

# Skilled researchers offering critical training on better use of data in decision-making

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The Rhodes Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) will offer a virtual training programme during July focused on improving critical skills on data collection, management and analyses, particularly in the public sector. Developed by experienced academic researchers, the programme will also include modules on presenting findings graphically and in an accessible way, including sharing information across public platforms for varied audiences.



“Public officials and research analysts have to make, recommend or evaluate policy-related decisions or strategic directions using empirical data as evidence to ensure their decisions will have meaningful and positive impacts on the lives of citizens and other stakeholders,” says Professor Cyril Nhlanhla Mbatha of the ISER. “We believe that effective data use can drive more inclusive and responsive decision-making in the public sector, resulting in better delivery of public services.”

Professor Mbatha says that while the importance of using reliable evidence to inform policies, reports and decision-making is well understood, sources of accurate representative and comprehensive data relevant to South Africa are not always readily available, effectively accessed and interpreted. “When freely available data does exist, compiling and presenting the information effectively for policymakers can be challenging. Different approaches to collecting data may have been used or information may be out of date. This course will help students identify reliable and freely available data, interpret and present this data to inform evidence-based decision-making.”

The course will be led by Professor Mike Rogan, an associate professor in economics and economic history at Rhodes University. Professor Rogan’s work has focused largely on informal employment, gender, poverty, food security, education and skills development and survey design.

“We’re looking forward to sharing best practice and procedures in collecting, generating, cleaning and storing data. Working with the most commonly used data software, we’ll show participants how to work with imperfect data without compromising integrity. They will be able to manipulate and organise freely available data and interpret the results accurately in a way that answers evaluative questions, using a variety of descriptive tools. Ultimately, participants will be able to write clear and effective reports for different audiences.

“At the ISER, we focus on transformative social and economic research excellence that contributes towards a fairer, more just and equitable society,” says Professor Mbatha. “Knowledge and skill sharing is critical in this process, and skills that experienced researchers employ all the time can be taught. We believe this course will add enormous value to all who would

like to better access and analyse public datasets to inform their decision-making, presentations and reports.”

Although it is a virtual course, numbers are limited to ensure in-depth engagement.

Please enrol as soon as possible to secure a place.

Click [here](#) for more. <https://www.ru.ac.za/iser/latestnews/trainingdatacollectionmanagementandanalysisforevidence-baseddecision-m.html>

**Dates:** 13–15 July 2021 (virtual course)

**Cost:** R6,000 per person

**Trainer:** Professor Mike Rogan, Department of Economics and Economic History at Rhodes University

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