



RISA

Research and Innovation
Support and Advancement

Grants Management and Systems Administration

Grants Manual: Extended Support for Masters and Doctoral Scholarships 2016



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List of Acronyms

APR	Annual Progress Report
DA	Designated Authority
GMSA	Grants Management and Systems Administration
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HICD	Human and Institutional Capacity Development
RISA	Research and Innovation Support and Advancement
NRF	National Research Foundation



Contact Details

Mrs Thashni Pillay

Director: GMSA
Telephone: (012) 481 4241
Fax: 012 349 1179
E-mail address: thashni.maistry@nrf.ac.za

Ms Nozine Nqeketo

Professional Officer: GMSA
Telephone: (012) 481-4184
Fax: 012 349 1179
E-mail address: Nozine.nqeketo@nrf.ac.za

Mrs Zikhona Lose

Professional Officer: GMSA
Telephone: (012) 481 4365
Fax: 012 349 1179
E-mail address: zikhona.lose@nrf.ac.za

Application guidelines are explained in this document. Please read this document together with the call or framework document of the funding instrument that highlights the eligibility criteria and requirements.

For technical online enquiries, please contact the NRF Support Desk during office hours from 08:00 to 16:30

Telephone: (012) 481-4202

E-mail: Supportdesk@nrf.ac.za



1. Introduction

This Manual provides an overview of the extended support for masters and doctoral scholarship funding instrument, application funding guidelines and processes. The Manual should be read in conjunction with the funding instrument call or framework document that can be accessed at <https://nrfs submission.nrf.ac.za>. It does not, however, constitute a complete set of the policies, procedures or systems used by the NRF.

2. Application Process

The NRF issues a call for extended support for masters and doctoral scholarship applications that is published on the NRF website and is accessible online at <https://nrfs submission.nrf.ac.za>. This call does not accept more than one application per applicant per year. All applications must be duly authorised and approved by the Designated Authority (DA) of the research administration at the institution that submits the application. Applications are automatically submitted electronically to the institutional DA of the submitting institution for validation at the deadline date determined by the institution. Please inquire with your institution regarding their internal closing dates. The processing of a successful grant application takes approximately five (5) months from the time of submission until the commencement of funding.

3. How to submit Applications

Applications must be completed on the NRF Online Submission System at <https://nrfs submission.nrf.ac.za> from Tuesday, 23 June 2015. Applicants are advised to start with their applications early on to prevent IT system overload nearer the closing date.



Step 1: This is an electronic submission system and applicants must be registered on the system in order to create and complete an application. If you previously registered on the NRF Online System (<http://nrfonline.nrf.ac.za>) before February 2012, your details will have been migrated to the new NRF Online Submission System (<https://nrfs submission.nrf.ac.za>). If you experience problems accessing the system with your NRF Online password, click the Reset Password button to reset it. If you are not yet registered on the NRF Online Submission System, you should register to access the application form.

Home
New Registration
Forgotten Password

Feedback Support

Instructions

- **If you have already registered on the previous systems (NRF Online and Interim), please use your existing login details to access this system. If you have forgotten your password, please click on the Forgotten Password link on the left-hand menu.**
- For technical online enquiries, please contact the Support Desk (Mondays to Fridays from 08h00 to 16h30) on:
Tel: (012) 481-4202
E-mail: supportdesk@nrf.ac.za
- To access call related documents, please refer to the Open Calls block below. Click on the icon next to the relevant call to show a list of document(s). To open the document, click on the relevant link.

Log In

ID/Passport/Unique Number:

Password: [Show Password](#)

[Not registered? Click here to register.](#)

Open Calls

- ⊕ Competitive Programme for Rated Researchers 2013
- ⊕ Competitive Support for Unrated Researchers 2014
- ⊕ Professional Development Programme for 2014
- ⊕ Nanotechnology Flagships Project (NFP) (2014)
- ⊕ THRIP 2014
- ⊕ NRF and Innovation Postdoctoral Fellowships for 2014
- ⊕ NRF and Innovation Masters and Doctoral Scholarship for 2014
- ⊕ South African Square Kilometre Array Project (SKA SA) Masters

Step 2: Once you have successfully logged onto the NRF Online Submission System, you get to the Landing Page. On the landing page, click on the left menu (tab indicated with blue arrow) to create a new application by clicking on My Applications then Create Application.

My Profile
My Applications
Tools
View Roll-out
Reports
Logout

Create Application
List of Applications

Welcome Ms Thashni maistry
Feedback Support

Landing Page

Information

- PLEASE NOTE: The summary below only lists output records that were migrated from the old NRF Online system. New records that are added on this system will not form part of this summary.
- Applicants must ensure that their CV is updated/completed before creating an application.
- In order for your migrated research outputs to show on the CV or be accessible for selection on applications that require your publication record, you **must** verify (review) the outputs listed in the **Research Outputs Summary** table below. In order to do this, click on the output type that still has outputs to be verified (see the To be Reviewed column). Scroll to the bottom of the screen and a heading saying cleaned-up research output records from NRF Online will be displayed. Click on the little black arrow. This will display the output(s) that needs to be verified. Then click on the View icon, it will open a screen with the data for the output. Please fill in the missing information and save the page. If you have more than one output per output type, click on View for the next output. Do this for all the outputs, the output type on the landing page should now say 0. Move on to the next output type and repeat the process. Should you wish to delete an output, then click on the Feedback box, fill in the **Feedback to the NRF box** (e.g. output duplicated, please delete) and in the **Status** field, please select Delete.
- In some cases, researchers' outputs don't show at all. The reason for this is
 - The ID/passport number which the cleaned data was linked to when the clean-up exercise was undertaken differs from the ID/passport number you have just used to login to the NRF Online Submission System.
 - No outputs were added on the old NRF Online system so there was nothing to migrate. If there were outputs on the old NRF Online system but they do not show in the summary below, you need to ensure that the ID/passport numbers used on both the old NRF Online and this system (NRF Online Submission System) are the same. Please contact the NRF should your outputs not show so that this can be rectified.

Step 3: On the create application screen, select the funding instrument for which you are applying which will open up a new application to complete. Please note this should only be selected once. To continue working on an application, go to My Applications- List of Applications.

The screenshot shows the 'Create Application' page in the NRF Online Submission System. The page includes a navigation menu on the left with options like 'Tools', 'Designated Authority', and 'Quick Links'. The main content area features a table of funding calls. A blue arrow points to the 'Apply' button for the 'Application for Extension of Master's or Doctoral support 2014' call.

Call	Open Date	Closing Date	Apply
Rating Application 2014	07 August 2013	07 February 2014	
South Africa – Italy Joint Science and Technology Research Cooperation Call for Joint Project Proposals 2013	01 November 2013	13 December 2013	
South Africa – Romania Joint Call for Thematic Cooperation Proposals 2013	11 November 2013	15 January 2014	
Collaborative Postgraduate Training Programme at Higher Education Institutions (HEI) in partnership with other universities, industry and government 2014	11 November 2013	15 January 2014	
SANCOR International Travel Student Award 2014	19 November 2013	24 January 2014	
African Origins Platform Scarce Skills 2014	20 November 2013	30 December 2013	
Application for Extension of Master's or Doctoral support 2014	2013	2014	
Research and Technology Fund 2014	03 December 2013	31 January 2014	
South African Research Chairs Initiative (Phase 2) 2013	05 December 2013	31 January 2014	
SA-Germany Joint Science and Technology Research Call for Thematic Cooperation Proposals 2013	09 December 2013	13 March 2014	

Step 4: Applicants are urged to complete or update ALL screens of the CV, including the Research Profile and Research Outputs (if applicable), as this information is evaluated during the merit review process.

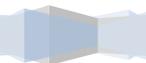
Step 5: All sections marked with a red asterisks are compulsory. The sections without asterisks are not, and you may enter information in these sections only if you have information to enter, such as research outputs. Completed sections will be indicated by a green tick on the main menu, while incomplete sections will be indicated by a yellow cross.

The screenshot shows the NRF Online Submission System interface. On the left, there is a navigation menu with links for 'Online)', 'Application History', and '(NRF Interim)'. The main content area contains instructions for rating applications and a table of application sections. A tooltip message states 'The application is ready to be submitted.' Below the table is a 'Final Submit' button.

Section	Complete	Date Updated	Edit
NRF Call Information Documents (Please read before starting this application)	📄	19 Nov 2013	✏️
Registration Details *	✅	13 Jun 2013	✏️
Contact Details *	✅	13 Jun 2013	✏️
Qualifications *	✅	29 Apr 2013	✏️
Career Profile *	✅	29 Apr 2013	✏️
Research Expertise *	✅	16 Aug 2012	✏️
Project Information *	✅	19 Nov 2013	✏️
Details of Research *	✅	19 Nov 2013	✏️
Preferred Panel *	✅	19 Nov 2013	✏️
Participating Members *	✅	19 Nov 2013	✏️
Attachments *	✅	22 Nov 2013	✏️
Possible Reviewers *	✅	19 Nov 2013	✏️
Excluded Reviewers	❌	19 Nov 2013	✏️
Financials: Operating Costs *	✅	19 Nov 2013	✏️
Financials: Student Support *	✅	19 Nov 2013	✏️
Print Preview	📄	19 Nov 2013	🖨️

All compulsory sections will guide you with error messages at the top of the screen. Please follow these messages to help you complete each section correctly.

Step 6: Most screens have screen- and application-specific instructions to help you work through the sections. Please read these instructions carefully before completing the sections.



Step 7: The Application: Academic Information section is one of the evaluated sections in your application. The applicant must ensure that the supervisor's email address is correct as the application will be automatically forwarded to him/her after the application is submitted. The supervisor's report is confidential to the applicant and the comment is taken into consideration when evaluating the application (see also 4.3).

Step 8: The *Details of Research* section- the applicant should follow the instructions and provide a detailed description of the project; the achievements to date versus the initial project proposal; and include the research work that is still outstanding. Also include details of manuscripts under preparation or that are submitted for publication. For more details on what is required under *Details of Research*, please also see section 4.3, Ranking of Applications: NRF scorecard assessments below.

Applicants must note the importance of giving a detailed work plan which is assessed based on your supervisor's comment as well as the feasibility of the timelines, the appropriateness of the research to be conducted and the details of activities planned.

Under *Reason for Non-completion of Study* section, the student must detail challenges experienced with the project which led to the non-completion of the degree.

Details of Research

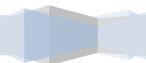
Details of Research : Research Description

Details of Research : Progress to Date

Details of Research : Proposed Research Plan for Requested Funding Period

Details of Research : Reason for not completing this study in the minimum prescribed time

The information above is thoroughly assessed by external panel members who are experts in the different disciplines.



Step 9: The attachment section provides specific instructions for uploading attachments to the application. Please print, certify and then scan in all documents at once, save as a PDF file and then upload the section as one document. If you are a student with a disability, you may also upload a medical certificate in support of your disability.

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <https://nrfs submission.nrf.ac.za/NrfMkII/Applicator>. The page title is "NRF Online Submission Sys...". The breadcrumb navigation is "Landing / My Applications / Edit Application - SFH13092648292 / Attachments". The user is logged in as "Ms Thashni maistry" and has access to "Feedback" and "Support".

The main content area is titled "Attachments" and contains the following instructions:

- Select the Document Type to be uploaded.
- Capture an appropriate Description.
- Click the Browse button below to select the file on your local machine.
- Click on the Upload button to save.
- Upload pages individually if document is larger than 4MB. **(For rating applications, please see specific instructions in this section of the rating application.)**
- Please do not upload zip files. Acrobat reader has built-in security to prevent the opening of zip files by default (please read the article at <http://forums.adobe.com/thread/520515> for more information).

Below the instructions, there is a section for "Masters and Doctoral" with the following instructions:

- Please attach the necessary documents in one PDF file in the following order for this call: ID document, certified academic transcripts and proof of registration (if available).
- These are all required for application completeness.
- If you wish to include a motivation letter, please include this as part of your attachment.

At the bottom of the instructions section, there is a table with the following columns: Description, Type, File Name, Edit, View, and Delete. Below the table are buttons for "Add" and "Return to Menu".

The footer of the page includes "©NRF Online Submission System" and a "Disclaimer" link.

Step 10: Applicants must ensure that they adhere to their institution's internal closing date for submission of their application to allow for internal institutional screening and review. The internal closing date will be determined by the respective research offices or Post Graduate Office and is usually at least two weeks prior to the NRF's closing date.

Institutions are requested to screen and approve all proposals through internal institutional processes **before** being submitting applications to the NRF. The NRF assumes that the respective DAs are satisfied with the standard of all proposals validated and submitted and, that the institution approves and supports the application.

Step 11: The final submit button will only appear when all compulsory sections are complete. If all the compulsory sections are complete and the final submit button does not appear, please select any section, re-save to refresh the application, and you should see the final submit button. Once you have selected final submit, the application will be routed to your hosting institution for validation and later, for consideration by the NRF.

Late applications, additional supporting documentation or information received after the closing date will not be accepted or considered.

The NRF will reject applications that are late or incomplete, contain insufficient or incorrect detail, or fail to follow instructions. The application must be completed in sufficient detail to allow for a comprehensive review and evaluation process by internal and external reviewers. In addition to the electronic application and required attachments, the NRF may request additional information or documentation to support an application, if required. Failure to supply such information or documentation upon request may result in the rejection of the application.

4. Screening and Review Processes

4.1 Overview of the Screening Process

All applications validated by institutions and submitted to the NRF are screened by the NRF for compliance with the requirements of the Call for Proposals as set out in this Manual, as well as the requirements for completing the online application. Applications that fail to meet the stipulated requirements will be rejected.

4.2 Overview of the Review Process

The NRF's peer review policy requires that all applications are subjected to a review process. Applications submitted to this funding instrument will go through a panel review process.

4.2.1 Panel Review

Panel members are selected from the NRF database and other sources, which is updated on a continuous basis. In making the selection of the panel, the expertise and experience of individuals in application adjudication are taken into account. In assessing the application, agreed assessment criteria are applied in the form of a scorecard.

The Panel provides recommendations to the NRF and the final funding decision is made by the NRF taking strategic and policy objectives into consideration. In awarding grants in this funding instrument, the NRF takes into account the recommendations of the peer review panel, the objectives and targets of the funding instrument, and the available funds.



4.3 Ranking of Applications

The purpose of the scoring system is to evaluate applications, based on funding instrument criteria, in order to identify applicants that are most deserving of the limited funds available. All research proposals submitted to the NRF for funding are evaluated according to a number of predetermined criteria. Applications are assessed and ranked on the basis of criteria as listed in the table below. Each area is weighted to indicate its relative importance. Kindly consult the table below for details on the criteria used.

NRF Scorecard for the Assessment of Extension Support for Master's and Doctoral Scholarship Funding

Assessment Category	Description
Causes of delays in project completion	This is an important section which details the initial proposed project objectives and challenges encountered that led to the delays in project completion.
Progress to date	This section refers to a detailed and comprehensive account of progress achieved to date. It also looks at the originality and contribution to new knowledge, interdisciplinary or multi-disciplinary aspects; and utilisation of existing knowledge and methodologies.
Work plan to complete the degree	<p>Research objectives to match aims of study – reviewers will assess whether the research objectives are clearly stated and whether they are appropriate to meet the aims of the study; are sound but have inconsistencies and can be refined; are appropriate but only partially address the aims of the study; or are not appropriate to meet the aims of the study.</p> <p>Research methodology to match research objectives – Reviewers will comment on whether the research methodology is appropriate to meet objectives of study; is sound but has inconsistencies and can be refined; is appropriate but only partially addresses study objectives; or not appropriate to meet objectives of study.</p> <p>Students to provide a thorough work plan towards completion of study. They should also give feasible timelines and methodical project activities.</p>
Supervisor's support	<p>Supervisor's recommendation for an extension bursary is important to provide an academic account of the student's progress in relation the project as well as the proposed project plan. The supervisor is required to endorse the proposed plan for completion as well as submission of the dissertation and manuscripts for publication.</p> <p>The reviewers will look for consistencies in the supervisor's report versus the student's motivation, as well as support for the applicant and the submission of the dissertation or manuscripts for publication.</p>
Research outputs and publication plan	Particular attention is paid to proposals with the potential to contribute to the strategic goals of the knowledge economy.



5. Application Feedback and Disputes

Once the review and assessment processes have been completed and the recommended funding decision has been approved by the NRF. The NRF will publish a list of successful applications emanating from the call for applications on the NRF website, www.nrf.ac.za; thereafter, successful applicants will receive a letter of award. The application status on the NRF Submissions system will not indicate whether the application has been supported for funding. This funding instrument does not provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants; if your name does not appear on the list you have not been supported.

Should an unsuccessful applicant require feedback, they are requested to follow the process and query *via* their institutional office. The NRF does not provide feedback to all unsuccessful applicants due to the high volume of applications received across all NRF funding instruments.

Unsuccessful applicants that wish to appeal the funding decision taken must follow the appropriate Appeals Process of the NRF. Appeals will only be considered for this funding instrument within a five (5) month period after the official date of publishing of the results on the NRF website.

6. Awardee Responsibilities

6.1 Reporting

An Annual Progress Report (APR) must be submitted by the awardee / grant-holder in a format provided by the NRF, documenting progress made against set objectives and research outputs. The NRF may, in consultation with the institutional Research Office, request interim progress reports for the purpose of implementing corrective measures timeously to ensure that stated objectives are met within stipulated timeframes.

6.2 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.

6.2.1 Change Requests

6.2.1.1 Prior Approval Requests

Applicants must submit all change requests in writing to the NRF 30 days before the proposed changes occur. The request must have institutional DA endorsement and be submitted to the NRF *via* the Research Office / Post graduate funding Office for approval prior to the change.

6.2.1.2 Changes in project scope, supervisor or institution

Although changes in the research project scope are not anticipated in this extension support call, other changes may occur in the case of a supervisor. The request for any changes must have institutional DA endorsement and must be submitted to the NRF *via* the Research Office.



7. Scientific Compliance

7.1 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.

7.2 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.

7.3 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. An ethical clearance certificate (where applicable) must be submitted to the NRF in respect of successful applications before funding can be released.



LIST OF REFERENCES

RSA (2008). Intellectual Property Rights, Publicly Financed Research and Development Act 51 of 2008. *Government Gazette*, 22 Dec 2008. Vol 522, No 31745

