

**LEADERSHIP FOR INNOVATION AND EXCELLENCE IN ACCELERATING
RESEARCH ON WOMEN'S HEALTH (LEA-WH) PROGRAM**

A Giant Step Forward for Women's Health in Africa.

FELLOWSHIP SELECTION CRITERIA

2026 LEA-WH Fellowship Application

Application Deadline: 11:59 PM EAT on Friday, February 20, 2026

Applications must be submitted using the online application system at

<https://lea-wh.kgs.ac.ke/>

We suggest printing these instructions to use as a reference while completing the application.

About the LEA-WH Fellowship

The **L**eadership for Innovation and **E**xcellence in **A**ccelerating Research on **W**omen's **H**ealth (**LEA WH**) Fellowship Program, situated at the Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI), aims to train up to 20 researchers and product innovators/developers focused on women's health per year.

Based on identified needs, this program focuses primarily on building scientific leadership, preparing African professionals for leadership in women's health research and product development/innovation.

- ♣ **Priority Topics:** Women's health areas of interest include, but are not limited to: contraceptive technologies, sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and other reproductive tract infections, including vaginal microbiome research, menstrual health, pelvic floor disorders (urogynaecology and fistulae) and others-fibroids, endometriosis, cervical cancer, menopause, and infertility.
- ♣ **Geographic Focus:** Applications accepted only from African researchers and product developers/innovators working in Africa. Africa represents the region with the greatest capacity gap in Women's Health Research & Development. (Note: The primary language of instruction for the fellowship is English)
- ♣ A 12-month fellowship with on-site and online components.
- ♣ Research and development, and leadership.
- ♣ **U.S. National Academy of Medicine (NAM):** In addition to the training organized by KEMRI, the U.S. National Academy of Medicine (NAM) will also match each Scholar with a mentor and organize their travel to the NAM and other events to expand their professional networks.
- ♣ **Gender Balance:** Open to all genders working in Women's Health (WH).

Scholar selection

a) Common selection criteria for all tracks:

♣ **Education Background:**

Terminal degree with relevant training to support work in women's health research or product development/innovation, with a minimum qualification of a:

- Bachelor's Degree – for the Product Developers/Innovators Track (**RHR track**)
- Master's Degree – for the Reproductive Health Researchers Track (**PD/I track**)

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♣ **Professional Experience:**

- A minimum of 3-8 years of work experience post-terminal degree – PD/I track
- A minimum of 10 – 15 years post graduate work experience – RHR track
- With At least 2 years of demonstrated involvement in women's health research or product/innovation engagement (Out of the total post graduate work experience).

♣ **Innovation Development:** A clear concept for a women's health solution, research project, product, or innovation intended to be further developed during the program.

♣ **Demographic and Geographic Focus:** Individuals of African nationality currently working in Africa.

♣ **Language Proficiency:** Fluency in spoken and written English is required.

♣ **Institutional Support:** Strong support from an institution or collaboration opportunities that can enhance the project's impact and development.

♣ **Relevant Fields of Expertise:** Candidates from various backgrounds, such as biotechnology, information technology, and other health-related fields, are encouraged to apply, provided they meet the core criteria outlined above.

b) Track-specific criteria:

Reproductive Health Researchers Track (RHR Track):

- ♣ Established expertise in women's Health research
- ♣ Three publications with at least one first-authored peer-reviewed publication in women's health and the second and third publications as the second or senior author
- ♣ Research independence plan showing transition from supervised to independent work
- ♣ Evidence of emerging leadership potential with supervision or service examples

Product Developers/Innovators track (PD/I):

- ♣ Any professional background with a women's health innovation concept
- ♣ Demonstrated technical/business expertise relevant to product development
- ♣ Existing prototype, business plan, or development-stage women's health solution

c) Four-stage selection process:

- i. Digital application portal with applications, including research/innovation proposals or product concept notes and institutional support. Applications will be received from **13th January to 20th February 2026**.
- ii. Expert review panel assessment by an international panel of women's health experts constituted by KEMRI and NAM (shortlist top 35-40 candidates).
- iii. Video interview assessment from **30th March to 2nd April 2026** covering research/innovation expertise and leadership potential
- iv. Final selection with regional diversity and gender balance considerations. Successful applicants will be contacted in **April 2026**.

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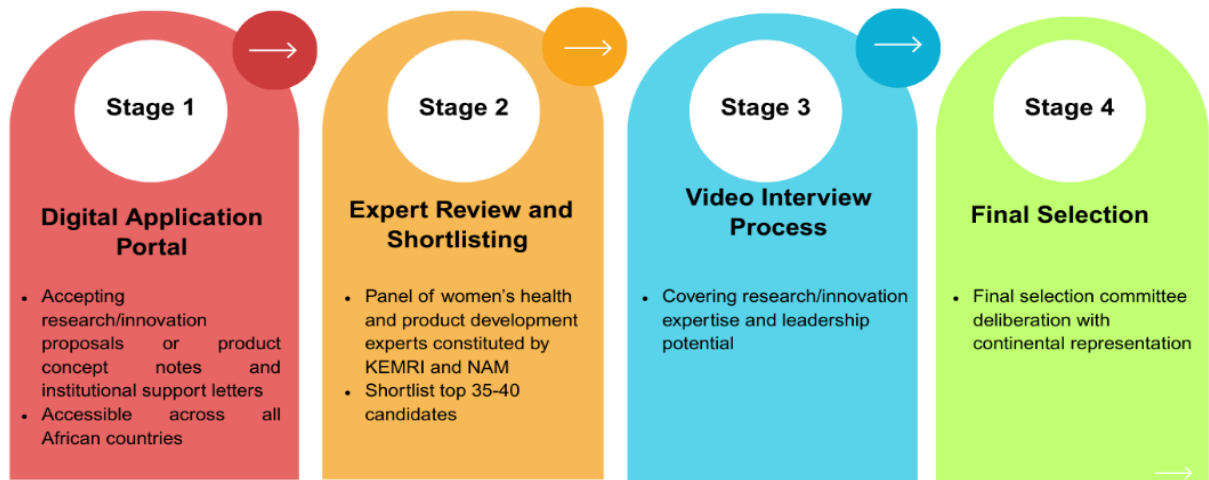


Fig. 1 Selection process for LEA-WH scholars' program

Submit Application

In the LEA-WH Application Portal, when all required sections of the application are completed, click **"Submit as FINAL"** at the end of the application page. **Please note: your application is not considered complete until you submit it.**

You can update your application before the Call for Applications closing date. If you have any questions about or problems with your application, please contact lea-wh@rctp.or.ke or WhatsApp us on +254113417746