



## **Research Methodology Training Course**

**Dates:** 16-20 and 23-27 February 2026

**Organiser:** SASVEPM

**Sponsor:** Health and Welfare Sector Education and Training Authority

**Facilitator:** Layla Cassim ERS Consultants

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### **1. Programme Overview**

The Southern African Society for Veterinary Epidemiology and Preventive Medicine (SASVEPM), in partnership with Health and Welfare Sector Education and Training Authority (HWSETA), successfully implemented a virtual Research Methodology Training Course during the 16<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> of February 2026. The training programme was designed to strengthen research capacity, academic writing competence, and funding application skills among postgraduate students, early-career researchers, and young academics within the veterinary and related scientific fields. The course aligns regional priorities on research development, transformation, and skills enhancement, with specific emphasis on methodological rigor, ethical research practice, and sustainable academic productivity.

### **2. Training Implementation and Reach**

The training was delivered over two cohorts to achieve a more focused teaching approach. The first cohort consisted of 80 participants, while the second included 72, bringing the total to 152. This approach ensured a broad reach while still allowing for meaningful interaction and engagement. The virtual platform further supported accessibility by minimising barriers such as travel, cost, and time constraints.

### **3. Facilitation and Quality Assurance**

The programme was led by Dr Layla Cassim and Dr Meryl du Plessis of Layla Cassim ERS Consultants. Drawing on their extensive experience in research methodology, academic writing, publishing, and research funding along with their roles as National Research Foundation (NRF) reviewers they brought both depth and practicality to the sessions, ensuring the training was engaging, relevant, and of high academic quality.

### **4. Course Content Assessment**



The five-day curriculum was comprehensive and appropriately sequenced, covering the full research continuum:

- **Day 1:** Research proposal development, research philosophy, decolonised research, Indigenous Knowledge Systems, ethics, and the “golden thread” linking core proposal components
- **Day 2:** Research design and methodology, data types, research methods, sampling, statistics, qualitative analysis, examiner expectations, and project management principles
- **Day 3:** Researcher wellness, thesis structure and writing, theoretical frameworks, examination processes, and common academic writing pitfalls
- **Day 4:** Academic publishing, journal selection, grant application writing, budgeting, and legal considerations related to research funding
- **Day 5:** NRF funding applications (including Thuthuka), reviewer insights, individual participant presentations, and structured feedback

The integration of wellness with academic and technical research skills was identified as a key strength of the programme.

## 5. Impact at a Glance

- One hundred and fifty-two participants were trained across both cohorts
- Strengthened skills in proposal writing, methodology, academic publishing, and grant applications
- Increased confidence in navigating research ethics, examiner expectations, and funding processes
- Enhanced readiness for postgraduate success and NRF funding applications
- Broader contribution to research capacity development, transformation, and decolonisation in veterinary and allied sciences
- The programme directly supports SASVEPM’s mission to build a vibrant, skilled, and sustainable research community.
- Each participant was awarded a certificate of participation.

## 6. Feedback and Participant Voices

Overall feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Participants highlighted clear explanation of complex concepts, practical examples informed by real review and funding experience,



supportive and inclusive facilitation, interactive learning opportunities, and high relevance to current research and academic challenges. The individual presentations and feedback sessions on Day 5 further strengthened participant confidence and learning outcomes. Below is feedback received from one of the attendees:

*“Thank you very much for your kind message. I would also like to sincerely thank you both for such a meaningful and enriching workshop. It was truly a privilege to be part of it. The workshop has truly helped me. I feel much more confident now, and I genuinely believe I am in a far better position to write and structure my master’s research proposal effectively. The discussions on methodological clarity, proposal framing, and critical thinking were particularly valuable to me.*

*Please also extend my sincere appreciation to Prof. Nkululeko and the SASVEPM and Vetlink teams for organising such a well-structured and impactful workshop. Thank you once again for your dedication, mentorship, and support. I am grateful for the opportunity and will certainly keep in touch.*

*Kind regards,*

*Fhulufhelo Sidimela”*

## **7. Overall Impact and Value**

The training significantly strengthened research capacity among emerging academics in veterinary and related fields. It advanced key goals including research excellence, skills development, knowledge transformation and decolonisation, and improved postgraduate outcomes. The SASVEPM–HWSETA partnership successfully delivered a high-impact, accessible, and academically robust programme.

## **8. Conclusion**

The Training Course successfully achieved its intended objectives and demonstrated strong value in building research competence and funding preparedness. The SASVEPM remains committed to strengthening research capacity through continued partnerships and targeted professional development initiatives. SASVEPM would like to also extend its gratitude to HWSETA for the sponsorship. And the facilitators.