

SAHUDA CONFERENCE 2025

RE-IMAGINING THE HUMANITIES IN THE 21ST CENTURY FOR IMPACT AND EXCELLENCE

22-24 October 2025

2nd Call for Papers

Introduction

For over a century, there has been a view that the Humanities are in a crisis. Some scholars argue that the word "crisis" is inappropriate as it suggests that the Humanities are faced with extinction when all they are doing is what they have always done – reinventing themselves, staying relevant and thriving. Such scholars believe that as long as humans exist, it is inconceivable for the Humanities to be extinct. What cannot be ignored is the relentless drive in the last couple of decades towards education for economic gain, which has seen governments and corporates reduce funding for Humanities and inversely increase the funding of STEM. It might make sense, therefore, to think of the Humanities at consistent crossroads for renewal and not crisis. The real crisis, some scholars in the Humanities argue, is that those in the humanities do not articulate frequently and forcefully enough the value of the Humanities. To that end, while this conference will reflect on the "crisis" discourse, its main thrust will be how the Humanities are repositioning themselves for relevance, impact and excellence in the 21st century.

It is in this context that the South African Humanities Deans Association (SAHUDA) invites scholars, researchers, and practitioners to critically engage with the theme: "Reimagining the Humanities in the 21st Century for Impact and Excellence" at the 2025 edition of the SAHUDA biennial conference to be hosted by Walter Sisulu University. The conference aims to explore how humanities disciplines are reimagined to impact social change and justice, economic development, relevant higher education, and cultural innovation, among other key aspects. Accordingly, this call for papers will have six streams:

1. Digital Humanities and Emerging Technologies

- AI, machine learning, and big data in humanities research
- Digital storytelling and interactive media
- Open-access scholarship and digital archives
- Virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) in cultural studies

2. Humanities for Social Justice and Public Good

- Decolonizing humanities: new narratives and perspectives
- Humanities in policymaking and advocacy
- Race, gender, and identity studies in the 21st century
- Public humanities: engaging communities and activism

3. Interdisciplinary and Transdisciplinary Innovations

- Humanities and STEM collaborations
- Environmental humanities and climate change
- Medical humanities and the future of healthcare ethics
- Business, entrepreneurship, and the humanities

4. The Future of Humanities Education

- Rethinking pedagogy in the digital age
- Humanities and employability: new career pathways
- The role of humanities in leadership and global citizenship
- Equity, access, and inclusion in humanities education

5. Cultural Heritage, Memory, and Global Perspectives

- Preserving indigenous knowledge and cultural heritage
- Postcolonial and transnational humanities
- Migration, displacement, and historical memory
- Museums, archives, and the role of heritage in the digital era

6. Ethics, Philosophy, and the Human Condition

- Ethics in the age of AI and biotechnology
- The role of philosophy in contemporary global challenges
- Human rights, democracy, and the humanities
- The humanities and the search for meaning in a fast-changing world

Conference Fees

Alumni/Academic Staff R2 800
Students R600

Cancellation: Attracts forfeiture of R1 400 for Staff and R300 for students.

The Nelson Mandela Museum tour is part of conference fee and programme

Payment reference number: sahuda0600. Email proof of payment to sahuda@wsu.ac.za

For the student category, proof of registration and payment must be submitted. Forward the documents to sahuda@wsu.ac.za

All registration fees are to be paid using the FIRST NATIONAL BANK ACCOUNT with the following details:

Name of account holder: Walter Sisulu University

Account number: 62099126601

Account type: Public Sector Managed Account

Branch: Mthatha

Branch code: 210521

VAT Number: 4770255679

SWIFT Code: FIRNZAJJ

Submission Guidelines

Abstract Submission Deadline: 31 August 2025

Notification of Acceptance: 15 September 2025

Full Paper Submission Deadline: 17 September 2025

Abstract Requirements:

- Indicate the Stream you have chosen
- Maximum 300 words
- Title of the paper
- Name(s) of the author(s)
- Institutional affiliation(s)
- Email address
- 3-5 keywords

Full Paper Requirements:

- 6,000 – 8,000 words (including references)
- Use Harvard Referencing Style
- Font: Times New Roman, 12pt, double-spaced

Submissions must be submitted via link:

<https://sahuda.wsu.ac.za/>

Conference Format

The conference will feature:

- Keynote addresses from leading scholars and professionals in the Humanities.
- Panel discussions on pressing humanities challenges.
- Workshops and roundtables for knowledge exchange and skills development.
- Networking opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration.

Publication Opportunities

Selected papers will be considered for publication in a Special Issue of an accredited journal to be announced.

Contact Information

For enquiries, please contact: sahuda@wsu.ac.za Faculty of Law, Humanities & Social Sciences (FLHSS), Walter Sisulu University