



NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

The NIHSS invites applications from suitably qualified candidates for the positions of Chief Executive Officer, Chief Financial Officer and a Company Secretary. Established on 5 December 2013, the NIHSS is an independent statutory body under the Higher Education Act (Act 101 of 1997). Its mandate is to advance and coordinate scholarship, research and ethical practice in the humanities and social sciences (HSS). The NIHSS was created to develop the institutional framework for an envisioned higher-education institute in HSS and to enhance and support the humanities and social sciences in South Africa and beyond, advising government and civil society on HSS-related matters. In line with its vision to contribute significantly to ensuring the excellence, integrity and dynamism of the Humanities and Social Sciences, the NIHSS drives innovation in HSS research and education through programmes such as doctoral schools, Catalytic Projects and the African Pathways initiative.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

(Ref: NIHSS/CEO/2025) • Salary: R1 813 182 per annum, CTC (SMS Level 15)

The CEO will serve as the Institute's principal executive and accounting officer. Reporting to the NIHSS Board, the CEO will lead the Institute's strategic direction and operations to fulfil its mandate.

Key Responsibilities: • Provide visionary leadership and strategic direction for the NIHSS, translating its mandate into coherent goals, programmes and initiatives. • Oversee the development and implementation of NIHSS's core programmes (e.g. doctoral scholarships, Catalytic Research Projects, Humanities Hubs), ensuring they advance HSS scholarship and address national priorities. • Cultivate and maintain relationships with key stakeholders; including DHET, universities, research councils, government, civil society and international partners in order to promote collaboration and support for the HSS sector. • Ensure effective governance, accountability and compliance with legislation (Higher Education Act, PFMA, etc.). NIHSS policies and Board decisions. Act as the Institute's accounting officer. • Secure and manage funding (government allocations, grants, donations) to sustain NIHSS programmes. Oversee budgeting, financial reporting and resource allocation in line with public sector standards. • Champion NIHSS's values of social responsibility and equity. Lead efforts to transform the HSS landscape, support diversity in scholarships, and implement employment equity targets. • Represent the NIHSS at national and international forums (conferences, policy dialogues, networks) to raise the profile of South African HSS scholarship. Promote norm-driven internationalisation and Global South collaborations.

Minimum Requirements, Qualification and Experience: • A doctoral degree (PhD) in a discipline within the humanities or social sciences is essential. • Minimum of 8 years in broad organisational management roles, including strategic and operational oversight. Proven track record of driving institutional growth or transformation is essential. • At least 5 years in a senior management or executive position in contexts such as public higher education institutions, research institutes, academic think tanks or similar public-sector academic entities. Experience managing complex budgets, personnel and stakeholder portfolios is required. • Proven understanding of the South African public service and higher education environment, including experience with government processes, policy development and legislative frameworks. • A distinguished record of research and scholarship appropriate to an academic leader (e.g. publications, grants, or equivalent achievements). • Demonstrated ability to manage complex academic or research programmes, including oversight of multi-institutional projects, scholarships or funding initiatives. • Experience in financial planning and management of institutional budgets. Knowledge of fundraising and donor relations. • Strong track record of managing teams and engaging diverse stakeholders. Excellent networking, communication and negotiation skills. • Demonstrated commitment to academic transformation and social impact, including advancing diversity and equity in higher education.

Additional / Advantageous Requirements: • Associate Professorship • Experience with large-scale international or continental research collaborations (e.g. BRICS HSS networks, African scholarship initiatives). • Established international research networks and partnerships. • Familiarity with emerging global HSS agendas (e.g. decolonisation, global South perspectives). • Fluency in additional official South African languages is an advantage.

Core Competencies: • Strategic Capability and Leadership • People Management and Empowerment • Programme and Project Management • Financial Management • Change Management.

Behavioural Attributes: • Vision and Innovation • Integrity and Ethics • Collaboration and Collegiality • Communication • Resilience and Adaptability • Commitment to Transformation.

Appointment Terms: Competitive, in line with Senior Management Service (SMS) remuneration frameworks for public institutions. Fixed-term contract (five-year term, renewable subject to performance and funding). Head Office in Parktown, Johannesburg (Gauteng). Occasional travel within South Africa and abroad will be required. The CEO reports directly to the NIHSS Board and is the Institute's accounting officer.

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

(Ref: NIHSS/CFO/2025) • Salary: R1 494 900 per annum, CTC (SMS Level 14)

The CFO is a senior executive in the NIHSS's operational portfolio, leading the finance and administration functions. Reporting directly to the Chief Executive Officer, the CFO will oversee the Institute's entire financial management, including budgeting, accounting, reporting and internal controls in support of NIHSS's academic and research mission. A key aspect of the role is managing NIHSS's dual funding streams: the annual operational grant (and South African BRICS Think Tank activities) from the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), and designated grants from the National Skills Fund for NIHSS's academic programmes. The CFO ensures that all funds are administered transparently and in accordance with public-sector financial standards, consistent with NIHSS's commitment to adopt PFMA best-practice standards.

Key Responsibilities: • Provide high-level oversight of NIHSS's financial management in line with the PFMA, National Treasury regulations and GRAP accounting standards. • Implement financial controls, policies and systems to safeguard assets and ensure regulatory compliance. • Lead the annual budgeting process and monitor expenditure against budget (including the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework), ensuring alignment with Treasury guidelines. • Prepare and present accurate financial reports, projections and variance analyses for the CEO, the Board and other stakeholders. • Oversee the accounting and disbursement of NIHSS's DHET and NSF grants, ensuring funds are applied only to approved programmes (e.g. NIHSS Doctoral Scholarships, Catalytic Research Projects, Humanities Hubs, Working Groups). • Liaise with DHET and NSF as funding partners to ensure timely transfers and compliance with funding conditions. • Ensure timely preparation of annual financial statements and coordinate the external audit process with the Auditor-General of South Africa. • Identify and resolve audit findings and risk issues. Maintain NIHSS's strong audit record by enforcing rigorous internal controls and accountability. • Manage all financial, supply chain and asset management functions. This includes accounting, payroll, procurement, contracts, revenue and receivable accounts, and inventory of assets. • Ensure the finance team implements efficient processes (e.g. automated accounting systems) and provides reliable transactional support for NIHSS's activities. • Advise the CEO, Board and NIHSS senior managers on financial strategy and implications. • Represent NIHSS in inter-agency and treasury forums as needed. • Establish effective working relationships with key stakeholders, including National Treasury, the Auditor-General's office, and other government and research bodies. • Develop, implement and update NIHSS financial and SCM policies, procedures and delegated authority frameworks. • Ensure systems (financial information systems, reporting tools) are optimized for transparency and efficiency.

Minimum Education and Experience Requirements: • Chartered Accountant (SA) or Professional Accountant (SA) designation, or equivalent qualification. (An NQF level 8/9 degree in Accounting or Finance, and postgraduate qualification such as MCom/MBA, is strongly preferred.) • At least 8 years of relevant finance and accounting experience,

of which 5 years must be in a senior financial management role (e.g. CFO, Finance Director or equivalent). • Should have a proven track record of managing large budgets and financial teams. • Sound understanding of South African public finance norms, including PFMA, Treasury Regulations, Generally Recognised Accounting Practice (GRAP) and public sector audit processes. (Experience in a government or public entity finance environment is highly desirable). • Completion of the National School of Government Senior Management Service (SMS) Pre-entry Programme is required for candidates without prior SMS certification. • Must be registered (or eligible to register) with SAICA, SAIPA or an equivalent professional accounting body in South Africa.

Core Competencies: Financial Expertise • Regulatory Knowledge • Strategic Leadership • Stakeholder Management • Analytical and IT Skills • Communication.

Behavioural Attributes: Integrity and Accountability • Ubuntu and Teamwork • Excellence and Initiative • Resilience and Adaptability • Leadership and Diplomacy.

Reporting Lines: The CFO is the head of the NIHSS Finance function within the Operational Portfolio. In NIHSS's structure, all portfolio heads report to the CEO, so the CFO reports directly to the Chief Executive Officer. The CFO will also work closely with the Academic Portfolio and Executive Office leads on institute-wide matters, and will liaise with the NIHSS Board as needed through the CEO.

Appointment Terms: Competitive, in line with Senior Management Service (SMS) remuneration frameworks for public institutions. Fixed-term contract (five-year term, renewable subject to performance and funding). Head Office in Parktown, Johannesburg (Gauteng). Occasional travel within South Africa and abroad will be required. The CFO reports directly to the CEO as the accounting officer of the institute.

NIHSS COMPANY SECRETARY

(Ref: NIHSS/CS/2025) • Salary: R1 266 714 per annum, CTC (SMS Level 13)

The Company Secretary will lead the Institute's governance function and serve as the principal advisor to the Board and CEO on corporate governance, ensuring that NIHSS adheres to PFMA requirements and King VTM principles. In this pivotal role, you will safeguard best-practice governance in support of NIHSS's mission to contribute to the excellence, integrity and dynamism of HSS scholarship. You will coordinate all Board and committee processes, manage statutory compliance, and provide high-level legal/governance guidance so that the Institute operates with integrity, accountability and transparency.

Key Responsibilities: The Company Secretary's duties will include advising and supporting the Board and CEO on governance and legal obligations, in line with PFMA, Company and King V best practices. Specific responsibilities include: • Act as primary advisor to the Board and CEO on statutory, regulatory and governance matters (PFMA, Companies Act, Higher Education Act, King VTM etc), ensuring the Board and executive understand their fiduciary duties. • Plan, convene and service all Board and sub-committee meetings. Prepare and distribute agendas, briefing packs and minutes; track and follow up on action items and resolutions. • Ensure continuous board development through induction, training and provision of relevant governance materials. • Develop, update and maintain corporate governance policies and charters (Board Charter, Code of Conduct, Delegations, etc.) consistent with King VTM and NIHSS values. • Oversee maintenance of statutory registers and record-keeping (e.g. director register, governance documents). • Manage all statutory compliance and reporting (e.g. reports to Parliament/Treasury, annual financial statements sign-off, Companies Act filings if applicable). • Ensure timely submission of governance reports to oversight bodies and alignment with DHET/DPSA requirements. • Prepare and submit regular corporate governance reports and disclosures to the Board, Minister/DHET and other stakeholders. • Assist the Accounting Officer (CEO) in fulfilling reporting obligations. • Serve as the liaison between the Board and the Accounting Officer (CEO), and between NIHSS and external stakeholders (auditors, regulators, sponsor department). • Monitor and communicate changes in legislation or governance best practice.

Minimum Educational and Experience Requirements: • An LLB or equivalent legal degree, or a post-graduate qualification in corporate governance or secretariat studies (e.g. CGISA chartered company secretary or governance professional) is required. • Membership of a recognised professional body (e.g. Chartered Governance Institute of SA) is desirable. • At least 8 years' relevant experience in corporate governance, with a minimum of 5 years at a senior or board-advisory level (e.g. Company Secretary or legal counsel supporting a Board). • Experience working with Boards of Directors or governance committees in a public entity, state-owned enterprise or non-profit organisation is essential. (Experience in higher education, research or the humanities/social sciences sector is an advantage.) • Demonstrated knowledge of South African public sector governance frameworks (PFMA, King VTM, Public Service Regulations, National Treasury regulations, etc.). • Strong understanding of corporate secretariat procedures and public-sector institutional governance.

Core Competencies: • Corporate Governance Expertise • Analytical and Strategic Thinking • Communication Skills • Project and Time Management • Personal Attributes.

Behavioural Attributes: • Unquestionable integrity, fairness and adherence to ethical standards. • Commitment to public service values (transparency, accountability, social responsibility). • Collaborative mindset and ability to work as part of a team. • Adaptability and resilience in a dynamic environment. • Attention to detail and thoroughness in following up on issues.

Reporting Lines: The Company Secretary will report functionally to the Chairperson of the Board and administratively to the Chief Executive Officer and will work closely with the Board, executive management and governance committees to fulfil their duties.

Appointment Terms: A competitive market-related remuneration package will be offered commensurate with the seniority of the role and the successful candidate's qualifications and experience. Fixed-term contract (five-year term, renewable subject to performance and funding). It includes standard benefits (pension, medical aid, leave) as per NIHSS regulations. The successful candidate will be required to enter into a performance agreement, and all appointments are subject to security vetting, qualification verification and other screening procedures. Head Office in Parktown, Johannesburg (Gauteng). Occasional travel within South Africa and abroad will be required. The Company Secretary reports directly to the Board as Accounting Authority of the institute.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Submit a single PDF file containing a cover letter (motivating suitability for the role), detailed CV and certified copies of qualifications and ID to recruitment@nihss.ac.za, with the subject line "Application: Name of the position you are applying for and the reference number".

Late or incomplete applications will not be considered. Shortlisted candidates will be required to submit certified documents and will undergo security clearance.

Closing Date: 16 January 2026

Enquiries: Mr Petros Mashaba at 011 480 2336

NIHSS is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to the principles of employment equity and transformation. Preference will be given to suitably qualified candidates from designated groups (including women and people with disabilities) in accordance with NIHSS's Employment Equity Plan and national equity targets.

Correspondence will be limited to shortlisted candidates. If you have not heard from us within eight weeks of the closing date, please accept that your application was unsuccessful.