

Two PhD Studentships in African Health, Economics and Diagnostics

Role: PhD studentship for the Wellcome-funded African Health, Economics and Diagnostics (AHEaD) Project

Start date: September 2026

Deadline to apply: Monday 27 April 2026

LSE Health and the Department of Health Policy at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) invites applications for two fully funded, full-time PhD studentships focused on the economics of diagnostics, with particular emphasis on point-of-care tests.

The successful candidates will join a Wellcome-funded research programme and growing team - AHEaD (African Health, Economics and Diagnostics) – to examine the health and economic impact of point-of-care diagnostics across Africa. Alongside their doctoral studies, the student will work as a Research Assistant within the AHEaD project team as their chosen PhD thesis will fall with scope of the wider research vision of the project.

Research Scope

The studentship supports innovative, evidence-based research on any aspect of the economics of diagnostics across Africa, including (but not limited to):

- Political economy of diagnostic manufacturing, supply chains, and use
- Health and macroeconomic benefits of local and regional diagnostic manufacturing
- Economic evaluation and Health Technology Assessment (HTA) of diagnostics, including reimbursement and payment models
- Financing strategies, regulatory frameworks, and incentives to support sustainable diagnostic markets
- Access, affordability, data integration, and behavioural factors influencing the uptake and use of point-of-care diagnostics

While the project has a strong African focus, comparative and global perspectives are welcome where relevant.

PhD Programme Structure

Year 1:

- Completion of required taught courses and refinement of PhD topic
- Active contribution to the AHEaD research programme

Year 2-4:

- Full-time doctoral research
- Underpinned by travel to facilitate primary data collection and collaboration with international partners
- Continued involvement in meeting the objectives of AHEaD

The students will:

- Meet regularly with PhD supervisors and Project manager
- Participate in departmental seminars and academic life
- Support in literature reviews, data collection, and empirical research linked to the doctoral topic that will also align to the AHEaD Project objectives

Funding

The 4-year studentships:

- Start in September 2026 and cover full fees (home or overseas)
- Students may also earn additional income as Research Assistants on the AHEaD Project, with hours capped at approximately 20 per week
- Cover the costs of primary data collection and travel to partners and conferences

Person Specification

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

- Master's degree in economics, political economy, or a closely related discipline, meeting LSE PhD entry requirements
- Strong analytical training in economic theory and/or applied policy analysis
- Ability to conduct research across micro (patient and provider behaviour, incentives, and decision-making), meso (health systems, markets, and organisational structures), or macro (policy, regulation, industrial strategy, and financing) levels
- Demonstrated interest in how incentives, institutions, and governance shape the development, adoption, scale-up, and impact of health commodities, ideally diagnostics
- Experience working with quantitative and/or policy-relevant datasets
- Excellent academic writing and communication skills
- Ability to work independently and contribute effectively within a multidisciplinary research team
- The candidates would be expected to be based in the UK for the duration of the studentship
- Willingness to undertake international travel to work alongside collaborators (up to three weeks at a time)

DESIRABLE CRITERIA

- Research experience in Senegal, Ethiopia and other African countries
- French language proficiency
- Experience in economic evaluation, health technology assessment, or applied econometrics
- Knowledge of diagnostic (or vaccine or pharmaceutical) markets, including manufacturing, procurement, reimbursement, and regulatory frameworks
- Interest in learning qualitative data collection and analysis

Entry Requirements

Applicants should:

- Have a background in economics, health economics or political economy
- Meet LSE's PhD entry requirements
- Hold (or expect to obtain) a Master's degree with:
 - Overall average equivalent to LSE High Merit (minimum 65%)
 - Dissertation mark of at least 65%

Prior expertise in the economics of diagnostics is not required. Travel of up to three weeks at a time will be required. French language skills are desirable. Experience of working in Senegal, Ethiopia or another African setting is desirable.

Application process

To be considered, applicants must apply to the MPhil/PhD in Health Policy at LSE, clearly indicating "Economics of Diagnostics: AHEaD" on their application.

Applicants must submit a research proposal of up to 1,000 words outlining their intended doctoral research within the thematic scope of the studentship and the project, "A New Era in the African Market for Diagnostics: Capturing Health and Economic Benefits – The Role of Point-of-Care Tests." The proposal does not need to reflect the applicant's final PhD topic. However, it must demonstrate the applicant's ability to:

- Clearly identify a relevant knowledge gap
- Justify why the issue is important and timely
- Specify the key stakeholders involved
- Outline appropriate methods and data sources to address the research question rigorously
- Explain the potential policy, market, or system-level pathways through which the findings could generate impact

The proposal should demonstrate conceptual clarity, methodological rigour, and alignment with aspects of the micro–meso–macro focus of the studentship.

Deadline: 25 April 2026

Informal enquiries:

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