General Application Guide 2021

Grants Management and Systems Administration (GMSA)

Version 4.1

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1. Background

During the last three years the National Research Foundation (NRF) has embarked on a process designed to enhance and simplify the NRF administrative interface with Researchers, Students and Designated Authorities. This has been done by streamlining its application templates and its Call Opening process, in line with the forthcoming Research Support Strategies by the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI) and the NRF. These changes will create enhanced efficiency in receiving and processing applications and be more effective in prioritizing funding to best serve the NRF mandate.

2. Application Categories

As a result of the streamlining, the NRF will publish the One Call for Applications for funding in February 2020 (Review Period 1) and others later in Review Period 2 under the following categories. Refer to Appendix 1 for the Review Periods.

1) **Concept Notes**
   a) Concept Notes FBIP
   b) Concept Notes JINR (Off-line Application)

2) **Customised Programmes**
   a) Customised Interventions
   b) Knowledge Fields Development Grants
   c) SANAP Development Grants (Off-line Application)

3) **Infrastructure**
   a) National Equipment Programme

4) **Infrastructure Bridging Finance**

5) **Institutional Grants**
   a) NRF / NMU Co-funded Chair in Ocean and Coastal Heritage and Cultures*
   b) NRF / NMU Co-funded Chair in African Feminist Imaginations*
   c) NRF / DUT Co-funded Chair in Applying Mathematics to Real World Issues*
   d) NRF / Wits Co-funded Chair in Materials, Electrochemistry and Energy Storage Technologies*
   e) SANSA Research Chair in Space Weather*
   f) UFH Chair in Sexualities, Genders and Queer Studies*

6) **Internship Programme**
   a) Host Institutions
   b) Graduate internship for Part-time Honours

7) **Non-funding opportunities**
   a) NRF Rating

8) **NRF Postgraduate Scholarships**
   a) Extension Support for Masters and Doctoral Studies
   b) First-time Doctoral Scholarships (Including SARAO Doctoral Scholarships)

    c) First-time Masters Scholarships (Including SARAO Masters Scholarships)

    d) Honours Scholarships (Including SARAO Honours Scholarships)

    e) NRF-Nuffic Doctoral Scholarships (Split site & Single site)

9) Other Grants

    a) Fullbright-NRF Doctoral Studies Abroad

10) Postdoctoral Grants

    a) China (YSEP) Postdoctoral Fellowships

    b) Postdoctoral Fellowships (Including SARAO Postdoctoral Fellowships)

11) Research Grants: General

    a) African Coelacanth Ecosystem Programme (ACEP)

    b) Black Academics Advancement Programme

    c) FBIP Large Grants**

    d) FBIP Small Grants

    e) Global Change Social Sciences Research Programme

    f) SA National Antarctic Programme (SANAP)

    g) Support for Rated and Unrated Researchers

12) Research Grants: International

    a) NRF/ FAPESP Joint Science and Technology Research Collaboration (Closed Call)

    b) BRICS Multilateral Joint Science and Technology Research Collaboration

    c) NRF / DFG International Research Training Groups (IRTGs)

    d) Germany (BMBF) SAG-CORE

    e) SA / Japan Call for Joint Proposals

    f) Africa / Japan Collaborative Research (AJ-CORE)

    g) Netherlands (NWO)-SA Bilateral

    h) NRF / BELSPO Joint Call for Proposals

    i) NRF / NSF Joint Research Programme on Dimensions of Biodiversity

    j) Russia: JINR Research Grants

    k) SA / China Joint Research Programme

    l) SA / France (PROTEA) Call for Joint Proposals

    m) SA / Sweden (STINT) Call for Joint Proposals

13) Research Grants: Thuthuka

    a) Thuthuka

    b) Thuthuka : Budget Motivations

14) Research Grants: Without Student Support

    a) Support for Y-rated Researchers

15) SARAO Undergraduate and Diploma Scholarships

    a) SARAO Undergraduate and Diploma Scholarships

16) Targeted Grants

    a) DSI/NRF Research Development Grants for New Generation of Academics Programme (nGAP) Scholars (Closed Call – currently open)

17) Travel, Training and Conference Grants

    a) DSI - NRF Conference Fund

    b) Equipment-related Travel & Training

    c) ERC Mobility

    d) F'SAGRI Travel Grants (Closed Call)

    e) Germany (IRTGs) Preparatory Workshop

    f) ICTP – NRF Bilateral

    g) ISC Grants for Travel & Hosting of Events

    h) JINR Student Practice

    i) Knowledge Interchange and Collaboration (KIC)

    j) Travel, Training and Conference Grants: Scholarship- and Fellowship-holders

Please note:

- **Institutional Grants:** Funding opportunities indicated with an asterix (*) are only available to certain institutions/potential applicants.
- **Research Grants: General**
  FBIP Large Grants indicated with (**) will be available to successful applicants from the Concept Notes submitted in Review Period 1.

3. Cut-off dates and Review Periods

The NRF will accept applications for processing on the cut-off dates for the different Review Periods as indicated in Appendix 1. No applications submitted by institutions to the NRF after that date will be considered. Applicants should therefore ensure that **the institutional deadlines be strictly followed**.

Institutional Cut-off Dates: Internal

The Cut-off dates for submission of applications to institutions are dependent on the internal cut-off dates of each individual institution. Institutions will need to advertise their respective cut-off dates for submission of applications to their Researchers/Students to ensure applications are not submitted late.

Applicants are **strongly advised** to adhere to the institutional cut-off dates so as NOT to miss the opportunity for their applications being submitted to the NRF for review.
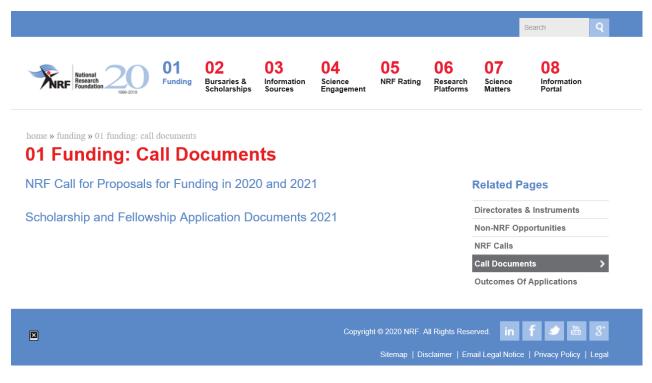
Institutional Cut-off Dates: NRF

The cut-off dates advertised in Appendix 1, are the final dates for the Designated Authorities (DAs) to submit applications to the NRF. Applications that are submitted to the NRF by institutions later than the dates in Appendix 1, will NOT be processed for funding in 2020/2021.

4. How to Apply

Applications must be submitted electronically on the NRF Online Submission System at https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za

It is important to read the relevant documents before deciding on the funding opportunity you need to apply to. All eligibility criteria, as well as the applicable requirements, must be taken into consideration. All Framework and Application and Funding Guide documents are available on the NRF website at https://www.nrf.ac.za/funding/framework-documents

Please note that Framework documents for the Research Grants: International category (Review Period 2) will be published on the system as they become available.

Instructions to Applicants

- Go to https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za.
- Register/Login using your ID/Passport number and password.
- Go to "My Applications" and select "Create Application":

Create Application

Instructions

- Check your intended institution's internal closing date as it will be prior to the closing date listed for applications, where applicable.
- A timeout will appear when there is no activity on the system for 25 minutes. Click on the refresh button (in the popup box) as this will enable the continuation/completion of the application. When clicking on the close button the system will close.
- Due to potential international review of applications and progress reports, the NRF requires that all applications and progress reports be completed in English.
- Please consult the Funding Framework and Funding & Application Guide for more information to assist you in your choices. These documents can be accessed at https://www.nrf.ac.za/funding/framework-documents.
- Ensure that you complete or update your CV. This is very important as applications without an updated CV will not be considered.

>	Funding Category	Create
	Concept Notes	⊕
>	Customised Programmes	
>	Institutional Grants	
	NRF Postgraduate Scholarships Call	⊕
	Postdoctoral Grants	⊕
>	Research Grants: General	
>	Research Grants: International	
>	Research Grants: Without student support	
	Research Grants: Thuthuka	⊕
>	Travel, Training and Conference Grants: General	

- Where there are multiple "Funding Opportunities" per category, click on the ⟩ icon next to the relevant "Funding Category".

- On the confirmation screen, review the selection of "Funding Opportunity" and click "OK" if correct.

- If the selection is not correct, click "Cancel" to return to the "Create Application" screen.

- Where there is only one "Funding Opportunity" per category, click on the ⊕ icon next to the relevant "Funding Category". With these "Funding Opportunities", the application will automatically be created.

- Complete all the compulsory sections of the application as well as the non-compulsory sections which are relevant to you.

- Attach all the required documents in PDF format.

- Submit the application on completion.

- Complete applications will go to the Research/Postgraduate Office of the applicant's institution for processing.

Number of Applications Allowed within a Category within a Call Year

Category	Applications per Category	Applications per Funding Opportunity
Concept Notes	2	1
Customised Programmes	2	1
Infrastructure	1	1
Institutional Grants	2	1
Research Grants: General	2	1
Research Grants: International	2	1
Research Grants: Thuthuka	1	1
Research Grants: Without Student Support	1	1
Travel, Training and Conference Grants	2	1
Travel, Training and Conference Grants: • Equipment-related Travel and Training • Knowledge Interchange and Collaboration	Per Review Period 2 2	Per Review Period 2 2
NRF Postgraduate Scholarships	1	1
Postdoctoral Grants	1	1
Scholarships Travel Grants	As per the Scholarships Guide	
Targetted Grants	1	1

The following applications will not be considered for funding:

- Incomplete applications;
- Applications that do not meet the eligibility criteria as outlined in documents;
- Applications submitted outside the NRF Online Submission System;
- Applications submitted in hard copies; and/or
- Applications in a language other than English.

Only applications endorsed by the Research/Postgraduate Office at Higher Education Institutions, or their equivalent at declared NRF Recognised Research Institutions, as gazetted, will be accepted. Please contact the relevant Research/Postgraduate Offices, or equivalent, if you have any queries.

Instructions to Research/Postgraduate Officers (or equivalent)

Please ensure that you prepare adequately for the advertised cut-off dates.

Designated Authorities (DAs) are the gatekeepers of quality applications and safeguard the reputation of the institutions in accessing funds. As such they should:

- Provide guidance and advice to potential applicants, researchers, grantholders and students in the choice of funding opportunities available to them;
- Review applications for completeness and correctness before submission to the NRF. This includes ensuring that all compulsory attachments are uploaded and are correct;
- Open applications for amendment if/when required and indicate where revisions are required;
- Decline applications that do not comply with the eligibility criteria and provide feedback to the applicant;
- Ensure that all mandatory documents e.g. copy of ID etc. are uploaded; and
- Ensure that applications meet all the Funding Opportunity eligibility criteria before submitting to NRF.

Please Note:

- Under no circumstance should DAs submit applications to the NRF if not all the eligibility criteria are met.
- For the Thuthuka funding opportunity, DAs are requested to enter the preferred Funding Track in the "Comments" block provided, see example below.

5. Evaluation of Applications

All applications received by the NRF are screened for eligibility and for compulsory documentation to be submitted with the application. Applications that are deemed not eligible or don't have ALL the required attachments will not be processed further.

Reviewing of most applications for funding will be through a one-stage or two-stage process.

One-stage review refers to where the reviewers who receive the applications, convene as a panel to share their reviews of the applications, score them & generate a collective outcome & recommendation. This process therefore entails the panel engaging the applications directly, and not receiving & dealing with reviewer reports.

In the case of two-stage reviews, the applications are sent out to remote, specialist reviewers who submit review reports on the applications. A panel/committee primarily considers the review reports in scoring & generating collective outcomes & recommendations.

6. Outcomes

Following on the review process recommendations, the NRF makes awards according to the recommendations and objectives of the various funding opportunities and funds available. It is envisaged that the outcomes of the funding decision process will become available during the month as advertised in the table above with the cut-off dates.

7. Contact Details

Applicants are encouraged to first engage their institutional authorities, i.e. Research/Postgraduate Office (or equivalent) for information and advice.

For Funding Instrument-related queries

Please contact the relevant contact persons as indicated in the Framework and Funding and Application Guides.

The NRF Support Desk can be contacted for technical support as follows:

Email: supportdesk@nrf.ac.za

Tel: (012) 481 4202

Appendix 1

List of Funding Opportunities and Cut-off dates

Category	Funding Opportunity	Funding Year	Review Period	Call Opening Date	Cut-off Date for DAs	Screening & Review	Funding Decision Outcomes
Concept Notes	Concept Notes for Large Integrated Projects -Foundational Biodiversity Information Programme (FBIP)	2020	1	7 Feb 20	30 Apr 20	May 20	Jun 20
	Concept Notes JINR (Off-line applications)	2021	1	19 Nov 19	14 Feb 20	Feb 20	Mar 20
Customised Programmes	Customised Interventions	2020	1	7 Feb 20	30 Apr 20	May 20	Jun 20
	Knowledge Fields Development Grants	2020	n/a	7 Feb 20	Monthly on the 25th	n/a	Monthly
	SANAP Development Grants (Off-line applications)	2020	n/a	-	n/a	n/a	Monthly
Infrastructure Grants	National Equipment Programme	2021	1	7 Feb 20	30 Apr 20	May - Aug 20	Aug 20
Infrastructure Bridging Finance	Infrastructure Bridging Finance	2020	1	7 Feb 20	28 Feb 20	Mar 20	Mar 20
Institutional Grants	SANSA Research Chair in Space Weather*	2021	1	7 Feb 20	15 May 20	May - Oct 20	Oct 20
	NRF / DUT Co-funded Chair in Applying Mathematics to Real World Issues*	2021	1	9 Feb 20	15 May 20	May - Aug 20	Sept 20
	UFH Chair in Sexualities, Genders & Queer Studies*	2021	1	9 Feb 20	15 May 20	May - Aug 20	Sept 20
	NRF / Wits Co-funded Chair in Materials, Electrochemistry and Energy Storage Technologies*	2021	1	9 Feb 20	15 May 20	May - Aug 20	Sept 20
	NRF / NMU Co-funded Chair in African Feminist Imaginations*	2021	1	9 Feb 20	15 May 20	May - Aug 20	Sept 20
	NRF / NMU Co-funded Chair in Ocean and Coastal Heritage and Cultures*	2021	1	9 Feb 20	15 May 20	May - Aug 20	Sept 20
Internship Programme	Host Institutions	2021	1	24 Feb 20	30 Apr 20	TBC	TBC
	Graduate Internship for Part-time Honours	2021	2	1 Apr 20	18 Dec 20	Jan 21	Jan 21
Non-Funding Opportunities	Rating for Individuals	n/a	n/a	15 Sept 20	15 Feb 21	Mar – Dec 21	Dec 22
NRF Postgraduate Scholarships	Extension Support for Masters and Doctoral Studies	2021	1	1 Apr 20	14 Aug 20	Aug – Sept 20	Oct 20
	First-time Doctoral Scholarships (Including SARAO Doctoral Scholarships)	2021	1	1 Apr 20	14 Aug 20	Aug – Oct 20	Nov 20
	First-time Masters Scholarships (Including SARAO Masters Scholarships)	2021	1	1 Apr 20	14 Aug 20	Aug – Oct 20	Nov 20
	Honours Scholarships	2021	1	1 Apr 20	18 Dec 20	Dec 20 – Jan 21	Jan 21
	SARAO Honours Scholarships	2021	1	1 Apr 20	31 Aug 20	Sept – Oct 20	Nov 20
	NRF-Nuffic Doctoral Scholarships (Split-site)	2021	1	1 Apr 20	14 Aug 20	Aug – Oct 20	Nov 20
	NRF-Nuffic Doctoral Scholarships (Single-site)	2021	1	1 Apr 20	8 Jun 20	Jun – Jul 20	Nov 20

Category	Funding Opportunity	Funding Year	Review Period	Call Opening Date	Cut-off Date for DAs	Screening & Review	Funding Decision Outcomes
Other Grants	Fullbright - NRF Doctoral Abroad (Off-line application)	2021	1	TBA	TBA	-	TBA
Postdoctoral Grants	Postdoctoral Fellowships (Including SARAO Postdoctoral Fellowships)	2021	1	7 Feb 20	30 Apr 20	Jun – Oct 20	Nov 20
	China (YSEP) - SA Postdoctoral Fellowships	2021	2	1 Jun 20	30 Sept 20	Oct – Dec 20	Jan 21
Research Grants: General	Black Academics Advancement Programme	2021	1	7 Feb 20	30 Apr 20	May – Jul 20	Nov 20
	Foundational Biodiversity Information Programme (FBIP) - Small Grants	2020	1	7 Feb 20	30 Apr 20	May 20	Jun 20
	Global Change Social Sciences Research Programme	2021	1	7 Feb 20	30 Apr 20	May – Jun 20	Jul 20
	Support for Rated and Unrated Researchers	2021	1	7 Feb 20	30 Apr 20	May – Aug 20	Sept 20
	African Coelacanth Ecosystem Programme (ACEP)	2021	1	7 Feb 20	30 Apr 20	May – Jun 20	Jun 20
	SA National Antarctic Programme (SANAP)	2021	1	7 Feb 20	30 Apr 20	May – Jun 20	Jun 20
	Foundational Biodiversity Information Programme (FBIP) - Large Grants (Closed Call)	2021	2	7 Feb 20	28 Aug 20	Sept 20	Oct 20
	Foundational Biodiversity Information Programme (FBIP) - Small Grants	2021	2	7 Feb 20	28 Aug 20	Sept 20	Oct 20
Research Grants: International	SA / Brazil (FAPESP) Joint Call for Proposals (Closed Call)	2021	1	7 Feb 20	30 Apr 20	May – Dec 20	Jan 21
	Africa - Japan Collaborative Research (AJ-CORE) Call for Proposals	2021	1	7 Feb 20	30 Apr 20	May – Dec 20	Jan 21
	NRF / NSF (USA) Joint Research Programme on Dimensions of Biodiversity	2021	1	7 Feb 20	30 Apr 20	May – Jun 20	Jun 20
	SA / France (PROTEA) Joint Call for Proposals	2021	1	7 Feb 20	30 Apr 20	May – Dec 20	Jan 21
	Russia: JINR Research Grants	2021	1	1 Apr 20	29 May 20	Jun – Jul 20	Oct 20
	South Africa / China Joint Call for Proposals	2021	1	7 Feb 20	30 Apr 20	May – Dec 20	Jan 21
	NRF / DFG International Research Training Groups (IRTGs)	2021	2	1 Jun 20	30 Sept 20	Oct – Dec 20	Feb 21
	BRICS Multilateral	2021	2	1 Jun 20	30 Sept 20	Oct – Dec 20	Feb 21
	South Africa / Japan Joint Call for Proposals	2021	2	1 Jun 20	30 Sept 20	Oct – Dec 20	Jan 21
	Germany (BMBF) SAG-CORE	2021	2	1 Jun 20	30 Sept 20	Oct – Dec 20	Feb 21
	SA / Netherlands (NWO) Joint Call for Proposals	2021	2	1 Jun 20	30 Sept 20	Oct – Dec 20	Feb 21
	NRF / BELSPO Collaboration	2021	2	1 Jun 20	30 Sept 20	Oct – Dec 20	Feb 21
	South Africa / Austria Joint Call for Proposals	2021	2	1 Jun 20	30 Sept 20	Oct – Dec 20	Feb 21
Research Grants: Thuthuka	Thuthuka	2021	1	7 Feb 20	30 Apr 20	May – Oct 20	Nov 20
	Thuthuka : Budget Motivations	2021	1	6 Jul 20	31 Sept 20	Oct 20	Nov 20

Category	Funding Opportunity	Funding Year	Review Period	Call Opening Date	Cut-off Date for DAs	Screening & Review	Funding Decision Outcomes
Research Grants: Without Student Support	Support for Y-rated Researchers	2021	1	7 Feb 20	30 Apr 20	May – Aug 20	Sept 20
SARAO Undergraduate and Diploma Scholarships	SARAO Undergraduate and Diploma Scholarships	2021	1	1 Apr 20	31 Aug 20	Sept - Oct 20	Nov 20
Targeted Grants	DSI/NRF Research Development Grants for New Generation of Academics Programme (nGAP) Scholars (Closed Call)	2020	1	17 Jan 20	26 Feb 20	Mar 20	Mar 20
Travel, Training and Conference Grants	Equipment Related Travel & Training 1st Call	2020	1	7 Feb 20	30 Apr 20	May – Jun 20	Jun 20
	Equipment Related Travel & Training 2nd Call	2020	2	1 Jun 20	28 Aug 20	Sept – Oct 20	Nov 20
	F'SAGRI Travel Grants (Closed Call)	2021	2	1 Jun 20	30 Aug 20	Nov 20	Dec 20
	ICTP – NRF Bilateral 1st Call	2020	1	7 Feb 20	30 Apr 20	May – Jun 20	Jun 20
	ICTP – NRF Bilateral 2nd Call	2020	2	1 Jun 20	28 Aug 20	Sept – Oct 20	Nov 20
	DSI/NRF Conference Fund	2021	1	7 Feb 20	30 Apr 20	May – Jun 20	Jul 20
	ISC Grants for Travel & Hosting of Events	2020	1	7 Feb 20	30 Apr 20	May 20	Jun 20
	ERC Mobility	2020	1	7 Feb 20	30 Apr 20	May 20	May 20
	Knowledge Interchange & Collaboration (KIC) 1st Call	2020	1	7 Feb 20	30 Apr 20	May 20	May 20
	Germany (IRTGs) Preparatory Workshop	2021	1	7 Feb 20	30 Apr 20	May 20	Jun 20
	Germany (IRTGs) Preparatory Workshop	2021	2	1 Jun 20	30 Aug 20	Sept – Oct 20	Nov 20
	Knowledge Interchange & Collaboration (KIC) 2nd Call	2021	2	1 Jun 20	30 Aug 20	Sept – Oct 20	Nov 20
	JINR Student Practice (Off-line)	2021	n/a		18 Sept 20	Sept – Oct 20	Nov 20
	Travel, Training and Conference Grants: Scholarship- & Fellowship-holders	2020	Throughout the year	7 Feb 20	20 Mar 20 5 Jun 20 4 Sept 20	Directly after each cut-off date	31 Mar 20 26 Jun 20 25 Sept 20

Institutional Grants: *Funding opportunities indicated with an asterix (*) are only available to certain institutions/potential applicants.*