

02 March 2026

To: Designated Authorities (DA), Research Directors, Students and Higher Education Institutions
Community.

COMMUNIQUE FOR STATUS OF THE NRF GENERAL HONOURS SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS FOR FUNDING IN 2026 AND THE PRE-ALLOCATION PROCESS.

This communique serves as a weekly status update from the National Research Foundation (NRF) General Honours Scholarships for the 2026 academic year, under the Pre-Allocation (formerly known as the honours block grant) process. The Pre-Allocation Process for Honours seeks to ensure that there are no delays in screening applications and making funding decisions, to enable honours students to know their application status, and to ensure that successful applicants have funds readily available for the purpose of registering at the beginning of the new academic year.

A. Pre-Allocation process outlined below:

- The NRF Connect system closed by **21 November 2025** for student submission of applications.
- The NRF sent pre-allocation letters in **November 2025** to the institutions' postgraduate and/or research offices detailing the number of allocated awards for 2026 (per institution) and the selection process.
- Designated Authorities(DAs) screen and score all applications submitted to the institutions, in accordance with the NRF screening checklist.
- All eligible and recommended applications by the institutions are submitted to the NRF for funding consideration.
- The cut-off date for DAs to submit eligible applications to the NRF is **27 February 2026**, however, the NRF encourages institutions to submit the applications as soon as the final examination marks are available to allow timely student registrations

- The NRF determines final funding allocations based on the recommendation lists submitted by institutions. Once these decisions are finalized, a list of successful students will be sent to the institution and the official award letters will be issued directly to the successful students.
- Successful students are expected to take up the scholarships within two (2) months from the date of issue of the letter of award.

B. Submission of Final Marks

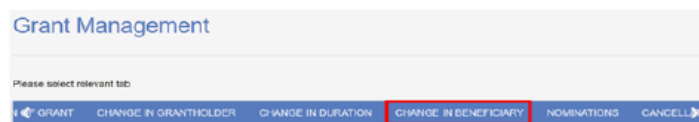
- Applicants who didn't have their final-year marks at the time of application must send the examination results to the NRF DA at their proposed university for capturing into the application and submission to NRF.

C. Change of University

- NRF applicants who receive a successful outcome and want to change their university, they must follow the steps below:

Step 1: Student must accept the award on NRF Connect. Designated Authority (DA) at the existing institution must accept the award. Once this has been done, a grant will be created.

Step 2: Access the Grants Management Module on NRF Connect and select Change in Beneficiary:



Step 3: Select the new beneficiary and capture the motivation (reason for the change) in the relevant field.

Upload the following documents for honours:

- Proof of registration or acceptance letter from the new institution

Step 4: Submit the request.

When the request is submitted, the status of the request will update indicating the next stage of the process.

Once the DA approves, the request will be submitted to the NRF for approval. Once the NRF approves, new award documents with the new institution details will be sent to the student and new DA to sign and upload to the grant on the system.

D. Queries

- Honours applicants should direct any queries about their applications and outcomes to their universities' postgrad/research offices where NRF Designated Authorities (DAs) are stationed to assist.

E. Application Statuses on NRF Connect

As applications move through the process, applicants from the same university will see different statuses at different times. Due to application volumes, it can sometimes take a while for an individual applicant's status to update on NRF Connect. What matters during this time is the status of the entire university's applications. (See Heading F)




Application in progress	• Applicant has created an application.
Application complete	• Application is complete but has not been submitted to the institution yet.
Submit application to institution	• Application has been submitted to the selected institution.
Designated authority submission review	• Application received by institutional designated authority (DA) and currently under review.
Designated authority submission eligibility review	• DA has completed review but still needs to complete eligibility criteria check.
Internal screening submission	• Application has been submitted to the NRF by the DA.
Panel review	• Application is under peer review process (only applicable to specific funding instruments)
Internal screening approval	• NRF screening process to check eligibility and application requirements. • If rejected, the applicant will receive a notification with the reason for rejection
Funding decision allocation	• Eligible application now under awarding stage. • Unsuccessful applications will remain at this stage
Award accepted	• Successful application i.e., an award has been made against the application. Awardee can log into NRF Connect to accept/reject the award.
























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F. Updates on University Statuses

The table below, shows the current application status of the General Honours Scholarships Call for the 2026 academic year.

Table 1. Current statuses of all honours applications (As of 02 March 2026).

Descriptor: Applications at the institutions 
 Applications submitted to the NRF 
 Approved by the NRF 

Institution	Status	Indicator
Cape Peninsula University of Technology	Applications at the institution	
Central University of Technology, Free State	Applications submitted to NRF	
Durban University of Technology	Approved by the NRF	
Nelson Mandela University	Applications submitted to NRF	
North-West University	Applications submitted to NRF	
Rhodes University	Approved by the NRF	
Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University	Applications at the institution	
Sol Plaatje University	Approved by the NRF	
Stellenbosch University	Approved by the NRF	
Tshwane University of Technology	Applications at the institution	
University of Cape Town	Approved by the NRF	
University of Fort Hare	Applications submitted to NRF	
University of the Free State	Applications submitted to NRF	
University of Johannesburg	Applications submitted to NRF	
University of KwaZulu-Natal	Approved by the NRF	
University of Limpopo	Applications submitted to NRF	
University of Mpumalanga	Applications submitted to NRF	
University of Pretoria	Applications submitted to NRF	
University of South Africa	Applications at the institution	
University of the Western Cape	Applications submitted to NRF	
University of the Witwatersrand	Applications submitted to NRF	
University of Venda	Applications submitted to NRF	
University of Zululand	Applications submitted to NRF	
Walter Sisulu University	Applications submitted to NRF	