



Collaborative Postgraduate Training

Framework Document

Directorate : Human and Infrastructure Capacity Development

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1. Introduction

The core mandate of the National Research Foundation (NRF) South Africa is to promote and support research through funding, human resource development and the provision of the necessary facilities in order to facilitate the creation of knowledge, innovation and development in all fields of research, and thereby contribute to establishing a knowledge-based economy. In order to achieve this mandate, the Department of Science and Technology (DST), through the NRF has made significant investment towards supporting “next generation” and “emerging researchers.” This is in line with the targets set out in the National Development Plan (NDP) 2030. The following targets are to be met by the year 2030:

- Increase the percentage of academic staff with doctoral degrees from 43% to 75%;
- Produce more than 100 doctoral graduates per million population by 2030;
- Produce an additional 100 000 doctoral graduates, most of which should be in the Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) disciplines; and
- Over 25 % of university enrolments should be postgraduate students.

The DST-NRF provides support for postgraduate students in the form of block grants awarded to institutions; grantholder-linked scholarships within research grants; and free-standing scholarships awarded to individual applicants. The Collaborative Postgraduate Training funding instrument is a complementary funding instrument which will enable multi-institutional collaborate training of a cohort of postgraduate students in a specific scarce skill discipline or priority research area. The training must involve a collaborative network of postgraduate students and supervisors led by the applicant.

The funding instrument aligns with the National Human Resource Strategy, the Ten-Year Innovation Plan of the DST and, to the strategic objective of the NRF that seeks to promote and support research through human resource development. It is located within the Human and Infrastructure Capacity Development (HICD) directorate and managed within the Next Generation Researchers (NGR) cluster of Human Capital Development (HCD) funding instruments. Funding is derived through a contractual agreement (DST/CON 0118/2012) between the DST and the NRF, for the management of funding for HCD.

The purpose of this framework document is to outline the implementation and funding principles of the Collaborative Postgraduate Training funding instrument for HCD.

2. Rationale

The objectives set out in the South African Human Resource Development (HRD) Strategy (2012 –2030) on developing and increasing the number of skilled personnel in SET, are a clear indication of the commitment the country has towards research, development and innovation in science and technology. The supporting platforms for the realisation of these HRD objectives as stipulated in the programme specific DST strategies require three critical areas for successful implementation:

- **Human capital:** the development of appropriate expertise and skills will receive priority attention, as without them all existing and envisaged programmes and infrastructure will be unsuccessful;
- **Infrastructure:** appropriate infrastructure is the cornerstone of an effective training programme, enabling technology transfer and human capacity development initiatives; and
- **International partnerships:** strategic partnerships with international partners are necessary for tangible and intangible technology transfer and a viable and sustainable human capital development programme.

The Collaborative Postgraduate Training to be supported under this funding instrument, must involve inter-university partnerships and preferably include relevant industry partnership(s) and/or public research institutions; all working together toward a common objective to produce and sustain a growing stream of well-rounded postgraduate students in the discipline.

3. Scope of the programme

The NRF invites lead applicants from public universities in South Africa to submit applications for funding support for a three-year block grant broken down as follows:

Postgraduate scholarships: No less than 60% of grant costs may be requested for Honours, Master's and Doctoral bursaries; and

Institutional Capacity: No more than 40% of the grant costs may be requested for institutional support comprising of small equipment costing less than R200 000; specialised software for research purposes; training workshops; international guest lecturers; technical staff in selected disciplines such as curators and artists in training and science

communication and outreach activities that may include programmes for supporting research exposure to undergraduate students.

4. Objectives

The objectives of this funding instrument are:

- To train a cohort of students in a specified scarce skill discipline or emerging research area spanning the physical, natural, social and human sciences, engineering and technology fields;
- To facilitate postgraduate training within a collaborative multi-institutional network; and
- To improve institutional capacity in order to enhance postgraduate training programmes at public universities in South Africa.

5. Allocation Principles

The grant supports well-structured Collaborative Postgraduate Training programmes with achievable objectives that support HCD in priority disciplines. The programme funding decisions will be guided by the following principles:

Equity and redress: In keeping with the equity and redress objectives the grant is based on a preferential funding model. In terms of this model, targets for supporting individuals from designated groups will be set;

Institutional capacity development: historically disadvantaged universities are encouraged to use this funding to improve institutional infrastructure e.g. computer software in order to enhance postgraduate training programmes and to attract students in the chosen fields;

Support for part-time postgraduate studies: support for part-time postgraduate students will only be considered in scarce and priority disciplines and/or disciplines where the majority of postgraduate students are registered for part-time studies. The target for the funding instrument is to support 90% full-time students and 10% part-time students. Targets on postgraduate student support will also be managed per grant. In improving efficiencies, the time to completion for postgraduate students must be monitored;

Developmental: even though the programme has a developmental focus, only quality proposals that are scientifically sound in terms of research and training, will be considered for funding;

Achievability: the research and training programmes must be realistic, *i.e.*, achievable in terms of the objectives, the resources required and the projected completion times; and

Partnerships: to ensure the alignment of human capital development with the needs of the country, proposals that involve inter-university partnerships and preferably include relevant industry partnership(s) and/or public research institutions; all working together toward a common objective to produce and sustain a growing stream of well-rounded postgraduate students in the discipline.

6. Eligibility Criteria

6.1. Eligibility criteria for applicants

Eligibility criteria for the lead applicant hosting the Collaborative Postgraduate Training grant are listed below. The applicant must:

- hold an academic position at a South African public university for the full duration of the awarded grant;
- hold a doctoral degree and have proven postgraduate supervision experience to host and supervise postgraduate students;
- demonstrate existing collaborations with national and international research institutions and universities for research and postgraduate training;
- demonstrate access to research funding by the applicant and consortium members to cover the research costs for the projects to be undertaken by the postgraduate students; and
- include at least two Historically Disadvantaged Higher Education Institutions, one of which may be the lead institution, in the Collaborative Postgraduate Training Initiative.
- Grant-holders of SARChI and Centres of Excellence are not eligible to apply.

6.2. Eligibility for students nominated for scholarships

The following eligibility criteria apply to the nominated students:

- Students must be either South African citizens or in possession of South African permanent residency (87%) as well as a limited percentage of international students (13%);
- Honours and final year B Tech students must be registered for a postgraduate degree at any South African public university;
- Students enrolling for Masters studies must hold a Honours, B. Tech or four-year degree;
- Students enrolling for Doctoral studies must hold a Master's level qualification;
- Postgraduate student beneficiaries may not concurrently hold another NRF scholarship or any other funding support from a South African government source; and
- Individuals that already hold a degree at the level for which they are nominated, are not eligible for support.

7. Application Requirements

The lead applicant will apply for the Collaborative Postgraduate Training grant indicating the following:

- Details of lead applicant and university;
- Objectives of the Collaborative Postgraduate Training initiative;
- Motivation indicating alignment with national priority research areas*, scarce skill area and/or a vulnerable discipline;
- Expected outputs and outcomes in advancing HCD in the given discipline;
- Collaborating partners;
- Partner universities where students will be registered for postgraduate studies;
- Postgraduate supervisors and research projects for training of postgraduate training;
- Availability of research running costs;
- Requested number of scholarships at Honours, Masters and Doctoral levels; institutional capacity and mobility; and

- Motivation for part-time student support where applicable.

Applicants must attach the *Curriculum Vitae* of all supervisors listed in the application.

8. Application Process

Applicants may apply by following the steps below:

- Applications for a three year block grant must be submitted through an online application process to the NRF.
 - **Applicants must apply for the 2018 Collaborative Postgraduate Training by accessing the link: <https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za/>**
 - **Register / Login using your ID number and password.**
 - Go to applications
 - Select create application.
 - Select the call for which you are applying to viz. **Collaborative Postgraduate Training call for 2018.**
 - Click on the “Apply” icon.
 - Remember to complete all compulsory sections of the application as incomplete applications will not be considered for support by the NRF. Please follow the step-by-step directions supplied in the *Funding Guide*.
 - Remember to **submit** your application on completion.
 - Complete applications will be directed to the host University for Verification before being forwarded to the NRF for further processing. **It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the university has approved the application and forwarded it to the NRF.**
 - Incomplete applications will not be considered.
 - Applications that do not meet the eligibility criteria will not be considered (please refer to section 2 for details on eligibility for the Collaborative Postgraduate Training).
 - Please contact the NRF if you have any queries.
 - The closing date for submitting applications is **12 May 2017.**

Please take note of your institutions internal closing dates as these will be set before the actual call closing date.

9. Approval Process

The applications submitted to the NRF will undergo a technical review to ensure accountability and appropriate utilisation of funds to be awarded. The proposal will be approved for funding for a three-year period. However, funding for years two and three will be released to grant-holders on an annual basis, subject to satisfactory progress. Once the grant has been approved and the Conditions of Grant has been signed by the grant-holder, student nominations will be approved by the NRF in line with DST-NRF equity targets.

9.1. Proposal review criteria

- Supervisory capacity of the lead applicant and supervisors at the collaborating partner institutions;
- Alignment with national priority research areas*, scarce skill area and/or a vulnerable discipline;
- Expected outputs and outcomes in advancing HCD in the given discipline;
- Collaborative partnerships for HCD training;
- Access to research running costs; and
- Requested budget.

10. Awarding Principle

Student scholarships (60%) will be released on the basis of student nominations and approval by the lead applicant's institution. All funds will be released to the lead applicant's (*i.e.* grant-holder's) institution. Scholarships not taken up within six (6) months of the grant award to the lead applicant will be cancelled for reallocation unless otherwise approved by the NRF.

These awards will be managed in terms of standard NRF financial policies and procedures. The payment of the grant by the NRF to successful applicants will be administered by the Grants Management and Systems Administration (GMSA) Directorate to the relevant institutions' cost centres. The institution will in turn administer the funds on behalf of the successful grant holder to the value of the full sum awarded by the NRF.

11. Conditions of the award

For continuous monitoring of the funding instrument, the grant holder will be required to submit an Annual Progress Reports (APR) in a format provided by the NRF, against

deliverables as outlined in the application form and the signed Conditions of Grant. At the end of the three-year funding period, a final report must be submitted listing the outputs and expenditure of the previous years, as well as containing a final assessment of progress made in relation to project objectives. Scholarships for qualifying continuing students will be released upon submission of an Annual Progress Report in accordance with the NRF Scholarship Agreement.

Block Grant awards to institutions will be made in September 2017, all funds for full-time and part-time postgraduate students (Honours, Masters, and Doctoral) must be taken up by end January 2018. All unused funds will be cancelled and/or re-distributed under the programme. In addition, no carry forwards will be considered under the DST-NRF Collaborative Postgraduate Training.

12. Types of financial support

The budget allocation must take into consideration the targets for the programme *viz.* sixty percent (60%) for postgraduate scholarships and forty percent (40%) for institutional capacity and mobility. Each application shall indicate projected costs, for years one (1), two (2) and three (3). The total requested budget (Human Capital Development, Infrastructure and Operational cost) under this programme cannot exceed R1 500 000 for the three years funding period.

Note: the running expenses must be calculated at 40% of the total requested number of students per year and not based on the maximum value of R1 500 000 that each applicant qualifies for.

12.1. Postgraduate scholarships

The duration and value for postgraduate scholarships is listed in the table that follows. These values will be reviewed annually to maintain alignment with the Innovation Bursaries for Honours, Master's and Doctoral students.

Table 1: Scholarship values and maximum periods of support

Study Level	Scholarship Value for 2017/18 (Rand per annum)	Maximum Funding Period (Years)
Honours full-time	60 000	One
Honours part-time	20 000	Two
Masters full-time	90 000	Two
Masters part-time	30 000	Three
Doctoral full-time	120 000	Three
Doctoral part-time	40 000	Five

Note: The period of support for nominated students is calculated from the first year of registration for the study or research regardless of NRF funding. Overall, only 10% of postgraduate bursaries will be awarded for part-time studies in this funding instrument. However, if part-time doctoral students are nominated, the grant will run for a period of five (5) years as indicated in table 1 above and the grant for operational expenses will run for three (3) years.

12.2. Demographics targets for postgraduate students

Student nominations shall be made as follows:

- 87% to South African (including permanent residents);
- 5% to students from the South African Development Community (SADC) region; and
- 4% to students from the rest of Africa and 4% to students from non-African countries

The overall student composition shall comprise of 55% women, 80% Black (African, Coloured and Indian) and 4% students with disabilities.

12.3. Institutional capacity and mobility

The following budget items may be included in the application and all requests must be fully motivated for in the application.

- Small to medium-sized equipment costing no more than R200 000 (two hundred thousand rand);
- Specialised computer software required for postgraduate training;

- Postgraduate training workshops;
- Travel and subsistence for international guest lecturers;
- Technical staff in selected disciplines such as curators and artists in training; and
- Science communication and outreach activities that may include programmes for supporting research exposure to undergraduate students.

13. Financial Control

Student scholarships (60%) will be released on the basis of student nominations and approval by the lead applicant's institution. All funds will be released to the lead applicant's (*i.e.* Grant holder's) institution. Scholarships not taken up within six (6) months of the grant award to the lead applicant will be cancelled for reallocation unless otherwise approved by the NRF.

These awards will be managed in terms of standard NRF financial policies and procedures. The payment of the grant by the NRF to successful applicants will be administered by the Grants Management and Systems Administration (GMSA) Directorate to the relevant institutions' cost centres. The institution will in turn administer the funds on behalf of the successful grantholder to the value of the full sum awarded by the NRF.

14. Assessment criteria

The assessment criteria for the applications are set out in the scorecard illustrated in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Scorecard for the evaluation of application

Criteria	Sub-Criteria	Weight (Total = 100%)
1. Track Record of Applicant	Past research outputs (Journal articles, conference presentations and proceedings, book chapters, patents and awards), the candidate's research experience, postgraduate supervision experience, and experience to host a cohort of postgraduate students.	15%
2. Human Capital Development	Student involvement/training outlined, Expected outputs and outcomes in advancing HCD, *alignment with national research priority/scarce skill area and/or vulnerable discipline.	40%
3. Potential Research Outputs	Details of envisaged realistic outputs of the research such as publications, conference proceedings, toolkits, policy documents.	20%
4. Collaboration on Research Project	Collaboration between institutions include historically disadvantaged higher education institutions. Existing research collaborations with national and international research institutions and universities demonstrated.	20%
5. Running Cost and Requested Budget	Access to research grant or funding to support the research to be undertaken by the Postgraduate students and feasibility of the requested budget. Must indicate the value of available or previous funds and source of funding. Sixty percent (60%) of the total budget should be allocated towards human capital development (HCD) and forty percent (40%) towards operating costs. The forty percent is inclusive of Small to medium-sized equipment costing no more than R200 000 (two hundred thousand rand); Specialised computer software required for postgraduate training; Postgraduate training workshops; Travel and Subsistence for International guest lecturers. The total requested budget (Human Capital Development, Infrastructure and Operational cost) under this programme cannot exceed R1 500 000 per annum.	5%
		100%

15. NRF contact persons

For programme related enquiries, please contact:

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Addendum 1:

Historically Disadvantaged Higher Education Institutions and Campuses / Sites in South Africa.

No.	Historically Disadvantaged Universities
1	University of Fort Hare
2	University of Limpopo
3	Mangosuthu University of Technology
4	University of Venda
5	University of the Western Cape
6	Walter Sisulu University
7	University of Zululand
No.	Historically Disadvantaged University Campuses / Sites
1	Central University of Technology (Welkom)
2	Durban University of Technology (ML Sultan)
3	University of Johannesburg (Soweto)
4	University of KwaZulu-Natal (Westville)
5	Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (Missionvale)
6	University of the Free State (QwaQwa)
7	North West University (Mafikeng)
8	University of Pretoria (Mamelodi)
9	Tshwane University of Technology (Shoshanguve and Ga-Rankuwa)
10	Vaal University of Technology (Sebokeng)
11	University of South Africa (East Rand)

Source: DHET 2014

***Relevant documents on National Priority Research Areas:**

1. <http://www.dst.gov.za/index.php/resource-center/strategies-and-reports/143-the-ten-year-plan-for-science-and-technology>
2. <http://www.dst.gov.za/index.php/resource-center/strategies-and-reports/174-national-research-a-development-strategy-2002>
3. http://www.gov.za/sites/www.gov.za/files/Science_Technology_White_Paper.pdf
4. http://www.gov.za/sites/www.gov.za/files/Bioeconomy%20Strategy_a.pdf
5. http://www.gov.za/sites/www.gov.za/files/PALEO_STRATEGY_DST_Final_.pdf
6. http://www.gov.za/sites/www.gov.za/files/DST_Nanotech_18012006_0.pdf
7. http://www.gov.za/document?search_query=strategy&field_gcisdoc_doctype=All&field_gcisdoc_subjects=518&start_date=&end_date=&=Search
8. <http://www.gov.za/about-sa/science-technology>