



## Southern African Conference for Artificial Intelligence Research | SACAIR2026

SACAIR2026 Organising Committee

### First Call for Papers: SACAIR 2026

The Organizing Committee of the South African Conference for Artificial Intelligence Research (SACAIR) invites the submission of full papers for presentation at the 7th Southern African Conference for Artificial Intelligence [SACAIR2026](#), hosted by the University of the KwaZulu-Natal. The conference will be held from 30 November – 4 December 2026 in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa.

The SACAIR series of conferences is the premier Artificial Intelligence conference in Southern Africa that has been held since 2019 and provides a platform for researchers and practitioners from academia and industry to meet and share cutting-edge developments. It provides a publishing venue for Artificial Intelligence researchers from across the academy and thus aims to promote multi-, inter-, and trans-disciplinary research and collaboration. The conference will bring together nationally and internationally established and emerging researchers from various disciplines, including Computer Science, Mathematics, Physics, Statistics, Informatics, Humanities, Philosophy and Law.

The conference theme, **Power, Justice, and the Governance of AI** has not been more relevant than now, as generative AI permeates through society at an unprecedented rate. The rapid global deployment of powerful AI systems is triggering critical challenges for all sectors of society. Regulatory frameworks are struggling to keep pace with technological development; a handful of corporations and states command disproportionate influence over the direction of AI; and the consequences of governance failure—algorithmic bias, automated misinformation, mass surveillance, and autonomous harm—fall disproportionately on those least able to bear them. These problems demand a genuinely interdisciplinary response: one that draws simultaneously on computer science, information systems, philosophy, and law, and one that insists on the perspectives of the Global South as central rather than peripheral to the conversation.

SACAIR 2026 calls on researchers across all disciplines to engage with AI governance as a shared challenge. Computer scientists are developing technical tools for auditing, explainability, and

safety certification; legal scholars are debating and crafting regulatory frameworks and accountability mechanisms; information systems researchers are studying how organisations adopt, resist, and subvert AI governance; philosophers are clarifying the values at stake and the ethical principles that should anchor policy. In the Southern African context, these questions acquire particular urgency: as nations across the continent navigate the adoption of AI systems largely developed elsewhere, questions of data sovereignty, technological self-determination, algorithmic justice, and AI for inclusive development become inseparable from broader questions of social justice. It is hoped that SACAIR 2026 will provide a forum where African voices can shape a more equitable AI future.

The conference welcomes significant, previously unpublished, contributions to all major fields of artificial intelligence in theoretical, application and practical aspects. We especially invite original contributions that speak to the conference theme and, in particular, trans-disciplinary research contributions.

## Conference Structure

The conference will be held in person and will be structured as follows:

- 30 November 2026: **Student Unconference**
- 1 December 2026: **Tutorials and Workshops**
- 2 – 4 December 2026: **Main Conference**

## Conference Tracks and Scope

Due to its multi-disciplinary nature, the conference will be organized around the following tracks:

- 1. Traditional AI, Symbolic AI, and Data-Driven AI (Computer Science)**
- 2. Socio-technical and human-centered AI (Information Systems)**
- 3. Responsible and Ethical AI (Philosophy and Law / Humanities)**
- 4. Inter- and trans-disciplinary AI research**

These tracks represent different academic disciplines and authors are advised to carefully select an appropriate track on submission to ensure the paper is reviewed by experts in that field. We solicit original, unpublished research in the following areas:

**Traditional AI, Symbolic AI, and Data-Driven AI (Computer Science) (Computer Science)** track  
Submissions will primarily be reviewed by a **computer science (CS)** program committee, so the contribution should be a CS contribution developed according to accepted CS research strategies, within a particular sub-field of research. Topics in this track include:

- Knowledge Representation & Reasoning and Symbolic AI
- Optimization & Computational Intelligence
- Agent Based Systems and Agentic AI
- AI Applications
- Deep Learning & Neural Networks
- Machine Learning Theory and Methods
- Natural Language Processing
- Computer Vision
- Reinforcement Learning

**Socio-technical and human-centred AI (Information Systems) track** An **information systems (IS)** program committee will primarily review the submission. The contribution should be developed according to accepted IS research strategies, primarily socio-technical. Please do not submit to this track if you do not have an IS contribution. Application papers such as testing an algorithm within a new software system belong to the CS track. Topics in this track include:

- AI Information Systems
- Socio-Technical AI Systems
- Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence
- Generative AI Applications
- AI for and in Business, including AI adoption
- AI for Sustainable Development and Social Good

**Responsible and Ethical AI (Philosophy and Law) track** Contributions should be acceptable to the **Humanities or Law communities**. This track, and only this track, will accept both full papers and extended abstracts. Both full papers and extended abstracts will undergo a double-blind peer review, and only full papers will be considered for publication in either the Springer CCIS proceedings or the online conference proceedings. Extended abstracts will be considered for presentation at the main conference. Submissions to this track can be either a full paper submission complying with the specifications below or an extended abstract in PDF format of at least 4 pages (1500+) words. Topics in this track include:

- Data Ethics
- Machine Ethics
- Ethics of Socio-robotics
- Neuro Ethics
- AI and the Law
- Responsible AI Governance

**Inter- and trans-disciplinary AI research track** – Submissions should be genuinely interdisciplinary or trans-disciplinary, adopting research strategies from, and motivating a contribution in, different disciplines. Submissions to this track are required to include a motivation for the submission being interdisciplinary or trans-disciplinary. This will assist the technical chairs to assign appropriate reviewers.

## **Paper Submission and Review**

All full papers and extended abstracts should report original research that has yet to be published and has not been submitted for publication or consideration elsewhere. Authors are invited to submit an abstract of their intended contribution a week before submission of the final paper. The abstract will assist the Program Committee with reviewer assignments and to ensure alignment to the track.

Note that extended abstracts will only be considered in the Responsible and Ethical AI (Philosophy and Law) track. Both full papers and extended abstracts will undergo double-blind peer review, complying with the requirements of the South African DHET research output policy.

## Important Submission Information:

Full paper submissions must be between 12 and 15 pages (excluding references-and references should not exceed two pages) and extended abstract submissions must be at least 4 pages long (1500+ words). Note: Extended Abstracts will NOT be accepted in any track other than the Responsible and Ethical AI (Philosophy and Law) track. All submissions must be in pdf format and must adhere strictly to Springer guidelines for authors. Papers that do not comply with these guidelines may be desk-rejected. Authors may prepare their submission using either the MS Word template or the LaTeX template that may be downloaded at <https://www.springer.com/gp/computer-science/lncs/conference-proceedings-guidelines>. This page also has instructions for authors.

**Submissions must be made at this Easy Chair url:**

<https://easychair.org/conferences/?conf=sacair2026>

Authors of papers accepted for publication in the Springer CCIS volume, will be required to submit a signed Consent to Publish form, clarifies the rights of authors and the publisher. Before final acceptances, submissions will be vetted by a plagiarism-checking tool.

## Proceedings

Two proceedings volumes will be published: A selection of the top accepted full papers, based on reviews, will appear in a volume of the Springer series – (Communications in Computer and Information Science – CCIS) (approval pending). Springer CCIS is accredited as a journal by the South African DHET. A second volume, the online proceedings, includes papers that were not mature enough for the CCIS volume, but had favourable reviews. The online proceedings will be published with an ISBN number and will qualify for DHET subsidy as a conference proceedings output. An option for open access, at an additional cost, will be available to authors.

## Important Dates

- **Abstracts Submission:** 10 August 2026
- **Submission of Full Papers:** 17 August 2026
- **Acceptance notification:** 28 September 2026
- **Camera-ready papers:** 5 October 2026
- **Conference:** 30 November to 4 December 2026

## Conference Organization

### 1. Conference Chair

- Mr Anban Pillay (University of KwaZulu-Natal)

### 2. Program Co-Chairs

- Prof Terence van Zyl (University of Johannesburg)
- Dr Edgar Jembere (University of KwaZulu-Natal)

### 3. SACAIR Steering Committee

- Prof AURONA Gerber (Stellenbosch University)
- Prof Emma Ruttkamp-Bloem (University of Pretoria)

- Prof Alta de Waal (University of Pretoria)
- Dr Edgar Jembere (University of KwaZulu-Natal)
- Mr Anban Pillay (University of KwaZulu-Natal)
- Prof Terence van Zyl (University of Johannesburg)
- Prof Mehrdad Ghaziasgar (University of the Western Cape)

## Contact Details

- Paper submission, acceptance and publishing enquiries: [tc@sacair.org.za](mailto:tc@sacair.org.za)
- General enquiries: [enquiries@sacair.org.za](mailto:enquiries@sacair.org.za)
- Conference Website: <https://2026.sacair.org.za/>

## Social Media

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