



RISA

Research and Innovation
Support and Advancement

Framework

**NRF Honours' and final year B Tech Block Grant Bursaries for
2018**

Directorate: Human and Infrastructure Capacity Development (HICD)

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Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	2
1. Background and Rationale	3
2. Objectives	5
3. Areas of Support	6
3.1. NRF Freestanding	6
3.2. Innovation (including DST Priority Research Areas)	6
3.3 Scarce Skills Bursaries and National Student Financial Aid Scheme Pipeline.....	7
3.4 Students with Disability	8
4. Eligibility	8
5. Students not eligible	9
6. Application Process	9
7. Attachments	10
8. Evaluation Criteria	10
9. Selection and Awarding Criteria	11
10. Student Nominations and NRF Approval	11
11. Equity and Redress	12
12. Value of Support.....	12
13. Conditions of Award	13
14. Financial Control	14
15. NRF Contact Persons.....	14
16. Relevant Strategies on National Priority Research Areas	15

1. Background and Rationale

The purpose of this framework document is to outline the funding principles and implementation of the Honours' and final year Bachelor of Technology (B Tech) block grant for (i) National Research Foundation (NRF) Freestanding Bursaries; (ii) Innovation Bursaries which includes the Department of Science and Technology (DST) priority research areas and NRF-Sasol Inzalo bursaries; (iii) the Scarce Skills Bursaries supported by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) through the National Skills Fund (NSF); (iv) bursaries for the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) undergraduate-funded students; and (v) bursaries for students with a disability. These funding instruments are funded by the NRF core grant allocation from National Treasury; the DST (DST/CON 0118/2012); and the DHET.

These bursaries advance the objectives of the National Development Plan (NDP) 2030 to increase the number of academic staff members at South African universities with doctoral qualifications to 75% and, the number of PhD graduations to 6 000 per annum by the year 2030. Furthermore, these funding instruments advance the joint deliverables of the DST and the NRF for developing high-end skills in South Africa. These high-end skills are critical for South Africa to establish a knowledge-based economy and for producing new knowledge for socio-economic development.

The NRF is mandated by an Act of Parliament, the National Research Foundation Act (Act No. 23 of 1998) to: *“Support and promote research through funding, human capacity development and the provision of the necessary research facilities, in order to facilitate the creation of knowledge, innovation and development in all fields of science and technology, including indigenous knowledge”*.

In support of this mandate, the NRF makes funds available to support Honours' and Final Year B Tech students for the 2018 academic year. These bursaries are released as block grants to South African public universities (**Table 1**). In addition, the block grant awards for qualifying students are made to universities depending on the availability of the budget as well as in line with the Ministerial guidelines for improving equity in the distribution of DST/NRF Bursaries and Fellowships (Ministerial Guidelines on Bursaries and Fellowships, 2013).

Table 1: Bursaries for Honours' and final year B Tech studies funded by DHET and DST

Bursaries	BSc Honours and B Tech
NRF Freestanding	Institutional nomination
Innovation Bursary Scheme including:	Institutional nomination
1. DST Priority Research Areas	Institutional nomination
2. Current DST-NRF Interns	NRF nomination
3. Sasol-Inzalo	NRF nomination
Scarce Skills Bursaries	Institutional nomination
NSFAS Pipeline	Institutional nomination
Students with disability	Institutional nomination

In addition, the DST and the DHET provide support for students with disabilities at all levels of study. The **definition of a person with disabilities** is defined according to The Code of Good Practice on Employment of People with Disabilities and the Employment Equity Act, (Act No 55 of 1998). The act states that: only people who satisfy all the criteria in the definition: (i) long-term or recurring; (ii) having a physical or mental impairment; (iii) which substantially limits, are considered as persons with disabilities.

According to the published *High Education Qualification Framework* as set out in the Schedule as policy in terms of the section 3 of the Higher Education Act, 1997 (Act No. 101 of 1997), the Bachelor Honours Degree (NQF Level 8) is a postgraduate specialisation qualification, characterised by the fact that it prepares students for research based postgraduate study. Additionally, programmes must include conducting and reporting research under supervision, worth at least 30 credits, in a manner that is appropriate to the discipline or field of study.

In contrast, a Postgraduate Diploma (NQF Level 8) is generally multi- or interdisciplinary in nature but may serve to strengthen and deepen the student's knowledge in a particular discipline or profession. The primary purpose of the qualification is to enable working professionals to undertake advanced reflection and development by means of a systematic survey of current thinking, practice and research methods in an area of specialisation. A sustained research project is not required but the qualification may include conducting and reporting research under supervision. It is against this backdrop

that the NRF has taken a strategic decision not to fund Postgraduate Diploma because it does not meet the requirements for this programme.

Prior to 2016, the NRF allocated Block Grants to universities that would implement NRF application and selection processes for awarding of the Honours' and final year B Tech bursaries allocated to each institution. In order to comply with good corporate governance, the NRF has migrated the application process to the NRF Online Submission application system by implementing a standardised application form and process for all Honours' and final year B Tech students. 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. The advantage of this standardised process is that it will be auditable, fair and transparent. It will also enable institutions and the NRF to assess the pool of eligible applicants and to respond more effectively should there be a need for reallocation of bursaries or to make additional bursary awards.

2. Objectives

The objectives of the Honours' and Final Year B Tech bursaries are to:

- Support the development of a critical mass of globally competitive human resources in prioritised areas;
- Promote and advancing science, research and innovation;
- Contribute towards the increase in the number and quality of South African postgraduate students (Honours and Final year B Tech) in all areas of (i) Science, (ii) Engineering and (iii) Technology and in the (iv) Social Sciences and (v) Humanities;
- Build a pipeline of the next generation of skilled scientists and researchers in South Africa;
- Effect transformation in the percentage representation of postgraduate students from designated groups *viz.* black, female and persons with disabilities ; and
- Support the development of postgraduate training to meet the specific needs of the country in conjunction with the higher education sector and industry.

3. Areas of Support

3.1. NRF Freestanding

The bursary is intended to support full-time Honours' and final year B Tech candidates to pursue research studies in all areas of (i) Science, (ii) Engineering and (iii) Technology and in the (iv) Social Sciences and (v) Humanities, at public universities and research institutions in South Africa. The percentage of supported students will be 80% from the Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) disciplines and 20 % from the Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH).

3.2. Innovation (including DST Priority Research Areas)

The Innovation Bursary Scheme which also includes priority research areas* supports students who wish to pursue their Honours and final year B Tech studies in the fields listed below *viz.*:

- Astronomy;
- Bioinformatics*;
- Biotechnology;
- Cellular and Molecular Biology;
- Chemistry;
- Climate Change*;
- Computer science;
- Drug Discovery and Development*;
- Earth Sciences;
- Earth Observation*;
- Ecology;
- Engineering;
- Functional Genomics*;
- Global Change, Society and Sustainability*;
- Indigenous Knowledge Systems*;
- Mathematical Sciences;
- Material Science;
- Marine Sciences*;
- Medicinal Plant Research*;
- Medical sciences;
- Nanotechnology*;
- Nuclear Science;

- Nuclear Technologies in Medicine and Biosciences*;
- Palaeosciences*;
- Physics;
- Renewable Energy*;
- Social Science and Humanities; and
- Space Science*.

The percentage of supported students will be 80% from SET and 20% from the SSH disciplines.

3.3 Scarce Skills Bursaries and National Student Financial Aid Scheme Pipeline

The DHET supports full-time students through the NSF who wish to pursue their Honours and final year B Tech studies in the fields listed in table 2.

Table 2: Honours and Final year B Tech qualifications eligible for Scarce Skills Bursaries and NSFAS postgraduate funding.

BSc Honours	Scarce Skills Hons & B Tech	NSFAS Hons Pipeline	NSFAS B Tech Pipeline
Accounting	Yes	Yes	No
Actuarial Studies	Yes	Yes	No
Agriculture	Yes	Yes	No
Architecture	No	No	Yes
Auditing	Yes	Yes	No
Biotechnology	Yes	Yes	Yes
Business Management	Yes	Yes	No
Chemistry	Yes	Yes	No
Computer Science	Yes	Yes	No
Demography	Yes	Yes	No
Economics	Yes	Yes	No
Engineering	Yes	Yes	Yes
Forestry	No	No	Yes
Financial Management	Yes	Yes	No
Geology	Yes	Yes	No
Health Science	No	No	Yes
Information Systems	Yes	Yes	No

BSc Honours	Scarce Skills Hons & B Tech	NSFAS Hons Pipeline	NSFAS B Tech Pipeline
Mathematical Sciences	Yes	Yes	No
Physical Sciences	Yes	Yes	No
Statistics	Yes	Yes	No
Sport Science	No	No	Yes
Transportation studies	Yes	Yes	No
Tourism	Yes	Yes	No

Only applicants whose study disciplines are listed above will be funded by NSFAS through the NRF. Applicants who wish to apply for NSFAS funding for the following study disciplines must do so on the NSFAS website before 30 November 2017 on <https://my.nsfas.org.za/mynsfas/selfservice.html> . B Tech degrees listed at 4 below are supported by both the NRF and NSFAS. However, only one award will be given to successful students.

1. Postgraduate Certificate in Education;
2. Postgraduate Diploma in Accounting;
3. LLB;
4. B Tech – Architecture; Architectural Technology; Biokinetics; Biomedical Technology and Biotechnology.

3.4 Students with Disability

The bursary is intended to support Honours' and final year B Tech students, with a physical or mental impairment, to pursue research degrees in all areas of (i) Science, (ii) Engineering and (iii) Technology and in the (iv) Social Sciences and (v) Humanities, at public universities and research institutions in South Africa.

4. Eligibility

The eligibility criteria listed in Table 3 applies to applicants for Honours' and final year B Tech who are intending to register full-time at a South African public University. This is as a result of a monitored Key Performance Indicator (KPI) pipeline in increasing Masters and Doctoral students.

Table 3: Eligibility Criteria for Honours' and Final year B Tech students

Programme	Eligibility
NRF Freestanding	South African citizens and South African permanent residents.
Innovation Bursary Scheme	
Priority Research Areas	
DST-NRF Interns*	
NRF-Sasol-Inzalo	
Scarce Skills Bursaries	
NSFAS Pipeline**	

* Applicant who held a DST-NRF internship in 2017

** Preference will be given to students previously funded by NSFAS.

5. Students not eligible

- Foreign Nationals;
- Applicants that already hold an Honours' or Final year B Tech degree;
- Applicants pursuing an undergraduate degree irrespective of the degree that they are enrolled for; and
- Applicants' intending to pursue Postgraduate diploma qualification.

6. Application Process

Students must first identify the university where they will be registered for the Honours' or final year B Tech degree. Applications for funding in 2018 must then be submitted, to the university where they intend to register, through the NRF Online Submission System by accessing the link: <https://nrfs submission.nrf.ac.za/>. The call for applications will be open from October 2017 to 15 January 2018. Further instructions on the application process will be made available on the NRF Honours and Final Year B Tech Block Grant Application and Funding Guide for 2018. **It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the university has received and approved the application.**

7. Attachments

Applicants must attach the following documents on the attachment section of your online application:

- i. Certified South African Identity Document.
- ii. Certified academic record or, in case of applicants with outstanding fees , attach an official university stamped and signed statement stating that the transcript is not issued due to outstanding fees. Proof of NSFAS or University Financial Aid funding for applicants that have indicated that they were previously funded by NSFAS or received University Financial Aid funding.

8. Evaluation Criteria

Each university will evaluate applications submitted by the students intending to study at the respective institution using the scorecard provided by the NRF. The following will be considered in evaluating all students' applications (Table 4):

1. Average percentage mark for the previous degree.
2. Priority research area of study to be supported;
3. Intention to continue with Masters studies upon completion of the Honours' or B Tech degree.

Table 4: Scorecard for the assessment of applications for NRF Honours and final year B -Tech Scholarships

Criteria	Description	Weight
Academic Merit	Average percentage mark for previous degree.	40%
Career path	Intention to continue with Master's degree.	25%
Priority Research Area	Research aligned with one of the national research priority areas*.	35%
Total		100%

9. Selection and Awarding Criteria

In all Scholarships, priority will be given to financially needy yet academically capable applicants who were previously funded by the NSFAS and/or University Financial Aid. Each student nominated by the university must be selected and awarded based on the following:

Selection Criteria

1. Availability of budget;
2. Ministerial guidelines on demographic targets for equity and redress
 - a. 80% Black Students (African, Indian, coloured);
 - b. 55% Women Students (African, Indian, Coloured, White);
 - c. 4% Students with disability.
3. NSF Demographics targets.
 - a. 85% Black Students (African, Indian, coloured);
 - b. 55% Women Students (African, Indian, Coloured, White);
 - c. 4% Students with disability.

Awarding Criteria (Order of priority)

1. Financially needy (NSFAS or University Financial Aid),
2. Highest score as per scorecard

10. Student Nominations and NRF Approval

The NRF will allocate a block grant of a set number of bursaries to each university based on historical uptake, 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. The NRF will not approve nominations that do not comply with these criteria. Students who are unable to submit an academic transcript due to outstanding fees must not be screened out. However, they must attach proof of outstanding fees from the university with an institutional stamp and signature.

11. Equity and Redress

In line with the national imperative of equity and redress, the bursary scheme prioritises support for appropriately qualified applicants from designated groups *viz.* black, female and persons with disabilities, while ensuring that only applications that meet the NRF merit assessment and selection criteria are supported. The set equity targets are 80% blacks, 55% women and 4% students with disabilities as directed by the DST Ministerial Guidelines on Equity and Redress (Ministerial Guidelines on Bursaries and Fellowships, 2013).

The DHET funded bursaries i.e. Scarce Skills and NSFAS pipeline bursaries will be distributed according to the following set equity targets; 85% blacks, 55% women and 4% students with disabilities.

12. Value of Support

Bursary values for full-time Honours' and final year B Tech students are indicated in Table 4. The bursary support is for one (1) year only and is not renewable.

Table 5: Bursary values for full-time Honours and Final year B Tech students for 2018 academic year

Type of Bursary	Bursary value (per annum)	Maximum Funding period
DST Priority Research Areas	R60 000	1 year
Current DST-NRF Interns	R60 000	1 year
Innovation Bursary Scheme	R60 000	1 year
NRF Freestanding	R30 000	1 year
Students with disability	R60 000	1 year
NRF-Sasol-Inzalo	R60 000	1 year
Scarce Skills	R60 000	1 year
NSFAS	R76 000	1 Year

Assistive devices for students with disabilities

Bursary-holders with a disability may apply for additional funding for an assistive technology device of up to **R20 000**. This is the maximum amount allowed during the tenure of the bursary. 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*".

13. Conditions of Award

- Successful applicants who are offered the scholarships by the NRF are required to complete and sign the student agreement that will be forwarded at the time of the award.
- The scholarship-holder may undertake a maximum of 12 hours of teaching, tutorials, assistance or demonstration duties per week on average during the year of study and may be remunerated for these duties, provided that they are reimbursed at a rate not exceeding the normal institution tariff for services rendered.
- Scholarship-holders may not hold full-time salaried employment during the tenure of the award.
- All NRF scholarships awards shall be held as primary funding towards the research study.
- Scholarship-holders are allowed to hold non-binding supplementary grants or emoluments to half the value of the NRF award. Alternatively, should the host university have an institutional capped value, the NRF award can be supplemented to the university capped value for the level of study.
- NRF scholarships may not be held simultaneously with a bursary / scholarship from any other government or NRF administered source.
- The scholarship-holder must obtain the degree for which the scholarship was awarded by the contractual date which is within one (1) year after NRF funding has ceased and notify the NRF via the university authority. Should the scholarship-holder not complete the degree for which the scholarship was awarded, the funds will have to be returned to the NRF plus interest at the prevailing prime rate charged by the NRF bankers.

14. Financial Control

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 applicant to the value of the full sum awarded by the NRF. Bursaries not taken up by June of the year of award will be cancelled for reallocation unless otherwise approved by the NRF.

15. NRF Contact Persons

For programme related enquiries, please contact:

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For Grant Management and System Administration related enquiries, please contact:

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16. Relevant Strategies 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>