

Call for Applications: 5 “Female only” PhD Graduate Teaching Assistantship (GTA) Positions under the TAGDev 2.0 project - Haramaya University, Ethiopia.

Female-only applicants

1. BACKGROUND

The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM), in partnership with Mastercard Foundation and diverse universities across Africa, is implementing a 10-year programme (2023-2033) titled **Transforming African Agricultural Universities to Meaningfully Contribute to Africa’s Growth and Development** (TAGDev 2.0). The programme seeks to strengthen universities and TVET institutions to better serve communities by skilling and empowering Africa’s young people and their institutions to drive inclusive, equitable, and climate-resilient transformation of agriculture and agrifood systems. The scholarship is open to female applicants only. Female applicants with a refugee background, internally displaced persons, and persons with disabilities are strongly encouraged to apply.

Haramaya University is implementing the **Agri-food System and Entrepreneurship Center (ASEC)** as the lead institution, in collaboration with Wollo University, Mekelle University in Ethiopia, and other relevant partners. The project focuses on the horticulture Value Chain (in Ethiopia). In general, the project focuses on strengthening research, innovation, entrepreneurship, and community engagement across the horticulture Value Chain. To support postgraduate training and strengthen teaching and research capacity, Haramaya University invites applications for PhD Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTA) aligned to the ASEC-Horticulture thematic priorities.

2. GRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIP (GTA)

The Graduate Teaching Assistantship (GTA) Programme contributes to one of RUFORUM’s three strategic goals to “build synergy from networks of specialisation to develop quality human resources and capacity required to intensify and increase Africa’s agricultural productivity and competitiveness” and its Vision 2030 Strategy that focuses on building postgraduate training and research capacity in its member universities. The GTA programme has been implemented since 2015 to: (i) improve the quality of higher education and increase the pool of PhD-level trained academic staff in African universities; (ii) provide opportunities for the doctoral research to contribute more directly to African development; (iii) strengthen inter-university collaboration in the field of higher education in Africa; and (iv) promote staff mobility among RUFORUM member universities, and across Africa.

Under the GTA arrangement:

1. The sending universities nominate the staff to be trained and the RUFORUM Secretariat supports their placement in receiving (host) Universities.
2. The sending universities commit to pay for travel, health insurance, upkeep and research of their staff under training.

3. The receiving/host universities waive the fees and associated costs, and provide accommodation for the admitted GTA Fellows.
4. Once the admission process is completed, the sending and host universities and the nominated GTA Fellow sign a Tripartite Agreement to guide the hosting and training of the Fellow.
5. In some cases where opportunities exist, the host university may attach the GTA Fellow to its research program(s).
6. The RUFORUM Secretariat facilitates the GTA arrangement and follows up on the GTA training.

3. THEMATIC FOCUS OF THE SCHOLARSHIP AND ELIGIBLE PROGRAMS

To directly contribute to the project's outcomes, GTAs are expected to engage in community-based action research across the potato and related value chains in the project target areas. **The following are eligible programs and thematic focuses of the scholarships:**

Thematic Area 1 - Development of Potato Varieties from True Potato Seed (TPS) and Tailored Crosses for Enhanced Yield, Yield Components, and Resistance to Late Blight Disease in Eastern Ethiopia (**PhD in Plant Breeding**)

Thematic Area 2 - Evaluation of Productivity and Feasibility of Stem Cutting and Tissue Culture-Derived Early Generation Potato Seed Tuber Production Systems across Mid- and Highland Agro-Ecologies of Eastern Ethiopia (**PhD in Horticulture**)

Thematic Area 3 -Farmer-Participatory Multiplication of Stem Cutting and Tissue Culture-Derived Potato Seed Tubers, and Assessment of Tuber Storability and Quality under Diffused Light and Dark Storage Conditions in Eastern Ethiopia (**PhD in Plant Breeding/Seed Sciences**)

Thematic Area 4 - Phenotypic Characterization of Farmers' Cultivars and Participatory Evaluation and Selection of Potato Varieties for Off-Season Production in Major Potato-Growing Districts of East Hararghe (**PhD in Plant Breeding**).

Thematic area 5: Supporting Innovation and scaling in the adoption and scaling of potato technologies (using an innovation system perspective). Areas of interest include participatory extension methods, Multi-stakeholder Innovation Platforms (MSIPs), scaling readiness approach, digital advisory services, inclusive innovation systems, policy engagement, and youth- and gender-responsive knowledge systems. Priority will be given to projects that accelerate technology uptake, scaling-readiness, entrepreneurship, and community learning in the horticulture (mainly potato) and allied value chain. (**PhD in Rural Development and Agricultural Extension**)

4. SCHOLARSHIP BENEFITS

Successful PhD GTA Fellows will benefit from the academic, professional, and community-engaged opportunities created through the Haramaya University GTA arrangement and the ASEC program. Subject to the final approved tripartite and institutional arrangements, support may include:

- tuition waiver at Haramaya University in line with the GTA agreement;
- accommodation and hostel support, where applicable, under the final arrangement
- opportunity for a Team-based mentorship and supervision by a team of multi-disciplinary, interdisciplinary, and highly experienced professionals
- small pocket money and research support from the ASEC project
- opportunities to strengthen skills in participatory research, stakeholder engagement, community-based action research, academic writing, publishing, entrepreneurship, data analysis, and other relevant skills;
- opportunities to present research findings at national and international conferences (depending on availability of resources)
- opportunities to contribute to impactful research on horticulture value chain and seed systems, climate-smart production, innovation and scaling, and inclusive agri-food system transformation.

5. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Haramaya University is providing **5 GTA positions for PhD students for the academic year 2026**. This GTA will be embedded into the implementation of the TAGDev 2.0 to increase the practical relevance of the candidates' research endeavors and make their research activities part and parcel of the project deliverables.

The GTA is open to all qualified female PhD students who must:

- be a teaching staff from a [RUFORUM member university](#) and formally nominated by their home/sending university;
- be willing to conduct research in the priority thematic research areas in the host country;
- hold a relevant Master's degree OR its equivalent, in a relevant field from the recognized institutions of higher learning
- demonstrate strong academic standing and potential for independent research;
- show interest and capacity to contribute to teaching, mentoring, laboratory/field practicals, and community engagement at the host university;
- be willing to relocate and reside at Haramaya University for the duration of the programme (36 months)
- be admissible to a full-time eligible PhD program at Haramaya University and have submitted an application for admission;
- have developed compelling concept notes about their research and expected outcomes;
- be willing to engage in community-based action research to develop innovative solutions and frameworks to address key challenges across the integrated potato and its allied value chains in Ethiopia;
- provide a letter of endorsement/nomination letter from their supervisor OR the department/school/ the academic vice-president/Deputy Vice Chancellor/ Vice Rector;

- can demonstrate the need for financial support and commitment to complete the training within the expected timeframe; and not hold another scholarship that fully supports the same programme of study; and
- have the willingness to commit to assistantship duties that are part of their GTA activities in the host university (at Haramaya University).

6. SELECTION CRITERIA

Applications will be evaluated competitively by the relevant steering committee at Haramaya University and the TAGDev 2.0 student selection structure. The selection will consider: The GTA selection process will involve the following key aspects.

The selection will consider:

- age of the applicant (below 41);
- the gender of the applicant - Female-only applicants;
- Relevance of the applicant's academic background to the program;
- Relevance of the concept notes to the HU-TAGDev 2.0/ ASEC project's goal and priorities;
- quality and completeness of the relevant application documents;
- evidence of teaching, research, and work experiences, publications, motivation letters, and recommendation letters;
- motivation and commitment to complete the PhD within the expected duration;
- evidence of financial need (economically disadvantaged, marginalized groups, coming from conflict and post-conflict areas, etc), and - candidates who have already secured funding from other organizations are not eligible to apply!
- potential to contribute to postgraduate training, research excellence; and entrepreneurship, and community-responsive innovation at the University of Eldoret.

7. HOW TO APPLY

The application is a two-stage process.

Step 1: Application for Admission to Haramaya University

Applicants must apply for admission to Haramaya University. To apply for admission, visit: <https://application.haramaya.edu.et/>. Follow the instructions on the portal and carefully complete all the required information for your preferred program. At this stage, you may not be required to upload supporting documents.

Step 2: Application for the scholarship under TAGDev 2.0

After completing the application for admission, applicants should proceed to apply for the scholarship. Interested candidates must submit their complete application package, including all required supporting documents listed below, as a single consolidated PDF file by email to the Haramaya University TAGDev 2.0/ASEC Project Coordinator.

- Dr. Getachew Shambel (TAGDev2.0_ASEC@haramaya.edu.et),
- Copy (cc): Ms. Selma Nghituwamhata (s.nghituwamhata@rforum.org),

The email subject line should read:

“Application for Graduate Teaching Assistantship under TAGDev 2.0 – Haramaya University”

The deadline for submission is **June 25, 2026**

8. APPLICATION DOCUMENTS

- ◆ A motivation letter outlining their research interests, suitability, and alignment with the position;
- ◆ A detailed Curriculum Vitae (CV);
- ◆ Certified copies of academic transcripts and degree certificates;
- ◆ A research proposal (maximum 3 pages) outlining their proposed research project aligned to one of the priority thematic areas under the ASEC project;
- ◆ A letter of nomination and financial need from the President/Vice Chancellor/Rector of their home university;
- ◆ Endorsement letters from their supervisor, the department/school, and the academic vice-president/Deputy Vice Chancellor/ Vice Rector;
- ◆ A list of relevant academic publications;
- ◆ Two copies of relevant academic publications, and
- ◆ Two recommendation letters containing the contact information of the referees

[Application deadline: June 25, 2026]

Note: *The call is open only to females, including those in the categories of refugees, internally displaced persons, and persons with disabilities. Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted for an interview. Applicants from Ethiopia MUST submit the Graduate Admission Test (GAT) results for admission.*

9. CONTACT INFORMATION

For further inquiries, please contact:

Dr. Getachew Shambel TAGDev 2.0 Coordinator, Haramaya University.

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