General Application Guide 2020

Grants Management and Systems Administration (GMSA)

Version 1.2

March 2019

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1. Background

During the last two 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 Technology (DST) and the NRF. These changes will create enhanced efficiency in receiving and processing applications and be more effective in prioritising funding to best serve the NRF mandate.

2. Application Categories

As a result of the streamlining, the NRF will publish One Call for Applications for funding in February 2019 under the following categories and the possible funding opportunities within each category:

1) **Concept Notes** (Review Period 1) only FBIP (2019)
2) **Customised Programmes**
   a) Knowledge Fields Development Grants (2020)
   b) Customised Interventions
3) **Institutional Grants**
   a) SARChI – Albertina Sisulu Chair in Nursing (2020)
   b) SARChI – DUT Co-funding* (2020)
   c) SARChI – SU Co-funding* (2020)
   d) SARChI – TUT Co-funding* (2020)
   e) South African Cities Network (SACN) (2020)
4) **NRF Postgraduate Scholarships (2020)**
5) **Postdoctoral Grants (2020)**
6) **Research Grants: General**
   a) Blue Skies Full Proposal** (2020)
   b) FBIP Large Grants*** (Review Period 2) (2020)
   c) Indigenous Knowledge Systems (2020)
   d) Support for Rated and Unrated Researchers (2020)
7) **Research Grants: International**
   a) Brazil (FAPESP) (Review Period 1) (2020)
   b) BRICS (Review Period 1) (2020)
   c) China (YSEP) (Review Period 2) (2020)
   d) Flanders (FWO) (Review Period 2) (2020)
   e) Germany (IRTGs) (Review Period 2) (2020)
   f) India (Review Period 2) (2020)
   g) Japan (JSPS) (Review Period 2) (2020)
   h) Netherlands (FWO) (Review Period 2) (2020)

    i)   Newton Fund (Review Period 2) (2020)

    j)   Portugal (FCT) (Review Period 2) (2020)

    k)   Romania (Review Period 2) (2020)

    l)   Russia: JINR (Review Period 1) (2020)

    m)   Sweden (Review Period 2) (2020

    n)   USA (NSF) Dimensions of Biodiversity (Review Period 1) (2020)

    o)   Wallonia (FNRS) (Review Period 1) (2020)

8) Research Grants: Without Student Support

    a)   Black Academics Advancement Programme (2020)

    b)   FBIP Small Grants (Review Period 1) (2019)

    c)   FBIP Small Grants (Review Period 2)**** (2019)

    d)   Support for Y-rated Researchers (2020)

9) Research Grants: Thuthuka (2020)

10) Travel, Training and Conference Grants

    a)   DST-NRF Conference Fund (Review Period 1) (2020)

    b)   Equipment Related Travel & Training (Review Period 1) (2019)

    c)   Equipment Related Travel & Training (Review Period 2) (2019)

    d)   ERC Mobility (Review Period 1) (2019)

    e)   ICTP – NRF Bilateral (Review Period 1) (2019)

    f)   ISC-SA Scientific Events/Travel Grants (Review Period 1) (2020)

    g)   KIC (Review Period 1) (2019)

    h)   KIC (Review Period 2) (2020)

11) Scholarship- and Fellowship-holders Travel Grants (2019)

Please note:

- **Student Block Grants and Masters & Doctoral Grants** applications opened on 2 April 2019.
- **Institutional Grants:** Funding opportunities indicated with an asterix (*) are only available to certain institutions/potential applicants.
- **Research Grants: General**
  - **Blue Skies Full Proposals,** indicated with (**), are available to successful applicants from the previous Blue Skies Concept Notes that held grants in 2018.
  - **FBIP Large Grants** indicated with (***) will be available to successful applicants from Review Period 1 of the Concept Notes submission in this round of applications.
  - **FBIP Small Grants (Review Period 2),** indicated with (****) will be available to some applicants from Review Period 1, as recommended by the review process.

3. Cut-off dates and Review Periods

Applicants will be able to submit applications on the NRF Online Submission System at any time as the system will be open throughout the year. However, the NRF has set definitive review periods for

applications within its funding opportunities and therefore the cut-off dates in the following Table should be considered and **the institutional deadlines be strictly followed**.

Institutional Cut-off Dates: Internal

The Cut-off dates for submission of applications to the various funding opportunities are dependent on individual institutions. The institutions will need to advertise their respective cut-off dates for submission of applications to the Research/Postgraduate offices which are dependent on their internal processes.

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

Institutional Cut-off Dates: NRF

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

Category	Cut off Dates (DA dates)	Screening & Review Period	Funding Decision/ Outcomes
Targeted Grants (nGAP)	Opened: 14 January 2019 Closing: 21 February 2019 Funding Decisions: 15 March 2019		
Travel, Training & Conference Grants (Review Period 1)	28 Feb 2019	Mar – May 2019	June 2019
DST-NRF Conference Fund (Review Period 1)	29 Mar 2019	Mar – May 2019	June 2019
ISC-SA Scientific Events/Travel Grants (Review Period 1)	15 Mar 2019	Mar – May 2019	June 2019
International Grants (Review Period 1)	29 Mar 2019	Apr – Jun 2019	July 2019
FBIP Concept Notes	30 Apr 2019	May 2019	June 2019
FBIP Small Grants (Review Period 1)	30 Apr 2019	May 2019	June 2019
Research Grants: General*	30 Apr 2019	May – Oct 2019	November 2019
Research Grants: Thuthuka			
Research Grants: Without Student Support			
Institutional Grants			
Postdoctoral Grants			
Doctoral Abroad (Nuffic)	7 Jun 2019	Jun – Jul 2019	December 2019
Doctoral Applications	31 Jul 2019	Sep – Oct 2019	December 2019
Masters and Doctoral Extensions		Sep – Oct 2019	December 2019
Research Grants: General (FBIP Large Grants)	30 Aug 2019	Sep – Oct 2019	November 2019
FBIP Small Grants (Review Period 2)	30 Aug 2019	Sept – Oct 2019	November 2019
Travel, Training & Conference Grants (Review Period 2)	30 Aug 2019	Sept – Oct 2019	November 2019
First time Masters Applications	16 Sep 2019	Nov 2019	December 2019
International Grants (Review Period 2)#	30 Sep 2019	Oct – Dec 2019	January 2020

Hons/BTech Applications	5 Dec 2019	-	December 2019
Customised Programmes	As advertised in the Funding Frameworks		
* Please take into consideration the notes on the Research Grants: General in the previous section.			
# Please consult the Flanders Call Application Guide for the cut-off dates			

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 become available on the system as they become available.

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01 Funding: Framework Documents

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Outcomes Of Applications

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":

- 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
Institutional Grants	2	1
Research Grants: General	2	1
Research Grants: International	2	1
Research Grants: Without Student Support	2	1
Research Grants: Thuthuka	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	

The following applications will not be considered for funding:

- Incomplete applications;
- Applications not meeting 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 its equivalent at declared NRF Recognised Research Institutions will be accepted. Please contact the relevant Research/Postgraduate Office, 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:
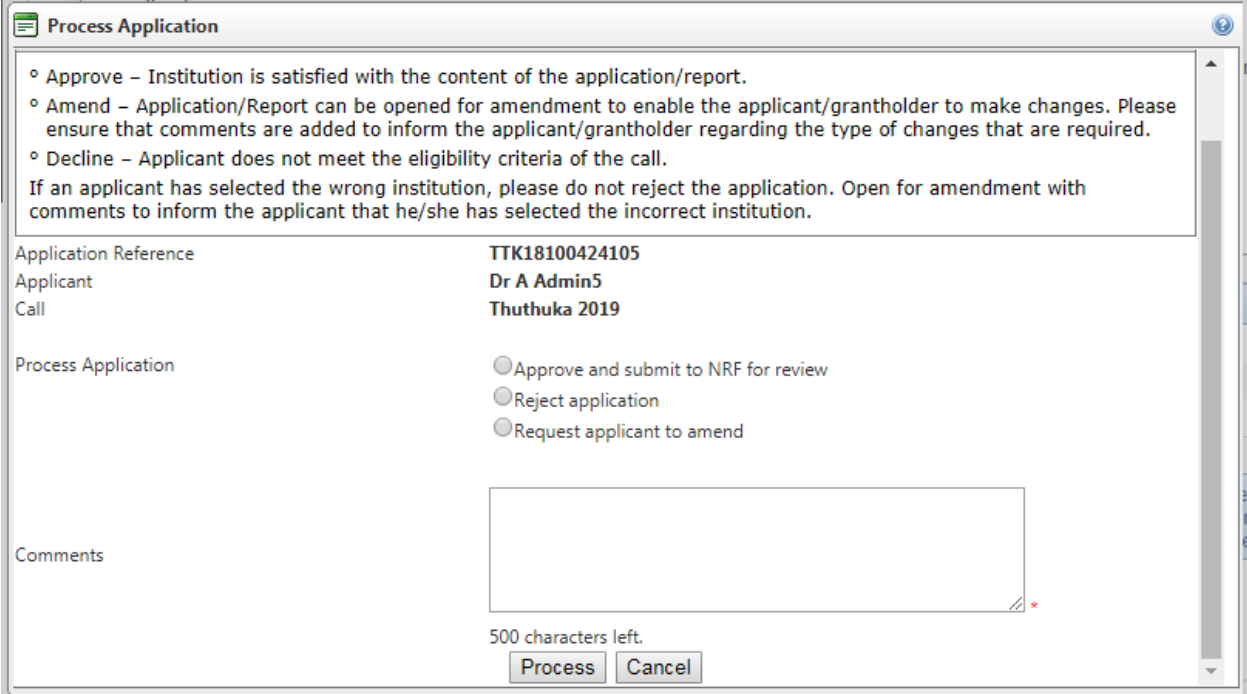
- Provide guidance and advice to potential applicants, researchers, grantholders and students in the choice of funding opportunities available to them;

- 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

Reviewing of most applications for funding will be through a one-stage or two-stage process. One-stage 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, the applications are sent out to remote, specialist reviewers who submit review reports on the applications. The panel/committee primarily considers the review reports in scoring & generating collective outcomes & recommendations.

In the case of the two-stage reviews, after screening of applications for eligibility, expert evaluators/ reviewers for these are identified and the applications are sent to them for remote reviewing.

6. Outcomes

Following on the review process recommendations, the NRF makes awards according to the recommendations and the objectives of the various funding opportunities 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.

The NRF Support Desk can be contacted as follows:

Email: supportdesk@nrf.ac.za

Tel: 012 – 481 4202