Grants Management and Systems Administration

Application and Funding Guide 2017: NRF Freestanding, Innovation and Scarce Skills Development Fund Honours and Final Year Bachelor of Technology Block Grant Bursaries

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List of Acronyms

B Tech	Bachelor of Technology
DA	Designated Authority
GMSA	Grants Management and Systems Administration
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HICD	Human and Institutional Capacity Development
ID	Identity Document
NRF	National Research Foundation
RISA	Research and Innovation Support and Advancement
UID	Unique Identification

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1. Introduction

This Application and Funding Guide provides an overview of the application process and funding guidelines for the NRF Freestanding, Innovation and Scarce Skills Development Fund Honours and Final Year Bachelor of Technology (B Tech) Block Grant Bursaries funding instrument. It should be read in conjunction with the NRF Freestanding, Innovation and Scarce Skills Development Fund (FISS) Honours and Final Year B Tech Block Grant Bursaries Framework document. The Framework document provides detailed information with respect to the objectives of the funding instruments, eligibility criteria and so forth. This document does not however, constitute a complete set of the policies, procedures or systems applied by the NRF.

2. Value of Support

Bursary values for full-time postgraduate students are indicated in table 1. Awards will be administered as block grants where university officials will be responsible for the review of submitted applications. Honours and final year B Tech degrees are funded for a period of one (1) year only, non-renewable. Semester grants of six (6) months will be accepted and will be paid on a pro rata basis. The funding period is calculated from the year/semester of first registration.

Table 1: Bursary values for full-time Honours and Final Year B Tech students for 2017 academic year

Type of Bursary	Bursary value (per annum)	Maximum Funding period
DST Priority Research Areas	R60 000	1 year
Current DST-NRF Interns	R60 000	1 year
Innovation Bursary Scheme	R60 000	1 year
NRF Freestanding	R30 000	1 year
Students with disability	R60 000	1 year
Sasol-Inzalo	R60 000	1 year
Scarce Skills	R60 000	1 year

3. Assistive devices for students with disabilities

Bursary-holders with a disability may apply for additional funding for assistive technology devices of up to R20 000. This is the maximum amount allowed during the tenure of the scholarship. As defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997 (IDEA), an assistive technology device is "*any piece of equipment, or product system, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities*".

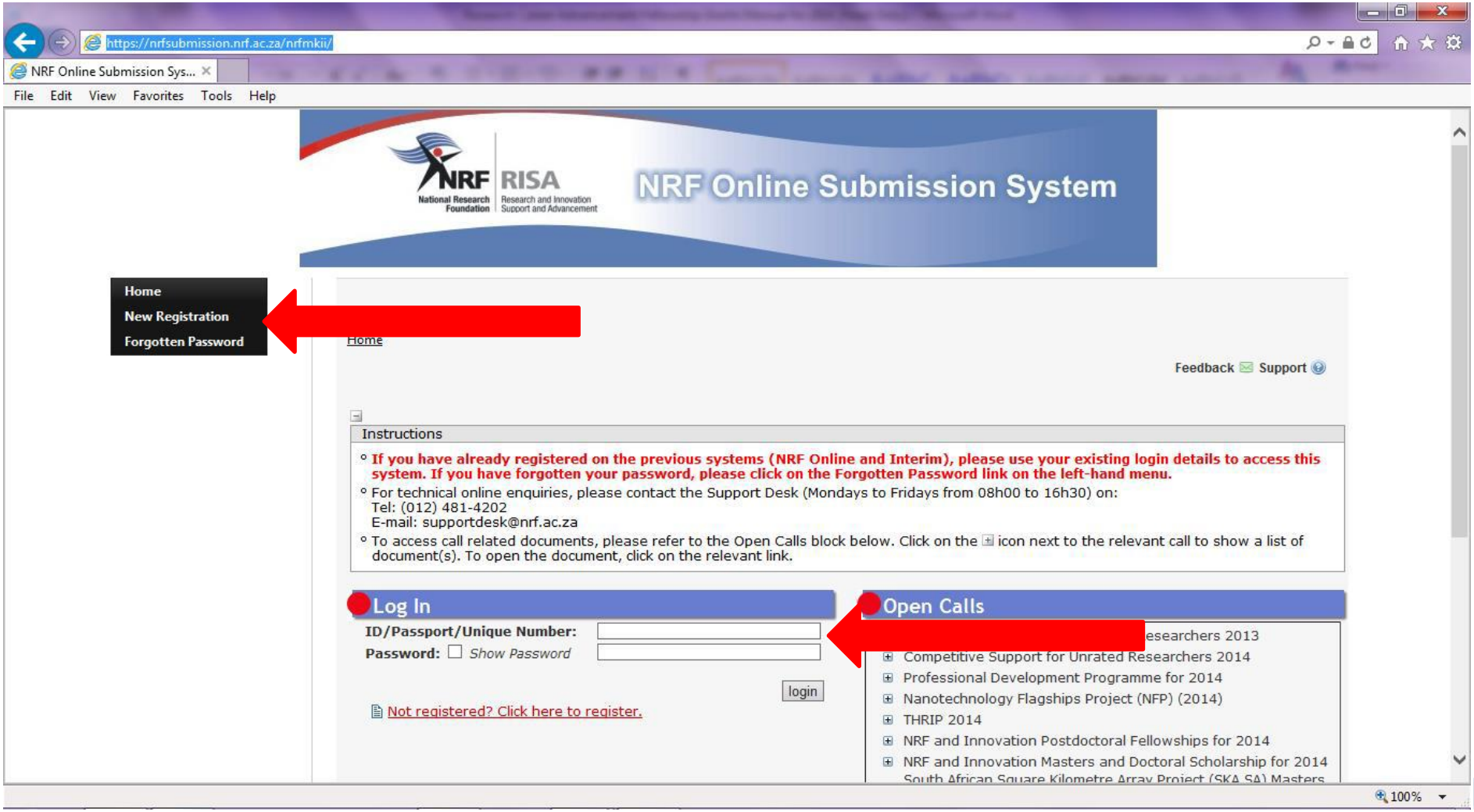
4. Application Process

The NRF is publishing the NRF Freestanding, Innovation and Scarce Skills Development Fund Honours and Final Year B Tech Block Grant Bursaries Call on the NRF website www.nrf.ac.za, that is accessible on the NRF Online Submission System https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za. Each applicant is limited to only one (1) application per Call. Once an applicant submits the online application, it will be automatically routed to the institutional delegated authority (DA) of the institution where the applicant intends to undertake the study. The DA will validate the applications on the institutional internal deadline date determined by the respective institutions, which will be before the NRF closing date of **31 January 2017.** Applicants must enquire with their institutions regarding internal closing dates, which is normally a week or two before the NRF closing date. The processing of successful grant applications takes approximately five (5) months from the closing date of applications until the commencement of funding.

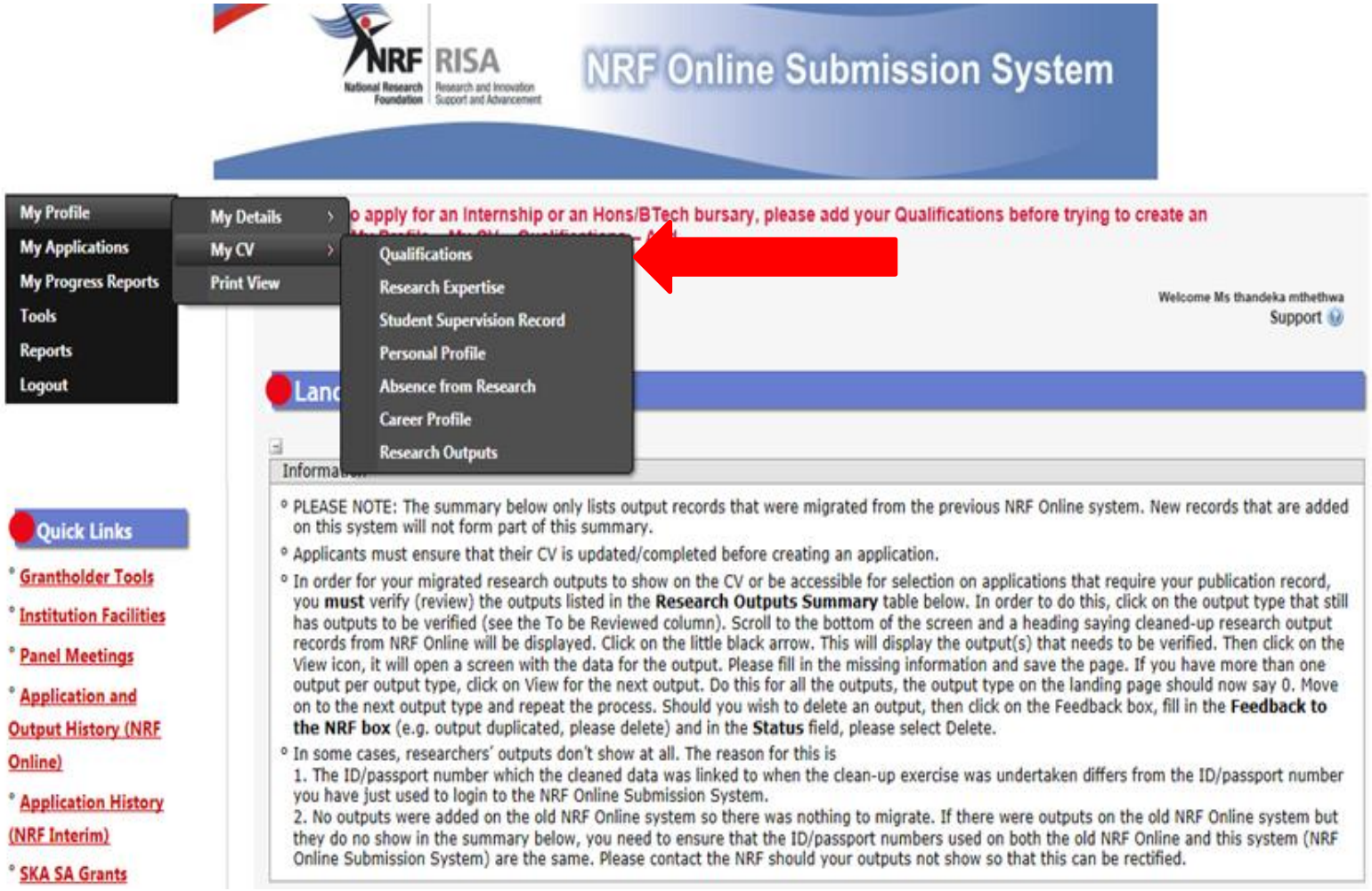
5. How to Create an Application

Applications must be completed on the NRF Online Submission System at https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za from **Monday, 19 September 2016.** Applicants are advised to complete their applications soon after the call has opened to prevent IT system overload nearer the **closing date of 31 January 2017.** Below are steps to follow in order to create an application.

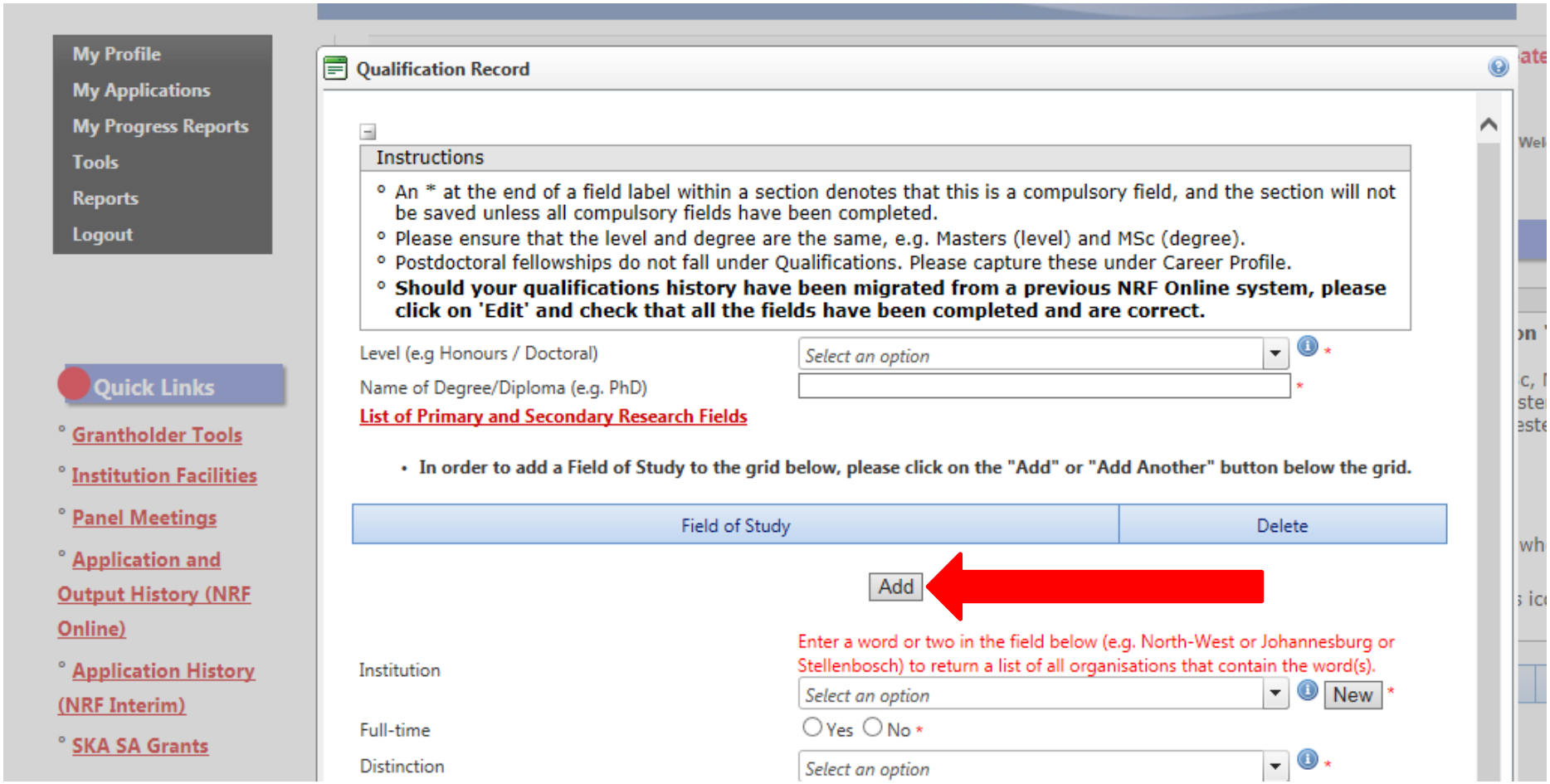
Step 1: This is an electronic submission system and applicants must be registered on the system to create and complete an application. Register on the website by clicking on New Registration and entering new login details to access the application form.



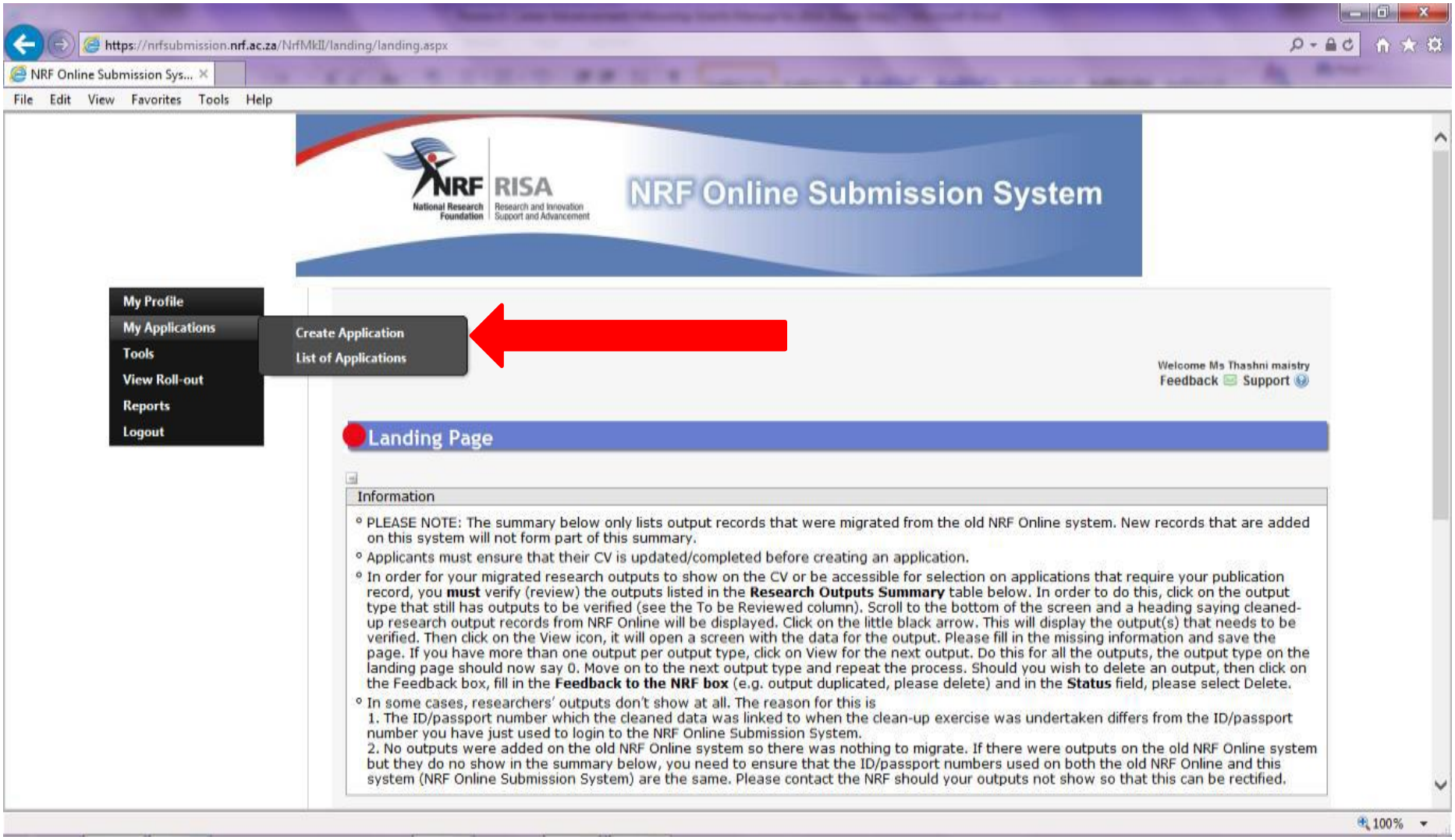
Step 2: Once the applicant has logged onto the NRF Online Submission System, they get to the landing page where there is a black menu on the left hand side. Click on 'My Profile' and fill in 'My Details'; then continue to 'My CV' and complete the Qualifications section.. **Applicants will only be able to fill in the application form for the Hons/B Tech Call once they have filled in the 'My CV - Qualifications' section.**



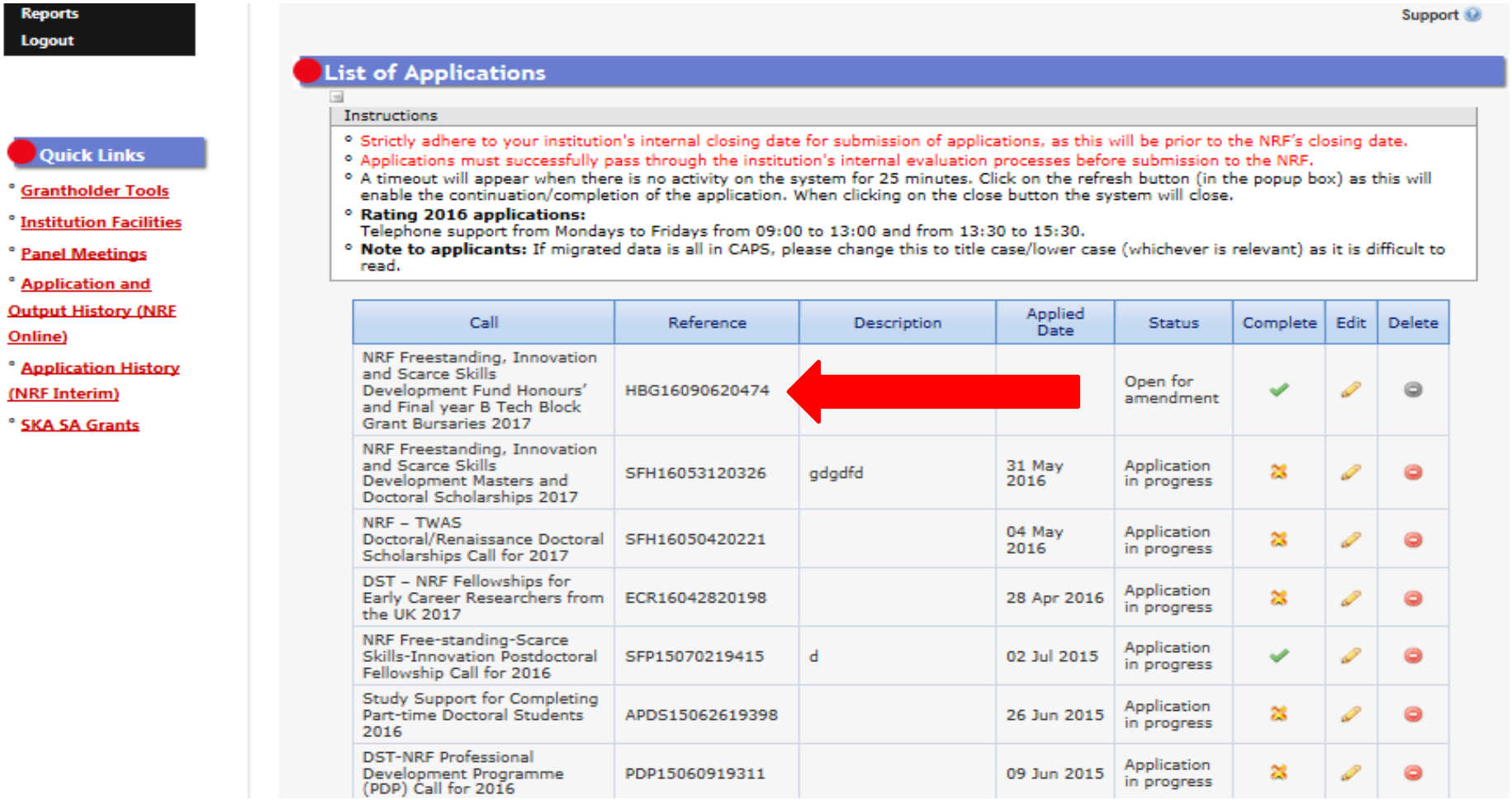
Step 3: Under Qualifications, click on ‘Add’ where the ‘Qualification Record’ screen will open, and list your qualifications. In order to complete the field of study section, click on ‘Add’ and enter the field in the block provided.



Step 4: Once the Qualifications section has been completed, applicants must create a new application by clicking on My Applications then Create Application. Only students that will be studying full time in 2017 will be able to create an application.



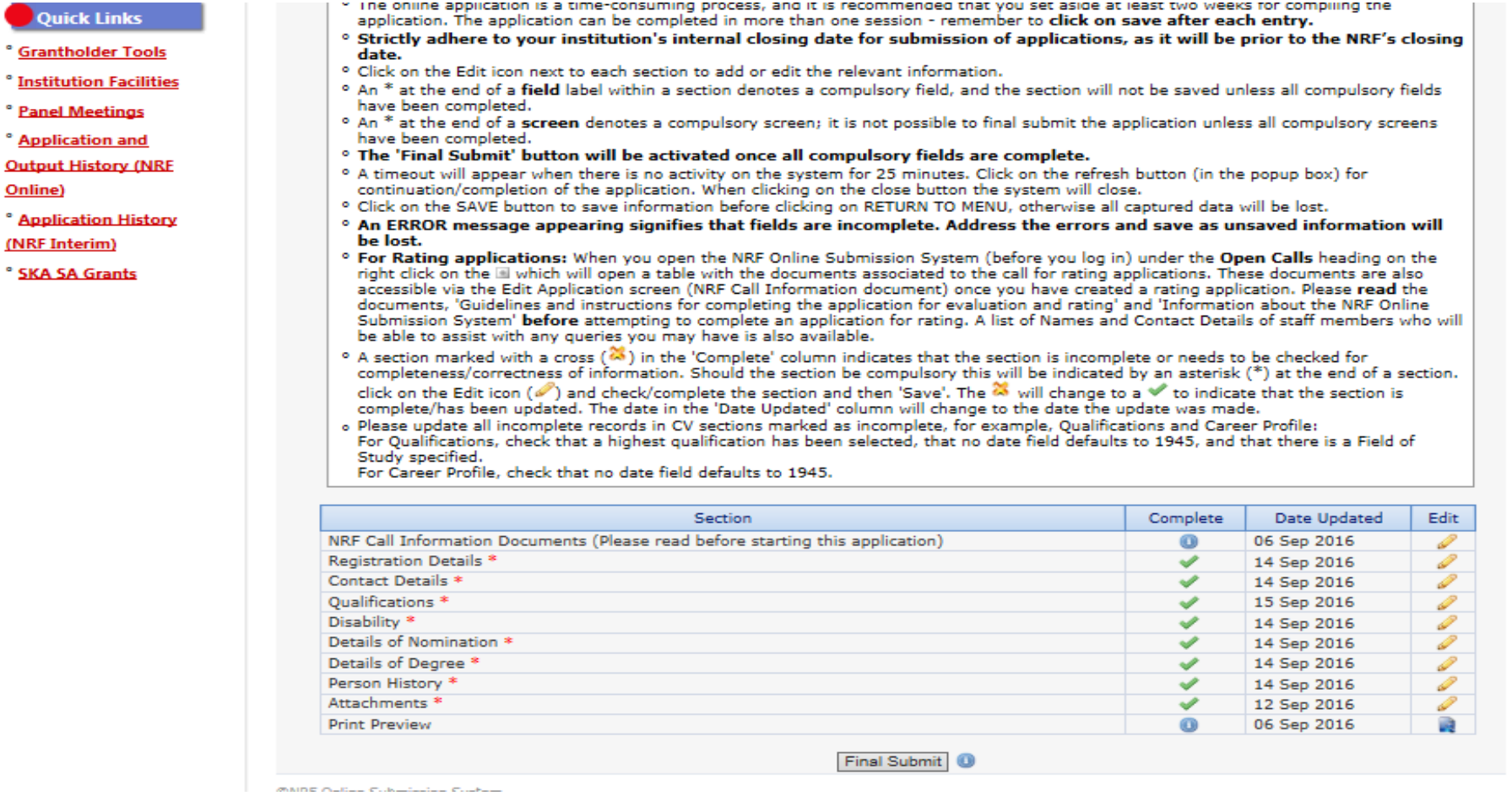
Step 5: Select the funding call for which you are applying on the Create Application screen and a new application will open. The application can be created only once; when applicants want to revisit their applications, they must click on My Applications, then List of Applications.



Call	Reference	Description	Applied Date	Status	Complete	Edit	Delete
NRF Freestanding, Innovation and Scarce Skills Development Fund Honours' and Final year B Tech Block Grant Bursaries 2017	HBG16090620474			Open for amendment	✓		
NRF Freestanding, Innovation and Scarce Skills Development Masters and Doctoral Scholarships 2017	SFH16053120326	gdgdfd	31 May 2016	Application in progress			
NRF – TWAS Doctoral/Renaissance Doctoral Scholarships Call for 2017	SFH16050420221		04 May 2016	Application in progress			
DST – NRF Fellowships for Early Career Researchers from the UK 2017	ECR16042820198		28 Apr 2016	Application in progress			
NRF Free-standing-Scarce Skills-Innovation Postdoctoral Fellowship Call for 2016	SFP15070219415	d	02 Jul 2015	Application in progress	✓		
Study Support for Completing Part-time Doctoral Students 2016	APDS15062619398		26 Jun 2015	Application in progress			
DST-NRF Professional Development Programme (PDP) Call for 2016	PDP15060919311		09 Jun 2015	Application in progress			

Applicants are urged to complete ALL screens of the CV section.

Step 6: All sections in this application are compulsory. These sections must all be completed in order for the final submit button to appear. Completed sections will be indicated by a green tick on the main menu. Application screens have application specific instructions to help the applicant work through the sections. The instructions will guide applicants with error messages where incorrect information was filled in. Applicants must follow these messages to complete the section correctly.



Quick Links

- Grantholder Tools
- Institution Facilities
- Panel Meetings
- Application and Output History (NRF Online)
- Application History (NRF Interim)
- SKA SA Grants

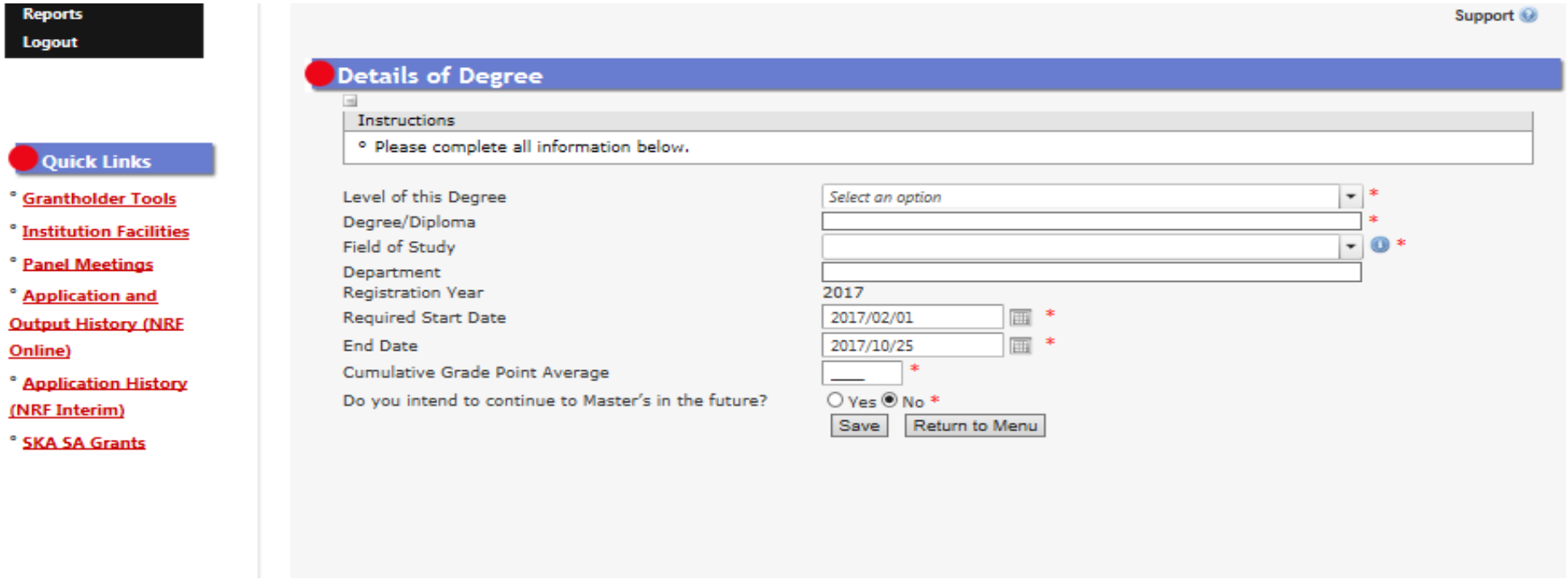
- The online application is a time-consuming process, and it is recommended that you set aside at least two weeks for compiling the application. The application can be completed in more than one session - remember to **click on save after each entry.**
- **Strictly adhere to your institution's internal closing date for submission of applications, as it will be prior to the NRF's closing date.**
- Click on the Edit icon next to each section to add or edit the relevant information.
- An * at the end of a **field** label within a section denotes a compulsory field, and the section will not be saved unless all compulsory fields have been completed.
- An * at the end of a **screen** denotes a compulsory screen; it is not possible to final submit the application unless all compulsory screens have been completed.
- **The 'Final Submit' button will be activated once all compulsory fields are complete.**
- A timeout will appear when there is no activity on the system for 25 minutes. Click on the refresh button (in the popup box) for continuation/completion of the application. When clicking on the close button the system will close.
- Click on the SAVE button to save information before clicking on RETURN TO MENU, otherwise all captured data will be lost.
- **An ERROR message appearing signifies that fields are incomplete. Address the errors and save as unsaved information will be lost.**
- **For Rating applications:** When you open the NRF Online Submission System (before you log in) under the **Open Calls** heading on the right click on the which will open a table with the documents associated to the call for rating applications. These documents are also accessible via the Edit Application screen (NRF Call Information document) once you have created a rating application. Please **read** the documents, 'Guidelines and instructions for completing the application for evaluation and rating' and 'Information about the NRF Online Submission System' **before** attempting to complete an application for rating. A list of Names and Contact Details of staff members who will be able to assist with any queries you may have is also available.
- A section marked with a cross ( ) in the 'Complete' column indicates that the section is incomplete or needs to be checked for completeness/correctness of information. Should the section be compulsory this will be indicated by an asterisk (*) at the end of a section. click on the Edit icon ( ) and check/complete the section and then 'Save'. The will change to a to indicate that the section is complete/has been updated. The date in the 'Date Updated' column will change to the date the update was made.
- Please update all incomplete records in CV sections marked as incomplete, for example, Qualifications and Career Profile:
  For Qualifications, check that a highest qualification has been selected, that no date field defaults to 1945, and that there is a Field of Study specified.
  For Career Profile, check that no date field defaults to 1945.

Section	Complete	Date Updated	Edit
NRF Call Information Documents (Please read before starting this application)		06 Sep 2016	
Registration Details *		14 Sep 2016	
Contact Details *		14 Sep 2016	
Qualifications *		15 Sep 2016	
Disability *		14 Sep 2016	
Details of Nomination *		14 Sep 2016	
Details of Degree *		14 Sep 2016	
Person History *		14 Sep 2016	
Attachments *		12 Sep 2016	
Print Preview		06 Sep 2016	

Final Submit

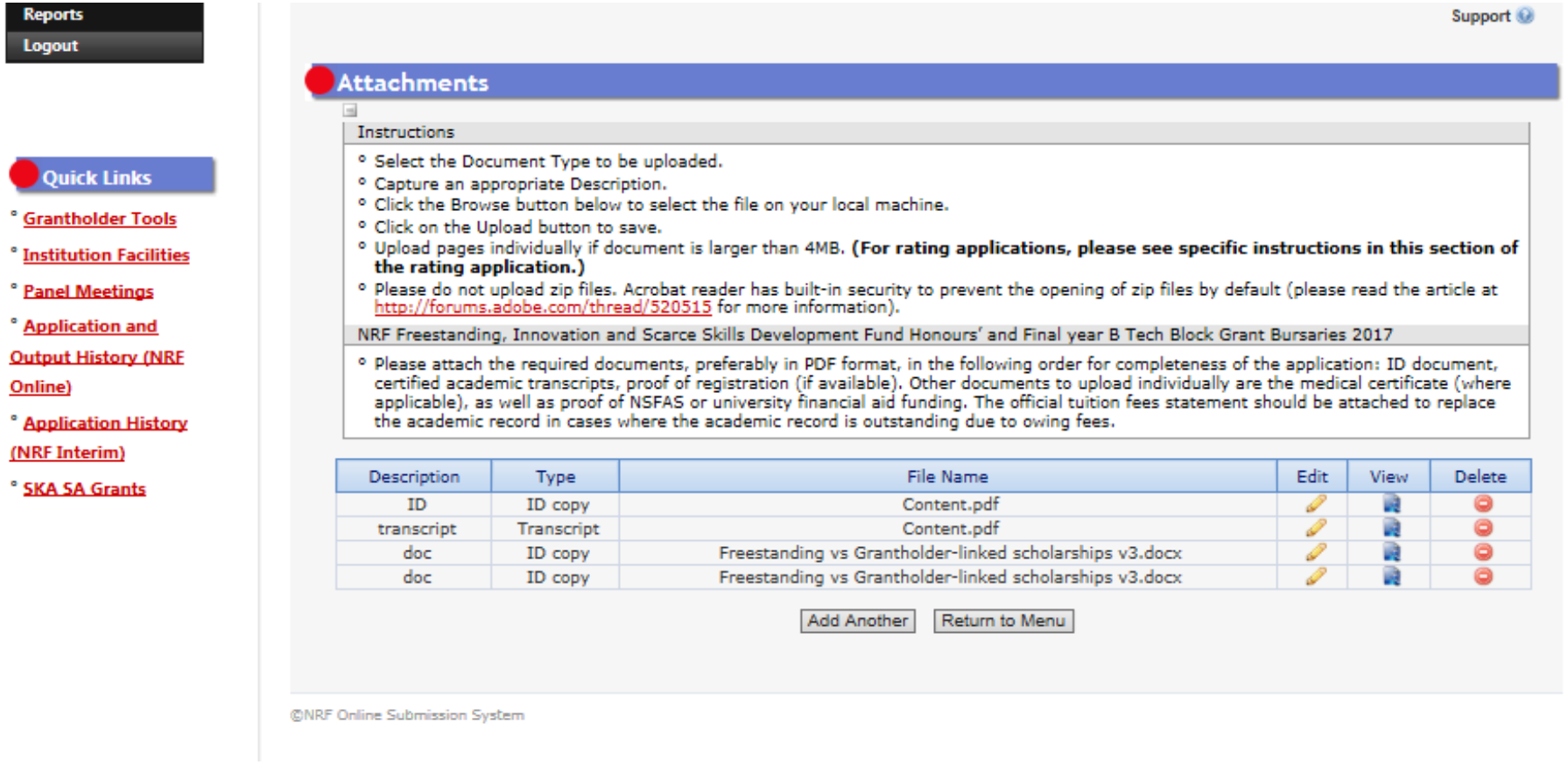
Step 7: The Details of Nomination section requires the name of the institution where the student will be studying for Honours or B Tech degree as well as an indication of whether funding is required for a semester or a full year.

Step 8: Under the Details of Degree section, applicants are required to fill in details of the degree, field of study that is being applied for and information related to past studies and future intentions.



In the cumulative grade point average block, applicants are required to enter an academic average by adding up the marks of courses already passed or marks of undergraduate degree already obtained, and divide these by the number of courses.

Step 9: The Attachments section provides specific instructions to upload attachments to the application. Here, the applicant is required to upload each attachment next to the description column. If the applicant has a disability, they may upload a medical certificate as a separate attachment in support of the disability. In cases where the applicant cannot upload a transcript due to outstanding fees, they must attach an official fees statement, on a university letterhead, that has an institutional stamp. Also to be attached is proof of funding where the applicant indicated they are funded by sources like NSFAS or the university financial aid.



Step 10: Once all sections have been completed, the final submit button will appear. Press OK to submit the application. If all the compulsory sections are completed and the final submit button does not appear, select any section and resave to refresh the application; the final submit button should then appear.

Applications that are incomplete, that contain insufficient or incorrect detail, or fail to comply with instructions will be rejected. The application must be completed in sufficient detail to allow for a comprehensive validation and institutional review.

Applicants must ensure that they adhere to the internal closing date for submission of the application to allow for institutional screening and review process, as well as the NRF final date for processing the nominations.

6. Screening and Review Processes

6.1 Overview of the Screening Process

All applications will be validated and screened by the various institutions for compliance with the eligibility criteria of the Call for applications. Institutions must reject applications that fail to meet the stipulated requirements.

6.2 Overview of the Review Process

The NRF's peer review policy requires that all applications are subjected to a review process. Applications submitted to this funding instrument will go through an institutional review process.

7. Ranking of Applications

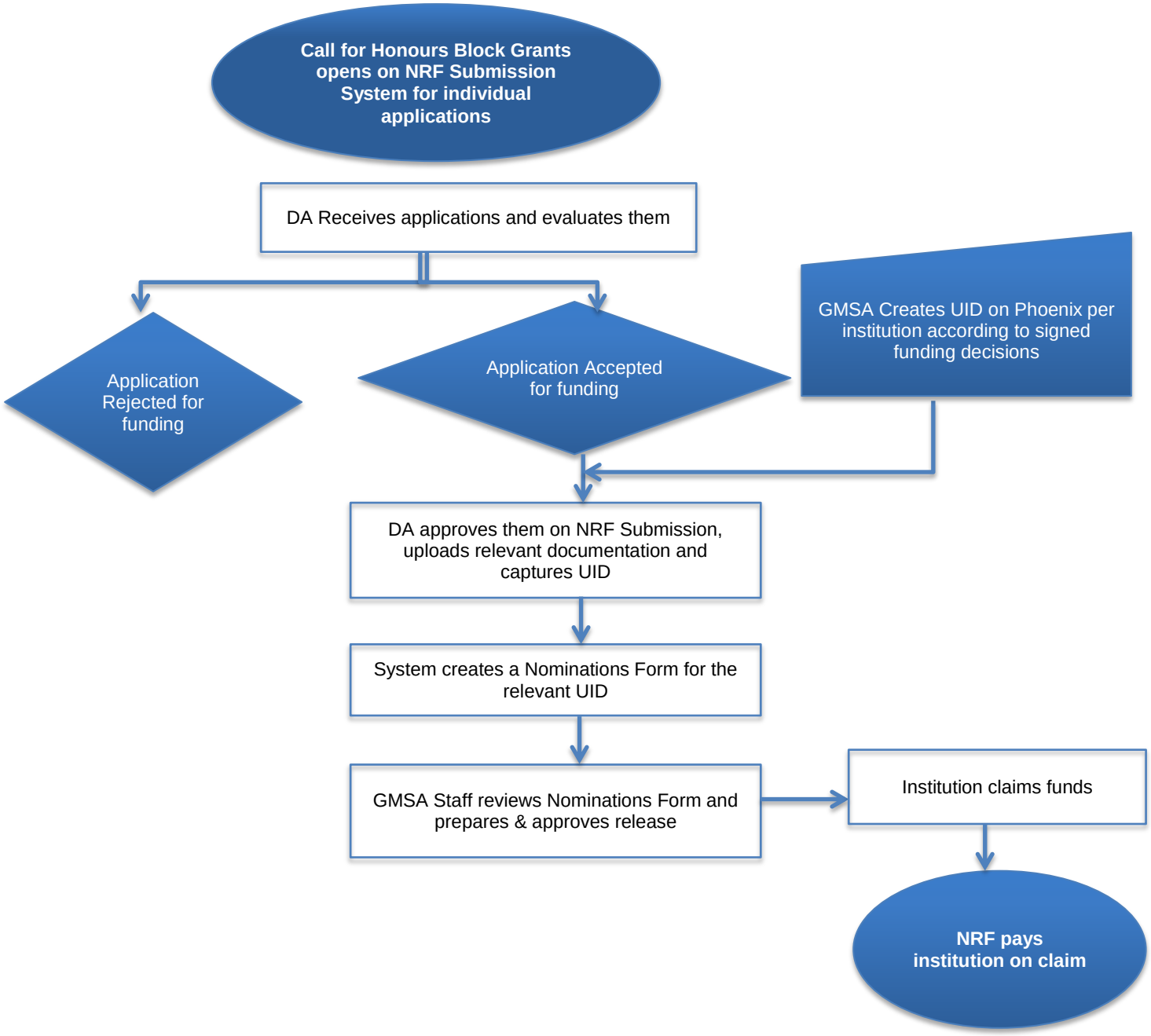
All applications submitted to the institution will follow a competitive process and will be evaluated using a number of predetermined criteria. The assessment and ranking of these applications will follow the criteria listed in table 2 below. Each criterion is given weight to indicate its relative importance. It is important to read the table for details on the criteria used.

Table 2: Scorecard for the assessment of proposals for Honours and Final Year B Tech Bursaries

Criteria	Description	Weight
Academic Merit	Average percentage mark for previous degree	45%
Career Path	Intention to continue to Master's degrees	15%
Priority Research Area	Research aligned to one of the national research areas	25%
National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) or University Financial Aid Scheme	Previously funded by NSFAS or University Financial Aid Scheme (proof must be attached	15%
TOTAL		**100%**

8. The Delegated Authority Nomination and Award Processes

The review process will follow the steps shown in the diagram below:



The NRF will allocate a set number of bursaries to each university based on institution historical uptake of grants, equity targets, expressed need and the available budget. Institutions will use a standard score card provided by the NRF to evaluate each application, before selecting and nominating students to take up the allocated bursaries.

9. Application Feedback and Disputes

As mentioned above, the Honours/B Tech application is a competitive process and institutions will notify successful awardees. Applicants must enquire with their institutional delegated authorities.

10. Application and Nomination Process Timelines

- All students must apply on the NRF Online Submission system at: https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za and follow the application process set out in the Application and Funding Guide for 2017. The submission deadline for applicants is **31 January 2017** for funding in 2017.
- Applicants' must consult their Research Office or Postgraduate Office for the institution's internal closing date, to ensure validation by institutional DA's on the eligibility of the application.
- The Designated Authority (DA) closing date for validations of all applications is **14 February 2017**. The DA will validate all eligible applications for consideration under the selection process.
- Institutions' will nominate students for a bursary award on the NRF Online System, based on the Block Grant allocation to each institution and set equity targets. This nomination process will take place from **20 February 2017 to 24 March 2017.**
- Nominated students must be approved by the NRF on the NRF Online system.
- DAs must upload and submit to the NRF the signed Conditions of Grant (CoGs) and proof of registration (PoR) documents for all approved students no later than **28 April 2017**.
- Unspent or unclaimed institutional funds under this allocation will automatically be cancelled by **30 June 2017**.
- Institutions must report on student completion by **31 March 2018** on the NRF student completion database.