

SENIOR RESEARCHER

OVERALL JOB PURPOSE

We are seeking someone who will be responsible for developing, executing and disseminating the research agenda of the Public Service Reform programme at the New South Institute (NSI). This role provides thought leadership, manages research teams and projects and ensures rigorous methodologies are applied to generate evidence that informs policy, practice or innovation. The Senior Researcher will contribute to cutting-edge research while establishing and managing research niches in Public Service Reform.

KEY ACCOUNTABILITIES:

Research Strategy and Agenda Setting

- Identify key research questions aligned with the strategic objectives of the Public Service Reform programme
- Select and implement the appropriate research methodology.

Research Execution

- Design and conduct high-quality, evidence-based research through the collection of qualitative and quantitative data
- Produce publishable pieces such as academic publications, long research pieces, policy briefs and other publications
- Ensure methodological rigor and relevance to stakeholders and policymakers.

Team Leadership and Management

- Provide guidance and oversight to junior researchers and research assistants
- Delegate tasks effectively and ensure timely delivery of research outputs
- Foster a collaborative and innovative research culture within the team.

Stakeholder Engagement:

- Engage with internal and external stakeholders to refine research priorities, understanding that not all stakeholders come from an academic background
- Engage effectively with stakeholders from different fields and areas of expertise to provide a robust and considered view.

MENTAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEMANDS:

- Must be prepared to work after / outside normal working hours

ROLE / PERSON SPECIFICATION:

Education and Experience Required:

- Previous work with think tanks and/or academic institutions required
- Undergraduate degree (NQF Level 7) in Political Science, Economics, History, Anthropology or Sociology
- Doctoral (NQF Level 10) degree is essential
- International post graduate qualification is advantageous

Knowledge and Skills

- Strong writing and editing skills: Publications in accredited journals
- Strategic thinking and planning skills: Be able to develop research goals, create robust questions and do research to answer these questions
- Project management skills: Be able to deal with tight timelines and work on multiple pieces of work at once
- Collaborative team player: Working and engaging effectively with stakeholders and colleagues from different, non-academic backgrounds.

Competencies:

- Critical thinking
- Problem solving
- Data analysis
- Strong writing skills
- Effective communication
- Time management and project management
- Collaboration and team work
- Resilience
- Attention to detail

REQUIREMENTS:

- Experience in research design, data collection, analysis and reporting at a high academic level
- Proficiency in both quantitative and qualitative research methods