DSI-NRF Postgraduate Student Application and Funding Guide for 2022

Directorate: Grants Management and Systems Administration (GMSA)

Date: March 2021
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<td>DA</td>
<td>Designated Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>GMSA</td>
<td>Grants Management and Systems Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>HEI</td>
<td>Higher Education Institution</td>
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<tr>
<td>HICD</td>
<td>Human and Infrastructure Capacity Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>RISA</td>
<td>Research and Innovation Support and Advancement</td>
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<td>NRF</td>
<td>National Research Foundation</td>
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<td>PR</td>
<td>Progress Report</td>
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<td>SARCHi</td>
<td>South African Research Chairs Initiative</td>
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<tr>
<td>CoE</td>
<td>Centre of Excellence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NASSP</td>
<td>National Astrophysics and Space Science Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SARAO</td>
<td>South African Radio Astronomy Observatory</td>
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</table>
**Contact Details for Technical Online Submission Enquiries**

For Online Submission Technical Enquiries, please contact the **NRF Support Desk** on weekdays, during office hours (08:00 to 16:30 Monday to Friday):

E-mail: supportdesk@nrf.ac.za

**Contact Details for the Funding Opportunities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding Opportunity</th>
<th>Responsible person</th>
<th>Email address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NRF (General) Honours Scholarships</td>
<td>Zodwa Mahlangu</td>
<td><a href="mailto:zodwa.mahlangu@nrf.ac.za">zodwa.mahlangu@nrf.ac.za</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRF (General) Master’s and Doctoral Scholarships</td>
<td>Melissa Govender</td>
<td><a href="mailto:melissa.govender@nrf.ac.za">melissa.govender@nrf.ac.za</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extension Support Scholarships</td>
<td>Nozine Nqeketo</td>
<td><a href="mailto:nozine.nqeketo@nrf.ac.za">nozine.nqeketo@nrf.ac.za</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TWAS Doctoral Scholarships</td>
<td>Thandeka Mthethwa</td>
<td><a href="mailto:thandeka.mthethwa@nrf.ac.za">thandeka.mthethwa@nrf.ac.za</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRF-DAAD Master’s and Doctoral Scholarships</td>
<td>Nozine Nqeketo</td>
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<td>NRF-Nuffic Doctoral Scholarships</td>
<td>Zodwa Mahlangu</td>
<td><a href="mailto:zodwa.mahlangu@nrf.ac.za">zodwa.mahlangu@nrf.ac.za</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SARAO Honours, Master’s and Doctoral Scholarship</td>
<td>Annah Mashemola</td>
<td><a href="mailto:amashemola@ska.ac.za">amashemola@ska.ac.za</a></td>
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<tr>
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<td>- Thuthuka</td>
<td>Thandeka Mthethwa</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Institutional Grants (CoEs; SARChI)</td>
<td>Judith Mahlanya</td>
<td><a href="mailto:judith.mahlanya@nrf.ac.za">judith.mahlanya@nrf.ac.za</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- NASSP</td>
<td>Stephen Dlamini</td>
<td><a href="mailto:DLMINI@nrf.ac.za">DLMINI@nrf.ac.za</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- General Research Grants</td>
<td>Jane Mabena</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Jane@nrf.ac.za">Jane@nrf.ac.za</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Motsakwe Rakgoale</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Motsakwe@nrf.ac.za">Motsakwe@nrf.ac.za</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. Introduction
- This Application and Funding Guide provides an overview of the application process and funding guidelines for Honours, Masters and Doctoral Scholarships for the 2022 academic year.
- It should be read in conjunction with the DSI-NRF Postgraduate Student Application and Funding Framework for Funding in 2022 Academic Year, which can be accessed via the following link https://www.nrf.ac.za/funding/framework-documents. (The framework document provides detailed information with respect to objectives of each funding opportunity, eligibility criteria, etc. This document does not, however, constitute a complete set of the policies, procedures or systems used by the NRF.)

2. Application Process
- The NRF’s call for Postgraduate Scholarships for full-time studies in 2022 is published on the NRF website.
- Application forms are accessible online at https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za.
- Applicants may only submit ONE application.
- Current recipients of NRF Masters scholarships, who wish to apply for half-year extension support may not also apply for half-year Doctoral support under the first time applicant category. These applicants will need to choose to apply for only one of these options.
- Once an applicant submits an application, the application will automatically be routed to the institution where the applicant is applying to study.
- The applications will be screened for eligibility, and reviewed and scored by the institutions, and only eligible applications will be submitted to the NRF.
- The institutions will set their own internal closing dates/cut-off dates for submission of applications, which must be before the NRF’s deadline.
- In order for an application to be considered for 2022 funding, applicants must ensure that they submit their applications on or before the institutional cut-off date.
- All applications are processed by an NRF Designated Authority (DA) who is based at the University Research/Postgraduate office. Should a DA contact you regarding your application, before your application is submitted to the NRF, please make sure you respond as soon as possible or within the timeline given in the communication. Failure to do so may result in the application being rejected at the institutional-review stage.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to check the institution’s internal cut-off date with the relevant Research or Postgraduate office.
3. How to Submit an Application

- Application forms must be completed on the NRF Online Submission System at https://nrfs_submission.nrf.ac.za.
- Applicants are advised to complete their applications soon after the call opens, to prevent IT system overload, which may occur close to the cut-off dates.

Application Steps for All Applicants

Steps 1 – 6 below are generic steps which should be followed by all applicants, regardless of funding opportunity

Step 1: All Applicants - Logging in and Registering

- This is an electronic submission system and applicants must be registered on the system in order to create and complete an application. If you have registered and submitted an application on the NRF Online System (http://nrfonline.nrf.ac.za) before February 2012, your details will be saved on the NRF Online Submission System (https://nrfs_submission.nrf.ac.za).
- If you experience problems accessing the system with your NRF Online password, use the Reset Password button. If your e-mail address is outdated, please contact the NRF Support Desk for assistance. Contact details for the NRF Support Desk are on page 4 of this document.
- If you are not yet registered on the NRF Online Submission System, you must register to access the application form.

Note: Most of the application screens have application-specific instructions to help you work through each section. Please read the instructions carefully before completing the section.
Step 2: All Applicants - Completing My CV

- After logging onto the NRF Online Submission System, you will be taken to the landing page.
- View the menu at the top left side of the screen.
- Click on My Profile and complete the My CV section first.

- South African citizens and permanent residents must attach a certified copy of their South African Identity Document. Other foreign nationals must attach a certified copy of their valid Passports. These documents must be attached under the My Details - Registration Details section only. If these documents are not attached, the application will be rejected.

- Please note that it is very important to update the CV section BEFORE you start with the application because all the CV information will automatically be populated into the relevant sections of the application form.

- Please ensure that the Career Profile and Qualifications sections are completed and up-to-date.

- To add the field of study under Qualifications, click on the “Add” button as shown below. As you start typing the name of the field, the system will provide options on the dropdown list.

- If you have already obtained an undergraduate degree, please attach the academic record as shown below.
Step 3: All Applicants - My Application

- Once you have completed all sections of **MY CV**, you can begin completing your application by clicking on **My Applications** and then **Create Application**.
• Then select **NRF Postgraduate Scholarships Call** from the list of funding categories, and a new application will open. (Please note that this must be selected only once. To continue working on the same application, go to **My Applications – List of Applications**, and click the **Edit** button.)

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**Step 4: All Applicants - Completing the Application Form**

• The **Main Menu** page of your application form lists the different sections of the application.

• All the sections marked with a red **asterisk** (*) are compulsory. These sections must be completed in order for the final **Submit** button to be activated.

• Completed sections will be indicated by a green tick on the **Main Menu** page, while incomplete sections will have a yellow cross. All compulsory sections will guide applicants with messages. Please follow these messages to complete the sections correctly.

• Applicants may enter information in the non-compulsory sections, if relevant.
### Step 5: All Applicants - ORCID

- ORCID provides a digital identifier that distinguishes you from other researchers and, through integration in key research workflows such as manuscript and grant submission, supports automated linkages between you and your professional activities ensuring that your work is recognized.

- If you don’t have an ORCID ID, please click on **Create or Connect your ORCID iD**, and you will be redirected to the ORCID website where you will have to register to obtain an ORCID ID.

- If you already have an ORCID ID, please also click on **Create or Connect your ORCID iD** and your ORCID number will be pulled through to your application.

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<th>Complete</th>
<th>Date Updated</th>
<th>Edit</th>
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Step 6: All Applicants - Application Category

- The **Application Category** section is a very important section
- For **Type of Application**, the applicant is required to select the **level of study** to be funded for.
  - There are four templates in this section:
    - Honours
    - Master’s
    - Doctoral, and
    - Extension support
  - If the incorrect level is chosen and the application is completed, the applicant will have to delete the entire application and start again, because each of the templates is different. Please **do not** make any changes under this section once you have completed the rest of the application.

**NB!** Please refer to the Framework document as well as the instructions under this section to ensure you are applying for a scholarship that you are eligible for.

Note: A change of scholarship type will not be allowed once the application has been submitted to the NRF.

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**Application Category Fields**

- **Type of Scholarship** = the level of funding e.g. honours, master’s or doctoral
• **Please indicate if you are:**
  - **First Time Applicant** = this is the first time that you are applying for funding at the selected academic level, or you have not previously received funding at this level.
  - **Extension Support Applicant** = you are a current NRF Master's or Doctoral grant-holder, either in your second year of master’s studies or third year of doctoral studies, and you require additional support to complete your degree. This means that you will be in your third year of master’s or your fourth year of doctoral studies in 2022. If you select **Extension Support Applicant**, you will then have to indicate whether the extension is required for 6 or 12 months.

• **Scholarship applying for** = for **first time applicants**, each level has different types of scholarships linked to it, as outlined below. Please refer to the **Framework Document** for further details and associated eligibility criteria. Only one option can be selected.

  **Honours scholarships:** General Scholarship
  
  SARAO Honours Scholarships (Please read the SARAO Postgraduate Scholarship Application Guide, available [here](#))

  Grantholder-linked Scholarship

  **Master’s scholarships:** General Scholarship
  
  SARAO Master’s Scholarships (Please read the SARAO Postgraduate Scholarship Application Guide, available [here](#))

  SASAC

  DAAD

  Grantholder-linked Scholarship

  **Doctoral scholarships:** General Scholarship
  
  SARAO Doctoral Scholarships (Please read the SARAO Postgraduate Scholarship Application Guide, available [here](#))

  SASAC

  DAAD

  TWAS

  NRF-Nuffic (split-site)

  Grantholder-linked Scholarship

**NOTE**

1. For further information about NRF-Nuffic scholarships, please refer to the NRF-Nuffic Scholarships Framework document.
2. Grantholder-linked students i.e. applicants who have been recruited to work under an NRF funded project (SARChI, CoE, Thuthuka, NASSP, General Research Grants etc.), MUST choose **Grantholder-linked Scholarship** under the relevant academic level.
Research Grants that students may be linked to include:

- Thuthuka
- NASSP
- Institutional Grants (SARChI; CoE)
- General Research Grants
  - African Coelacanth Ecosystem Programme
  - Africa Origin Platform
  - ACCESS Funding Instrument
  - Risk and Vulnerability Assessment Programme
  - Human and Social Dynamics Funding Instrument
  - Foundational Biodiversity Information Programme
  - Global Change Funding Instruments
  - South African National Antarctic Programme
  - Marine and Coastal Research Grants
  - Competitive Programme for Rated Researchers
  - Competitive Support for Unrated Researchers
  - Community Engagement Grants

**Applicant’s proposed institution** = this is the South African institution where you intend to register for your degree. Once your application is complete, it will be routed to the research office at the selected institution for review and processing.

**To Complete the Rest of your Application**

Please follow the links below for further instructions on how to complete and submit an application for a specific academic level:

- [Honours Scholarships](#)
- [Master’s and Doctoral Scholarships](#)
- [Extension Support Scholarships](#)
Honours Scholarship Applications

The following information is applicable to all those applying for Honours funding in 2022 (including students applying for SARAO Honours Scholarships).

Step 7: Honours - Person History Section

- The Person History section is required for statistical purposes by the NRF.
- If the Previous or Current Study is funded by NSFAS or ISFAP, please attach official proof under the Attachments section. Proof can be an official letter from NSFAS, ISFAP or the University, stating that you have previously received financial assistance from them. It can also be an official stamped account statement from the funder or university that clearly shows where the funds were received from.

Step 8: Honours - Financial Need Section

- With the Financial Need section, the NRF (through Ikusasa Student Financial Aid Programme (ISFAP)) aims to establish whether an applicant is financially needy or not (please refer to the Framework document for more information).
- If an applicant selects an option of a combined family income of more than R350 000, the section will be complete and the financial means test will not be requested from the applicant.
• If an applicant selects an option of **less than or equal to R350 000**, more questions will pop-up, as shown below. If this option is selected, please complete the ISFAP Consent Form which is downloadable from the Financial Need section and upload to the Financial Need section only. If the form is not uploaded or incomplete, a financial means test cannot be conducted.

> Household Contributor: For applicants who give the NRF and ISFAP consent to conduct the financial means test, a Household Contributor section will pop-up. The applicant is required to provide the contributor's information, as well as that of the dependents, living in the same household. In order to provide information for all the dependents, please indicate the exact number as shown below, for the system to provide sufficient fields to capture all of the dependents.

• This information will be sent to ISFAP, therefore it is important that consent has been provided by the relevant contributors and the details must be correct.
Step 9: Honours - Details of Degree Section

- Under the honours Details of Degree section, applicants are required to fill in details of the degree, discipline of study that is being applied for, and information related to past studies and future intentions.

- Grantholder-linked students i.e. applicants who have been recruited to work under an NRF funded project (SARChI, CoE, Thuthuka etc.) should indicate their supervisor’s UID/Grant Number or Application Reference Number in the space provided. In the case of a student being linked to a CoE, the CoE grantholder may not be the supervisor but must be listed together with the UID (grant number). This will allow the NRF to separate the Grantholder-linked students from the general pool of applicants.

- In the Average percentage mark for major subject(s), applicants are required to click on “Add” and list major subjects with marks obtained in the final year of study of the undergraduate degree and click on save.
Step 10: Honours – Attachments Section

In the Attachments section, please print or make a copy, certify and then scan all the required documents and submit as a single PDF file. The applicant is required to attach the following documents:

First time honours applicants must attach the following documents in the attachment section of the online application:

a. An official academic record on the university letterhead.

b. Applicants with outstanding fees are required to attach an official letter from the university confirming their first year of registration for the degree and indicating that the student still has outstanding fees owed to the university.

c. Applicants with disabilities must upload a medical certificate, in support of the disability. Document must be attached under the Disability section only.

d. First time honours applicants who were previously supported by NSFAS or ISFAP must attach proof in the form of an official university stamped financial statement clearly showing that the funds are coming from these funders, a statement from the funder or a letter form NSFAS, ISFAP or the university stating that the applicant received funding from them.

*Applications without the required attachments will be rejected.*
Step 11: Honours - Closing Date for Applications

Applicants must adhere to their institution’s internal cut-off date for submission of their applications to allow for internal institutional screening and review.

- The institution’s internal cut-off date will be determined by the respective Research Office or Postgraduate Office and is usually at least two weeks prior to the NRF’s cut-off date.
- DAs ensure that all applications are screened through internal institutional processes, and only those applications that meet the NRF’s criteria are submitted to the NRF.
- The NRF assumes that the respective DAs are satisfied with the standard of all applications validated and submitted, and that the institution approves and supports the proposed degree.

Step 12: Honours – Submission of a Completed Application

- The final submit button will only be activated when all compulsory sections are complete.
- If all the compulsory sections are complete and the final submit button does not appear, resave the Project Information section to refresh the application.
- The final submit button should then be active.
- A submitted application is automatically routed to the DA in the Research or Postgraduate Office of the South African public institution that was selected, for internal review and validation.
- Late applications, additional supporting documentation or information received after the closing date will not be accepted or considered.
- The NRF will not process applications that are incomplete, contain insufficient or incorrect information, or fail to comply with instructions. These applications will be rejected.
- The application must be completed in sufficient detail to allow for a comprehensive review and evaluation by external reviewers.
- In addition to the electronic application and required attachments, the NRF may request additional information or documentation to support an application if required. Failure to supply such information or documentation upon request may result in the rejection of the application.

Incomplete applications is an application without:

a. Any of the required attachments e.g. official academic transcript or proof of NSFAS or ISFAP funding.
Master’s and Doctoral Scholarships

The following information is applicable to all those applying for master’s or doctoral funding in 2022.

Step 7: Master’s and Doctoral – Person History Section

- The Person History section is required for statistical purposes by the NRF.
- If the Previous or Current Study is funded by NSFAS or ISFAP, please attach official proof under the Attachments section. Proof can be an official letter from NSFAS, ISFAP or the University, stating that you have previously received financial assistance from them. It can also be an official stamped account statement from the funder or university that clearly shows where the funds were received from.

![Previous studies funded by](image)

![Current degree funding](image)

Step 8: Master’s and Doctoral – Financial Need Section

- With the Financial Need section, the NRF (through Ikusasa Student Financial Aid Programme (ISFAP)) aims to establish whether an applicant is financially needy or not (please refer to the Framework document for more information).
- If an applicant selects an option of a combined family income of more than R350 000, the section will be complete and the financial means test will not be requested from the applicant.
- If an applicant selects an option of less than or equal to R350 000, more questions will pop-up, as shown below. If this option is selected, please complete the ISFAP Consent Form which is downloadable from the Financial Need section and upload to the Financial Need section only. If the form is not uploaded or incomplete, a financial means test cannot be conducted.
Household Contributor: For applicants who give the NRF and ISFAP consent to conduct the financial means test, a Household Contributor section will pop-up. The applicant is required to provide the contributor’s information, as well as that of the dependents, living in the same household. In order to provide information for all the dependents, please indicate the exact number as shown below, for the system to provide sufficient fields to capture all of the dependents.

This information will be sent to ISFAP, therefore it is important that consent has been provided by the relevant contributors and the details must be correct.
Step 9: Master’s and Doctoral – Degree to be Funded Section

- Under the Master’s and Doctoral **Degree to be funded** section, applicants are required to fill in the details of the degree and the discipline of study that is being applied for.
- The applicant is also expected to indicate if the study will be conducted on a full time or part time basis.

![Degree to Be Funded](image)

Step 10: Master’s and Doctoral - Research Project Information Section

- The **Research Project Information section** requires the applicant to indicate when the project will be started or scheduled to start if it hasn’t started.
- Also provide title and abstract of the proposed research project.
- Students applying for SARAO Master’s/Doctoral Scholarships must read Section 2 of the “SARAO Postgraduate Scholarship Application Guide for the 2022 Academic Year”, available [here](#). SARAO will only consider Masters/Doctoral scholarship applications from students who have selected an approved 2022 SARAO postgraduate research project, and obtained a signed agreement from the relevant supervisor stating that he/she will supervise the student.
Step 11: Master’s and Doctoral - Academic Achievements Section

- In the Academic Achievements section, please capture the academic average percentage for the honours degree if completed, OR the average percentage for major subjects in the final-year undergraduate courses for students currently registered for a honours degree, OR the average percentage for major subjects in the third-year undergraduate courses for students in the final year of a four-year undergraduate degree.
Step 12: Master’s and Doctoral - Details of Research Section

- The **Details of Research** section is one of the most important sections in the application.
- The section has specific instructions related to each screen. Follow the instructions to complete the sections.
- Applicants must give a concise overview of the proposed research in this section as the input is taken into consideration during the review of the application. Appropriate literature references must also be included in this section.
- The requirements under this section are different for masters and doctoral applicants. Please refer to the **Framework Document** for the scorecards which will be used to review the applications.
- Students applying for SARAO Master’s/Doctoral Scholarships must read Section 2 of the “SARAO Postgraduate Scholarship Application Guide for the 2022 Academic Year”, available [here](#). SARAO will only consider Masters/Doctoral scholarship applications from students who have selected an approved 2022 SARAO postgraduate research project, and obtained a signed agreement from the relevant supervisor stating that he/she will supervise the student.

**For a Master’s applicants:**

![Details of Research](#)

**For a Doctoral first time applicants:**

![Details of Research](#)

*Please note that the Details of Research section will only be marked as complete when all the sub-sections have been completed.
Step 13: Master’s and Doctoral - National Infrastructure Platform Section

- In the **National Infrastructure Platform section** if an applicant with plans to access any equipment or collect data from any platform outside the proposed institution, relevant information should be captured under this section. If there is no such planned, please click on “No plan to access platforms” (See blue arrow on screen shot), and the click save.

![National Infrastructure Platform screenshot](image)

Step 14: Master’s and Doctoral - Science Engagement Section

The **Science Engagement** section is a compulsory section. Should applicants not be running any science engagement activities, they must click on “add” and select “N/A” under “activity” and category.

![Science Engagement screenshot](image)
**Step 15: Master’s and Doctoral - Attachments Section**

- In the **Attachments section**, please print or make a copy, certify and then scan all the required documents and submit as a **single PDF file**. The applicant is required to attach the following documents:

First time master’s and doctoral applicants **must** attach the following documents to the online application:

- An official academic record on the university letterhead.
- Applicants with outstanding fees are required to attach an **official letter from the university** confirming their first year of registration for the degree and indicating that the student still has outstanding fees owed to the university.
- Applicants with disabilities must upload a medical certificate, in support of the disability. **Document must be attached under the Disability section only.**
- First time master’s and doctoral applicants who were previously supported by NSFAS or ISFAP must attach proof in the form of an official university stamped financial statement clearly showing that the funds are coming from these funders, a statement from the funder or a letter form NSFAS, ISFAP or the university stating that the applicant received funding from them.

**Other Funding Opportunities – Attachments**

- **First Time Master’s and Doctoral NRF-DAAD Applicants**

  In addition to the above mentioned attachments, the NRF-DAAD applicants must attach the following document in the attachment section of the online application:

  - A brief motivation on the interest to undertake a three (3) to six (6) months research visit in Germany.
  - Applicants must also indicate if they have established collaborations in Germany and if they do, the applicant must provide the details of the collaborator.

- **NRF-TWAS Doctoral Applicants**

  All NRF-TWAS doctoral applicants must attach the following documents in the attachment section of the online application:
a. Proof of evaluation of all foreign qualifications (obtained from non-South African universities) evaluated by the South African Qualification Authority (SAQA) or proof that the applicant has submitted his/her qualifications to SAQA for evaluation. Failure to submit proof will result in the application being rejected. Further information on the process can be accessed by logging on to www.saqa.org.za.

b. An English language proficiency certificate (if available at the time of the application). If not available, this will be required before any NRF funds will be released to the student. Applicants must meet the following requirements of the English Language Proficiency Academic test: IELTS 6.5 (no band less than 6.0); or TOEFL (paper) 575 (TWE 4.5); or TOEFL iBT (min. 20); or Cambridge minimum 58. Information on the IELTS tests can be obtained from the British Council in applicant’s home country or accessed at: www.ielts.org. Further information on the TOEFL test can be accessed at: www.toefl.com. Applicants may consult the British Council in their home country for assistance.

c. Applicants must provide an official proof of study application and/or acceptance letter from their South African institution, department or laboratory.

d. A motivation from the prospective doctoral supervisor. It is the responsibility of the applicant to contact the respective institution to apply for acceptance and to secure a supervisor for the doctoral study.

e. Official academic record on the university letterhead.

SARAO Master’s and Doctoral Applicants – all required documents must be submitted as a single PDF file

a. An official academic record, on a university letterhead, for all the years of study at university

b. Copy of undergraduate certificate, if available

c. Prior to applying for a SARAO Master’s or Doctoral Scholarship, students will be required to review the list of approved research projects for 2022, and identify a project they wish to pursue for their Masters or Doctoral degree. Once a student has identified a project, he/she must then contact the relevant supervisor to discuss the project. Additionally, to discuss if the student have the required qualifications, skills and abilities to undertake the project. If a supervisor agrees to supervise a student, the supervisor will be required to provide the student with a signed letter, on a university letterhead, stating that he/she has agreed to supervise the student for the relevant project. The student must upload a signed copy of this letter with their application.
*Applications without the required attachments will be rejected.

**Step 16: Master’s and Doctoral – Reference Section**

- The **Reference** section allows an applicant to include the names and email addresses of academic referees who can comment on the applicant’s academic abilities.

  On final submission of the application, emails requesting a referee’s response, are sent automatically to the nominated referees to provide a report on the academic and research capabilities of the applicant.

- **References for Grantholder-linked students**

  Applicants who are linked to supervisors with NRF Research Grants e.g. SARChI, Thuthuka, CoE etc. must list either the application reference number or the UID (grant number) of the supervisor in this section. In the case of a student being linked to a CoE, the CoE grantholder may not be the supervisor but **must** be listed together with the UID (grant number). This will enable the NRF to separate your application during the funding decisions process.

- **References for Master’s-level Applicants**

  At master’s level, an applicant is expected to have identified a supervisor at the time of application. If not yet identified, the applicant is expected to capture the information of the Head of School/Department who will guarantee that the applicant will be allocated a supervisor in case their application is successful. The Head of School/Department should respond to the link sent by the NRF by the due date provided on the link, or the application will be rejected.

- **References for Doctoral-level Applicants**

  At doctoral level, applicants are expected to have identified a supervisor at the time of application. A guide to assist students in identifying a supervisor is as follows:
a. Think about your interest area of research, considering your past research endeavours and where you see yourself in future;

b. Identify the university you would want to pursue your doctoral study with;

c. Review the research profiles of the staff in the relevant university department or school (including a literature search to see what they have published);

d. Contact the staff member who you think may be a potential supervisor, detailing your interest area and finally request that they supervise you; and

e. Once you have confirmation that you have a supervisor for your doctoral study, proceed by completing the details of your supervisor in the reference section of the application you send to the NRF.

*Note: Once you submit your application online, an email with a supervisor’s report will be sent to your supervisor to complete. Your supervisor **MUST** submit the report in order for your application to be considered for funding.

- **Types of references required are listed below:** Applicants must ensure that the contact details for the referee are correct.
  - **Master’s applicants**
    - Master’s supervisor (Reference role = Proposed master’s supervisor or Current master’s supervisor)
    - HoD if a supervisor has not been allocated (Reference role = Head of Department)
  - **Doctoral applicants**
    - Doctoral supervisor (Reference role = Proposed doctoral supervisor or Current doctoral supervisor)
  - **Doctoral Nuffic (split-site)**
    - Both the South African and Dutch doctoral supervisors are required (Reference role = Proposed doctoral supervisor). Responses from both supervisors are mandatory.
  - **For extension support applicants** - either Doctoral or Masters Supervisor who can comment on the progress of the studies. If there is no response from the supervisor, the application will be rejected without review. **Only current supervisor(s) required.**
Step 17: Master’s and Doctoral – Closing Date for Applications

- Applicants must adhere to their institution’s internal cut-off date for submission of their applications to allow for internal institutional screening and review.
- The institution’s internal cut-off date will be determined by the respective Research Office or Postgraduate Office and is usually at least two weeks prior to the NRF’s cut-off date.
- DAs ensure that all applications are screened through internal institutional processes, and only those applications that meet the NRF’s criteria are submitted to the NRF.
- The NRF assumes that the respective DAs are satisfied with the standard of all applications validated and submitted, and that the institution approves and supports the proposed research.

Step 18: Master’s and Doctoral – Submission of Completed Application

- The final submit button will only be activated when all compulsory sections are complete. If all the compulsory sections are complete and the final submit button does not appear, resave the Project Information section to refresh the application. The final submit button should then be active.
- A submitted application is automatically routed to the DA in the Research or Postgraduate Office of the South African public institution that was selected, for internal review and validation.
- Late applications, additional supporting documentation or information received after the closing date will not be accepted or considered.
- The NRF will not process applications that are incomplete, contain insufficient or incorrect information, or fail to comply with instructions. These applications will be rejected.
- The application must be completed in sufficient detail to allow for a comprehensive review and evaluation by external reviewers. In addition to the electronic application and required attachments, the NRF may request additional information or documentation to support an application if required. Failure to supply such information or documentation upon request may result in the rejection of the application.
- **Incomplete applications is an application without:**
  a. Any of the required attachments e.g. official academic transcript or proof of NSFAS or ISFAP funding.
  b. Supervisor response on the application viz.:
  c. Response from current supervisor for Extension Support applicants; or
  d. Response from proposed masters supervisor for first-time masters applicants; or
  e. Response from proposed doctoral supervisor for first-time doctoral applicants; or
  f. Response from proposed doctoral supervisor for first-time NRF-TWAS doctoral applicants.
Extension Support Scholarships

The following information is applicable to all those applying for Extension Support funding in 2022.

**Step 7: Extension Support - Details of Extension Section**

- The **Details of Extension** section requires the applicants to indicate which institution they will be registered with. If the applicant is an NRF granholder in 2021, the grant details will pull into this section. If your grant details does not pull into the section, it means that the NRF system does not recognise you as a granholder. Please call the NRF contact person for assistance.
- **NB:** Block grant and granholder-linked students will have to have been nominated on the system in 2021 for your information to pull through.
- **For applicants funded under the PDP programme**, the applicant’s institution should be the university you will be registered with **(not the Science Council or Research facility)**.
- Please take note of the university internal closing date.
Step 8: Extension Support – Original Problem Statement and Research Plan Section

- The **Original Problem statement** and the **Original research plan** sections are compulsory sections because the reviewer might not have the applicant’s original application, so the information is very important to determine what was originally proposed prior to progress to date.

Step 9: Extension Support - Progress to Date Section

- The **Progress to Date** section requires applicants to indicate the work done so far under the Research Project.

Step 10: Extension Support - Reasons why Study Not Completed Section

- The **Reason why the study could not be completed in the NRF maximum funding period** section requires an explanation as to why the study could not be completed within the NRF maximum funding period time.
Step 11: Extension Support – Work Plan

- The **Work plan to complete the degree within the defined timeframes** section requires the applicant to provide a work plan to complete the degree within the requested period of extension. Clear timelines of activities to take place during the period of extension should be provided.

Step 12: Extension Support – Closing Date for Applications

- **Applicants must adhere to their institution’s internal cut-off date for submission of their applications to allow for internal institutional screening and review.**
- The institution’s internal cut-off date will be determined by the respective Research Office or Postgraduate Office and is usually at least two weeks prior to the NRF’s cut-off date.
- DAs ensure that all applications are screened through internal institutional processes, and only those applications that meet the NRF’s criteria are submitted to the NRF.
- The NRF assumes that the respective DAs are satisfied with the standard of all applications validated and submitted, and that the institution approves and supports the proposed research.
Step 13: Extension Support – Submission of Completed applications

- The final submit button will only be activated when all compulsory sections are complete. If all the compulsory sections are complete and the final submit button does not appear, resave the Project Information section to refresh the application. The final submit button should then be active.

- A submitted application is automatically routed to the DA in the Research or Postgraduate Office of the South African public institution that was selected, for internal review and validation.

- Late applications, additional supporting documentation or information received after the closing date will not be accepted or considered.

- **The NRF will not process applications that are incomplete, contain insufficient or incorrect information, or fail to comply with instructions.** These applications will be rejected. The application must be completed in sufficient detail to allow for a comprehensive review and evaluation by external reviewers. In addition to the electronic application and required attachments, the NRF may request additional information or documentation to support an application if required. Failure to supply such information or documentation upon request may result in the rejection of the application.

- **Incomplete applications is an application without:**
  
  a. Any of the required attachments e.g. official academic transcript or proof of NSFAS or ISFAP funding.
  b. Supervisor response on the application viz.:
  c. Response from current supervisor for Extension Support applicants; or
  d. Response from proposed masters supervisor for first-time masters applicants; or
  e. Response from proposed doctoral supervisor for first-time doctoral applicants; or
  f. Response from proposed doctoral supervisor for first-time NRF-TWAS doctoral applicants.
4. Tracking the application

This section explains different application statuses to assist the applicant track the application. The status of your application will determine the stage the application is at.

Applicants should direct queries to the University Research/Postgraduate office if the application is still at the university.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Application in progress</strong></td>
<td>Applicant still busy completing the application</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Submitted to Institution</strong></td>
<td>Application has been submitted by the applicant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Application under designated authority review</strong></td>
<td>Application being screened and scored by university DA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Application rejected by DA</strong></td>
<td>The application has been rejected at the institutional stage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Open for amendment</strong></td>
<td>DA has opened the application for applicant to effect changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Call closed</strong></td>
<td>Application process closed and application not submitted to NRF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Submitted to NRF for review</strong></td>
<td>Eligible applications submitted to the NRF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Declined for review by NRF</strong></td>
<td>Application rescreened and rejected by NRF due to non-eligibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>External Evaluation</strong></td>
<td>Application being considered for funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Successful</strong></td>
<td>Successful application</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unsuccessful due to constraints</strong></td>
<td>Application deemed fundable, but unsuccessful due to Budgetary constraints</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unsuccessful due to review outcome</strong></td>
<td>Application deemed unfundable during the review process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Withdrawn</strong></td>
<td>The applicant has withdrawn the application</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Screening Processes

5.1 Overview of the Screening Process

All applications validated and reviewed by South African public institutions and submitted to the NRF, are further screened by the NRF for compliance with the eligibility criteria and requirements of the Call for applications. Applications that fail to meet the stipulated requirements will be rejected.

6. Applications Feedback and Disputes

Once the assessment processes have been completed and the recommended funding decision has been approved by the NRF, the NRF will publish a list of successful applicants on the NRF website at www.nrf.ac.za/bursaries/calls. The application status online will indicate whether or not the application has been approved for funding. If your name does not appear on the published list of successful applications it means that your application was unsuccessful.

The Promotion of Administrative Justice Act (Act 3 of 2000) give effect to the right to administrative action that is lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair and to the right to written reasons for administrative action as contemplated in section 33 of the constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. The NRF and the universities are expected to provide feedback to all applicants on the status of their application.

Feedback from the University:

- Universities must provide feedback to applicants who were screened at the universities for eligibility and deemed not eligible for funding.
- Universities must provide feedback to applicants who were reviewed at the universities and were recommended not eligible for funding by the panel of reviewers.

Feedback from the NRF

- The NRF must provide feedback to applicants whose applications were recommended for funding but were not awarded funding due to budget constraints. In this instance the NRF will send a regret letter directly to the affected applicants.
- The NRF must provide feedback to applicants whose application were recommended for funding and approved for funding. In this instance, the NRF will publish a list of the successful
applicants on the NRF website (https://www.nrf.ac.za/Bursaries_Outcomes) and share the list with the Research/Postgraduate Offices at respective universities.

The NRF will conduct an Appeals Process two (2) months after the official publication date of the results on the NRF website. Only those applicants who were not recommended by the institutional review panel or where a system issue was encountered with the submission of an application to the NRF, are eligible to appeal. An appeal must be justified and must be supported by the supervisor in order to be considered.

Note: A successful appeal does not automatically constitute an award, rather the application will be moved to the list of applications recommended for funding but not awarded due to budgetary constraints.

7. Awardee Responsibilities

7.1 Managing changes during the project life cycle

Changes may occur during the project life cycle due to unforeseen and extenuating circumstances. Please note the following on how to manage the award and subsequent changes (planned or unanticipated) should they arise during the project life cycle.

7.2 Change Requests

7.2.1 Prior Approval Requests

Applicants must submit all change requests in writing to the NRF for approval before effecting any changes. The request must have institutional DA endorsement and be submitted to the NRF via the South African institution’s Research Office / Postgraduate Office for approval prior to the change.

7.3 Changes in Project Scope, Supervisor or Institution

Changes may occur where a project scope, supervisor or institution needs to be changed from the original research proposal, supervisor or institution respectively. The request must have institutional DA endorsement and be submitted to the NRF via the Research / Postgraduate Office. Such requests must be forwarded to the NRF 30 days before the change is intended to take place.
8. Scientific Compliance

8.1 Methodology

The student takes scientific responsibility for the research to be undertaken, including its objectives and the methodology outlined in the project proposal. The student is required to devote the necessary time to the research project in compliance with the work-plan for the research proposal approved by the NRF so as to achieve the project’s stated aims and objectives.

8.2 Intellectual Property Rights

The intellectual capital generated by NRF funded research must be appropriately protected and exploited for the benefit of South Africa. This condition should not interfere with the Intellectual Property Rights arrangements already made, on condition that the majority of the benefits arising from the intellectual capital accrue to South Africa and its citizens. This condition is aligned with the Intellectual Property Rights Act, \(^1\) which will override this condition of grant.

8.3 Ethics

The student is required to maintain the highest ethical and safety standards in conducting the research, particularly when human and animal subjects are involved. It remains the responsibility of the project leader to comply with all relevant regulations in this regard, including those of the institution at which the research is carried out. An ethical clearance certificate (where applicable) must be submitted to the NRF in respect of successful applications before funding can be released.

\(^{—\text{-END-}}\)

Appendix 1 – PG Policy Payment Guidelines

Guidelines for Payments of NRF Postgraduate Scholarships

This document serves to provide guidance to the institution on the payment of postgraduate awards under the NRF postgraduate policy. It is only to assist institutions in understanding and managing the payment process. The guidelines are by no means dictating how the institution should manage these awards.

General Regulations and Guidelines:

1. The policy requires payments to be made to postgraduate grantees on a monthly basis.
2. The grantee should have a valid transactional bank account into which funds can be paid. The bank account must be in the name of the grantee. Payment to third parties will not be allowed.
3. Living and transport allowance, Food allowance and accommodation (university-owned accommodation or university private accredited accommodation) expenses will be paid out on a monthly basis. However, students using university accommodation facilities and university catering and meals, will not be paid out a monthly meal allowance.
4. Tuition fees must be deducted from the scholarship as per institutional invoice on actual programme costs, including registration costs and will not be paid over the capped NRF amount.
5. Grantees should be allowed to register for the study without paying the upfront registration fees. However, university administration costs (application fees) have to be paid upfront by the grantee according to the institutional requirements and processes.
6. Electronic study device allowance is paid once-off during the tenure of NRF support at postgraduate level. It is not paid out per level of study or annually under the award. The students will have to provide 3 quotes from 3 different service providers and the cheapest quote should be considered.
7. The assistive technology device is only applicable to persons living with disabilities through a separate application process.
8. Grant reconciliations will be performed by the NRF with the Postgraduate Office and the Institutional Financial office during the course of the year of the award to verify actual expenditure and adjustments will be made under the scholarship value in accordance with the actual expenditure.
9. Unspent funds - All unspent tuition, accommodation and electronic study device funds should be returned to the NRF by 30 September of the year of award.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Funding per level of Postgraduate Student (per annum)</th>
<th>Payment Guidelines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Honours FCS</td>
<td>Masters FCS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living and Transport allowance</td>
<td>R12 000</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food allowance</td>
<td>R27 000</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum accommodation allowance</td>
<td>R53 350</td>
<td>R53 350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Honours</td>
<td>Masters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FCS</td>
<td>PCS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum tuition fees</td>
<td>R52 350</td>
<td>R52 350</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>R144 700</td>
<td>R105 700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electronic study device allowance</td>
<td>R10 000</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum assistive technology device*</td>
<td>R20 000</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*An assistive device is defined as any device, product, equipment or tool that is designed or adapted to enable persons with disabilities to participate in activities, tasks or actions including: (i) mobility aids such as wheelchairs, prostheses and crutches as well as service animals (ii) communication aids such as hearing aids, Frequency Modulation (FM) systems; (iii) sensory aids such as white canes; noise reducing headphones and coloured lenses (iv) technology aids such as computers for alternate and augmentative communication, screen readers, magnifiers, texts in audio format (Strategic Policy Framework on Disability for the PSET, 2018).