

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

**Funded M&D Students' and Postdoctoral Fellows' Participation in the
International Conference on Coastal, Marine, and Maritime Research (COMMRE 2026)
27 - 30 October 2026
Durban International Conference Centre, Durban**

The College of Graduate Studies (CGS) is pleased to announce that it has secured funding to support the participation of selected Master's and Doctoral (M&D) students and Postdoctoral Fellows in the International Conference on Coastal, Marine, and Maritime Research, taking place from 27 to 30 October 2026 at the Durban International Conference Centre, Durban. The theme of the conference is:

Advancing Science, Innovation, Policy, and Equity within the UN Ocean Decade

More information:

<https://www.unisa.ac.za/sites/corporate/default/Colleges/Economic-and-Management-Sciences/News-&-events/Events/COMMRE-2026>

The International Conference on Coastal, Marine and Maritime Research offers a valuable platform for engaging with urgent coastal, marine and maritime challenges, including climate change, coastal adaptation, ocean governance, biodiversity, blue economy development, marine tourism, coastal sustainability and community livelihoods. As part of UNISA's commitment to optimising the catalytic niche areas, particularly Marine Studies and Student Support, the College of Graduate Studies will fund selected M&D students and postdoctoral fellows to attend the conference either in person or virtually. This opportunity will expose successful applicants to international scholarship, support multi-, inter- and transdisciplinary engagement, and strengthen their development as emerging researchers whose work contributes to socially responsive and impactful knowledge production.

We therefore invite supervisors and academic departments to nominate suitable M&D students and PDFs for consideration. Please note the following:

- CGS will cover registration fees only. Students will be responsible for arranging and covering their own travel and accommodation. There is also an option for online attendance of part of the programme.
- The opportunity is open to postgraduate students and postdoctoral fellows from across disciplines and colleges. Nominees do not need to be working directly within the Marine Studies catalytic niche area, but should be able to demonstrate how their research, scholarly interests or professional development goals may benefit from engagement with coastal, marine, maritime, environmental, sustainability, governance, development, technological, educational, legal, economic, community-based or related themes.
- Preference will be given to students who commit to submitting abstracts or posters for presentation at the conference. CGS will offer an abstract writing workshop and mentorship to nominated students to assist with abstract development and with preparation for the Lightning Talks format.

- Sponsored candidates may submit abstracts under the Lightning Talks option. A dedicated UNISA M&D and Postdoctoral Fellow Lightning Talks special session will be proposed for the programme, with selected participants allocated five minutes each to present a concise overview of their work.
- Funded participants should be willing to participate in CGS pre- and post-conference activities, including orientation, reflection and knowledge-sharing sessions. They may also be invited to share their work in progress, conference insights or emerging research connections in a CGS-facilitated postgraduate or emerging scholars forum. Training and guidance will be provided by CGS.
- Nominated students should demonstrate strong academic progress, potential for scholarly contribution, and alignment with the themes of the conference.
- **M&D students and postdoctoral fellows may also nominate themselves.**

This is an excellent opportunity for postgraduate students and postdoctoral fellows to gain international exposure, network with leading scholars and stakeholders, and connect their work to wider societal and catalytic niche area priorities.

Submission of Nominations:

Departments, supervisors, M&D students and postdoctoral fellows are requested to submit nominations (including a short motivation for each nominated student) to:

Prof Jessica Murray
murraj@unisa.ac.za

Closing Date: 30 June 2026

We look forward to your nominations and to showcasing UNISA's next generation of scholars at this important international event.