



NITheCS

National Institute for
Theoretical and Computational Sciences

June 2026 



NEWSLETTER



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Prof Francesco Petruccione

Dear NITheCS Community

As we approach the midpoint of the year, June is another exciting month for our community.

I am delighted to congratulate NITheCS Associates Prof Tulio de Oliveira and Prof Vukosi Marivate, who were awarded South Africa's prestigious National Orders. This recognition reflects not only their outstanding individual contributions, but also the calibre of researchers within our community.

This month marks the start of the 2026 NITheCS Winter Virtual Internship Programme. We are pleased to welcome a new cohort of talented students who will spend the coming weeks gaining valuable research experience under the guidance of our Associates.

Our recent debrief of the 2026 CHPC & NITheCS Coding Summer School reinforced the growing importance of data science, machine learning and computational thinking within South Africa's research ecosystem. With increasing participation and engagement, this event remains one of our flagship initiatives for developing the computational and analytical skills of future researchers.

I would like to remind members that the call for nominations for new NITheCS Associates closes on 30 June 2026. In addition, eligible postgraduate students are reminded to submit their applications for funding to the NRF if they intend to continue their studies in 2027.

Our events programme continues to flourish, with a diverse range of colloquia, seminars and mini-school taking place throughout the month. Thank you to everyone who contributes to the continued growth and success of NITheCS. Your enthusiasm, expertise and commitment are what make this community so vibrant and impactful.

Best regards

Prof Francesco Petruccione
Director

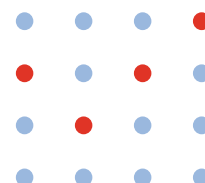
Associates honoured with SA's highest national awards



Above: President Cyril Ramaphosa presents Prof Tulio de Oliveira (left) and Prof Vukosi Marivate (right) with the Order of Mapungubwe.

Two NITheCS Associates, Prof Tulio de Oliveira and Prof Vukosi Marivate, were among the 38 recipients of South Africa's National Orders awarded at an investiture ceremony held at the Sefako Makgatho Presidential Guesthouse in Pretoria on 19 May 2026.

[READ MORE](#)



Reflections on the 2026 CHPC & NITheCS Coding Summer School



Above – participants at several of the campuses that hosted the CHPC & NITheCS Coding Summer School.

The organisers of the 16th CHPC and 8th NITheCS Coding Summer School on Data Science and Machine Learning recently held a debrief session, reflecting on the programme's significant reach and impact.

[READ MORE](#)

Future researchers embark on NITheCS 2026 Winter Internship

The NITheCS 2026 Winter Virtual Internship Programme has officially begun this month, providing a select group of promising postgraduate students across South Africa with an opportunity to gain valuable research experience under the guidance of NITheCS Associates.

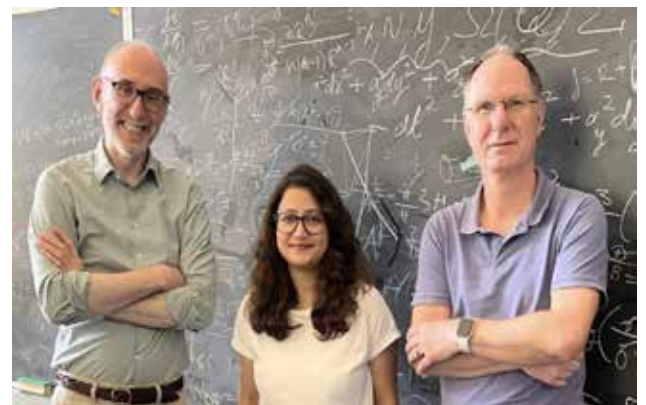


[READ MORE](#)

Student news: NITheCS Postdoctoral Fellow selected to visit Japan

Dr Payel Sarkar, a NITheCS Postdoctoral Research Fellow based at UCT, has been selected for the Young International Researcher Invitation Program at Kyoto University's Yukawa Institute for Theoretical Physics in Japan.

[READ MORE](#)



Nominations open for new NITheCS Associates

NITheCS invites nominations for new Associates.

Only current NITheCS Associates may nominate eligible candidates, who must:

hold a PhD in a NITheCS discipline and

occupy an academic position at a recognised South African institution.

Please submit your nominations, supported by at least two additional NITheCS Associates, via our [online form](#) (accessible when signed in to Google with your NITheCS email account).

An independent evaluation committee will review the nominations. The closing date is 30 June 2026.

[MORE INFO](#)



NITheCS & UKZN Seminar 'Platypus Stars: self-gravitating vacuum compact objects'

Prof Gonzalo J. Olmo (Dept. of Theoretical Physics and IFIC, University of Valencia-CSIC (Spain); Vice-President of SEGRE)
Fri, 12 June 2026 | 11h00-12h00 SAST

Venues:

- NITheCS Seminar Room, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Westville Campus, 3rd Floor, H-Block, School of Chemistry and Physics;
- Online

[POSTER](#) | [REGISTER](#)



NITheCS & QSUN Seminar 'A Gentle Introduction to Experimental Semiconductor Physics'

Ms Jo-Marie Rossouw (University of the Western Cape)
Fri, 12 June 2026 | 14h00-15h00 SAST

Venues:

- NITheCS Seminar Room, Stellenbosch University;
- Online

[POSTER](#) | [REGISTER](#)



NITheCS Colloquium 'Smart Crawlers for Infectious Disease Modelling: Automating Data Acquisition in the Digital Age'

Prof Dephney Mathebula-Periola (University of Fort Hare)
Mon, 15 June 2026 | 16h00-17h00 SAST

Venues:

- Main venue: Stellenbosch University: Road House Cinema (Neelsie)
- Satellite venues: WITS & North-West University
- Online

[POSTER](#) | [REGISTER](#)



NITheCS Colloquium

'Boosting the Predictability of the Market Risk Premium'

Prof Jens Jackwerth (University of Konstanz, Germany)

Mon, 22 June 2026 | 16h00-17h00 SAST

Venues:

- Main venue: Stellenbosch University: Road House Cinema (Neelsie)
- Satellite venues: WITS & North-West University
- Online

[POSTER](#) | [REGISTER](#)



African Data Science Conference 2026

24-26 June 2026

Venues:

- Science Stadium, University of the Witwatersrand

[MORE INFO](#) | [REGISTER](#)



9th Biennial African School of Fundamental Physics and Applications (ASP2026)

5-19 July 2026

Venues:

- University of Nairobi, Kenya

[MORE INFO](#)



70th Annual Conference of the South African Institute of Physics (SAIP2026)

6-10 July 2026

Venues:

- University of the Western Cape

[MORE INFO](#) | [REGISTER](#)



47th South African Institute of Computer Scientists and Information Technologists (SAICSIT) Conference

13-15 July 2026

Venues:

- UCT Graduate School of Business Conference Centre: 9 Portswood Rd, V & A Waterfront, Cape Town

[MORE INFO](#)



NITheCS & UWC Public Talk

'Astroseismology: The Real Music of the Spheres'

Prof Donald Kurtz (North-West University)

Wed, 15 July 2026 | 18h00-19h00 SAST

Venues:

- Road House Cinema at the Neelsie, Stellenbosch University,
- online

[POSTER](#) | [MORE INFO](#) | [REGISTER](#)



NITheCS Colloquium 'The European Union Emissions Trading Scheme (EU ETS): Design, Analysis & Trading'

Prof Dr Rüdiger Kiesel (University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany)
Mon, 20 July 2026 | 16h00-17h00 SAST

Venues:

- Main venue: Stellenbosch University: Road House Cinema (Neelsie)
- Satellite venues: WITS & North-West University
- Online

[POSTER](#) | [REGISTER](#)



NITheCS Webinar 'Modelling the glucose-insulin system for diabetes: problems and perspectives'

Prof Andrea De Gaetano (Institute for Systems Analysis and Informatics
"A. Ruberti", National Research Council of Italy, Rome, Italy)
Tues, 1 September 2026 | 14h00-15h00 SAST

Venues:

- NITheCS Seminar Room, Stellenbosch University;
- Online

[POSTER](#) | [REGISTER](#)



Science Forum South Africa

2-4 December 2026

Venues:

- CSIR International Convention Centre, Pretoria

[MORE INFO](#)



10th International Conference on Quantum Techniques in Machine Learning (QTML2026) 'Bridging Quantum Computing and Machine Learning'

6-11 December 2026

Venues:

- Jan Mouton Learning Centre, Stellenbosch University

[MORE INFO](#)



Missed an Event?

Want to rewatch an event?

- [Visit our website](#) for details of past events.
- Watch recorded talks on the [NITheCS YouTube channel](#).
- To inform us of an event that may interest the NITheCS community, [upload your content HERE](#).



External events

Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP), Italy

View events in the [ICTP Scientific Calendar](#).

International Conference on Mathematical Models and Methods in Biosciences (Biomath)

Date: 14-19 June 2026

Venues: Bolyai Institute, Szeged, Hungary

[MORE INFO](#)

University of Johannesburg Research Workshop

'Digital Pathogens, Mental Health & Modelling: Network & Deterministic Approaches'

Date: 29 June – 3 July 2026

Venues: Shumba Valley Lodge, Lanseria

[MORE INFO](#)

American Institute of Mathematical Sciences (AIMS)

15th AIMS Conference

Date: 6-10 July 2026

Venues: Athens, Greece

[MORE INFO](#) | [REGISTER](#)

Deep Learning IndabaX South Africa 2026

Date: 6-10 July 2026

Venues: University of Kwa-Zulu Natal

[MORE INFO](#) | [REGISTER](#) (Early Bird rates until 12 June)

UWC Department of Physics and Astronomy Conference

'Photometric Surveys of Southern Stars'

Date: 12-17 July 2026

Venues: Stias, Stellenbosch

[MORE INFO](#) | [REGISTER](#)

International Space Summit Africa

Date: 10–12 August 2026

Venues: CSIR International Convention Centre, Pretoria

[MORE INFO](#) | [REGISTER](#)

RSAfrica26 (Research Software Africa 2026)

'The International Conference of Research Software in Africa'

Date: 25–28 August 2026

Venues: Online

[MORE INFO](#)

Workshop on Mathematical Optimization and Control For Industrial and Societal Challenges in Sub-Saharan Africa

Date: 7–10 September 2026

Venues: Manhattan Hotel, Pretoria

[MORE INFO](#) | [APPLY](#) (by 24 May)

24th International Conference of Numerical Analysis and Applied Mathematics

Date: 5–21 September 2026

Venues: Galaxy Hotel, Heraklion, Crete, Greece

[MORE INFO](#) | [REGISTER](#) (by 1 July 2026)

2026 NRF Next Generation and Emerging Researchers Symposium

Date: 6–9 October 2026

Venues: Birchwood Hotel & OR Tambo Conference Centre, Boksburg

[MORE INFO](#)

Functional Analysis and Operator Theory South Africa Workshop (FAOTSA 2026)

Date: 28 October – 1 November 2026

Venues: North-West University, Potchefstroom

[MORE INFO](#) | [REGISTER](#) (from 20 Jul – 4 Oct)

AI, Uncertainty & Simulation Workshop

'Bayesian Methods & Neural Inference'

Date: 16–20 November 2026

Venues: Mauritius

[MORE INFO](#) | [APPLY](#) (by 31 May 2026)

Science Forum South Africa (SFSA)

'Igniting Conversations about Science – From Research to Impact'

Date: 2–4 December 2026

Venues: CSIR International Convention Centre, Pretoria

[MORE INFO](#) | [CALL FOR OPEN THEMATIC SESSION PROPOSALS](#) (deadline: 31 July 2026)

The 66th ISI World Statistics Congress 2027

Date: 11–15 July 2027

Venues: Lusaka, Zambia [MORE INFO](#)



 **SOUTH AFRICAN**
Theory and Computational School

 **NITheCS**
National Institute for
Theoretical and Computational Sciences

Broaden your depth of knowledge across a range of fields in the theoretical and computational sciences at an Honours/Masters level.

SATACS-NITheCS Courses for 2026:

Introduction to String Theory

1 July – 1 December 2026

Advanced Partial Differential Equations

27 July – 27 October 2026

Quantum Field Theory I

27 July – 27 October 2026

Riemann Surfaces

31 July – 23 October 2026

Advanced General Relativity

31 July – 31 October 2026

[MORE INFO](#)



The University of Pretoria, in conjunction with the Gates Foundation and SAMRC, is presenting **FREE online courses**, including:

INTRODUCTION TO MACHINE LEARNING

Date: 18-19 June 2026T

Taught by: Prof Najmeh Nakhaeirad and Dr Kabelo Mahloromela

[MORE INFO](#) | [REGISTER](#)



Featured scientist

Prof Matthew O. Adigun

Prof Matthew Adigun is a senior Computer Science scholar at the University of Zululand, whose work sits at the powerful intersection of artificial intelligence, software engineering, cloud and edge computing, cybersecurity, natural language processing, and digital systems for development.

Prof Adigun's research is driven by one big idea: computing systems should not only be technically strong, but also useful to communities. His work focuses on building intelligent, secure, and socially meaningful technologies that can support areas such as education, health, development, and digital inclusion.

[READ MORE](#)

To view the most recent publications by NITheCS Associates, staff, postdoc researchers and students who included their NITheCS affiliation on their publications, [please click here](#).

Additionally, articles and publications with a NITheCS affiliation can be viewed on [Nature Index](#).

Featured article:



Quantum-gravitational backreaction in the BTZ background from curved momentum space

Partha Nandi^{*}, Mainak Roy, Langa Horoto, Frederik G Scholtz and Biswajit Chakraborty

Published 26 May 2026 • © 2026 The Author(s). Published by IOP Publishing Ltd

[Classical and Quantum Gravity](#), Volume 43, Number 10

[Focus on Mathematical and Numerical Relativity in Modified Gravity](#)

Citation Partha Nandi et al 2026 *Class. Quantum Grav.* 43 105015

DOI 10.1088/1361-6382/ae62ef

ABSTRACT:

We explore how quantum properties of spacetime—specifically the curvature of momentum space—can backreact on classical gravity within a tractable semiclassical d -dimensional framework with negative cosmological constant. Motivated by quantum-gravity scenarios, we investigate how Planck-scale modifications of particle kinematics influence both dynamics and gravitational solutions. Starting from a first-order action, we derive an effective configuration-space description and show that particle trajectories remain geodesic, preserving the weak equivalence principle despite the underlying deformation. Coupling this modified matter sector to Einstein gravity, we obtain a deformed BTZ black hole solution. Remarkably, the local geometric structure and thermodynamic relations retain their standard form, while all quantum-gravity effects are encoded in a nonlinear mapping between the microscopic mass parameter and the ADM mass. This induces a renormalization of the horizon radius and thermodynamic quantities without altering their functional dependence. As a concrete observable consequence, we compute corrections to the return time of massless probes traveling along null geodesics between the horizon and the AdS₃ boundary. Our results demonstrate that Planck-scale kinematic effects can leave controlled and potentially measurable imprints on classical geometry, providing a clear and consistent bridge between quantum gravity ideas and semiclassical observables.

[READ MORE](#)



Wisaarkhu: a global community

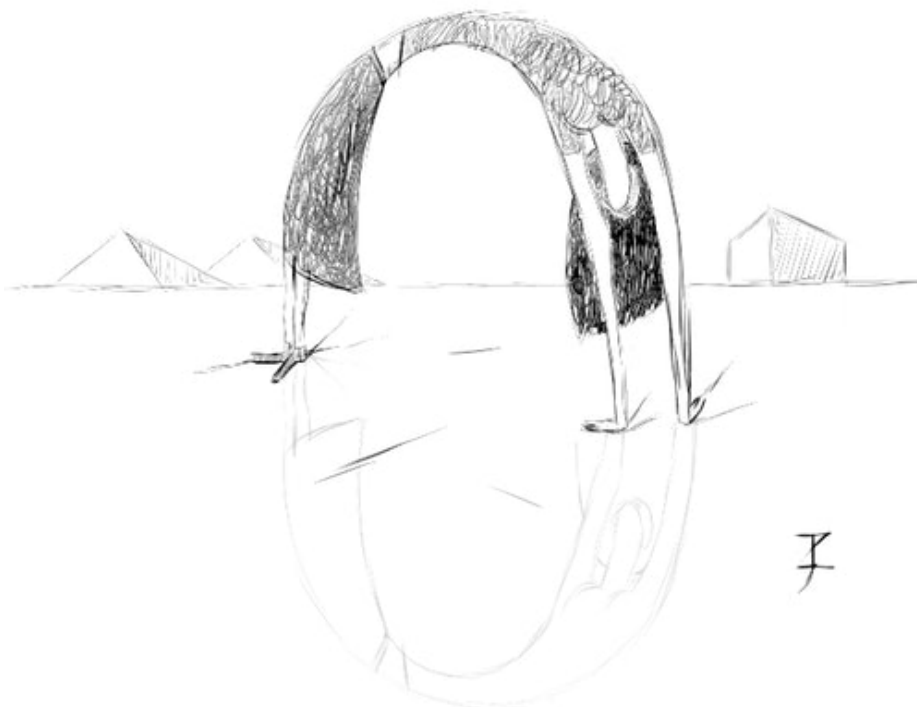
The Wisaarkhu community seeks to reveal the beauty and power of mathematics and the basic sciences, and how they provide a real edge in practical applications – from modeling ecosystems to applying physics, chemistry, and computer science to real-world challenges.

Join Wisaarkhu on this journey of discovery and unlock the possibilities of the basic sciences. By supporting and sharing the community, you help make science and mathematics accessible and inspiring for all.

[VISIT THE SITE](#)



Illustration by Prof Zurab Janelidze (Stellenbosch University):



International scholarships - various

View scholarship opportunities from China, Erasmus +, Intra-Africa, Ireland, France, Germany and the United Kingdom.

[MORE INFO](#)

Rhodes Scholarships for Postgraduate Study at the University of Oxford

Applications for the Rhodes Scholarships 2027 are open. The scholarships provide outstanding students from around the world with the opportunity to undertake fully funded postgraduate study at the University of Oxford, UK.

Rhodes Scholars are selected based on academic excellence, leadership potential, commitment to service, and the ability to make a positive impact in society. The scholarship covers university and college fees, a living stipend, travel costs, visa and health surcharge fees, and access to a global network of Rhodes Scholars.

[MORE INFO](#)

3 x CoE-MaSS Postdoctoral Fellowships: Call Re-opened

Application deadline: 30 June 2026

CoE-MaSS has re-opened applications for three postdoctoral fellowships at participating South African public research institutions.

The fellowships are open to South African citizens whose research aligns with the CoE-MaSS focus areas. Applicants must have obtained their PhD within the past five years and may not apply to work with the same supervisor or within the same department where they completed their doctorate. Successful applicants expected to begin their fellowships by 1 July 2026 where possible.

[MORE INFO](#)

NRF Postgraduate Funding for 2027

The NRF is offering funding for Honours, Masters, and Doctoral studies in 2027.

Masters and Doctoral applications are currently open and close on **3 July 2026**.*

Honours applications open on 7 July and close on **23 November 2026**.*

* Applicants are advised to familiarise themselves with their own university's internal submission deadlines, as these may differ from the NRF deadlines.

Eligible students in the NITheCS community are encouraged to apply for NRF funding through the NRF Connect System. Please read the NRF documentation carefully before applying, and quote the NITheCS UID/grant number: 65212 in the application category section of the application.

Preference will be given to applicants affiliated with NITheCS Associates, NITheCS Research Focus Areas, and HDIs.

Please note: Students who currently hold DSTI-NRF funding and are eligible for continued funding in 2027 – either a second year of funding (Master's and Doctoral students) or a third year of funding (Doctoral students) – must submit a Progress Report rather than a new application. The NRF system will open for Progress Report submissions in November 2026.

[MORE INFO](#)

Postdoctoral Fellowship Opportunity – University of the Free State (UFS)

Application deadline: 1 August 2026

The UFS invites applications for a postdoctoral fellowship in Mathematics and Applied Mathematics, with a focus on areas such as functional analysis and evolution equations. The fellowship is awarded for one year (renewable up to three years) and supports early-career researchers in developing their research and publication profile. The fellowship is valued at R270,000 per year, with an extra R30,000 for research expenses, and the successful candidate will commence on 1 October 2026.

[MORE INFO](#)

Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) Postdoctoral Fellowships 2026 – CERN opportunity

Application deadline: 9 September 2026

CERN's Theoretical Physics Department invites applications for MSCA European Postdoctoral Fellowships 2026, with CERN as host. A limited number of positions are available, with preselection based on research profile. Please note that CERN does not host Global Fellowships under this scheme. Interested researchers should apply for CERN as the host institution – read the details for the [CERN OPPORTUNITY](#).

The MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships support researchers with a PhD to advance their careers through international mobility, interdisciplinary research, and skills development. Open to applicants of any nationality, the programme includes both European and Global Fellowships across academic and non-academic sectors.

[MORE INFO](#)

To share opportunities with the NITheCS community, [CLICK to upload your content.](#)

External funding

External funding is available for research, conferences, travel, collaborative grants and postdoctoral fellowships.

[MORE INFO](#)

NRF / European Research Council (ERC) Partnership Call

Application deadline: 26 June 2026

The NRF/ERC partnership is intended to enable South African researchers to partner with and undertake research visits to ERC funded teams.

[MORE INFO](#)

South Africa / France Science and Technology Research Collaboration: PROTEA Call for Joint Research Proposals

Application deadline: 30 July 2026

Applications are open for the South Africa–France PROTEA Programme, which supports collaborative research and researcher mobility between the two countries. The programme is open to all scientific disciplines, and particularly encourages proposals involving early- and mid-career researchers, PhD students, and female researchers. Projects will be funded for two years (2027–2028).

[MORE INFO](#)

Technical University of Munich (TUM) Global Visiting Professor Program

Application deadline: 31 July 2026

This programme supports the recruitment of distinguished professors from international universities for temporary teaching and research collaborations at TUM.

[MORE INFO](#)

ICIAM Conference Support for Developing Countries

Application deadline: 31 October

The International Council for Industrial and Applied Mathematics (ICIAM) offers limited funding to support participation from developing countries at conferences, workshops, and research schools in applied and industrial mathematics. Up to USD 3,500 per event is available to provide fellowships for selected participants. Organisers may submit applications at least a year in advance of the event.

[MORE INFO](#)

IMSA: Call for Applications for Grant Funding

The IMSA, an initiative of CoE-MaSS and NGA(MaSS), invites applications for grant funding to support research collaborations among early career and next generation mathematical scientists at its member institutions. Up to 20 research collaborations can be supported.

Types of grants available:

- 1) Research-in-Teams offers up to R15,000 per participant for short, focused research meetings, ideally held alongside major conferences. [APPLY](#)
- (2) Joint Research and Postgraduate Training Programmes provide up to R200,000 over three years for collaborative research, training activities, and academic exchanges. [APPLY](#)
- (3) International Research Collaborations - Existing collaboration networks are encouraged to explore international collaborations with research groups, or established researchers elsewhere, that share the same interests. To apply, submit a Letter of Intent to Emeritus Prof Loyiso G. Nongxa at loyiso.nongxa@wits.ac.za and mathsci.imsa@wits.ac.za

AI Research Foundations for Higher Education

Empowering Universities to
Lead Africa's AI Future

Expert-led

Purpose-built

Hands-on Learning

Freely available

with support from
Google.org

AI Research Foundations for Higher Education

Through funding from Google.org, AIMS South Africa is supporting ten South African Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to strengthen AI teaching at university level.

The initiative draws on Google DeepMind's AI Research Foundations curriculum and provides:

- Grants of up to \$57,300 per institution (up to \$11,460 per lecturer, for a maximum of five lecturers)
- Fully funded week-long training workshops for lecturers and teaching assistants
- Blended-learning toolkits developed by University College London
- An adaptable curriculum suitable for applied mathematics, data science, engineering, statistics and other senior STEM courses

The programme also supports HEIs in Nigeria, Kenya and Ghana.

Institutions interested in introducing or refreshing AI courses can find nomination details in the full programme document.

[MORE INFO](#)



Call for Invited Paper Session Proposals – 66th World Statistics Congress (WSC 2027)

Submission deadline: 16 June 2026

The International Statistical Institute (ISI) invites proposals for Invited Paper Sessions (IPS) at WSC 2027, to be held in Lusaka, Zambia, from 11–15 July 2027. The congress will showcase the latest developments, challenges, and applications in statistics, statistical science, and data science across academia, industry, government, and official statistics.

Each proposal should include a session description, justification, and a list of confirmed presenters and discussants.

[**MORE INFO**](#)

Call for Abstracts – Quantum Techniques in Machine Learning (QTML2026)

Submission deadline: 30 June 2026

The 10th International Conference on Quantum Techniques in Machine Learning: Bridging Quantum Computing and Machine Learning (QTML 2026) invites submissions for:

Talks: Extended abstracts (maximum 3 pages)

Posters: One-page abstracts

[**SUBMISSIONS**](#)

Call for papers: Special Issue of Advances in Computational Physics and Mathematical Physics

Submission deadline: 20 July 2026

Contributions can be provided for a Special Issue of Advances in Computational Physics and Mathematical Physics. The issue, guest edited by Prof Michael Tsamparlis and Dr Aniekan Magnus Ukpog, focuses on partial differential equations (PDEs) as powerful tools for modeling physical systems.

[**SUBMISSIONS**](#)

Call for Session Proposals: Science Forum South Africa 2026

Submission deadline: 31 July 2026

The community is invited to submit session proposals for the 2026 Science Forum South Africa (SFA), taking place from 2–4 December 2026 at the CSIR International Convention Centre in Pretoria.

Under the theme “Igniting Conversations about Science – From Research to Impact”, SFA provides a major platform for engaging on the science–society interface and the role of science, technology, and innovation in addressing regional and global challenges.

[**MORE INFO**](#)

Call for Abstracts: 66th World Statistics Congress (WSC 2027)

Submission deadline: 8 October 2026

The International Statistical Institute (ISI) invites submissions for Contributed Paper and Poster Sessions at the 66th World Statistics Congress (WSC 2027), taking place in Lusaka, Zambia, from 11–15 July 2027.

Researchers, particularly early- and mid-career statisticians, are encouraged to submit abstracts (maximum 500 words) for oral or poster presentations. Accepted contributions will be included in the official congress programme.

[MORE INFO](#)

Careers

Research Administrator – Communications & Events

Submission deadline: 15 June 2026

The Centre of Excellence in Mathematical and Statistical Sciences (CoE-MaSS) and the Centre of Excellence in Palaeosciences (Genus) are seeking a candidate to support communications, stakeholder engagement, and research-related events. This is a fixed-term position until 31 July 2027, renewable subject to funding and performance.

[MORE INFO](#)

Senior Lecturer/Associate Professor for the Faculty of Commerce at the University of Cape Town

Submission deadline: 26 June 2026

The African Institute of Financial Markets & Risk Management (AIFMRM) at the University of Cape Town is seeking to appoint a Senior Lecturer or Associate Professor in quantitative finance, financial markets, risk management, or a related quantitative discipline. The successful candidate will contribute to postgraduate teaching, research, supervision, and industry engagement within one of Africa's leading centres for quantitative finance research and education.

[MORE INFO](#)

Foreign nationals with visa issues

Do you know of foreign nationals in the theoretical and computational sciences who are struggling to get a South African visa?

We will try to help expedite the visa process for foreign nationals who:

- have been appointed to fill critical positions in the theoretical and computational sciences in South Africa, or
- have accepted a postdoctoral position at a South African university in the abovementioned scarce skills fields.

Please encourage them to [share their details with us here](#).

NITheCS CONTACT DETAILS:

info@nithecs.ac.za

