A GUIDE FOR REPLACEMENT OF VACATED RESEARCH CHAIRS

SOUTH AFRICAN RESEARCH CHAIRS INITIATIVE
Date: February 2013

Table of Contents

1. Purpose of the Guide

Research Chairs under the South African Research Chairs Initiative (SARChI) are awarded to public research universities in South Africa. The maximum period of support for Tier 1 and Tier 2 Research Chairs is fifteen and ten years respectively, with the expectation that for the majority of the Research Chairs, the Chair holder will not change during the fifteen or ten year period. However, where a Research Chair is vacated, the university is afforded an opportunity to nominate a replacement candidate for the Research Chair. This document is intended to outline the SARChI process for the management of vacated Research Chairs and the appointment of a replacement candidate.

2. The Objective of the Replacement Process for Vacated Chairs

The process for replacement of vacated Research Chairs is established to ensure the following:

2.1. A summative report on performance of the outgoing Chair incumbent, from the beginning of the funding cycle to the time of departure, is submitted to the National Research Foundation (NRF);

2.2. The appointment of a suitable Interim Research Leader for the interim period is approved by the NRF;

2.3. Continuation of Research Chair activities including training and mentoring of postgraduate students and postdoctoral fellows in the absence of a Research Chair-holder;

2.4. An interim budged, based on activities for the interim period, is approved by the NRF; and

2.5. The NRF releases funding to support on-going Chair activities for the interim period.

3. Process Outline

In the event that the Research Chair is vacated during the tenure of a Research Chair, for example as a result of retirement, resignation or passing away of the incumbent, the following will apply:

3.1. Official Notification

The host university Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) accountable for Research Chairs is required to notify the NRF in writing **within one month** of a Research Chair having being vacated. The duly signed official notification letter must be e-mailed to the Executive Director: Grants Management and Systems Administration (GMSA), Dr Bernard Nthambeleni at bernard@nrf.ac.za and copied to Dr Romilla Maharaj [(romilla@nrf.ac.za),](mailto:romilla@nrf.ac.za) the Executive Director responsible for management of the SARChI Programme. Upon receipt of the notification, the NRF will put a hold on the release of further funding to support Chair activities, until such time as the Interim Research Leader and Interim Plan of activities and budget has been approved by the NRF. However, funding for approved postgraduate students and post-doctoral fellows can be accessed and used for the intended purpose.

3.2. Chair-holder's Exit Report

Incumbents vacating Research Chair positions, under any circumstances, are required to submit to the NRF an Exit Report, using the NRF template. This report must be submitted **within two months** of the Chair having being vacated or, together with the university submission of Chair-holder replacement documents; whichever comes first. The Report must include details of the Chair-holders performance during the current funding cycle up to the date on which the Research Chair was vacated. In the event that a Research Chair is vacated during a five-year funding cycle, the Exit Report will form part of the documentation for the five-year Term Review, when the Research Chair undergoes the next Term Review. The Exit Report will be subject to the same review process as the Research Chair Term Review, which is outlined in the SARChI Guide for a Term Review Process dated February 2012. In the event that the Chair-holder's exit coincides with the Term

Review of the Chair, the self-evaluation report for the Term Review will be used as an Exit Report.

However, in the unfortunate event of a Research Chair being vacated as a result of a deceased incumbent, the host university DVC accountable for the Research Chairs is held responsible for ensuring that the Exit Report is submitted to the NRF.

3.3. SARChI Interim Plan and Budget

The host university DVC accountable for Research Chairs is required to submit to the NRF **within one month** of the Research Chair having been vacated, an Interim Plan, using the NRF template, for continuing Research Chair activities. The Interim Plan may be for a period of up to six months and must outline the following details:

3.3.1. On-going activities of the Research Chair, indicating clear objectives of each activity and an Interim Plan for ensuring continuation of the activities;

3.3.2. A list of continuing postgraduate students and post-doctoral fellows including details on interim measures to be put in place to ensure continued supervision and mentorship;

3.3.3. Details on the responsibilities of the Interim Research Leader and time to be spent on Chair activities; and

3.3.4. A proposed budget to support on-going research activities.

The Interim Plan must be accompanied by a detailed *Curriculum Vita* (CV) of a nominated Interim Research Leader, which must be uploaded or updated on the NRF Online Submission System. The CV must outline the candidate's professional standing in the research area of the Chair with regard to track record in publishing and postgraduate student training and demonstrate suitability for serving as the Interim Research Leader.

Upon approval of the Interim Plan and the nominated Interim Research Leader candidate by the NRF further funds as per the approved interim budget will be released according to the NRF schedule.

Please note: The budget and interim period during which the Research Chair is under leadership of an Interim Research Leader will count towards the total budget and funding period of a Research Chair.

3.4 Research Chair Replacement Candidate

The host university must, **within six months** of the Chair being vacated, submit to the NRF a SARChI Phase 2 proposal that is aligned with the approved SARChI Phase 1 proposal, for continuation of the Research Chair activities. This submission must include a nomination for a replacement candidate together with a full proposal authored by the nominated candidate in consultation with the university DVC responsible for Research Chairs. The selection of the candidate will be based on merit of the candidate's full proposal. This will include the strength of the candidate's profile, including her/his qualifications and experience in the research area of the Chair, publishing and postgraduate student training track records. It will also include an assessment of the candidate's research and activity plan in respect of its ability to deliver on SARChI objectives as well as a proposed budget.

Since the Tier level of the Research Chair is determined by the profile of the candidate, the replacement candidate may be approved at a Tier 1 or Tier 2 level regardless of the Tier level of the predecessor.

The full proposal must be in the same research area and have the same research focus as the original Research Chair proposal. Deviations to the original proposal are permissible only within the same research area with a research focus aligned to the original proposal. The proposal must give details on the following:
- The research focus of the Research Chair;

- A proposed plan on how the Research Chair will fulfil SARChI objectives, including the strategic considerations mentioned in the Phase 1 proposal;

- How it will deliver on the university research strategy; and

- Specific objectives, outputs and outcomes for the full or remainder of the five-year funding period, depending on the timing of the replacement with regard to the tenure of the Chair. Details on the selection criteria is given in Section 2.3 of the SARChI Guide for Applications, dated February 2012.

The nominated candidate must use the NRF Online Submission System (https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za/nrfmkii/) to upload or update her/his CV and the SARChI Phase 2 proposal template for the full proposal. Both the candidate's CV and the full proposal will be subject to peer review following the process outlined in sections 3.2, 4.2 and 4.3 of the SARChI Review Framework.

4. Document submission

The signatory of all documents, i.e. the Exit Report, Interim Plan and the full proposal of a replacement candidate, shall be the University DVC responsible for managing the Research Chair(s). Documents that are not duly signed will be deemed to be incomplete and will be returned the institution without review.

The completed Exit Report and Interim Plan and Budget must be submitted to the NRF electronically to Ms Kentse Mabalane at kentse.mabalane@nrf.ac.za;

The completed SARChI Phase 2 Proposal must be submitted to the NRF in two formats:

- An electronic copy, preferably in a **searchable** PDF format, to Ms Kentse Mabalane at kentse.mabalane@nrf.ac.za; and

- A **signed hard copy**, to be mailed to SARChI, c/o Ms Kentse Mabalane, PO Box 2600, Pretoria, 0001 or hand delivered to the NRF Offices, 50 Meiring Naude, Brummeria.

NRF Contact Persons

Dr Linda Mtwisha, Programme Director: South African Research Chairs Initiative (telephone: 012 481 4014 and email: linda.mtwisha@nrf.ac.za)

Mrs Anthipi Pouris, Acting Grants Director: South African Research Chairs Initiative (telephone: 012 481 4240 and email: Anthipi@nrf.ac.za)