one's true passions.



Sphumelele Sibuta
NESP Scholar, UJ

In 2021, the NESP programme provided me with the opportunity to grow academically while receiving financial and institutional support. One of the major advantages of NESP was the freedom to select a mentor who resonated with my academic interests. This mentorship was essential to my growth, offering guidance in research, academic publishing, and professional development.

The teaching development workshops were particularly impactful, helping me learn how to design and deliver lessons effectively, manage classroom dynamics, and engage students.

The NESP Manager at the University of Johannesburg organized regular check-in meetings, which served as a platform for me to raise any concerns or issues I might have encountered. These meetings were well-structured and ensured that all scholars had the opportunity to report problems and receive guidance. In addition to the support from the program coordinators, my supervisor was incredibly supportive and accessible. When I needed feedback on my research or advice on academic matters, my supervisor was always ready to assist.

As a NESP scholar, I was required to participate in development opportunities at the University of Johannesburg, which significantly enhanced my skills. The teaching development workshops were particularly impactful, helping me design and deliver lessons effectively, manage classroom dynamics, and engage students. These workshops gave me the confidence and tools to step into a teaching role during my internship, where I would later apply these skills in a real-world setting. Equally important were the research development opportunities that deepened my understanding of research methodologies, data analysis, and academic writing. These skills were crucial when it came to preparing a paper for publication based on my Masters study.

My academic internship year, 2023, provided me with a platform to apply the skills I had acquired. During this period, I achieved one of my key goals: preparing and publishing a paper titled *Design and Manufacturing of an Air-Filled Travelling-Wave Thermo-Acoustic Generator* which was presented at a International Conference on Electrical, Computer and Energy Technologies (ICECET 2023) in Cape Town. I gained significant teaching experience during my internship. I was entrusted with teaching two modules: Mechanical Manufacturing 2A and Engineering Drawing 1B. These responsibilities included preparing lectures, grading assignments, and engaging with students.

NESP has been instrumental in my academic and professional development. I am grateful for the opportunity to realize my academic ambitions. These experiences have equipped me with the tools necessary to thrive in academia and beyond.



Vuledzani Badetswana
NESP Scholar, WSU

The Nurturing Emerging Scholar Program (NESP) was an incredible journey of growth, both as a lecturer and a researcher. My academic internship year provided a transformative experience, combining teaching, mentorship, and the development of my PhD proposal.

One of the most impactful elements of my internship was teaching first-year and final-year students. Each group brought unique challenges and opportunities. Working with first-year students was rewarding as I helped them transition into university life, guiding them through both academic and personal adjustments. It required a nurturing approach to build their confidence and skills.

This holistic mentorship provided a well-rounded perspective on what it means to contribute to the academic community.

The guidance I received from senior academics during my internship was another significant aspect of my development. These mentors, experienced in both teaching and research, offered me constructive feedback and helped me navigate the academic world. Their insights not only improved my teaching skills but also helped refine my research ideas and shape my academic path. They taught me the importance of collaboration, the need for continuous learning, and the value of giving back by mentoring future scholars. This holistic mentorship provided a well-rounded perspective on what it means to contribute to the academic community. A major milestone during my internship year was working on my PhD proposal. The balance between teaching and mentorship gave me a fertile environment to develop my research ideas. The process involved extensive reading, critical thinking, and revisions, but it ultimately sharpened my focus and provided me with the skills to articulate clear research objectives.

My academic internship year was a transformative experience. The combination of hands-on teaching, mentorship from esteemed academics, and the opportunity to develop my PhD proposal gave me a strong foundation for the future. I gained confidence as both a lecturer and a researcher, and I look forward to applying these skills in my continued academic career.

The NESP has been an exceptional platform for growth, and I am excited about the next steps in my journey.

NURTURING
EMERGING
SCHOLARS
PROGRAMME

NESP

DHET in Partnership with Rhodes University
Funded by DHET

www.ru.ac.za/dhetnespapplication/
www.nesp.org.za



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



RHODES UNIVERSITY
Where leaders learn