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Department:
Science, Technology and Innovation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



FirstRand
EMPOWERMENT FOUNDATION



RIISA
Research, Innovation and Impact
Support and Advancement

Research Grants:

*NRF-FREF:Black Academics Advancement Programme PhD Track; and
Post PhD Track*

Application Guide

DEPARTMENT: NEXT GENERATION AND EMERGING RESEARCHERS (NGER)

Date: February 2026

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Contact Details

When making enquiries use “NRF-FREF: BAAP Call for 2026” in the subject line of the email.

For NRF online application and grants management related queries please contact:

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For technical online enquiries, please contact the NRF Support Desk during office hours (08:00-16:30) Monday to Friday on:

E-mail address: Supportdesk@nrf.ac.za

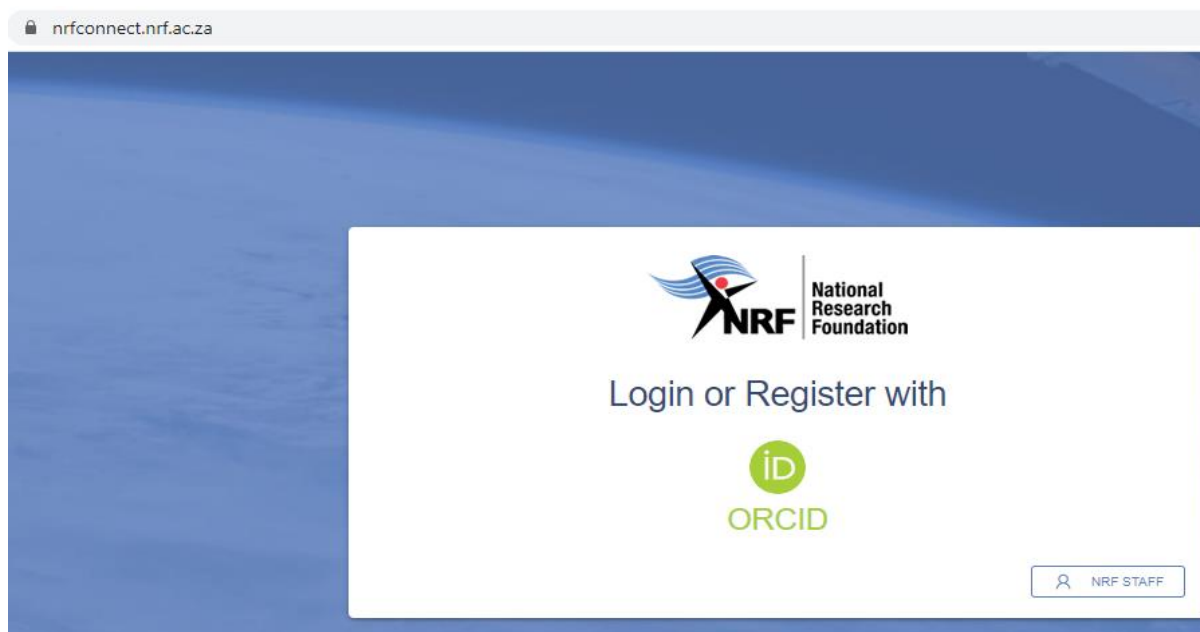
1. Introduction

This document serves as a guideline on how to complete the online application for the NRF-FREF: Black Academics Advancement Programme (BAAP). An understanding of the application process is critical to successfully submitting your application. This guide provides an overview of the application process and funding guidelines.

This document should be read together with the accompanying NRF-FREF: BAAP Framework to the current call. The Framework will provide all the detailed information about the NRF-FREF: BAAP Funding Instrument including eligibility criteria, funding principles as well as the review scorecard.

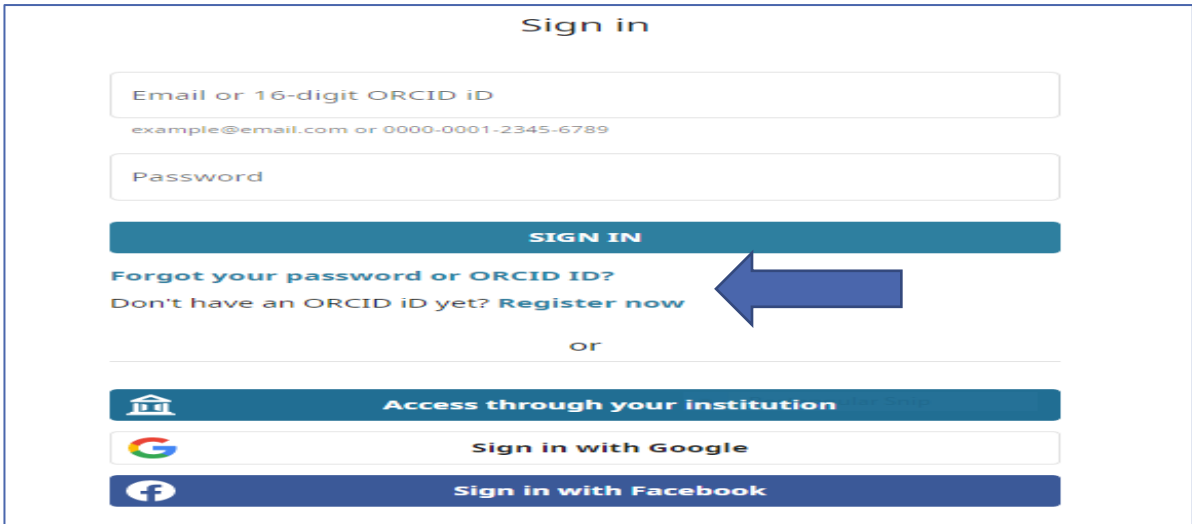
2. Registering and accessing the system

The application must be completed on the NRF online system: <https://nrfconnect.nrf.ac.za>, using the ORCID (Open Researcher and Contributor ID) credentials.



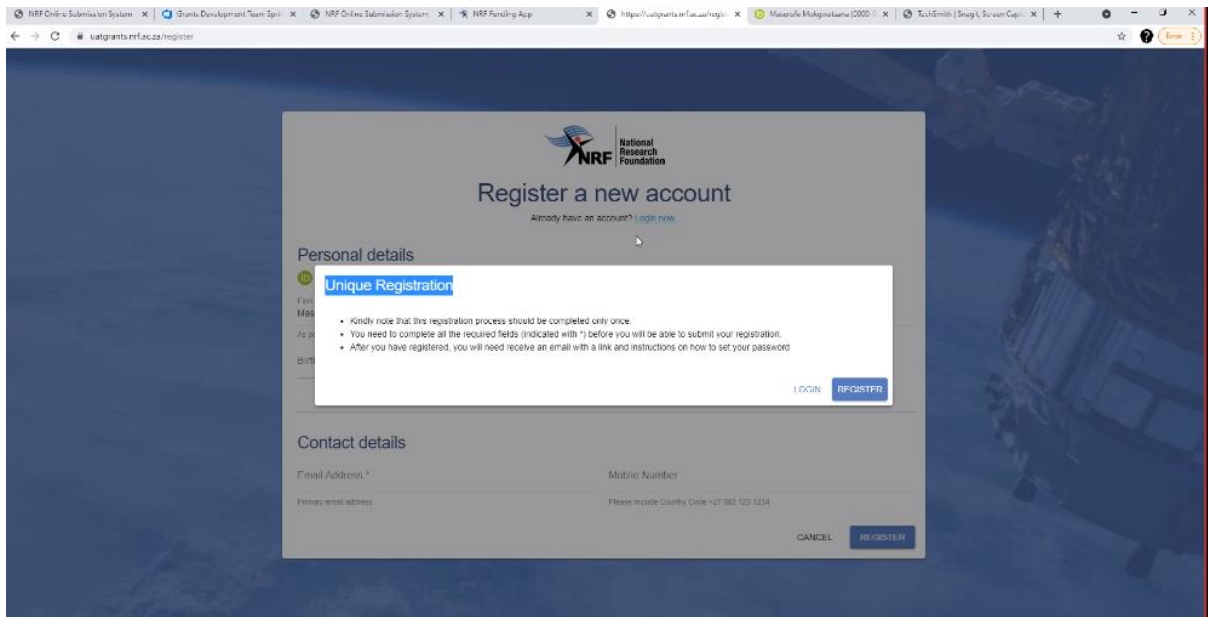
If not registered on ORCID, click Register now and follow the steps. Continue with the ORCID registration as prompted. If users are already registered on ORCID, they must sign in using one of the following options:

1. ORCID iD
2. Email address linked with your ORCID profile
3. GMAIL account linked with your ORCID
4. Facebook account linked with ORCID




If you currently registered on the NRF Online Submission System, the system would automatically log in with the ORCID profile.

When the ORCID registration process is complete, new users will be re-directed to NRF Connect login screen to register on the system.



Complete the missing fields and click Register to complete the process and the system will automatically log the user in.


Register a new account
Already have an account? [Login now.](#)

Personal details

ID <https://sandbox.orcid.org/0000-0002-8226-4581>

First Name *
Maserufe

Surname *
I

As per your birth certificate

Birth Date *
[Calendar icon]

Contact details

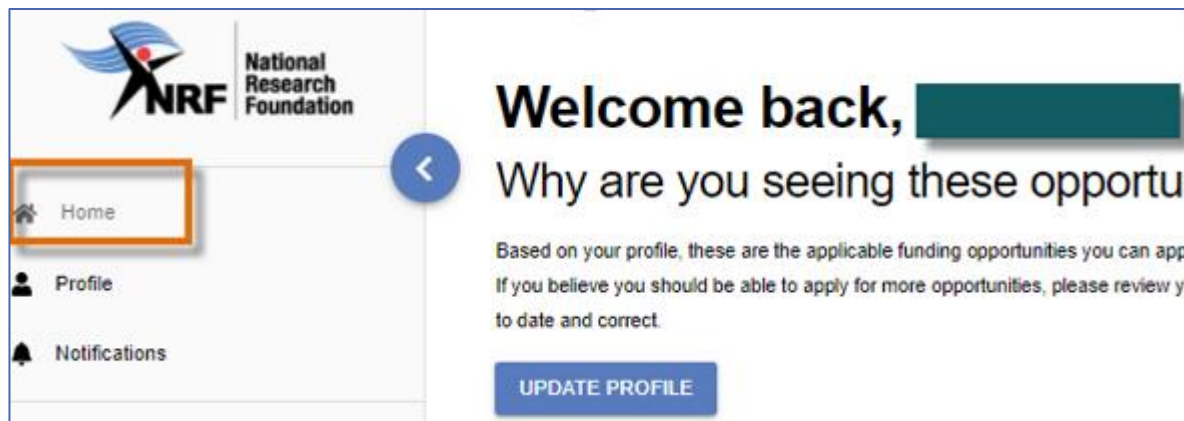
Email Address *
Primary email address

Mobile Number
Please include Country Code +27 062 123 1234

[CANCEL](#) [REGISTER](#)

3. Personal Details

After logging in, please click on the Update Profile button to update or complete the profile details.



- Only black South African Citizens or South African Citizens with disabilities may apply under this call. A **certified** copy of your South African Identity Document must be attached under the Personal Details only. **Please do not attach this document under the attachment section.** If this document is not attached, the application will be rejected.
- Applicants should not be older than forty-five (45) years of age at the time of application. However applicants over the age of 45 years, at the time of first application, may be considered on submission of a motivation demonstrating that they are late entrants to

research or that they are returning to research after a period of absence due to family responsibilities. This information must be uploaded in the attachment section of the application and applications without the motivation will be automatically rejected.

- Applicants must hold a permanent, full-time academic appointment at one of the 26 public universities in South Africa. **The NRF-FREF: BAAP call is a closed call to the universities, so only applicants who are based at the universities will be able to apply. Please include the institution under the personal details section in order to access the call.**

Personal details

Title *	Initials *	First Name *	Surname *
	As per your birth certificate	Please fill in your Name	Please fill in your Name
Maiden Name	Birth Date * 1993/03/05	Citizenship Status *	Country *
		South African Citizenship Status	Country of Birth
Country *	Institution *	Country *	Field of Specialisation *
Current Country		Country of Institution	Field of Specialisation
Position/Designation	Race *	Gender *	Identity *
ID/Passport Number *	Identity Document	Are you disabled in any way? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Specify Disability
As per your Identity document	Upload Identity document of less than 2 MB. 0 (0.0B)		Field is required 0 / 200
Proof of Disability	Upload proof of disability document of less than 2 MB. 0 (0.0B)		

4. CV section

Migrating the CV from the NRF Online Submission System

Should the user be an existing user on the NRF Online Submission System, there is functionality to migrate the CV from the previous system. Click **Verify** to link to the relevant account on the NRF Online Submission System.

! **Link Submission ...**

Connect your old nrf submission profile

NO THANKS **VERIFY**

Provide the ID/Passport number and password used on the NRF Online Submission System.

Enter your Old Nrf Submission Details

ID Number *

ID/Passport

Password *

Your Old Password

CANCEL SUBMIT

Once the verification of the two accounts has been completed, confirmation will show at the bottom of the screen.

Sync Your CV

Migrate your CV from the previous system

NOT NOW SYNC NOW

For new users

The CV can be updated by clicking on the tabs under the CV banner on the left-hand side of the screen.

Click on "Verify" below the instructions.

Use your NRF Online Submission login [details](#) to start the verification process.

When the system confirms that the verification process is complete, go to "Sync Your CV" and click on "Sync Now".

Applications

Select the funding opportunity you want to apply for and click on APPLY.

Applications you have created will appear at the top. Click on EDIT to continue working on an application.

To access Call documents with information relevant to the Call you may wish to apply for, go to <https://www.nrf.ac.za/nrf-call-for-proposals-for-funding-in-2023-and-2024/>.

To access **Frequently Asked Questions**, go to <https://www.nrf.ac.za/nrf-connect/nrf-connect-fags/>.

The 2024 NRF Next Generation and Emerging Researchers Symposium:

MY APPLICATIONS

REVIEWS

MY CV ←

Career History

Qualifications/Certifications

4.1. Sections of the CV

The CV includes the following sections:

4.1.1. Career History

- The NRF-FREF: BAAP funding instrument awards are limited to academics at the 26 NRF recognised public universities in South Africa.
- Applicants must hold a permanent, full-time academic appointment or, a fixed-term appointment that extends for the full grant period plus one additional year.
- Applicants in an nGAP appointment are not eligible to apply for NRF-FREF: BAAP funding.
- The term “academic” relates to lecturing duties as part of their job. If any of the following “positions” (current career) are indicated under the Career Profile section of your CV, your application will be deemed ineligible:
 - Doctoral student
 - Postdoctoral fellow
 - Lab technician
 - Coordinator
 - Administrator
 - Research Fellow
 - Tutor

4.1.2. Qualifications / Certifications

PhD track

- Master’s degree should be the highest qualification.
- If the Master’s degree is “in progress”, then the date of completion should be before December 2026.
- Applicants who received previous freestanding and/or grantholder-linked doctoral scholarships are not eligible to apply for further funding under the same level.

Post-PhD track

- Applicants should have obtained a Doctoral degree no more than five (5) years prior to the date of first application.
- If the Doctoral degree is “in progress”, then the date of completion should be before December 2026. *Please include the Doctoral degree under this section and indicate the anticipated date of completion.*

4.1.3. **Research Expertise**

Select the relevant primary research field and secondary research field from the drop-down list. To search for a field of specialisation, please start typing any part of the word in the appropriate space.

4.1.4. **Research Outputs - Primary and Secondary Outputs and Patents**

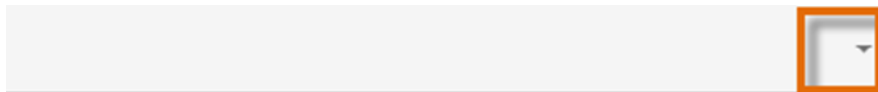
Click on **Research Outputs Menu** to select the relevant output type.

Should the outputs have been synched with NRF Submission, a list of outputs will be available for editing or deletion.

5. **Navigation and Controls**

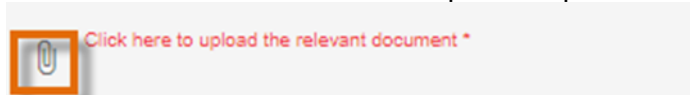
5.1. **Drop-down List Control**

Click on the arrow on the drop-down to see a list of options. Then click on the relevant option(s) to select.



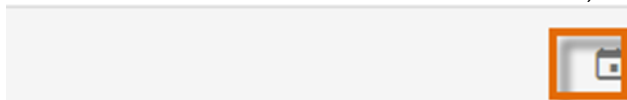
5.2 **Upload Control**

Click on the **Attachment** icon to upload required document(s).

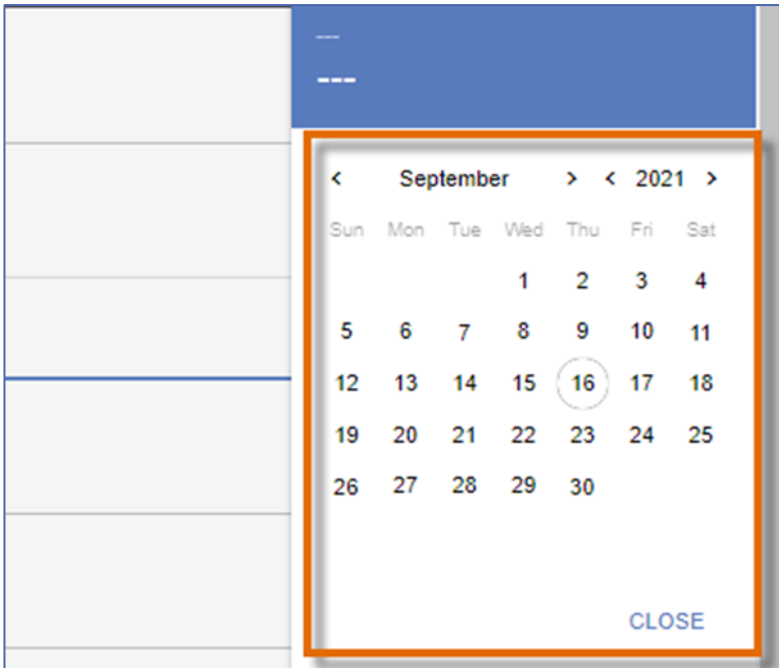


5.3 **Calendar Control**

Click on the **Calendar** icon to select the date, where a date is required.

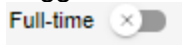


A full **Calendar** will be displayed to allow for selection of the relevant date (follow the sequence as follows: year, month, day).

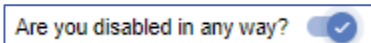
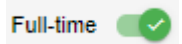


5.4 Toggle Control

Toggle to indicate **No**.



Toggle to indicate **Yes**.



Please make sure that the toggle has fully marked no or yes based on your selection. Toggle not fully selected will not allow the section to complete.

6. Creating the application

An application can be created from the **Home/Landing page** or from the **My Applications** menu.

Create Application from Home/Landing page

The Funding Opportunities listed under your profile will be those that the applicant might be potentially eligible to apply for based on the information captured under the CV section.

Click Apply on the funding call for which you are applying to create an application.

To continue working on an application, click **Edit** on the funding call you want to edit.



Create Application from My Applications Menu

Click the expand icon next to the relevant Category to see the Calls associated with the Category. Then Click **Create** next to the relevant Funding Opportunity to create a new application.



Sections of the application

- Please note that some sections (e.g. Personal Details, CV Details) will be pre-populated, if they were completed on Update Profile and MY CV sections.
- Most application screens have application specific instructions to help you work through the section. Please read the instruction carefully before completing the section.
- Completed sections will be indicated by a green tick on the main menu, while incomplete sections will have a red cross. Please ensure that you press the “save” button after completing information in a section, before returning back to the application.

- All sections marked with a red asterisk (*) are compulsory sections in the application. These sections must be completed for the final submit button to be active.

Section	Complete	Updated	Edit
Personal Profile *	✓	11/09/2023	
Qualifications/Certifications *	✓	14/05/2024	
Research Expertise *	✓	14/05/2024	
Student Supervision	✗		
Career History *	✗		
Research Outputs	✗		
Patents	✗		
Top Research Outputs	✗		
Additional Information *	✗		
Basic Information *	✗		

6.1 Additional Information: Research Grants (NRF-FREF:BAAP)

If you are employed on a contractual basis, please indicate the end date of employment. If this information is not captured under the section, the application will be deemed incomplete, and it will be rejected.

Additional Information: Black Academics Advancement Programme (Phd)

Track * End Date of Employment *

6.2 Details of Research

The details of research section is one of the most important part of the application and is looked at during the review process (please refer to the detailed review scorecard in the Framework document). This section is made up of multiple sub-sections that must be completed with as much detail as possible. Character limitations are indicated in each sub-section.

Details of Research *			
Section	Complete	Updated	Edit
Problem Statement *	x		
Aims and Objectives *	x		
Rationale and Literature Review *	x		
Proposed Activities/Methodology/Work Plan *	x		
Anticipated Outputs *	x		
Potential Impact and Outputs *	x		
Transformation *	x		
Alignment to National Imperatives	x		
Data Management and Utilisation	x		

6.3 Attachments

The following attachments are required for NRF-FREF: BAAP:

- A self-motivation from the applicant detailing his/her academic and research career plan, the benefits and intended outcomes to be achieved from the time off period.
- A detailed letter of nomination under the signature of the HOD of the relevant department at the university where the academic is employed, and institutional support letter. This letter of motivation must detail the reasons for nominating the candidate, the alignment with the university research and academic staffing plan and, any strategic partnership with other universities for proposal development, co-supervision and/or support for emerging research development. **Please use the template provided, -a letter that does not have all the required information will not be acceptable and the application will be rejected. The duration for which the applicant will be released from teaching and administrative responsibilities must be explicitly stated as the funding approved will be fixed to this period.**

6.4 Ethical Clearance

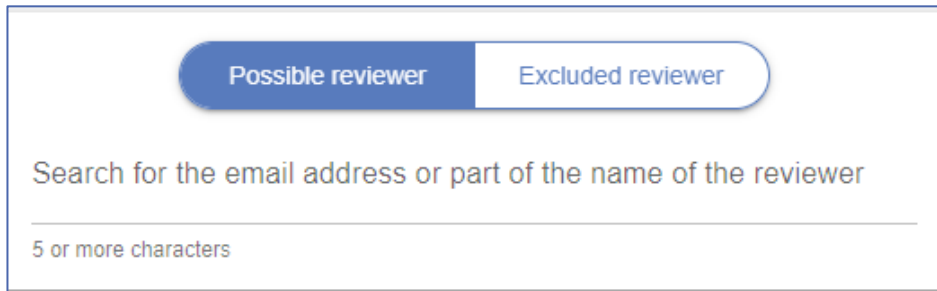
Indicate if ethical clearance is required for your research and if it has been obtained already.

*Note: If your application is successful and if ethical clearance is required for your research, then the ethical clearance certificate must be sent to the NRF when accepting the Conditions of Grant. Without this certificate, funds cannot be released.

6.5 Reviewers – Possible Reviewer and Excluded reviewer

Please indicate potential subject experts who would be suitable to review your application. A minimum of six (6) reviewers are required. Applicants are given the opportunity to identify reviewers (not exceeding three) who the NRF should not approach. Please use the appropriate 'tab' to enter relevant information.

You can search for the reviewer on the system by typing part of their email address.



Possible reviewer Excluded reviewer

Search for the email address or part of the name of the reviewer

5 or more characters

Should a reviewer not be found, please select the not found tab to add the reviewer details.

6.6 Preferred Panel

Indicate the most suitable panel that your project should be evaluated under.

6.7 Requested Financials

Please refer to the Framework for more information about the NRF-FREF: BAAP granting rules, financial control and categories supported. Please note that some of the running expenses sub-categories listed under the template are not supported under NRF-FREF: BAAP.

****Please include all financial details (i.e., budget breakdown) in the space provided in the application. Do not add attachments with the required detail to the application. This will not be looked at during the funding decisions process. ****Only indicate the NRF contribution under this section.****

The three (3) distinct budget categories supported by the NRF and the maximum amount that will be awarded per category are indicated in Table 1.

Table 1: Financial categories supported and maximum amounts funded.

No.	Category of Support	Maximum amount (NRF contribution)
1.	Running Expenses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International conferences • Materials and supplies • Local conferences • Local travel • Research equipment • Research/technical/ad hoc assistants • Science Engagements 	R50 000 for 6 months R100 000 per annum
2.	Lecturer Replacement Costs	R200 000 per annum
3.	International Travel (Mobility) *Applicable to Postdoctoral track only	R100 000 per annum

NRF Exclusions for Financial Support:

- Indirect costs (overheads);
- Registration fees for enrolment;
- Basic office equipment;
- General stationery, photocopying and printing costs;
- Journal publications; journal subscription costs and textbooks;
- Telephone, fax and internet costs;
- Personal laptops, computer hardware, net books, hand-held notebooks and personal digital assistant (PDA) devices;
- Purchase or renewal of software licenses unless for specialised equipment;
- Any funding line item that is listed as: “miscellaneous”, “other” or “etc.”;
- Visa and permit fees;
- Events not attached to the conference;
- Presentation of the same work at multiple conferences; or
- Attendance of more than one conference abroad per year;
- Meetings, workshops, networking and collaboration events;
- Administrative and/or secretarial support.

Note: Applicants must include a detailed and well-motivated budget for each of the years in the grant application. Budget requests and motivations that are NOT consistent with the permissible funding categories will NOT be considered in the Funding Decision process. Budget requests must be well-motivated according to the requirements of the NRF-FREF: BAAP Funding Instrument. Budget requests that are not according to the requirements of the NRF-FREF: BAAP Funding Instrument will not be approved for funding.

The application must include a detailed well-structured project plan which outlines the following:

- Project schedule/Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) with the work divided into manageable activities linked to specific time-bound outcomes (i.e. list of tasks/activities/objectives linked to timelines and expected outputs) and
- Project budget - listing activities, costs and motivation towards efficient use of resources (refer to Application and Funding guide for more information).

6.8 Other sources of funding

To realistically gauge the full extent of the proposed research, details of other sources of financial support for the research must be submitted in the application budget. This in no way compromises or disadvantages the proposal; instead, knowledge of the commitment and contribution of other contributors (where applicable) serves to better understand the feasibility of the proposed research project.

If there are no other sources of funding, please select “add” under the section, then select “N/A” from the dropdown list under “source”. You can then enter 0 values for the different years.

6.9 National Infrastructure Platforms

Indicate the infrastructure platform (i.e., planned equipment or data) that will be accessed outside your own institution during the grant.

6.10 Science Engagement

List any science communication or public engagement activities that will take place during the grant.

6.11 Application Support Input

6.12.1 Doctoral Supervisor

Applicants under the PhD track must add their supervisor’s details in this section (please use the Doctoral Co-supervisor role under the application template). Once the application has been submitted, an e-mail will be generated requesting the supervisor to complete the reference report electronically. The supervisor or referee must however access the feedback report on their NRF Connect profiles. Please ensure that the contact details provided in the application are correct.

*The supervisor's report is compulsory and without this the application will not be considered for funding.

There are NO compulsory references required for applicants under the Post-PhD track. Applicants can add the details of any academic referees who may be able to comment on their work.

Application Support Input

Instructions

- Please **do not** list yourself, or any students, or postdoctoral fellows.
- Select the role of your referee. Search for them in the NRF Connect database by using their email address or part of their name by clicking the **search** button.
- Should you find the relevant person, click on the box next to their name, complete the rest of the fields and **save**.
- If you could not locate the person you are looking for, **click user not found**, and complete the rest of the fields, and **save**.
- Upon clicking the Save button, the system will send an automated email with a link to the referee email address inserted/captured. Once this is done, the section will be marked as "Complete".
- Please consult with the Framework Documents to determine the type of compulsory referee(s) that need to be added.

[BACK TO APPLICATION](#)

Role *

- Doctoral Co-supervisor
- Co-investigator
- Chief Financial Officer

6.12 Participating Members

Add the details of additional people e.g., collaborators, who will be involved in the research project.

6.13 Appendix A

Aligning the budget to the programme requirements

Some applicants invest a significant amount of time and effort in ensuring that their project is clearly articulated within their application. While having a compelling narrative is crucial, it is equally important not to overlook the budget component, as it plays a vital role in the overall evaluation and the allocation of funding by the NRF.

The review panel may find the application to be exceptionally well-written and may score it highly based on its content and project significance. However, if the proposed budget does not accurately align with the program's requirements or guidelines, it can ultimately lead to the application being rejected for funding. Therefore, it is essential for applicants to create a comprehensive budget that not only reflects the project's needs but also adheres to the specified criteria. Balancing both the narrative and the budget ensures a stronger chance of securing funding. The below shows an example of a well-structured budget motivation with some of the categories that are funded under NRF-FREF: BAAP.

Sabbatical

Lecturer replacement	R171,200.00	R183,184.00
----------------------	-------------	-------------

Motivation

2025:

This will be used to cover the cost of a replacement lecturer while I'm away for research training, as well as when I'm writing and developing creative outputs This allocation has been based on 2024 rates as follows R160 per hour, with a total of 5 hours per week (1 hour of lesson time and 4 hours of preparation time), amounting to R4000 per week or R16,000 per month Therefore, over a 5-month semester, the cost would be R80,000, making a total of R160,000 per year Against inflation of 7%, the total for 2025 is projected at R171 200

2026:

This will be used to cover the cost of a replacement lecturer while I'm away for research training, as well as when I'm writing and developing creative outputs This allocation has been based on 2024 rates as follows R160 per hour, with a total of 5 hours per week (1 hour of lesson time and 4 hours of preparation time), amounting to R4000 per week or R16,000 per month Therefore, over a 5-month semester, the cost would be R80,000, making a total of R160,000 per year Against inflation of 7% over two years, the total for 2026 is projected as R183 184

Running expenses		
Research/technical/ad hoc assistants	R32,400.00	R26,000.00
<p>Motivation</p> <p><u>2025:</u> To pay for the creation of the video creative output as follows: -Script Development based on findings from this project: R11 500 to be converted to 80-120 pages (40 000 - 60 000 words) script -Video Production phase (set and shoot): R13 500 -Post Production phase (editing, visual effects): R7400</p> <p><u>2026:</u> R26 000 to go towards the creative output/performance – ‘Justice through Decoloniality’ as follows: -Payment of artists: 7x artists at R3 714 28 per artist, charged at a rate of R185 71 per hour for a total of 20 hours: 18 hours of rehearsals and 2 hours of performance</p>		
International conferences	R67,598.60	R73,968.80
<p>Motivation</p> <p><u>2025:</u> R67 598 6 to present a paper at the International Conference on Teaching and Education Sciences in Paris, France on 24-25 June 2025 Funds allocated as follows: -Flights: R34 699 -Accommodation: R9 296 for 3 nights @ R3 098 6 per night -Subsistence: R10 199 6 for 4 days @ R2 594 9 per day based on conversion from R128 Euro per day -Ground transport: R3 500 (for airport transfers, taxis between accommodation and conference venue) -Conference registration: R9 934</p> <p><u>2026:</u> R73 968 80, to present at the International Conference on Educational System Planning and Curriculum Development in Montreal, Canada on December 2026, dates pending announcement Budget allocation as follows: -Flights: R41 379 -Accommodation: R7 708 for 3 nights @ R2 569 3 per night -Subsistence: R10 299 8 for 4 days @ R2 574 95 per day based on conversion from R191 Canadian Dollars per day -Ground transport: R3 500 (airport transfer and taxi between hotel and conference venue)</p>		

Ends.