Joint Clinical Research Centre

Call for Applications for PhD Training in Cell and Gene Therapy (CGT)

Background:
The Joint Clinical Research Centre (JCRC), in collaboration with Makerere University (Mak), Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST), and University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School, is pleased to announce a competitive opportunity for PhD training in Cell and Gene Therapy (CGT), with a focus on HIV cure research. This training programme is supported by the Fogarty International Center of the U.S. National Institutes of Health and aims to build a new generation of African scientists equipped with advanced knowledge and practical skills in Cell and Gene Therapy for HIV cure and related translational research. The programme will provide advanced doctoral training, multidisciplinary mentorship, and international exposure to prepare fellows for leadership in biomedical innovation and translational science.

Research Focus Areas:
Successful PhD fellows will undertake research in one of the following (or related) thematic areas:

- Gene editing technologies (e.g., CRISPR-Cas systems) for an HIV cure
- HIV latency reversal and immune modulation strategies
- Chimeric Antigen Receptor (CAR) T-cell therapies
- Cell and Gene Therapy clinical trial readiness and implementation science

Eligibility:
Applicants must:

- Be Ugandan nationals
- Have obtained their Master's degree within the last **5 years**
- Hold a Master's degree in a relevant field (e.g., Molecular Biology, Immunology, Biomedical Sciences, Medicine, Laboratory Sciences or related disciplines) from a recognized university
- Demonstrate a strong interest in Cell and Gene Therapy for the HIV cure
- Be willing to enroll in and complete a **full-time, four-year PhD programme** at Makerere University (Mak) or Mbarara University of Science and Technology
- Have the capacity to meet the rigorous academic and research requirements of the PhD programme
- Be willing to participate in multidisciplinary research, grant applications, and international collaborations
- Be willing to undertake short-term training attachments at a partner institution in the United States

Note: Evidence of admission to a PhD programme at Mak or MUST will be an added advantage, but is not a requirement at the time of application.

Fellowship Benefits:
The fellowship provides:

- Full tuition and university fees at Mak or MUST
- Monthly stipend and research support, including fieldwork expenses
- Mentorship from leading local and international scientists
- Short-term specialized training and placement opportunities in Cell and Gene Therapy at a U.S. partner institution
- Training in scientific writing, grantsmanship, and responsible conduct of research
- Funding support to present research findings at local and international scientific conferences

Application Requirements:
Applicants must submit the following:

- A Cover Letter (maximum 1 page) expressing interest in the PhD programme
- A Curriculum Vitae (CV) (maximum 5 pages)
- A Personal Statement (maximum 1 page) addressing the eligibility criteria outlined above
- A Research Synopsis (maximum 5 pages) related to HIV Cell and Gene Therapy
- Academic transcripts and other relevant academic documents
- Two reference letters, including at least one from an academic referee (to be submitted separately by the referees to the email below by the application deadline)

Application Timeline

- **Application Deadline:** 2nd December 2026 (11:59 PM EAT)
- **Interviews for Shortlisted Applicants:** 15th December 2026
- **Notification of Successful Applicants:** 4th January 2027

Application Procedure:
Applications must be submitted by email as **a single PDF document** to: **training@jcrc.org.ug** with the subject line: **"PhD Scholarship Application 2026"**

For inquiries, please use the same email address. **Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.**

JCRC is an equal opportunity institution and strongly encourages applications from qualified candidates across diverse backgrounds.