



EDUCATION RESEARCH IN SOUTH AFRICA

KNOWLEDGE FIELDS DEVELOPMENT

Framework Document

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1. FUNDING INSTRUMENT TITLE AND DESCRIPTION

1.1 Name

Education Research in South Africa

1.2 Description of Funding Instrument

The intention of this instrument is to develop new knowledge about teaching and learning so as to improve education practice and the quality of life of all the people of South Africa.

The Education Research in South Africa Funding Instrument scope covers the following:

- The overarching theme on “Teaching and Learning interactions that shape the qualitative outcomes of education” at all levels of the *public* education and training system;
- National priorities in South Africa (a strong indication must be provided);
- Systemic implications (either through large-scale empirical research or meta-analyses of past/existing small-scale research projects);

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The call for 2013 funding for Education Research in South Africa seeks research proposals that adhere to the following entry-level hurdles.

- Multi-institutional collaboration: at least three different institutions in South Africa, with at least one representing a rural-based institution
- Multi-disciplinary backgrounds

Applications submitted to this funding instrument that meet the above entry-level hurdles will be assessed according to a range of criteria relating to the track record of the applicant; the conceptual framework, approach and feasibility of the proposed research; issues of equity and redress; and the proposed research outcomes/impacts.

A two-tiered assessment process will be followed that includes postal peer-reviews and panel reviews. Funding will be allocated on a competitive basis in accordance with the comments and scores derived from this process.

3. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The National Research Foundation's (NRF) purpose is to support and promote research through funding, human resource 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 and thereby contributing to the improvement of quality of life of all the people of South Africa (NRF Act, 1998). As part of this mandate, the NRF pro-actively facilitates the advancement of the frontiers of existing and new knowledge and expertise across the knowledge spectrum. Education research was identified as one of the priority areas given its importance in contributing to the improvement of the quality of life of all the people of the Republic. The NRF recognises these challenges facing the South African education research community and for these reasons the NRF has been engaging with the research community and relevant stakeholders on the way forward for education research in South Africa.

To advance Education Research in South Africa, the NRF has supported a number of activities that include:

- A “*Status Quo* Study of Education Research funded by the NRF”;
- An “Audit and Interpretative Analysis of Education Research in South Africa- What has been learnt?” study;
- A position paper summarizing research issues/directions proposed through the submission of concept papers by the research community;
- Six regional workshops held in the Western Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng, Limpopo, Eastern Cape and the Free State during October- November 2009

See: <http://www.nrf.ac.za/projects.php?pid=58> for the reports on these activities.

3.1 Environmental Scan

In support of its mandate the NRF launched Vision 2015 that aims to promote world class research, create a transformed society and sustainable environment. Soon after its founding in 1999, the NRF took a strategic decision to organize its support and promotion of research in terms of nationally relevant focus areas. The NRF's strategic decision to organise its support and promotion of research in terms of nationally relevant focus areas was at least partially in line with the strategy of many other comparable national funding agencies across the world, notable African examples being Egypt and Tunisia. A review of the Focus Area Programme (FAP) was conducted in 2007. This review recognized that the rationale behind FAP and model underpinning it remained valid. The review also acknowledged that the focus area programme came at the right time, had been partially successful and that a focused research programme should be continued, even if in an amended form. The review recommended the provision of a funding instrument dedicated to promoting discipline-oriented, self-initiated research. Education research was identified as one of the priority areas given its importance in contributing to the improvement of the quality of life of all the people of the Republic.

3.2 Objectives

The objectives of this Funding instrument are:

- To address national priorities;
- To advances the goals of a democratic, inclusive society and the ‘public good’;
- To support Education research that engenders progressive and ameliorative social change for the society as a whole;
- Extend and build *theoretical and basic knowledge*;
- Research *capacity development* at varying levels;
- Broaden the *scope of scholarship* to include community engagement, socially engaged research;
- Scientific novelty (i.e. internationally cutting-edge research) will be encouraged.

3.3 NRF Perspective

The NRF has an integrated approach to Human Capital Development and promotes and supports a pipeline of human capital through all its different business divisions and funding instruments. The Education Research in South Africa funding instrument promotes the building of human capital and knowledge generation in line with the NRF’s vision 2015 which envisage the following for South Africa:

- World-class research
- Transformed society; and
- Sustainable environment

3.4 Institutional structure

The funding instrument is managed by the Knowledge Fields Development (KFD) Directorate, the Reviews and Evaluation (RE) Directorate is responsible for the review processes up to the award of grants. The Grant Management and Systems Administration (GMSA) Directorate’s responsibilities include disbursement of grant funds and ensuring adherence to the conditions of the grant.

3.5 Financing support

The Education Research in South Africa Funding Instrument is made possible through the National Research Foundation’s Parliamentary Core Funding.

3.6 Key stakeholders

Public Universities, Science Councils and Museums

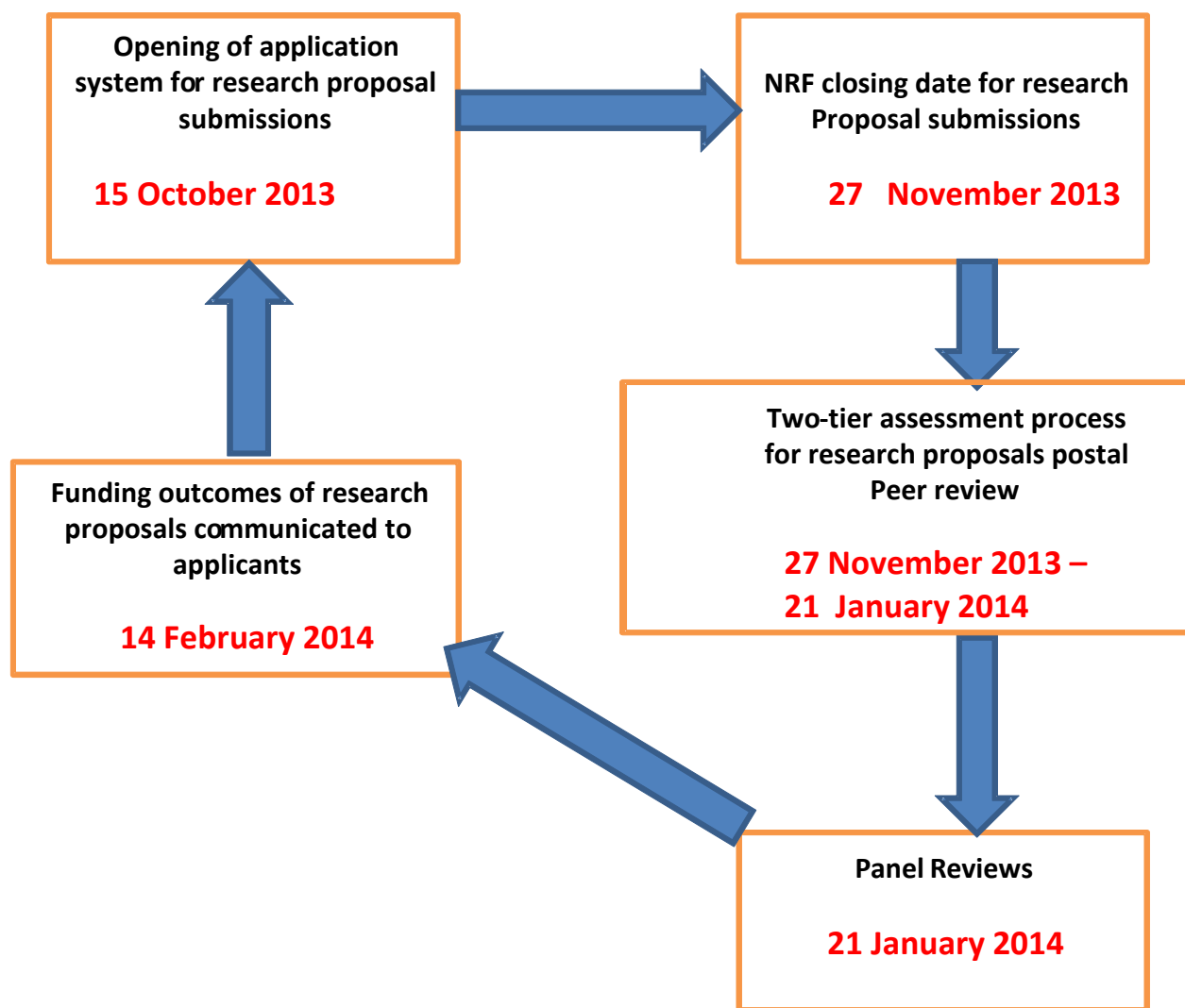
3.7 Information sources

- NRF Vision 2015
- NRF Act , 1998
- DST Ten-Year Plan (2008-2018)

4. **MODUS OPERANDI**

The Education Research in South Africa Funding Instrument *modus operandi* are described below

FIGURE 1: The NRF's Application, assessment and funding process for the Education Research in South Africa



4.1 Call for proposals

Call for proposals are made once after every three year cycle depending on availability of financial resources. All applications materials must be submitted electronically via the NRF's Submission system at <https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za>.

The NRF closing date for applications is **27 November 2013**. All applications must be endorsed by the research office of the principal applicant. It is the responsibility of each applicant to familiarise themselves with the internal closing date, set by their institution in order to meet the NRF closing date. **Incomplete OR late submissions will not be accepted.**

NB. Applicants must ensure that their Curriculum Vitae are updated on the NTR Submission system at <https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za>. These Curriculum Vitae will be used in the assessment processes.

4.2. Eligibility

This funding instrument is suitable for Universities, Science Councils and Museums

We encourage collaborative research and will accept applications from consortiums of education researcher/s

Who may apply for funding?

Only researchers based at public research institutions that are recognised by directive of the Minister of Science and Technology are eligible to apply as the principal investigator. Their affiliation must be either as:

- Full-time employees
- Part-time employees on contract but on condition that the appointment is for (at least) the duration of the project applied for in the submission. The length of the contract should be stated in the application form. Salaries must be paid by the research institution and the primary employment of the individual concerned must be at a university or university of technology on behalf of a third party to fulfill a very specific function for the latter does not qualify for support.
- Retired researchers provided that :
 - There is a proof of institutional support in the form of an employment contract, office space, administrative support, access to research equipment and space. The institution will have to ensure that a minimum of reasonable time is spent at the facility for the purpose of research and research capacity development.
 - The researcher must have a research publication track record and must be actively supervising postgraduate students at present.

- Researchers can hold either a CSUR or CPRR with the Education Research grant. However, the CSUR or CPRR proposal funded should not be the same as and or very closely aligned to the theme/subject of the of the Education grant

The two-tiered assessment process will include:

Postal or remote peer review: The postal or remote peer reviewers will be specialist in the ambit of the respective proposals.

Panel-peer review: one panel will be constituted to assess all the full proposals submissions. This panel will comprise of members of reputable research standing in the field of education research.

The peer-reviewers will assess the full proposal submissions in terms of:

- Conceptual framework
- Proposed approaches and activities planned for the research project
- Availability of required resources
- Envisaged contribution to human resource capacity development(including, issues of equity and redress)
- The panel will also advise the NRF on the appropriateness of the budget request.

(See APPENDIX: 3 for score card details)

In principle, feedback on assessment on the application is regarded as crucial value- adding function of the NRF. In a limited number of cases, feedback from either the reviewers and/ or panel members who evaluated your application will be sent. These selected comments will be provided to give insight into some of the peer thinking that informed the grant decision-making process, and to give constructive support to applicants. In general, no feedback will be sent where the assessment was positive unless specific conditions are attached to the funding.

4.3 Rules of participation

Only researchers based at public research institutions that are recognised by directive of the Minister of Science and Technology are eligible to apply as principal investigator.

For the Education Research in South Africa Funding Instrument the core research team consists of a principal investigator and a co-investigator (s). In addition the **PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR** (i.e. the applicant) must be an active researcher who takes intellectual responsibility for the project, its conception, any strategic decisions called for in its pursuit, and the communication of results. The principal investigator must have the capacity to make a serious commitment to the project and cannot assume the role of a supplier of resources for work that will largely be placed in the hands of others.

He/she will also take responsibility for the management and administration of resources allocated to the proposal.

A **CO-INVESTIGATOR** is an active researcher that provides significant commitment, intellectual input and the relevant expertise into the design and implementation of the research application and will be involved in all or at least some well-defined research activities within the scope of the application. South African-based co-investigators are eligible to receive NRF funds from the grant if the team's application is successful.

Post-doctoral fellows, students and technical and support staff should NOT be listed as co-investigators.

The proposal may also include

RESEARCH ASSOCIATES/COLLABORATORS

These are individuals or groups who are anticipated to make a relatively small but meaningful contribution to the research endeavours outlined in the application. Research Associates/collaborators will not actively participate in the design and implementation of the research application. They are not considered a part of the core research team.

4.4 Timelines

Education Research in South Africa instrument grants will be awarded for a period of three years. Successful applications who wish to apply for further funding upon completion of the three-year funding cycle must submit new applications. All applications will be assessed on a competitive basis. Education Research funding cannot be automatically renewed. Preferential treatment will not be given to those who have previously received NRF funding.

4.5 Management of funding instrument

The KFD Directorate of the NRF – Research and Innovation Support and Advancement (RISA) manages the in South Africa Funding Instrument and is primarily responsible for:

- Strategic oversight and management of the funding instrument;
- Conceptualizing and developing the funding instrument;
- Coordinating and facilitating activities of the funding instrument;
- Compiling funding instrument research and evaluation reports;
- Stakeholder engagement;
- Ensuring that the funding instruments delivers on its intended goal(s).

The RE Directorate is responsible for managing the adjudication process including:

- sourcing of reviewers both for remote reviews and panels;
- managing the peer review process;

- organizing and managing the review panels as and where appropriate;
- providing feed-back as appropriate and
- awarding of grants

The GMSA Directorate is responsible for

- Managing the call process, that is,
 - Posting the call;
 - Receiving and assessing applications eligibility;
- Coordinating and facilitating the granting processes
- Managing the granting including the administration of awards;
- Administering grant payments; and
- Ensuring adherence to conditions of grants

4.6 Lines of authority

The funding instrument Director, in the KFD Directorate generally manages the Education Research in South Africa funding instrument with the assistance of a Professional Officer. Where and when appropriate, a call may be managed by a specially appointed Project Leader supported by Project team of staff drawn from Reviews and Evaluation, GMSA; Knowledge Management and others. The Director responsible for this instrument reports to the Executive Director of the KFD Directorate. Directors from GMSA and Reviews and Evaluation will normally manage the granting and review processes, respectively with the assistance of Professional and Liaison Officers. The Directors in both the GMSA and the Reviews and Evaluation report to their respective Executive Directors

5. FINANCIALS

5.1 Funding model

Education Research in South Africa Funding Instrument is made possible through the Core Funding model of the National Research Foundation.

5.2 Funding ranges

Successful Proposals will receive funding that accommodates the following budget items:

- a) Grant holder-linked student support
- b) Staff developments grants
- c) Research-related operating costs
 - Sabbaticals
 - Materials and supplies
 - Travel and subsistence

- Research/technical/ad hoc assistance
- Research equipment

5.3 Funding support

The NRF funds the Education Research in South Africa funding instrument for Rated Researchers on an ongoing basis. Science councils, universities, museums and other NRF-recognized institutions are the primary beneficiaries of this funding instrument.

5.4 Funding Instrument budget

The budget for this instrument originates from the NRF's Core Funding

6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF THE FUNDING INSTRUMENT

The National Research Foundation is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the Education Research Funding Instrument.

6.1 Reporting

The KFD Director is responsible for reporting twice annually on the contribution of the Education Research Funding Instrument to the Knowledge Fields Development Directorate's Key Performance indicators (KPI's).

6.2. Timeframes for evaluation

The Education Research Funding Instrument will be evaluated every seven years by a team of reviewers who will be appointed by the National Research Foundation. The NRF's Knowledge Fields Directorate in consultation with the Review and Evaluation Directorate will agree to and set Timeframes for the review in line with the existing guidelines.

6.3. Broad terms of reference for evaluation

The broad terms of reference for the evolution of the Education Research Funding Instrument will be determined by the Knowledge Fields Development Directorate prior to the evaluation taking place and in accordance with the tenets set in the NRF's Review and Evaluation Directorate's Handbook.

6.4. Utilisation of the results for evaluation.

There results of the evaluation will be used in line with the purpose set in the terms of Reference for the evaluation as well as for funding instrument improvement and development.

CONTACT DETAILS	
Grant Officer	Liaison Officer:
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APPENDIX: 1

FUNDING DETAILS FOR RESEARCH PROJECTS

GRANT HOLDER-LINKED STUDENT SUPPORT

The distribution for this support (in the form of student assistantships and bursaries) is targeted at the ratio:

- Final year Undergraduate and Honours/BTech student assistantships: 100% SA citizens with a minimum ratio¹ of 1:1 for Black² and White participants
- Masters bursaries: 90% to South Africans and 10% to candidates from other African countries
- Doctoral bursaries: 80:15:5, SA: Other African: Rest of the World
- Postdoctoral bursaries: Open to all who undertake research in South Africa.

Values of Student Assistantships

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| • Final year undergraduate (Full-time) | R 8 000 pa |
| • Honours / BTech (Full-time) | R 20 000 pa |

Values of Bursaries & Fellowships

- | | |
|---|--------------|
| • Masters degree (Full-time) | R 40 000 pa |
| • Masters degree (Part-time) | R 20 000 pa |
| • Doctoral degree (Full-time) | R 60 000 pa |
| • Doctoral degree (Part-time) | R 30 000 pa |
| • Postdoctoral (<i>pro rata</i> per month) | R 150 000 pa |

RESEARCH-RELATED OPERATING COSTS

These costs include materials and supplies, travel (including conferences) and subsistence, equipment and research/technical/*ad hoc* assistance and sabbaticals to other research organisations and institutions of higher learning may be included within the context of the project application. These costs should be justified and commensurate with the planned outputs, as they will be assessed on this basis. The amount awarded within this framework can be used at the discretion of the applicant. **General guidelines**

Sabbaticals

Sabbaticals will be considered for a period from two to six months. The maximum sabbatical amount requested should not exceed R 80,000 for six months. Funding for sabbaticals of less than six months will be reduced pro-rata. Only principal

¹ With the emphasis on Black students

² Inclusive of Africans, Indians and Coloureds

investigators and co-investigators are legible to apply for sabbatical funding.

APPENDIX: 2 FUNDING DETAILS FOR RESEARCH PROJECTS

Materials and Supplies

Generally, The NRF does not provide financial support for:

- Basic work equipment including computers and consumables
- Basic work supplies including stationery, photocopying costs, printing costs
- Journal publication costs, journal subscription costs, book costs.
- Telephone, fax and internet costs

Research Equipment

Funding for equipment will be limited to R50, 000 per year. Requisitions for large equipment items (> R200, 000) should be submitted through the NRF's Equipment Programme.

Travel and subsistence

- International conference attendance: Generally this NRF research funding instrument restricts this amount to R25,000 per person to a maximum of R50,000 per application per year for a team application i.e. for principal investigators and co-investigators (local only). Funding requests for students to attend international conferences will not be considered.
- International visits: These will be considered on a case by case basis. Such visits must be integral to the research plan and strong motivations should accompany these requests. Realistic funding allocations will be based on the requested activities. Only outgoing visits will be considered depending on the availability of funding.
- Local conference attendance: Generally this NRF research funding instrument restricts expenditure against this item to R4000 per person (all costs). Support for local conference attendance could be requested for all listed co-investigators and post-graduate students. The applicant should motivate for:
 - the benefits to attend more than one local conference per annum if so requested
 - the number of people that should be funded to attend local conferences.
- Local travel: The NRF does not stipulate any rate for mileage as this will depend on the rate that varies per institution/organisation. Applicants are requested to provide details of this rate as well as the estimated distance to be travelled within the given year.
- Local accommodation costs should not exceed R500 per night per person.

Research / Technical / *Ad hoc* Assistants

- This instrument does not provide funding for the salaries of the team members if they are

based at organisations/institutions where the salaries are state funded. In cases where the salaries are not state funded, the total salary amount for all team members will be limited to up to 20% of the overall grant amount. A strong motivation for the salary component must accompany the request.

- Requests for research/technical/*ad hoc* assistance should be treated with caution. Generally the NRF would encourage applicants to engage students to undertake the research rather than

employing research consultants. This guideline however does not apply when specific and/or highly specialized research/technical expertise is required. This should be CLEARLY motivated for in the application.

- Administrative assistance does not qualify under this category.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

Applicants may apply for Staff Development grants for South African staff members at their own and other institutions (e.g. schools), and who are not NRF grant-holders in their own right. These staff members must be registered for either a Masters or Doctoral degree, supervised by the applicant or a co-investigator of the application and must be directly involved in the NRF approved project. These grants can be used to contribute towards the salary costs and/or research operating costs for the staff members (e.g. as buy-out time for teachers who are part-time students). Grants usually range between R40 000 and R60 000 depending on the nature of the motivation provided in the application. Applicants themselves are **not** eligible for Staff Development Grants. The maximum period of support is three years for a Master's degree and five years for a Doctoral degree.

FUNDING TO CATER FOR DISABILITIES

Additional funding support to cater for disability will only be allocated to people with disabilities as specified in the Code of Good Practice on Employment of People with Disabilities as in the Employment Equity Act No 55 of 1998.

APPENDIX: 3 THE NRF SCORECARD USED IN ASSESSING INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH PROPOSALS DURING THE PANEL REVIEW PROCESS

Criteria	Sub-Criteria	Details	Score / 4	Weight (Total = 100%)	Weighted score (Total = 4)	Scoring Comments
Entry-level hurdles Scoring: Yes = Pass (continue to next criterion) No = Fail (application not considered for funding)	Overarching call theme	Does the proposed research in the application clearly address the theme of “Teaching and Learning interactions that shape the qualitative outcomes of education”				Select either yes or no
	National priorities in South Africa	Does the application clearly indicate how the proposed research will address national priorities in South Africa?				Select either yes or no
	Systemic implications	Does the application adequately explain how the proposed research will have possible systemic implications?				Select either yes or no
	Composition of the consortium	Have the relevant criteria been adhered to i.e. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-institutional collaboration: at least three different institutions in South Africa, with at least one representing a rural institution • Multi-disciplinary backgrounds 				Select either yes or no

Criteria	Sub-Criteria	Details	Score / 4	Weight (Total = 100%)	Weighted score (Total = 4)	Scoring Comments
Track record of applicant	Past students (graduated)	The number of M and D students graduated as listed in the application. (This sub-criterion is not necessarily relevant for young researchers).		5%	0.00	
	Current students (registered) equity and redress	The number of M and D students registered as listed in the application. Women and blacks in general (This sub-criterion is not necessarily relevant for young researchers).		5%	0.00	
	Past research	The quality and quantity of the applicant's research outputs will be assessed (as listed in the application) as well as the applicant's NRF rating will be taken into account if relevant. (This criterion is not necessarily relevant for young researchers).		5%	0.00	
Proposed research	Conceptual framework: theoretical and basic knowledge contribution	<p>How well does the application address/engage novel concepts, approaches and methods that challenge existing paradigms or develop innovative methodologies and/or processes?</p> <p>How clear are the justifications for the choice of theoretical position(s) motivated for in the application?</p>		15%	0.00	A minimum score of 2 is needed for the application to be considered for funding.

Criteria	Sub-Criteria	Details	Score / 4	Weight (Total = 100%)	Weighted score (Total = 4)	Scoring Comments
	Knowledge production approach	How well does the application demonstrate a strong understanding of the methodological approach (es) to be utilized? How effective and appropriate is the methodological approach/ the range of methodological approaches employed in the application?		15%		A minimum score of 2 is needed for the application to be considered for funding.
	Feasibility of the proposed research	Is the work plan achievable within the timeframe and available resources? Is the relevant expertise included? Are the activities of the students embedded in the workplan (if relevant)? Are practitioners involved in the research?		15%	0.00	A minimum score of 2 is needed for the application to be considered for funding.
	Ethical research	Have appropriate ethical considerations been addressed in the application?		5%	0.00	A minimum score of 1 is needed for the application to be considered for funding.
Equity & redress	Of applicant	This sub-criterion relates to black, female and young (five years after the first academic/professional appointment) applicants. The scores that will be used are as follow:		5%	0.00	

Criteria	Sub-Criteria	Details	Score / 4	Weight (Total = 100%)	Weighted score (Total = 4)	Scoring Comments
		Black female= 10 (including young as defined above) Black male, young =8 Black male, not young = 5 White female, young =2.5 White female, not young = 2 White male, young = 1.5 White male, not young = 1				
	Of students Supervised	This sub-criterion relates to the race (for South African Citizens only) and gender aspects of the students trained. (This sub-criterion is not necessarily relevant for young researchers).		5%	0.00	
Outcomes/ Impacts	Expected research outputs	How appropriate are the expected research outputs listed in the application? This could include publications, technical reports, performances, artifacts, processes, internet resources, other type of articles etc		5%	0.00	A minimum score of 2 is needed for the application to be considered for funding.
	Public-good relevance	Does the proposed research in the application indicate how it will have <i>relevance</i> for, and advances the goals of, a democratic and inclusive society and the 'public good' and that is intended to engender progressive and		5%	0.00	A minimum score of 2 is needed for the application to be considered for funding.

Criteria	Sub-Criteria	Details	Score / 4	Weight (Total = 100%)	Weighted score (Total = 4)	Scoring Comments
		ameliorative social change for the society as a whole?				
	Link between research, teaching and community engagement	How effective are the application's proposed strategies in bridging the link between research, teaching and community engagement?		5%		A minimum score of 1 is needed for the application to be considered for funding.
	Plans for human research capacity development (HRCD)	How effective is HRCD embedded and integrated in the planned research?		5%		A minimum score of 2 is needed for the application to be considered for funding.
	Plans for data storage, usage &/or dissemination	How well has the application provided details on the plans to provide metadata to national knowledge management systems?		5%		A minimum score of 2 is needed for the application to be considered for funding.
Totals				100%		

Scoring scale to be used		
Score	Meaning of score	Notes
4	Excellent	It is clear that the achievement could not be improved within the specific context.
3	Above average	The achievement is exceeding average but could still be improved within the specific context.
2	Average	This is an average achievement within the appropriate context.
1	Below average	The achievement is not meeting average expectations within the appropriate context however this could be improved with minor amendments/revisions.
0	Poor	There are major shortcomings or flaws in the submission.
Context		
Note: The scoring process must be made with sensitivity to the context in which the proposal is made. The context will include the research field or discipline. It will also include other relevant influences such as societal and institutional textures		

If the criterion is not applicable to an application, the weighting of the criterion will equal zero. The score of each criterion for each application will be contextualised to accommodate variability in knowledge fields, institutional capacity etc.