

NRF Scholarships for Doctoral Studies Abroad

2016 Call for Applications

The National Research Foundation (NRF) is mandated by an Act of Parliament, the National Research Foundation Act (Act No. 23 of 1998) to: *“Support and promote research through funding, human capacity development and the provision of the necessary research facilities, in order to facilitate the creation of knowledge, innovation and development in all fields of science and technology, including indigenous knowledge”*.

In support of this mandate, the NRF makes funds available to support scholarships at the postgraduate level that are awarded on a competitive basis. In addition to the suite of funding instruments in support of full-time doctoral studies at South African public universities, science councils and national research facilities, the NRF makes funds available to support a small number of scholarships for full-time doctoral studies abroad, with the objective of increasing the number and quality of South African doctoral graduates in South Africa. **Applicants to this funding instrument, will need to ensure that supplementary funding can be secured as the NRF scholarship may not cover the full cost of tuition and living expenses abroad.**

1. Areas of Support

The scholarship is intended to support doctoral candidates to pursue research studies in all areas of (i) Science, (ii) Engineering and (iii) Technology and in the (iv) Social Sciences and (v) Humanities, at a university abroad. Preference will be given to applications to obtain a doctoral degree in a vulnerable discipline, emerging research area or where there exists a paucity of research infrastructure and/or suitably qualified supervisors in South Africa.

2. Value of the NRF Free-standing Masters and Doctoral Scholarships for 2016

The value of the scholarship will be calculated as the equivalent of the United States Dollar (USD) of 22 000 per annum, for a maximum of four years, and will be paid out in the currency of the country in which the doctoral studies will be undertaken. In addition, the NRF will cover the cost of:

- A single economy airfare for travel to the country in which the doctoral studies will be undertaken; and
- A single economy airfare to return to South Africa upon completion of the doctoral studies abroad.

The NRF will not cover any costs for accompanying family members or any other related costs associated with the doctoral studies. The applicant will be responsible for securing additional funding to cover any shortfall in funding required to undertake his/her doctoral studies abroad.

3. Eligibility criteria

The eligibility criteria listed below applies to all applicants' for this scholarship:

- Scholarships are open to **South African citizens, including permanent residents, only;**
- All applicants for full-time doctoral studies abroad must be registered or, intending to register at a university abroad; and
- Applications will only be considered if the application includes a provisional letter of acceptance for doctoral studies from the university abroad.

Those applicants that already hold a degree at the level for which they are applying for funding, are not eligible.

4. Selection criteria

The following will be considered in evaluating all applications in a competitive merit review process:

- The applicant's past, current and potential academic performance. This will be measured by the applicant's:
 - The potential of the applicant to undertake an independent research project;
 - Leadership roles;
 - Previous awards, prizes and honours; and
 - The potential research outputs and impact.

- The feasibility and merit of the applicant's research project proposal. In instances where the first year of studies will involve course work only, an outline of the course work to be undertaken, will be assessed;
- Motivation explaining the benefits of undertaking the doctoral studies abroad and reasons why the doctoral studies cannot be undertaken in South Africa;
- Identification of a suitable doctoral supervisor. Where this is not yet available, successful applicants will be required to submit this information at a later date; and
- Support from a minimum of two referees.

5. Equity and redress

In line with the national imperative of equity and redress, this scholarship prioritises support for appropriately qualified applicants from designated groups *viz.* black, female and persons with disabilities, while ensuring that only applications that meet the NRF merit review and selection criteria are supported. The set equity targets are 80% black, 55% women and 4% students with disabilities.

6. Conditions of award for the scholarship for doctoral studies abroad

- A list of successful candidates will be published on the NRF website as soon as the internal NRF approval processes for the award are finalised.
- Successful students who are offered the NRF free-standing scholarship are required to complete and sign the NRF scholarship agreement that will be forwarded at the time of the award.
- Successful students who are offered the NRF free-standing scholarship will be required to give a written undertaking to return to South Africa upon completion of the doctoral studies abroad.
- Scholarship-holders who intend to continue with postdoctoral research training abroad before returning to South Africa will also need to seek written approval from the NRF.
- The award will be paid directly into the student's account upon submission to the NRF of the required written confirmations, which includes stamped bank statements or banking details.

- The scholarship-holder may undertake a maximum of 12 hours of teaching, tutorials, assistance or demonstration duties per week on average during the year of study and may be remunerated for these duties, provided that they are reimbursed at a rate not exceeding the normal institution tariff for services rendered.
- Scholarship-holders may not hold full-time salaried employment during the tenure of the award.
- All NRF scholarships awards shall be held as primary funding towards the research study.
- Scholarship-holders are allowed to hold non-binding supplementary grants or emoluments to half the value of the NRF award. Alternatively, should the host university have an institutional capped value, the NRF award can be supplemented to the university capped value for the level of study.
- NRF scholarships may not be held simultaneously with a bursary / scholarship from any other government or NRF administered source.
- **The applicant will be responsible for securing additional funding to cover any shortfall in funding required to undertake his/her doctoral studies abroad.**

7. How to submit an application for a scholarship for doctoral studies abroad

Applicants may apply by following the steps below:

- Applications must be submitted through an online application process to the NRF.
- **Applicants must apply for the 2016 NRF Doctoral Scholarship by accessing the link: <https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za/>.**
- **Register / Login using your ID number and password.**
- Go to “**My Applications**” and select “**Create Application**”.
- Select the call for which you are applying to viz. **NRF Doctoral Scholarship Call for 2016.**
- Remember to complete all **compulsory** sections of the application as incomplete applications will not be considered for support by the NRF.
- Please attach the required documents in **one PDF file in the following order: (i) South African identity document; (ii) certified academic transcripts; (iii) motivation explaining the benefits of undertaking the doctoral studies abroad and reasons why the doctoral studies cannot be undertaken in South Africa; and (iv) additional**

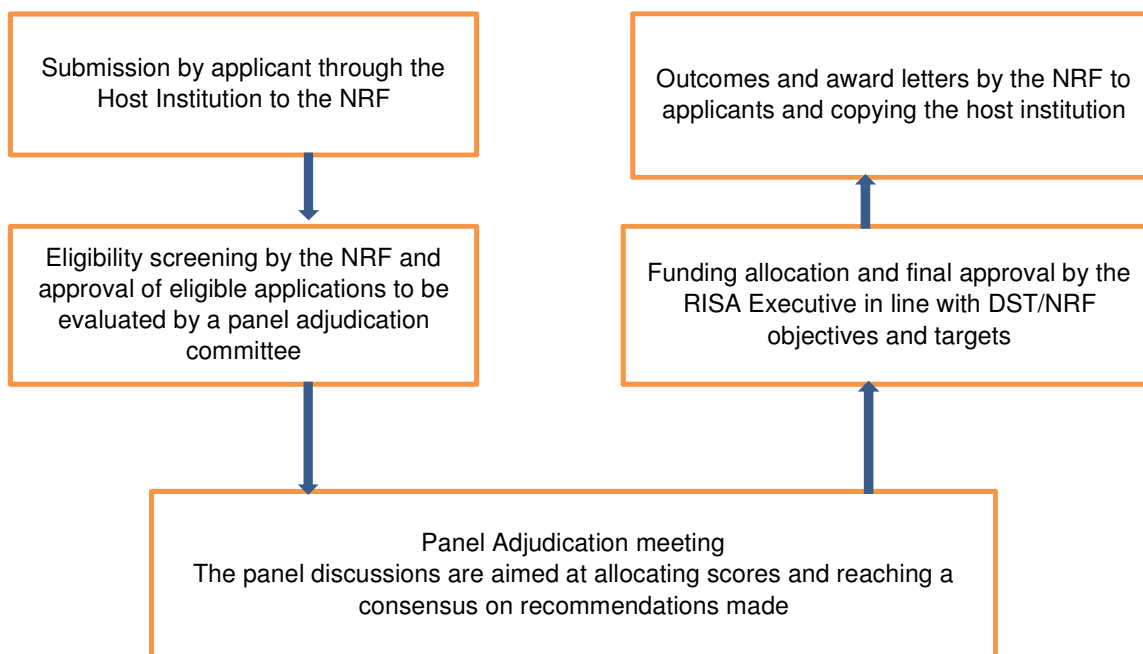
sources of funding to cover the full costs of doctoral studies abroad. Should you not follow the guidelines for attaching the necessary documents, your application will not be considered.

Remember to **submit** your application on completion.

- Complete applications will be directed to the host university for verification before being forwarded to the NRF for further processing. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the university has approved the application and forwarded it to the NRF.
- Incomplete applications will not be considered.
- Applications that do not meet the eligibility criteria will not be considered (please refer to section 3 for details on eligibility for the NRF scholarship for doctoral studies abroad).
- Please contact the university postgraduate office or research office if you have any queries.
- The closing date for submission of applications is **7 August 2015**.

Please take note of your institutions internal closing dates as these will be set before the actual call closing date.

NRF Review Processes



NRF Contact persons:

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