

Scarce Skills Development Fund Programme for Masters and Doctoral Scholarships Call for 2015

1. Background

The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) commits grant funds from the National Skills Fund (NSF) towards the Scarce Skills Development Fund Programme (SSDF), which targets students. The management of the SSDF programme is performed in accordance with the memorandum of agreement (MoA) between the National Research Foundation (NRF) and the DHET.

2. Objectives

The programme supports students at South African higher education institutions (HEIs) and science councils. The objectives of the SSDF programme are:

- To continue increasing the number and quality of South African postgraduate students in specified scarce skills areas;
- To continue working towards increased race and gender representation; and
- In conjunction with the higher education sector and industry, to support the development of postgraduate courses and research to meet specific needs of the country.

3. Scarce Skills Areas

Since the inception of the programme, the following disciplines have been supported:

- **Management:**
Financial Management
- **Financial sector:**
Accounting, Auditing, Statistics, Actuarial Science
- **Biological sciences:**
Biotechnology
- **Physical sciences:**
Mathematical Sciences, Physics, Geology, Computer Science, Information Systems, Chemistry
- **Engineering (all fields)**
- **Sector specific:** Agricultural Sciences, Transportation Studies, Tourism, Demography

4. Value of the Award

Awards are given at Masters and Doctoral level as indicated below:

Level	Fellowship / Bursaries	Local Travel	International Travel
Masters Scholarship	R70 000	R15 000	
Doctoral Scholarships	R100 000	R15 000	R50 000

Masters' awards will be allocated as a block grant to universities/institutions. Applications should be submitted online, <https://nrfs submission.nrf.ac.za/>. Master's scholarship-holders may apply for a once off travel grant of up to R 15 000 which can be used to attend local/ international conferences or workshops or visit a laboratory during the tenure of the award.

Doctoral scholarship-holders may apply for a once off travel grant of up to R 15 000 for local travel and R 50 000 for travel abroad which can be used to attend a conference or workshop or visit a laboratory during the tenure of the award.

A travel grant application needs to be completed to be considered for any travel grant and the guidelines, terms and conditions related to travel will apply.

5. Criteria for Selection

5.1. Eligibility

The eligibility criteria listed below applies:

- Scholarships are open to **only bonafide South African citizens** to study for Masters or Doctoral degree.
- Applicants must have obtained their previous degree in the minimum prescribed period. An exception is made for Black (African, Coloured and Indian) students who may have taken an additional year to complete their previous degree.



- Applicants that already hold a degree at the level for which they are applying are not eligible.
- Full time employees of Higher Education Institutions are not eligible to apply.
- All NRF scholarships awards should be held as primary funding towards the research study.
- Scholarships must not be held simultaneously with a bursary/ scholarship from any other government or NRF source or NRF administered source.
- Scholarship-holders are allowed to hold non- binding supplementary grants or emoluments to half the value of the NRF award or should the host university have an institutional capped value, the award can be supplemented to the university capped value for the level of study.
- Scholarship-holders must not hold full-time salaried employment during the tenure of the award.
- Scholarship- holders will be allowed to 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.

5.2 Assessment Criteria

The management of the programme will be conducted by the NRF who is mandated by the National Research Foundation Act, Act No.23 of 1998 to promote and support research. The NRF will select high caliber on the basis of merit (qualifications, and proposed research) through selection panels employing NRF peer review processes. Despite the obligation to meet race and gender targets, quality remains the desired outcome.

- The award of a scholarship to a student will be based on past, current and potential academic performance. Selection criteria will include academic merit, promise of research ability, leadership qualities and previous awards, various prizes and honours.
- In addition to the above criteria, the award of the scholarship will be based on the feasibility and merit of the applicant's research project proposal.

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



5.3. Equity

In line with the national imperative of equity and redress, the programme prioritises support for appropriately qualified blacks, women and students with disabilities without sacrificing quality. Scholarships funds are allocated with every attempt being made to meet the programme targets. This call will give preference to candidates meeting the gender and equity targets (listed below) of the programme.

♦	Black students	(African, Coloured, Indian)	85%
♦	Women students	(African, Coloured, Indian, White)	54%
♦	Students with disabilities	(African, Coloured, Indian, White)	4%

6. How to apply for funding

Applicants can apply by following the steps below:

- Applications must be submitted through an online application process to the National Research Foundation
- **Applicants can apply for the NRF- Scarce Skills Masters and Doctoral Scholarship Call for 2015 by accessing the link: <https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za/>**
- **Register/ Login using your ID number and password.**
- Select create new application from the list of existing calls.
- Select the call for which you are applying to: **NRF- Scarce Skills Masters and Doctoral Scholarship Call for 2015**
- Remember to complete all sections of the application.
- Please attach the necessary documents in **one PDF file in the following order: ID document and certified academic transcripts.**



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- 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 go to the host university for verification before being forwarded to the NRF for further processing.
- Incomplete applications will not be considered.
- Applications that do not meet the eligibility criteria will not be considered (please refer to section 5.1 for details on eligibility for the NRF-Scarce Skills Masters and Doctoral programme).
- Please contact the university post graduate office or research office if you have any queries.
- The closing date for submitting applications is **15 August 2014**.
- **Please take note of your institutions internal closing dates as these may be set before the actual call closing date.**

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