2017 Postdoctoral Fellowship

Application and Funding Guide:

DST-NRF Free-standing (Local and Abroad)

DST-NRF Innovation

DST-NRF-DHET Scarce Skills Postdoctoral

Grants Management and Systems Administration

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List of Acronyms

APR	Annual 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
DST	Department of Science and Technology
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training

Contact Details

When making an enquiry, please use "NRF Free-standing, Innovation, Scarce Skills Postdoctoral Fellowship Call" as the email subject line.

For NRF Online application and grants management related enquiries, please contact:

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For technical online enquiries, please contact the NRF Support Desk during office hours from 08:00 to 16:30 Monday to Friday.

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Application and funding guidelines are explained in this document. Candidates must read this document together with the following documents: **DST-NRF Innovation Postdoctoral Fellowships Framework; DST-NRF-DHET Scarce Skills Development Fund Postdoctoral Framework and the DST-NRF Free-standing Postdoctoral Framework** which highlight the eligibility criteria and requirements of each funding instrument.

1. Introduction

This Guide provides an overview of the application process and funding guidelines for the DST-NRF Free-standing (Local and Abroad), DST-NRF Innovation and the DST-NRF-DHET Scarce Skills Postdoctoral Fellowships funding instruments. It should be read in conjunction with the above-mentioned **Frameworks**, which can be accessed at https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za. The Frameworks provide detailed information with respect to objectives of the funding instruments, eligibility criteria etc. This document does not, however, constitute a complete set of the policies, procedures or systems used by the NRF.

2. Granting Rules

2.1. Conditions of the DST- NRF Free-standing (Local and Abroad), DST-NRF Innovation and DST-NRF-DHET Scarce Skills Postdoctoral Fellowships

- The fellowship shall be held as the primary funding for the Postdoctoral research training;
- Fellowships may not be held simultaneously with a another fellowship from any other government or NRF source or NRF administered source;
- Postdoctoral Fellows are permitted to spend a maximum of 20% of their time undertaking lecturing and student supervision;
- Postdoctoral Fellows may not concurrently hold the fellowship with any full-time salaried employment position; and
- Postdoctoral Fellows may hold non-binding supplementary grants or emoluments to the institutional capped value.

2.2. Values of Postdoctoral Fellowships

2.2.1. Local Awards

Successful applicants will receive funding for a maximum period of three (3) years based on the initial commencement date of the project. Female Postdoctoral Fellows that take maternity leave during the tenure of the fellowship, are eligible for an additional four (4) months of support beyond the three year period.

The local Postdoctoral Fellowship packages for 2017 are broken down as follows:

Value (per annum)	Item
DST-NRF Free-standing (local)	
R155 000	non-taxable stipend
R45 000	contribution towards research costs
R15 000	compulsory institutional contribution
DST-NRF Innovation	
R255 000	non-taxable stipend
R50 000	contribution towards research costs
R15 000	compulsory institutional contribution
DST-NRF-DHET Scarce skills	
R255 000	non-taxable stipend
R50 000	contribution towards research costs
R15 000	compulsory institutional contribution

Host institutions will be expected to supplement the fellowship with a minimum of R15 000.00 per annum as part of the institutional commitment. In addition, the host institutions will ensure the provision of an enabling environment for Fellows' research training and skills development.

Successful candidates are also eligible for travel grants for local and international travel. The travel grants may be used to contribute towards the costs of attending local or international conferences; workshops; visiting a laboratory or; any other activity that supports the beneficiaries' research training. Please refer to the Frameworks for the maximum amount permitted over the tenure of the fellowship.

Postdoctoral Fellows who wish to access the travel grant must complete a travel grant application form for submission and approval by the institution and the NRF. The travel application form can be accessed on NRF Online Submissions (https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za) and should be submitted 3 months prior to travelling.

2.2.2. DST-NRF Free-standing Postdoctoral Abroad Awards

The value of the award will be calculated as the equivalent of the United States Dollar (USD) of 26 000 per annum, for a maximum of two (2) years, and will be paid out in the currency of the country in which the postdoctoral research will be undertaken.

In addition, the NRF will cover the cost of:

- A single economy airfare for travel to the country in which the postdoctoral research will be undertaken; and
- A single economy airfare to return to South Africa upon completion of the postdoctoral research abroad.

The NRF **will not** cover any costs for accompanying family members or any other related costs associated with the postdoctoral research. The applicant will be responsible for securing additional funding to cover any shortfall in funding required to undertake his/her postdoctoral research abroad.

3. Application Process

The NRF is issuing this pooled call for DST-NRF Free-standing (Local and Abroad), DST-NRF Innovation and DST-NRF-DHET Scarce Skills Postdoctoral Fellowship applications that is published on the NRF website and is accessible online at https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za. Each applicant is limited to only one (1) application per year for this pooled Postdoctoral Fellowship. Once an applicant submits an application, it will be duly authorised and approved by the Designated Authority (DA) of the research administration at the prospective South African host institution where the applicant intends to undertake the postdoctoral research. Applications will be automatically routed to the institutional DA of the submitting institution for validation at the deadline date determined by individual institutions. Applicants have to enquire with their institutions regarding internal closing dates. The processing of a successful grant application takes approximately five (5) months from the closing date for applications until the commencement of funding.

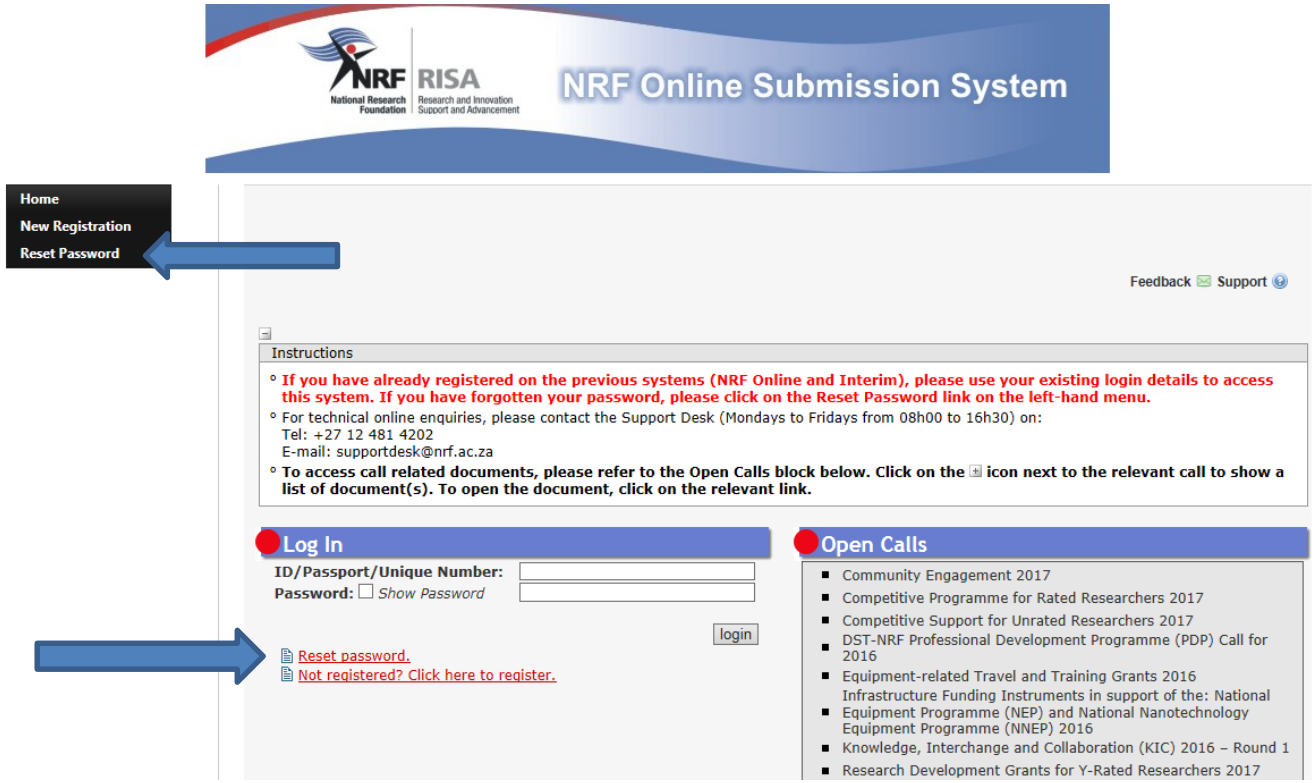
4. How to Submit Applications

Applications may be completed on the NRF Online Submission System at https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za starting from Monday, 18 April 2016. Applicants are advised to complete their applications soon after the call is open to prevent IT system overload nearer the **closing date of Monday, 13 June 2016.**

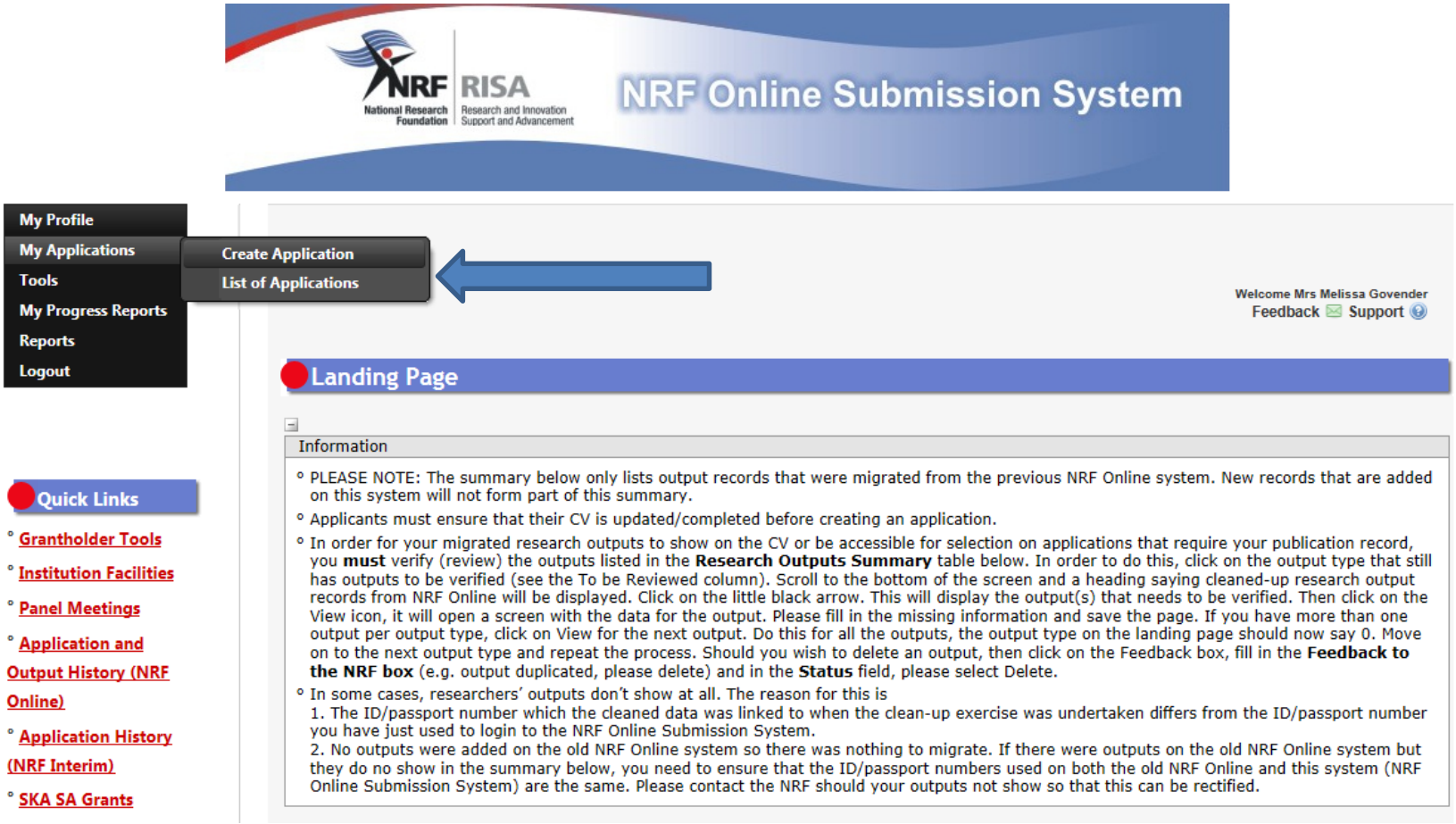
Applicants must ensure that they adhere to their institution's internal closing date for submission of their application to allow for internal institutional screening and review. The internal closing date will be determined by the respective research offices or Post Graduate Office and is usually at least two weeks prior to the NRF's closing date.

Step 1: This is an electronic submission system and applicants must be registered on the system in order to create and complete an application. If you had previously registered and submitted and application on the NRF Online System (http://nrfonline.nrf.ac.za) before February 2012 and your application was not successful, your details would have been migrated to the new NRF Online Submission System (https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za). If you experience problems accessing the system with your NRF Online password, use the Reset Password button. If you are not yet registered on the NRF Online Submission System, you must register to access the application form.

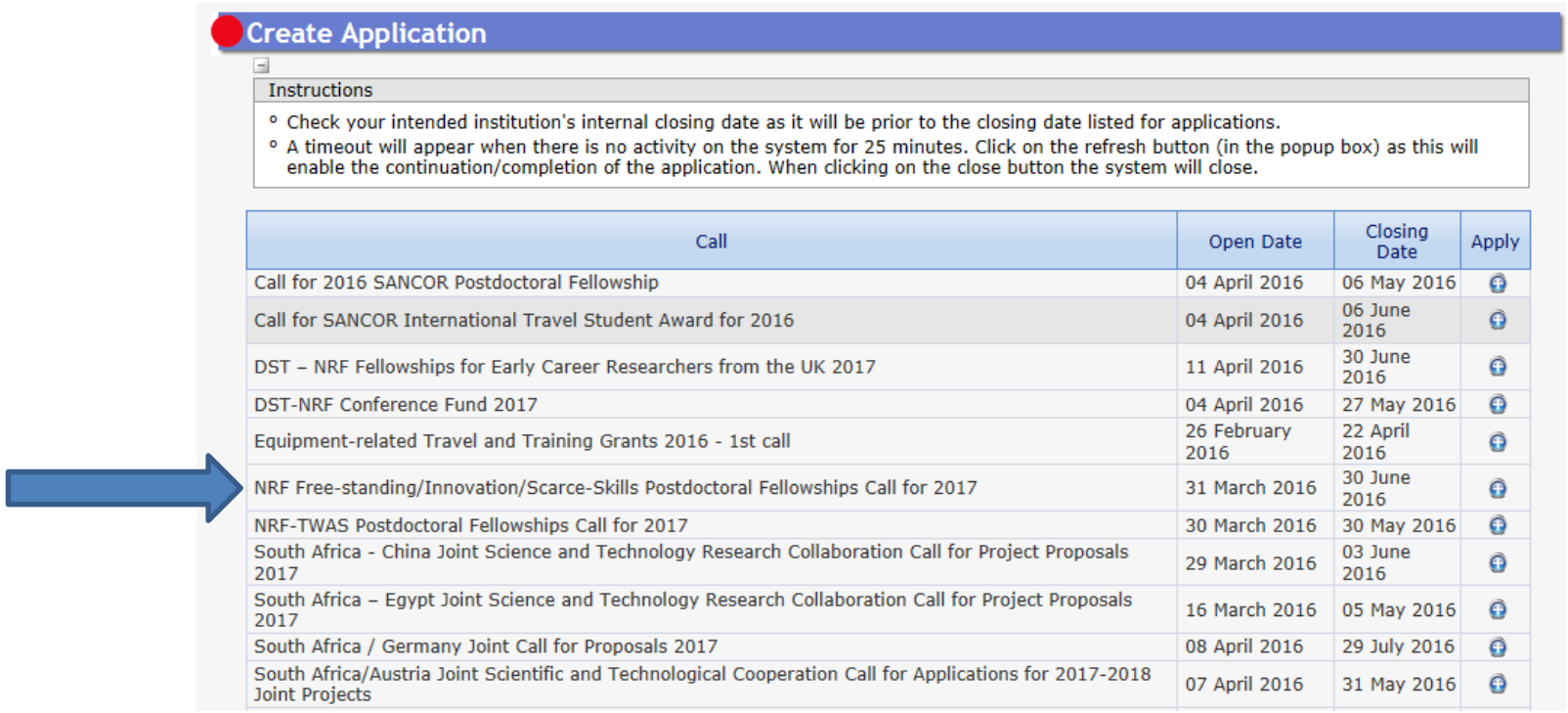
Most application screens have application specific instructions to help you work through the section. Please read the instruction carefully before completing the section.



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 call for which you are applying on the create application screen and a new application will open to complete. Please note that this must be selected only once. To continue working on an application, go to My Applications- List of Applications.



Create Application

Instructions

- Check your intended institution's internal closing date as it will be prior to the closing date listed for applications.
- A timeout will appear when there is no activity on the system for 25 minutes. Click on the refresh button (in the popup box) as this will enable the continuation/completion of the application. When clicking on the close button the system will close.

Call	Open Date	Closing Date	Apply
Call for 2016 SANCOR Postdoctoral Fellowship	04 April 2016	06 May 2016	
Call for SANCOR International Travel Student Award for 2016	04 April 2016	06 June 2016	
DST – NRF Fellowships for Early Career Researchers from the UK 2017	11 April 2016	30 June 2016	
DST-NRF Conference Fund 2017	04 April 2016	27 May 2016	
Equipment-related Travel and Training Grants 2016 - 1st call	26 February 2016	22 April 2016	
NRF Free-standing/Innovation/Scarce-Skills Postdoctoral Fellowships Call for 2017	31 March 2016	30 June 2016	
NRF-TWAS Postdoctoral Fellowships Call for 2017	30 March 2016	30 May 2016	
South Africa - China Joint Science and Technology Research Collaboration Call for Project Proposals 2017	29 March 2016	03 June 2016	
South Africa – Egypt Joint Science and Technology Research Collaboration Call for Project Proposals 2017	16 March 2016	05 May 2016	
South Africa / Germany Joint Call for Proposals 2017	08 April 2016	29 July 2016	
South Africa/Austria Joint Scientific and Technological Cooperation Call for Applications for 2017-2018 Joint Projects	07 April 2016	31 May 2016	

*****Applicants are urged to complete or update ALL screens of the CV, including the Research Profile and Research Outputs as this information is evaluated in the review process and will impact on the overall assessment of your application.

Step 4: All sections marked with a red asterisk are compulsory sections in the application. These sections must be completed in order for the final submit button to appear. The sections without asterisks are non-compulsory sections. You may enter information in these sections, if you have information to enter, 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, press the "save" button before returning to the main menu.

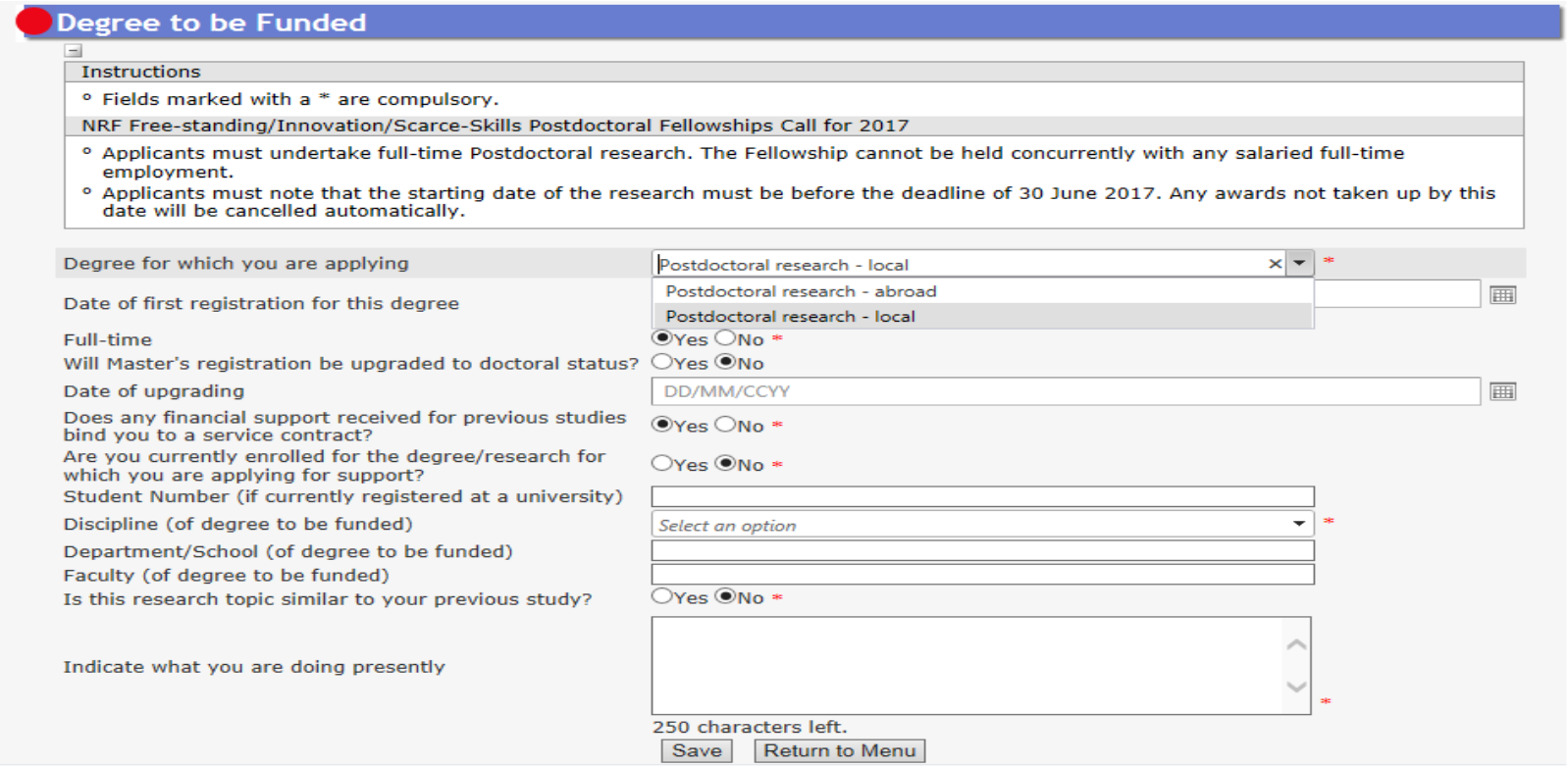
Section	Complete	Date Updated	Edit
NRF Call Information Documents (Please read before starting this application)		05 Apr 2016	
Registration Details *	✔	05 Apr 2016	
Contact Details *	✔	10 Jun 2015	
Qualifications *	✔	05 Apr 2016	
Research Expertise *	✔	10 Jun 2015	
Personal Profile *	✔	19 Aug 2015	
Career Profile *	✔	18 Mar 2016	
Books	✔	10 Jun 2015	
Chapters in Books	✔	10 Jun 2015	
Refereed/Peer-reviewed Conference Outputs	✔	10 Jun 2015	
Articles in Refereed/Peer-reviewed Journals	✔	10 Jun 2015	
Patents	✔	10 Jun 2015	
Keynote/Plenary Addresses	✔	10 Jun 2015	
Articles in Non-refereed/Non-peer Reviewed Journals	✔	10 Jun 2015	
Other Significant Conference Outputs	✔	19 Aug 2015	
Technical/Policy Reports	✔	10 Jun 2015	
Products	✔	10 Jun 2015	
Artefacts	✔	10 Jun 2015	
Prototypes	✔	10 Jun 2015	
Other Recognised Research Outputs	✔	10 Jun 2015	
Disability *	✘	05 Apr 2016	
Degree to be Funded *	✘	05 Apr 2016	
Research Project Information *	✘	05 Apr 2016	
Academic Achievements	✘	05 Apr 2016	
Details of Research *	✘	05 Apr 2016	
Science Communication	✘	05 Apr 2016	
Attachments *	✘	05 Apr 2016	
References *	✘	05 Apr 2016	
Possible Reviewers	✘	05 Apr 2016	
Declaration *	✘	05 Apr 2016	
Checklist *	✘	05 Apr 2016	
Print Preview		05 Apr 2016	

Final Submit

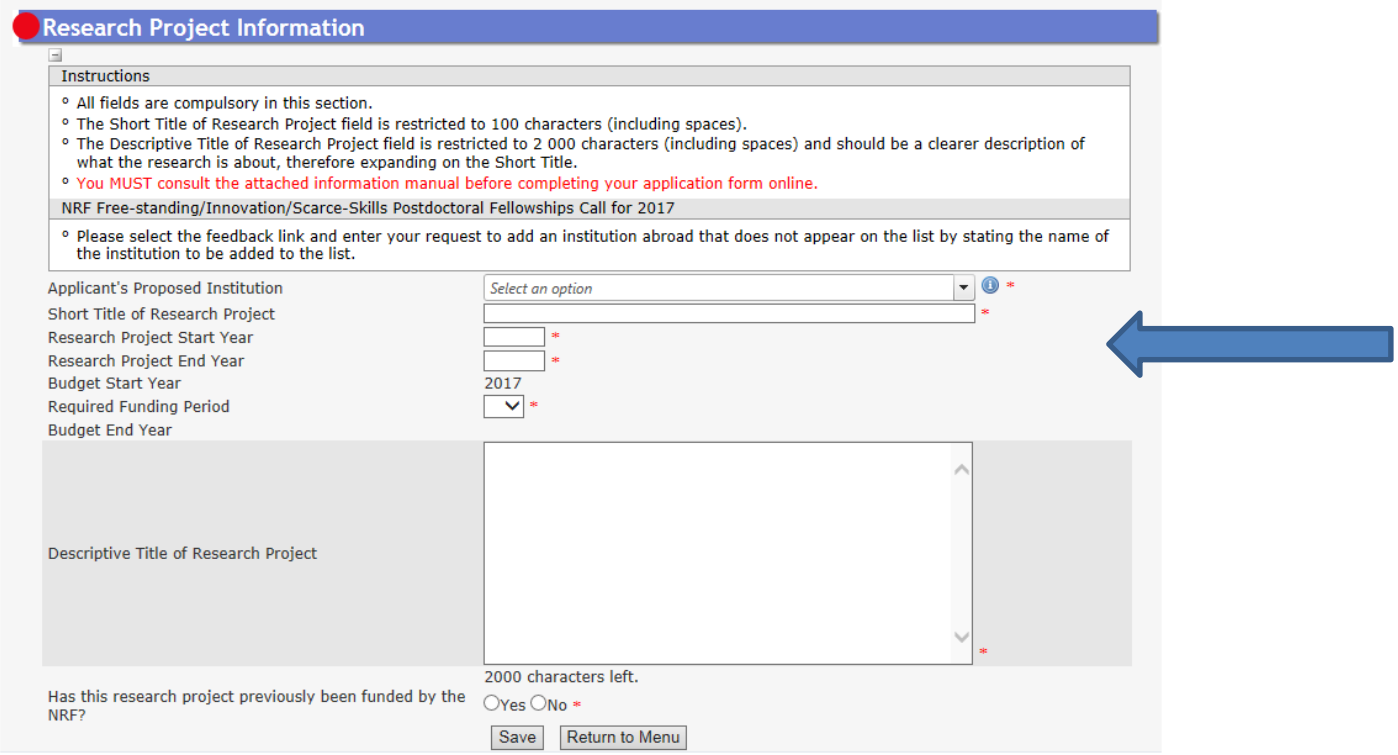
All compulsory sections will guide you with error messages at the top of the screen. Please follow these messages to help you complete the section correctly.

Step 5: The *Degree to be Funded* section is a compulsory section. The dropdown list for *Degree for which you are applying*, will have two options: (1) Postdoctoral research – local; (2) Postdoctoral research – abroad. Please select the relevant option.

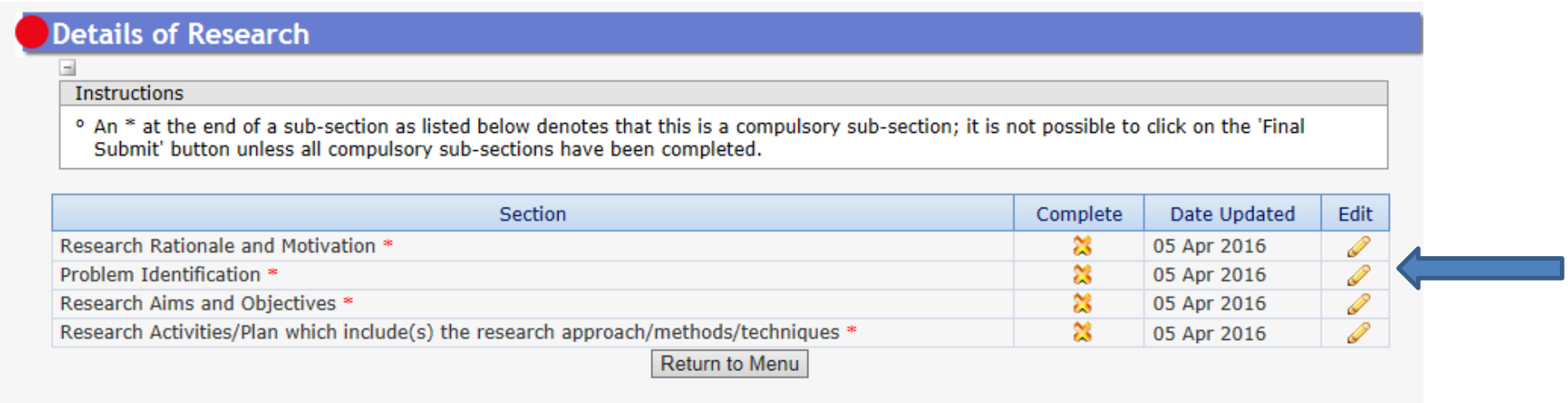
Please complete the section accurately and keep the following in mind: (1) Applicants must undertake full-time Postdoctoral research. The Fellowship cannot be held concurrently with any salaried employment (2) Applicants must note that the starting date of the research must be before the deadline of 30 June 2017. Any awards not taken up by this date will be cancelled automatically.



Step 6: The *Research Project Information* section requires you to select the proposed institution. If you have selected the "Postdoctoral research - local" option in the previous section, then the institutions that you can select from the dropdown list will be limited to South African institutions (including SA national facilities). Likewise, if you have selected the "Postdoctoral research - abroad" option, you will be given a list of international institutions to choose from. Should your institution not be on the list, please request it by selecting the support tab on the far right at the top of the screen. Please note that it is the applicant's responsibility to find an institution and supervisor in South Africa that is willing to host them for the duration of the fellowship.



Step 7: 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. You are required to give a concise overview about your proposed research in this section as the input is taken into consideration during the assessment of your application. Appropriate literature references must also be included. The Scorecard that will be used to assess your application can be viewed in Section 6 of this document.



Details of Research

Instructions

- An * at the end of a sub-section as listed below denotes that this is a compulsory sub-section; it is not possible to click on the 'Final Submit' button unless all compulsory sub-sections have been completed.

Section	Complete	Date Updated	Edit
Research Rationale and Motivation *		05 Apr 2016	
Problem Identification *		05 Apr 2016	
Research Aims and Objectives *		05 Apr 2016	
Research Activities/Plan which include(s) the research approach/methods/techniques *		05 Apr 2016	

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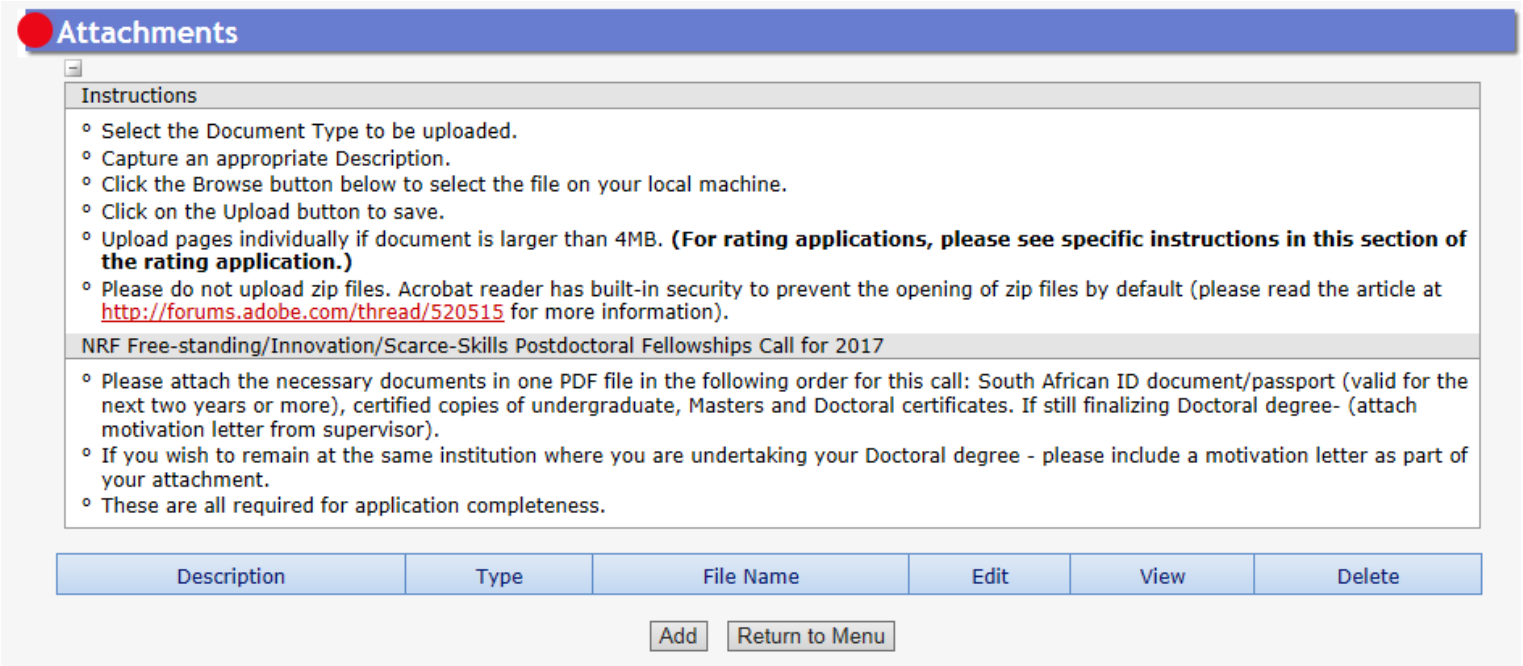
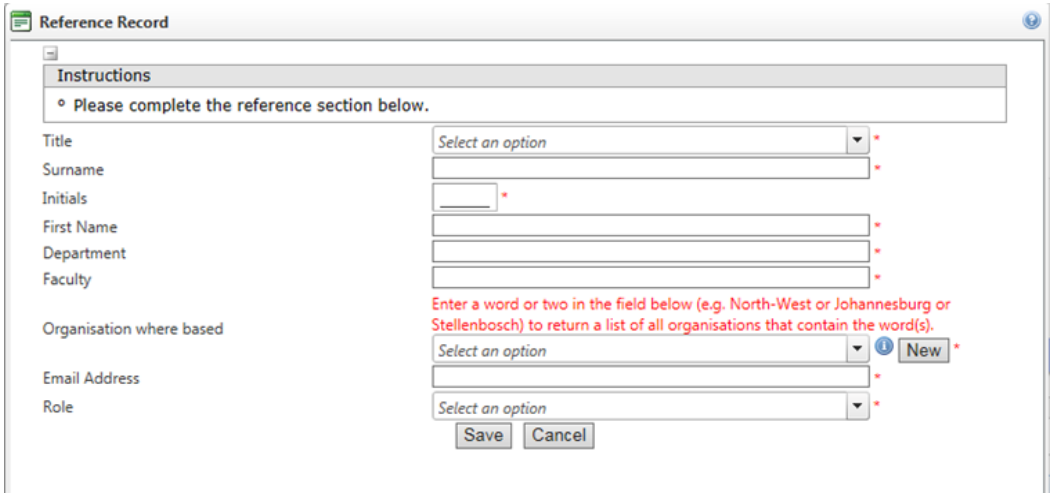
***Please note that the Details of Research section will only mark as complete when all the sub-sections are completed.**

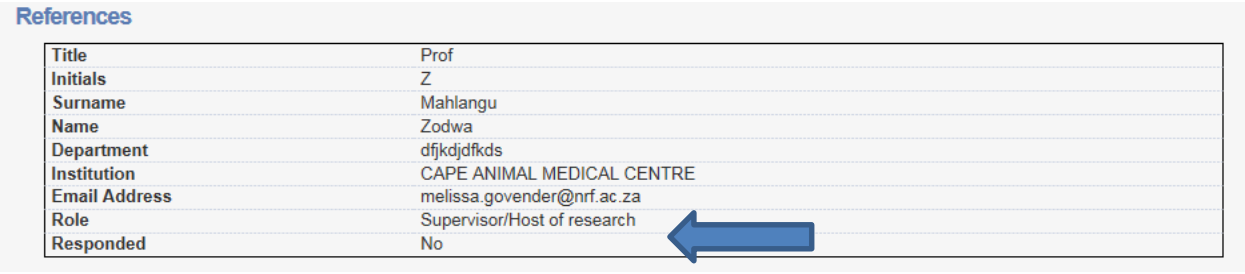
Step 8: The *Attachments* section provides specific instructions with respect to the **compulsory** documents required and for uploading attachments to the application. Please print, certify and then scan all of the required documentation and submit as a single PDF file; then upload the section as one document. If you are a fellow with a disability, you may also upload a medical certificate in support of your disability.



Step 9: The *Reference* section allows applicants to include academic referees who can comment on the applicants' academic abilities. On final submission of the application the emails containing a reference form are sent automatically to the nominated referees to provide a report on the academic and research capabilities of the applicant. ***The applicant will have to select at two Doctoral supervisors AND two other academic referees in order for the section to mark as complete.**



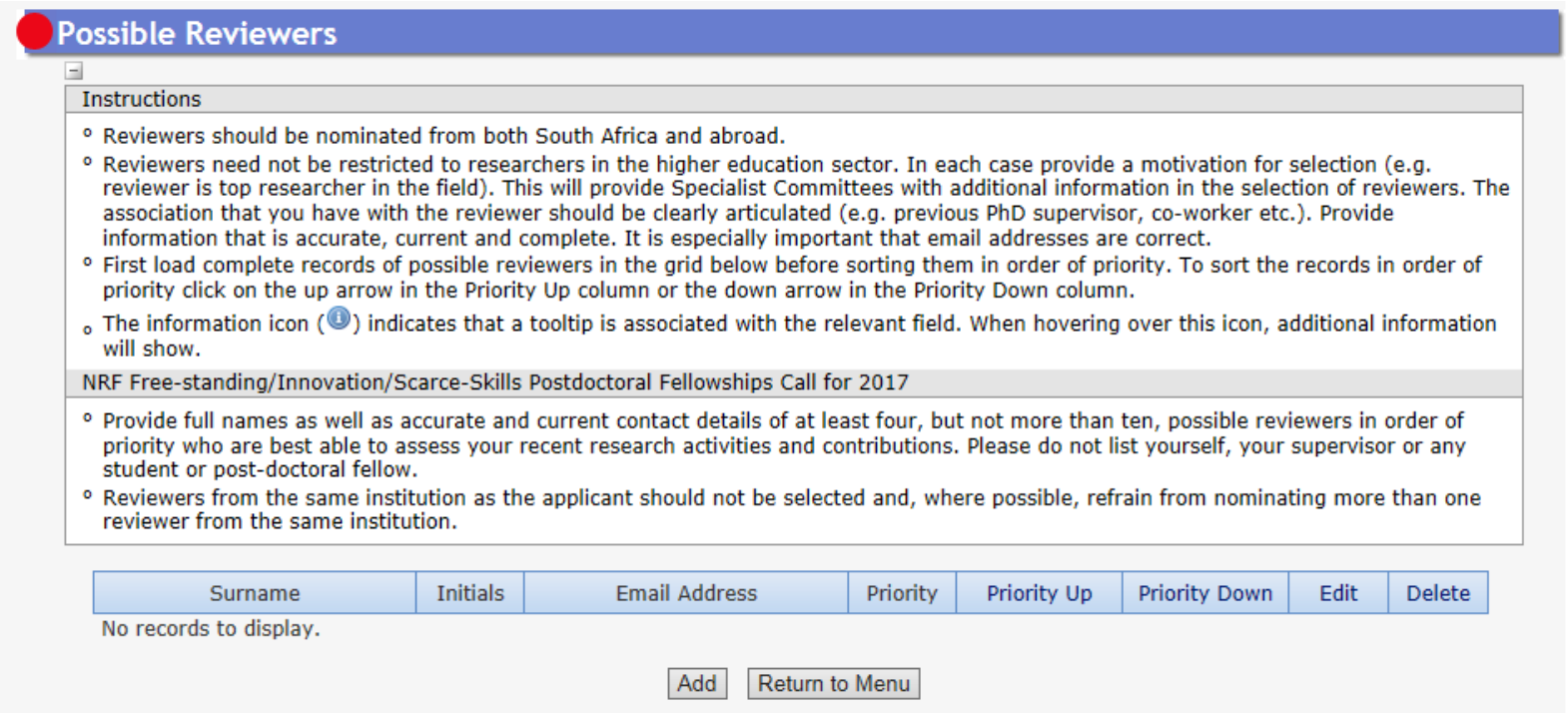
It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the referee email is correct and that the referees have responded by the closing date of 13 June 2016 as this category is assessed in the application. The applicant must view the application PDF to check if a referee has responded to the request for reference. A "yes" indicates a response and a "no" indicates no response from the referee.



References

Title	Prof
Initials	Z
Surname	Mahlangu
Name	Zodwa
Department	dfjkdjdfkds
Institution	CAPE ANIMAL MEDICAL CENTRE
Email Address	melissa.govender@nrf.ac.za
Role	Supervisor/Host of research
Responded	No

Step 10: The *Possible Reviewers* section is not compulsory in this Call. The section requires that you add the names of possible reviewers in your field of research that you have interacted with through conferences or other academic fora, to provide a neutral review of your proposed research project.



Possible Reviewers

Instructions

- Reviewers should be nominated from both South Africa and abroad.
- Reviewers need not be restricted to researchers in the higher education sector. In each case provide a motivation for selection (e.g. reviewer is top researcher in the field). This will provide Specialist Committees with additional information in the selection of reviewers. The association that you have with the reviewer should be clearly articulated (e.g. previous PhD supervisor, co-worker etc.). Provide information that is accurate, current and complete. It is especially important that email addresses are correct.
- First load complete records of possible reviewers in the grid below before sorting them in order of priority. To sort the records in order of priority click on the up arrow in the Priority Up column or the down arrow in the Priority Down column.
- The information icon (ⓘ) indicates that a tooltip is associated with the relevant field. When hovering over this icon, additional information will show.

NRF Free-standing/Innovation/Scarce-Skills Postdoctoral Fellowships Call for 2017

- Provide full names as well as accurate and current contact details of at least four, but not more than ten, possible reviewers in order of priority who are best able to assess your recent research activities and contributions. Please do not list yourself, your supervisor or any student or post-doctoral fellow.
- Reviewers from the same institution as the applicant should not be selected and, where possible, refrain from nominating more than one reviewer from the same institution.

Surname	Initials	Email Address	Priority	Priority Up	Priority Down	Edit	Delete

No records to display.

Add | Return to Menu

Step 11: 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 offices or Post Graduate Office and is usually at least two weeks prior to the NRF's closing date

DAs ensure that all proposals are screened and approved through internal institutional processes **before** submitting 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 12: The final submit button will appear only if all compulsory sections are complete. Press OK to submit your application. 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 Office of the institution that you 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 detail, or fail to comply with instruction as such 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.

5. Screening and Review Processes

5.1. Overview of the Screening Process

All applications validated by institutions and submitted to the NRF are screened by the NRF for compliance with the eligibility criteria of the Call for applications, as well as the requirements for completing the NRF Online Submission application. Applications that fail to meet the stipulated requirements will be rejected.

5.2. Overview of the Review Process

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

Panel members are selected from the NRF database and other sources, which is updated on a continuous basis. When selecting 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 Section 6).

The Review Panel provides recommendations to the NRF and the final funding decision is made by the NRF taking strategic and policy objectives into consideration. In awarding grants in this funding instrument, the NRF takes into account the recommendations of the peer review panel, the objectives and targets of the funding instrument, and the available funds.

6. Ranking of Applications

The purpose of the scoring system is to evaluate applications, based on funding instrument criteria, in order to determine applications that are most deserving of the limited funds available. All research proposals submitted to the NRF for funding are evaluated according to a number of predetermined criteria. Applications are assessed and ranked on the basis of criteria as listed in the table below. Each area may be given a weight to indicate its relative importance. Kindly consult the table below for details on the criteria used.

Scorecard for the Assessment of Proposals for Postdoctoral fellowships

Criteria	Sub-Criteria	Weight (Total = 100%)
Track Record of Applicant	Applicant expertise/training that will enable the applicant to successfully undertake the proposed research.	10%
	The applicant's research track record which could include peer reviewed publications, conference proceedings, research prizes and awards.	10%
Scientific and Technical quality of proposed research	Literature review with citations, significance of the research in terms of the problem statement, aims and objectives. Scientific contribution; originality and new knowledge to be generated.	20%
	Research design, methodology developed to address aims of the research. Provision of workplan and feasible timelines and milestones for the research.	20%
	Alignment with national and institutional research priorities.	5%
Institutional Support	Institutional support for the Postdoctoral fellowship through infrastructure and facilities for an enabling environment.	10%
Potential Research Outputs and Impact of the research	Details of envisaged realistic outputs of the research such as publications, conference proceedings, toolkits, policy documents.	5%
	Contribution to Postdoctoral research skills development in a priority research area (human capacity development of the applicant)	10%
	Potential for socio-economic impact of the research in South Africa	10%
		100%

7. Application 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 applications on the NRF website, www.nrf.ac.za/bursaries/calls. Thereafter, successful applicants will receive a letter of award. The application status online will not indicate whether or not the application has been approved for funding. **This funding instrument does not provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants**; if your name does not appear on the published list of successful applications it means that your application was unsuccessful.

An unsuccessful applicant who requires feedback is advised to contact their institutional office to request feedback from the NRF. The NRF does not provide feedback to all unsuccessful applicants due to the high volume of applicants within this funding instrument.

Unsuccessful applicants that wish to appeal the funding decision taken by the NRF must follow the appropriate Appeals Process of the NRF. Appeals will only be considered for this funding instrument within a 3 month period after the official date of publishing of the results on the NRF website.

8. Change Requests

8.1. 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 Research Office for approval prior to the change.

8.2. Changes in Project Scope, Supervisor or Institution

Changes may occur where a project scope, host or institution needs to be changed from the original research proposal, host or institution respectively. The request must have institutional DA endorsement and be submitted to the NRF *via* the Research 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 fellow 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 override this condition of grant.

9.3. Ethics

The fellow 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 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.

10. References

RSA (2008). Intellectual Property Rights from Publicly Financed Research and Development Act 51 of 2008. *Government Gazette*, 22 Dec 2008. Vol 522, No 31745