

ALLOCATION OF POSTGRADUATE BURSARIES OFFERED BY THE FACULTY OF SCIENCE in 2013

A recent “needs analysis” conducted in all eight departments in the Faculty of Science highlighted the difficulties researchers are facing in obtaining bursary support for promising postgraduate students. In large part this is due to the low funding success of submissions to the NRF (and that incentive funding for rated scientists does not make provision for bursaries). Moreover, this was exacerbated by the NRF’s decision not to make a call in 2012 which has had the effect of keeping a cohort of researchers out of the system.

Of the staff that submitted data for the needs analysis >90% identified the availability of bursaries as a major threat to their research programmes. In the light of this the Acting Dean, has ring-fenced faculty funding to award 10 MSc and 10 PhD bursaries on an annual basis starting in 2013. Once fully operational (2014 for MSc and 2015 for PhD) there will be approximately 20 MSc and 30 PhD bursaries at any given time and the cost to the Faculty is considerable. Consequently, a major consideration is that the Faculty Bursaries (FBs) will be used to attract students who would otherwise be lost to the system due to their inability to secure financial support from other sources for postgraduate study (i.e., NRF, Harry Crossley, Wilhelm Frank etc).

We envisage the “50 additional students” will attract subsidy from the DoE that, in part, will offset the cost to the Faculty of Science. Consequently, evidence not only of academic merit but also of “failed” attempts to obtain bursary support elsewhere will be critical considerations in awarding FBs.

- The intension is to bench mark the monetary values of the FBs against those awarded in the NRF’s Competitive Programme for Rated Researchers— R60,000 for PhD and R40,000 for MSc.
- FBs may not be held simultaneously with any other bursary/scholarship but supplementation up to R10,000 p.a. is permitted. These must be non-binding emoluments.
- The only exception concerns Stellenbosch Merit Bursaries. These may be held concurrently with FBs (current values: MSc R16,000 1st year; R17,600, 2nd year; PhD R57,780 for 3 years i.e., R19,260 per year). In this instance, however, the additional supplementation of R10,000 p.a. is not permitted.

The closing date for consideration of a FB will be mid-February of the year in which funding begins. The block grant NRF bursaries will not have been awarded at that point. However, since only 13 were awarded in 2012 (with 9 continuations) we have decided to discount these in favour of providing an opportunity to make the FBs allocations in February (i.e., earlier than what would have been possible if we had delayed to accommodate the outcome of the block grant allocations).

Duration of funding:

1) Two years of support at the MSc level and three years of support for PhD; funding runs for a calendar year from date of registration. Funding for the second/third year is based on exceptional progress in the preceding year as assessed by the biannual departmental progress reports, and is the positive recommendation of the supervisor(s).

Qualifying criteria:

- 1) Only for SA citizens and for full-time study
- 2) Academic merit and exclusive registration in a department of the Faculty of Science
- 3) MSc bursaries are made to students who are already in possession of an Honours degree, and to PhD students who hold an MSc. Provision will be made for upgrades from MSc to PhD.
- 4) Bursary holders will be allowed to undertake a maximum of 12 hours teaching per week, tutorial and demonstration duties for remuneration.

Applications:

Applicants provide a comprehensive CV (including academic record) and evidence that they have tried for funding at other sources and been unsuccessful. The application must be endorsed by the potential supervisor and submitted to the Dean's Office via the HOD. The HOD (and departmental management committee) should, where there are multiple applications from a single department, prioritize the applications on critical need. While not definitive this will help inform the final selection of FB awardees.

Proviso:

The scheme may be reconsidered should NRF bursaries become more freely available, the financial situation of the Faculty deteriorate to the point where the scheme cannot be continued or students begin using the Faculty scheme in preference to bursaries available elsewhere. The scheme should remain financially viable provided the students supported are additional students who would not have been able to study without bursary support, but not if the scheme supports students who could receive bursaries elsewhere and are therefore not additional to the Faculty. Funding will be put aside and ring-fenced for each student for the normal duration of the bursary and therefore should it be necessary to terminate the scheme, students already on the scheme will receive support for the full period of the bursary.

**CLOSING DATE FOR RECEIPT OF APPLICATIONS AT THE DEAN'S
OFFICE FEBRUARY 15 2013**