

FACULTY OF NATURAL AND AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF PLANT AND SOIL SCIENCES

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR / SENIOR LECTURER (PLANT BREEDING) (ONE POSITION)

In pursuit of the ideals of excellence and diversity, the University of Pretoria wishes to invite applications for the above vacancy.

The University of Pretoria's commitment to quality makes us one of the top research Universities in the country and gives us a competitive advantage in international science and technology development.

BACKGROUND:

The Department of Plant and Soil Sciences in the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences at the University of Pretoria is a leading research and teaching department in the disciplines of basic and applied plant sciences both in Africa and internationally. It is recognised for the quality, relevance and impact of its research, and its graduates that are sought after by all stakeholders.

The Department is one of the most productive departments at UP, with a strong emphasis on undergraduate and postgraduate training. We have a unique blend of research expertise in crop and tree health and production, soil science, plant biotechnology, phytomedicine, ecology, systematics and biodiversity. The Department hosts the Manie van der Schijff Botanical Garden and the HGWJ Schweickerdt Herbarium. The experimental field sites and plant growth facilities at Innovation Africa @ UP are less than 2 km from the main campus. Within the University, the Department has active collaborations with other departments and research entities, particularly the Forestry and Agricultural Biotechnology Institute (FABI) and the Future Africa indigenous food gardens initiative.

One academic position is available in the Department at the level of either Associate Professor or Senior Lecturer with specialisation in plant breeding and a focus on DNA marker based molecular breeding combined with high-throughput phenotyping data (phenomics). The incumbent will be responsible for developing and stewarding this specialization. For example, there are excellent opportunities to conduct research in breeding of climate-smart African orphan crops, or in plantation forestry in collaboration with the Forest Molecular Genetics/Eucalyptus and Pine Pathogen Interactions research team at FABI. The incumbent will be appointed at a level commensurate with their level of experience.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

The incumbent will have an academic mandate to teach at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, with an emphasis on molecular plant breeding and precision agriculture. They will supervise honours, masters and doctoral students, and produce research outputs through scientific papers published in international high-impact journals, books, and conference presentations. The incumbent is expected to raise research funds and build a strong, internationally acclaimed research programme in molecular plant breeding/phenomics.

In addition, the successful candidate will be responsible for:

- Curriculum development, upgrading and updating course material;
- Participating in professional scientific societies;
- Participating in community engagement activities;
- Active involvement in Departmental, Faculty, and/or University administrative tasks.

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS:

Associate Professor:

- A relevant PhD in Plant Breeding or a related field;

- Evidence of being an established researcher (e.g., in South Africa, an NRF rating in the C category or higher);
- Evidence of current postgraduate student supervision and graduates at masters and doctoral levels;
- Recent evidence of research outputs in the field of molecular plant breeding/phenotyping at a rate of at least three publications per year in Web of Science-listed journals (average over five years);
- Recent evidence of oral presentations of research at local and international conferences in an appropriate field;
- Evidence of leading successful research funding applications (two or more partners);
- A minimum of five (5) years of tertiary teaching experience;
- Experience in module coordination and module curriculum development; and
- Evidence of participation in departmental- and faculty committees;

Senior Lecturer:

- A relevant PhD in Plant Breeding or a related field;
- Evidence of postgraduate supervision as the main supervisor of at least one graduated masters student in a relevant field;
- Recent evidence of research outputs in the field of molecular plant breeding/phenotyping at a rate of at least two publications per year in DHET-accredited journals (average over three years);
- Recent evidence of oral presentations of research at local conferences in an appropriate field;
- Evidence of successful research funding applications;
- A minimum of two (2) years of tertiary teaching experience;
- Intent to obtain a National Research Foundation (NRF) rating in the next three years.

REQUIRED COMPETENCIES (SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE AND BEHAVIOURAL ATTRIBUTES):

- Innovative thinking and new ideas on how to expand their field of research in Africa and beyond;
- Excellent quantitative genetics and statistical skills;
- Proficient in English with the ability to function effectively in a multi-lingual environment.

ADDED ADVANTAGES AND PREFERENCES:

- Industry experience in crop or tree breeding;
- Verifiable involvement in science-based community engagement activities;
- Demonstrated capacity to work in inter-disciplinary teams;
- Member of an editorial board of a Web of Science listed journal in a relevant field;
- Research experience in plant phenomics;
- Research experience in applying or developing AI approaches for analysis of large datasets;
- Interest in trans-disciplinary plant breeding research involving communities and farmers/growers;
- Interest in developing novel instrumentation and data tools for plant phenotyping together with technologists such as engineers/IT specialists.

The annual remuneration package will be commensurate with the incumbent's level of appointment, as determined by UP policy guidelines. UP subscribes to the BESTMED and UMWUZO medical aid schemes and contributes 50% of the applicable monthly premium.

Applicants are requested to apply online at www.up.ac.za, and follow the link: Careers@UP.

In applying for these posts, please attach:

- A self-evaluation addressing the minimum requirements, required competencies, and added advantages and preferences. The self-evaluation must indicate the appointment level (i.e.,

Associate Professor, or Professor) at which the applicant wishes to be considered and then address the relevant selection criteria;

- Teaching portfolio detailing teaching philosophy, teaching practice, professional growth, and critical engagement with student evaluations and peer class observation reports;
- A comprehensive CV in the University of Pretoria format;
- Certified copies of qualifications;
- Names, e-mail addresses and telephone details of three referees whom we have permission to contact and have worked with the applicant on a professional basis;
- Names and contact details of three academic peer reviewers at Professor level with whom the applicant has not previously collaborated but works within the same field of research.

NOTE: Shortlisted applicants will be required to present a 20-minute undergraduate lecture on a topic provided prior to the interviews.

CLOSING DATE: 12 July 2026

No application will be considered after the closing date, or if it does not comply with at least the minimum requirements.

ENQUIRIES:

Ms M Huma, mokopa.huma@up.ac.za for application-related enquiries, and Prof DK Berger Tel: (012) 420 3770, Email: Dave.berger@up.ac.za for enquiries relating to the post content.

Should you not hear from the University of Pretoria by 31 August 2026, please accept that your application has been unsuccessful.

The University of Pretoria is committed to equality, employment equity and diversity.

In accordance with the Employment Equity Plan of the University and its Employment Equity goals and targets, preference may be given, but is not limited to candidates from under-represented designated groups.

All candidates who comply with the requirements for appointment are invited to apply. All candidates agree to undergo verification of personal credentials.

By applying for this vacancy, the candidates consent to undergo verification of personal credentials and related information including, but not limited to, qualifications, criminal record, credit record, current and historic disciplinary proceedings as part of the selection process.

The University of Pretoria reserves the right to not fill the advertised positions.