



science
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Department:
Science and Technology
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



National
Research
Foundation

COMMUNIQUÉ

NRF Postgraduate Scholarships for Full-time Studies in 2020

01 April 2019

The National Research Foundation took a decision to move the opening date for the honours, masters and doctoral Call from February to 01 April 2019 following a process of engagement with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The online application template and review requirements for honours, masters and doctoral studies have been simplified and closing dates have been set to ensure that all applicants are informed of the outcome of their applications by December 2019. The main changes are outlined below and details are contained in the Call documents and NRF Online Application (<https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za>).

Honours applications

The process and closing dates have been set to ensure that students receive the outcome of their applications by December 2019 in order to receive their funding at the start of the 2020 academic year.

- **Institutions should set their own internal cut-off dates for students to submit applications.**
- **Institutions must review** the applications using a standard scorecard provided by the NRF, and submit applications to the NRF by 05 December 2019 in order for the NRF to finalise honours awards by 23 December 2019.
- Only student applications that have been scored and that have an acceptance/provisional acceptance onto an honours programme may be submitted to the NRF.

Masters applications

In response to feedback from the institutions, the NRF has (i) significantly simplified the application requirements for the masters funding application and (ii) made it possible for a student that may not as yet have identified a supervisor for their masters studies to submit an application. This has eliminated the need for scientific review, therefore the NRF will provide a standard scorecard which institutions must use to assess the applications and forward only fundable applications to the NRF.

- **Institutions should set their own internal cut-off dates for students to submit applications.**
- The deadline for Designated Authority (DA) validation of eligible students, review of applications using a standard scorecard provided by the NRF (Table 1), and submission of applications to the NRF is 16 September 2019 in order for the NRF to finalise masters awards by 15 November 2019.
- Only student applications that have a supervisor assigned by the institution, applications scored, and that have an acceptance/provisional acceptance onto a masters programme may be submitted to the NRF.

Doctoral applications and Extension Support

In response to feedback from the institutions, the NRF has significantly simplified the application requirements for the doctoral funding application. However, students must identify a doctoral supervisor before submitting an Application on the NRF Online Application System and these applications will undergo a scientific merit review managed by the NRF.

- **Institutions should set their own internal cut-off dates for students to submit applications.**
- The deadline for DA validation and submission of eligible applications to the NRF is 31 July 2019 in order for the NRF to finalise doctoral awards by 15 November 2019.

Doctoral Abroad (NRF-Nuffic)

Note that the closing date for the NRF-Nuffic applications is earlier than that for all other doctoral applications

- **Institutions should set their own internal cut-off dates for students to submit applications.**
- Submission of eligible applications to the NRF is 07 June 2019.
- Successful applicants' will receive award letters by 31 July 2019 ahead of the Dutch academic year beginning in September 2019.

Table 1: Matrix detailing the maximum number of applications to be submitted, responsibility for review of applications and applicability of the Ministerial Guidelines target at each level of study.

Level of study	Capped number submitted to NRF	Reviewed by	Submitted according to Ministerial Guidelines target
Honours	No	Institutional Designated Authority	Yes
Masters	No	Institutional Review Committee	Yes
Doctoral	Yes	NRF	Yes
TWAS Doctoral	No	NRF	No
NRF-Nuffic Doctoral	No	NRF	Yes
Extension Support Masters and Doctoral	No	NRF	Yes

The NRF ceiling on the number of applications that may be submitted by each institution remains, **this is applicable only to applications for Doctoral studies in-country and excludes the Honours, Masters, Extension Support and TWAS applications (Tables 1 and 2).**

The restriction on the number of applications submitted to the NRF is intended to reduce the cost and burden of review of poor quality applications and/or applications that cannot be funded within the available budget and/or equity targets as stipulated in the *Ministerial Guidelines on improving equity in the distribution of bursaries and fellowships (2013)*. Additionally, limiting the number of applications to align with the proportion that may be funded, will reduce the number of students that are disappointed at a later stage following the conclusion of the awarding process.

Institutions are required to carefully screen and select applications for submission to the NRF. Each university must **give preference** to students that meet the following criteria:

- Students that obtained an average mark of 65% and above in their previous degree;
- Students that have received NRF funding for postgraduate studies, NSFAS and/or University Financial Aid for honours or masters studies, and/or who are currently funded for postgraduate studies by the NRF; NSFAS and/or University Financial Aid;
- Students that have completed their undergraduate and/or honours degree within the minimum prescribed period; and
- Students that have completed their masters degree within two-years.

Institutional DA must ensure that the proportion of honours, masters and doctoral applications, including Extension Support submitted by each institution meets the **targets indicated in the Ministerial Guidelines**, namely:

- i. 87% South African citizens and permanent residents;
- ii. 5% Students from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region;
- iii. 4% students from the rest of Africa; and
- iv. 4% students from non-African countries.

The **South African citizens targets** are further disaggregated in terms of race and gender as follows:

- 80% Black (African, Coloured, and Indian);
- 55% women (African, Coloured, Indian, and White); and
- 4% students with a disability.

Table 2: Maximum number of Doctoral applications that may be submitted per institution.

Institutions	Maximum number of Doctoral applications that may be submitted per institution
Cape Peninsula University of Technology	80
Central University of Technology	
Walter Sisulu University	
Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University	
Vaal University of Technology	
Durban University of Technology	
Rhodes University	
University of South Africa	
Nelson Mandela University	
University of Zululand	
University of the Free State	
Tshwane University of Technology	
University of Limpopo	
University of the Western Cape	120
University of Fort Hare	
University of Johannesburg	
University of Venda	
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg	160
University of Pretoria	
North-West University	
Stellenbosch University	
University of Cape Town	
University of KwaZulu-Natal	