

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.

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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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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://nrfsubmission.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://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, 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

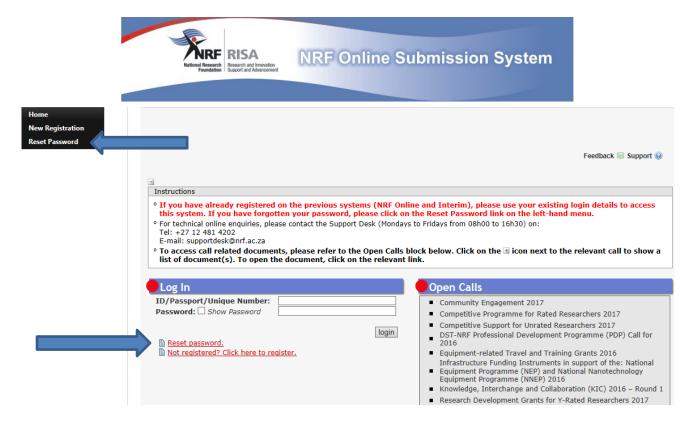
Applications must be completed on the NRF Online Submission System at https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za. Applicants are advised to complete their applications soon after the call opened to prevent IT system overload nearer the closing date.

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.

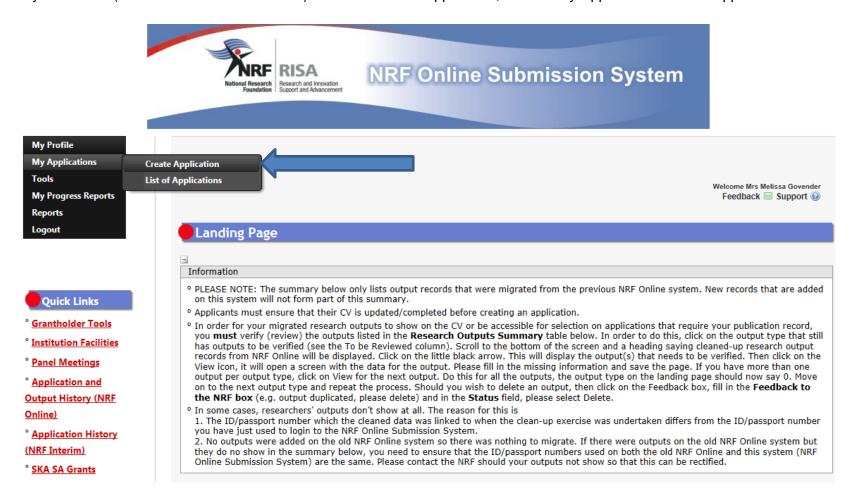
Step 1: This is an electronic submission system and applicants must be registered on the system in order to create and complete an application. If you had previously registered and submitted an application on the NRF Online System (http://nrfonline.nrf.ac.za) before February 2012 and your application 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.

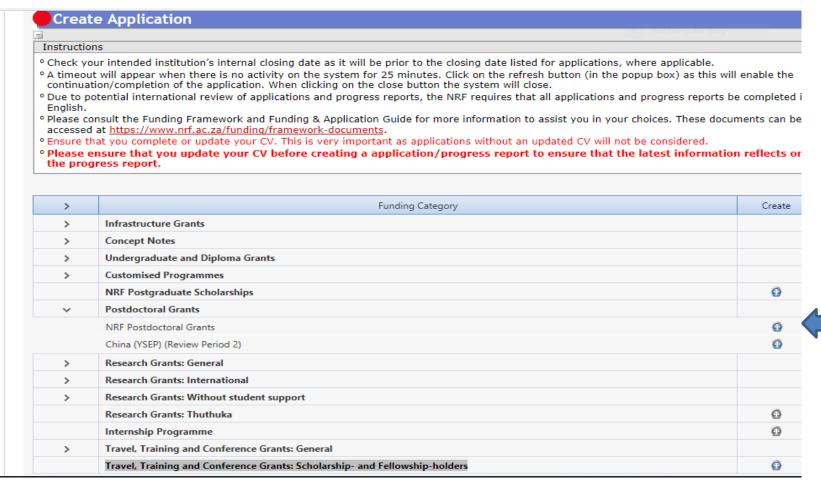
Most application screens have application-specific instructions to help you work through the section. Please read the instructions carefully before completing the section.



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.

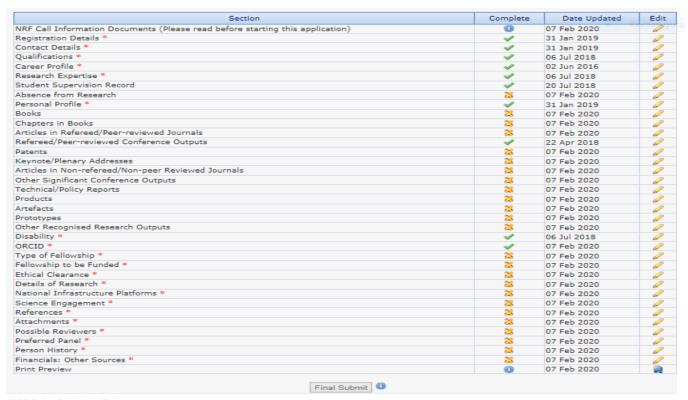


Step 3: Select the Funding Category for which you are applying on the create application screen and a new application will open to complete. Please note that this must be selected only once. To continue working on an application, go to My Applications- List of Applications



^{*}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.

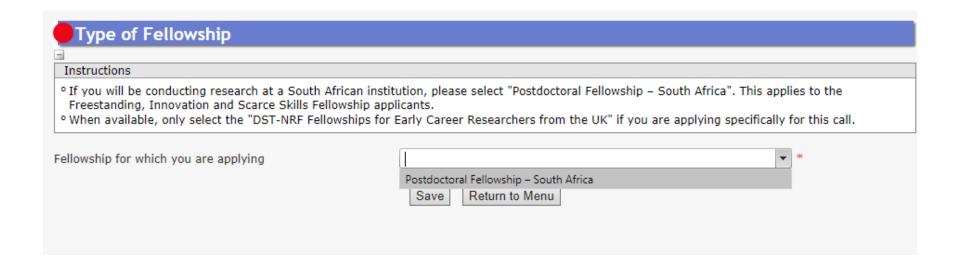
Step 4: All sections marked with a red asterisk are compulsory sections in the application. These sections must be completed in order for the final submit button to appear. The sections without asterisks are non-compulsory sections. You may enter information in these sections, if you have information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



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".



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.

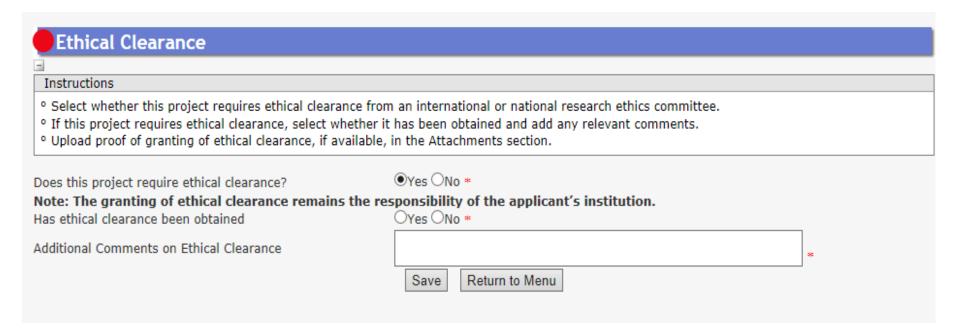
Fellowship to be Funded		
Instructions		
° Fields marked with a * are compulsory		
Fellowship for which you are applying	Select an option	s)s
		ĺ
Provide a short description of current and previous research		
study		
		*
Date of commencement of postdoctoral research	DD/MM/CCYY *	1
Full-time	Oyes ONo *	
Was your Masters degree upgraded to Doctoral?	Oyes ONo *	
Does any financial support received for previous studies bind		
you to a service contract?	○Yes ○No *	
Student Number (if applicable)		
Discipline of postdoctoral research	Select an option ▼	*
Department/School for postdoctoral research		ĺ
Faculty for postdoctoral research		Ī
		Ī
Indicate what you are doing presently		
		*
	Save Return to Menu	
	Tetam to Wella	

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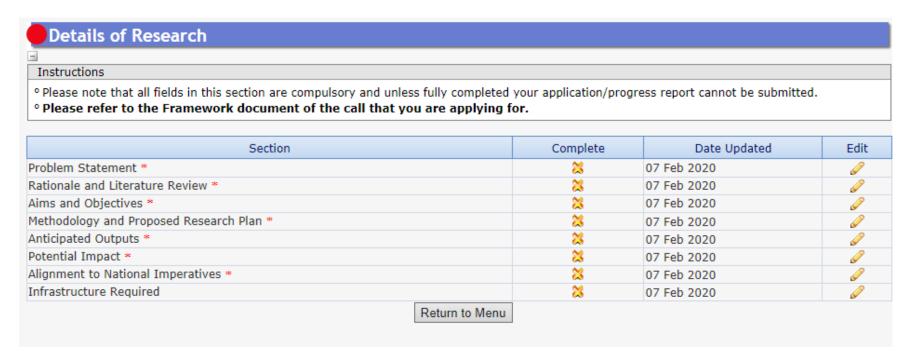
Step 7: The *Research Project Information* section requires you to select the proposed institution. Please select the proposed institution for Postdoctoral research in South Africa from the dropdown list. Should your institution not be on the list, please request it by selecting the support tab on the 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	Instructions			
 All fields are compulsory in this section. The Short Title of Research Project field is restricted to 10 The Descriptive Title of Research Project field is restricted research is about, therefore expanding on the Short Title. You MUST consult the attached call documents before con 	to 2 000 characters (including spaces) and should be a clearer desc	ription of what the		
Applicant's Proposed Institution	Select an option	▼ 0 *		
Short Title of Research Project		sk:		
Research Project Start Year	*			
Research Project End Year	*			
Budget Start Year	2021			
Required Funding Period Budget End Year	*			
Descriptive Title of Research Project				
Has this research project previously been funded by the NRF?	2000 characters left. Yes No * Save Return to Menu	<u>//</u> *		

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.

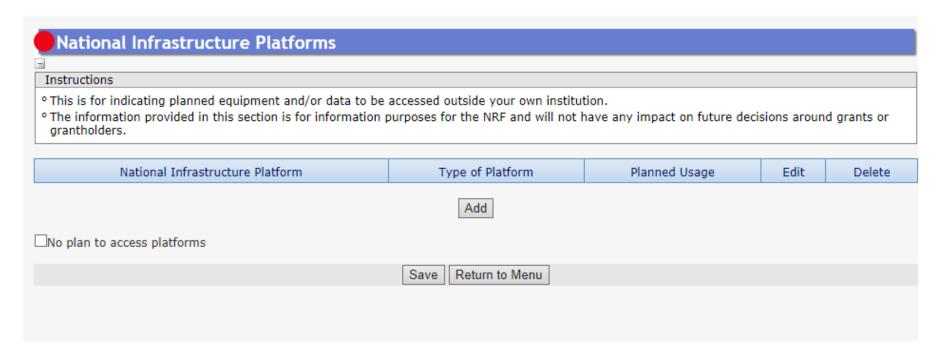


Step 9: The *Details of Research* section is one of the most important sections in the application. The section has specific instructions related to each screen. Follow the instructions to complete the section. You are required to give a concise overview about your proposed research in this section as 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.



^{*}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.



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.

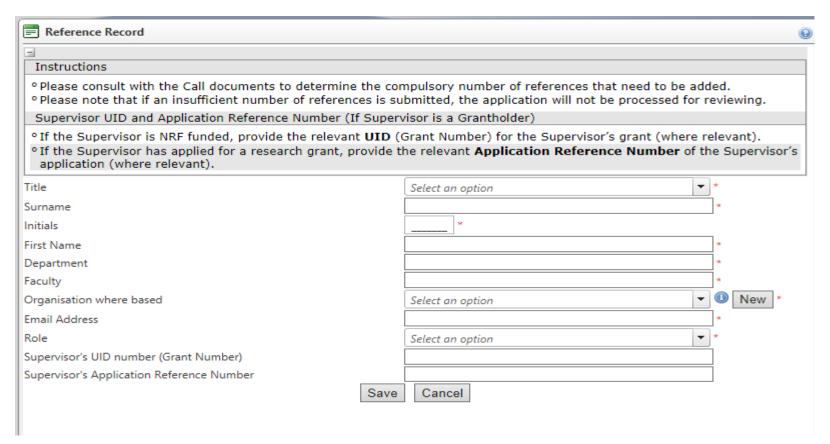
Science Engagement

Instructions

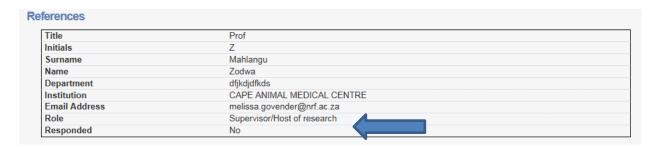
- ° For the purposes of this application/report, the use of the overarching term science engagement is inclusive of all aspects of public engagement with science, science communication, science literacy as well as science outreach and awareness. It includes all participation by various groups of society 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.
- o The approach acknowledges the importance of citizens in the research and innovation process.
- o 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.
- o 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.						
Add No science engagement planned						
		Save Return	to Menu			

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.



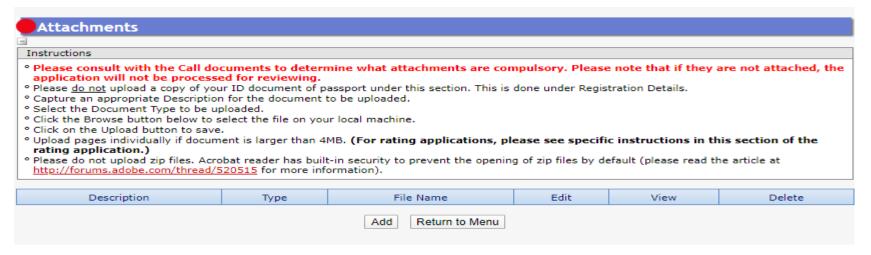
It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the referee email is correct and that the referees have responded by the closing date as this category is assessed in the application. The applicant must view the application PDF to check if a referee has responded to the request for reference. A "yes"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



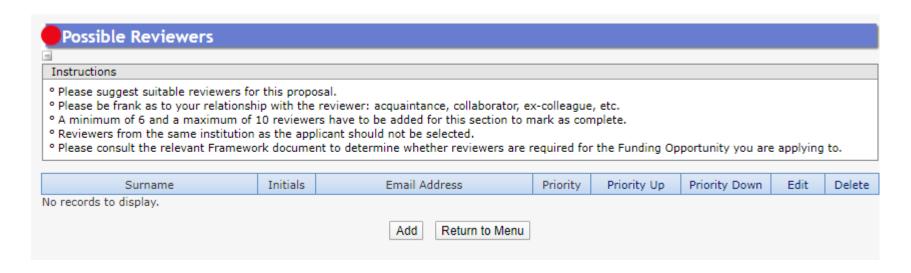
Step 13: Attachments section - please print, certify and scan all the required documentation as a single PDF file; and upload to the section as one document. The following documents are compulsory:

- 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.



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.



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 o Proof of NSFAS or ISFAP funding must be attached. o Please only select the primary funder under "previous studies funded by" or "current degree funding".				
Current degree funding	□ Institutional Funding □ Not funded from any other source * □ 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 Return to Menu			

©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.