Promoting Efficiency Through Simplicity

9th Annual NRF Research Administrators Workshop

REPORT 2018

16 - 18 October 2018
Birchwood Hotel & OR Tambo Conference Centre
Boksburg, Gauteng
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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY REPORT**

The Grants Management and Systems Administration (GMSA) Directorate of the National Research Foundation (NRF) hosted its annual Research Administrators Workshop (RAW) from 16 to 18 October 2018 in Gauteng. This annual Workshop aims to bring together key stakeholders from universities, research institutions, and science councils across South Africa, that are funded by the NRF, to share experiences and best practices in the area of effective research administration and management.

The Workshop supports the advancement of the Communities of Practice for research administrators, Designated Authorities (DAs) (as defined by the NRF) and Financial Officers (FOs) based at the beneficiary research institutions. This opportunity is motivated by the NRF mandate to support world-class grant management systems. The core objectives of RAW are, among others, to:

- Increase the knowledge of funding opportunities offered by the NRF;
- Familiarise participants with the NRF business processes;
- Share expectations on financial and other reporting by institutions;
- Provide a platform for research administrators and finance officers to share their experiences and learn from best practice;
- Create space for strategic networks among professionals in the sector;
- Provide a platform for international/continental researchers and professionals in the sector.

The interest and attendance of the RAW 2018 was considered to be extremely good. Of the 231 registered delegates, 202 attended. They were from Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs), Science Councils, National Research Facilities, research institutions and the NRF.

The primary aim of RAW 2018 was to facilitate discussions among institutions and provide networking opportunities to all. The structure of the Workshop provided for breakaway and panel opportunities with presentations on matters of mutual importance which allowed delegate participation.

The majority of the programme items emanated from an online survey that was conducted prior to the Workshop to gain better insight into the interests and expectations of the delegates. Additional items were included to provide information on systems development and improvements, business practices within the NRF, as well as best practice from stakeholders. The following topics, each with a set of sub-topics, were identified for discussion in an open forum:

- **Simplifying and Improving Granting Processes & Systems Development**;
- **Legislative Environment & Compliance**;
- **Emerging & Established Researchers**;
- **Communication and the Role of the**;
- **Supporting Research Excellence**;
- **Finances & Audits**; and
- **General Discussions**

Feedback from the Workshop was positive — delegates enjoyed the chance to interact amongst themselves and have the opportunity to network and learn from one another. The Workshop maintained the idea of an ‘open forum’ where broader platforms were provided for all delegates to engage in meaningful discussions for an improved way forward in research management. The aforementioned topics were mostly addressed in parallel breakaway sessions, with plenary sessions for the chairpersons to report back to the larger audience. The breakaway sessions were led by the DAs with the assistance of panellists that consisted of NRF representatives and key stakeholders based on their experience of the topics to be discussed. Awards were presented at the Gala Dinner to Research Administrators, FOs and NRF staff for outstanding performance during the past year.

RAW 2018 can be best summarised by the following feedback points from some delegates:

- Provides the context behind system changes and support thereof;
- Very informative for existing and new FOs. Hub of useful information for all DAs and all personnel involved in the administration of NRF funds. A place to get the right and reliable information from;
- RAW is always a useful annual forum and allows for the opportunity to engage with both NRF and other HEI delegates – it is like speed dating;
- A good platform to engage with other DAs and FOs from other institutions.

The presentations were very insightful, as we learned how other institutions did things and how we could improve our own processes. NRF

This is a very good opportunity for institutions to share experiences, successes and concerns as well as interact on the changes which the NRF is implementing.

In terms of improving NRF’s services to Higher Education Institutions on how they can promote efficiency through simplicity so that research outputs are enhanced continuously is indeed promoted as good work.

The sessions were quite informative and the interactions with other fellow colleagues from other institutions and sharing our challenges.

This was a good workshop with robust debate.

Mrs Anthipi POuris
Acting Executive Director: GMSA
March 2019

A vibrant atmosphere was maintained throughout the Workshop as delegates had meaningful engagements over the three days. Institutional knowledge and experiences were shared among delegates, while other communication channels were also encouraged.
The members of the RAW 2018 Organising Committee are listed below:

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<tr>
<th>Name &amp; Surname</th>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>Role</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr Gansen Pillay</td>
<td>Deputy CEO: RISA</td>
<td>Project Sponsor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr Ndanduleni B Nthambeleni</td>
<td>Executive Director: GMSA</td>
<td>Project Sponsor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Anitha Puma</td>
<td>Director: GMSA</td>
<td>Project Manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Thembekile Madiwe</td>
<td>Liaison Officer: GMSA</td>
<td>Committee Member and Programme Director</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Anika Motsoelile</td>
<td>Professional Officer: GMSA</td>
<td>Committee Member</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Sithole Sibindi</td>
<td>Liaison Officer: GMSA</td>
<td>Committee Member</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Sipheko Nkangala</td>
<td>Liaison Officer: GMSA</td>
<td>Committee Member</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Tshidego Masebale</td>
<td>Finance Officer: GMSA</td>
<td>Committee Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Tikonge Raphelese</td>
<td>Liaison Officer: GMSA</td>
<td>Committee Member</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Theopis Masebale</td>
<td>Liaison Officer: GMSA</td>
<td>Committee Member</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr Malwi Rebecy</td>
<td>Professional Officer: NE</td>
<td>Committee Member</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr Vumela Thwza</td>
<td>Liaison Officer: GMSA</td>
<td>Committee Member</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Thembekile Mphatsi</td>
<td>Professional Officer: GMSA</td>
<td>Committee Member</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Magweni Kubu</td>
<td>Intern: GMSA</td>
<td>Committee Member</td>
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A Sub-committee was established to assist on a rotational basis with various tasks before and during the Workshop. The members are listed below:

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<tr>
<th>Name &amp; Surname</th>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>Role</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ms Festina Leduka</td>
<td>Liaison Officer: KAS</td>
<td>Support Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Rosine Mphakalana</td>
<td>Professional Officer: GMSA</td>
<td>Support Staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr Thandi Mbona</td>
<td>Liaison Officer: GMSA</td>
<td>Support Staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Mantsho Calo</td>
<td>Liaison Officer: GMSA</td>
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<td>Mr Lekapeo Mphela</td>
<td>Liaison Officer: KAS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr Mbona Makakele</td>
<td>Intern: KAS</td>
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<td>Mr Sello Mokoena</td>
<td>Liaison Officer: GMSA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Lenco Mphako</td>
<td>Liaison Officer: KAS</td>
<td>Support Staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Batumile Rakabe</td>
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<td>Support Staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr Zambuku Buthelelo</td>
<td>Intern: KAS</td>
<td>Support Staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Ndebele Nhlashelo</td>
<td>Intern: KAS</td>
<td>Support Staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Redoy Puseko</td>
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<td>Support Staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Mphakalana Mapulane</td>
<td>Liaison Officer: GMSA</td>
<td>Support Staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mr Ducommene Ntene</td>
<td>Professional Officer: GMSA</td>
<td>Support Staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms Jephte Mphakalana</td>
<td>Professional Officer: GMSA</td>
<td>Support Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Judith Mhlanga</td>
<td>Professional Officer: GMSA</td>
<td>Support Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms Georgina Munro</td>
<td>Graphic and Web Designer</td>
<td>Support Staff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The organising committee created an online survey to obtain the interests and expectations of the RAW 2018 delegates and received 45 responses, as summarised below.

### Proposed Themes
- Systems for Efficiency
- Operation Excellence
- NRF Stakeholder Enrichment
- Knowledge Sharing
- The Good, the Bad and the Ugly
- Towards Professionalisation of Research Administration and Grants Management

### Expectations
- Awarding Grants
- Systems and Processes
- Communication / Interaction
- Application Process
- DA Office staying relevant / Innovative
- Open discussion panels / networking
- NRF statutory requirements
- Knowledge transfer between institutions
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Permanent employees applying for NRF funding

### Major Topics
- Innovative Research Administration through Synergy
- The Innovative Administration System for the National System of Innovation (NSI)
- Working Together towards Successful Research Partnerships
- To Enhance Management of Funding Opportunities in South African Universities
- How to deal with challenges
- Implementation of discussion points
- DAIs meeting researchers’ demands
- Capacity development for administrators
- Feedback from previous RAWs
- Changes in a brochure format
- Financial reporting requirements
- Specific breakaways – e.g. Financial Officers
- Discuss problems and changes
- Improving quality of proposals – guest speakers from Africa

![Figure 1: RAW 2018 Major Topics](image-url)
Points of Discussion
- Funding Decisions
- Communication amongst institutions and NRF
- Simplification of processes
- Audit deadlines
- Carry forward process
- Progress Reports
- Use of the Grant Deposit
- Specific guidelines on different funding instruments
- Online application process
- Grant-holder student nomination
- Initiatives implemented after the previous RAW
- The task of the DA and FO
- The NRF’s expectations from Institutions and Institutional expectations from the NRF
- Releasing of student funding in 2018 especially Thuthuka
- Clarity on student top-ups
- Conversion of funds between lines – SARChI
- Reporting dates
- Honour Block Grants - simplify process
- Call Guideline - simplification, clarification and removal of deadlines for internal purposes

RAW 2018 Format
The following preferences were recorded in the responses:

RAW 2018 Format

![RAW 2018 Format](image)

Figure 2: RAW 2018 Format

Other comments
- Team building activities
- Submission of Conditions of Grant on time
- Learn from other institutions
- Do not overcrowd the programme
- More networking sessions
- NRF Legal Unit to be available
- Presentation, followed by an engagement session
- Notify a DA when a student applies for a Travel Grant
- One on One Consultations
- Shorter presentations and more time for discussions
- Brain storming sessions – innovative solutions from the ground up instead of a top-down approach which works but does not serve the needs of everyone involved
- Recent NRF information sessions available electronically
- Split Progress report session between students and researchers

ATTENDANCE
A total of 231 delegates registered for RAW 2018. The delegates included NRF staff and external stakeholders.

The external stakeholders were represented by the following institutions:
- Higher Education Institutions
- Science Councils
- National Museums

The NRF was represented by:
- The GMSA Executive Director
- Directors from across all NRF directorates (GMSA, RE, HICD & SSP)
- Professional Officers and Liaison Officers from all GMSA units, and
- Financial Officers and Administrative Assistants

WORKSHOP SPONSORS & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
The NRF would like to thank our sponsors SABINET and Clarivate Analytics. Their generosity provided a platform for delegates to network during the Cocktail and Gala Dinner events.

Furthermore, the NRF would like to acknowledge and thank the Department of Science and Technology (DST) for its continuous support as the NRF’s line Department. The NRF also would like to appreciate all delegates that were present at RAW 2018 representing their respective institutions and the RAW 2018 Organising Committee and Sub-committee for their dedicated work for the coordination of the Workshop.
Figure 3: Breakdown of number of delegates per institution (excl NRF GMSA staff)
The programme aimed at enhancing the knowledge of stakeholders about changing granting policies and processes related to funding opportunities. (Refer to Appendix A for the complete RAW 2018 Programme).

The Workshop content emanated from the online survey and feedback obtained from previous workshops, as well as new internal NRF processes that will be implemented in future. Presenters from the various institutions were made aware of relevant issues, questions and concerns that were raised at the RAW 2017 for consideration during their respective presentations. Each presentation was followed by a Question & Answer session to ensure interaction and clarity on relevant issues.

The following determined the contents of the programme:
- Changes in the operations at the NRF;
- Reporting on issues raised for attention at RAW 2017;
- Practical issues pertaining to the effective administration of grants.

PLENARY SESSION DAY 1 - INTRODUCTION TO RAW 2018

Opening and Welcome, Setting the Scene
Dr Bernard Nhambeleni (NRF)

Dr Nhambeleni opened the Workshop and formally welcomed all delegates. He provided an overview of the event, and highlighted some of the topics for discussion.

Call Rationalisation
In order to improve processes and work smarter, the NRF intends to announce the One Call in February 2019. This will replace all individual Calls for any Funding Instruments and pave the way forward for future calls according to the NRF’s Research Agenda.

ORCID
The South African National System of Innovation NSI requires career tracking of researchers in order to justify the return on investment made by the Government with tax payer’s money. The mandatory ORCID ID field will be a part of applications in future as a start in tracking such investment.

Alumni Database
The Alumni Database and Completion Tool is a platform that will assist the NRF with career profile tracking of postgraduate students that have been funded by the NRF. It will go live after the pending the finalisation of the DST reporting requirements which are currently in the process of being attended to.

Institutions were asked to encourage academics to update their information on the database as per signed Master Funding Administration Agreement between beneficiary institutions and the NRF.

Conditions of Grant
- Funds for a Grant cannot be released to the institutions if the signed Conditions of Grant (CoG) have not been received timeously by the NRF;
- Institutions must follow up on claims not submitted in order to receive all grants as awarded.
- Claims will ensure less carry forward amounts to the following Grant Year which are not guaranteed.

NRF Postgraduate Funding Policy
Romilla Maharaj (NRF) & Mbulelo Ncango (NRF)

Dr Maharaj explained that the drafting of the NRF Postgraduate Funding Policy commenced two years prior to the Workshop and that it was in the process of being taken to the NRF Board for approval.

The policy was endorsed by the then Minister of DST, Naledi Pandor, as an implementation policy for ministerial guidelines and it would apply to all NRF bursaries. The policy was informed by NRF bursary challenges and completion pattern statistics.

Dr Maharaj shared a summary of the possible policy clauses that were as follows:
- Applicants may be subject to a means test to determine their financial need for a full cost bursary.
- The NRF engaged with National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) on the possibility of providing postgraduate funding while NSFAS provides only undergraduate funding.
- The NRF also engaged with Iusasa Student Financial Aid Programme (ISFAP) – a financial aid programme – to assist with securing funds from the private sector.
- The postgraduate pipeline funding would be split into two categories i.e. full-cost funding for financially needy students, and partial-cost funding for those who were not in the same family income bracket. The partial-cost would only apply to SA permanent residents, citizens and some international students.
- The age adjustment was a means to contribute to a lower age at which doctoral studies are completed. Adjustments were made to cover 90% of bursary funding SA citizens, 5% for Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries, 5% international, 55% females and 80% black academics.
- Bursaries would be awarded in response to national priorities, vulnerable disciplines and fields important to socio-economic development.
- The responsibilities of institutions were emphasised.
- The process for determining the total- and partial-cost for postgraduate studies were explained.

Raw 2017 Feedback
Tshegofatso Makete (NRF)

Ms Makete provided a brief overview of RAW 2017 which was held at Lord Charles Hotel in Somerset West from 9 - 11 October 2017. The theme was “Working Together to Create Efficiency”.

Participation was summarised as follows:
- 202 delegates;
- 35 institutions; and
- 11 Organising Committee members.

Some of the discussion points were incorporated into the 2018 programme.
PLENARY: SIMPLIFYING AND IMPROVING GRANTING PROCESSES AND SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT

New Developments

Anthipi Pouris (NRF)

Incentive funding

There will be no Call for applications going out for Incentive Funding for Rated Researchers. Awards will be linked directly to the award of a valid rating.

One Call for Proposals

- The NRF One Call for Proposals project was put in place to reduce the number of individual Calls being advertised by the NRF.
- There will be only one General Funding Guide and Funding Opportunity Frameworks available on the website.
- The different Funding Instruments have been clustered together in categories according to their similarity, and an applicant will select their choice of funding instrument from the list.
- The One Call will open on 1 February 2019 for 2020 funding. The NRF has resolved to have either one or two review periods. The last day of submission for DA’s will be advertised accordingly and failing that there will be no review for the un-submitted applications for 2019 or 2020 funding.
- The aim is to have funding decisions finalised by the 30th of November annually, with results being communicated early December.
- International Research Grants will have two review seasons with results published as per advertised dates.
- Student Grants will have their own individual cut-off and review dates. Institutions are strongly advised to manage their internal closing dates.

Research Information Sharing

Sanet Vos (SABINET)

The main focus of SABINET is to update and maintain information services:
- Innovative library service offering including collaborative cataloguing, inter-lending and end-to-end library management systems.
- African journal content, news research services and South African legal information – one of the most reliable specialist information providers in Africa.
- Preservation of valuable documents for easy access electronically.

SABINET holds information and journals and publications, and also provide legal, labour and media information.
- The African journals is the most comprehensive reachable collection of Southern African journals.
- They are currently partners with 170 publishers.
- SA is the number one visitor of the African journals.
- SABINET have visitors from across the world, and had 3.2 million downloads of open access articles in the past year.

The Value and Process of PRs

Simon Lotz (NRF)

- There is alignment between the NRF mandate and the Progress Report (PR) process.
- Governance and reporting are responsibilities shared by the NRF and institutions.
- Progress reports will be hosted on one platform, the NRF Online Submission System, to eliminate confusion.
- The reporting templates and their respective requirements were presented. The current focus is on compliance as auditing becomes more stringent. DAs are the first point of evaluation for completeness.
- South Africa was benchmarked against international research funding agencies and the three points below were found to be in common:
  - They all require reporting.
  - They all require reporting.
  - All experience a lack of resources.
  - Monitoring is a problem and we are still driven by the numbers.

Comment: The NRF should look at streamlining its reporting processes.

NEP Reporting

Rakeshnie Ramoutar (NRF)

- Stringent measures were put in place for compliance and audit purposes in terms of the PRs.
- DAs and FOs were urged to ensure that grantholders submit their PRs timely.
- Non-compliance will result in NRF not being able to meet deadlines, under-reporting and a qualified audit.
- The qualified audit may result in possible reduction of infrastructure capital and as a consequence management measures are put into place which include the withdrawal / recall of equipment or even a grant. Future applications may also not be considered for three (3) years.
- The following Auditor General audit findings were presented:
  - Users could not be traced.
  - Invalid users (no proper name/ID/Passport)
  - Users reported more than once
  - Grantholders not submitting PRs

The number of travel grants received by an individual student could not be tracked as block grants are linked to DA names. Only the M & D and Freestanding grants could be tracked on the system.

The One Call was introduced to streamline the template and to avoid different opening and closing dates on the system. This is also in line with the new NRF Strategy that might move away from funding instruments.

With Incentive Funding, researchers have to indicate at the time of the award in which year the funds will be required over the duration of their NRF rating cycle. The funds should be assigned, in total, to a single year and no carry-forward of funds from one year to another will be allowed.

Student travel grants should stay open until after reporting to ensure that graduated students still submit their report.
Completion Tool & Alumni Database Showcase
Bettie de Beer & Lebina Mokoena (NRF)

Alumni database
The purpose of the database is to track postgraduate students funded by the DST’s sponsored programmes in order to determine the socio-economic impact of the DST investments in postgraduate training. The aim will be to keep in touch with them after their NRF funding to assist NRF & DST with record keeping and control.

Completion Tool
All institutions must add student information on the student completion tool. Many institutions are currently not completing the forms regularly enough, and completeness of the information provided is also a problem. The information will feed into the Alumni Database.

- The NRF and the Square Kilometre Array (SKA) use different systems as the SKA systems were designed to handle their specific needs. The two systems will be synchronised soon.
- The new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system is not complete yet as it is still in the conceptual phase. No specific timelines are available yet.
- The NRF will investigate DAs not always able to access nomination data on Phoenix.
- There are no journal numbers on adjustments, and this leads to constant back and forth between NRF and DAs.

Changes on the DA Tool & Feedback on Requested Changes by DAs
Bettie de Beer & Elinor Heathfield (NRF)

- The system has changed and students must upload their valid ID document / passport.
- NRF is looking at one centralised database for student and grantholder information.
- Notifications from the Grants and the Online Submission systems are being explored to be more comprehensive.
- The Progress Reports spreadsheet for NEP was uploaded with the errors. Data in the future will be inserted online.
- The NRF is working towards one online tool. Emails will then be sent only once.
- The DA tool functions will be explained and simplified.
- As many changes as possible, as requested by DAs, will be implemented in the new system with the new developments kept in mind.
- Excel files will be uploaded onto the system.
- There should be an automated process for submitting beneficiaries.
- Applications cannot be reset once they have been submitted to the NRF.
- The new grant system will replace the need for two different systems used at the moment.
- DAs must encourage applicants and grantholders not to submit applications and progress reports in the last week to avoid delays and clogging the system.

PLENARY SESSION DAY 2 – LEGISLATIVE ENVIRONMENT & COMPLIANCE

One Call
Anthipi Pours (NRF)

The ‘rationalisation process’ was guided by the need to simplify processes. It was undertaken in order to make life easier for stakeholders, reduce administrative burdens and complexity, and reduce the reliance on IT for Calls for Proposals. It has also assisted in streamlining the review process and optimising turnaround times.

The suggested timelines allow for the staggering of deadlines within the cut-off dates for submitting applications.

- Applicants will be able to submit in various categories, e.g. travel grants, research grants etc.
- It was requested that NRF support must be in place so that emails do not have to be resent. Helpdesk emails have a turnaround time for response and calls can be routed to the Support Desk if there is no response.
- All requirements will be available on the system to eliminate applications that are not eligible.
- As the Thuthuka budget as well as First Rand Foundation (FRF) and Sabbatical grants are different from other funding opportunities an alternative way has to be found to harvest applications.
- There are different attachment rules for different funding opportunities. Institutions are advised to read the rules for particular opportunities and ensure correct attachments are uploaded.
- Deadlines will be communicated in advance and institutions are expected to set their own internal deadline dates.
- The system will stay open and if the deadline for submission of applications passes, all applications not meeting the deadline will be entertained in the following year, with certain adjustments.
- Comments and queries should be sent to LOs or escalated to POs and Directors.

Grant Deposit – Conditions of Utilisation
Rentia Hamilton (NRF)

The intention behind the Grant Deposit (GD) is to enable institutions to promote the NRF objectives.

- A separate account will make it easier to account for the interest received when the GD is invested.
- Institutions must provide adequate support and resources with the grants provided by the NRF.
- Rhodes University noted their appreciation for the assistance from Tebogo Manganye (NRF, GMSA Finance).
- The GD can be used to pay bursaries on a pro-rata basis when students arrive in February, as the NRF only receives money in April from DST. However, care must be taken to pay bursaries that might not be approved in the block grants.
- Grant funding must be claimed as soon as it has been spent.
- The institution can decide how the grant deposit can be spent as long as it enhances research.

General Issues and Non-compliance
Anthipi Pours (NRF)

The South African legislative environment is a contributing factor to the NRF being stringent in their granting processes.

- Institutions were requested to complete the required student information on the Completion Tool, as per Master Funding Administration Agreement (MFMA).
- The NRF received only 50% signed MFAAs so far. This has shared implications for both the NRF and institutions.
- Institutions must try to recover funds from students who did not finish their studies before the NRF will intervene.
- Institutions are advised to read the rules for particular opportunities and ensure correct attachments are uploaded.
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NRF RAW REPORT 2018

NRF and FirstRand need to re-look at applications from:
- person with a disability, even holding other NRF grants.
- candidates only in time for the closing dates.
- track record.
- motivation.
- DVC letter, reasons for nomination.
- application requirements:
  - DVC letter, reasons for nomination.
  - motivation.
  - track record.
- reasons for exclusion of applications from the process:
  - non SA citizens.
  - Over-age.
  - holding other NRF grants.

Comments:
- no applications received from person with a disability, even though they are a priority.
- NRF and FirstRand need to re-lookup at applications from candidates that are older than the required age. A motivation must be submitted why the doctoral was not done in the required age.
- NRF disqualifies candidates who already hold other NRF grants.
- universities need to plan ahead and identify potential candidates only in time for the closing dates.

Feedback and Information Sharing on the Limitations of Applications

Mbulelo Ncango (NRF)

The rationalisation of calls for proposals in 2016 lead to three (3) funding streams, with distinct requirements instead of 15, that is:

Honours Block Grants
- Masters and Doctoral

Masters and Doctoral

The target pool are academics below the age of 45 with a masters degree.

FirstRand provides a five (5) year commitment to the grantees. The NRF reviews applications and the academics must then work back the equivalent period of support at a South African public institution.

Comments:
- the first call for applications was announced in 2016 for 2017 funding. all applications were screened for eligibility.
- masters candidates are only eligible for local travel.
- every trip requires an application.
- no reimbursements are allowed.
- accommodation will be funded.

Impact:
- supporting government priorities
- NSI
- national priorities

Comments:
- DAs are experiencing problems with the capping of applications. students are appealing when their applications are rejected at University level.
- the DAs do not always receive the information communicated to DVCs.

Block Grants – Timelines, Scoring and Outcomes

Thandeka Mthethwa (NRF)

The first call for Applications was announced in 2016 for 2017 funding. All applications were screened for eligibility.

Comments:
- only full-time students are funded.
- no foreign students are funded.

Thashni Pillay (NRF)

Travel grants were previously part of a research grant. However, bursars will now have to apply and the applications will be announced four times a year, with the next being in November.

Comments:
- unused funds will be taken back for compliance.
- travel reports are now part of progress reports.
- student numbers must be captured on the application.

Breakaway 2: Established Researchers

SARChI & CoEs
Nana Boaduo & Simon Lotz (NRF)

New Applications/One Call:
- Call will be open throughout the year, but cut-off dates should be noted.

Progress Reports:
- assistance from institutions: vetting of progress reports – role of the DA.

Vacant Chairs:
- the institution must inform the NRF in time to ensure continuity in terms of interim Chairholders, especially for the sake of continued student support.
The new RTF Call, which opened before the outstanding Industry collaborations invaluable. The budgets are already

Fear that the Intellectual Property (IP) will be lost when THRIP: 
Significant losses (financial & other) with THRIP taken back 

The reduced incentive funding also impacts on researcher’s 
Grant Take-Up: 
Encourage grantholders to use funds, thereby reducing cash holdings.

Incentive Funding: 
Grantholders’ reaction has been very negative to adjustments. DA’s struggle to motivate grantholders to report, especially the low funding values.

SARCHI & Centres of Excellence 
Chairholders are “problematic” (image, self-worth, etc.). 
There is a challenge to attract and retain South African students. This is further exacerbated by the different values between e.g. DST NRF Chairs and DST NRF Innovation bursaries. Students tend to give up SARCHI funding when higher funding is offered elsewhere – matching of funding values needs to be prioritised by the NRF.

Budget Cuts/Value Changes: Cutting of the Grant Deposit impacts on institution (Funds are insufficient, expenditure values needs to be prioritised by the NRF).

Institutional Perspective 
Zukile Matsheya (TUT)

was affected by late distribution of funds & additional student funding earlier in the year). Grantholders also complained about the value changes; Unused equipment funds can be converted into running funds, especially in later years for SARCHI only; How will SARCHI fit in the One Call modality?; A Budget Guidelines document is required to explain how funds can be utilised within NRF rules.

Eligibility Issues:
Potential applicants must be aware of the eligibility criteria. Applicants must have all the information they need. Conditions of Grant are signed and returned to the NRF. Applicants must have all the information they need.

Motivations: Examples of good & bad motivations and panel comments; and “not-to do’s” (Don’t scan all five (5) outputs in one document).

Plea to make an effort with screening of attachments; 
Guidelines on “to-do’s” (name output from data entry) 

Eligibility criteria – clarification of eligible applicants (oint, retired, fellows); 
Review of Application: 
Multi-authored Outputs must include comments on independence, authorship sequence, etc. (5) outputs in one document.

Importance of screening attachments: 

Unethical Publication Practices (Predatory Journals); 

How Administrators Stay Relevant 
Colin Stone (NICD)

Communications is key, things only go smooth if the lines of communication are good.

The role of a DA: 
Organisational changes are communicated to the NRF for smooth transition.

Financial statements must be submitted on a yearly basis

Motivations: Examples of good & bad motivations and panel comments;

The role of the FDO:
All grant expenditure is managed according to the institution policies and in compliance with the Public Finance Management Amendment Act (PFMA).

Reconciliation of what is on the system between the DA and FDO

Prior notification of grantholder about all the reporting requirements.

Audit report submitted on time.

Expenses need to be approved by the grantholder, DA and senior level official. If it goes over a certain amount the approval process takes place at a very high level. Then a purchase order is done for procurement. If the award is too high, it goes through the Bid process

Reconciliation of what is on the system between the DA and FDO

Audit report submitted on time.

Expenses need to be approved by the grantholder, DA and senior level official. If it goes over a certain amount the approval process takes place at a very high level. Then a purchase order is done for procurement. If the award is too high, it goes through the Bid process

Comments: 
System changes and enhancements are communicated in time, 
Must make sure there is reconciliation between NRF system and institution financial system.
Community engagement

Communication to internal stakeholders are done through:
- Regional fora must be implemented in all provinces.
- Information sharing between institutions are encouraged as the value thereof can be seen in the
  Western Cape.
- Collaboration between universities and science councils is in the process of forming their fora.

Stakeholder Engagement Strategies – NRF Perspective

Anthipi Pouris (NRF)

NRF Executives are involved in the RSG and DVC Fora.

Communication strategies for GMSA:
- Raw
- Mini RAWs
- Support Desk

The Live Chat was demonstrated. It has a build in Frequently Asked Questions that still needs to be expanded as the application is still new.

Stakeholder Engagement Strategies – Institutional Perspective

Izel Rosouw (SU)

The key to stakeholder engagement is – COMMUNICATION – it is very important to share updated research information.

Media of engagement with internal researchers at Stellenbosch University:
- Website
- Research@SU
- Workshops/ skills development

Communication to internal stakeholders are done through:
- Community engagement
- Research@SU

Communication is very important to form collaborations.

Tools for Successful Administration of Research Management Functions – DA/FO

Tania Holmes-Watts (CPUT)

- Introduce new NRF staff, changes and updates.
- Formal training for new DAs and FOs.
- Upskill existing DAs and FO’s s they can move from administering to managing.
- Consider compulsory Research Management training for DAs and FOs.
- Introduce mechanism to evaluate the performance of current DAs and FOs at institutional level.
- Introduce indicators and measures to assess each institution’s overall research management performance and showcase at RAW annually.

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Institutional processes:
- The institutional processes differ amongst institutions and Call for Proposals. The structures in place at UMP are not as established as those in longer existing institutions.
- Offer support to applicants through institutional partners and relevant people.
- Rendering a presentation to an internal screening committee before submitting the application to the NRF.

Institutional vetting:
- Ensuring compliance to requirements, checking the eligibility of applicants, quality of applications and the relevance of
- Research to institutional strategic objectives
Applications not submitted to NRF by the DA closing date

Partners/supervisors must also submit their input to avoid
Rejection of applications:

DAs were urged to set ground rules at their institutions for

The differences amongst institutions and NRF should

comments:

BREAKAWAY 2 – FINANCES AND AUDITS

Financial Reporting

Rentia Hamilton & Thembile Ramotabele (NRF)

 Funds are released through cost centres.
 Reports are pulled from the NRF system.
 The grant deposit is audited by finance for compliance.
 Challenges:
 Timing and duration
 DAs busy with calls and unable to assist
 Grantholders do not read (funding guides and framework)
 Funds not released on time

Audits

Benjamin Smit (NRF)

Challenges:

Final dates for claims shut down too early (15 January)
 Institutional selection for annual audits by NRF internal
 auditors is guided by GMSA, informed by the audit
 guidelines.
 Institutional audits are done in the first quarter of the year.
 Audit guidelines should be disseminated in September.
 Institutions were reminded to deposit the Grant Deposit
 funds in the external account.

Cancellation of Grants

Anthipi Pours (NRF)

Currently the NRF is drafting a policy for the cancellation
and termination of grants.

CoG not signed or returned on time.

Student Debtors

Thashni Pillay (NRF)

Even though it is not a huge amount, the money for
 defaulting students still needs to be recovered.
 Institutions were advised to update data of graduating
 students on the Student Completion Tool, as per MFAA.
 It is a challenge to keep track of completed students, as
 some supervisors leave the institution and students change
 their contact details.

PLENARY

Consolidation of RAW 2018 – Summary and Action List

Anthipi Pours (NRF)

Please see Annexure 3 for the complete list.

Comments:

Supporting research excellence leads to proper evaluation and it anchors the compliance and integrity of an institution. It helps in avoiding rejections and withdrawals of submissions, making life easy for all those who are processing applications.

NRF Perspectives

Raven Jimmy (NRF)

Responsibilities of DA in screening applications include:

Avoiding last day processing of applications (which leads to
system overload).
 Following up on in-doubt applications with NRF staff in
advance.
 will be rejected.
 An average of 45% of applications have not been duly
processed by DA’s.

encouraging academics / researchers to participate in
reviews.
 It was noted that previously disadvantaged individuals are
not applying for rating.

or DAs should be copied.
 Local relevance was considered when research excellence
was defined.
 Competitive funding instruments have an overwhelming
number of applications, but institutions should not do
institutional screening and ranking of applications. It might
be difficult for institutions to know which proposal will be
funded due to the selection criteria used.
 Extensions of grants follow a stringent approval process and
are governed by the MFAAs. Institutions have the power to
reject the request for extensions.

Advantages of the implementation of Financial Reporting

Rendani Ladzani (NRF)

Reviews

Reviews and Evaluation (RE) falls within the NRF mandate.
 RE fits into Strategic Objective 3 of the NRF which is to
provide best-practice systems in support of grant-making.
 There was a plea for research administrators to assist in

The differences amongst institutions and NRF should
not compromise the beneficiaries seeing that there is a
common mandate. The NRF has a responsibility to assist
institutions to understand policies and mandates to reduce
animosity. We are one team working for the National System
of Innovation in pushing South Africa forward.

The quality of review feedback is improving due to incentives
provided from 2015 onwards.

DAs were urged to set ground rules at their institutions for
rules of engagement to eliminate researchers contacting NRF
staff directly and ignoring DA advice. Direct communication
between the NRF staff and researchers should be avoided,

CHALLENGES:

Challenges:

Some students want to cancel their NRF bursary and take
up a bursary from another source, as the NRF process is
 too slow. Slow systems leading to the cancellation of grants
will be improved.

Students not easily traced due to the use of student email
address. DAs are requested to assist the NRF in tracing
students for the NRF to be able to recover funds.

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students for the NRF to be able to recover funds.
Closure

Bernard Nthambeleni (NRF)

Dr Nthambeleni conveyed gratitude to all those who made the event a success:

- The RAW organising team
- GMSA staff
- RISA staff
- GMSA Management team
- Presenters for their engaging presentations and the time taken to prepare well thought content.
- Sound and camera technicians
- Facilitators
- Sponsors (Sabinet and Clarivate Analytics).

He emphasised that we should all work together to make the life of our stakeholders easy and promised that the NRF will remain open in terms of communication.

He acknowledged Ms Mirriam Tlou for her services to NRF and the stakeholder community, as she will be retiring and quoted her as a Hall Mark and a dependable employee.

He wished everyone a safe travel and wished them well.

RAW 2018 FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRES

Questionnaires were distributed to delegates at the beginning of the workshop. Below is a list of the questions. See Appendix B for the complete list of responses received from 23 delegates.

- General comments on RAW 2018.
- Comments on the content, quality, applicability and presentations.
- Comments on the suitability of the venue, the efficiency of the proceedings, accommodation and catering, and any logistical arrangement.
- Suggestions for future workshops.

CONCLUSION

The success of the RAW 2018 was based upon the positive responses, constructive suggestions for improvement, interaction and positive attitude of delegates. The theme and primary purpose of RAW 2018 was to discuss how systems and processes can be simplified, as well as actively engage and network with all delegates. Delegates and the NRF staff interacted openly and shared experiences and challenges during the breakaway sessions. The programme was aimed at addressing, as far as possible, the interests and challenges of the delegates. The Workshop provided a foundation on which future events can be built in terms of grant management and systems administration.
MONDAY 15 OCTOBER

15:00 – 17:00 ARRIVAL & REGISTRATION

Important Details
During Tea and Lunch Breaks NRF staff will be available to assist all DAs and FOs with navigating the NRF Online Submission System or with any other queries.

DAY 1: TUESDAY 16 OCTOBER 2018

08:00 – 09:00 REGISTRATION

09:00 – 11:15 PLENARY: INTRODUCTION TO RAW 2018
Facilitator: Etresia Diedericks (NRF)

09:00 – 09:40 Opening and Welcome
Ndanduleni B Nthambeleni (NRF)

09:40 – 10:00 RAW 2017 Feedback
Tshegofatso Makete (NRF)

10:00 – 11:15 NRF Postgraduate Funding Policy
Romilla Maharaj (NRF)
Mbulelo Ncango (NRF)

11:15 – 11:30 TEA BREAK

11:30 – 13:00 PLENARY: SIMPLIFYING AND IMPROVING GRANTING PROCESSES & SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT
Facilitator: Raven Jimmy (NRF)

11:30 – 12:00 New Developments
• One Call Process
• Incentive Funding Process

12:00 – 12:30 The Value and Process of PRs
Simon Lotz (NRF)

12:30 – 13:00 NRF Reporting
Rakoshnie Ramoutar (NRF)

13:00 – 14:00 LUNCH

14:00 – 16:15 PLENARY: SIMPLIFYING AND IMPROVING GRANTING PROCESSES & SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT (Cont.)
Facilitator: Raven Jimmy (NRF)

14:00 – 14:30 Research Information Sharing
Sanet Vos (SABINET)

14:30 – 15:15 Completion Tool & Alumni Database Showcase
Brettle de Beer (NRF)
Loksha Mokwana (NRF)

15:15 – 16:30 TEA BREAK

15:30 – 16:15 Changes on the DA Tool Feedback on Requested Changes by DAs
Brettle de Beer (NRF)
Elene Heathfield (NRF)

16:30 for 18:00 COCKTAIL
Venue – International Centre

CLOSURE

DAY 2: WEDNESDAY 17 OCTOBER 2018

08:30 – 10:15 PLENARY: LEGISLATIVE ENVIRONMENT & COMPLIANCE
Facilitator: Thashni Pillay (NRF)

08:30 – 09:15 Grant Deposit – Conditions of Utilisation
Rentia Hamilton (NRF)

09:15 – 09:45 General Issues and Non-Compliance
Anthipi POURSIS (NRF)

09:45 – 10:15 Research Office Ethics, POPI and PAIA Acts
Georges-lee Eksiose (UNINTE)

10:15 – 10:30 TEA BREAK

10:30 – 12:30 BREAKAWAY 1: EMERGING RESEARCHERS
Facilitator: Leanne van Zyl (UP)
Panel members: Thashni Pillay (NRF), Joy Mogabe (UP), NRF FirstRand Fund Substantive Programme

10:30 – 12:30 BREAKAWAY 2: ESTABLISHED RESEARCHERS
Facilitator: Simon Lotz (NRF)
Panel members: Nana Boaduo (NRF), Joyce Olivier (NRF) and Zukile Matshaya (TUT)

10:30 – 12:30 BREAKAWAY 3: STAFF DEVELOPMENT
Facilitator: Thandeka Mthethwa (NRF)

10:30 – 12:30 BREAKAWAY 4: INSTITUTIONAL GRANTS
Facilitator: Nana Boaduo (NRF)
Panel members: Simon Lotz (NRF), Naves, Maphuti Madiga (NRF)

12:30 – 13:00 PLENARY: FEEDBACK FROM BREAKAWAY SESSIONS
Leanne van Zyl (UP) & Simon Lotz (NRF)

13:00 – 14:30 LUNCH

14:30 – 17:15 PLENARY: COMMUNICATION AND THE ROLE OF THE DAs & FOs
Facilitator: Thapeloatsilo Makutsa (NRF)

14:30 – 15:00 How Administrators Stay Relevant
Collin Stone (NICD)

15:00 – 15:30 Regional Forum – Where are we one year later?
Ndanduleni B Nthambeleni (NRF)

15:30 – 15:45 TEA BREAK

15:45 – 16:15 Stakeholder Engagement Strategies – NRF Perspective
Anthipi POURSIS (NRF)

16:15 – 16:45 Stakeholder Engagement Strategies – Institutional Perspective
Izel Roussouw (SU)

16:45 – 17:15 Tools for Successful Administration of Research Management Functions – DA/FO
Tania Holmes-Watts (CPUT)

18:30 for 19:00 AWARDS DINNER
Venue – Simongeli Lapa, Dress Code – Black with a Touch of African Colours

CLOSURE
### APPENDIX B - RAW 2018 FEEDBACK QUESTIONNAIRES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• This is a very good opportunity for institutions to share experiences, successes and concerns as well as interact on the changes which NRF is implementing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• It was good to hear the reasons behind decisions. Providing the context behind system changing ensures support for changes. Also good platform to communicate, rather than email.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Well organised. Not enough free time in the evenings, prefer one evening event only.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Safe and excellent space to voice out concerns. Very informative for existing and new FOs. Hub of useful information for all DAs and all personnel involved in the administration of NRF funds. A place to get the right and reliable information from.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• RAW = always useful annual forum, opportunity to engage with both NRF and other HEI delegates – it is like speed-dating.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• This is the first RAW I attended and found it interesting and very useful. Also a good platform to engage with other DAs and FOs from other institutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The event was very insightful and enlightening. Very engaging and robust.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The presentations were very insightful, as we learned how other institutions did things and how we could improve our own processes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Thank you NRF. Networking good once again.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• In terms of improving NRF’s services to Higher Education Institutions on how they can promote efficiency through simplicity so that research outputs are enhanced continuously is indeed promoted as good work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Improving every year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• As this was my first experience, it was very useful taking back to my work environment have learnt a lot and benefitted a lot from all topics relevant and not relevant in my profession. It helps to understand how other organisations and their procedures and policies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• RAW 2018 was a very well balanced workshop. Even the DA sessions were informative for me as an FO.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• RAW was very insightful, especially for me as a newcomer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• This being my first attendance, I found the workshop to be well organised.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Programme was very informative and useful for going forward, only concern is ONE CALL new system to be implemented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The sessions were quite informative and the interactions with other fellow colleagues from other institutions and sharing our challenges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The experience was okay.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• This was a good workshop with robust debate.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Presentations
- Short presentations are useful with opportunity for questions.
- Relevant content. Feasible solutions. High quality presentations and videos.
- Very clear content of high quality and thus provides a clear directions on how to administer NRF funds and how to provide guidance to researchers. Presenters are very open to suggestions and the content is spot on, precise and does not waste time.
- Very good and relevant. Engaging and interesting sessions.
- Fine: Always trying to cater for various stakeholders.
- These were good, however I would have enjoyed more time allocated for Q’s and A’s and discussions many of us are experiencing similar issues. It could also help if presenters are able to go online to see what exactly the issues are and add to address it afterwards.
- The content quality, applicability and presentations were very high, really applicable to our work situation I learnt a lot from them.
- It was good and I learned a lot as to how we can improve all processed.
- The content was more relevant than in previous RAW’s. The quality of the information, presentations and presenters are high.
- All good. Screens too low. Look forward to challenges of One Call.
- On spot and so necessary to all SA research institutions. It just needs to be taken into consideration and serious by all stakeholders.
- Very informative.
- All went well. Screens need to be adjusted to make the slides reachable from the back.
- Very well done. The only comment is that a speaker coming from an institution with only 35 grants cannot really provide useful information to a large institution.
- Presentations met my expectations; the content cover was relevant and informative. Sharing experiences and challenges with colleagues is valuable.
- Presentations were informative.
- Fairly good, but I believe we will add to NRF image by attending a presentation skills course.

### Venue and Logistics
- Great venue, convenient access to the airport.
- Good choice of venue. Catering very good.
- I enjoyed the workshop. The venue’s food was very good. The seating in the conference room was too small, and squashed. Thank you for all the effort with evening events.
- Everything was on point. This was properly organised. Wish this could be maintained for RAW 2019.
- In a very convenient area for out of town NRF university representatives as the area does not have traffic. Accommodation, catering were excellent.
- We were seated so close to each other and it was not easy for everyone to bring his/her laptop as some of the plugs were not working.
- I sat near the back so I struggled to see the presenters clearly. Will check them all again on the internet.
- Venue was nice and cosy. The food was good with a variety.
- The venue is suitable, only too small for actual conference.
- Satisfied, can recommend venue.
- Excellent. Good venue
- The venue is / was excellent and the proceedings were coordinated in a very orderly manner. The food was alright.
- The venue was good our institution will in future stay close to the venue as we had to travel daily.
- It would have been better to have all the accommodation booked close together as we had to use transport to move between the venues and rooms. The hotel was very busy and this caused delays.
- Very cramped. No space among delegates. No air conditioner / inconsistent. Screens too low and some sides small. Cannot see from the back.
- All promises made could be implemented with immediate effect that would indeed improve
- Very informative
- All went well. Screens need to be adjusted to make the slides reachable from the back.
- The venue was good. The main workshop room could have been bigger so that people do not need to sit that close to each other. A bit more spacious room would have been better. People want to sit down also with the cocktail function. Rooms were good. The breakfast area where most people ate was not same standard as other breakfast rooms.
- Excellent venue, accommodation and catering.
- The venue was a good choice. Catering was up to standard. The facilities were well kept. Parking was sufficient and the different session rooms were clean. The accommodation was also comfortable.
- Good
- The venue was fine
- Did not stay over. The journey daily was very easy. Perhaps the late start of evening functions can be brought forward.
- The food was okay but can be better. The NRF can implement a registration fee to all delegates that would help to cater for everyone’s needs. Thank you for this platform where we can engage and have robust discussions.
Suggestions for future workshops

- Definitely a platform to communicate any changes to systems or any changes to structures etc. Take RAW 2018 opportunity to address, provide context for changes to assist with common challenges faced by institutions.
- Smaller breakaway groups/working groups. Interactive (institutions and NRF) do hands on. “Outside” presenter should present on a trending topic i.e. fourth industrial revolution.
- Same as 2018 ones with the inclusion of relevant technologies to be used.
- For all issues and challenges raised, a response in presentation format should be provided. Same content and new developments on NRF. How universities have improved in their administration of NRF funds.
- We should have an overview of what each programme guidelines are in terms of spending. Frequently queried by researcher on what they can spend funds on.
- Please make the financial breakaway longer. Maybe always split DA/FO related presentations too. Maybe invite researchers from institutions to highlight what their frustration/heights are in terms of administration of their grants.
- PE, Durban or Cape Town
- Preliminary NRF regional visits up to September. Topics/Format: Standard standing items. More breakaway sessions. NRF RAW = 3 full days. Burning issues from NRF and Institution’s perspective. Circulate notes regarding workshops within 2 weeks of end of RAW.
- A full 3-day workshop with more breakaway sessions with topics relating directly to DA’s and FO’s.
- It could be great to have a separate session for non-universities like us to share our unique challenges and engage with the NRF on them.
- Separate breakaway for DA for M-D and DA for academic grads.
- Relevant topics that need to be taken into consideration are based on what NRF is experiencing and a feed both from the universities that it serves.
- Sessions to finish at 16:00 to allow turnaround time for evening events.
- Rather make the programme longer without it being so packed.
- The current layout was good and format was also well conducted. Having more breakaways or do survey to establish what topics delegates require more interaction with. All in all workshop well conducted and worth attending.

APPENDIX C - CHALLENGES AND COMMENTS FROM RAW 2018

Student Issues

Student give up funding from grantholder-linked to higher value funding

- Career pathing should be stated in the Call documents. Students need to know that it is a NRF condition.
- Automated scoreboard for Honours
- Half allocation in one year and half in the next?

NRF Policy on Postgraduate Funding

- No clause supporting historically disadvantaged individuals and it was suggested that institutions be given a chance to make inputs based on data gathered in their experiences.
- How the policy converses with other funding instruments in terms of limited resources since researchers are dependent on NRF funding (increase in values affecting numbers).  
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- Determination of living expenses
- Role of universities in student collaboration policy to recognise that students may be registered and apply to research facilities

Block Grants

- How many proposals will be allowed within a category
- Important information should be communicated to people in the granting space/people who have access to DA rights.

Student Travel Grants

- System must pull the number of travel grants a student holds for DA's to check
- Clarification on student reporting on travel grants

NRF - FRF

- Proposed revision to a framework: period of support will be revised
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How do we deal with travel grant PRs which are taken in the last year of grant

- Look at the possibility of having the same process for PRs as in the Travel Grants Category

NRF One Call

- How many proposals will be allowed within a category
- Communicate should go out early November by GMSA

Student give up funding from grantholder-linked to higher value funding

- Career pathing should be stated in the Call documents. Students need to know that it is a NRF condition.
- Automated scoreboard for Honours
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- The NRF has high investment in research and wishes to see alignment in research and investment. Institutions cannot rely only on the NRF for funding as it has a small budget even though they are a critical funding agency. The NRF’s partnering with ISRAP is also there to ensure that funds are raised for values to be increased without limiting resources.
- Only 20% of the applications received in the previous year were funded.
- The scarce skills fund substantially increased contribution to the NRF from 3 sources of income but it now has a limited budget and 1500 fewer students were funded. The budget will only allow for 100 post-doctoral applications to be funded

- NRF needs to be more strategic and not set targets to achieve
- Supervisors vary as per institution, but the degree is awarded by the university the suggestion is that relationship between the university and the institutions needs to be improved.

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<td>• GNISA and other RISA units</td>
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<tr>
<th>System Issues</th>
<th></th>
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<td>System to have in-built process for changes of supervisors, titles, etc</td>
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<td>Student Travel Grants</td>
<td>• Online template: Travel dates &amp; Referee response did not pull through.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• UID, student number &amp; email address to be captured on the template</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• If the student is awarded a grant for a conference and does not travel, money should be returned to the NRF and a new application must be put through.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Travel costs for Block Grants must reflect the student name on the system/ NRF IT has noted the request</td>
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<td>• GNISA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grant letters to be available easily to DAs &amp; FOs</td>
<td>• GNISA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not all documents can be found on GMS</td>
<td>• GNISA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal numbers to be available on GMS</td>
<td>• GNISA Finance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functionality to change Funding Instrument by the DAs</td>
<td>• GNISA/FIT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students supported by one institution but studying in another not on Student Completion functionality</td>
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<td>Upload of Excel files to student completion</td>
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<td>Institutions were requested to go back and correct the issues around claims that were not made.</td>
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<td>Incentive Funding: The allowable expenses (e.g. publication costs) needs to be revised.</td>
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<td>Incentive Funding to be taken up in one FY</td>
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<td>NRF Releases take too long</td>
<td>• GNISA</td>
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<tr>
<td>NRF to be more sensitive to Gender and Race requirements</td>
<td>• NRF</td>
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<td>Grant expenditure</td>
<td>• DAs to assist in timeous take up of funds</td>
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<td>SARChI specific issues on funds should be documented and circulated</td>
<td>• GNISA &amp; Funding Domain</td>
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<td>Appeal against process, not merit</td>
<td>• Appeals to be referred to Director: RCCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attachments</td>
<td>• DAs to screen attachments (incl. Rating Call)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Summary of attachments required per funding instrument on each section (attachment section)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting on societal impact in PRs</td>
<td>• GNISA</td>
</tr>
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<td>Collaborations between institutions and science councils encouraged to form forums for information sharing – good value of this seen in the Western cape</td>
<td>•</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No appeals Call!</td>
<td>• Will make it available only if necessary</td>
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<tr>
<td>Progress Reports</td>
<td>• DAs to vet PRs before submission to NRF</td>
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