



**DSI-NRF Research Development Grants for
“New Generation of Academics Programme
(nGAP)” Scholars**

Framework

Directorate: Human and Infrastructure Capacity Development

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1. Introduction

In 2015, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) launched the “*Staffing South Africa’s Universities Framework (SSAUF)*” which presented a “*comprehensive, transformative approach to developing future generations of academics and building staff capacity.*” The SSAUF focussed on both research and teaching development to ensure that academics who are supported through programmes in the framework acquire training and mentoring over the full spectrum of academic roles.

The SSAUF consists of four core programmes linked to the academic development pathway, and one cross-cutting support programme, which are the:

- *Nurturing Emerging Scholars Programme (NESP)* aimed at senior undergraduate or Honours students for active recruitment and development;
- *New Generation of Academics Programme (nGAP)* for the recruitment of new academics against carefully designed and balanced equity considerations and in disciplinary areas of greatest need. The nGAP scholars comprise of masters and doctoral candidates and postdoctoral emerging researchers appointed against new academic positions to be created;
- *Existing Academics Capacity Enhancement Programme (EACEP)* to support the development of academics currently employed in the sector through *inter alia* funding to complete their doctoral studies or interventions that address specific gaps with respect to teaching development, research development, social engagement and academic leadership;
- *Supplementary Staff Employment Programme (SSEP)* to enable universities to address specific skills gaps by recruiting new staff members with the requisite skills over a fixed period of time, and to support the implementation of other SSAUF programmes underway at each university; and
- *Staffing South Africa’s Universities Development Programme (SSAU-DP)* has a cross-cutting function and supports teaching and research development needs within each programme.

This framework document focuses on complementary support, from the DHET and the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI) - National Research Foundation (NRF), for the emerging researchers appointed as nGAP scholars. The 2018/19 financial year marked the mid-point of the first cohort of nGAP scholars appointed in 2015/16, and in 2020 the DHET commissioned a mid-term review of the implementation of the nGAP. From inception

to the mid-term review, 573 nGAP posts had been approved by the DHET across 26 public universities and approximately 400 permanent positions had been filled, with the recruitment for filling of the remaining positions in progress.¹ The *DSI-NRF Research Development Grants for nGAP Scholars* in the PhD and Post-PhD track was initiated in 2015.

The nGAP is a six-year programme split into a three-year development phase followed by a second three-year induction or early career phase. During the initial three-year development phase, the nGAP scholar is expected to benefit from substantial research development and teaching development opportunities, and to complete or make substantial progress towards a masters or doctoral degree, or undertake postdoctoral training as appropriate. During this period, the nGAP scholar should receive only a 20% teaching workload allocation. In the latter three years, the teaching workload is expected to increase, reaching a full teaching load by the sixth year. Table 1 below illustrates six key aspects of the nGAP.

Table 1. The New Generation of Academics Programme

Developmental Aspect	Stage 1 Development programme			Stage 2 Induction and early career development		
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Year						
Employment	✓ [reduced workload ¹]	✓ [reduced workload]	✓ [reduced workload]	✓ [increasing workload]	✓ [full workload]	✓ [full workload]
M / PhD/ Post-PhD study	✓	✓	✓	PhD Possibly still completing		
Mentoring	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Participation in development activities as part of the SSAU-DP	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Research Study Equipment	Contributions towards the lecturer's research study costs.					
International mobility	The intention is to support one international mobility opportunity, to take place at a point where it will have maximum benefit for the development of the nGAP lecturer.					

¹ *Mid-term review of the New Generation of Academics Programme (nGAP): An analysis of Annual Reports 2016-2018*

The nGAP funds provided by DHET covers the cost of the scholar’s salary, contribution towards registration and tuition fees, mentoring, contribution towards participation in the SSAU (Staffing South Africa’s Universities) Development Programme, infrastructure and equipment, e.g., laptops and international conference/mobility. The notable exclusion is research running costs.

Table 2. Categories of funding support for nGAP scholars from the DHET

Category	Maximum % covered by DHET
Salary costs of the nGAP appointees	18% of the total allocation per annum for each of the first three years
	14% of the total allocation for year four (university contribution to meet gap)
	9% of the total allocation for year five (university contribution to meet gap)
	5% of the total allocation for year six (university contribution to meet gap)
Contribution towards registration and tuition fees	2% of the total allocation over the full registration period
Costs for mentors	4% of the total allocation over the first four-year period
Contribution towards participation in the SSAU-DP	6% of the total allocation over the full programme
Costs of equipment e.g., laptops	5% of the total allocation over the full programme
International conference / mobility	1% of the total allocation over the full programme
TOTAL: R2 500 000	100% = Specific allocated amount for each year

DSI-NRF nGAP Research Development Grant

The nGAP scholars are eligible to apply for funds for research costs and postgraduate training through competitive funding instruments managed by the NRF. However, the DSI-NRF makes available start-up funds as an *nGAP Research Development Grant* for all newly appointed nGAP scholars. The purpose of the Research Development Grant is primarily to provide initial funding in support of their research development. The expectation is that new nGAP incumbents will apply for competitive research grants both to the NRF and other funding agencies within their first or second year of appointment.

Eligible nGAP scholars in their first and second year of appointment may apply for a Research Development Grant to assist them to develop and submit competitive proposals for funding instruments such as the Thuthuka PhD and Post-PhD tracks. Additionally, nGAP scholars with a university approved research proposal may utilise the Research Development Grant to cover the costs of their research activities.

2. Rationale

The rationale for providing the *DSI-NRF Research Development Grants for nGAP Scholars* is to ensure that they receive holistic and complementary support for honing their skills in teaching and learning, research and postgraduate student supervision. In addition to the funding categories presented in Table 2 which are covered by the DHET, the *DSI-NRF Research Development Grants for nGAP Scholars* provides funding for two (2) years to cover the following:

- Proposal development (bespoke funding e.g. mobility, research instrument development, statistical technical support; literature review; or supervisor/collaborator/community engagements); and/or
- Research costs for university approved research projects (including travel, materials and supplies, small research equipment or science engagement).

3. Objectives

The objectives of the grant are to:

- Accelerate the doctoral level training of nGAP scholars in the PhD track at public universities;
- Effect transformation in the demographic profile of the emerging researcher community with respect to gender, race and persons with disabilities through support for nGAP scholars in the Post-PhD track;
- Provide Research Development Grants for nGAP Scholars in their first and second year of appointment to assist these scholars to develop and submit research grant applications aligned to the Thuthuka PhD and Post-PhD tracks;
- To support nGAP scholars, in the first and second year of appointment, that have a university approved research project, with start-up research funding while they apply for competitive research grants to the NRF and other agencies.

4. Eligibility

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;
- Appointed nGAP scholars must hold a minimum qualification of a Master's degree to apply for the PhD track and a doctoral degree to apply for the Post-PhD track;
- Applicants must be South African citizens or permanent residents;
- Applicants that hold a valid NRF rating are not eligible to apply; and
- Applicants who are currently NRF research grantholders are not eligible to apply.

5. Funding Principles

5.1. Institution

The number of applications an institution may submit, in any given financial year, is limited to the number of nGAP scholars in their first or second year of appointment.

5.2. Demographics

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.

5.3. Financial Support

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.

In the budget section under brief description of planning activities the following must be included for your budget to be considered:

- A clear plan for all project activities to be undertaken,
- Timelines for each activity planned,
- Projected outputs, and
- Itemised cost breakdown with budget motivations for the requested budget.

Note that applications that do not provide an activity plan and motivated budget will not be approved for funding.

The following funding principles will apply:

- Grantholders are not permitted to change to any other NRF funding stream during the academic year,
- This grant may not be held concurrently with any other NRF research grant, and
- In cases where the *DSI-NRF nGAP Research Development Grant* and another NRF research grant are submitted simultaneously and both are successful, then the *nGAP Research Development Grant* will not be awarded.

6. Awards and Period of Funding

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

Grantholders must be registered with a South African public University. No carry-over of unspent funds will be permitted under this funding instrument, except under extenuating circumstances, e.g., ill-health, and must be motivated for in writing. The grant is not transferable to another grantholder.

7. Application Principles

Applications should be submitted on the NRF Connect system at <https://nrfconnect.nrf.ac.za>. Applicants must complete the online application template indicating the activities that will be supported by the Research Development Grant, timelines and a budget breakdown and expected outputs.

Note:

- Applicants must be registered on the NRF Connect system in order to create and complete an application.
- This will be a closed call for eligible applicants only, i.e., those who are appointed nGAP scholars at a public university in South Africa and who meet all the eligibility criteria.
- Qualifications must be uploaded in the *Curriculum Vitae* (CV) section on the NRF Connect system.

7.1. Review Criteria

The applications submitted to the NRF will undergo a technical review only to ensure accountability and appropriate utilisation of funds that are released. Approval of the grants will be in accordance with standard NRF grant approvals by senior management. A template for Project schedule/Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) is attached to this call which may be used by applicants.

The selection criteria for the technical review are tabulated below:

Table 3: Review Criteria of applications

Review Criteria/ Weight	Description
1. Project Plan (PhD track - 50%) (Post-PhD track - 50%)	Project plan with activities, timelines and projected outputs.
2. Budget Motivation (PhD track - 50%) (Post-PhD track - 50%)	Itemised budget breakdown and a well-motivated budget justification for the requested budget amounts.

7.2. Attachments

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

- A letter from a South African public university confirming the appointment of the applicant as an nGAP scholar; or
- A signed acceptance, by the applicant, of an offer of appointment as an nGAP scholar at a South African public university.

Note:

The Proof of South African Identity Document (ID) must be uploaded in the Personal Profile section and should not be uploaded under Attachments.

7.3. Post-Award Process

Successful candidates will be notified by the NRF regarding the DSI-NRF Research Development Grants for nGAP scholars' award. All successful candidates should complete and sign all the necessary documents / Conditions of Grant related to the acceptance of the award. Candidates in the PhD Track must submit proof of registration.

7.4. Research ethics

The NRF requires the Grantholder to maintain the highest ethical and safety standards when conducting research. The Grant must be used in compliance with South African and international laws, and the research outputs must be used entirely and wholly for lawful purposes.

It is therefore the responsibility of the grantholder, in conjunction with the institution, to ensure that all research activities carried out in or outside South Africa comply with the laws and regulations of South Africa and/or the foreign country in which the research activities are conducted, where the latter do not conflict with South African laws.

These include all human and animal subjects, copyright and intellectual property protection, and other regulations or laws, as appropriate. A research ethics committee must review and approve the ethical and academic rigour of all research prior to the commencement of the research and acceptance of the grant.

In the case that ethical clearance is required, a copy of the approval document should be available through the institution.

8. Reporting

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

- All grantholders are required to submit a Progress Report (PR) before 15 February each year; covering performance and financials of the previous funding year.
- In the case of continuing grantholders, the NRF will use these reports to assess project performance against timeframes and deliverables as indicated in the original application prior to releasing funding for the second grant year.

9. Renewal of Grant

Continued funding for year two will be subject to the following:

- The submission of a PR for the first year of funding and meeting the deliverables for year one.
- A recommendation by the supervisor that the grant may be renewed for the second year. The supervisor's details must be inserted in the Supervisor/Host of Research

Details section of the PR.

10. Enquiries

For any further assistance and information relating to the DSI-NRF Research Development Grant for nGAP Scholars, please contact the Research, Financial Aid/Bursary/Postgraduate Office at your institution before contacting the following NRF staff.

Ms Thandeka Mthethwa Professional Officer: GMSA Tel: (012) 481-4163 e-mail: T.Mthethwa@risa.nrf.ac.za	Ms Edith Shikumo Professional Officer: HICD Tel: (012) 481-4236 e-mail: ea.shikumo@risa.nrf.ac.za
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