



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.

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.