Grants Management and Systems Administration

Application and Funding Guide 2017
NRF Freestanding, Innovation and Scarce Skills Development Fund Honours
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## List of Acronyms

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B Tech</td>
<td>Bachelor of Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DA</td>
<td>Designated Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>GMSA</td>
<td>Grants Management and Systems Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>HEI</td>
<td>Higher Education Institution</td>
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<tr>
<td>HICD</td>
<td>Human and Institutional Capacity Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>ID</td>
<td>Identity Document</td>
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<tr>
<td>NRF</td>
<td>National Research Foundation</td>
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<tr>
<td>RISA</td>
<td>Research and Innovation Support and Advancement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UID</td>
<td>Unique Identification</td>
</tr>
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Contact Details

Ms Mpai Mphunngoa
Postgraduate Scholarship Consultant
Graduate Centre, Hatfield Campus, Room 1-55 Telephone:
Email Address: mpai.mphunngoa@up.ac.za

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 Freestanding, Innovation and Scarce Skills Development Fund Honours and Final Year Bachelor of Technology (B Tech) Block Grant Bursaries funding instrument. It should be read in conjunction with the NRF Freestanding, Innovation and Scarce Skills Development Fund (FISS) Honours and Final Year B Tech Block Grant Bursaries Framework document. The Framework document provides detailed information with respect to the objectives of the funding instruments, eligibility criteria and so forth. This document does not however, constitute a complete set of the policies, procedures or systems applied by the NRF.

2. Value of Support

Bursary values for full-time postgraduate students are indicated in table 1. Awards will be administered as block grants where university officials will be responsible for the review of submitted applications. Honours and final year B Tech degrees are funded for a period of one (1) year only, non-renewable. Semester grants of six (6) months will be accepted and will be paid on a pro rata basis. The funding period is calculated from the year/semester of first registration.

Table 1: Bursary values for full-time Honours and Final Year B Tech students for 2017 academic year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Bursary</th>
<th>Bursary value (per annum)</th>
<th>Maximum Funding period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DST Priority Research Areas</td>
<td>R60 000</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current DST-NRF Interns</td>
<td>R60 000</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation Bursary Scheme</td>
<td>R60 000</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRF Freestanding</td>
<td>R30 000</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students with disability</td>
<td>R60 000</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sasol-Inzalo</td>
<td>R60 000</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scarce Skills</td>
<td>R60 000</td>
<td>1 year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Assistive devices for students with disabilities

Bursary-holders with a disability may apply for additional funding for assistive technology devices of up to R20 000. This is the maximum amount allowed during the tenure of the scholarship. As defined by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997 (IDEA), an assistive technology device is "any piece of equipment, or product system, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities".

4. Application Process

The NRF is publishing the NRF Freestanding, Innovation and Scarce Skills Development Fund Honours and Final Year B Tech Block Grant Bursaries Call on the NRF website www.nrf.ac.za, that is accessible on the NRF Online Submission System https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za. Each applicant is limited to only one (1) application per Call. Once an applicant submits the online application, it will be automatically routed to the institutional delegated authority (DA) of the institution where the applicant intends to undertake the study. The DA will validate the applications on the institutional internal deadline date determined by the respective institutions, which will be before the NRF closing date of 31 October 2016. Applicants must enquire with their institutions regarding internal closing dates, which is normally a week or two before the NRF closing date. The processing of successful grant applications takes approximately five (5) months from the closing date of applications until the commencement of funding.

5. How to Create an Application

Applications must be completed on the NRF Online Submission System at https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za from Tuesday, 20 September 2016. Applicants are advised to complete their applications soon after the call has opened to prevent IT system overload nearer the closing date of 31 October 2016. Below are steps to follow in order to create an application.
**Step 1:** This is an electronic submission system and applicants must be registered on the system to create and complete an application. Register on the website by clicking on New Registration and entering new login details to access the application form.
Step 2: Once the applicant has logged on the NRF Online Submission System, they will arrive on the landing page where there is a black menu on the left hand side. Create a new application by clicking on My Applications then Create Application.
Step 3: Select the funding call for which you are applying on the Create Application screen and a new application will open. The application can be created only once; when applicants want to revisit their applications, they must click on My Applications, then List of Applications.

Applicants are urged to complete ALL screens of the CV section.
**Step 4:** All sections in this application are compulsory. These sections must all be completed in order for the final submit button to appear. Completed sections will be indicated by a green tick on the main menu. Application screens have application specific instructions to help the applicant work through the sections. The instructions will guide applicants with error messages where incorrect information was filled in. Applicants must follow these messages to help complete the section correctly.
Step 5: The Details of Nomination section requires the name of the institution where the degree will be undertaken as well as an indication of whether funding is required for a semester or a full year.

Step 6: Under the Details of Degree section, applicants are required to fill in details of the degree that is being applied for and information related to past studies and future intentions.

In the cumulative grade point average block, applicants are required to enter an academic average by adding up the marks of courses already passed or marks of undergraduate degree already obtained, and divide these by the number of courses.
**Step 7:** The attachment section provides specific instructions to upload attachments to the application. Here, the applicant is required to copy the identity document (ID) or passport, the official transcript and proof of registration. If the applicant has a disability, they may upload a medical certificate as a separate attachment in support of the disability. In cases where the applicant cannot upload a transcript due to outstanding fees, they must attach an official fees statement, on a university letterhead, that has an institutional stamp. Also to be attached is proof of funding where the applicant indicated they are funded by sources like NSFAS or the university financial aid.
**Step 8:** Once all sections have been completed, the final submit button will appear. Press OK to submit the application. If all the compulsory sections are completed and the final submit button does not appear, select any section and resave to refresh the application; the final submit button should then appear.

Applications that are incomplete, that contain insufficient or incorrect detail, or fail to comply with instructions will be rejected. The application must be completed in sufficient detail to allow for a comprehensive validation and institutional review.

Applicants must ensure that they adhere to the internal closing date for submission of the application to allow for institutional screening and review process, as well as the NRF final date for processing the nominations.

### 6. Screening and Review Processes

#### 6.1 Overview of the Screening Process

All applications will be validated and screened by the various institutions for compliance with the eligibility criteria of the Call for applications. Institutions must reject applications that fail to meet the stipulated requirements.

#### 6.2 Overview of the Review Process

The NRF’s peer review policy requires that all applications are subjected to a review process. Applications submitted to this funding instrument will go through an institutional review process.
7. Ranking of Applications

All applications submitted to the institution will follow a competitive process and will be evaluated using a number of predetermined criteria. The assessment and ranking of these applications will follow the criteria listed in table 2 below. Each criterion is given weight to indicate its relative importance. It is important to read the table for details on the criteria used.

Table 2: Scorecard for the assessment of proposals for Honours and Final Year B Tech Bursaries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Merit</td>
<td>Average percentage mark for previous degree</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career Path</td>
<td>Intention to continue to Master’s degrees</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority Research Area</td>
<td>Research aligned to one of the national research areas</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) or University Financial Aid Scheme</td>
<td>Previously funded by NSFAS or University Financial Aid Scheme (proof must be attached)</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. The Delegated Authority Nomination and Award Processes

The review process will follow the steps shown in the diagram below:

The NRF will allocate a set number of bursaries to each university based on institution historical uptake of grants, equity targets, expressed need and the available budget. Institutions will use a standard score card provided by the NRF to evaluate each application, before selecting and nominating students to take up the allocated bursaries.
9. Application Feedback and Disputes

As mentioned above, the Honours/B Tech application is a competitive process and institutions will notify successful awardees. Applicants must enquire with their institutional delegated authorities.

10. Application and Nomination Process Timelines

- All students must apply on the NRF Online Submission system at: https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za and follow the application process set out in the Application and Funding Guide for 2017. The submission deadline for applicants is **30 October 2016** for funding in 2017.
- The Designated Authority (DA) closing date for processing of all applications is **14 November 2016**. The DA will process all eligible applications for consideration under the selection process.
- Institutions will recommend students for a bursary award on the NRF Online Submission System, based on the Block Grant allocation to each institution and set equity targets. This process will take place from **21 November 2016 to 28 February 2017**.
- Recommended students must be approved by the NRF.
- DAs must upload and submit to the NRF the signed Conditions of Grant (CoGs) and proof of registration (PoR) documents for all approved students no later than **31 March 2017**.
- Unspent or unclaimed institutional funds under this allocation will automatically be cancelled by **31 May 2017**.
- Institutions must report on student completion by **31 March 2018** on the NRF student completion database.