Application and Funding Guide for DSTI-NRF Master's and Doctoral Scholarships 2026

Contents

Contact Details

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.

Contact Details for the Funding Opportunities

Queries related to specific funding opportunities can be directed to postgraduatequeries@risa.nrf.ac.za.

The subject line of your email must have the following information in order to be routed correctly:
- Level i.e., Honours, Master's or Doctoral
- Funding opportunity e.g., General, SARChI, NRF-MINDS, Manus MatSci
- Application reference number starting with prefix PMDS25…

1. Introduction

This Application and Funding Guide provides an overview of the application process and funding guidelines for master's and doctoral scholarships for the 2026 academic year.

This document should be read in conjunction with the **DSTI-NRF Postgraduate Student Application and Funding Framework for Funding in 2026 Academic Year**. 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.

*All postgraduate call documents can be accessed via the NRF website: https://www.nrf.ac.za/funding/nrf-call-for-proposals-for-funding-in-2025-and-2026/

2. Application Process

- The NRF's call for Postgraduate Scholarships for full-time studies in 2026 is published on the NRF website (www.nrf.ac.za).
- Application forms are accessible online at https://nrfconnect.nrf.ac.za
- Applicants may only submit ONE application.
- 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, reviewed and scored by the institutions, and only **eligible** applications which are **recommended by the institutional review panel** will be submitted to the NRF.
- In order for an application to be considered for 2026 funding, applicants must ensure that they submit their applications on or before the applicant 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 application closing date with the relevant Research or Postgraduate office.

3. How to Submit an Application

- Application forms must be completed on the NRF Connect System at https://nrfconnect.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.

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.
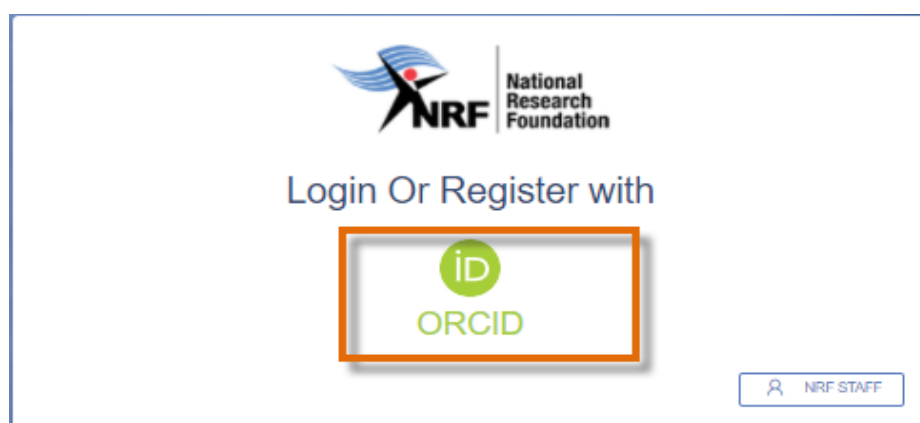
Step 2: Signing in with ORCID iD

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.
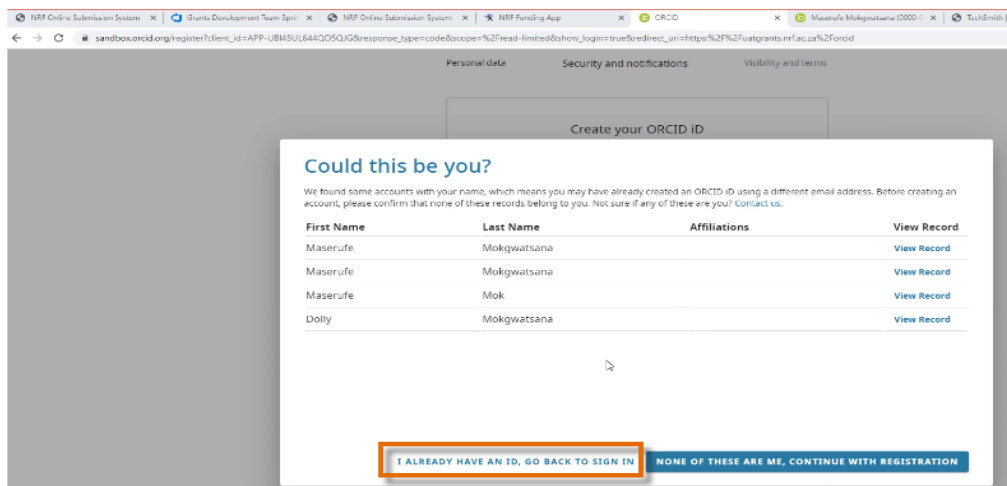
Step 3: Creating the ORCID iD

- 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
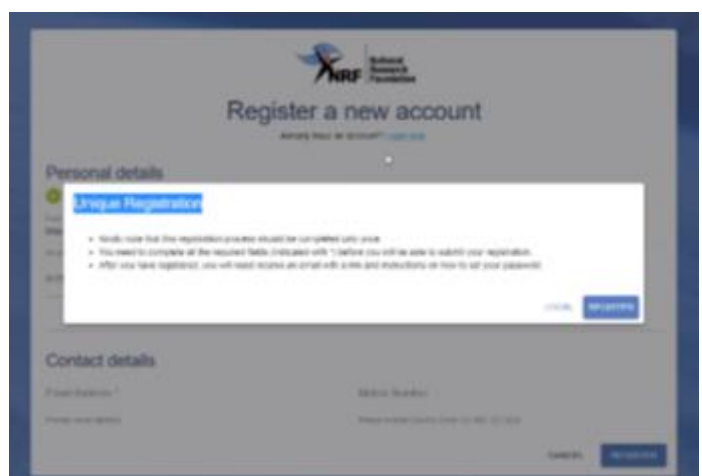
Step 6: Authorize Access

Continue with the ORCID registration as prompted.

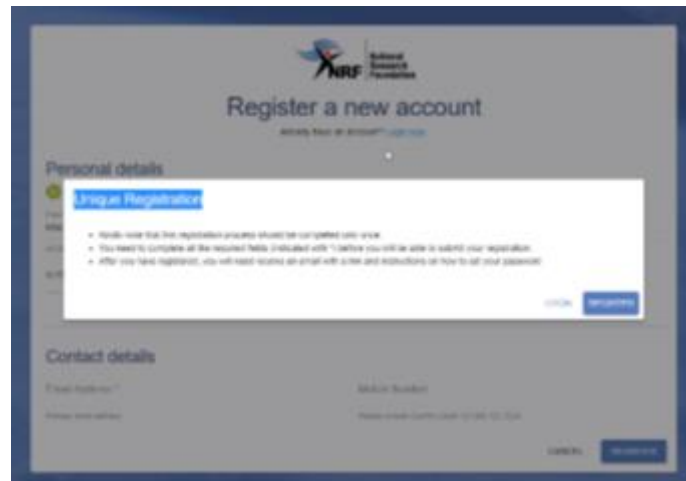**Step 7: Register on NRF Connect**

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

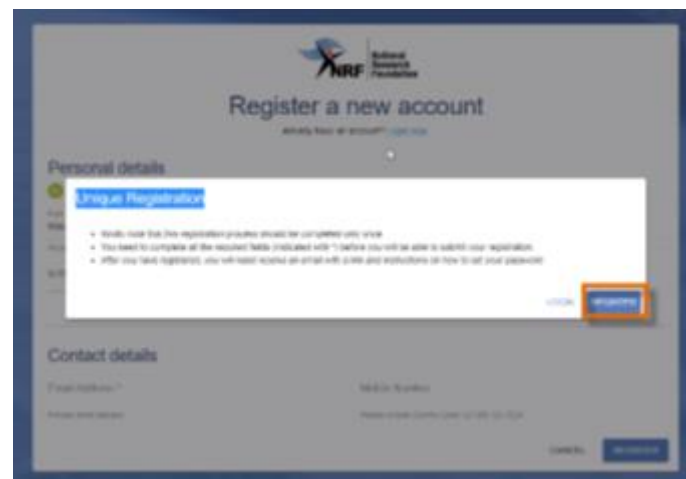**Step 8: Applicants with NRF Online Submission Profile**

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

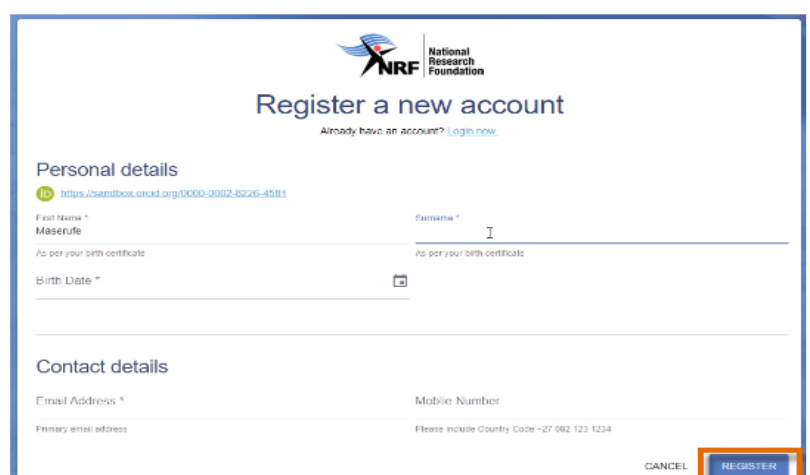**Step 9: Applicants without NRF Online Submission Profile**

If you're not registered on NRF Online Submission system, click '**Register'** to register and create a profile on the new 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 *'Profile'* and ensure that they upload a clear, certified copy of their valid ID document or passport (foreign applicants). ***If the ID copy or passport is not certified, the application will be rejected as this is an audit requirement.**

- The name, surname and ID/passport number on the profile section should match the ID document/passport uploaded.

- Applicants with disabilities must upload a medical certificate, in support of the disability. **Document must be attached under the Disability field (profile section) only. *Do not select "disability unspecified".**

- **Home address** must be completed as this information is required by some funders.

- The CV section*s* on the left side of the NRF Connect screen must also be completed before applicants can complete the application. This information will be pulled into the application.

- All fields with an asterisk * are compulsory.

- 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.
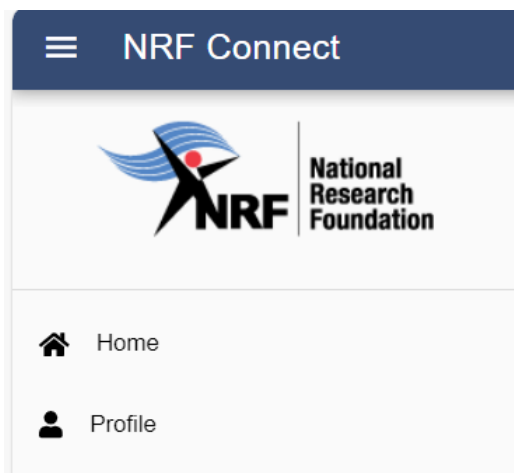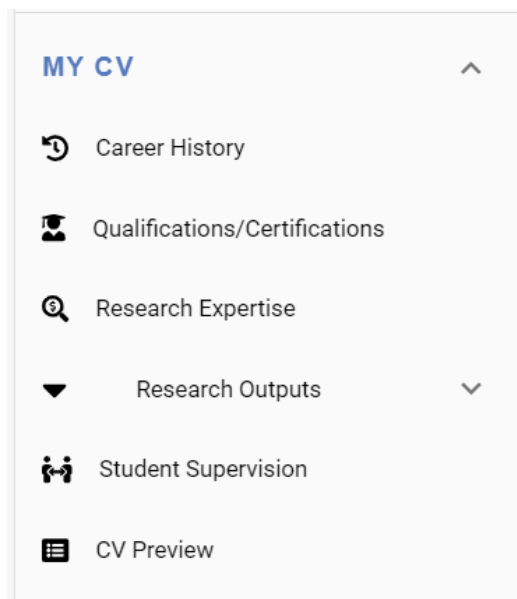
Navigation and Controls

Drop-down List Control

Click on the arrow on the drop-down to see a list of options. Then click on the relevant option(s) to select.
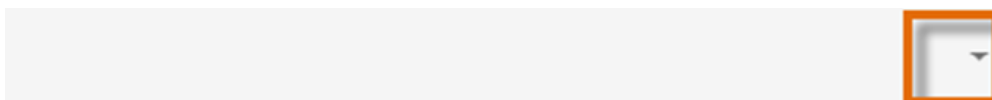
Upload Control

Click on the **Attachment** icon to upload required document(s).

Calendar Control

Click on the **Calendar** icon to select the date, where a date is required.
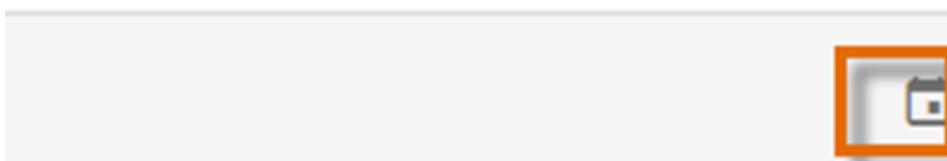
A full **Calendar** will be displayed to allow for selection of the relevant date (follow the sequence as follows: year, month, day).

Toggle Control

Toggle to indicate **No**.
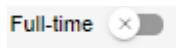
Toggle to indicate **Yes**.
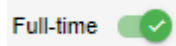
Please make sure that the toggle has fully marked no or yes based on your selection. Toggle not fully selected will not allow the section to complete.

Accessing the application

Applications that you are potentially eligible for will be displayed on the homepage of NRF Connect.

You can click on the "apply" icon in order to start an application.
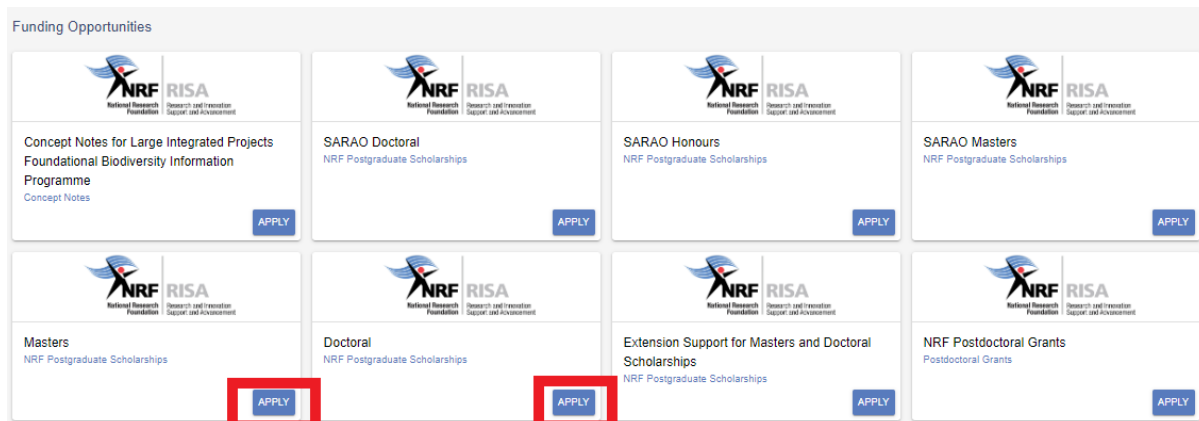
Another way to create an application via the main NRF Connect menu is to go to **"MY APPLICATIONS"** and select **"Applications":**
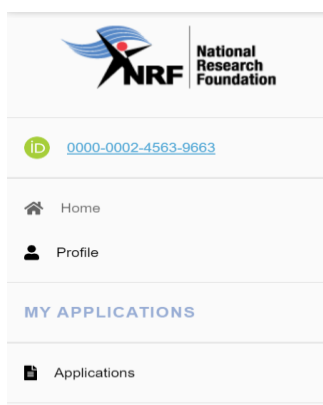
Click on the plus sign on NRF Postgraduate Scholarships to view the postgraduate scholarship levels.
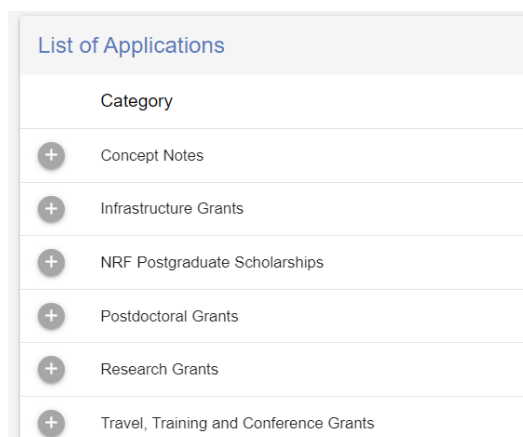
Click on **'Create'** to complete the relevant scholarship application.

Please note that the application can only be created once. To continue working on the created application, you must click on the **'Edit'** button.

*Please do not edit and resubmit old applications which were submitted under previous calls. These will not be considered.

Applicants can then complete the application:

Sections marked with a red asterisk (*) are compulsory and all these sections have to be completed in order for you to submit your application. Completeness is indicated by a red cross (incomplete) or a green tick (complete). Sections can be edited by selecting the edit icons on the far-right side.

Should you experience any challenges with updating the CV section of the application, try editing these sections via the main menu on NRF Connect, and these will automatically update on the application.

*Please ensure that you complete and submit your application by the closing date of the call. The system will not allow applicants to submit after the call has closed.

Step 12: Application Category

- The **Application Category** section is a very important section.
- **Scholarship applying for** = each level has different types of scholarships linked to it.
- Only one option can be selected.
- Please refer to the Framework Document for further details and associated eligibility criteria for the various scholarships.
- **Note:** A change of scholarship applying for will not be allowed once the application has been submitted to the NRF. If the applicant is not eligible under the selected scholarship, the application will be rejected and will not be considered for funding.

Application Category - Masters

Are you/will you be registered as a full-time student? *

Scholarship applying for *

NRF-funded researcher's applic…

Funding Opportunity

CANCEL   SAVE

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-SARAO Master's and Doctoral Scholarships: READ THE APPLICATION GUIDE <https://www.nrf.ac.za/funding/nrf-call-for-proposals-for-funding-in-2025-and-2026/ >.

Any applicant who is applying for a scholarship that will be funded by NRF-SARAO, must select the SARAO Master's or SARAO Doctoral option. This includes applicants for freestanding SARAO scholarships, as well as for SARAO-funded Research Chairs and SARAO-funded Research Groups.

Please note: **SARAO Masters and Doctoral Scholarships**: ONLY students who wish to pursue Master's or Doctoral research that is relevant to radio astronomy science or engineering may apply.

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 (CoE, Thuthuka, General Research Grants etc.), MUST choose '**Scholarship linked to NRF-funded research'** under the relevant academic level.

Applicants 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 Centre of Excellence (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.

Research Grants that students may be linked to include:

Institutional Grants (CoE, National Institutes for Research, Development and Innovation (NIRDs))

- 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
    - South African National Antarctic Programme
    - Marine and Coastal Research Grants
    - Competitive Programme for Rated Researchers
    - Competitive Support for Unrated Researchers
      Community Engagement Grants

Note: Global Change and SARChI (South African Research Chairs) can be selected from the drop-down list under the scholarship applying for field.
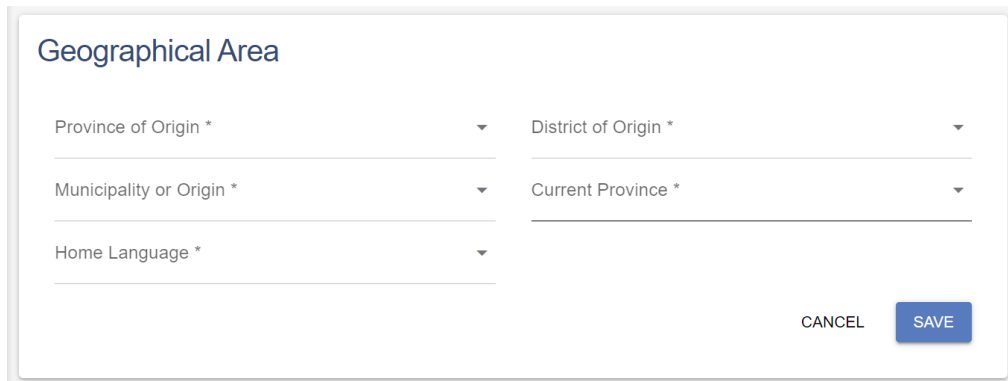
NRF-SASOL Scholarship:

- 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), North-West University (Mafikeng Campus),** and **University of Mpumalanga** 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.

Step 13: Geographical Area

Please refer to the instructions online to complete the section.
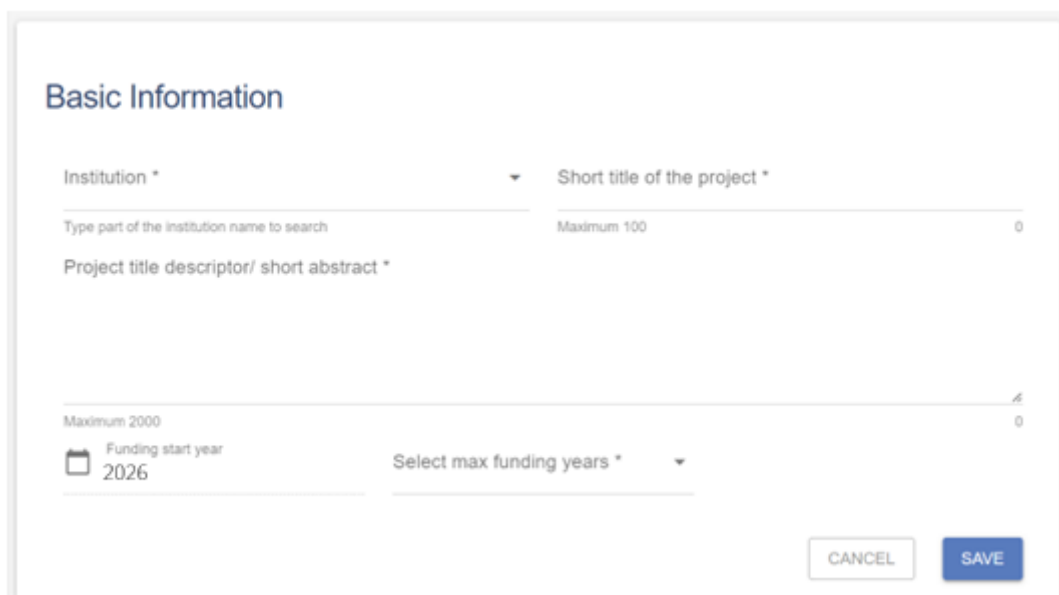
Step 14: Basic Information

- **Institution** = this is the **South African public university or university of technology** 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.

- The **Basic Information section** requires the applicant to indicate the funding period required for the study.

- Also provide the title and abstract of the proposed research project. This information is pulled into the granting system and is displayed on the award documents and progress reports. *Applications without a title or descriptive title/abstract will be rejected. Please do not indicate things like "TBC" or "still to be decided" – applications with these phrases will be rejected.

  Short title of the project = Project title

  Project title descriptor/short abstract = descriptive title of your project

- **Select max funding years**
  - Master's level = 2 years
  - Doctoral level = 3 years
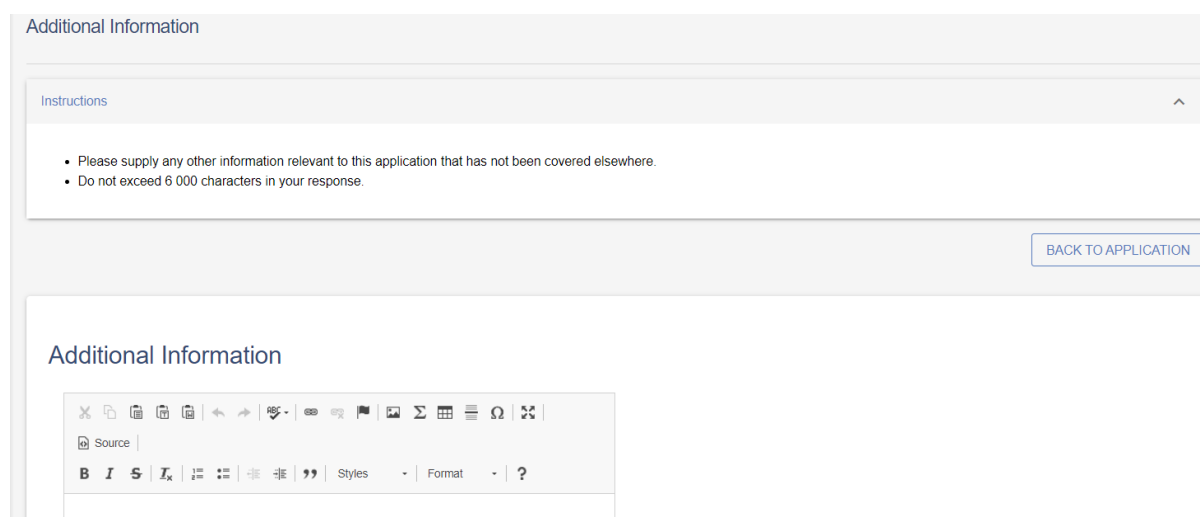
*The period of support is based on the first date of registration for the degree to be funded, regardless of having been previously funded by the NRF. The NRF maximum funding period of support is 2 years for master's study and 3 years for doctoral study.

Example: Master's applicant, if first date of registration is February 2025 – this applicant is only eligible for 1 year of funding in 2026 as this will be the 2nd year of study. If awarded funding for 2026, and further funding is required for 2027, the applicant will have to apply for an Extension Support scholarship.

Step 15: Additional Information

- It is best to complete this section last as it provides you with an opportunity to mention anything that could not be included in any other section of the application.
- This is a free text section with a 6 000 character limitation.
- If you do not have any additional information to add, there is no need to complete this section as it is a non-compulsory section.

Step 16: 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). The financial means test can only be done for South African citizens and South African permanent residents.

- Applicants who were previously or currently funded by NSFAS or ISFAP, don't have to give consent for a financial means assessment. They must upload proof of funding under the "NSFAS/ISFAP Funding" section. Please select **not applicable** under the combined gross family income field.

- Non-South African citizens must select **not applicable** under the combined gross family income field.

- 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.

Financial Need

Combined gross family income *

Has a Financial Means Test been done?

Do you give consent for a Financial Means Test to be done?

📎 Upload completed consent form *

EDIT FILE

Step 17: Financial Need: NSFAS/ISFAP Funding

- Move the Toggle to the right (blue tick) if you're previously or currently funded by NSFAS or ISFAP.

- Move the Toggle to the left (grey cross) if you were not funded by NSFAS/ISFAP.

- Applicants who were previously or currently funded by NSFAS or ISFAP, **must** upload proof of funding in the form of:

  o an official university stamped financial statement clearly showing that the funds are coming from these funders, or

  o a letter form NSFAS, ISFAP or the university stating that the applicant received funding from them.

  *Please **do not** upload unsigned NSFAS bursary agreements!

Step 18: Household Contributor Record

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.

*Note: If a financial means test has been requested, but the household contributor section is incomplete, a financial means test cannot be performed by ISFAP. Likewise, if the household contributor section has been completed but the completed ISFAP consent form has not been uploaded, a financial means test will not be done.

Click on the create new tab to add a record for the household contributor(s).

*If a financial means test has not been requested, please move the toggle for not applicable so that it's green with a tick.

Step 19: Funding History

- The **Funding 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 **Financial Need: NSFAS/ISFAP Funding** section.

Step 20: Degree to be Funded

- 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.
- **Indicate what you are doing currently** – this field has 3 options:
    - Employed
    - N/A (this option is used when you are neither employed nor studying in 2025)
    - Studying
- Full-time employed applicants cannot hold the NRF scholarship unless they're willing to resign if successfully awarded. If "no" is indicated under willingness to resign, the application will be

rejected. This field is checked in conjunction with the "career history" section, as such it is important that this section is up to date.

- Applicants are also required to indicate the first date of registration for the degree. Please ensure that the correct date is indicated as the scholarship period of support is determined by this date.

- If you will be registered for your pre-proposal year in 2026, you are not eligible to apply as the NRF does not fund the pre-proposal year of study.

- If your master's degree has been upgraded to a doctoral degree, please complete the relevant upgrade fields.

- If you are unsure of the faculty/department information, please check with the DA at the relevant institution. If the exact name does not appear on the dropdown lists, please select the most suitable option.

Degree To Be Funded

Are you currently registered for the degree for which funding is being applied for? *	Date of first registration for the degree for which funding is being a…
Has your Master's degree been upgraded to a Doctorate? *	Date of upgrade *
Does your degree include a pre-proposal year? *	Indicate the year in which your pre-proposal year was/will be taken *
Does any financial support received for previous studies bind you to a service contract? *	Student number (if currently registered at a university)
Discipline *	Masters co-supervisor
Faculty (of degree to be funded)	Department/School (of degree to be funded)
Indicate what you are doing currently *	Are you willing to resign in order to take up the scholarship? *

Step 21: Academic Achievement

- In the **Academic Achievement** section, please capture the academic average **percentage** for the previous degree.

- Master's applications must indicate the average for the honours or equivalent degree. If still busy with the honours degree, applicants must capture the average percentage for major subjects in the final-year undergraduate courses, 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.

- Doctoral applicants must indicate the average obtained for their master's. If currently busy with master's, then the average for the honours or equivalent degree must be captured.

- As per the Framework document, South African citizens or permanent resident applicants who have **graduated from 2021 academic year onwards with a classification of Pass will not be allowed to apply in the current call**, only applicants with a numerical pass mark may apply for NRF funding. However, the following individuals will be allowed to apply without a numerical mark:
    - South African citizens or permanent residents who graduated prior to 2021 academic year with a 'Pass' and 'Pass with a distinction'. Applicants with a 'Pass' should enter the 'Pass' under the academic achievement section of the application form, and those with 'Pass with a distinction' should enter 75%;
    - South African citizens or permanent residents with a 'Pass with distinction'. These applicants should enter 75% mark in the application form;
    - International applicants applying for master's and doctoral scholarships. These applicants should enter a 'Pass' in the application form; and
    - South African citizens with international qualifications applying for master's and doctoral scholarships. These applicants should also enter a 'Pass' in the application form.

Academic Achievements

Name of previous degree *

Level of previous degree *

Average percentage mark for major subjects or completed degree e.g. 6…

Year in which previous degree was completed *

Completion time for previous degree *

CANCEL   SAVE

Step 22: Details of Research

- The **Details of Research** section is one of the most important sections in the application. This section differs slightly for master's and doctoral, with the doctoral section requiring more information.
- 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 or can be attached to the attachments section.
- Please avoid one-liners. Applications with no or insufficient research content will be rejected.

- Some free-text sections have character limitations, therefore please read the instructions on the section for guidance.

- The requirements under this section are different for master's and doctoral applicants. Please refer to the **Framework Document** for the scorecards which will be used to review the applications.

- Potential impact relates to the impact that your research may have on society (e.g. poverty alleviation etc.) or knowledge generation.

- For "alignment to national imperatives" section, if you create any records, please note that following:

  o This section is about how your research project is aligned to what the country deems as important or necessary research. Once you create a record, you will be guided by drop down lists of imperatives to select from.

  o The comments and justification fields must be completed in order for the section to save.

  o There is a character limitation in place of 250, therefore if you add more than 250 characters, the section won't save.

  o If you need to add more than 250 characters, then it would be best for you to include the information as an attachment under the "attachments" section.

  o If your research if not aligned to any imperatives, move the toggle to the right (blue) for "no alignment to national imperatives related to this application" and save.

Details of research – Master's application
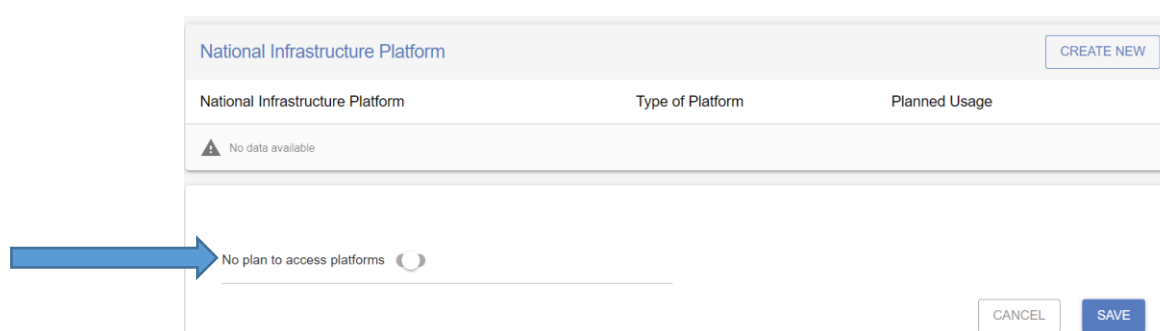
Section	Complete	Updated	Edit
Details of Research *	✗		⊖
Project Outline *	✗		✏
Alignment to National Imperatives *	✗		✏

Details of research – Doctoral application

Section	Complete	Updated	Edit
Details of Research *	✗		⊖
Original Problem Statement *	✗		✏
Aims and Objectives *	✗		✏
Potential Impact (Societal and/or Knowledge) of the Research *	✗		✏
Alignment to National Imperatives *	✗		✏

Step 23: National Infrastructure Platform

- In the **National Infrastructure Platform section,** if you plan to access any specialised equipment or collect data from any platform outside the proposed institution, relevant information should be captured under this section. Click on "create new" in order to add records under this section.

- If there is no such plan, please move the Toggle to the left on "No plan to access platforms" (See blue arrow on screen shot), and the click save.

Step 24: Science Engagement

- The **Science Engagement** section is a compulsory section.

- Science engagement relates to activities where the applicant will communicate their science to the public. Click on "create new" in order to add records under this section.

- Should applicants not be running any science engagement activities, they must move the 'Toggle' to the left as depicted in the image below:

Step 25: Attachments

Here follows a summary of all attachments required under the various sections of the application.

First Time NRF-SARAO Master's and Doctoral Applicants – READ SARAO APPLICATION GUIDE for additional attachments <https://www.nrf.ac.za/funding/nrf-call-for-proposals-for-funding-in-2025-and-2026/>.

- Latest academic record. Applicants who cannot obtain an academic record because of 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.
- **If the supervisor will not respond via the application support input section (see Step 26), then a signed letter from your supervisor** on the institutional letterhead must be attached to the application, in which the following questions must be answered:
  - Confirm master's/doctoral supervision
  - Do you support the application that has been submitted to the NRF?
  - Does the institution have the necessary infrastructure to carry out the recommended research project as detailed in the applications submitted to the NRF?
  - Ethical clearance required?
- For master's applicants only – if a supervisor is yet to be allocated, a signed letter on the institutional letterhead from the Head of Department (HoD) can be attached, in which the following questions are answered:
  - Do you support the application that has been submitted to the NRF?

- Do you confirm that the master's applicant will be allocated a supervisor timeously, thus enabling the applicant to take up the scholarship (if awarded) and start their studies by April of the year of award?

[*Institutions can create templates for their students to utilize with the above questions.]

This requirement is only applicable to the following Master's and Doctoral scholarship programmes (as selected under the **Application Category** section):

Master's	Doctoral
General scholarships	General scholarships
NRF-DAAD	NRF-DAAD
NRF-SASOL	NRF-MINDS
Manus MatSci scholarships	NRF-SASOL
NRF-EMET	Manus MatSci scholarships
NRF-SASAC	NRF-EMET
Scholarship linked to NRF-funded research – **CoE; Thuthuka**	NRF-SASAC
	NRF-PDP
	Scholarship linked to NRF-funded research – **CoE; Thuthuka**

*NOTE: This requirement is NOT APPLICABLE to those applying under "Global Change", "SARChI" and other "Scholarship linked to NRF funded research" (see page 16 for the full list of institutional and research grants).

Profile section (Step 11)

a. Clear, certified copy of ID document (SA citizens or SA permanent residents) or passport (foreign applicants)

b. Doctor's letter as proof of disability (if applicable)

   *Please do not select "disability unspecified" under the disability field drop-down list.

Financial need

a. Completed ISFAP consent form (if requesting a financial means test) (**Step 16**)

b. Proof of previous NSFAS/ISFAP funding, if applicable (see **Step 17**)

First Time Master's and Doctoral NRF-DAAD Applicants – additional attachments

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

a. A brief motivation on the interest to undertake a three (3) to six (6) months research visit in Germany. ***Note:** if this motivation letter is not attached to the application, the application will be **rejected**.

b. Applicants must also indicate if they have established collaborations in Germany and if they do, the applicant must provide the details of the collaborator.

Step 26: Application Support Input

The **Application Support Input** 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. *If the referee did not receive an email, the report can be accessed on their NRF Connect profile.

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.

References for Doctoral-level Applicants

At doctoral level, applicants are expected to have identified a supervisor at the time of application.

*If the referee does not respond by the closing date, the system will not allow the institution to submit the application to the NRF. A referee response is an application requirement!

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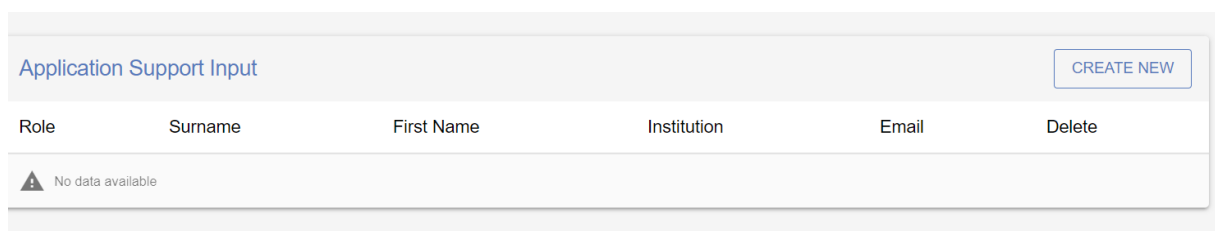
e. Once you have confirmation that you have a supervisor for your doctoral study, proceed by completing the details of your supervisor in the application support input section of the application you send to the NRF.

*Note:** Once you submit your application online, an email will be sent to your referee directing them to login to the NRF Connect profile to complete the referee report. Your referee **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**
  - o   Master's supervisor

    OR
  - o   HoD if a supervisor has not been allocated
- **Doctoral applicants**
  - o   Doctoral supervisor
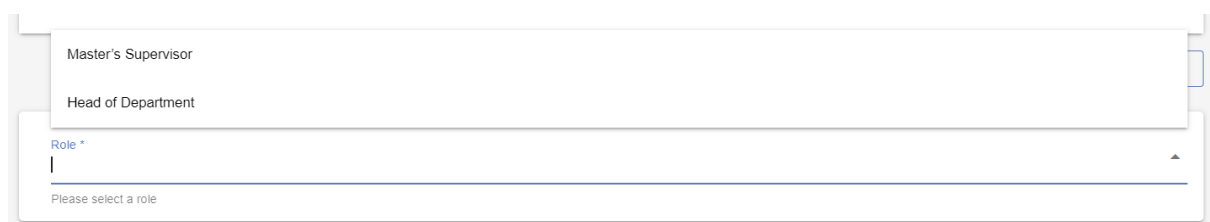
In order to add a referee, please follow the directions below:

Application Support Input					CREATE NEW
Role	Surname	First Name	Institution	Email	Delete
⚠ No data available					

- Click on "create new" in order to add a referee.
- Then select the relevant role of the referee:

Masters
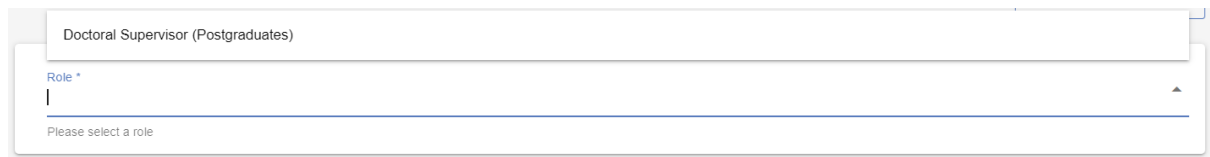
Master's Supervisor
Head of Department

Role *
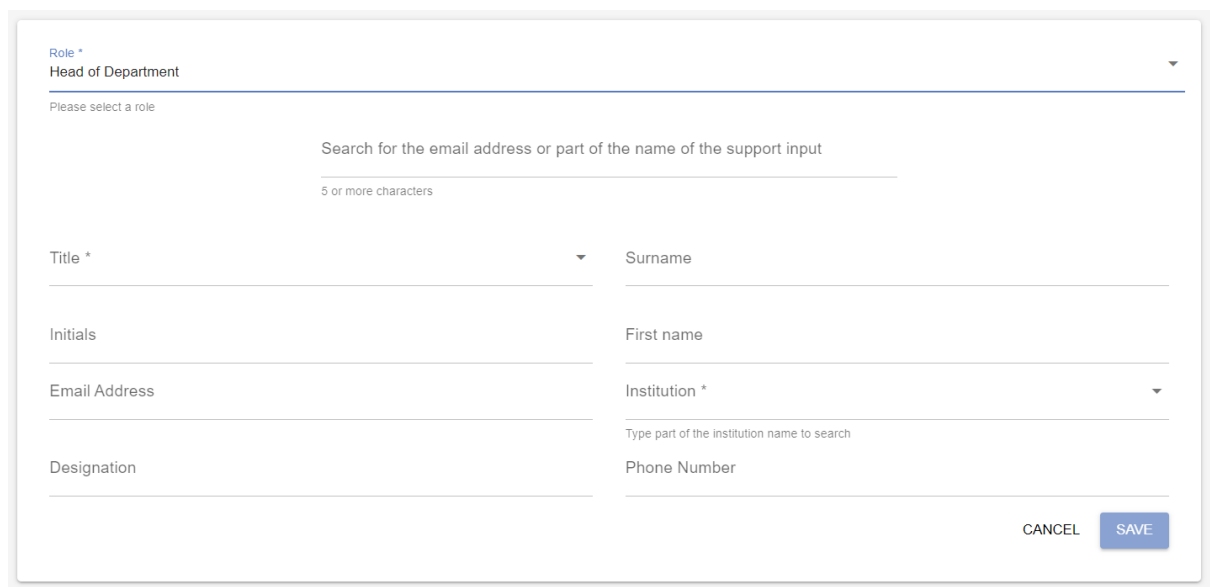
Please select a role

Doctoral

- The roles for the masters and doctoral applications differ:
    - Masters application roles = master's supervisor; head of department
    - Doctoral application role = doctoral supervisor

- Once the role has been selected, the following will appear:

- Please search for the **email address** that your referee is registered with on NRF Connect (this is the email address they use when logging into NRF Connect).
    - If the referee is registered on NRF Connect, their details will appear for you to select.
    - If the referee is registered on NRF Connect, but you cannot find them or you get an error message this means:
        - The referee has a duplicate profile. The referee will have to contact the NRF and request for one profile to be deleted. Or,
        - The referee's profile is inactive. In this case, the referee needs to login to their account on NRF Connect, and update the profile section and save the information. Once done, you will be able to locate and add the referee under the application support input section.

o   If the referee is not registered, you can then tick the box "user not found" and then populate the remaining fields with the referee's details.

- ***Note:** Once you submit your application online, an email will be sent to your referee directing them to login to their NRF Connect profile to complete the referee report. Your referee **MUST** submit the report in order for your application to be considered for funding.
- **Only add ONE referee under the application support input section.** If you add more than one referee and all do not respond, the institution will not be able to submit the application to the NRF.

Once **all** the compulsory sections are completed on the application, the system will allow you to submit the application. Please ensure that you adhere to the applicant closing date. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered for funding.

The onus lies on the applicant to ensure that they have complied with all application requirements. Applications that do not meet the eligibility criteria or application requirements (including those with missing documents) will be rejected by the institution and/or NRF.

4. Tracking the Application

This section explains different application statuses to assist the applicant in tracking their application. The status of your application will determine the stage of the application.

Applicants should direct queries to the Institution Research/Postgraduate Office if the application is still with the Institution i.e., not yet submitted to the NRF.

Application in progress	• Applicant has created an application.
Application complete	• Application is complete but has not been submitted to the institution yet.
Submit application to institution	• Application has been submitted to the selected institution.
Designated authority submission review	• Application received by institutional designated authority (DA) and currently under review.
Designated authority submission eligibility review	• DA has completed review but still needs to complete eligibility criteria and/or scorecard.
Internal screening submission	• Application has been submitted to the NRF by the DA.

5. Screening Processes

5.1 Overview of the Screening Process

All applications validated and reviewed by South African public universities 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. 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 and share the list with the Research/Postgraduate Offices at respective universities.

The NRF will conduct an Appeals Process 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 with proof (e.g., email correspondence with the NRF for system related issues) and must be supported by the supervisor in order to be considered.

Note: Awarding of successful appeals will be contingent on the availability of the budget. Therefore, a successful appeal does not automatically constitute an award.

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.

NOTE: The above-mentioned changes are dependent on the scholarship category. Example, grantholder-linked scholarship-holders cannot change their institution, unless they will remain linked to the NRF-funded research. Further, supervisor changes will also not be allowed as the scholarship was awarded on the basis that the student will be working under the supervisor's NRF-funded research.

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.

1 RSA (2008). Intellectual Property Rights from Publicly Financed Research and Development Act 51 of 2008.G*overnment Gazette*, 22 Dec 2008. Vol 522, No 3174

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.

--END--