



Application and Funding Guide for Extension Support for Master's and Doctoral Scholarships 2027

Date: April 2026

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List of Acronyms

Acronym	Meaning
DA	Designated Authority
NRF	National Research Foundation

Contact Details

For Technical NRF Connect Enquiries

For NRF Connect Technical Enquiries, please contact the **NRF Support Desk** on weekdays, during office hours (08:00 to 16:30 Monday to Friday):

Telephone: 012-481-4202

E-mail: supportdesk@nrf.ac.za

For General Extension Support Enquiries

Queries for Extension Support can be directed to postgraduatequeries@risa.nrf.ac.za.

The subject line of your email must have the following information in order to be routed correctly:

- Level
- Funding opportunity i.e., Extension Support
- Application reference number

1. Introduction

- This Application and Funding Guide provides an overview of the application process and funding guidelines for the Call for Extension Support for master's and doctoral scholarships for the 2027 academic year.
- This document should be read in conjunction with the DSI-NRF Postgraduate Student Application and Funding Framework for Funding in 2027 Academic Year (accessible on the NRF website under call documents). The framework document provides detailed information with respect to objectives of each funding opportunity, eligibility criteria, etc. This document does not, however, constitute a complete set of policies, procedures or systems used by the NRF.
- The NRF funding model is guided by principles of equity and redress, academic merit, and financial need. Funding is awarded under two modalities, namely Full Cost of Study (FCS) and Partial Cost of Study (PCS), in line with the outcomes of the financial means test and available budget.

2. Application Process

- The Call for Extension Support for master's and doctoral scholarships for full-time studies in 2027 is published on the NRF website.
- The application form is accessible online at <https://nrfconnect.nrf.ac.za>
- Applicants may only submit **ONE** application.
- Once the applicant submits an application, the application will automatically be routed to the institution where the applicant is applying to study.
- The applications will be screened for eligibility, reviewed, and scored by the institutions.
- Applications that meet the scholarship requirements will be submitted to the NRF by the institution.
- All applications are processed by an NRF Designated Authority (DA) based at the University Research/Postgraduate Office. Should a DA contact you regarding your application before your application is submitted to the NRF, please make sure you respond as soon as possible or within the timeline given in the communication. Failure to do so may result in your application being rejected at the institutional-review stage.
- Since funding decisions are based on academic merit, financial need, and national transformation priorities. Institutional recommendation does not guarantee funding, and the NRF reserves the right not to fund all recommended applications due to budget limitations.

3. How to Submit an Application

- The Extension Support scholarship application is available on the NRF Connect System at <https://nrfconnect.nrf.ac.za>.
- Applicants are advised to complete their applications soon after the Call opens, to prevent IT system overload, which may occur close to the cut-off dates.
- Applicants must ensure that all sections of the application are fully completed and that all required supporting documents are uploaded at the time of submission. Incomplete or non-compliant applications will not be considered.

Step 1: Login or Register

- When accessing NRF Connect (<https://nrfconnect.nrf.ac.za>), the applicant will be directed to a Login (for registered users) and Register (for new users) page.
- All applicants are required to be registered on the NRF Connect system to make use of the relevant functionality.

Applicants must click the **ORCID (Open Researcher and Contributor ID)** icon to login or register.



Step 2: Signing in with ORCID iD

Applicants already registered on ORCID, must sign in using one of the following options:

- ORCID iD
- Email address linked with your ORCID profile
- GMAIL account linked with your ORCID
- Facebook account linked with ORCID

When clicking on **Sign In**, the system will redirect you to the NRF Connect login page and automatically log you in.



Step 3: Creating the ORCID iD

Applicants that are not registered on ORCID, must click “**Register now**” and follow the steps to create an ORCID profile.



Step 4: Existing ORCID Profiles

- On clicking ‘**Register Now**’, the system will return the following message: “*We found some accounts with your name, which means you may have already created an ORCID iD using a different email address. Before creating an account, please confirm that none of these records belong to you. Not sure if any of these are you?*”
- If any of the listed profile(s) belong to you, click “*I already have an ID, go back to sign in*”
- If none of the profiles are yours, click “*None of these are me, continue with registration*”

Could this be you?

Do you want to connect with ORCID Connect? (ORCID Connect is a free service that allows you to link your ORCID iD to your NRF Connect account. This will allow you to share your ORCID iD with your NRF Connect account and make it easier to find your ORCID iD on NRF Connect.)

Your Name	Last Name	Affiliation	Email Address
First Name	Family Name	Organization	Work Email
First Name	Family Name	Organization	Work Email
First Name	Family Name	Organization	Work Email
First Name	Family Name	Organization	Work Email

1 I want my ORCID iD to be visible on NRF Connect

2 I want my ORCID iD to be visible on NRF Connect but not on the public web

3 I don't want my ORCID iD to be visible on NRF Connect

Step 5: Visibility of ORCID iD

Please select one of the options for the visibility of the ORCID records.

- Should you choose the first or second option, the ORCID records will be visible on NRF Connect
- Should you choose the third option; the records will not be visible on NRF Connect

ORCID Connect: Connect your ORCID iD

ORCID Connect is a free service that allows you to link your ORCID iD to your NRF Connect account. This will allow you to share your ORCID iD with your NRF Connect account and make it easier to find your ORCID iD on NRF Connect.

Do you want to connect with ORCID Connect? (ORCID Connect is a free service that allows you to link your ORCID iD to your NRF Connect account. This will allow you to share your ORCID iD with your NRF Connect account and make it easier to find your ORCID iD on NRF Connect.)

1 I want my ORCID iD to be visible on NRF Connect

2 I want my ORCID iD to be visible on NRF Connect but not on the public web

3 I don't want my ORCID iD to be visible on NRF Connect

Step 6: Authorize Access

Continue with the ORCID registration as prompted.

ORCID Connect: Connect your ORCID iD

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1 I want my ORCID iD to be visible on NRF Connect

2 I want my ORCID iD to be visible on NRF Connect but not on the public web

3 I don't want my ORCID iD to be visible on NRF Connect

Step 7: Register on NRF Connect

When the ORCID registration process is complete, you will be redirected to NRF Connect login screen to register on the system.



Step 8: Applicants with NRF Online Submission Profile

Applicants who are currently registered on the NRF Online Submission System, will be automatically logged in to NRF Connect with the ORCID profile.



Step 9: Applicants without NRF Online Submission Profile

If you are not registered on NRF Online Submission system, click '**Register**' to register and create a profile on the new NRF Connect system.



Step 10: Login on NRF Connect

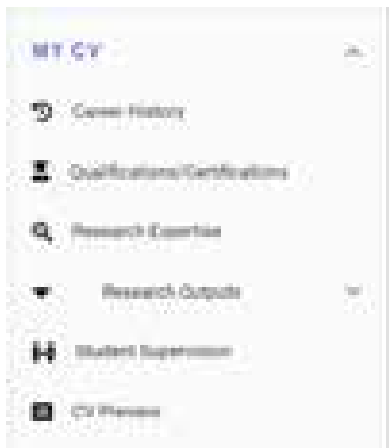
Complete the missing fields and click **Register** to complete the process and the system will automatically log you in.



Step 11: Complete the “My Profile” and CV sections

- Applicants must first complete or update the section ‘**My Profile**’ together with the CV section on the left side of the NRF Connect screen before they can complete the application.
- All fields with an asterisk * are compulsory.

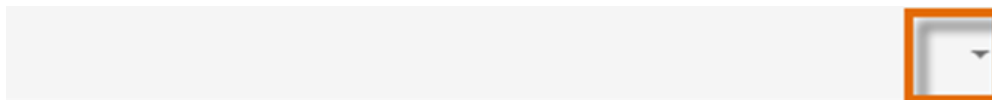




Navigation and Controls

Drop-down List Control

Click on the arrow on the drop-down to see a list of options. Then click on the relevant option(s) to select.



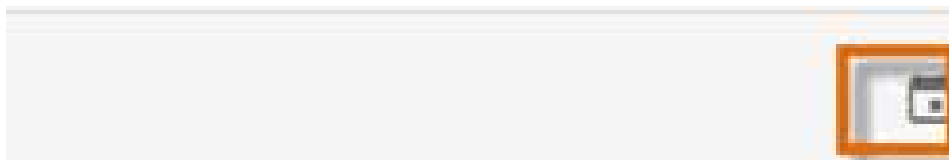
Upload Control

Click on the **Attachment** icon to upload required document(s).

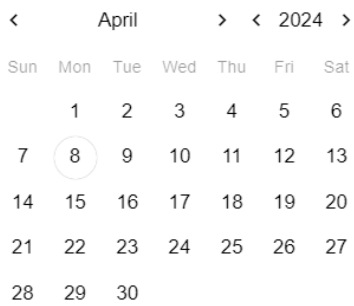


Calendar Control

Click on the **Calendar** icon to select the date, where a date is required.



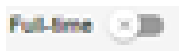
A full **Calendar** will be displayed to allow for selection of the relevant date (follow the sequence as follows: year, month, day).



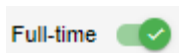
CLOSE

Toggle Control

Toggle to indicate **No**.



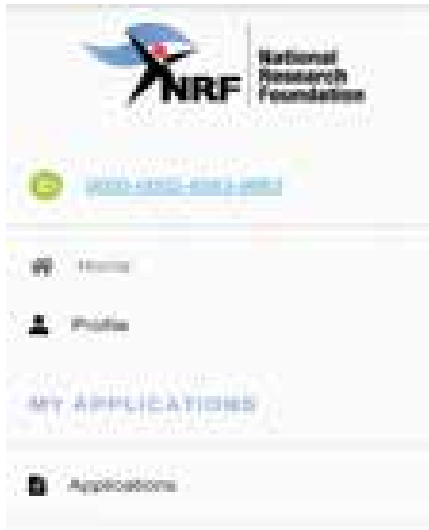
Toggle to indicate **Yes**.



Please make sure that the toggle has fully marked no or yes based on your selection. Toggle not fully selected will not allow the section to complete.

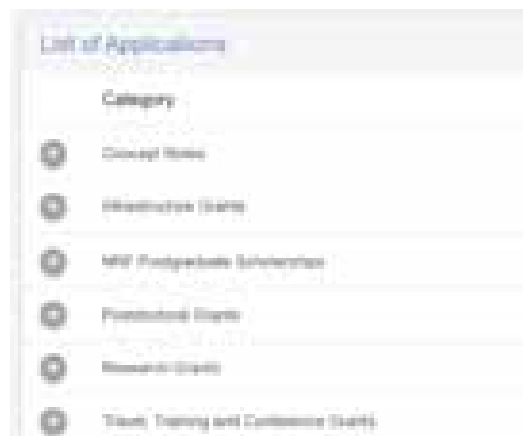
Step 12: Accessing the application

To create an application, go to **“MY APPLICATIONS”** and select **“Applications”**



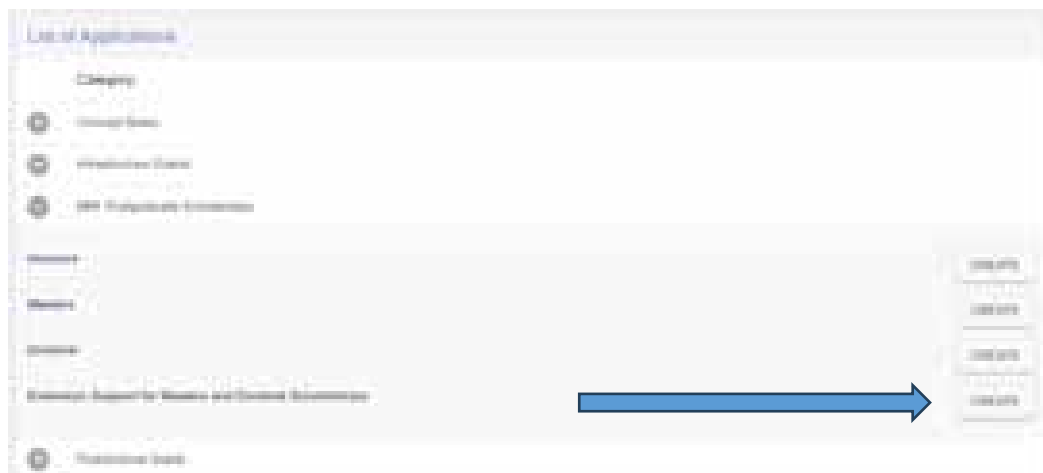
Step 13: Postgraduate Scholarship Level

Click on the plus sign on **NRF Postgraduate Scholarships** to view the postgraduate scholarship levels.



Step 14: Creating the application

- Click on **'Create'** to complete the extension support scholarship application.
- Please note that the application can only be created once. To continue working on the created application, you must click on the **'Edit'** button.



Step 15: Application Sections

- After creating the application, you will be taken to the landing page below.
- All sections marked with an asterisk (*) are compulsory. These sections must be completed in order for the final submit button to be activated.
- Completed sections will be indicated by a green tick, while incomplete sections will have a red cross.
- Applicants may complete the non-compulsory sections, if relevant.

This is the application reference number. Please indicate this reference when logging any queries.

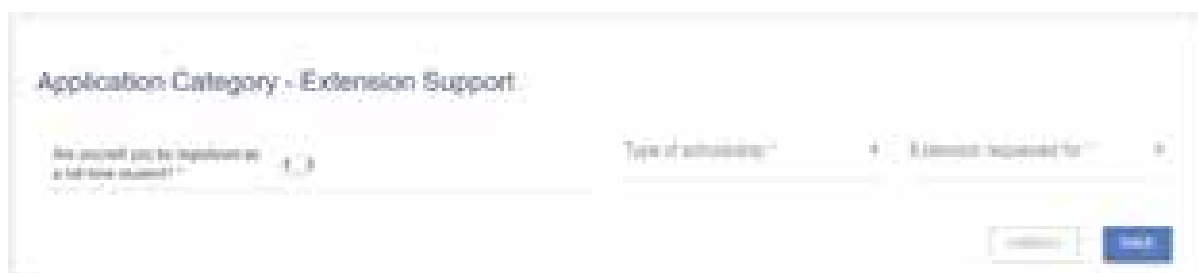
CV section - all information is pulled from the main CV menu on RMIT Connect. Please ensure that the information is up to date.

Sections related specifically to Extension Support for Masters and Doctoral Scholarships application template.

Section	Status	Progress	Submit
Personal Information	Completed	100%	Submit
Education	In Progress	50%	Submit
Work History	In Progress	50%	Submit
References	In Progress	50%	Submit
CV section	In Progress	50%	Submit
Extension Support for Masters and Doctoral Scholarships	In Progress	50%	Submit
Final Review	In Progress	50%	Submit

Step 16: Application Category - Extension Support

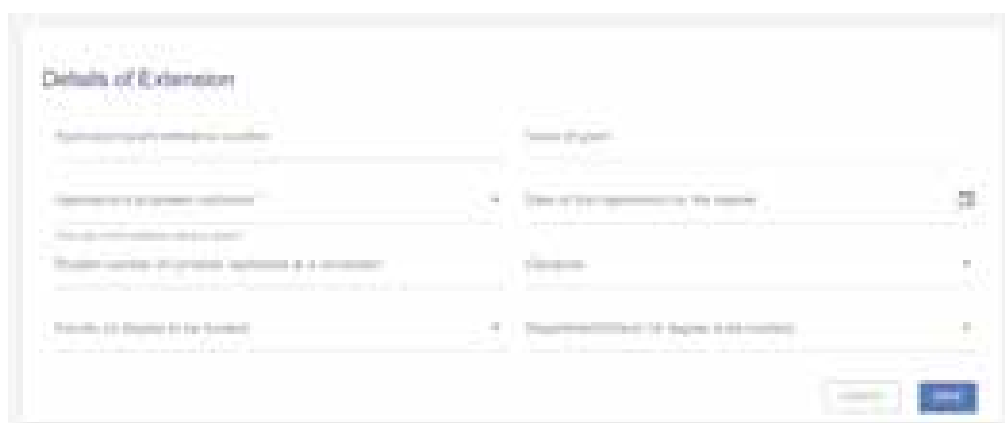
- The **Application Category** section is a very important section as the applicant is required to select the level of study to be funded for and the required duration of support.
- Only full-time applicants can apply for extension support.
- Note that extensions will only be granted under exceptional circumstances and will be for either six (6) or twelve (12) months.



The screenshot shows a web form titled "Application Category - Extension Support". It contains two main input fields: "Type of extension" and "Duration requested for". Below these fields are two buttons: "Previous" and "Next".

Step 17: Details of Extension

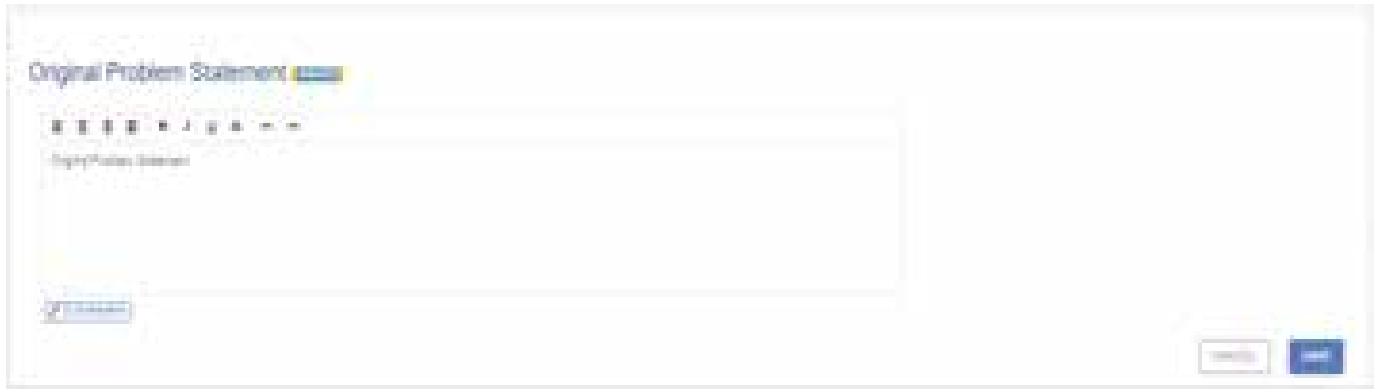
- The **Details of Extension** section requires the applicants to indicate which institution they will be registered with.
- The fields “application/grant reference number” and “value of grant” are not editable as information is pulled directly from the system. If the applicant is an NRF grantholder in 2026, the grant details will pull into this section. If your grant details do not pull into the section, it means that the NRF system does not recognise you as a grantholder. Please email the NRF for assistance.
- NB: **Block grant** and **grantholder-linked students** who were previously nominated under the block grant or their researcher’s grant, will have to be nominated again on the system in 2026 for their information to pull through.
- **For applicants funded under the PDP programme**, the applicant’s institution must be the university you will be registered with (**not the Science Council or Research facility**).



The screenshot shows a web form titled "Details of Extension". It contains several input fields: "Application/grant reference number", "Value of grant", "Institution you will be registered with", "Type of extension requested", "Duration requested for", "Number of students to be funded", and "Researcher's grant reference number". Below these fields are two buttons: "Previous" and "Next".

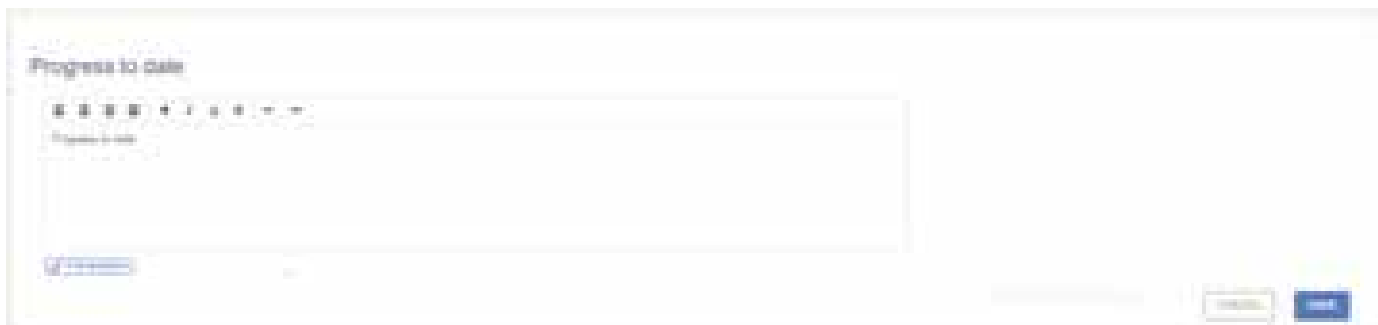
Step 18: Original Problem Statement and Research Plan

The **Original Problem Statement** and the **Original Research Plan** sections are compulsory sections because the reviewer might not have the applicant's original application, therefore, the information is very important to determine what was originally proposed prior to the progress to date.

A screenshot of a web form titled "Original Problem Statement". The form has a header with the title and a progress bar with 10 steps, where the first step is highlighted. Below the header is a large text input area. At the bottom left, there is a "Save" button. At the bottom right, there are "Previous" and "Next" buttons.

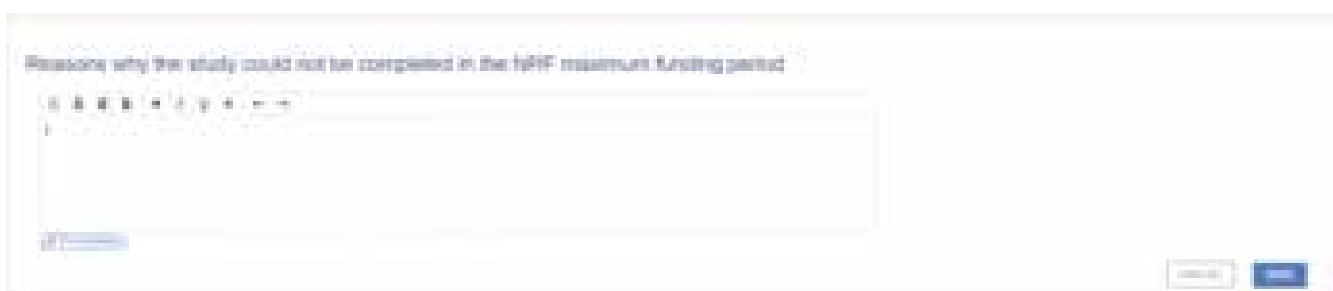
Step 19: Progress to Date

The **Progress to Date** section requires applicants to indicate the work done thus far under the Research Project.

A screenshot of a web form titled "Progress to date". The form has a header with the title and a progress bar with 10 steps, where the first step is highlighted. Below the header is a large text input area. At the bottom left, there is a "Save" button. At the bottom right, there are "Previous" and "Next" buttons.

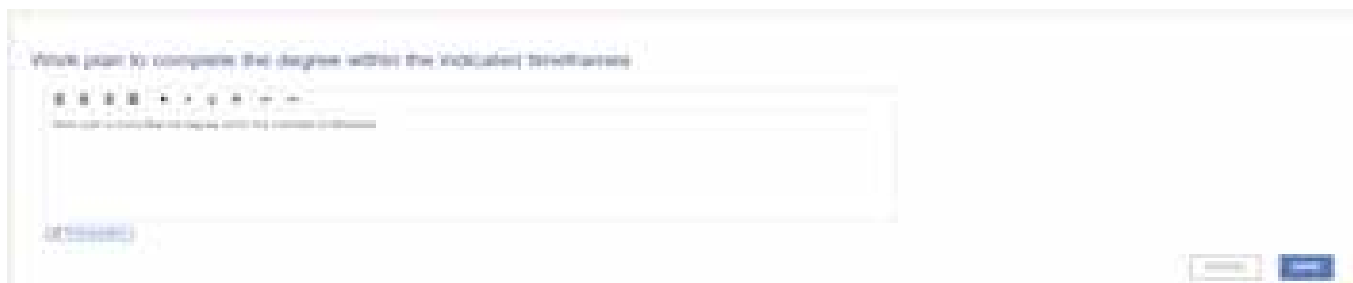
Step 20: Reasons why the study could not be completed

This section requires an explanation as to why the study could not be completed within the NRF grant period.

A screenshot of a web form titled "Reasons why the study could not be completed in the NRF maximum funding period". The form has a header with the title and a progress bar with 10 steps, where the first step is highlighted. Below the header is a large text input area. At the bottom left, there is a "Save" button. At the bottom right, there are "Previous" and "Next" buttons.

Step 21: Work Plan

The **Work plan to complete the degree within the indicated timeframes** section requires the applicant to provide a work plan to complete the degree within the requested (6 or 12 months) extension period. **Clear timelines of activities to take place during the period of extension should be provided.**

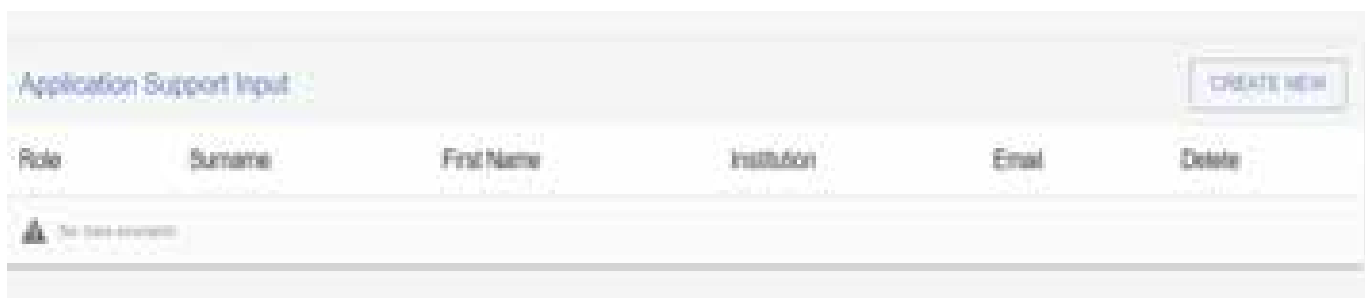


Step 22: Application Support Input

The **Application Support Input** section allows an applicant to include the name and email address of the academic referee who can comment on the applicant's research progress. On final submission of the application, emails requesting the referee's response are sent automatically to the nominated referee.

***Note:** For extension support applicants - either add the Doctoral or Masters Supervisor who can comment on the progress of the studies. If there is no response from the supervisor, the application will be rejected without review. **Only current supervisor(s)** required.

To add a referee, please follow the directions below:



- Click on "create new" in order to add a referee.
- Select the role of the referee:



- Once the role has been selected, the following will appear:

- Please search for the email address or part of the referee's name.
 - Ensure that you use the email address that the referee uses to login to NRF Connect.
 - If the referee is registered on NRF Connect, their details will appear for you to select.
 - If the referee is registered on NRF Connect, but you cannot find them or you get an error message this means:
 - The referee has a duplicate profile. The referee will have to contact the NRF and request for one profile to be deleted. Or,
 - The referee's profile is inactive. In this case, the referee needs to login to their account on NRF Connect, update the profile section and save the information. Once done, you will be able to locate and add the referee under the application support input section.
 - If the referee is not registered, you must tick the box "user not found" and then populate the remaining fields with the referee's details.

- *Note:** Once you submit your application online, an email will be sent to your referee directing them to login to their NRF Connect profile to complete the referee report. Your referee **MUST** submit the report in order for your application to be considered for funding.
- Only add ONE referee under the application support input section.** If you add more than one referee and all do not respond, the institution will not be able to submit the application to the NRF.

4. Tracking the Application

This section explains different application statuses to assist the applicant in tracking the application. The status of your application will determine the stage the application is at. Applicants should direct queries to the University Research/Postgraduate Office if the application is still at the university.

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 and/or scorecard.
Internal screening submission	• Application has been submitted to the NRF by the DA.
Internal screening approval	• NRF screening 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 award.

5. Screening Processes

5.1 Overview of the Screening Process

All submitted applications validated and reviewed by South African public institutions and submitted to the NRF, are further screened by the NRF for compliance with the eligibility criteria and requirements of the call for applications. Applications that fail to meet the stipulated requirements will be rejected.

6. Applications Feedback and Disputes

Once the 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 at www.nrf.ac.za/bursaries/calls. The application status online will indicate whether or not the application has been approved for funding. If your name does not appear on the published list of successful applications, it means that your application was unsuccessful.

The Promotion of Administrative Justice Act (Act 3 of 2000) give effect to the right to administrative action that is lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair and to the right to written reasons for administrative action as contemplated in section 33 of the constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. The NRF and the universities are expected to provide feedback to all applicants on the status of their application.

Feedback from the University:

- Universities must provide feedback to applicants who were screened at the universities for eligibility and deemed not eligible for funding.
- Universities must provide feedback to applicants who were reviewed at the universities and were recommended not eligible for funding by the panel of reviewers.

Feedback from the NRF

- The NRF must provide feedback to applicants whose applications were recommended for funding but were not awarded funding due to budget constraints. In this instance, the NRF will send a regret letter directly to the affected applicants.
- The NRF must provide feedback to applicants whose applications were recommended for funding and approved for funding. In this instance, the NRF will publish a list of the successful applicants on the NRF website and share the list with the Research/Postgraduate Offices at respective universities.

The NRF will conduct an Appeals Process two (2) months after the official publication date of the results on the NRF website. Eligibility to appeal is limited to applicants who either were not recommended by the institutional review panel or encountered a system issue during their NRF application submission, *in which case* they must also demonstrate they contacted the NRF for assistance well in advance and could not be helped before the call closed. . **An appeal must be justified with proof (e.g., email correspondence with the NRF for system related issues), and must be supported by the supervisor in order to be considered.**

Note: Awarding of successful appeals will be contingent on the availability of the budget. Therefore, a successful appeal does not automatically constitute an award.

7. Scientific Compliance

7.1 Methodology

The student 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.

7.2 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, 1 which will override this condition of grant.

1 RSA (2008). Intellectual Property Rights from Publicly Financed Research and Development Act 51 of 2008. Government Gazette, 22 Dec 2008. Vol 522, No 3174

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