

Honours and Masters bursaries 2012 – 2013

Botany Department, Rhodes University

Two bursaries of **R 75,000 per annum** for Honours or MSc study are offered for 2012 (Honours) and 2012-2013 (MSc) under the ACCESS (Applied Centre for Climate & Earth System Studies) programme. Funding to cover all research expenses is available in addition.

Funding is available for the following projects, which fit into a bigger research programme on **climate and land cover change in South Africa**. The principal supervisor for all projects is Professor Brad Ripley (Botany Department, Rhodes University):

Honours/MSc

(co-supervised by Dr Susi Vetter, Rhodes University, and/or Dr Sally Archibald, CSIR)

What are the mechanisms by which woody thickening alters the grass understory and how do these changes feedback on fire, herbivory and woody plant performance?

These questions will investigate the role of altered light (shading), soil water and nutrient levels in changing the grass layer composition and characteristics and resultant feedbacks on woody plants.

Honours/MSc

Is the response of grasses to fire and drought related to photosynthetic type or ancestral lineage? Climate Change predictions for grassy regions of southern Africa include increased drought and more frequent fire. Both factors are likely to differentially select between grass photosynthetic types and lineages. This project will investigate the mechanisms for these differences and offer predictions as to likely changes under future climates.

Requirements:

Applicants must have a BSc (in the case of Honours applicants) or Honours (in the case of MSc applicants) degree with a strong track record in Botany and a keen interest in ecology and/or ecophysiology. Funding for Honours students to continue with an MSc on the same research programme will be available. Honours bursaries will be allocated preferentially to candidates who are interested in pursuing the research up to MSc level.

Funding is available to all South African nationals, but preference will be given to good applicants from designated groups.

Applications:

Applications should reach Brad Ripley (b.ripley@ru.ac.za) by 30 November. Applications should consist of a motivating letter outlining the suitability and interests of the applicant, as well as a short C.V. and a copy of the student's academic record.