Application and Funding Guide

NRF-Nuffic Doctoral Scholarships

Directorate: Grants Management and Systems Administration

Date: March 2019

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List of Acronyms

PR	Progress Report
DA	Designated Authority
GMSA	Grants Management and Systems Administration
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HICD	Human and Institutional Capacity Development
RISA	Research and Innovation Support and Advancement
NRF	National Research Foundation

Contact Details

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Application and funding guidelines are explained in this document. Applicants must read this document together with the following document: Framework for NRF-Nuffic Doctoral Scholarships which highlights the eligibility criteria and requirements of each funding instrument.

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

1. Introduction

This Application and Funding Guide provides an overview of the application process and funding guidelines for the NRF-Nuffic Doctoral Scholarships funding instrument. It should be read in conjunction with the above-mentioned **Framework**, which can be accessed at https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za and under the *NRF Call Information documents* on the application. The Framework provides detailed information with respect to objectives of the funding instrument, eligibility criteria, etc. This document does not, however, constitute a complete set of the policies, procedures or systems used by the NRF.

2. Conditions of Grant

- The NRF scholarship shall be held as the primary source of funding. The scholarship may not be held concurrently with any other NRF or South African/Netherlands government scholarships.
- The scholarship-holder may hold bursaries, awards, assistantships and receive emoluments from *private institutions* in conjunction with the NRF scholarship.
- The scholarship-holder will be accepted as a full-time student during the tenure of the scholarship. Scholarship-holders may not concurrently hold the scholarship with any full-time salaried employment position.
- The scholarship holder must obtain the degree for which the scholarship was awarded by the contractual date, which is one (1) year after the NRF funding has ceased and notify the NRF (directly if funded under the single site mode, or via the relevant university authority if funded under the Split site mode), unless otherwise approved by the NRF in writing. Should the scholarship holder not complete the degree for which the scholarship was awarded, the funds will have to be paid back to the NRF with interest at the prevailing prime rate charged by the NRF bankers.

3. Application Requirements

3.1 Full-time Doctoral Scholarships in the Netherlands (single site mode)

Modalities for funding full-time doctoral studies in the Netherlands are as follows:

- Applicants must be registered or intend to register for full-time doctoral studies at a higher education institution in the Netherlands;
- The applicant must include a provisional letter of acceptance for doctoral studies from the Dutch Higher Education Institution (HEI). Without such a letter, the application will be rejected;

- A letter of support from the doctoral supervisor at the host institution in the Netherlands confirming the availability of research running costs (i.e. costs that can reasonably be expected to accrue during the course of the research period) and other necessary resources for the completion of the doctoral research project. Without such support, the application will be rejected;

- With respect to travel, the NRF will cover the cost of a single cheapest economy airfare for travel to the Netherlands as well as a single cheapest economy airfare to return to South Africa upon completion of the Doctoral studies;

- The NRF will also provide funding for visa, health insurance and subsistence; and

- The Dutch host institution will waive tuition, provide research running costs and access to research infrastructure. Without such support, the application will be rejected.

3.2 Full-time Doctoral Scholarships for Joint Degrees (split site mode)

Modalities for funding a full-time joint doctoral degree (split site mode) are as follows:

- Applicants must be registered or intend to register for a joint doctoral degree between a Dutch HEI and a partner South African Higher Education Institution.

- The applicant must include a letter of support from both supervisors in the Netherlands and South Africa, including a plan for co-supervision and for proposed mobility visits;

- The letter of support from the doctoral supervisor in the host institution in the Netherlands must also confirm the availability of research running costs and other necessary resources for the completion of the doctoral research project. Without such support, the application will be rejected;

- Applicants must upload signed institutional agreements in the case of joint degrees on acceptance of award;

- Over the four year maximum period of funding, the NRF will provide funding for international visits, visa, health insurance, accommodation and subsistence. The number of visits per annum will depend on the arrangement between the student and the supervisor(s), but should not exceed the capped mobility budget of €21 600;

- The NRF will provide a mobility allowance; and

- The Dutch host institution will waive tuition, provide research running costs and access to research infrastructure during these international visits.

4. Application Process

The NRF issues a call for the NRF-Nuffic Doctoral Scholarship applications that is published on the NRF website and is accessible online at https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za.

The NRF-Nuffic Doctoral Scholarship funding instrument will not accept more than one (1) application per applicant per year. All Split site mode applications submitted to South African institutions must be duly authorised and approved by the Designated Authority (DA) of the research administration at the institution that submits the application. Applications must be submitted electronically to the institutional DA of the submitting institution for validation at the deadline date determined by individual institutions. **Applicants must enquire with their institutions regarding internal closing dates.** Applications for single site mode, will be routed directly to the NRF for validation. The processing of a successful grant application takes approximately five (5) months from the call closing date until the commencement of funding.

5. How to Submit Applications

Applications may be completed on the NRF Online Submission System at https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za. Applicants are advised to complete their applications soon after the call opened to prevent IT system overload nearer the closing date. **All Split site mode 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 internal closing date will be determined by the respective Research Office or Post Graduate Office.**

Step 1: This is an electronic submission system and applicants must first register, if not already registered on the NRF Online Submission System (https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za) in order to create and complete an application. If you experience problems accessing the system with your NRF Online password, use the Reset Password button. If your e-mail address is outdated, please contact the NRF Support Desk at (012) 481-4202 for assistance.

If you are not yet registered on the NRF Online Submission System, you must register to access the application form.

Most application screens have application-specific instructions to help you work through the section. Please read the instructions carefully before completing the section.

Step 2: Once you have logged onto the NRF Online Submission System, you will get to the 'landing page' where you will find a menu at the top left side of your screen (tab indicated with blue arrow). To create a new application, click on My Applications-Create Application.

Step 3: Select the Funding Category **_"NRF Postgraduate Scholarships Call"_** on the create application screen and a new application will open for you to complete. Please note that this must be selected only once. To continue working on an application, go to My Applications- List of Applications
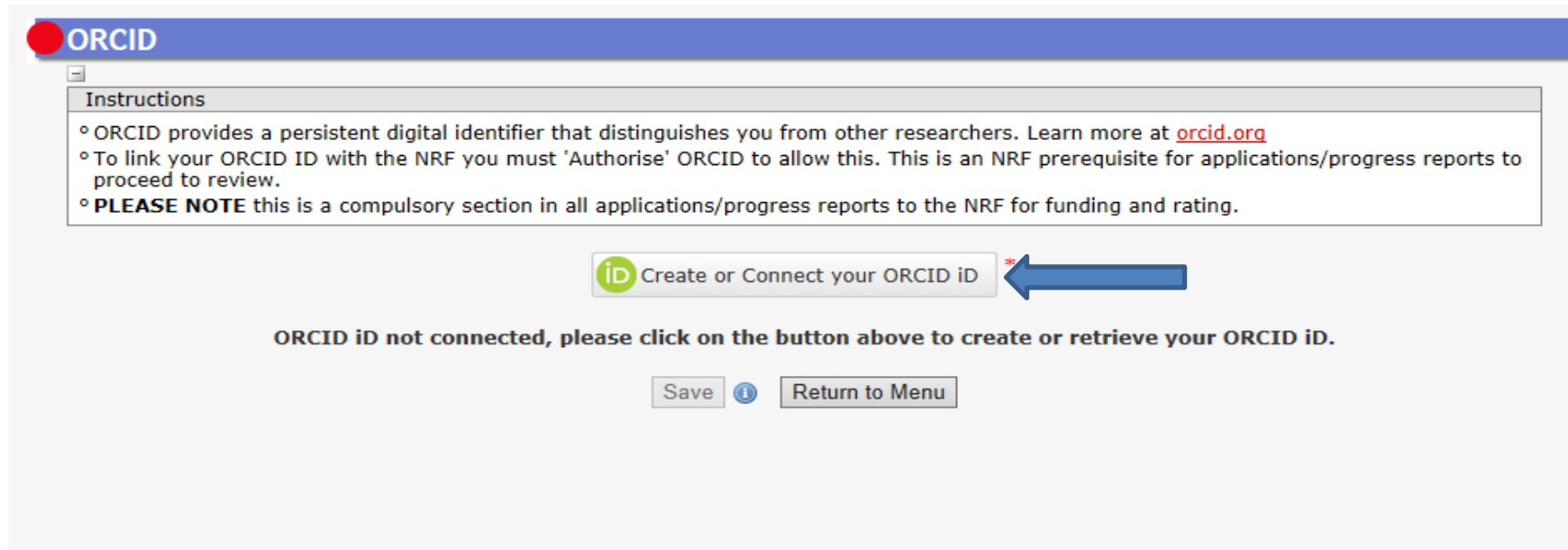
Step 4: All sections marked with red **asterisks** are compulsory. These sections must be completed in order for the final submit button to be activated. Applicants may enter information in the non-compulsory sections only if they have information to fill in, such as research outputs. Completed sections will be indicated by a green tick on the main menu, while incomplete sections will have a yellow cross. **Please ensure that once you complete information in a section, you press the "save" button before returning to the main menu.**

Section	Complete	Date Updated	Edit
NRF Call Information Documents (Please read before starting this application)	ⓘ	29 Mar 2019	✎
Registration Details *	✔	31 Jan 2019	✎
Contact Details *	✔	31 Jan 2019	✎
Qualifications *	✔	06 Jul 2018	✎
Career Profile	✔	02 Jun 2016	✎
Research Expertise *	✔	06 Jul 2018	✎
Student Supervision Record	✔	20 Jul 2018	✎
Absence from Research	✖	29 Mar 2019	✎
Personal Profile *	✔	31 Jan 2019	✎
Books	✖	29 Mar 2019	✎
Chapters in Books	✖	29 Mar 2019	✎
Refereed/Peer-reviewed Conference Outputs	✔	22 Apr 2018	✎
Articles in Refereed/Peer-reviewed Journals	✖	29 Mar 2019	✎
Patents	✖	29 Mar 2019	✎
Keynote/Plenary Addresses	✖	29 Mar 2019	✎
Articles in Non-refereed/Non-peer Reviewed Journals	✖	29 Mar 2019	✎
Other Significant Conference Outputs	✖	29 Mar 2019	✎
Technical/Policy Reports	✖	29 Mar 2019	✎
Products	✖	29 Mar 2019	✎
Artefacts	✖	29 Mar 2019	✎
Prototypes	✖	29 Mar 2019	✎
Other Recognised Research Outputs	✖	29 Mar 2019	✎
Disability *	✔	06 Jul 2018	✎
ORCID *	✔	29 Mar 2019	✎
Application Category *	✖	29 Mar 2019	✎
Print Preview	ⓘ	29 Mar 2019	💾

Final Submit ⓘ

All compulsory sections will guide applicants with error messages. Please follow these messages to complete the sections correctly.

Step 5: ORCID provides a persistent digital identifier that distinguishes you from other researchers and, through integration in key research workflows such as manuscript and grant submission, supports automated linkages between you and your professional activities ensuring that your work is recognized. Please follow the instructions to complete this section.

Step 6: This is a compulsory section. Please select *"Doctoral"* and *"First Time Applicant"* under *"Type of Scholarship"*. For the "Scholarship applying for" section, select ***"NRF-Nuffic: Single-site"*** if you are applying for fulltime doctoral studies at a Dutch HEI **OR** select ***"NRF-Nuffic: Split-site"*** if you are applying for full-time doctoral studies jointly developed and implemented by a Dutch HEI and a Partner University in South Africa.

Step 7: The *Degree to be funded* section is a compulsory section. Please complete the section accurately and keep the following in mind: (1) The scholarship may not be held concurrently with any other NRF or South African/Netherlands government scholarships. (2) The Scholarship may not be held concurrently with any full-time salaried employment. Students who are in their fourth year of Doctoral study at the time of application, are not eligible for funding.

Eligible for Sabbatical Grant – please select "**No**" to this question.

⬤ Degree to be Funded

Instructions

° Only Students who will register on a full-time basis in 2020 may apply.
° Please select NO under Eligible for Sabbatical Grant.

Eligible for Sabbatical grant	○Yes ◉No *
Date of first registration for this degree	`DD/MM/CCYY` ▦ *
Will Master's registration be upgraded to doctoral status?	○Yes ○No
Date of upgrading	`DD/MM/CCYY` ▦
Does any financial support received for previous studies bind you to a service contract?	○Yes ○No *
Are you currently enrolled for the degree/research for which you are applying for support?	○Yes ○No *
Student Number (if currently registered at a university)	[ ]
Discipline (of degree to be funded)	Select an option ▾ *
Department/School (of degree to be funded)	[ ]
Faculty (of degree to be funded)	[ ]
Is this research topic similar to your previous study?	○Yes ○No *
Indicate what you are doing presently	[ ] *

250 characters left.

[Save] [Return to Menu]

Step 8: The *"Research Project Information"* section requires that you select the proposed institution. Candidates applying for the *"Split-site mode"* should select an institution in South Africa and candidates applying for *"Single-site mode"* must select an institution in the Netherlands.

Research Project Information

Instructions
- All fields are compulsory in this section.
- The Short Title of Research Project field is restricted to 100 characters (including spaces).
- The Descriptive Title of Research Project field is restricted to 2 000 characters (including spaces) and should be a clearer description of what the research is about, therefore expanding on the Short Title.
- You MUST consult the attached call documents before completing your application form online.

Applicant's Proposed Institution	Select an option ▼ ⓘ *
Short Title of Research Project	*
Research Project Start Year	*
Research Project End Year	*
Budget Start Year	2020
Required Funding Period	∨ *
Budget End Year	
Descriptive Title of Research Project	2000 characters left. *
Has this research project previously been funded by the NRF?	○Yes ○No *

Save   Return to Menu

©NRF Online Submission System

Step 9: The *Academic Achievements* section is compulsory. Please read the instructions before you complete this section.

Academic Achievements

Instructions

° Average percentage mark for major subjects refers to:
Masters:
Average percentage mark for the honours degree if completed;
OR
Average percentage mark for major subjects in the final-year undergraduate courses for students currently registered for a honours degree;
OR
Average percentage mark for major subjects in the third-year undergraduate courses for students in the final year of a four-year undergraduate degree.
Doctoral:
Percentage mark for the masters degree if completed;
OR
If the masters degree is in progress, average percentage mark for the honours degree;
OR
Average percentage mark for major subjects in the final year of a four-year undergraduate degree.
° Students who received a "Pass" and have not entered a percentage pass mark will be given a default score of 1.
° Minimum prescribed period means the minimum academic years prescribed for the completion of a Designated Qualification.

Average percentage mark for major subjects [____] *

Year in which previous degree was completed [____] *

Completion time for previous degree [Select an option ▼] *

[Save] [Return to Menu]

Step 10: 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. Applicants must give a concise overview of the proposed research which is taken into consideration during the assessment of the application. The Scorecard that will be used to assess the application can be viewed in the **Framework Document.**
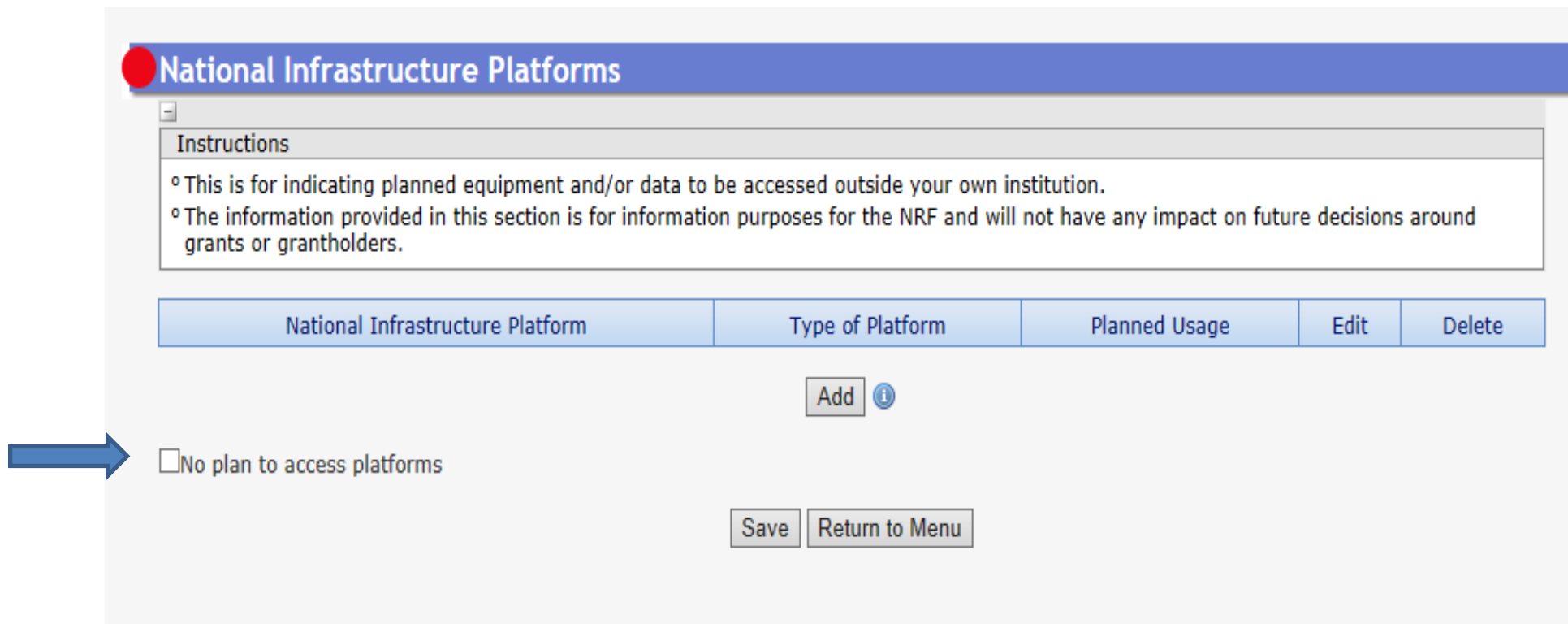
*Please note that the Details of Research section will only be marked as complete when all the sub-sections have been completed.

Step 11: The *National Infrastructure Platform* section is not relevant to this call, select "No plan to access platforms" and save.

National Infrastructure Platforms

Instructions

° This is for indicating planned equipment and/or data to be accessed outside your own institution.
° The information provided in this section is for information purposes for the NRF and will not have any impact on future decisions around grants or grantholders.

National Infrastructure Platform	Type of Platform	Planned Usage	Edit	Delete

Add ⓘ

☐ No plan to access platforms

Save | Return to Menu

Step 12: The *Science Engagement* section is compulsory for reporting purposes. Outline all activities that constitute Science Engagement in this section. If you will NOT be running any science engagement activities, please select "*No science engagement planned*" and save.

Step 13: The *Preferred Panel* section is compulsory. Please read the instructions before you complete this section.

Step 14: The *Person History* section is required for statistical purposes by the NRF. It allows the NRF to ascertain who previously received NSFAS (South African National Student Financial Aid Scheme) funding.

Person History

Instructions

° Proof of NSFAS or University financial aid scheme must be attached.
° Please only select the primary funder under "previous studies funded by" or "current degree funding".

Previous studies funded by
- ☐ NSFAS funded
- ☐ University Financial Aid
- ☐ Self funded
- ☐ Other Government departments
- ☐ International donor funds
- ☐ NRF Funded
- ☐ Institutional Funding
- ☐ Not funded from any other source
- ☐ Private Sector Company
- ☐ Not applicable   *

Current degree funding
- ☐ NSFAS funded
- ☐ University Financial Aid
- ☐ Self funded
- ☐ Other Government departments
- ☐ International donor funds
- ☐ NRF Funded
- ☐ Institutional Funding
- ☐ Not funded from any other source
- ☐ Private Sector Company   *

Are you currently a DST-NRF intern   ○Yes○No *

[Save]   [Return to Menu]

©NRF Online Submission System

Step 15: The *Reference* section allows applicants to include academic referees who can comment on the applicant's academic abilities. On final submission of the application, emails requesting a referee's response, are sent automatically to the nominated referees to provide a report on the academic and research capabilities of the applicant. Types of references required are listed below:

- Doctoral Single Site Mode applicants: Master's supervisor, Doctoral supervisor from the host institution in the Netherlands and an academic referee.
- Doctoral Split Site Mode applicants: Master's supervisor, Doctoral supervisor from the institution in the Netherlands, Doctoral supervisor from the institution in South Africa, and an academic referee.

NB: The applicant must periodically view the application PDF to ensure that referees have responded to the request.

Step 16: In the *Attachments* section, please print, certify and then scan all the required documents and submit as a <u>single</u> PDF file. The applicant is required to attach the following documents:

(i)   Certified academic record or, in the case of applicants with outstanding fees, attach an official letter (stamped and signed) from the institution, confirming that the transcript is not issued due to outstanding fees owed to the university;

(ii) Proof of Honours and Masters Qualifications. If your Master's thesis has been submitted for examination and your application is successful, you will have six months to submit the Master's certificate to the NRF. Failure to comply with the stipulated deadline will result in the scholarship being cancelled.

(iii) Proof of National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) or University Financial Aid funding for applicants that have indicated that they were previously funded by NSFAS or University Financial Aid;

(iv) Provisional letter of acceptance from the Dutch HEI (single site mode)

(v)   A letter of support from the doctoral supervisor at the host institution in the Netherlands confirming the availability of research running costs and other necessary resources for the completion of the doctoral research project(single site mode)

(vi) Provisional letter of acceptance from the Dutch HEI and South African HEI (split site mode)

(vii)A letter of support from the supervisors in the Netherlands and South Africa, including a plan for co-supervision and for proposed mobility visits. The letter of support from the doctoral supervisor in the Netherlands institution must also confirm the availability of research running costs and other necessary resources for the completion of the doctoral research project (split site mode).

(viii)   Applicants with disabilities must upload a medical certificate, in support of the disability.
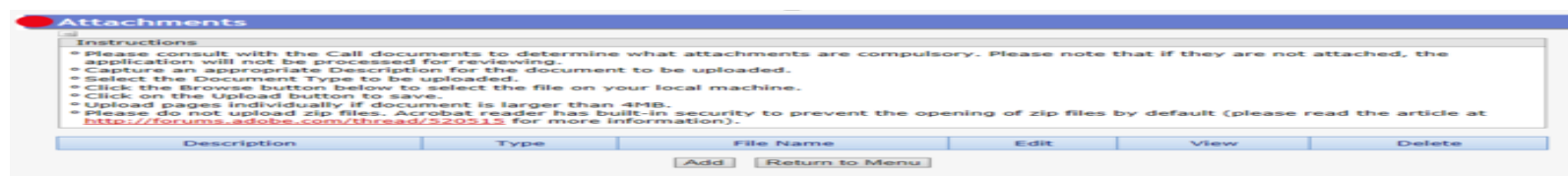
*Applications without the required attachments will be rejected.

Step 17: Split site mode applicants must adhere to the local institution's internal closing date for submission of their applications to allow for internal institutional screening and review. The Institution's internal closing date will be determined by the respective Research Office or Postgraduate Office. DAs must ensure that all proposals are screened and approved through the institution's internal 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 18: The final submit button will only be activated when all compulsory sections are complete. 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 or Postgraduate Office of the South African institution that was 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 information, or fail to comply with instructions. These 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.

6. Screening and Review Processes

6.1. Overview of the Screening Process

All applications validated by South African institutions and submitted to the NRF, are 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.

6.2. Overview of the Review Process

The NRF's peer review policy requires that all applications be subjected to a review process. Applications submitted for this funding instrument will go through a panel review process.

6.2.1. Panel Review

Panel members are selected from the NRF database that is updated on a continuous basis, and other sources. In compiling 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 the **Framework Document**).

The Review Panel provides recommendations to the NRF and the final funding decision is made by the NRF. In awarding grants under this funding instrument, the NRF takes into account the recommendations of the peer review panels, the objectives and equity targets of the funding instrument, and the available funds.

7. Applications 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 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, your application was unsuccessful.

Unsuccessful applicants who wish to appeal the funding decision taken by the NRF must follow the appropriate Appeals Process of the NRF. Appeals for this funding instrument will only be considered two to three (2-3) months after the official publication date of the results on the NRF website.

8. Awardee Responsibilities

8.1. Reporting

Continued funding beyond the first year is dependent on the submission of a Progress Report (PR) when the official process has opened on the NRF Online Submission Systems. Continued funding will be considered based on satisfactory progress.

A PR must be submitted by the awardee / grant-holder in a format provided by the NRF, documenting progress made against set objectives and research outputs. The NRF may, in consultation with the Research Office, request interim progress reports for the purpose of implementing corrective measures timeously to ensure that stated objectives are met within stipulated timeframes.

8.2. Managing changes during the project life cycle

Changes may occur during the project life cycle due to unforeseen and extenuating circumstances. Please note the following on how to manage the award and subsequent changes (planned or unanticipated) should they arise during the project life cycle.

8.2.1. Change Requests

8.2.1.1. 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 South African institution's Research Office / Postgraduate Office for approval prior to the change.

8.2.1.2. Changes in Project Scope, Supervisor or Institution

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

9. Scientific Compliance

9.1. 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.

9.2. 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 overrides the condition of grant.

9.3. Ethics

The student 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

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

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.