



Call for Applications

Kingsgate Young Scholars Academy (Cohort II)

Building a Critical Mass of Youth Change Agents
in Fragile and Conflict-Affected States (FCAS) in Africa



The Kingsgate Young Scholars Academy is a flagship programme of the Kingsgate Advisors Institute, established to equip young Africans—particularly those living in fragile and conflict-affected states (FCAS)—with the analytical, policy, and leadership capabilities required to lead evidence-based policy change and economic transformation.

The Academy was launched in April 2025 in response to a clear and persistent gap: while millions of young people in Africa's fragile contexts are affected by conflict, displacement, weak institutions, and economic instability, they are rarely positioned as producers of policy evidence or as agents shaping solutions. Instead, they are often treated solely as beneficiaries of interventions.

Cohort II of the Kingsgate Young Scholars Academy builds on the pilot phase by deepening the Academy's focus on policy-oriented training, applied research, and structured on-the-job learning, with the explicit objective of preparing young women and men to participate meaningfully in policy processes and development initiatives at the community and national levels.



Why This Academy Exists

Countries classified as fragile and conflict-affected are characterised by weak growth, extreme poverty, fragile institutions, macroeconomic instability, and recurring political and social shocks. Evidence shows that countries that successfully exit fragility do so through far-reaching institutional reform, economic diversification, and participatory governance.

Yet, fragile contexts continue to suffer from a shortage of locally grounded policy evidence and a lack of young professionals with the skills to generate, interpret, and use data to inform decision-making. Conventional tertiary education rarely equips graduates with the tools needed to analyse policy problems in fragile settings or to operate within real policy and institutional environments.

The Kingsgate Young Scholars Academy addresses this gap by combining context-specific policy training, applied research, and direct exposure to real policy and development work.



Who Should Apply

The Academy is designed for motivated young Africans who demonstrate strong intellectual curiosity and a commitment to improving development outcomes in fragile contexts.

You are encouraged to apply if you:

- Are between 18 and 35 years old;
- Are an African citizen who currently resides in a country in Africa classified as a fragile or conflict-affected state ([per the IMF classification](#)); or you currently reside in the diaspora but have lived in a country in Africa classified as a fragile or conflict-affected state (per IMF classification) for at least 10 years before the age of 20, and your parents are also from a country in Africa classified as a fragile or conflict-affected state.
- Are a student, recent graduate, graduate student, or early-career professional in economics, public policy, international relations, political science, development studies or related disciplines (or can demonstrate a strong interest despite a different academic background);
- Have a clear interest in economic policy, evidence-based decision-making, and development practice;
- Aspire to careers in policy research, think tanks, government, international development organisations, consulting, or policy-oriented entrepreneurship.



What the Academy Offers

The Kingsgate Young Scholars Academy is not a degree-awarding programme. It is a practice-oriented policy training and professional development pathway designed to prepare participants for real-world roles in policy ecosystems. Certificates of completion will be awarded to participants who complete the programme.

Participants in Cohort II will benefit from the following:

Policy-Oriented Training

- Structured learning modules covering interdisciplinary policy analysis, economic policy, and policy design in fragile and conflict-affected contexts;
- Training grounded in African realities, rather than abstract or purely theoretical frameworks;
- Emphasis on analytical thinking, policy writing, and communicating evidence to decision-makers.

Leadership and Change-management Capability Development

- Scholars will be equipped with the confidence, ethical grounding, and practical skills required to navigate fragile contexts, lead policy change or reform efforts under conditions of uncertainty, and translate locally grounded evidence into policy influence.
- Scholars will develop the capacity to engage governments, development partners, and communities; manage political economy constraints; and drive incremental but catalytic change in contexts affected by conflict, displacement, weak institutions, and macroeconomic instability.



Applied Research and Capstone Work

- Engagement with real datasets and policy questions relevant to fragile states;
- Supervised analytical projects and policy briefs;
- A capstone project focused on a concrete policy challenge, with feedback from experienced faculty and practitioners

On-the-Job Learning and Internship Component

- All scholars will participate in a structured on-the-job component, serving as interns with Kingsgate Advisors Institute and, where possible, partner institutions;
- Scholars will work alongside researchers and policy practitioners on live projects, gaining first-hand exposure to how policy analysis is conducted, commissioned, and used;
- This component is designed to build professional discipline, institutional awareness, and job-ready skills that are rarely taught in traditional schools.





Mentorship and Professional Development

- Continuous mentorship from Kingsgate faculty, fellows, and research associates;
- Career guidance for pathways in policy research, public service, international organisations, and consulting;
- Feedback on analytical outputs and professional growth.

Portfolio, Network, and Career Signalling

- Graduates leave the Academy with a credible portfolio of policy-relevant work;
- Integration into the Kingsgate Young Scholars Network, providing long-term professional connections;
- Stronger positioning for employment, consulting opportunities, further study, or policy-oriented entrepreneurship.



What Makes the Academy Distinct

The Kingsgate Young Scholars Academy is distinguished by:

- A sole focus on fragile and conflict-affected African contexts;
- A curriculum explicitly designed around the policy and development process and not just academic theory;
- Embedded internships and on-the-job learning, linking training to real institutional work;
- Faculty and mentors with both technical expertise and lived experience of fragility and displacement;
- A clear objective of building a critical mass of youth policy entrepreneurs and scholar-practitioners.



Programme Format

- The Academy is delivered virtually, enabling participation across countries and contexts;
- Learning includes live sessions, guided assignments, applied research work, fireside chats and supervised internships;
- All sessions will be delivered in English. Therefore, fluency in English is required.
- The programme is intensive, requiring a serious commitment from participants.
- The programme duration is 9 months



Tuition and Financial Support

The Kingsgate Young Scholars Academy is committed to removing financial barriers that prevent talented young people in fragile and conflict-affected contexts from accessing high-quality policy training.

All candidates admitted into the Academy are automatically awarded a full scholarship that covers 100% of tuition fees for the duration of the programme. Scholars are not required to pay any tuition or instructional fees at any stage of the Academy.

Participants are, however, expected to have access to the following basic learning requirements:

- A laptop or suitable learning device
- Reliable internet connectivity
- A stable power source

This model ensures that financial constraints do not exclude capable candidates, while also reinforcing a shared responsibility for active participation and commitment to learning. By fully covering tuition, the Academy enables scholars to focus entirely on developing the analytical, policy, and leadership skills required to engage meaningfully in policy processes and professional practice.



Application Requirements

Applicants are required to submit:

Personal Statement / Cover Letter

- Your interest in economic and public policy issues in fragile and conflict-affected contexts, particularly in Africa;
- Why you are applying to the Kingsgate Young Scholars Academy
- How the programme aligns with your personal and professional goals.

Curriculum Vitae (CV)

- Academic background, skills, and relevant experience.

Writing Sample (Original Work)

- A policy memo, analytical essay, research paper, or brief demonstrating critical thinking;
- If co-authored, your specific contribution must be clearly stated.

Submit your application via this link:

<https://kingsgateinstitute.org/ysa/>



Use of AI Tools and Academic Integrity

The Kingsgate Young Scholars Academy is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity, intellectual honesty, and original work. Applicants are expected to submit materials that reflect their own thinking, analysis, and voice.

Applicants may use artificial intelligence (AI) tools as assistive tools only, for example to support brainstorming, organisation of ideas, or language clarity. AI tools must not be used as a substitute for original thinking, analysis, or authorship.

All application materials must:

- Reflect the applicant's own ideas, arguments, and analytical judgement;
- Be reviewed, edited, and substantively shaped by the applicant;
- Be accurate and fully attributable to the applicant.

Plagiarism in any form is prohibited, including the submission of AI-generated content that lacks meaningful human intellectual contribution or the use of others' work without proper attribution.

The Academy reserves the right to use AI, plagiarism-detection, and other verification tools. Any form of misrepresentation will result in disqualification.

The Academy values intellectual honesty, clarity of thought, and research integrity over stylistic polish. Applicants are encouraged to engage deeply with ideas and submit work that genuinely reflects their analytical capacity and ethical standards.



Final Note

The Kingsgate Young Scholars Academy is demanding by design. It is intended for young people who want to move beyond learning about policy to actively shaping it. If you are motivated to develop rigorous analytical skills, gain real policy experience, and contribute to evidence-based change in fragile contexts, we encourage you to apply.



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