



PROSPECTUS AFRICAN CENTRE FOR MIGRATION & SOCIETY

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND
JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA





AFRICA'S LEADING SCHOLARLY INSTITUTION FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH AND TEACHING ON HUMAN MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

ACMS is an independent, interdisciplinary and internationally engaged institution dedicated to shaping global discourse on human mobility social transformation.

It offers postgraduate degrees in Migration and Displacement, providing training to students and professionals on a number of topics including the sociology of migration, mobility and health, human rights, and research methods.



ABOUT ACMS

As part of Wits University's School of Social Sciences, the ACMS offers Bachelor of Arts (BA) with Honours, Masters and PhD degrees in Migration and Displacement.

Migration and Displacement is an interdisciplinary field encompassing a wide range of disciplines including economics, public health, political science, sociology, urban planning, and development studies. The degree programmes have wide ranging academic and practical relevance. They are taught and supervised by ACMS staff who are experts in the field.

These programmes are designed to provide graduate students with comprehensive conceptual and theoretical training in the Migration and Displacement field. They also equip students with the practical skills necessary to understand, analyse and advise on the drivers, impacts and management of migration within academia, government, the private sector, and non-profit organisations, where many of our alumni are currently employed.

Students are invited to participate in the Centre's research activities and to publish and present their own work.

ACMS enrolls a maximum of 15 Honours, MA and PhD students each year from various academic backgrounds and countries.



WHY STUDY AT ACMS?

- ACMS is Africa's leading institute for migration and society teaching and research. It is the African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA) Centre of Excellence (CoE) for Migration and Mobility.
- We offer an interdisciplinary teaching and research environment.
- We maintain strong links and collaborations with national, regional and international NGOs, UN agencies, and policy networks.
- We offer opportunities for students to embed their research in broader ACMS projects, gaining practical fieldwork experience and skills, with possible funding.
- Students are taught by ACMS staff who are experts in the field.



BACHELOR OF ARTS (BA) WITH HONOURS

Course Title	BA with Honours in Migration & Displacement
Course Code	AHA00
Duration	1 year full-time or 2 years part-time

Course Summary

The BA with Honours in Migration and Displacement degree is suitable for those who would like to advance their scholarly training in migration studies. Students are expected to complete two mandatory courses, two elective courses and a research essay of 9,000 to 10,000 words.

Entry Requirements

- An undergraduate degree in Humanities/Social Sciences (SAQA NQF Level 7),
- 65% or above average mark for the undergraduate degree (i.e. the average for 3 years),
- Candidates with relevant professional experience may also be considered.

Information and Applications

For more information, contact teaching@migration.org.za. To apply, visit www.wits.ac.za/postgraduate/applications.

[Read more here >>](#)

MASTERS (MA)

BY COURSEWORK & RESEARCH REPORT

Course Title	MA in Migration and Displacement by coursework and research report
Course Code	ACA00
Duration	1 year full-time or 2 years part-time

Course Summary

This MA degree is intended to advance critical engagement with the theory and practices of migration and displacement.

Students enrolled for the MA by coursework and research report are required to complete two mandatory courses, one elective course and a research report of 20 000 - 25 000 words.

Entry Requirements

- Honours or a 4-year degree in Humanities/Social sciences (SAQA NQF Level 8),
- 65% or above average mark for Honours or 4th year,
- A motivation letter explaining the interest in migration studies.

Information and Applications

For more information, contact teaching@migration.org.za. To apply, visit www.wits.ac.za/postgraduate/applications.

[Read more here >>](#)

MASTERS (MA)

BY RESEARCH DISSERTATION ONLY

Course Title	MA in Migration and Displacement by research dissertation only
Course Code	ARA00
Duration	1 year full-time or 2 years part-time

Course Summary

This MA degree is intended to advance critical engagement with the theory and practices of migration and displacement.

The MA by research is intended for advanced students with prior social-science research experience and a background in migration studies. With no coursework requirement, students are expected to complete a dissertation of 40,000 to 50,000 words.

Entry Requirements

- Honours or a 4-year degree in migration studies (SAQA NQF Level 8),
- 65% or above average mark for Honours or 4th year,
- A motivation letter explaining the interest in migration studies,
- Evidence of research methods training and ability to conduct research independently.

Information and Applications

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[Read more here >>](#)

DOCTORATE (PHD)

Course Title	PhD in Migration and Displacement
Course Code	ADA02
Duration	3 years full-time or 4 years part-time

Course Summary

The PhD is suitable for those who intend to have a career in research either inside or outside the academy.

The degree generally requires no coursework. It can be completed either by full thesis (of 75,000 to 85,000 words) or by publication of peer-reviewed articles.

Entry Requirements

- Academic background (i.e. Masters degree) in migration studies (NQF Level 9),
- 70% or above mark for the Masters research report or dissertation,
- Evidence of research methods training and ability to conduct research independently,
- A motivation letter explaining the interest in migration studies,
- A research concept note (5 pages max) outlining the topic, the question and the scholarly relevance of the intended research project,
- Supervision offer.

Information and Applications

For more information, contact teaching@migration.org.za. To apply, visit www.wits.ac.za/postgraduate/applications.

[Read more here >>](#)



Since 2004, **188**
students have
graduated from
ACMS.

OUR RESEARCH

Current ACMS research falls largely into three main thematic areas.

Moral B/orders and the Politics of Belonging

This research theme investigates the processes by which governments, and other institutions manage and control the diverse sexualities and gender identities of people who are migrating or moving, particularly through borders and beyond. It explores how norms, laws and policies shape, restrict or sometimes enable the sexual and gendered lives of mobile populations. Research projects under this theme also study the ways in which migration, mobility and movement become sites where concepts of citizenship, belonging, and identity are contested and regulated through the lens of gender and sexuality.

While early migration studies largely centered on cisgender heterosexual men workers, feminist and queer studies have expanded the field by highlighting how diverse gender identities and sexualities intersect with class, race, and other social factors to shape migrants' experiences. Bringing together diverse theoretical, methodological and epistemological perspectives, this research theme also unpacks how gender and sexuality intersect with and potentially transform social, spatial and symbolic borders. By focusing on queer and trans displacement within the Global South – including movements on, from and to the African continent – this research theme counters the geographical and empirical orientation of existing scholarship, resulting in a more nuanced account of how, when, where and why LGBTQI persons migrate.



Socio-Spatial Transformation

This theme explores the constitution of social subjectivities and citizenship across diverse African sites whether origins, stations or destinations for people on the move. At its heart is a concern over the meaning of socio-spatial regulation in an era of mobility. Drawing on quantitative, qualitative, and visual methodologies in considers the material and moral transformations of spaces and institutions related to human movement. It surfaces poorly understood places and processes connected to the making of social, political, and ethical communities and boundaries.

This theme incorporates the work of the South African Research Chair in Mobility and the Politics of Difference, and Xenowatch. This includes multi-sited research on mobility, urbanisation, and political possibilities and broader inquiries into the meanings of political community and identity within fluid, often translocal sites. It employs traditional quantitative approaches coupled with oral history, critical cartography, narrative analysis, eco-system mapping, and highly localised political ethnographies in Southern and Eastern Africa. Most work is conducted collaboratively with local and international partners, colleagues, and graduate students. Reflecting a diversity of interests, the results speak to multiple audiences across the social sciences and public domain.



Mobilities, Health and Wellbeing

Globally, migration and health research has gained traction not only because of heightened recognition of the ways in which migration determines health and wellbeing; but also as a result of increasingly securitised immigration regimes that frame migrants as a security threat and the associated erosion of refugee protection mechanisms. Complicated by xenophobia, racism and nationalism, the ambition of upholding the right to good health for all, regardless of place of birth, is increasingly out of reach.

Recognising this, our research views health as fundamentally political, expanding the scope beyond healthcare systems to explore the bi-directional relationship between migration and health. Through multi-level and multi-sited research, we investigate how social and structural determinants of health are shaped by both the process and the politicisation of migration. This includes mapping the (dis)connections between global and regional governance ecosystems, national legislative and policy responses, and the lived experiences of diverse migrant groups across Southern Africa and beyond.

At the core of our work is a justice-driven research agenda that foregrounds the ethical and methodological challenges of researching migration and health. We collaborate with a wide range of international and local stakeholders, including civil society networks, and encourage postgraduate students to align their research projects within this thematic area of work. In addition to dissemination of our research, our outreach work includes participation in various governance and policy forums, engagements with civil society organisations and contributions to public discussions and debates relating to migration and health.



CONTACT US

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