

## Curriculum Vitae

*Specialization: African literary and cultural studies; African digital humanities, popular cultures, Nollywood, visual cultures*

## Employment

- Associate Professor, University of Kansas: August 2024 –
- Postdoc Researcher, Humboldt University of Berlin, August 2023 – April 2024
- Assistant Professor, University of Kansas: August 2019 – June 2024

## Education

- Ph.D. English, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Canada (October 2018)
- M.A. Performance Studies, University of Ibadan, Nigeria (November 2012)
- B.A. English, University of Ibadan (November 2008)

## Languages

- Yorùbá- Fluent
- English- Fluent
- Pidgin English- Fluent
- Deutsch – Basic

## Courses Taught

- AAAS/ENGL 732: African Literature (Graduate)
- Seminar: Postcolonial Digital Humanities
- AAAS 101: Introduction to African Studies
- AAAS 320: Social Media and African Popular Culture
- AAAS 323: Black Masculinities

### *Prior to KU*

- ENG 112—Literature and Composition: Reading Drama (University of Saskatchewan)
- ENG 114—Literature and Composition: Reading Culture (University of Saskatchewan)
- GES 101/201: Writing and Grammar (University of Ibadan)

## Graduate and Postgraduate Advising Record

### ○ Committee Member: Doctoral

- Ibukun Fasunhan Media, Art, and Performance, University of Regina, Canada, 2024 – present
- Ifeloju Olusanya, KU School of Architecture and Design, 2021 – present
- Ogochukwo Ngwudike, Department of English PhD, 2020 – present

### ○ Committee Member: Masters

- Alexandra Koran, Master's Thesis Examination, AAAS, April 21, 2023
- Phutheho Ranooe, Master's Thesis Examination, *KU School of Design*, August 11, 2023

#### Other Graduate Committee Service:

- *Doctoral Comprehensive Exam (External Examiner) for:*
  - Brigid Enchill, French, Francophone and Italian studies—December 11th, 2020
  - Ogochukwo Ngwudike, Department of English—May 26th, 2020

#### Honors and Awards for Teaching

- 2020: CODESRIA African Academic Diaspora Support to African Universities Award
- 2020: Award for Remote and Hybrid Course Development, Kansas African Studies Center
- 2019: Course Development Award for Experiential Learning, Kansas African Studies Center

#### *Prior to KU*

- 2017 Teacher Scholar Doctoral Award, University of Saskatchewan
- 2013 University of Saskatchewan Graduate Teaching Fellowship, English Dept

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### Research Record

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#### A. Research Publications and/or Creative Works

- **Major Publications or Creative Works**

##### Book-length Publications

- Academic Monograph: *The Algorithmic Age of Personality* (Michigan State University Press, 2025)
- Academic Monograph: *Cultural Netizenship: Social media, Popular culture, and Performance in Nigeria* (Indiana University Press, 2023)
- Co-edited Volume: *Africa Digital Cultures* (Forthcoming, Amsterdam Uni Press, 2026)
- Nonfiction/Essays: *Ambivalent Encounters and Other Essays* (Griots Lounge Publishing, Winnipeg 2024)
- Poetry Collection: *A Phial of Passing Memories* (Mawenzi House Publishers, Toronto Canada, 2025)
- Poetry Collection: *Where the Baedeker Leads*: (September 15, 2021, Mawenzi House Publishers, Toronto Canada)
- Poetry Anthology—*SoroSoke: An Anthology of #EndSARS Poems*. Noireledge, Ibadan, 2022 (with Jumoke Verissimo)
- Co-edited Volume, Special Issue: "African Digital Humanities." *Reviews in Digital Humanities*, 2024.
- Co-edited Volume, Special Issue: "Túndé Kèlání, Global Cinema and Philosophical Engagements" *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 2020.
- Edited Special Issue—#EndSARS. *Ibadan Journal of Humanistic Studies*, 2022.

### **Digital Publications**

- Soro Soke: When Poetry Speaks Up, a digital collaborative project on #EndSARS (with Jumoke Verissimo). <https://brittlepaper.com/2020/10/a-collection-of-poetry-and-reflections-on-the-endsars-protest-curated-by-jumoke-verissimo-and-james-yeku/>
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- Ongoing Digital Project: Digital Nollywood—An Archive of Nollywood Film posters (<https://digitalnollywood.ku.edu/>)

### **Refereed Book Chapters and Journal Articles**

#### **Book Chapters**

- "Cartooning COVID-19 on Facebook." *Global Health, Humanity and the COVID-19 Pandemic: Philosophical and Sociological Challenges and Imperatives*. Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2023
- "Nollywood film posters and print urbanism in Lagos." *The Routledge Companion to Media and the City*. Edited By Erica Stein, Germaine R. Halegoua, Brendan Kredell. Routledge, 2022
- "The Police Is Your Friend: Instagram Comedy and the Defamiliarization of the Postcolonial State." *Routledge Handbook of African Popular Culture*. Ed. Grace Musila, Routledge, 2022
- "The Regeneration of Play: Popular Culture as Infrapolitics on Instagram," *Youth and popular culture in Africa: media, music, and politics*, edited by Paul Ugor. Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2021
- "On Afropolitan Im/mobilities and the Digital", *Intellectual Traditions of African Literature - Cambridge UP Volume*, edited by Cajetan Iheka and Jeanne-Marie Jackson. (In production)
- "The Obamas as Memes in Nigerian Visual Culture": *Africa, Africans and the United States in the Age of Obama*. Ed. Ebenezer Obadare (Accepted)
- "Digital Citizens of an Analog State: Infrastructure and Epistemic Closure in Nigeria" (Under review)
- "Resisting Pastoral Authority: Of Scriptural Texts and Social Media Influencer," *Power, Wealth, and the Emergent Religious Elite in Africa*. Eds. Obadare and Adebani (Under review)

#### **Journal Articles**

- "Social Media Images as Digital Sources for West African Urban History," *Oxford Research Encyclopedias: African History*, 2024.
- "Encountering Mudi Yahaya's Nina Fischer-Stephan's Respectful Gaze in Lagos." *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 2024.
- "#MakeNigeriaGreatAgain: Donald Trump in Nollywood's Social Media." *The Black Scholar* 53.1 (2023): 19-34.

- “Digital African Literatures and the Coloniality of Data.” *Cambridge Journal of Postcolonial Literary Inquiry* 9.3 (2022): 381-398
- “Introduction,” “Túndé Kèlání, Global Cinema and Philosophical Engagements.” *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 32.4 (2020) 343-346.
- “From Google to Facebook: Visual Constructions of the Past in Nigeria.” *African Studies Review*, 2021, 1-25. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/asr.2020.118> (with Ayobami Ojebode)
- “Deference to Paper: Textuality, Materiality, and Literary Digital Humanities in Africa.” *Digital Studies/le champ numérique* (DSCN) Open Issue 2020 10(1), None. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.16995/dscn.357>
- Chinua Achebe’s There was a Country and the digital publics of African literature. *Digital Scholarship in the Humanities* 36. 1 (2021): 209–223
- Anti-Afropolitan ethics and the performative politics of online scam-baiting. *Social Dynamics: A journal of African studies* 46.2 (2020): 240-258
- Tricksters and female warriors: womanist interweavings from Oríta to Wakanda. *Journal of African Literature Association* 15.1 (2020): 107-124
- #EndSars and the Afterlives of Hashtags. “Introduction: # EndSARS and the Afterlives of Hashtags.” *Ibadan Journal of Humanistic Studies* 32.1 (2022): 11-16
- We are live now: The diaspora inflections of Nigerian political livestreaming." *Ibadan Journal of Humanistic Studies* 32.1 (2022): 102-128
- “In Praise of Ostentation: Social Class in Lagos and the Aesthetics of Nollywood's Ówàmbè Genres.” *African Studies* (2021): 434–450
- “Encountering Mudi Yahaya’s Nina Fischer-Stephan’s Respectful Gaze in Lagos.” *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 2024.
- “Kunle Afolayan’s Tragic Women and Nollywood’s Necropolitics “(Ongoing Journal Article)

Prior to KU**Book Chapters**

- “The Hashtag as Archive: Internet Memes and Nigeria’s Social Media Election.” *Art, Creativity, and Politics in Africa and the Diaspora*. Eds. Adedunni Adunni & Falola Toyin. African Histories and Modernities, Palgrave Macmillan, 2018. Print
- “From the Groove to Cyberspace: Lagbaja and the Technologizing of the Mask.” *The Crossroads: African Literature and The Emerging Global Cultures*. Eds. Ayo Kehinde, Rotimi O. Fasan Gliencke: Galda Verlag, 2017
- “The Figurine and Alter/native Film Narratives in Nollywood.” *Auteuring Nollywood*, Eds. Shina Afolayan. Ibadan: University Press. 2014. 165-186

**Journal Articles**

- “ICT and Use of English in Nigeria” *Use of English*. Ibadan: General Studies Programme Press, University of Ibadan 2013. (co-author)
- “Thighs Fell Apart: Online Fan Fiction, and African Writing in a Digital Age.” *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 29.3 (2017): 261-275
- “Akpos Don Come Again: Nigerian Cyberpop Hero as Trickster.” *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 28.3 (2016):245-261—**Winner of the 2017 African Literature Association Best Article Award for the most outstanding article in African literary studies.**

- **Minor Publications or Creative Works**

- **Reviews**

- Yékú, James. "Everything Is Sampled: Digital and Print Mediations in African Arts and Letters by Akin Adesokan. *Journal of Postcolonial Literary Inquiry*, 2024.
    - African Literature in the Digital Age: Class and Sexual Politics in New Writing from Nigeria and Kenya by Shola Adenekan." *Research in African Literatures* 52.1 (2021): 202-204
    - "A Box Full of Darkness: The Spaces of Trauma in Jumoke Verissimo's 'A Small Silence.'" *Africa in Words*, 2020. <https://africainwords.com/2020/06/10/a-box-full-of-darkness-the-spaces-of-trauma-in-jumoke-verissimos-a-small-silence/>
    - "John Campbell and Matthew T. Page. Nigeria. What Everyone Needs to Know." Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018. xiv+ 218 pp. *African Studies Review* 63.4 (2020): E63-E64
    - Yeku, James. "Naturalizing Africa: Ecological Violence, Agency, and Postcolonial Resistance in African Literature by Cajetan Iheka." *Research in African Literatures* 50.1 (2019): 223-224

- **Blog Posts, Op-eds and Other Public-facing Scholarship**

- "Air Peace: On Decolonial Wings." *Premium Times*, 2024, <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/opinion/684640-air-peace-on-decolonial-wings-by-james-yeku.html>
    - "The Uses of Others: Onyeka Nwelue and African Literature in the Age of Cancel Culture." *The Lagos Review*, 2023. <https://thelagosreview.ng/the-uses-of-others-onyeka-nwelue-and-african-literature-in-the-age-of-cancel-culture-james-yeku/>
    - How AFCON proved its critics wrong. *Aljazeera*, 2022 <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2022/2/9/how-afcon-proved-its-critics-wrong>
    - Behind concerns over AFCON is a culture of disdain. *New Frame*, 2022 <https://www.newframe.com/behind-concerns-over-afcon-is-a-culture-of-disdain/>
    - "Diaspora and My Unpackable Library." Crusoe Books. 2021 <https://crusoesbooks.com/2021/05/02/diaspora-and-my-unpackable-library/>
    - "Rare Books and the Stories they Tell." April 19, 2021. <https://jamesyeku.com/2021/08/19/rare-books-and-the-stories-they-tell/>
    - The Multiple Meanings of #EndSARS. *Africaisacountry*. 2020 <https://africaisacountry.com/2020/11/the-multiple-meanings-of-endsars>
    - The Social Media Influencer and The Freezing of Pentecostal Power in Nigeria. *Premium Times*,

2020. <https://opinion.premiumtimesng.com/2020/09/17/the-social-media-influencer-and-the-freezing-of-pentecostal-power-in-nigeria-by-james-yeku/>
- Covid-19 and the Closing of the Nigerian Mind. *Premium Times*, 2020  
<https://opinion.premiumtimesng.com/2020/03/21/covid-19-and-the-closing-of-the-nigerian-mind-by-james-yeku/>
  - Africa's Narrative Agency: Teaching Pius Adesanmi. *Premium Times*, 2020  
<https://opinion.premiumtimesng.com/2020/03/10/africas-narrative-agency-teaching-pius-adesanmi-by-james-yeku/>
  - “#EndSARS shows why the police is not ‘your friend.’ Africa at LSE. London School of Economics. <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/africaatlse/2020/11/12/endsars-shows-why-the-police-is-not-your-friend/>
  - The racist myth of the ‘physical’ African football team. *Aljazeera*, 2018  
<https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2018/6/27/the-racist-myth-of-the-physical-african-football-team>

## B. Scholarly Presentations

### Major Presentations ( A Selection)

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|------|---|
| 2022 | “Yorùbá Nollywood and African Digital Humanities.” MLA Panel: Digital Humanities and Multilingualism, January 2022  |
| 2021 | “Digital Nollywood and Digital Monolingualism.” Digital Storytelling Symposium. Institute for Digital Research in the Humanities, May 11  |
| 2021 | Taking “African Cartoons” Seriously as a Digital Humanities Project.” Beyond Censorship: Literature, Film, Media and Public Discourse. 46th Annual meeting of the African Literature Association, May 26-29 |
| 2021 | “Career Trajectories and the Job Market in African Literary Studies.” Beyond Censorship: Literature, Film, Media and Public Discourse. 46th Annual meeting of the African Literature Association, May 26-29 |
| 2021 | “Tropes of the Unsaid.” Beyond Censorship: Literature, Film, Media and Public Discourse. 46th Annual meeting of the African Literature Association, May 26-29, (Panel Chair)                                |
| 2021 | “Digital Humanities in Africa.” 3rd Lagos Summer School in Digital Humanities University of Lagos, May 9-15   |
| 2021 | “What is African Digital Humanities?” African DH Workshop. University of Legon, Ghana, July 15  |
| 2021 | “Deleting Facebook: The Task of African Digital Humanities” Paper presented at Africa Knows—Digital Humanities Panel, University of Leiden. January 27  |

- 2020 “The Politics of the Archives: From the Print Era to the Digital Age.” African Studies Association 63rd Virtual Annual Meeting: The Hour of Decision. Thursday, November 19 – 21
- 2020 “Potentials of Digital Humanities in Africa and Impacts to the world.” Digital Humanities of Nigeria Virtual Panel. May 30
- 2020 “African Children, Agency, and the Politics of Representation.” African Studies Association 63rd Virtual Annual Meeting: The Hour of Decision. Thursday, November 19 – 21 (Panel organized)
- 2020 “The Social Media Stage of Nigerian Children Comedy.” African Studies Association 63rd Virtual Annual Meeting: The Hour of Decision. Thursday, November 19 – 21

#### **Invited Presentations (A Selection)**

- 2024 Centre of African Studies, University of Copenhagen: *Africa Seminar 'The Sound of Memes: Cultural Netizenship and The Intermediality of the Memesphere'* March 20.
- 2024 Oxford School of Global and Area Studies: *African Studies Research Seminar| African Literature and Cancel Culture: The Algorithmic Age of Personality* February 29.
- 2024 College of Arts and Science, University of Saskatchewan: Black History Month Celebrations of Excellence in Arts and Literature Panel| February 27, 2024.
- 2024 Dartmouth College: *Memetics and Mimesis: The Memosphere in the Public Sphere*. “Cultural Netizenship and The Intermediality of the Nigerian Memesphere” | February 28, 2024.
- 2023 “The Humanities and Technology in the 21st Century.” Annual International Conference, Adeleke University Nigeria (Keynote Talk, November 24)
- 2023 Screening and Panel on “Taiwo Shango,” The German Historical Museum, Berlin. December 8
- 2023 “African Literature and Cancel Culture: The Algorithmic Age of Personality.” Institute of Ethnology and African Studies, Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, Germany.
2023. “Popular Aesthetics and Visual Economies of Influence on Social Media,” Popular Visual Media Beyond "The West" Interdisciplinary Workshop, University of



Köln, Germany, June 14

- 2023 NELK Workshops: Goethe-Universität Frankfurt: “#EndSARS: Literary-Cultural Activism and the Afterlives of Hashtags” June 6
- 2023 “The Archival Possibilities of Social Media.” The University of Wisconsin Madison, Africa at Noon, African Studies Program
- 2022 “The Promises and Perils of the Social Media Archive.” African Studies Seminar. John Hopkins University. September 16, 2022
- 2022 “Social Media Aesthetics and the Digital Afterlife of Old Nollywood.” African Development Seminar, Cornell University. September 15, 2022
- 2022 “Authors Speak: New Books in African Literature,” African Literature Association Lecture Series
- 2022. “Cultural Netizenship” #IAS Virtual Book Talk, Northwestern University in Qatar
- 2022 “Nigeria’s Twitter Ban and the Logic of Cultural Netizenship” CARGC Colloquium: Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania, February 24,
- 2022 “Cultural Netizenship and the Production of the Social Media Influencer in Nigeria,” Social Media and Society Conference, University of Michigan
- 2021 “Nollywood’s Africa and the Inventions of the American Mind.” African Studies Association Teacher Workshop Session. 13 November
- 2021 “Literary Digital Humanities in Africa.” University of Oye-Ekiti, Nigeria
- 2021 “The Social Web and the Cultural Politics of Fake Nollywood Posters.” Department of English Seminar, University of Ghana, Legon. October 11
- 2021 The #Sorosoke Generation That is #Nottooyoungtorun. January 9 Collective, Lagos, Nigeria (Keynote Speech)
- 2020 “Africa and the Debates in the Digital Humanities,” University of Chicago DH forum
- 2020 Digital Nollywood. Hall Center Digital Seminar. University of Kansas
- 2020 “Teaching and Theorizing African Digital Humanities.” African Digital Humanities Colloquium. Princeton University. November

Prior to KU

- 2019 “Anti-Afropolitan Impulses and the Performative Politics of Online Scambaiting.” Paper presented at Black Studies at 50 Conference, University of Austin, Austin Texas, March 14-16, 2019
- 2018 “African Literature in a Digital Age.” Department of English, University of Winnipeg, Manitoba. May 12
- 2019 “Anti-Afropolitan Impulses and the Performative Politics of Online

- Scambaiting.” Black Studies at 50, U of Texas, Austin, March 14-16
- 2018 “The Digital Environments of African Literature.” Paper presented at the 2018 African Literature Association Conference. “The Environments of African Literature, Washington DC, United States, May 23-27
- 2017 “Performing the Political Self: The Cultural Supplements of Online Activism.” Paper presented at the Internationale Dissidenz Annual Conference “International Dissidence: Rule and Resistance in a Globalized World,” Frankfurt, Germany, March 2-4.
- 2017 “Materiality and the Text of African Literature in a Digital Age.” Paper presented at Digital Africas: Texts, Publics, Genre at Amherst College, Amherst MA, United States. October 12-14
- 2016 “Rewriting’ Things Fall Apart: Online Fan fiction and the Reinvention of African literature.” Paper presented at the 2016 MLA Convention, Austin, Texas. January 9.
- 2015 “A Cultural Theory of Social media and Agency.” Paper presented at Literary Eclectic, University of Saskatchewan, October 2-3
- 2015 “Photo-based Memes, Identity, and Politics in Nigerian Networked Society.” Paper presented at: African Misperceived: Beyond Africa as a Laboratory (2015 Northwestern Program of African Studies); NWU, Evanston, Illinois, April 10-11
- 2012 “Ijapa on Facebook: Akpors as Trickster Figure?” Paper presented at the Ademola Dasylva Colloquium on Oral Literature(s) in the Age of New Media at the Institute of African Studies, Ibadan, Nigeria, October 25
- 2011 “E-jab: Social Media and the Role of Women in Egypt’s Arab Spring.” Paper presented at the African Studies Students Association Colloquium at IAS, Ibadan, Nigeria, September 7

- **Others**

Panel/Conferences and DH Events organized at KU

- 09 March 2023 – African Digital Indabas #3: Pandemic Mediations
- 06 October 2022 – Third Annual African Digital Humanities Symposium
- 09 Nov 2021 - Second Annual African Digital Humanities Symposium
- 28 Sep 2021 - African DH Indaba #2: African Literature in the Digital Age
- 29 Apr 2021 - Digitizing Onitsha Market Literature (Special Event on African DH)
- 10 Dec 2020 - African DH Indaba #1: Mapping Detention Centers in Kenya and the US
- 08 Oct 2020 – First Annual Digital Humanities Symposium
- 09 Apr 2020 - African DH Web Forum, Spring 2020

**C. Grants and/or other Funded Projects**

- **External Funding**

- 2023 Alexander Von Humboldt Postdoctoral Fellowship, Humboldt University of Berlin, Germany
- 2023 CEDITRAA International Guest Fellowship, Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, Germany
- 2022 Fellow, Center for Advanced Internet Studies, Bochum Germany
- 2021 Co-Principal Investigator: The Hall Center for the Humanities & the IDRH Mellon Foundation Grant for "Stories for All" (Declined)

**CI. Honors and Awards for Research**

- 2023 Department of African and African American Studies Research Excellence Award
- 2023 Honorable Mention for *Where The Baedeker Leads*, African Literature Association Best Book Award (Creative Writing)
- 2023 KASC Travel Grant, University of Kansas
- 2022 Pius Adesanmi Early Career Research Excellence Award. Canadian Association of African Studies, Canada
- 2022 KASC Travel Grant, University of Kansas
- 2021 KASC Travel Grant, University of Kansas
- 2021 New Faculty General Research Fund, College of Liberal Arts and Science, KU
- 2020 Institute for Digital Research in the Humanities Digital Humanities Fellowships
- 2019 Hall Center for The Humanities Research Travel Grant
- 2019 Institute for Digital Research in the Humanities Seed Grant

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**Service Record**


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**A. University of Kansas**

Departmental Service (*Department of African and African American Studies*)

1. Managing Editor, *Africana Annual*, an interdisciplinary journal of Africana Studies, 2022-present
2. Ambassador, Center for Teaching Excellence, 2019-2021
3. Member Curriculum Committee, 2021-present
4. Member Grievances Committee, 2021-present
5. Annual Marwa Lecture Committee Member, 2019-present

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Service

1. Member, Executive committee of the Kansas African Studies Center, 2021-present
4. College Student Marshall, Hooding Ceremony, AY 2020-2021; AY 2022-2023

## University of Kansas Service

1. Search Committee Member, African History Lecturer, Department of History, AY 2024-2025
2. Search Committee Member, Global Indigenous Art, Spencer Museum, AY 2023-2024
3. Member, HCH Sias Graduate Fellowship in the Humanities Review Committee, AY 2022-2023
4. Co-convener, Hall Center for the Humanities DH seminars (2020-2023)
5. KASC/ KU Librarian Search Committee member for an Africana Librarian AY 2022-2023
6. Summer African Language Institute (SALI) committee member, AY 2020-2021
7. IDRH Search Committee for Co-director for Institute for Digital Research in the Humanities (IDRH) AY 2019-2020, member.
8. Peer Reviewer, KU Undergraduate Journal, 2021
9. University's Scholars and Global Scholars programs (Students Essays Reviewer, 2020)

**B. Professional Service Outside the University**

Local, State, Regional

National and International

- Member, African Literature Association Award Committee, 2024
- Editorial Member, *Hyperrhiz: New Media Cultures*
- Editorial Member, *Journal of African Cultural Studies*
- Editorial Member, *Nordic Journal of African Studies*
- Reviews Editor, *African Studies Review*
- Reviewer, ADHO Digital Humanities Conference, 2021-2024
- Secretary, Global Outlook: Digital Humanities, 2020-2022
- External Examiner, PhD Dissertation, Carleton University, Ottawa Canada, 2022
- External Examiner, PhD Thesis, University of Milan, Italy, 2024.
- External Reviewer—South Africa's National Research Foundation (NRF), 2021.