



Framework Document

Extension Scholarships for Masters and Doctoral Students 2018

Directorate: Human and Infrastructure Capacity Development
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1. Background and Rationale

The purpose of this framework document is to outline the funding principles and implementation of the Extension Support for Masters and Doctoral students. The funding instrument is funded by the Department of Science and Technology (DST), through a contractual agreement (DST/CON 0118/2012) with the National Research Foundation (NRF) for the management of funding for human capital development in South Africa.

The NRF provides Masters and Doctoral scholarships to candidates that meet the application requirements through a number of freestanding funding instruments such as the Innovation Bursary Scheme (IBS), Scarce Skills Development Fund (SSDF) and NRF scholarships. In addition, provision for masters and doctoral studies is made through grant holder-linked bursaries. Furthermore, priority will be given to applicants who were previously funded by the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) or University Financial Aid, proof must be attached.

A large number of students are unable to complete their degrees within the two- or three year time period stipulated for Masters and Doctoral degrees respectively. The extension scholarship support is intended to increase graduation and throughput rates for full-time masters and doctoral students in South Africa, by providing additional funding for six (6) or twelve (12) months.

To accelerate the throughput of masters and doctoral graduates, a six (6) or 12 month extension scholarship is offered to existing NRF supported masters and doctoral scholarship holders pursuing postgraduate studies in South Africa. Priority will be given to academically deserving but financially needy students, and those that are in the process of finalizing their dissertation or thesis for examination and/or submitting a manuscript to an accredited journal.

2. Objectives

The objectives of the Extension Scholarship Support Funding Instrument are to:

- Accelerate the graduation throughput rates of full-time masters and doctoral students that are NRF bursars or scholarship holders in South Africa; and

- To increase research outputs from Masters and Doctoral students at public higher education institutions.

3. Eligibility

In selecting applicants for consideration for funding, the following criteria will apply:-

- The student must have been an NRF scholarship recipient, for the current degree e.g. recipient of an Innovation Bursary Scheme, Scarce Skills Development Fund, NRF freestanding or grant-holder linked bursary or scholarship.
- Applicants must be full-time students in their second year of Masters or third year Doctoral studies in South Africa at the time of application.
- Only students pursuing full-time Masters or Doctoral studies in South Africa are eligible to apply.

4. Selection Criteria

The following will be considered in screening and evaluating all applications in a competitive merit review process (**Table 1**):

- Problem statement;
- Rationale and literature review;
- Aims and objectives;
- Methodology and proposed research plan;
- Anticipated outputs;
- Potential impact;
- Alignment to National Research Strategies;
- A completed supervisor's report that includes the following:
 - Intended thesis submission date;
 - Envisaged graduating date;
 - Reasons for extension;
 - Plans to ensure that the student will finish in six (6) or 12 months; and
 - Whether funding is required for six (6) or 12 months.
- A completed student work plan for the six (6) or 12 months period detailing the following:
 - Start and end dates for the six (6) or 12 months' work plan;

- Proposed date for submission of the Masters or Doctoral Dissertation for examination;
- Proposed graduation date;
- Activities for completing outstanding research indicating the start and completion date for each activity;
- Plan with timelines for completion of the Masters or Doctoral dissertation;
- Details of manuscripts to be drafted and submission timelines; and
- Timelines for corrections to dissertation from reviewers.

Table 1: Scorecard for the Assessment of Extension Support for Master's and Doctoral Students Funding

Category	Description	Weight %
Problem statement	Describe the problem statement	5
Rationale and Literature Review	Rationale and literature review with references.	15
Aims and Objectives	Provide clear aims and objectives for your study.	5
Methodology and proposed research plan	Research methodology and include work plan and project organization and progress to date. Indicate whether r funding is required for 6 or 12 months.	40
Anticipated outputs	Anticipated outputs of the research such as dissertation and manuscripts for publications, poster and/or oral conference presentation.	15
Potential impact	Potential for socio-economic impact of the research in South Africa.	10
Alignment to National Research Strategies	Alignment with one or more National Research Strategies	10
		100

5. Application Process

Applications for funding in 2018 must be submitted through the NRF Online Submission following the steps below:

- Applicants must apply for the 2018 Study Support for Extension Support for Master's and Doctoral Students Funding by accessing the link: <https://nrfs submission.nrf.ac.za/>
- Register / Login using your ID number and password.
- Go to applications
- Select create application.
- Select the call for which you are applying to viz. **Extension Support for Master's and Doctoral Students call for 2018.**
- Click on the "Apply" icon.
- Remember to complete all compulsory sections of the application as incomplete applications will not be considered for support by the NRF. Please follow the step-by-step directions supplied in the *Funding Guide*.
- Remember to **submit** your application on completion.
- 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 Extension Support for Master's and Doctoral Students).
- Please contact the NRF if you have any queries.

Further instructions on the application process will be made available in the *DST-NRF – Extension Support for Masters and Doctoral 2018 Application and Funding Guide*.

Applicants are strongly advised to consult their supervisors before they apply in order to determine if extension support is indeed desirable. If in doubt, applicants are advised to apply.

6. Attachments

- i. Certified South African Identity Document or Passport in the case of non-South Africans.
- ii. Certified academic record or, in case of applicants with outstanding fees due to the university, attach an official i.e. stamped and signed statement stating that the transcript is not issued due to outstanding fees owed to the university.
- iii. Proof of National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) or for applicants that have indicated that they were previously funded by NSFAS or University Financial Aid.

7. Approval Process

The applications submitted to the NRF will undergo a technical review to ensure accountability and appropriate utilisation of funds to be awarded. The proposal will be approved for funding for either a six (6) or twelve (12) months period. Applicants who were previously funded by NSFAS or University Financial Aid will be prioritised for funding.

8. Equity and Redress

In line with the national imperative of equity and redress, the funding instrument 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% blacks, 55% women and 4% students with disabilities.

With respect to citizenship of successful applicants, the awards will be allocated in line with the following percentages:

- 87% to South African and permanent residents;
- 5% to students from the South African Development Community (SADC) region;

- 4% to students from the rest of Africa ;and
- 4% to students from non-African countries

9. Value of Support

Support for completion of studies will be made for a six (6) or 12 month period. For the 2018 academic year, the value of the scholarships will be the same as the current annual bursary and scholarship values of the NRF funding categories.

Students that are funded under NRF grantholder-linked scholarships are eligible to apply to this funding instrument.

10. Funding Principle

The Extension Support for Completion of Masters and Doctoral degrees is aimed at increasing the throughput rates of Masters and Doctoral students at public higher education institutions. Consideration will be given to ensuring the need to strengthen research capacity in priority skills and knowledge fields and to accelerate the demographic transformation of the next generation of researchers. Attempt will be made to allocate funding in order to meet the target of 80% black students, 55% female students and 4% students with disability. Allocation of funding will be governed by the annual budget allocation.

11. Reporting

At the end of the funding period, grant recipients shall submit a final report through the link http://www.nrf.ac.za/nrf_funded_thesis_dissertation_requirements indicating the outputs. In addition, each student will be required to provide proof of submission of the dissertation and, where applicable, proof of submission of a manuscript(s) to an accredited journal.

12. Financial Control

These awards will be managed in terms of standard NRF financial policies and procedures. The payment of the grant by the NRF to successful applicants will be administered by the Grants Management and Systems Administration (GMSA) Directorate to the relevant institutions' cost centres. The institution will in turn administer

the funds on behalf of the successful grant holder to the value of the full sum awarded by the NRF.

Scholarships not taken up by end June of the grant award year will be cancelled for reallocation unless otherwise approved by the NRF.

Relevant documents on National Priority Research Areas:

1. <http://www.dst.gov.za/index.php/resource-center/strategies-and-reports/143-the-ten-year-plan-for-science-and-technology>
2. <http://www.dst.gov.za/index.php/resource-center/strategies-and-reports/174-national-research-a-development-strategy-2002>
3. http://www.gov.za/sites/www.gov.za/files/Science_Technology_White_Paper.pdf
4. http://www.gov.za/sites/www.gov.za/files/Bioeconomy%20Strategy_a.pdf
5. http://www.gov.za/sites/www.gov.za/files/PALEO_STRATEGY_DST_Final_.pdf
6. http://www.gov.za/sites/www.gov.za/files/DST_Nanotech_18012006_0.pdf
7. http://www.gov.za/document?search_query=strategy&field_gcisdoc_doctype=All&field_gcisdoc_subjects=518&start_date=&end_date=&=Search
<http://www.gov.za/about-sa/science-technology>

13. NRF contact persons

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