Application and Funding Guide for NRF Honours Scholarships 2025

Department: Next Generation and Emerging Researchers

Date: July 2024

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Contact Details:

For Technical NRF Connect 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

For enquiries about the Funding Opportunity and Application Process:

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1. Introduction

- This Application and Funding Guide provides an overview of the funding guidelines and application process for the honour's scholarships for the 2025 academic year.
- The guide should be read in conjunction with the **DSI-NRF Postgraduate Student Application and Funding Framework for Funding in 2025 Academic Year.** The framework document provides detailed information with respect to objectives of the funding opportunity, eligibility criteria, etc. This document does not, however, constitute a complete set of policies, procedures or systems used by the NRF.

2. Application Process

- The call for honours scholarships for full-time studies in 2025 is published on the NRF website.
- The application form is accessible online at https://nrfconnect.nrf.ac.za
- Applicants may only submit ONE application.
- Once the applicant submits an application, the application is automatically routed to the proposed institution for a screening and scoring process. Applications that meet the scholarship requirements are then submitted to the NRF by the proposed institution.
- The closing date for applicants to submit applications to their proposed institution is **22 November 2024.**
- Applicants who wish to undergo the ISFAP assessment, must ensure that their application is submitted to the proposed institution earlier than September 2023, as the proposed institution must screen and submit these applications to the NRF by **02 September 2024**.
- Applicants who don't have final year examination results at the time of application, can submit their applications without the marks. However, as soon as the exam results are made available by the university, the applicant must ensure that they send the marks to the Postgraduate Office of their proposed institution for capturing of the marks.
- 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-screening stage.
- The honours applications awarded a scholarship must claim the award by **31 March 2025.**

3. How to Submit an Application

- The honours scholarship application is available on the NRF Connect system (https://nrfconnect.nrf.ac.za)
- This application and funding guide consists of two steps of the application process:
  - **A. Profile Registration on the NRF Connect system.**
  - **B. Completing the honours scholarship application.**

A. Profile Registration on the NRF Connect system:

Step 1: Login or Register

- When accessing NRF Connect (https://nrfconnect.nrf.ac.za), the applicant will be directed to a Login (for registered users) and Register (for new users) page.
- All applicants are required to be registered on the NRF Connect system to make use of the relevant functionality.

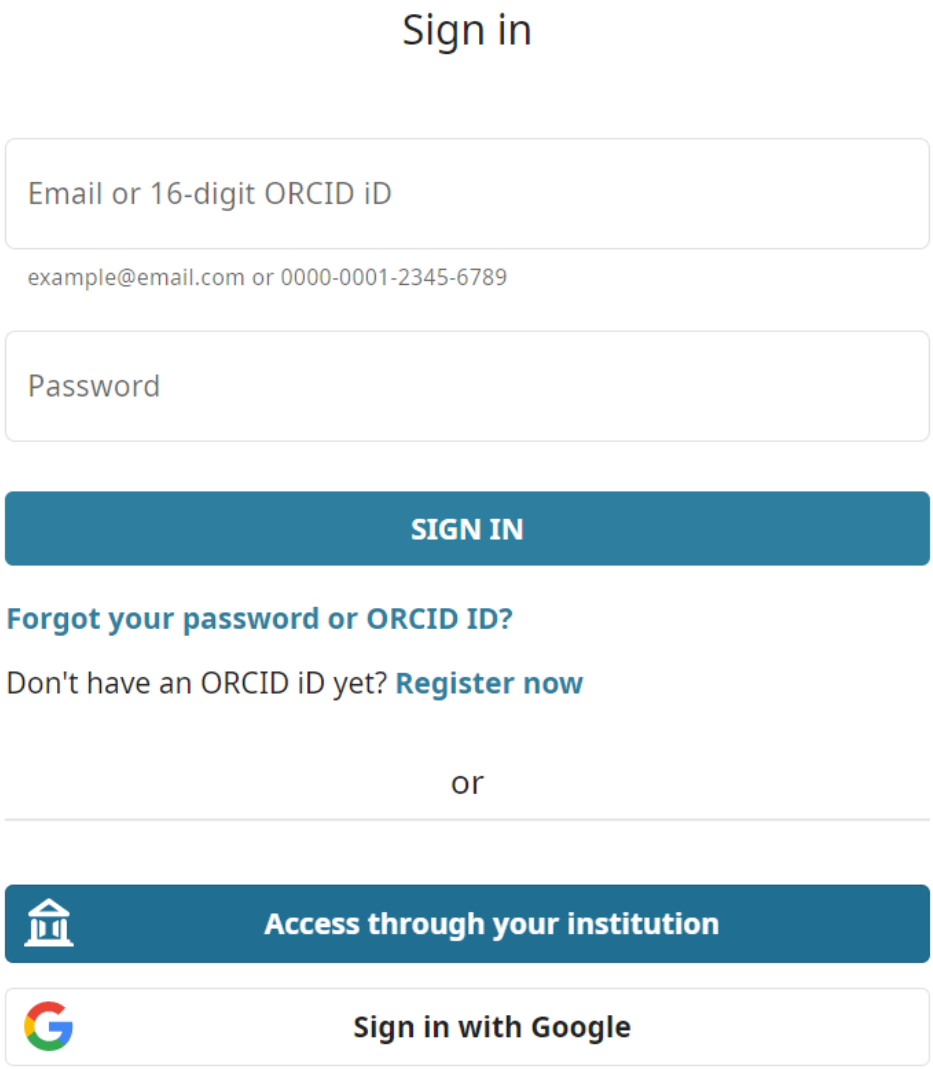
Applicants must click the **ORCID (Open Researcher and Contributor ID)** icon to login or register.

Step 2: Signing in with ORCID iD

Applicants already registered on ORCID, must sign in using one of the following options:

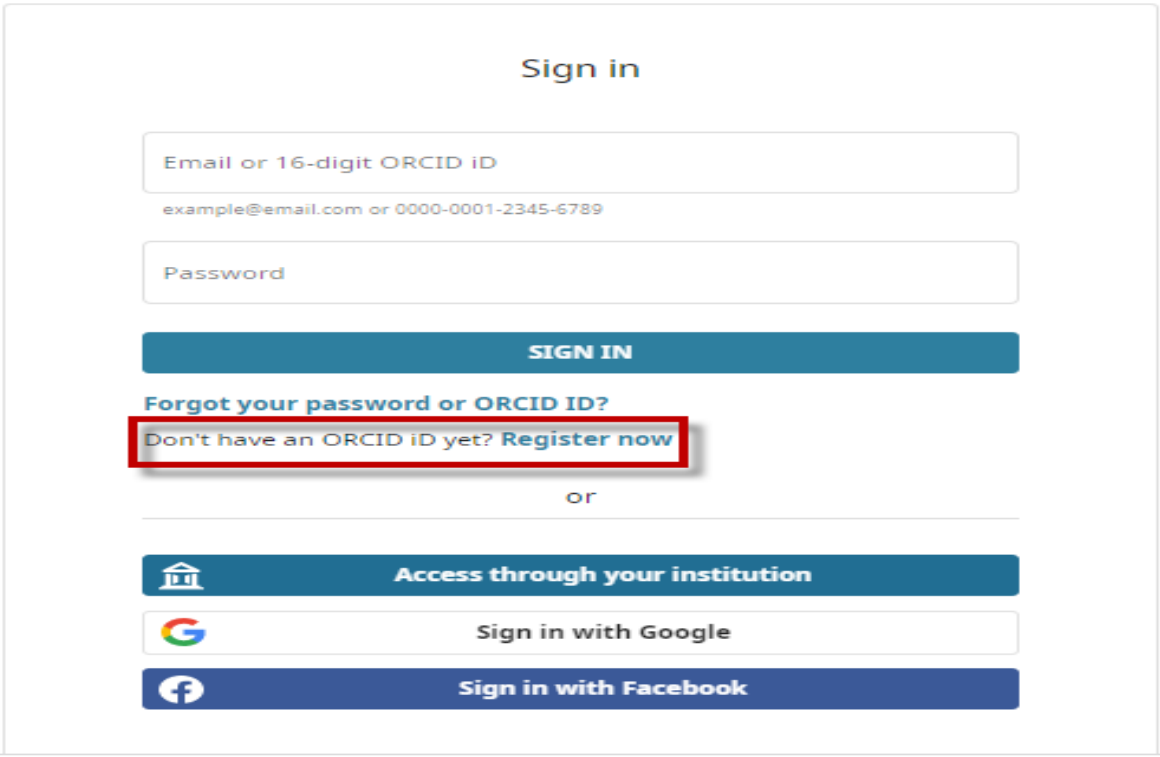
- ORCID iD
- Email address linked with your ORCID profile
- GMAIL account linked with your ORCID
- Facebook account linked with ORCID

When clicking on **Sign In**, the system will redirect you to the NRF Connect login page and automatically log you in.



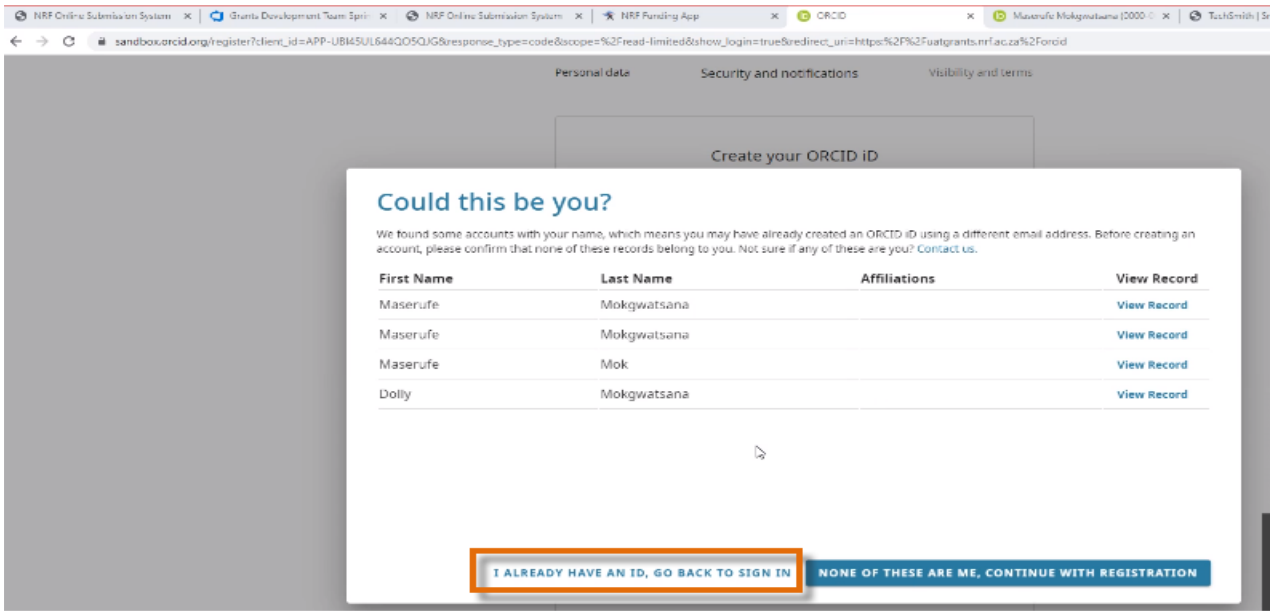
Step 3: Creating the ORCID iD

- Applicants that are not registered on ORCID, must click “**Register now”** and follow the steps to create an ORCID profile.



Step 4: Existing ORCID Profiles

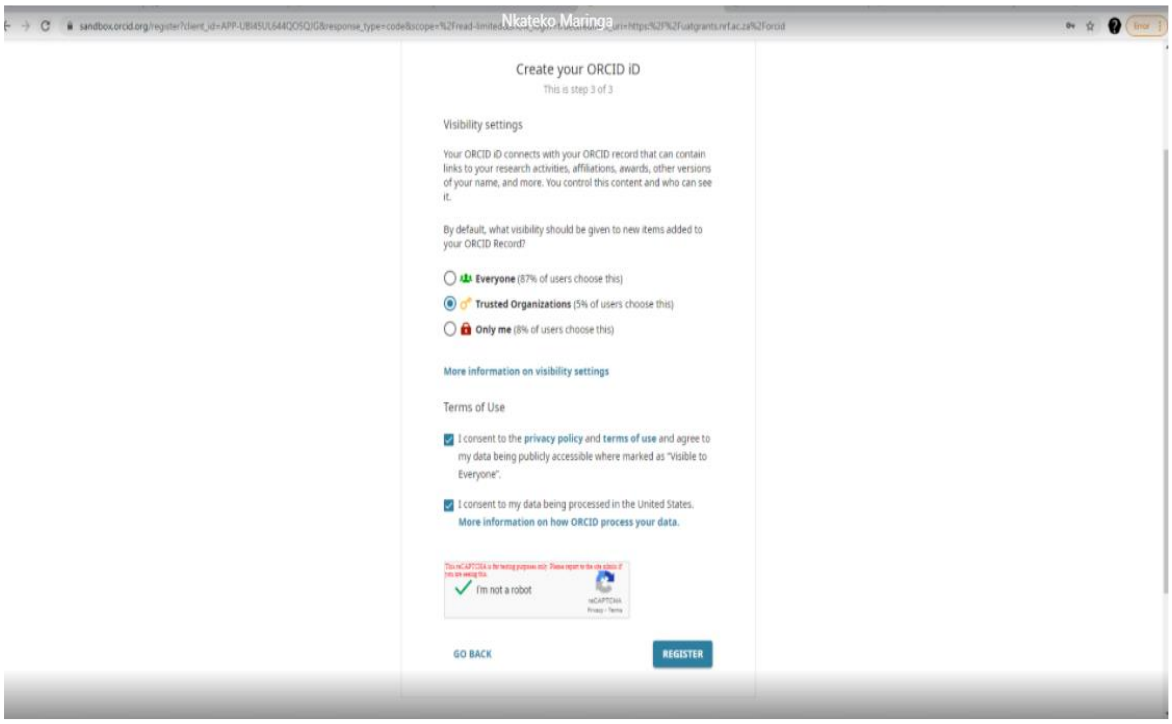
- On clicking 'Register Now', the system will return the following message: *"We found some accounts with your name, which means you may have already created an ORCID iD using a different email address. Before creating an account, please confirm that none of these records belong to you. Not sure if any of these are you?"*
- If any of the listed profile(s) belong to you, click "*I already have an ID, go back to sign in*"
- If none of the profiles are yours, click "*None of these are me, continue with registration*"



Step 5: Visibility of ORCID iD

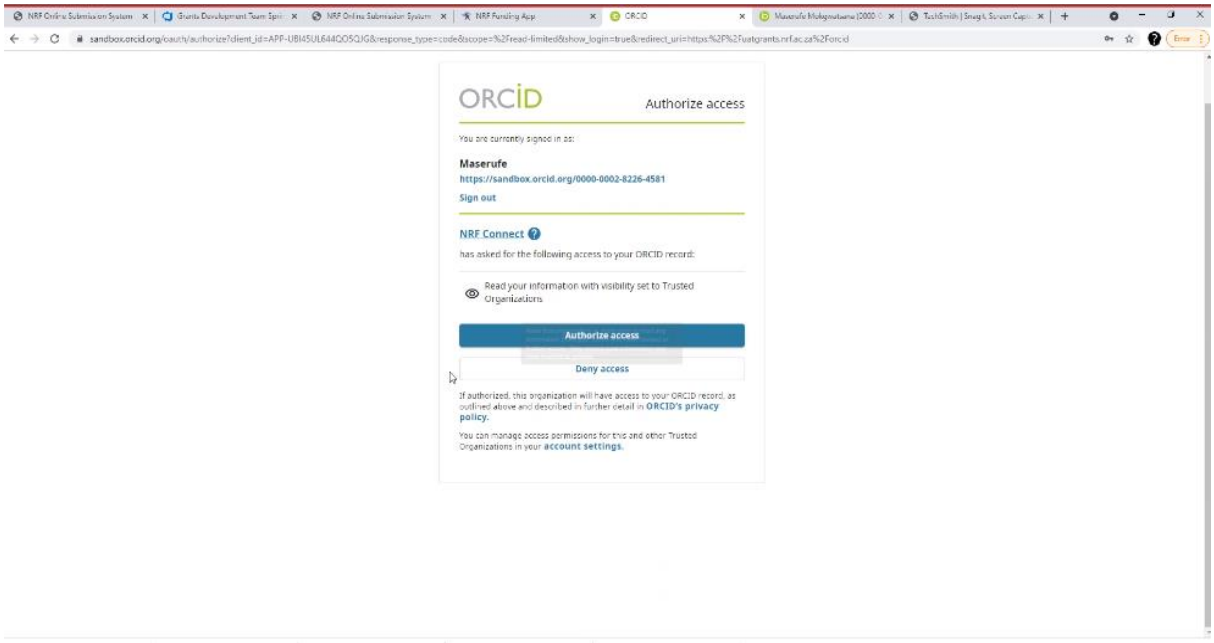
Please select one of the options for the visibility of the ORCID records.

- Should you choose the first or second option, the ORCID records will be visible on NRF Connect.
- Should you choose the third option; the records will not be visible on NRF Connect.



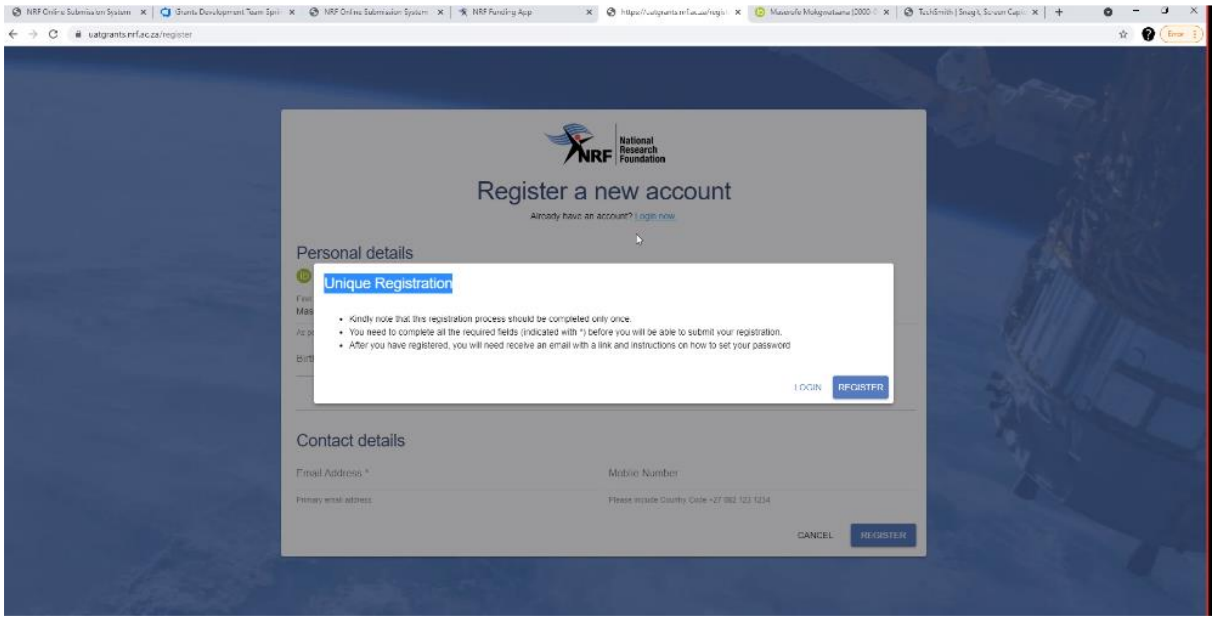
Step 6: Authorize Access

Continue with the ORCID registration as prompted.



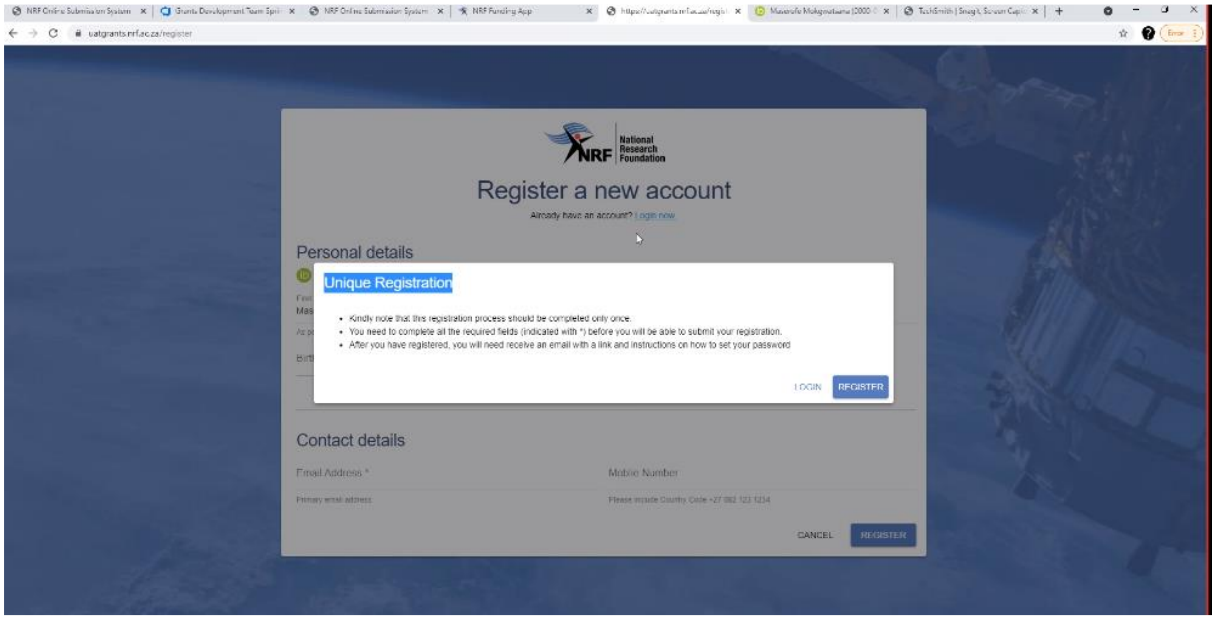
Step 7: Register on NRF Connect

When the ORCID registration process is complete, you will be redirected to NRF Connect login screen to register on the system.



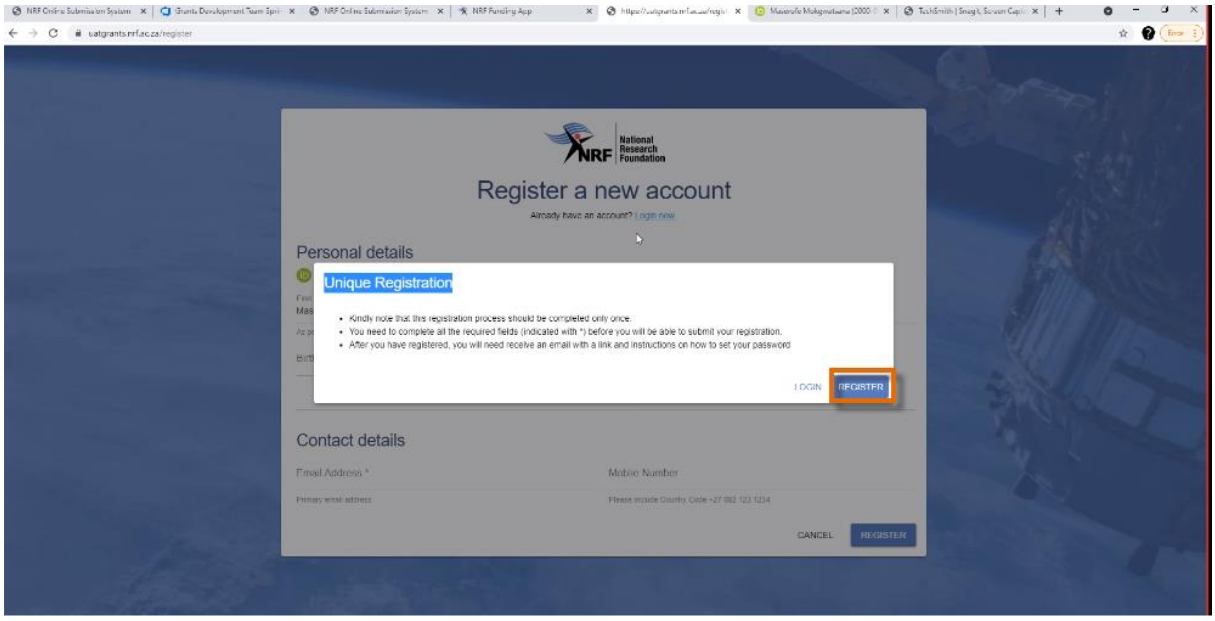
Step 8: Applicants with NRF Online Submission Profile

Applicants who are currently registered on the NRF Online Submission System, will be automatically logged in to NRF Connect with the ORCID profile.



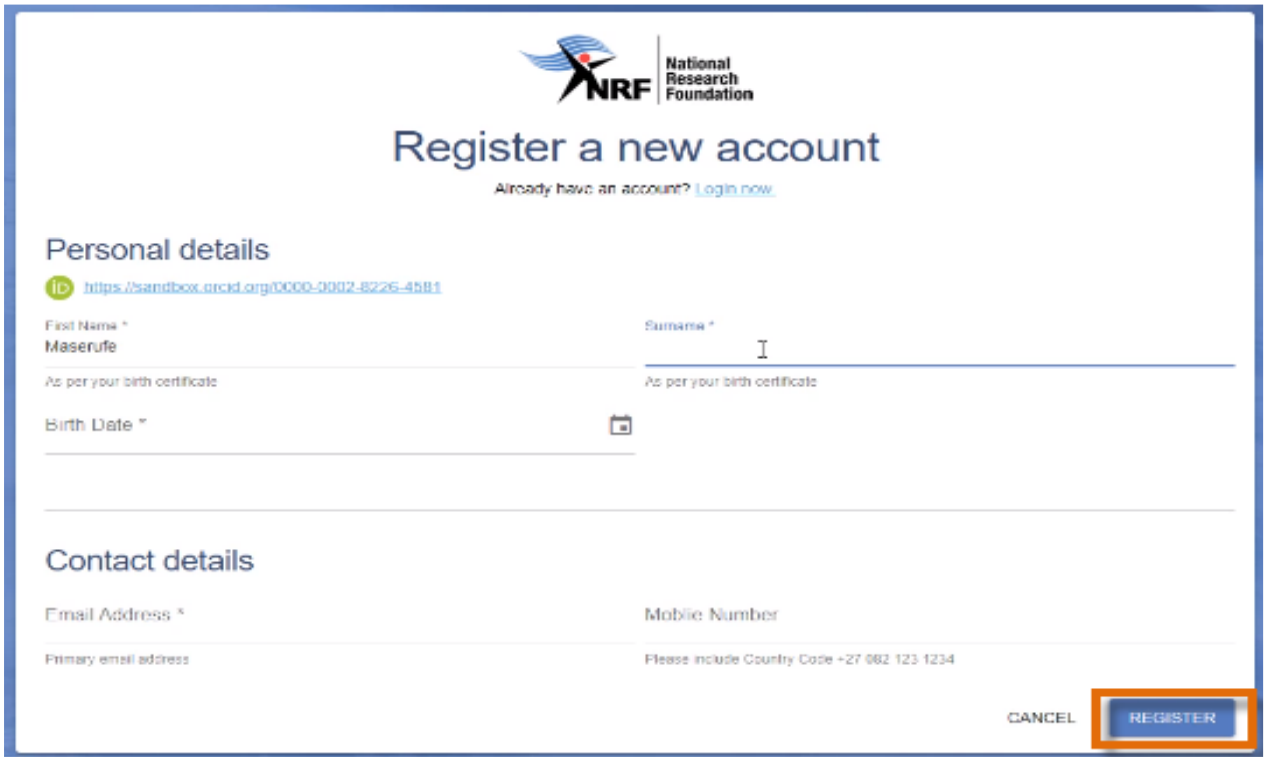
Step 9: Applicants without NRF Online Submission Profile

If you're not registered on NRF Online Submission system, click '**Register'** to register and create a profile on NRF Connect system.



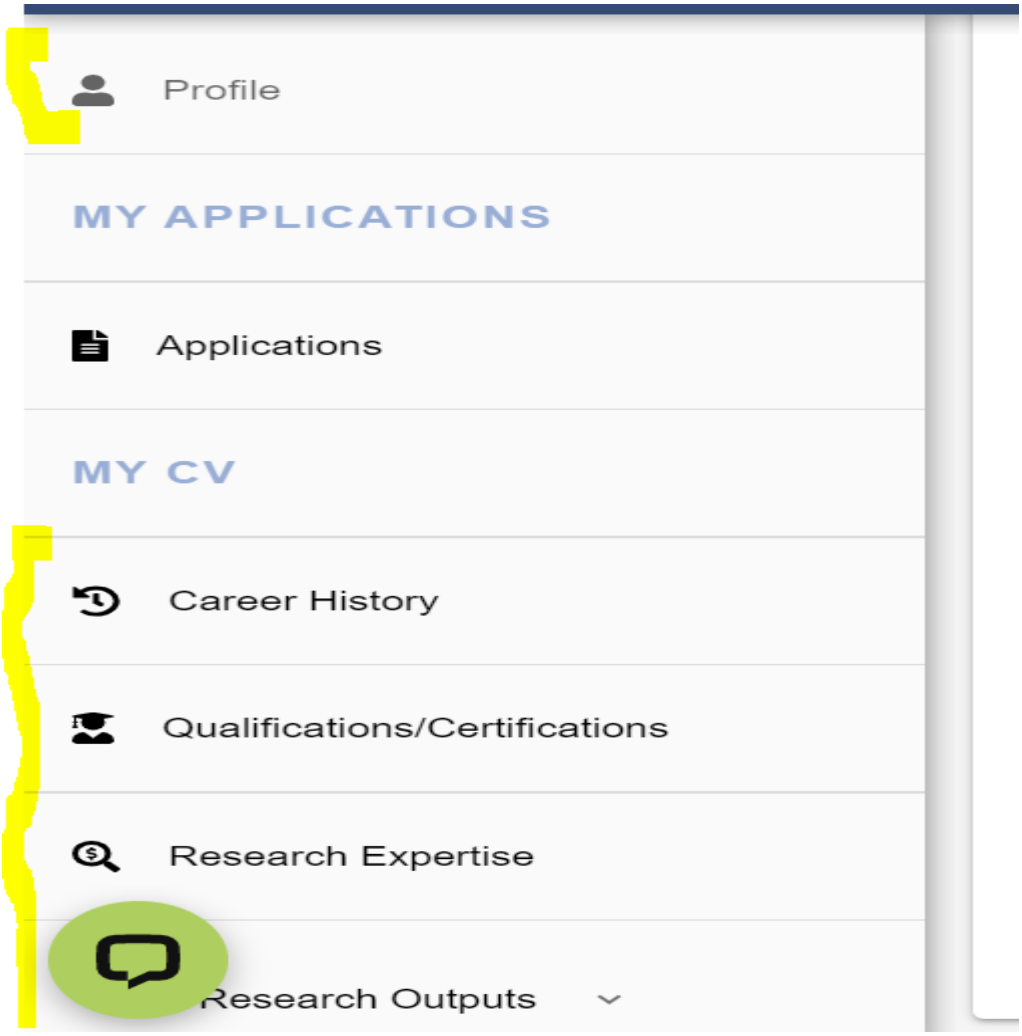
Step 10: Login on NRF Connect

Complete the missing fields and click Register to complete the process and the system will automatically log you in.



Step 11: Complete the "My Profile" and CV sections

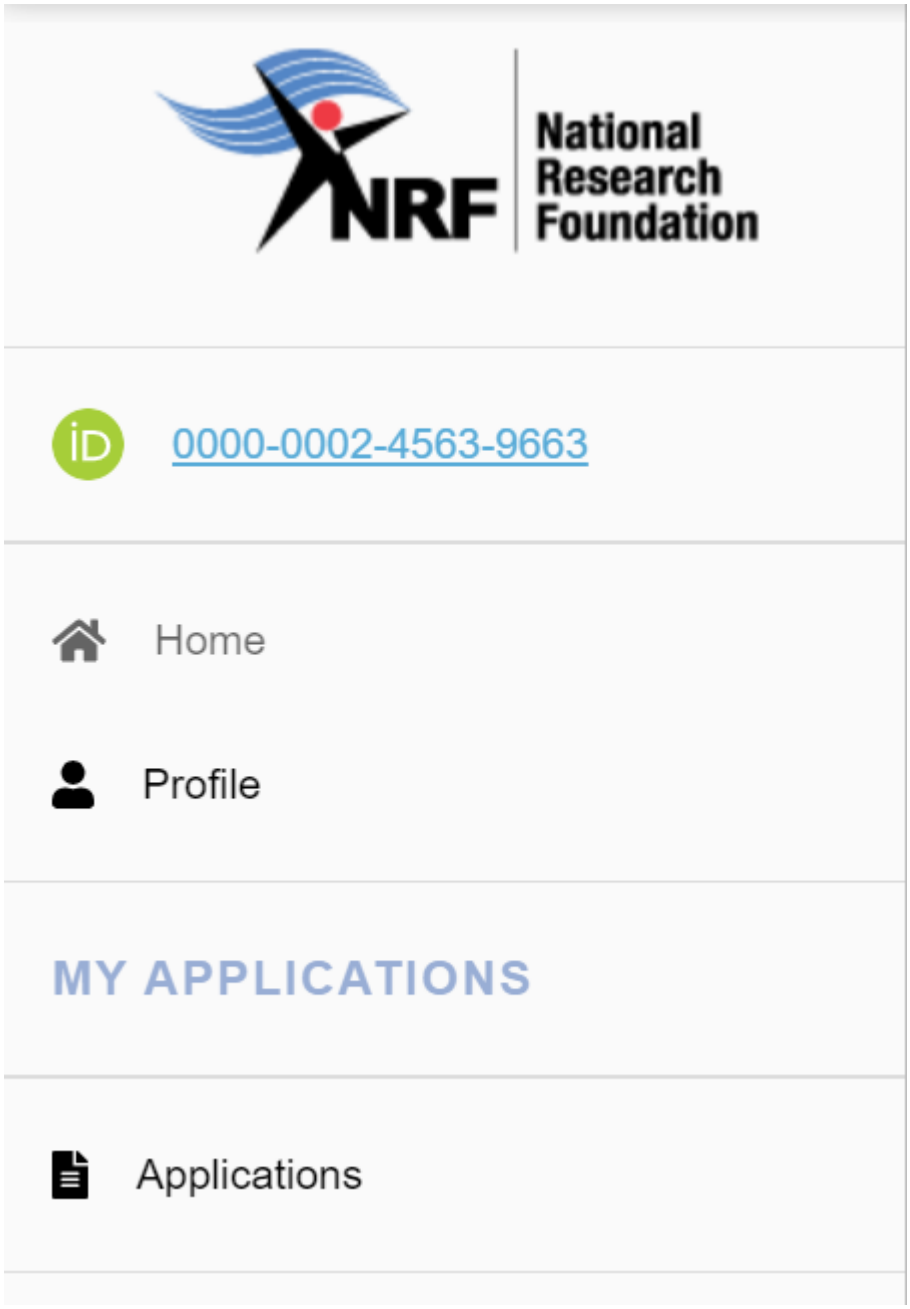
- Applicants must first complete or update the section *'My Profile'* together with the CV sections on the left side of the NRF Connect screen before they can complete the application.
- If tertiary qualification is completed, upload proof of completion by clicking on "*Click here to upload the relevant document*" field which will redirect to your list of files.



B. Completing the Honours Scholarship application:

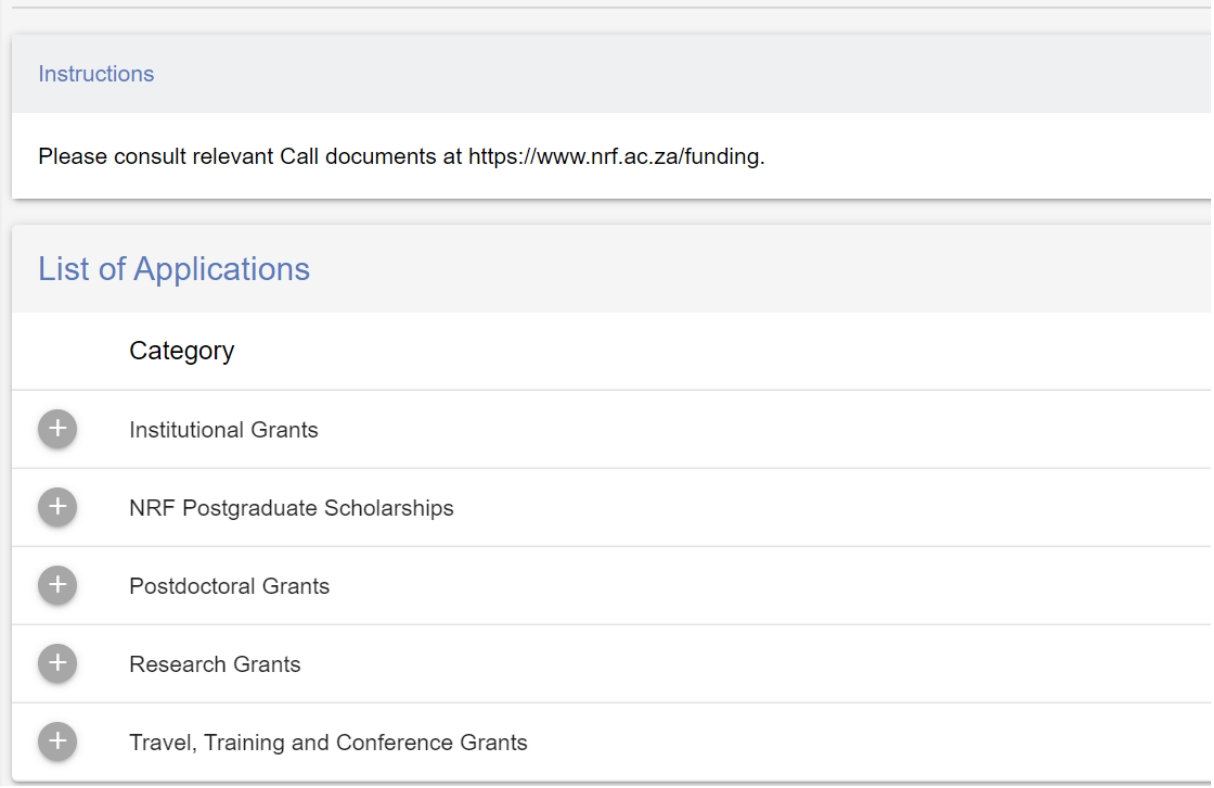
Step 12: Accessing the application

To create an application, go to “MY APPLICATIONS” and select “Applications”



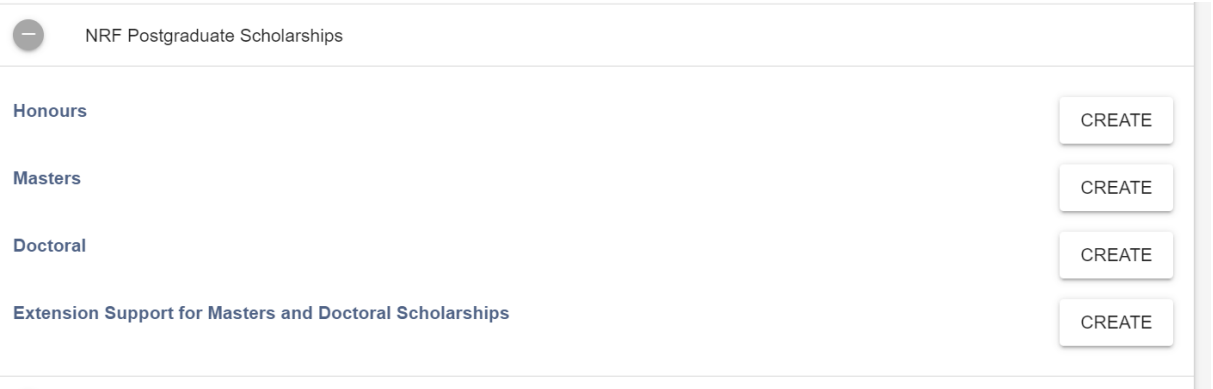
Step 13: Postgraduate Scholarship Level

Click on the plus sign on NRF Postgraduate Scholarships to view the postgraduate scholarship levels.



Step 14: Creating the application

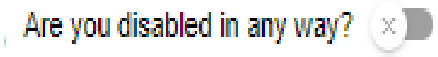
- Click on *'Create'* to complete the honours scholarship application.
- Please note that the application can only be created once. To continue working on the created application, you must click on the 'Edit' button.

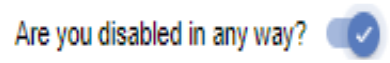


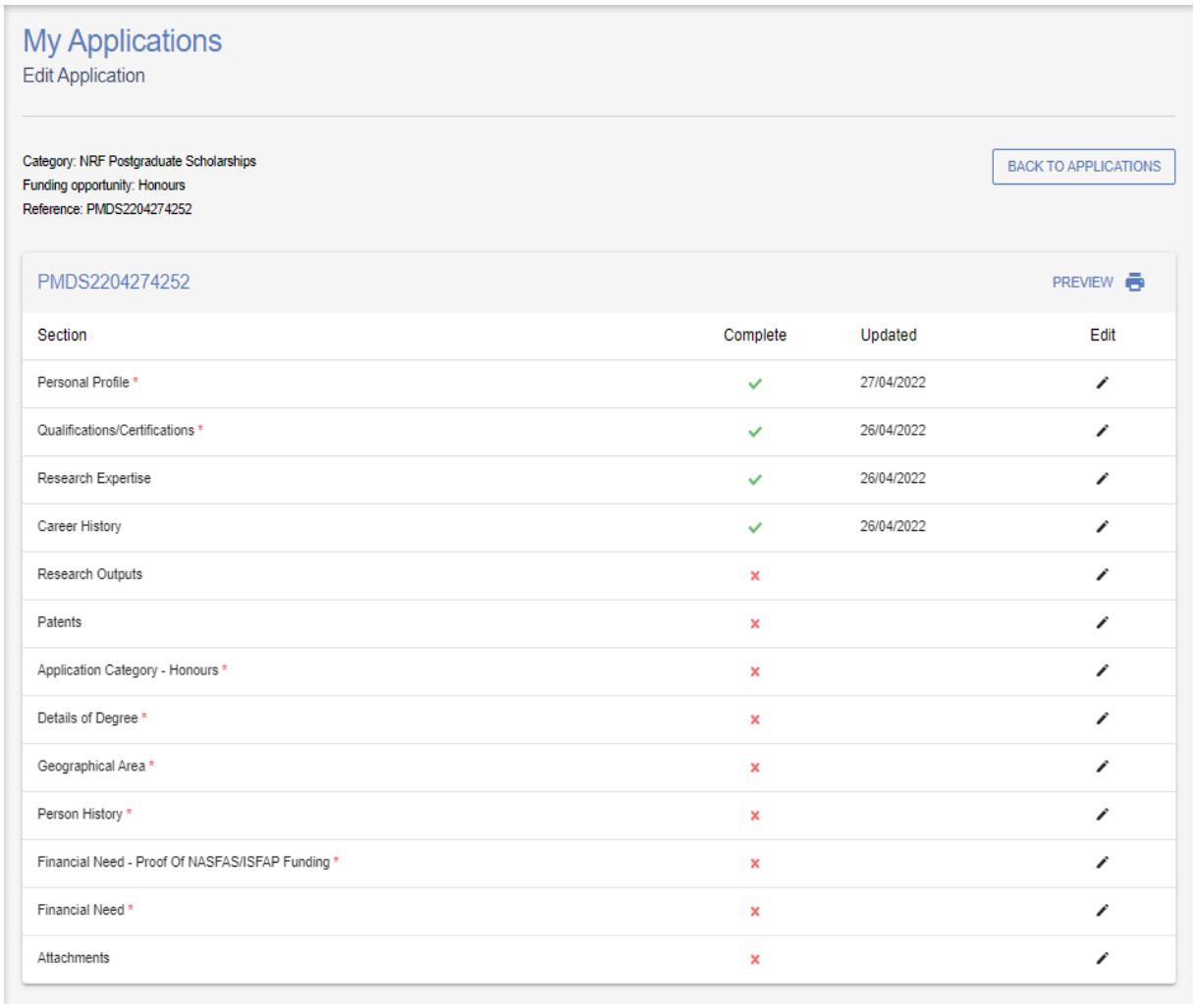
Step 15: Application Sections

- After creating the application, you will be taken to the landing page below.
- All sections marked with an **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, while incomplete sections will have a red cross.
- Applicants may complete the non-compulsory sections, if relevant.

*Note that the grey cross Toggle indicates “No”, and the blue tick indicates “Yes”, see example below:







Step 16: Application Category -Honours

- The *Application Category* section is a very important section, and the applicant must ensure that they select the correct Scholarship applying for.
- **Scholarship applying for** = there are various types of honours scholarships offered.
- Only one option can be selected.
- **Please refer to the *DSI-NRF Postgraduate Scholarship Framework* for a detailed eligibility criteria for of each scholarship.**
- Note that a change of the Scholarship you're applying for, will not be permitted if the application has already been submitted to the NRF.

General NRF Scholarship:

The scholarship is intended to support candidates at South African public universities, in all areas of Science, Engineering, Technology, Social Sciences and Humanities, including Indigenous Knowledge Systems.

NRF-SASOL Scholarship:

- Only South African citizens are eligible.
- Only applicants registered in chemistry and related disciplines with specific focus on the green economy will be considered.
- Only applicants who intend registering at one of the following South African public universities *viz*. **University of Fort Hare, University of Limpopo, University of Venda, University of Free State (Qwaqwa Campus), and North-West University (Mafikeng Campus),** will be considered.

*Please note that if an institution outside the above list is selected, the application will be routed to the general scholarships pool of applications.

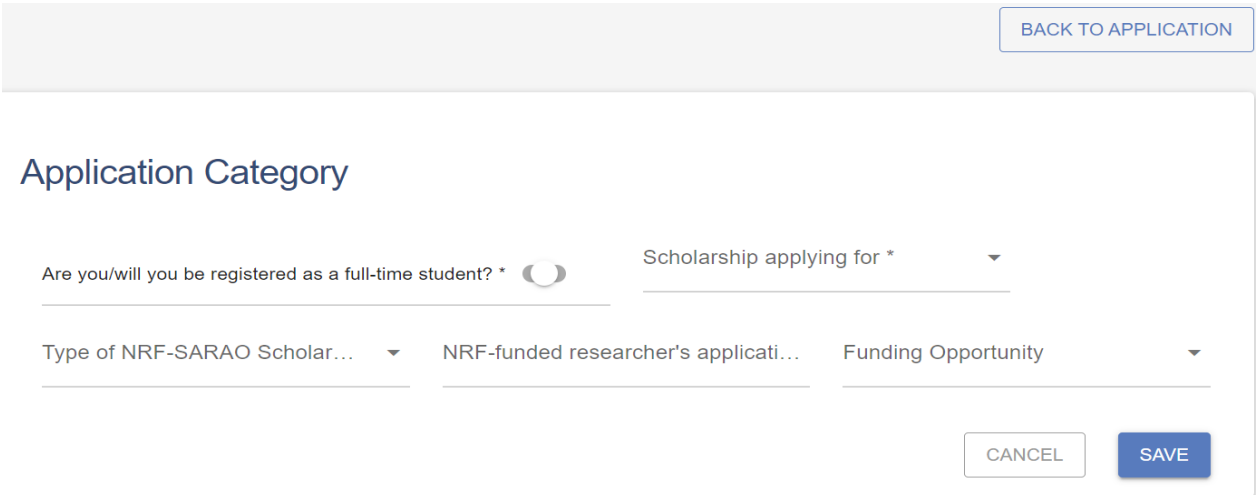
Scholarship linked to NRF-funded researcher:

NOTE: Grant holder-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 '**Scholarship linked to NRF-funded research'** under the *"Scholarship Applying For"* field.

Applicants must list either the application reference number or the UID (grant number) of the **researcher** in this section. This will enable the NRF to separate your application during the funding decisions process.

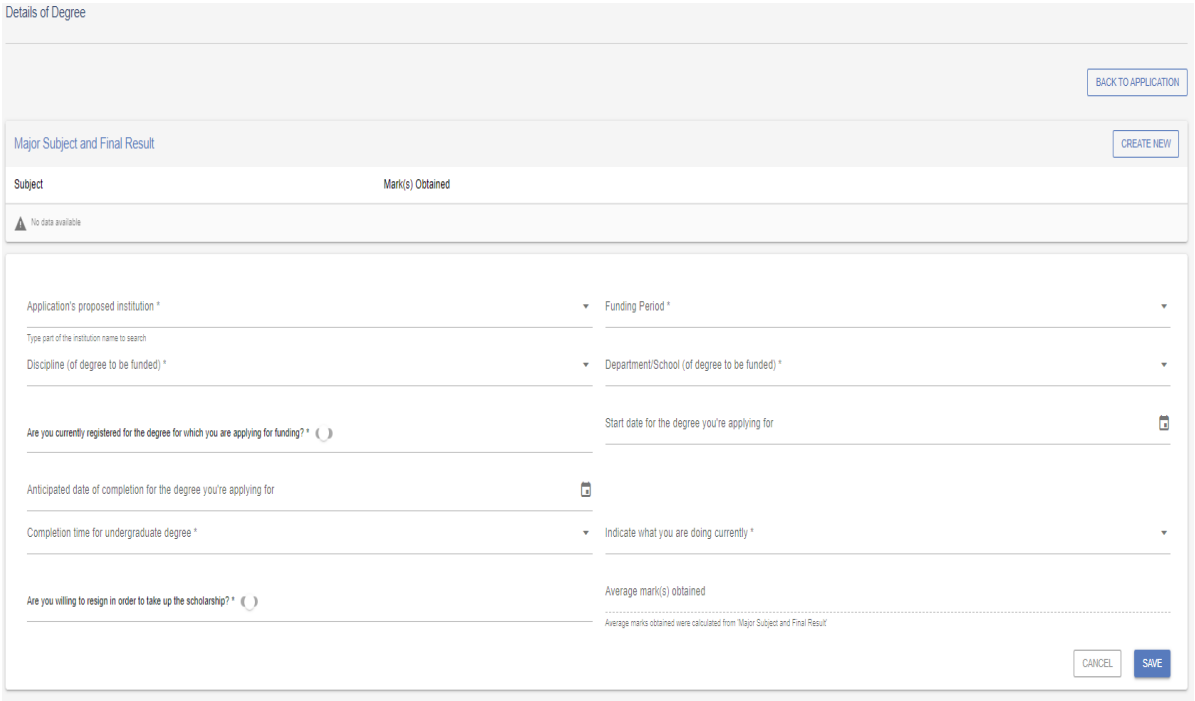
Research Grants that students may be linked to include:

- Institutional Grants (SARChI; CoE)
- General Research Grants Thuthuka
- 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



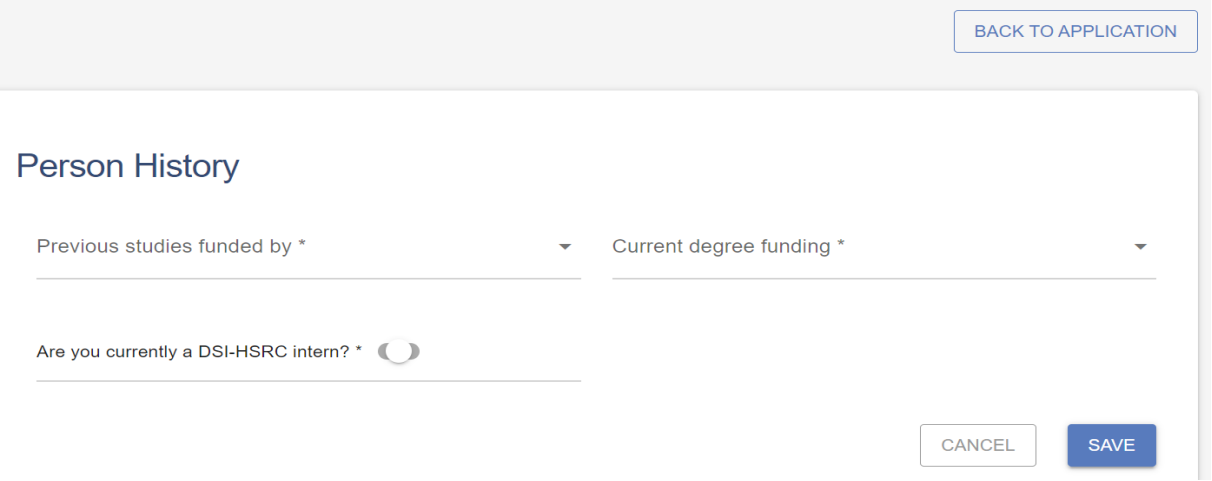
Step 17: Details of Degree

- **Applicant's proposed institution** = this is the South African institution where you intend to register for your honour's degree. Once your application is submitted, it will be routed to the postgraduate/research office at the selected institution for the screening and scoring processes.
- Applicants will not be permitted to change the proposed institution once the application is submitted to the NRF. Should the application be successfully awarded, the student will be allowed to move the scholarship to another university.
- Applicants must capture the **final year major subjects** of the **undergraduate study** and the **mark obtained** for each subject.
- Applicants that don't have the final year results at time of application, may proceed to submit the application, however, as the final examination marks are released, they must ensure that they send the results to the proposed institution's postgraduate office for capturing on the scorecard.
- Applicants with the average examination mark that is **below 65%** for **major subjects in the final year** of the **undergraduate study**, are not eligible for the honours scholarship and will be rejected by the proposed university.
- Applicants who are full-time employed, cannot hold the NRF scholarship unless they're willing to resign if they're successfully awarded.



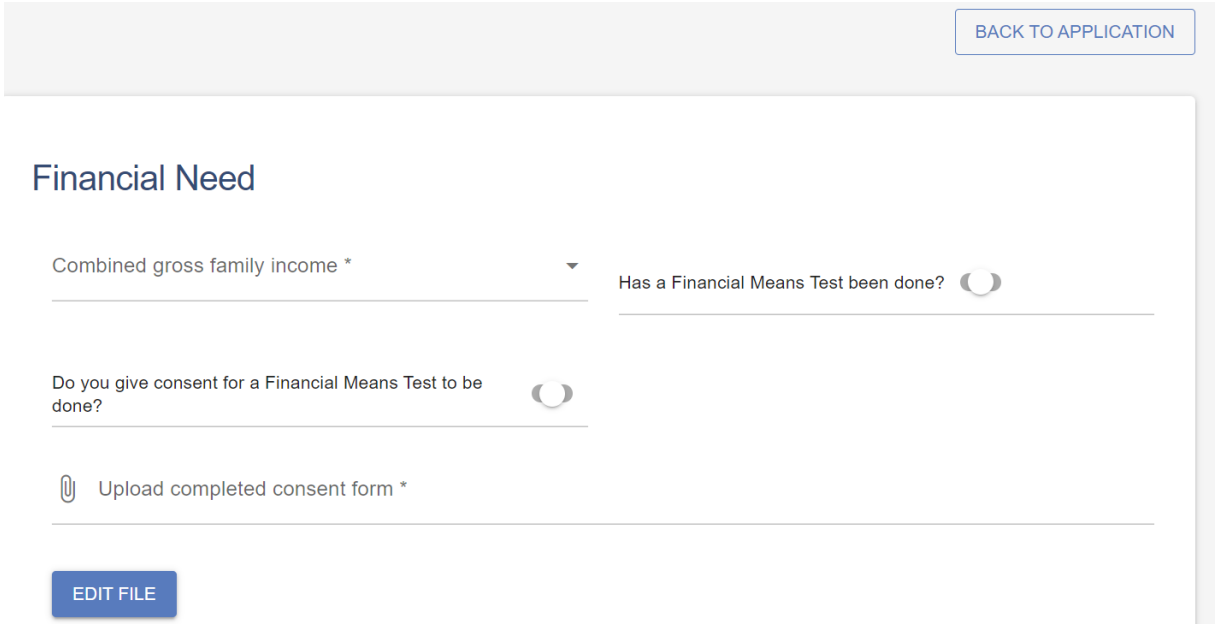
Step 18: Person History

- 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.



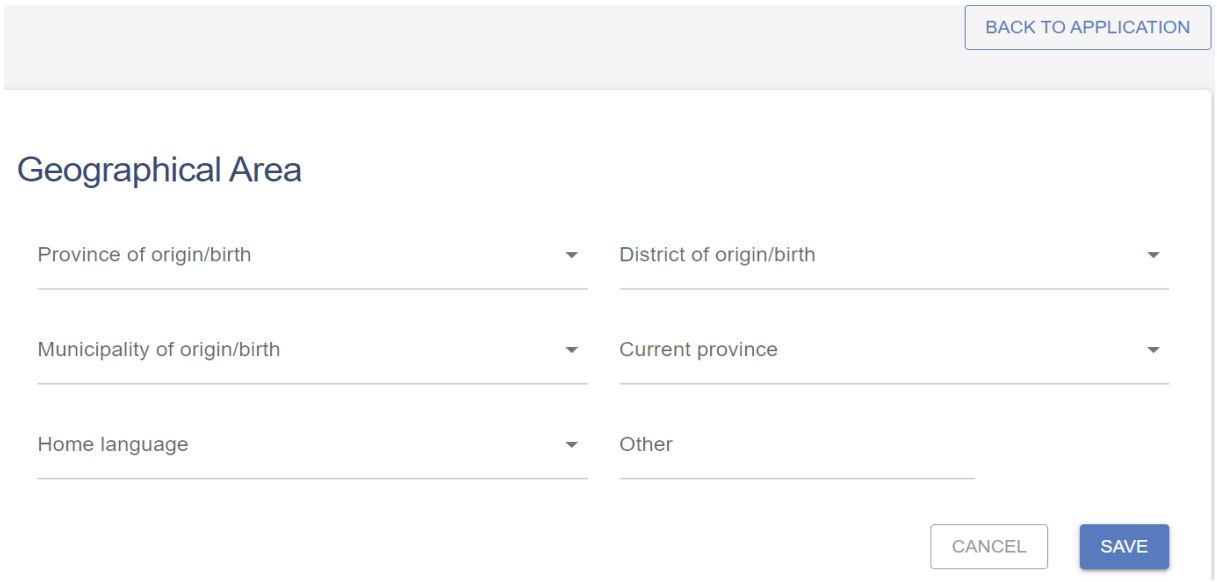
Step 19: Financial Need

- 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 the applicant gives consent for a financial means assessment, the ISFAP Consent Form which is downloadable from the instructions window of the Financial Need section must be completed and uploaded to the **Financial Need** section only. If the form is not uploaded or incomplete, a financial means test will not be conducted.
- Applicants who were previously or currently funded by NSFAS or ISFAP, do not have to give consent for a financial means test. They must upload proof of funding under the "**Financial Need - Proof Of NSFAS/ISFAP Funding**" section.



Step 20: Geographical Area

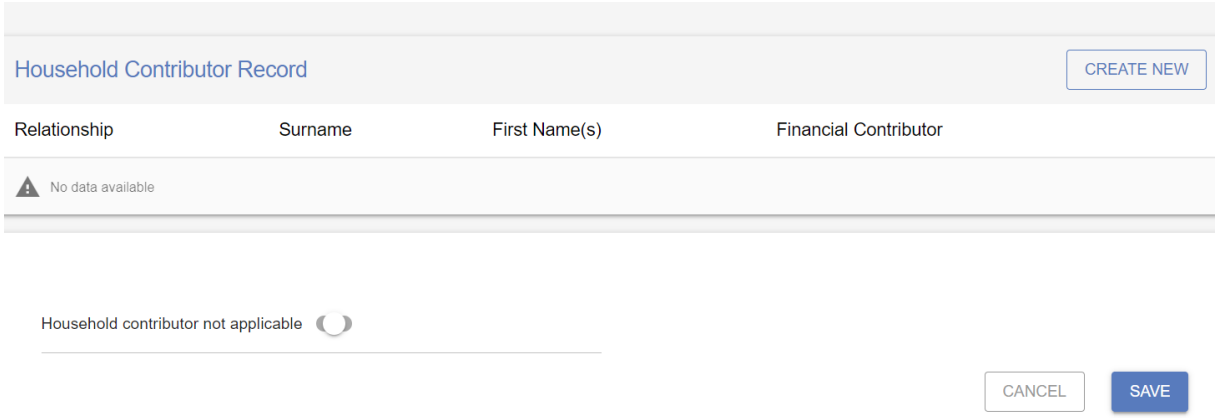
Please refer to the instructions to complete the section.



Step 21: Household Contributor

If a financial means test is required, please complete the household contributor section, and input the details of the household contributors as they appear on the completed ISFAP consent form.

If the financial means assessment is not required, please select *"Household contributor not applicable"*

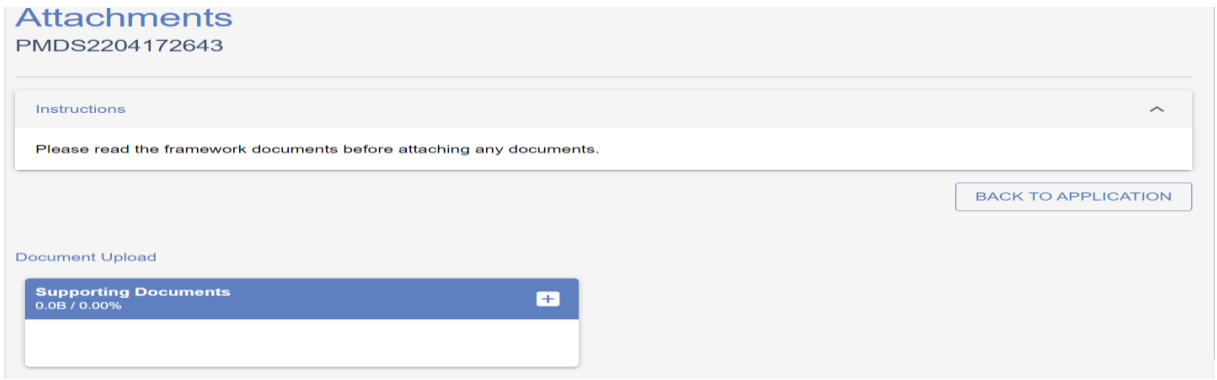


Step 22: Attachments

Please print or make a copy, certify, and scan all the required documents and upload as a **PDF file**.

The following is a summary of documents required for the honours scholarship:

- Certified copy of Identity Document *(Must be uploaded on the 'My Profile' section).*
- The latest official academic record on the university letterhead. Applicants who do not have the academic transcript due to outstanding fees, are required to attach **an official financial statement or letter from the university** indicating that the student still has outstanding fees owed to the university.
- A medical certificate for applicants who live with a disability *(Must be uploaded on the 'My Profile' section).*
- Proof of NSFAS/ISFAP for applicants who were previously or are currently funded by NSFAS/ISFAP.



4. Screening Processes

Overview of the Screening Process

All submitted applications are routed to the proposed institution for screening on eligibility, scoring process and recommendation for scholarship. Applications that meet the eligibility criteria are submitted to the NRF for further review and approval.

5. Applications Feedback and Disputes

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.

Feedback from the NRF

- The NRF must provide feedback to applicants rejected at the screening stage for not meeting the eligibility criteria.
- 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 upload a regret letter to the applicant's NRF portal.
- The NRF must provide feedback to applicants whose applications were recommended for funding and approved for funding. In this instance, the NRF will upload an award letter to the applicant's NRF portal.

--END