University of Ibadan & University of Edinburgh

Mid-Career Researcher (MCR) Fellowship Programme: Expression of Interest

Background and Programme Summary

Building on research collaboration in climate, environment and entrepreneurship initiated in 2024 and formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in April 2026, the University of Edinburgh, through the Edinburgh Earth Initiative (EEI), and the University of Ibadan are developing a joint Mid-Career Researcher (MCR) Fellowship Programme.

The programme aims to support equitable, interdisciplinary research partnerships, strengthen research leadership and develop collaborative proposals with the potential to attract external funding. It will combine an initial scoping visit by Edinburgh academics with subsequent research placements for competitively selected mid-career researchers from Ibadan.

Purpose of this Expression of Interest (EoI)

This initial call invites University of Edinburgh academics to express interest in developing research collaborations with counterparts at the University of Ibadan, particularly in relation to the core themes outlined below.

Successful applicants will be expected to participate in a scoping visit to Ibadan, help shape joint research priorities and support the subsequent placement of an Ibadan Mid-Career Researcher in Edinburgh.

This is an expression of interest in a potential research collaboration, not an application for a Fellowship or a request for a fully developed research proposal.

Expressions of interest from individual academics, research groups, teams or networks are welcome. Where an EoI is submitted on behalf of a group, team or network, a lead Edinburgh academic should be nominated. It is anticipated that this individual will be available to participate in the scoping visit to Ibadan in February 2027.

Core Thematic Scope

The programme will focus on interconnected challenges within sustainable livelihoods and agri-food systems, with five indicative sub-themes:

1. **Soil Systems and Food Production:** Investigating sustainable soil management, water dynamics and the integration of biochar to enhance agricultural yields.
2. **Sustainable Agriculture and Farming Systems:** Developing resilient, regenerative farming systems suited to regional ecological pressures.
3. **Sustainable One Health Ecosystems:** Examining Forest and landscape integrity alongside the transmission dynamics of infectious diseases and antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

4. **Governance, Regulation and Innovation:** Bridging environmental policy, governance mechanisms and bioethics, reflecting strategic academic priorities at Ibadan.
5. **Community Participation and Engagement in Climate Adaptation:** Drawing on social science and anthropological approaches to ensure climate adaptation solutions are co-produced with local communities rather than prescribed externally.

Note: Proposals covering other sub-themes aligned with sustainable livelihoods and agri-food systems are also welcome. Overviews of relevant research infrastructure at the University of Ibadan and University of Edinburgh are available below to help inform EoI development.

Fellowship Structure and Phased Implementation

The programme is designed as a reciprocal, two-stage process to develop equitable and sustainable research partnerships.

Stage 1: Scoping Visit to Ibadan, Nigeria

Edinburgh academic leads, working with their counterparts at Ibadan, will undertake a scoping visit to identify complementary expertise, explore opportunities for collaboration and co-design research priorities and potential Fellowship activities.

The visit is expected to take place in the last week of February 2027. The final number and distribution of academic leads across the thematic areas will be confirmed following the EoI process.

Stage 2: Ibadan Fellow Placements in Edinburgh

Following the scoping phase, competitively selected mid-career researchers from the University of Ibadan will undertake three- to four-week placements within Edinburgh research groups. It is anticipated that these placements will take place during the **2027–2028 academic year, or earlier where feasible**.

Visiting Fellows will have opportunities to access relevant specialist facilities, receive mentoring and work with Edinburgh colleagues to develop competitive collaborative research proposals for external funding.

The timing and number of placements will be confirmed as the programme develops.

Expected Outcomes and Long-Term Impact

External Grant Acquisition: Development of strong collaborative research proposals for relevant international funding opportunities, including, where eligible, UKRI, global climate funds and Horizon Europe.

Research Leadership Development: Strengthened research leadership, cross-institutional networks and supervisory capabilities among participating researchers.

Co-Produced, Translatable Knowledge: Co-designed research agendas with the potential to generate actionable findings, publications and policy-relevant outputs addressing livelihood vulnerabilities and climate resilience.

Logistics and Support

Funding Coverage: EEI funding and delivery support will cover the Edinburgh academic scoping visit to Ibadan and the hosting of visiting Ibadan mid-career researchers. Eligible travel, accommodation and placement arrangements will be confirmed with selected participants.

Pre-Visit Planning: EEI will work closely with the Climate Research Team at the University of Ibadan to develop the programme structure and scoping arrangements.

Administrative and Logistical Support: Teams across both universities will coordinate practical arrangements, including travel and accommodation.

Partnership Development: Participants will receive information on relevant partnership and funding opportunities to support the longer-term development of the collaboration.

EoI Process

University of Edinburgh academics are invited to submit a short EoI (**no longer than 1,000 words**), drawing on the accompanying overviews of research strengths at both universities, where appropriate.

EoIs should outline the proposed area of collaboration, relevant expertise, shared or complementary research interests with the University of Ibadan, and the potential for longer-term joint research and external funding.

Applications are welcome from individual academics or on behalf of a research group, team or network. All EoIs should identify a nominated Edinburgh academic who would be available to participate in the February 2027 scoping visit.

Deadline: Monday 7th of December 2026. Completed EoIs should be emailed to Lucy Young, Director of Operations, EEI and Seth Amanfo , Regional Director Africa and the Middle East, Edinburgh Global at: samanfo@ed.ac.uk & l.young@ed.ac.uk

Next Steps: EEI expects to notify applicants of the EoI outcome by Friday 18 December 2026. Further details on next steps will be shared with successful applicants.

The University of Ibadan's Research Strengths in Sub-themes

The **University of Ibadan's research strengths** span medicine and public health, agriculture and veterinary sciences, engineering, environmental sciences, energy, the humanities and social sciences. Its established capabilities include infectious disease research, food production and animal health, irrigation, agricultural processing and storage, greenhouse engineering, and sustainable resource management. These are complemented by expertise in basic and applied sciences, African studies, economics, education and development research. Its specialised research institutes and centres support collaboration in areas such as sustainable development, energy, zoonoses and drug discovery, while institutional structures promote research training, external funding and strategic partnerships. This combination positions UI to contribute to collaborative research on climate-resilient food systems, human and environmental health, resource efficiency, livelihoods and sustainable development.

1. Soil Systems and Food Production

The University of Ibadan (UI) has established expertise in soil fertility and testing, soil physics and conservation, soil chemistry, soil microbiology, soil survey and agrometeorology. These capabilities provide a strong foundation for understanding how soil conditions influence crop productivity, water availability and sustainable land use. Combined with crop science and agricultural engineering, this expertise positions UI to contribute to integrated soil fertility management, soil restoration, efficient water and nutrient use, and resilient food production systems.

Relevant links:

- Department of Soil Resources Management
- Faculty of Agriculture
- Department of Agricultural and Environmental Engineering

2. Sustainable Agriculture and Farming Systems

UI brings together complementary expertise in crop production, soil management, agricultural engineering, animal health, agricultural extension and rural development. Its engineering capabilities include irrigation, agricultural processing and storage, waste utilisation, biofuels and greenhouse environmental control, while extension expertise supports communication and adoption. This multidisciplinary foundation enables UI to contribute to farming systems that improve productivity and livelihoods while conserving resources, reducing losses and responding to climate variability.

Relevant links:

- Faculty of Agriculture
- Department of Agricultural and Environmental Engineering
- Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Development

3. Sustainable One Health Ecosystems

UI has a clear institutional strength in One Health through its Centre for Control and Prevention of Zoonoses, which supports research, education and disease surveillance at the human–animal–environment interface. The Centre connects veterinary and public health expertise with environmental health protection, community engagement and regional collaboration. Together with UI's wider biomedical and environmental disciplines, this provides a strong platform for investigating interconnected health risks and developing approaches that support healthy people, animals and ecosystems.

Relevant links:

- About the Centre for Control and Prevention of Zoonoses
- CCPZ Mission and Vision
- Environmental and Community Health
- https://com.ui.edu.ng/

4. Governance, Regulation and Innovation

UI combines expertise in law, economics, political science, technology and sustainable development, enabling it to examine both technical innovations and the institutional conditions needed for their adoption. The Centre for Petroleum, Energy Economics and Law connects energy research with policy and regulation, while the Centre for Sustainable Development includes leadership and governance. Supported by institutional structures for research, innovation and strategic partnerships, these capabilities position UI to contribute to policy analysis, regulatory assessment and the translation of research into practical solutions.

Relevant links:

- Centre for Petroleum, Energy Economics and Law
- Centre for Sustainable Development
- Research, Innovation and Strategic Partnerships\
- https://ui.edu.ng/content/faculty-law-1

5. Community Participation and Engagement in Climate Adaptation

UI's strengths in agricultural extension, rural sociology, development communication, geography and climate studies provide a foundation for community-centred adaptation research. Its extension department has a documented history of community-based rural development, while the Centre for Sustainable Development combines climate-and-society expertise with community outreach. These complementary capabilities position UI to support participatory vulnerability assessments, integrate local knowledge with

scientific evidence, communicate climate risks and work with communities to develop adaptation measures suited to their livelihoods and circumstances.

Relevant links:

- Agricultural Extension and Rural Development: Background and Expertise
- Department of Geography
- Centre for Sustainable Development

The University of Edinburgh's Research Strengths in Sub-themes

1. Soil Systems and Food Production

Strengths include:

Research covers soil science, sustainable land management, hydrology, nutrient cycling and agricultural production. The UK Biochar Research Centre provides expertise in biochar production and its potential applications in soil health, agricultural productivity and carbon storage. Research through the Centre for Engineering Biology and EPCC contributes biotechnology, environmental data analysis and computational modelling. Social science perspectives include land-use governance, resource management and agricultural livelihoods, drawing on research in Social Anthropology and the Centre of African Studies.

2. Sustainable Agriculture and Farming Systems

Strengths include:

Research spans agriculture, food systems, animal health, ecology and climate research to support resilient and regenerative farming systems. The Global Academy of Agriculture and Food Systems focuses on sustainable production, livestock systems, food security and the links between agriculture and wellbeing. Complementary expertise in cellular agritechnology and data-driven modelling supports innovation in food production and resource efficiency. The Centre for Adapting to Changing Environments examines biological and ecological responses to environmental change. Research in Social Anthropology on agriculture, food and water security and rural livelihoods, alongside the Centre of African Studies on development and political economy, adds understanding of local farming contexts and barriers to adoption. Science, Technology and Innovation Studies (STIS) also examines how agricultural technologies are developed, governed and adopted.

3. Sustainable One Health Ecosystems

Strengths include:

One Health research integrates human, animal and environmental health. Edinburgh Infectious Diseases and the Roslin Institute bring strengths in infectious disease transmission, antimicrobial resistance (AMR), epidemiology and veterinary science. Biodiversity and landscape expertise includes the Centre for Adapting to Changing Environments and Centre for Sustainable Forests and Landscapes; the Forest and Peatland Programme connects ecological restoration with research and learning. The Global Health Policy Unit contributes expertise on health governance and inequalities,

while Social Anthropology examines environmental health, livelihoods and the social contexts of disease.

4. Governance, Regulation and Innovation

Strengths include:

Research addresses environmental governance, public policy, regulation, bioethics and the societal dimensions of scientific and technological change. Science, Technology and Innovation Studies (STIS) contributes strengths in responsible innovation, technological change and public engagement. These are complemented by Edinburgh Law School's public law research on environmental regulation and climate change law, the Centre of African Studies on political economy and development, and Social Policy research on governance, evidence and inequality. The Centre for Engineering Biology's responsible research and innovation work provides a further connection to biotechnology and its governance.

5. Community Participation and Engagement in Climate Adaptation

Strengths include:

Community-centred climate adaptation research draws on social anthropology, geography, international development, environmental science and participatory research. Social Anthropology and the Centre of African Studies contribute research on local knowledge, livelihoods, inequalities and the political and cultural dimensions of environmental change. The Policy, Publics & Action Research Group adds expertise in community engagement, participation and environmental sustainability. These perspectives connect with environmental change research through the Centre for Adapting to Changing Environments and Earth observation and environmental data capabilities. Science, Technology and Innovation Studies (STIS) adds perspectives on public participation in innovation and the uptake of climate adaptation technologies.