OPPENHEIMER MEMORIAL TRUST

HARRY OPPENHEIMER FELLOWSHIP AWARD 2026

This Award focuses unambiguously on excellence and exceptional scholarship. It is granted to candidates of the highest calibre to enable them to undertake a programme of cutting edge, internationally significant work. The Award carries a monetary value of R3million.

- The Trust is calling for nominations from South African Universities, Science Councils, Research & Policy Institutes, and other institutions or agencies of similar national standing
- The Trust will also consider applications from individuals who do not have specific institutional affiliations
- The closing date for nominations is **24 November 2026**
- The closing date for applications is **31 January 2026**
- Incomplete submissions will not be considered
- Short-listed candidates or finalists should be available for interviews in May 2027
- Awards are made at the discretion of the review panel, which includes Trustees
- All submissions should be submitted electronically on our application portal, SmartSimple: https://omt.smartsimpleuk.com/s_Login.jsp

The Trust was established in 1958 by the late Mr Harry Oppenheimer in memory of his father, Sir Ernest, and has a long tradition of investing in education and related fields. The Harry Oppenheimer Fellowship was initiated by the Trustees in 2000 and is the Trust's most prestigious award.

THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- The Award seeks to attract world-class candidates with visionary ideas based on an exceptionally well- developed grasp of a field or topic
- It is intended to enable scholars based in South Africa to undertake a programme of work that will 'build the academy' and contribute richly to intellectual life
- It aims to strengthen relationships and partnerships between local and international institutions and the Trust

CRITERIA

The Trust will consider candidates who:

- Are residents of South Africa (age is not a factor in selection) and are based at a South African institution
- Are outstanding achievers and very well established in their field
- Are regarded as leading scholars internationally, have undertaken advanced research for many years and have a track record of sustained intellectual effort
- Present submissions that describe a clearly focused and specific project that offers a 'visionary idea' that represents a paradigm shift in current thinking, seeks to make important discoveries and contributes significantly to new knowledge
- Demonstrate a commitment to transferring skills and building capacity in South Africa

Special consideration will also be given to the following points:

- The value of the proposed work: its particular application to teaching, research and development in South Africa; its potential to push the frontiers of knowledge in the given field or area of interest; its contribution to the advancement or application of knowledge in the service of society

- The coherence and practicability of the proposed programme and its feasibility within the limit set for the Award and the given timeframe of approximately one year
- The candidate's proven achievement and his or her ability to benefit from the use of the Award
- By proven achievement the Trust would be looking for candidates who have: attracted research funding on a competitive basis; published peer-reviewed articles in high-impact journals or scholarly books through high-profile publishers; successfully supervised graduate students to completion; and secured invitations to, and seats on, international bodies and institution

Written submissions must be supported by the following information:

- An up-to-date curriculum vitae (not exceeding 6 pages)
- A complete list of publications
- A brief synopsis in lay terms (2 to 3 A4 pages) of the work to be undertaken, together with a written motivation explaining the reasons for the work
- Details of the proposed work programme, including estimated timeframes and costs (specifying the major components of the budget and associated expenses within the limit set and based on realistic needs) and commentary on the envisaged outputs and outcomes
- Current reports from **four** highly-placed referees of international standing who are familiar with the candidate's work. Referees should be properly briefed about the nature of the Award and its significance so that their remarks are directed appropriately. Referees will be invited to submit their letters directly on the portal by way of a secure link. The Trust reserves the right to contact referees or other experts for further information
- **Note: Applicants are encouraged to apply on the portal directly, and not use an administrator to upload on their behalf**, however there is functionality to add the applicant to all communication.

NOMINATIONS, APPLICATIONS & SELECTION PROCESS

- The Trust will consider nominations from institutions (the preferred route) as well as applications from individuals who do not have specific institutional affiliations
- Institutions are requested to publicise the Award internally and actively seek out and encourage their best candidates to apply, including candidates who may have been nominated or short-listed in prior years. Each nominee will require formal endorsement in the form of letters from his or her Vice-Chancellor, Principal, Rector, Chairperson or Chief Executive or one of their Deputies (as appropriate)
- Candidates without institutional affiliations may apply directly to the Trust and will require a formal letter of endorsement from their institutions
- The Trust will engage in a formal selection process and no correspondence on its decision will be entered into

PAYMENT AND REPORTING

- Funds will be disbursed in two instalments – an initial payment in advance and the second at the half-way stage, on submission of a progress report to the Trust
- The Fellow will be required to submit a reflective report (including commentary on the impact of the work) to the Trust within six months of completion of the programme and undertake to deliver a public lecture on the work