Funding Instrument: DST-NRF Research Development Grants for New Generation of Academics Programme (nGAP) Scholars

Functional Domain: Grants Management & Systems Administration

Document: 2016 Funding Guide

Date: February 2016
1. **Background**

The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and the Department of Science and Technology (DST) came to an agreement that the *New Generation of Academics Programme* (nGAP) which is one of the core programmes of the Staffing South Africa’s Universities Framework (SSAUF), will *have academics* access funds for research costs and postgraduate training through competitive funding instruments managed by the NRF.

Furthermore, the DST - NRF agreed to make available the Research Development Grants for nGAP scholars in the first and second year of appointment, to enable these young academics to develop and submit applications in funding instruments such as the Thuthuka- PhD and Post PhD tracks.

*Research Development Grants for nGAP Scholars* will be made available from the 2016 academic year and a maximum of 250 nGAP scholars will be supported in any given academic year.

2. **Objectives**

In light of the above, the objectives of the grant are to:

- Accelerate the doctoral level training of nGAP scholars in the doctoral track at public universities
- Effect a rapid transformation in the demographic composition of the emerging researcher community with respect to gender, race and persons with disabilities through support for nGAP scholars in the postdoctoral track; and
- Provide DST-NRF *Research Development Grants for nGAP Scholars* in the first and second year of appointment to enable these scholars to develop and submit research grant applications aligned to the Thuthuka PhD and Post PhD tracks.

3. **Target group**

The DST-NRF research development grants are intended for nGAP scholars who are in their first and second year of appointment ONLY.

The grant is intended to fund research costs and/or research proposal development in order to prepare
the nGAP scholar to apply to the NRF for a competitive research grant that will be subjected to merit review.

Once appointed as an nGAP scholar, incumbents will be eligible for consideration for a Research Development Grant for nGAP Scholars. This grant funding will be awarded for a maximum of two years.

4. **Grant details**

The *Research Development Grants* are designed for applicants who are already appointed as nGAP Scholars by the SSAUF initiative; across the Higher Education (HE) sector. The grants may be used to cover the following costs:

- Proposal development;
- Research running expenses; and
- Small research equipment.

Two types of awards will be provided based on the level of the nGAP scholar, namely:

- An award of R30 000 per annum for two years for nGAP scholars in the doctoral track; and
- An award of R50 000 per annum for two years for nGAP scholars in the post-PhD track.

Carry-over of unspent funds will only be permitted under extenuating circumstances e.g. ill-health, and must be motivated for in writing when the Call for Carry-over of funding is made by the NRF. The grant will not be transferable to another grant holder.

Grant holders are not allowed to change to any other NRF funding streams during the tenure of the award. However, it is expected that the nGAP scholars will focus on developing their research proposal in year one and in year two will submit to the NRF a Thuthuka grant proposal for research funding. These proposals will be subjected to merit review and grant awards will be made on a competitive basis.

The *Research Development Grants for nGAP Scholars* may not be used to cover the costs provided for by the DHET viz.:

- Salary costs for nGAP scholars;
- Registration and tuition fees;
- Mentoring costs;
- Participation in the SSAU Development Programme;
• Infrastructure and equipment e.g. laptops; and
• Conference / international mobility

Additional research funds and travel grants to conferences are not awarded to awardees on this grant:

5. Eligibility criteria

To qualify for the grant, applicants must comply with the following eligibility criteria:

• Applicants must be in their first or second year of appointment as nGAP scholars at a public university in South Africa;
• Applicants must be South African citizens or permanent residents;
• Applicants that hold a valid NRF rating are not eligible to apply; and
• Applicants that are currently NRF research grantholders are not eligible to apply.

6. Application documents

The following documents will be required in the application attachment section.

• Proof of South African Identity Document (ID) or proof of Permanent Residency
• A letter/employment contract from a university in South Africa confirming the appointment of the applicant as a nGAP scholar
• Official and certified university degree certificates and transcripts

7. Application procedure

Applications must be submitted through an online application process to the NRF.

(NB: This will be a closed call)

Applicants can apply for the DST-NRF Research Development Grants for nGAP Scholars by accessing the link: https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za/

• Register/Login using your ID number and password.
• Go to my applications
• Select “create new application”.
• Select the call for which you are applying to: DST-NRF Research Development Grants for nGAP Scholars
• Complete all sections of the application form.
• Please attach the necessary documents in one PDF file in the following order: ID document, proof of permanent residence and university employment letter/contract, letter of admission. The online application will ask you for reference details, please list your supervisor as a reference. The online system will send out an email requesting an electronic reference report from your referee/s when you select the final submit button on the application. There is no need to include reference letters on the attachment section.
• Please follow the guidelines for attaching the necessary documents your application to be considered.
• Once the application is completed the submit button appears. Submit the application.
• Complete applications will go to the host university, for verification, before being forwarded to the NRF for further processing.
• No late submissions or incomplete applications will be considered.
• Applications that do not meet the eligibility criteria will not be considered.
  o Please contact the university postgraduate office or research office if you have any queries.

  • Your application will be directed to the NRF for further assessment and selection through a Research Development Grants for NGAP Scholars Selection Panel.
  • A list of successful applicants will be published on the NRF website under the student link.

8. **Selection Criteria**

Applications submitted to the NRF will undergo a technical review only to ensure accountability and appropriate utilization of funds that are released. Approval of the grants will be in accordance with standard NRF grant approvals by senior management.

The demographic targets will be in alignment with the approved targets for the nGAP, i.e. 80% of the awards must be to black South Africans and/or women.

9. **Post Awarding Process**

Successful candidates will be notified by the NRF regarding the DST-NRF Research Development Grants for nGAP scholars’ award. All successful candidates should complete all the necessary documents / conditions of grant related to the acceptance of the award sent by the NRF.
An Annual Progress report must be submitted to the NRF by the grantholder and the supervisor in order for the grant to be renewed on a yearly basis.

10. Renewal of Grant

The NRF will monitor and evaluate the progress of the Research Development Grants for nGAP grantholders at an individual, institutional and funding instrument level as follows:

- All grantholders are required to submit Annual Progress Reports (APRs) covering performance and financials. The NRF will use these reports to assess project performance against timeframes and deliverables as indicated in the application. Continued funding for year two will be subject to the submission of an APR for the first year of funding and meeting the deliverables for year one.
- On an on-going basis, the NRF will undertake institutional visits and focus group discussions which will be conducted at the host institutions.

11. Queries

For any further assistance and information around the DST-NRF Research Development Grants for NGAP Scholars, please contact the institutions financial aid / bursary / postgraduate office. OR

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