Grants Management and Systems Administration

NRF-TWAS Doctoral Scholarships

NRF-TWAS African Renaissance Doctoral Scholarships

Funding Guide 2017
Contents
Contact Details .................................................................................................................. 4
1. Introduction .................................................................................................................... 5
2. Granting Rules ............................................................................................................... 5
2.1 Conditions of NRF-TWAS Doctoral / NRF-TWAS African Renaissance Doctoral Scholarships .................................................................................................................. 5
2.2 Values of NRF-TWAS Doctoral Scholarships / NRF-TWAS African Renaissance Doctoral Scholarships .................................................................................................................. 5
Responsibilities of Scholars ............................................................................................... 6
2. Application Process ......................................................................................................... 7
3. How to Submit Applications ............................................................................................ 7
4. Screening and Review Processes .................................................................................... 19
4.1 Overview of the Screening Process .............................................................................. 19
4.2 Overview of the Review Process .................................................................................. 19
5. Ranking of Applications ................................................................................................. 20
6. Application Feedback and Disputes .............................................................................. 22
7. Change Requests ........................................................................................................... 22
7.1 Prior Approval Requests ............................................................................................. 22
7.2 Changes in Project Scope, Supervisor or Institution .................................................. 22
8. Scientific Compliance ..................................................................................................... 22
8.1 Methodology ............................................................................................................... 22
8.2 Intellectual Property Rights ........................................................................................ 23
8.3 Ethics .......................................................................................................................... 23
9. References ...................................................................................................................... 23
## List of Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>APR</td>
<td>Annual Progress Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA</td>
<td>Designated Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>GMSA</td>
<td>Grants Management and Systems Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>HEI</td>
<td>Higher Education Institution</td>
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<tr>
<td>HICD</td>
<td>Human and Institutional Capacity Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>RISA</td>
<td>Research and Innovation Support and Advancement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRF</td>
<td>National Research Foundation</td>
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<tr>
<td>DST</td>
<td>Department of Science and Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>TWAS</td>
<td>The World Academy of Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Contact Details
When making an enquiry use NRF–TWAS Doctoral Scholarships / NRF-TWAS African Renaissance Doctoral Scholarships Call as the email subject line.

Mrs Thashni Pillay
Director: Grants Management and Systems Administration (GMSA)
Telephone: 012-481 4241
Fax: 012-349 1179
E-mail address: thashni.maistry@nrf.ac.za

For NRF Online application and grants management related enquiries, please contact:

Mrs Zikhona Lose
Professional Officer: Grants Management and Systems Administration (GMSA)
Telephone: 012 481 4365
E-mail: zikhona.lose@nrf.ac.za

Mrs Thandeka Mthethwa
Liaison Officer: Grants Management and Systems Administration (GMSA)
Telephone: 012 481 4163
E-mail: thandeka.mthethwa@nrf.ac.za

For technical online enquiries, please contact the NRF Support Desk during office hours from 08:00 to 16:30 Monday to Friday.

Tel: 012-481 4202
E-mail: supportdesk@nrf.ac.za

Application and funding guidelines are explained in this document. Applicants must read this document together with the following documents: NRF–TWAS Doctoral Scholarships / NRF–TWAS African Renaissance Doctoral Scholarships Framework which highlights the eligibility criteria and requirements of each funding instrument.
1. Introduction
This Guide provides an overview of the application process and funding guidelines for the NRF-TWAS Doctoral Scholarship / NRF-TWAS African Renaissance Doctoral Scholarships funding instruments. It should be read in conjunction with the above-mentioned Framework document which can be accessed at https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za. 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 used by the NRF.

2. Granting Rules
2.1 Conditions of NRF-TWAS Doctoral / NRF-TWAS African Renaissance Doctoral Scholarships
- The scholarship shall be held as the primary source of funding for the doctoral scholarships;
- Scholarships may not be held simultaneously with another scholarship from any other TWAS, South African government or NRF administered source;
- Doctoral scholars may not concurrently hold the scholarship with any full-time employment position;
- Doctoral scholars can hold non-binding supplementary grants or emoluments to the institutional capped value;
- Successful applicants will be required to give a written undertaking that they will return to their home country upon completion of the scholarship; and
- Applicants must meet the following requirements of the English Language Proficiency Academic test:
  - IELTS 6.5 (no band less than 6.0); or TOEFL (paper) 575 (TWE 4.5); or TOEFL iBT (min. 20); or Cambridge minimum 58. Information on the IELTS tests can be obtained from the British Council in home country or accessed on: www.ielts.org. Further information on the TOEFL test can be accessed on: www.toefl.com. Consult the British Council in the home country for assistance.

2.2 Values of NRF-TWAS Doctoral Scholarships / NRF-TWAS African Renaissance Doctoral Scholarships
Successful applicants will receive funding annually for a maximum period of three (3) years to pursue full-time research training in SA.
The package for the TWAS doctoral scholarships for 2017 are broken down as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Item</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R110 000</td>
<td>Non-taxable stipend per annum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R25 000</td>
<td>Maximum local travel costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R50 000</td>
<td>Maximum international travel costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobility costs of the scholar</td>
<td>Mobility grants for once off travel from home country to South Africa, and from South Africa to home country on completion of degree, subject to cost breakdown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Successful applicants are eligible for travel grants for local and international travel. The travel grants may be used to contribute towards the costs of attending local and international conferences, workshops, visiting a laboratory or, any other activity that supports the scholars’ research training. Also refer to the framework for the maximum amounts permitted over the tenure of the scholarship.

In addition, the NRF will also cover mobility costs as follows:

- A single economy airfare to travel from home country to South Africa; and
- A single economy airfare to return to home country upon completion of the doctoral degree.

Scholars that wish to access the travel grant for local travel, international travel, or to be reimbursed for mobility related costs, must complete a travel grant application form for submission and approval by the institution and the NRF. The travel application form can be accessed on NRF Online Submissions (https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za) and should be submitted three (3) months prior to travelling to conferences. The mobility grant to SA can only be reimbursed once the candidate has registered at a South African institution by attaching the ticket/s and other travel related documents, to the travel grant application form to claim for these costs.

**Responsibilities of Scholars**

The applicant will be responsible for the following costs:

- All financial expenses of accompanying family members. Scholars must also ensure that accompanying family members have the correct documentation for entry and stay in South Africa; and
Comprehensive medical insurance for the period of their stay to meet any untoward incidents and major ailments during travel and stay in South Africa.

The applicant will be responsible for securing additional funding to cover any shortfall in funding required to undertake his/her research in South Africa.

2. Application Process
The NRF is publishing the NRF-TWAS Doctoral/ NRF-TWAS Doctoral African Renaissance Call on the NRF website that is accessible online at https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za. Each applicant is limited to only one (1) application per year. Once an applicant submits an application, it will be duly authorised and approved by the Designated Authority (DA) of the research administration at the prospective South African host institution where the applicant intends to undertake the doctoral research. Applications will be automatically routed to the institutional DA of the submitting institution for validation on the deadline date determined by individual institutions. Applicants must enquire with their institutions regarding internal closing dates. The processing of a successful grant application takes approximately five (5) months from the closing date of applications until the commencement of funding.

3. How to Submit Applications
Applications may be completed on the NRF Online Submission System at https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za starting from Wednesday, 4 May 2016. Applicants are advised to complete their applications soon after the call is open to prevent IT system overload nearer the closing date of Friday, 29 June 2016.
Step 1: This is an electronic submission system and applicants must be registered online in order to create and complete an application. If you had previously registered and submitted an application on the NRF Online System (http://nrfonline.nrf.ac.za) before February 2012 and your application was not successful, your details would have been migrated to the new NRF Online Submission System (https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za). If you experience problems accessing the system with your NRF Online password, use the Reset Password button. If you are not yet registered on the NRF Online Submission System, you must register to access the application form.

Most application screens have screen and application specific instructions to help the applicant work through the sections. Please read the instructions carefully before completing the section.
Step 2: On logging onto the NRF Online Submission System, one gets to the ‘landing page’ where there is a menu at the top left side of the screen (tab indicated with blue arrow below). To create a new application, click on My Applications-Create Application.
Step 3: Select the funding instrument for which you are applying on the create application screen and a new application will open to complete. Please note that this must be selected once only. To continue working on an application, go to My Applications - List of Applications.

Applicants are urged to complete or update ALL screens of the CV, including the Research Profile and Research Outputs as this information gets evaluated during the review process and will impact on the overall assessment of your application.
Step 4: All sections marked with a red asterisk are compulsory sections in the application. These sections must be completed in order for the final submit button to appear. Sections without asterisks are not compulsory; an applicant may enter information in these sections, they have information to enter, such as research outputs. Completed sections will be indicated by a green tick on the main menu, while incomplete sections will have a yellow cross. Please ensure to press the “save” button after completing each section before returning to the main menu.

All compulsory sections will guide the applicant with error messages at the top of the screen. Please read these messages carefully to help you complete the section correctly.
Step 5: The “Degree to be Funded” section is a compulsory section. The dropdown list for degree for which you are applying, will have two options: (1) NRF-TWAS Doctoral Scholarships; (2) NRF-TWAS African Renaissance Doctoral Scholarships. Please select the relevant option.

Please complete the section accurately and keep the following in mind: (1) successful applicants will have until the end of June 2017 to take up the award; (2) only full-time applicants who will conduct research in SA will be considered.
Step 6: The **Research Project Information** section requires applicants to select the proposed institution. SA Higher Education Institutions (HEI) as well research centres will be in the list. Should the institution you want to select not be on the drop-down list, please request it by selecting the support tab on the far right at the top of the screen. Please note that it is the applicant’s responsibility to find an institution and supervisor in South Africa that is willing to host them for the duration of the scholarship.
Step 7: The Details of Research section is one of the most important sections in the application. The section has specific instructions related to each screen. Follow the instructions to complete the section. You are required to give a concise overview of your proposed research in this section as the input is taken into consideration during the assessment of your application. Appropriate literature references must also be included in this section. The Scorecard that will be used to assess your application can be viewed in Section 6 of this document.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Details of Research</th>
<th>Instructions</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>An * at the end of a sub-section as listed below denotes that this is a compulsory sub-section; it is not possible to click on the 'Final Submit' button unless all compulsory sub-sections have been completed.</td>
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</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Complete</th>
<th>Date Updated</th>
<th>Edit</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research Rationale and Motivation</td>
<td></td>
<td>05 Apr 2016</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Problem Identification</td>
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<td>05 Apr 2016</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Aims and Objectives</td>
<td></td>
<td>05 Apr 2016</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Activities/Plan which include(s) the research approach/methods/techniques</td>
<td></td>
<td>05 Apr 2016</td>
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*Please note that the Details of Research section will only mark as complete when all the sub-sections are completed.*
**Step 8:** The *Science Communication* section is a compulsory section in which you describe your involvement in communicating your science/research to the various audiences.
**Step 9:** The **Attachments** section provides specific instructions with respect to the **compulsory** documents required and for uploading attachments to the application. The applicant is required to attach SAQA certificates for all qualifications obtained outside SA, a letter of acceptance from the host institution and/or a letter from the supervisor approving the research project. Please print, certify and then scan all of the required documentation into a single PDF file; then upload them under this section as one document. If you are an applicant with a disability, you may also upload a medical certificate in support of your disability.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>File Name</th>
<th>Edit</th>
<th>View</th>
<th>Delete</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Instructions</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Select the Document Type to be uploaded.</td>
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<td>- Capture an appropriate Description.</td>
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<td>- Click the Browse button below to select the file on your local machine.</td>
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<td>- Click on the Upload button to save.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Upload pages individually if document is larger than 4MB. <em>(For rating applications, please see specific instructions in this section of the rating application.)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Please do not upload zip files. Acrobat reader has built-in security to prevent the opening of zip files by default (please read the article at <a href="http://forums.adobe.com/thread/520515">http://forums.adobe.com/thread/520515</a> for more information).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NRF Free-standing/Innovation/Scarce Skills Postdoctoral Fellowships Call for 2017</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Please attach the necessary documents in one PDF file in the following order for this call: South African ID document/passport (valid for the next two years or more), certified copies of undergraduate, Masters and Doctoral certificates. If still finalizing Doctoral degree - attach motivation letter from supervisor). (If available).</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- If you wish to remain at the same institution where you are undertaking your Doctoral degree - please include a motivation letter as part of your attachment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- These are all required for application completeness.</td>
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Step 10: The **Reference** section allows applicants to include academic referees who can comment on the applicant’s academic abilities. On final submission of the application, the emails containing a *reference response* are sent automatically to the nominated referees to provide a report on the academic and research capabilities of the applicant. *The applicant will have to select at least one Doctoral supervisor AND one academic referee in order for the section to mark as complete.*
It is the applicant’s responsibility to ensure that the referee email address is correct and that the referees have responded by the closing date of 29 June 2016 as this category of the application is assessed. The applicant must periodically view the application PDF to check if a referee has responded to the request.

Step 11: The Possible Reviewers section is not compulsory in this Call. The section requires that you add the names of possible reviewers in your field of research that you have interacted with through conferences or other academic fora, to provide a neutral review of your proposed research project.
Step 12: Applicants must ensure that they adhere to their institution’s internal closing date for submission of their application to allow for internal institutional screening and review. The institution’s internal closing date will be determined by the respective research offices or Post Graduate Office and is usually at least two weeks prior to the NRF’s closing date.

DAs ensure that all proposals are screened and approved through internal institutional processes before submitting the applications to the NRF. The NRF assumes that the respective DAs are satisfied with the standard of all proposals validated and submitted, and that the institution approves and supports the proposed research.

Step 13: The final submit button will appear only if all compulsory sections are complete. Press OK to submit your application. If all the compulsory sections are complete and the final submit button does not appear, select any section and resave to refresh the application; you will then see the final submit button. A submitted application is automatically routed to the DA in the Research Office of the institution that you selected, for internal review and validation. Late applications, additional supporting documentation or information received after the closing date will not be accepted or considered.

The NRF will not process applications that are incomplete, contain insufficient or incorrect detail, or fail to comply with instruction as such applications will be rejected. The application must be completed in sufficient detail to allow for a comprehensive review and evaluation by external reviewers. In addition to the electronic application and required attachments, the NRF may request additional information or documentation to support an application if required. Failure to supply such information or documentation upon request may result in the rejection of the application.

4. Screening and Review Processes

4.1 Overview of the Screening Process
All applications validated by institutions and submitted to the NRF are screened by the NRF for compliance with the eligibility criteria of the Call for applications, as well as the requirements for completing the NRF Online Submission application. Applications that fail to meet the stipulated requirements will be rejected.

4.2 Overview of the Review Process
The NRF’s peer review policy requires that all applications be subjected to a review process. Applications submitted to this funding instrument will go through a panel review process.

Panel members are selected from the NRF database and other sources, which is updated on a continuous basis. When selecting the review panel, the expertise and experience of individuals in application
adjudication are taken into account. In assessing the application, agreed assessment criteria are applied in the form of a scorecard (please refer to Section 6).

The Review Panel provides recommendations to the NRF and the final funding decision is made by the NRF taking strategic and policy objectives into consideration. In awarding grants in this funding instrument, the NRF takes into account the recommendations of the peer review panel, the objectives and targets of the funding instrument, and the available funds.

5. Ranking of Applications

The purpose of the scoring system is to evaluate applications, based on funding instrument criteria, in order to determine applications that are most deserving of the limited funds available. All research proposals submitted to the NRF for funding are evaluated according to a number of predetermined criteria. Applications are assessed and ranked on the basis of criteria as listed in the table below. Each area may be given a weight to indicate its relative importance. Kindly consult the table below for details on the criteria used.
Scorecard for the Assessment of Proposals for Postdoctoral scholarships

NRF Scorecard for the Assessment of Master’s and Doctoral Scholarship Applications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| The applicant’s past, current and potential academic performance | This refers to the academic potential of the applicant, taking into consideration:  
  - The potential of the applicant to undertake an independent research project;  
  - Journal articles; conference presentations and proceedings; books and book chapters; and patents;  
  - Leadership roles; and  
  - Previous awards, prizes and honours. |
| The feasibility and merit of the applicant’s research project proposal; | Research objectives to match aims of study – Reviewers will assess whether the research objectives are clearly stated and whether they are appropriate to meet the aims of the study; are sound but have inconsistencies and can be refined; are appropriate but only partially address the aims of the study; or are not appropriate to meet the aims of the study.  
  Research methodology to match research objectives – Reviewers will comment on whether the research methodology is appropriate to meet objectives of study; is sound but has inconsistencies and can be refined; is appropriate but only partially addresses study objectives; or not appropriate to meet objectives of study.  
  Research Plan - is the research plan feasible and detailed.  
  For students doing a Master’s by coursework and dissertation, some idea of the research topic and understanding is required for assessment. |
| References                                                      | Referee’s reports are considered in the assessment of the application. These provide an account of the student’s academic capabilities in relation to the research and the research field. The reviewers will look for consistencies in the reference reports as well as support for the applicant, proposed research study, capacity to host the research (if required) and evidence of institutional infrastructure or resources to support the applicant and the research. |
| Research outputs and publication plan                          | Reviewers will assess whether the study has a potential for outputs in terms of knowledge generation, e.g. publications or patents and potential impact. |
6. Application Feedback and Disputes

Once the review and assessment processes have been completed and the recommended funding decision has been approved by the NRF, the NRF will publish a list of successful applicants on the NRF website, www.nrf.ac.za/bursaries/calls. Successful applicants will thereafter receive a letter of award. The application status online will not indicate whether or not the application has been approved for funding. **This funding instrument does not provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants:** if your name does not appear on the published list of successful applications it means that your application was unsuccessful.

An unsuccessful applicant who requires feedback is advised to contact their institutional office to request feedback from the NRF. The NRF does not provide feedback to all unsuccessful applicants due to the high volume of applications received across its funding instruments.

Unsuccessful applicants that wish to appeal the funding decision taken by the NRF must follow the appropriate Appeals Process of the NRF. Appeals will only be considered for this funding instrument within a three (3) month period after the official date of publishing of the results on the NRF website.

7. Change Requests

7.1 Prior Approval Requests

Applicants must submit all change requests in writing to the NRF for approval before effecting any changes. The request must have institutional DA endorsement and be submitted to the NRF via the Research Office for approval prior to the change.

7.2 Changes in Project Scope, Supervisor or Institution

Changes may occur where a project scope, host or institution needs to be changed from the original research proposal, host or institution respectively. The request must have institutional DA endorsement and be submitted to the NRF via the Research Office. Such requests must be forwarded to the NRF thirty (30) days before the change is intended to take place.

8. Scientific Compliance

8.1 Methodology

The applicant takes scientific responsibility for the research to be undertaken, including its objectives and the methodology outlined in the project proposal. The student is required to devote the necessary time to the research project in compliance with the work-plan for the research proposal approved by the NRF so as to achieve the project's stated aims and objectives.
8.2 Intellectual Property Rights

The intellectual capital generated by NRF funded research must be appropriately protected and exploited for the benefit of South Africa. This condition should not interfere with the Intellectual Property Rights arrangements already made, on condition that the majority of the benefits arising from the intellectual capital accrue to South Africa and its citizens. This condition is aligned with the Intellectual Property Rights Act, which will override this condition of grant.

8.3 Ethics

The fellow is required to maintain the highest ethical and safety standards in conducting the research, particularly when human and animal subjects are involved. It remains the responsibility of the project leader to comply with all relevant regulations in this regard, including those of the institution at which the research is carried out. An ethical clearance certificate (where applicable) must be submitted to the NRF in respect of successful applications before funding can be released.

9. References