



Application and Funding Guide

Freestanding, Innovation and Scarce Skills Postdoctoral Fellowships

Directorate: Grants Management and Systems Administration

Date: February 2020

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Contact Details

When making an enquiry, please use “Freestanding, Innovation and Scarce Skills Postdoctoral Fellowship Call” as the email subject line.

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

Ms Zodwa Mahlangu

Professional Officer: Grants Management and Systems Administration (GMSA)

Telephone: 012 481 4114

E-mail: zodwa.mahlangu@nrf.ac.za

For funding instrument related enquiries, please contact:

Mr Malose Ledwaba

Professional Officer: Human and Infrastructure Capacity Development (HICD).

Telephone: 012 481 4236

E-mail: malose.ledwaba@nrf.ac.za

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

Telephone: 012-481 4034

E-mail: supportdesk@nrf.ac.za

1. Introduction

This document provides an overview of the application process and funding guidelines for the Freestanding, Innovation and Scarce Skills Postdoctoral Fellowships funding instruments. It should be read in conjunction with the abovementioned **Framework**, which may be accessed at <https://nrfs submission.nrf.ac.za>. The Framework provides detailed information with respect to objectives of the funding instruments, eligibility criteria and other relevant information for applicants. This document does not, however, constitute a complete set of the policies, procedures or systems used by the NRF.

2. Application Process

The NRF is issuing this pooled call for Freestanding, Innovation and Scarce Skills Postdoctoral Fellowship applications that is published on the NRF website and is accessible online at <https://nrfs submission.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, the application will be automatically routed to the institutional Designated Authority (DA) of the submitting institution for validation at the deadline date determined by individual institutions. The applications will then be authorised and approved by the institutional DA through a screening process using the call requirements.

The institution will submit a maximum of thirty (30) applications from all the Postdoctoral applications received at the university or research institution. Applications submitted by the institutions to the NRF must be aligned with the following equity targets:

- **80 % South African citizens and permanent residents**
- **80 % Black (African, Indian and Coloured)**
- **55% Female**

3. How to Submit Applications

Applications must be completed on the NRF Online Submission System at <https://nrfs submission.nrf.ac.za>. Applicants are advised to complete their applications soon after the call opened to prevent IT system overload nearer the closing date.

Applicants must ensure that they adhere to their institution's internal closing date for submission of their applications to allow for internal institutional screening and review. The internal closing date will be determined by the respective Research/Postgraduate/Financial aid Office of the institution.

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 an 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 your e-mail address is outdated, please contact the NRF Support Desk at (012) 481-4202 for assistance.

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 instructions carefully before completing the section.

The screenshot shows the NRF Online Submission System homepage. At the top, there is a header with the NRF logo, RISA logo, and the text 'NRF Online Submission System'. Below the header, there is a navigation menu on the left with links: Home, New Registration, and Reset Password. A blue arrow points to the 'Reset Password' link. On the right side of the page, there are links for Feedback and Support. The main content area is divided into two sections: 'Log In' and 'Open Calls'. The 'Log In' section has a form with fields for 'ID/Passport/Unique Number' and 'Password', a 'Show Password' checkbox, and a 'login' button. A blue arrow points to the 'Reset password.' link below the password field. The 'Open Calls' section lists various funding opportunities, including 'Community Engagement 2017', 'Competitive Programme for Rated Researchers 2017', 'Competitive Support for Unrated Researchers 2017', 'DST-NRF Professional Development Programme (PDP) Call for 2016', 'Equipment-related Travel and Training Grants 2016', 'Infrastructure Funding Instruments in support of the: National Equipment Programme (NEP) and National Nanotechnology Equipment Programme (NNEP) 2016', 'Knowledge, Interchange and Collaboration (KIC) 2016 – Round 1', and 'Research Development Grants for Y-Rated Researchers 2017'.

Home
New Registration
Reset Password

Feedback Support

Instructions

- If you have already registered on the previous systems (NRF Online and Interim), please use your existing login details to access this system. If you have forgotten your password, please click on the Reset Password link on the left-hand menu.
- For technical online enquiries, please contact the Support Desk (Mondays to Fridays from 08h00 to 16h30) on:
Tel: +27 12 481 4202
E-mail: supportdesk@nrf.ac.za
- To access call related documents, please refer to the Open Calls block below. Click on the icon next to the relevant call to show a list of document(s). To open the document, click on the relevant link.

Log In

ID/Passport/Unique Number:

Password: ☐ Show Password

[Reset password.](#)
[Not registered? Click here to register.](#)

Open Calls

- Community Engagement 2017
- Competitive Programme for Rated Researchers 2017
- Competitive Support for Unrated Researchers 2017
- DST-NRF Professional Development Programme (PDP) Call for 2016
- Equipment-related Travel and Training Grants 2016
- Infrastructure Funding Instruments in support of the: National Equipment Programme (NEP) and National Nanotechnology Equipment Programme (NNEP) 2016
- Knowledge, Interchange and Collaboration (KIC) 2016 – Round 1
- Research Development Grants for Y-Rated Researchers 2017

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.

NRF Online Submission System

My Profile
My Applications
Tools
My Progress Reports
Reports
Logout

Create Application
List of Applications

Welcome Mrs Melissa Govender
Feedback Support

Landing Page

Information

- PLEASE NOTE: The summary below only lists output records that were migrated from the previous NRF Online system. New records that are added on this system will not form part of this summary.
- Applicants must ensure that their CV is updated/completed before creating an application.
- In order for your migrated research outputs to show on the CV or be accessible for selection on applications that require your publication record, you **must** verify (review) the outputs listed in the **Research Outputs Summary** table below. In order to do this, click on the output type that still has outputs to be verified (see the To be Reviewed column). Scroll to the bottom of the screen and a heading saying cleaned-up research output records from NRF Online will be displayed. Click on the little black arrow. This will display the output(s) that needs to be verified. Then click on the View icon, it will open a screen with the data for the output. Please fill in the missing information and save the page. If you have more than one output per output type, click on View for the next output. Do this for all the outputs, the output type on the landing page should now say 0. Move on to the next output type and repeat the process. Should you wish to delete an output, then click on the Feedback box, fill in the **Feedback to the NRF box** (e.g. output duplicated, please delete) and in the **Status** field, please select Delete.
- In some cases, researchers' outputs don't show at all. The reason for this is
 - The ID/passport number which the cleaned data was linked to when the clean-up exercise was undertaken differs from the ID/passport number you have just used to login to the NRF Online Submission System.
 - No outputs were added on the old NRF Online system so there was nothing to migrate. If there were outputs on the old NRF Online system but they do not show in the summary below, you need to ensure that the ID/passport numbers used on both the old NRF Online and this system (NRF Online Submission System) are the same. Please contact the NRF should your outputs not show so that this can be rectified.

Step 3: Select the Funding Category 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, where applicable.
- 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.
- Due to potential international review of applications and progress reports, the NRF requires that all applications and progress reports be completed in English.
- Please consult the Funding Framework and Funding & Application Guide for more information to assist you in your choices. These documents can be accessed at <https://www.nrf.ac.za/funding/framework-documents>.
- Ensure that you complete or update your CV. This is very important as applications without an updated CV will not be considered.
- Please ensure that you update your CV before creating a application/progress report to ensure that the latest information reflects on the progress report.**

>	Funding Category	Create
>	Infrastructure Grants	
>	Concept Notes	
>	Undergraduate and Diploma Grants	
>	Customised Programmes	
	NRF Postgraduate Scholarships	
▼	Postdoctoral Grants	
	NRF Postdoctoral Grants	
	China (YSEP) (Review Period 2)	
>	Research Grants: General	
>	Research Grants: International	
>	Research Grants: Without student support	
	Research Grants: Thuthuka	
	Internship Programme	
>	Travel, Training and Conference Grants: General	
	Travel, Training and Conference Grants: Scholarship- and Fellowship-holders	

*Applicants are urged to complete or update ALL sections 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, you 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)		07 Feb 2020	
Registration Details *		31 Jan 2019	
Contact Details *		31 Jan 2019	
Qualifications *		06 Jul 2018	
Career Profile *		02 Jun 2016	
Research Expertise *		06 Jul 2018	
Student Supervision Record		20 Jul 2018	
Absence from Research		07 Feb 2020	
Personal Profile *		31 Jan 2019	
Books		07 Feb 2020	
Chapters in Books		07 Feb 2020	
Articles in Refereed/Peer-reviewed Journals		07 Feb 2020	
Refereed/Peer-reviewed Conference Outputs		22 Apr 2018	
Patents		07 Feb 2020	
Keynote/Plenary Addresses		07 Feb 2020	
Articles in Non-refereed/Non-peer Reviewed Journals		07 Feb 2020	
Other Significant Conference Outputs		07 Feb 2020	
Technical/Policy Reports		07 Feb 2020	
Products		07 Feb 2020	
Artefacts		07 Feb 2020	
Prototypes		07 Feb 2020	
Other Recognised Research Outputs		07 Feb 2020	
Disability *		06 Jul 2018	
ORCID *		07 Feb 2020	
Type of Fellowship *		07 Feb 2020	
Fellowship to be Funded *		07 Feb 2020	
Ethical Clearance *		07 Feb 2020	
Details of Research *		07 Feb 2020	
National Infrastructure Platforms *		07 Feb 2020	
Science Engagement *		07 Feb 2020	
References *		07 Feb 2020	
Attachments *		07 Feb 2020	
Possible Reviewers *		07 Feb 2020	
Preferred Panel *		07 Feb 2020	
Person History *		07 Feb 2020	
Financials: Other Sources *		07 Feb 2020	
Print Preview		07 Feb 2020	

Final Submit

All compulsory sections will guide you with error messages at the top of the screen if not completed properly. Please follow these messages to help you complete the section correctly.

Step 5: The *Type of Fellowship* section is a compulsory section. Please read the below:

- This call is **ONLY** for candidates who will be conducting research at a South African institution, therefore all applicants must select "Postdoctoral Fellowship – South Africa".

Type of Fellowship

Instructions

° If you will be conducting research at a South African institution, please select "Postdoctoral Fellowship – South Africa". This applies to the Freestanding, Innovation and Scarce Skills Fellowship applicants.

° When available, only select the "DST-NRF Fellowships for Early Career Researchers from the UK" if you are applying specifically for this call.

Fellowship for which you are applying

Postdoctoral Fellowship – South Africa

Save

Return to Menu

Step 6: The *Fellowship to be Funded* section is a compulsory section. 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 fulltime salaried employment. Applicants may not hold incentive funding for rated researchers (2) Applicants must note that the fellowship awards must be taken up before the deadline of 30 June 2021. Any awards not taken up by this date will be automatically cancelled.

Fellowship to be Funded

Instructions

Fields marked with a * are compulsory

Fellowship for which you are applying

Select an option

Provide a short description of current and previous research study

Date of commencement of postdoctoral research

DD/MM/CCYY

Full-time

Was your Masters degree upgraded to Doctoral?

Does any financial support received for previous studies bind you to a service contract?

Student Number (if applicable)

Discipline of postdoctoral research

Department/School for postdoctoral research

Faculty for postdoctoral research

Indicate what you are doing presently

Save

Return to Menu

©NRF Online Submission System

Step 7: The *Research Project Information* section requires you to select the proposed institution. Please select the proposed institution for Postdoctoral research in South Africa from the dropdown list. 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/mentor in South Africa that is willing to host them for the duration of the fellowship.

Research Project Information

Instructions

- All fields are compulsory in this section.
- The Short Title of Research Project field is restricted to 100 characters (including spaces).
- The Descriptive Title of Research Project field is restricted to 2 000 characters (including spaces) and should be a clearer description of what the research is about, therefore expanding on the Short Title.
- You MUST consult the attached call documents before completing your application form online.

Applicant's Proposed Institution

Select an option

Short Title of Research Project

*

Research Project Start Year

*

Research Project End Year

*

Budget Start Year

2021

Required Funding Period

*

Budget End Year

Descriptive Title of Research Project

2000 characters left.

Has this research project previously been funded by the NRF?

Yes

No

Save

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Step 8: *The Ethical Clearance* section is a compulsory section. It is the responsibility of the applicant, in conjunction with the institution, to ensure that all research activities carried out in or outside South Africa comply with the laws and regulations of South Africa and/or the foreign country in which the research activities are conducted. These include all human and animal subjects, copyright and intellectual property protection, and other regulations or laws, as appropriate. A research ethics committee must review and approve the ethical and academic rigour of all research prior to the commencement of the research.

Ethical Clearance

Instructions

- Select whether this project requires ethical clearance from an international or national research ethics committee.
- If this project requires ethical clearance, select whether it has been obtained and add any relevant comments.
- Upload proof of granting of ethical clearance, if available, in the Attachments section.

Does this project require ethical clearance?

☒ Yes ☐ No *

Note: The granting of ethical clearance remains the responsibility of the applicant's institution.

Has ethical clearance been obtained

☐ Yes ☐ No *


Additional Comments on Ethical Clearance

*

Save

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Step 9: 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. The Scorecard that will be used to assess your application can be viewed on the framework document.


Details of Research

Instructions

° Please note that all fields in this section are compulsory and unless fully completed your application/progress report cannot be submitted.

° **Please refer to the Framework document of the call that you are applying for.**

Section	Complete	Date Updated	Edit
Problem Statement *		07 Feb 2020	
Rationale and Literature Review *		07 Feb 2020	
Aims and Objectives *		07 Feb 2020	
Methodology and Proposed Research Plan *		07 Feb 2020	
Anticipated Outputs *		07 Feb 2020	
Potential Impact *		07 Feb 2020	
Alignment to National Imperatives *		07 Feb 2020	
Infrastructure Required		07 Feb 2020	

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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 10: The National Infrastructure Platforms section is a compulsory section for reporting purposes. If you will not be accessing any infrastructure platforms, please select “*No plan to access platforms*” and save.

National Infrastructure Platforms

Instructions

° This is for indicating planned equipment and/or data to be accessed outside your own institution.

° The information provided in this section is for information purposes for the NRF and will not have any impact on future decisions around grants or grantholders.

National Infrastructure Platform	Type of Platform	Planned Usage	Edit	Delete
<div>Add</div>				

☐ No plan to access platforms

Save

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Step 11: The Science Engagement section is a compulsory section for reporting purposes. If you will not be running any science engagement activities, please select “*No science engagement planned*” and save.

Science Engagement

Instructions

- For the purposes of this application/report, the use of the overarching term science engagement is inclusive of all aspects of public engagement with science, science communication, science literacy as well as science outreach and awareness. It includes all participation by various groups of society in a programme aimed at generating mutual (two way) understanding and responses to science, including but not limited to awareness, accumulation of knowledge, enjoyment, opinion formulation and scientific literacy.
- The approach acknowledges the importance of citizens in the research and innovation process.
- It also embraces a broad understanding of “science” and “the sciences”, encompassing systematic knowledge spanning natural and physical sciences, engineering sciences, medical sciences, agricultural sciences, mathematics, social sciences and humanities, technology, all aspects of the innovation chain and indigenous knowledge.
- Broader impact encourages engagement beyond the boundaries of academia and considers the impact of the activities/project on the various public (s) and/or the various participants in terms of knowledges and/or awareness, behavioural and/or attitudinal change, skills acquisition etc.
- For more information, [click here](#). The attached Strategy is for the South African Context and may be used by applicants as input to their science engagement strategy. International applicants could utilise this or draw from their own national strategy if it already exists.

Category	Engagement to be undertaken and desired outcome	People/audiences	Intended engagement with audiences	Plan to assess broader impact(s)	Edit	Delete
No records to display.						

☐ No science engagement planned

Step 12: 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. A minimum of three referees should be added. ***The applicant will have to select one Doctoral Supervisor, one Reference, and one Proposed Supervisor/Host.**

Reference Record

Instructions

- Please consult with the Call documents to determine the compulsory number of references that need to be added.
- Please note that if an insufficient number of references is submitted, the application will not be processed for reviewing.

Supervisor UID and Application Reference Number (If Supervisor is a Grantholder)

- If the Supervisor is NRF funded, provide the relevant **UID** (Grant Number) for the Supervisor's grant (where relevant).
- If the Supervisor has applied for a research grant, provide the relevant **Application Reference Number** of the Supervisor's application (where relevant).

Title	<input type="text" value="Select an option"/>	*
Surname	<input type="text"/>	*
Initials	<input type="text"/>	*
First Name	<input type="text"/>	*
Department	<input type="text"/>	*
Faculty	<input type="text"/>	*
Organisation where based	<input type="text" value="Select an option"/>	<input type="button" value="New"/> *
Email Address	<input type="text"/>	*
Role	<input type="text" value="Select an option"/>	*
Supervisor's UID number (Grant Number)	<input type="text"/>	
Supervisor's Application Reference Number	<input type="text"/>	

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the referee email is correct and that the referees have responded by the closing date 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	dfkjdfkds
Institution	CAPE ANIMAL MEDICAL CENTRE
Email Address	melissa.govender@nrf.ac.za
Role	Supervisor/Host of research
Responded	No



Step 13: Attachments section - please print, certify and scan all the required documentation as a single PDF file; and upload to the section as one document. The following documents are compulsory:

- Proof of Masters and Doctoral qualifications (if Masters was upgraded to Doctoral this needs to be stated clearly in your application).
- If your Doctoral degree is still “in progress”, a formal letter of confirmation from your institution, stating that your Doctoral qualification will be completed by December 2020, must be attached.
- If the institution, department and/or supervisor remain the same as your Doctoral study or first postdoctoral placement, a motivation letter must be attached.
- Official postdoctoral acceptance letter from the host institution (signed, stamped and on an official letterhead). The letter should include details of the availability of specialised equipment, infrastructure and resources to enable the fellow to conduct their research.
- If you are a fellow with a disability, you must also upload a medical certificate in support of your disability.
- Proof of South African National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) or University financial aid scheme funding (if applicable).

***Please note that should any of the required documents not be uploaded to the application, the application will be rejected without review.**

Attachments

Instructions

- **Please consult with the Call documents to determine what attachments are compulsory. Please note that if they are not attached, the application will not be processed for reviewing.**
- Please do not upload a copy of your ID document or passport under this section. This is done under Registration Details.
- Capture an appropriate Description for the document to be uploaded.
- Select the Document Type to be uploaded.
- Click the Browse button below to select the file on your local machine.
- Click on the Upload button to save.
- Upload pages individually if document is larger than 4MB. **(For rating applications, please see specific instructions in this section of the rating application.)**
- Please do not upload zip files. Acrobat reader has built-in security to prevent the opening of zip files by default (please read the article at <http://forums.adobe.com/thread/520515> for more information).

Description	Type	File Name	Edit	View	Delete
-------------	------	-----------	------	------	--------

Add

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Step 14: The *Possible Reviewers* section is compulsory in this Call. The section requires that you add the names of possible reviewers in your field of research that will be able to provide a neutral review of your proposed research project. These may be reviewers that you have interacted with through conferences or other academic fora. A minimum of six (6) and a maximum of ten (10) possible reviewers are required.

Possible Reviewers

Instructions

- Please suggest suitable reviewers for this proposal.
- Please be frank as to your relationship with the reviewer: acquaintance, collaborator, ex-colleague, etc.
- A minimum of 6 and a maximum of 10 reviewers have to be added for this section to mark as complete.
- Reviewers from the same institution as the applicant should not be selected.
- Please consult the relevant Framework document to determine whether reviewers are required for the Funding Opportunity you are applying to.

Surname	Initials	Email Address	Priority	Priority Up	Priority Down	Edit	Delete
No records to display.							

Add

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Step 15: *Person History* section is a section required for statistical purposes by the NRF. It allows the NRF to ascertain who previously received NSFAS funding. Please also indicate if you were funded by an international donor.

Person History

Instructions

◦ Proof of NSFAS or ISFAP funding must be attached.

◦ Please only select the primary funder under "previous studies funded by" or "current degree funding".

Previous studies funded by

☐ NSFAS funded

☐ University Financial Aid

☐ ISFAP

☐ Self funded

☐ Other Government departments

☐ International donor funds

☐ NRF Funded

☐ Institutional Funding

☐ Not funded from any other source *

Current degree funding

☐ NSFAS funded

☐ University Financial Aid

☐ ISFAP

☐ Self funded

☐ Other Government departments

☐ International donor funds

☐ NRF Funded

☐ Institutional Funding

☐ Not funded from any other source *

Are you currently a DST-NRF intern

☐ Yes ☐ No *

Save

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©NRF Online Submission System

Step 16: 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.

DAs at institutions must ensure that all proposals are screened and approved through internal institutional processes **before** submitting applications to the NRF. The respective DAs will submit a **maximum of thirty (30) applications** from their university or research institution. The NRF assumes that the DAs are satisfied with the standard of all proposals validated and submitted, and that the institution approves and supports the proposed research.

Step 17: 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 cut-off 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. 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.