



higher education
& training

Department:
Higher Education and Training
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



RISA

Research and Innovation
Support and Advancement

Scarce Skills Development Fund Programme

1. Background

The National Research Foundation in partnership with the National Skills Fund (NSF) introduced the Scarce Skills Development Fund (SSDF) Programme in 2002, which is aimed at training postgraduate students in scarce skills areas as identified by the Department of Labour (DoL). The NSF operates under the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET).

2. Objectives

The programme supports students at South African Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and Science Councils. The objectives of the SSDF programme are:

- To continue increasing the number and quality of South African postgraduate students in specified scarce skills areas;
- To continue working towards increased race and gender representation; and
- In conjunction with the higher education sector and industry, to support the development of postgraduate courses to meet specific needs of the country.

3. Scarce Skills Areas

Since the inception of the programme, the following 20 disciplines have been supported:

- **Management:**

Economic and Management Sciences, Financial Management

- **Financial sector:**

Accounting, Auditing, Statistics, Actuarial Science

- **Biological sciences:**

Biotechnology, Bioinformatics, Microbiology,

- **Physical sciences:**

Mathematical Sciences, Physics, Geology, Computer Science, Demography, Information Systems, Chemistry

- **Engineering**

- **Sector specific:**

Agricultural Sciences

Transportation Studies

Tourism

4. Scholarship Values per study level

Honours: R35 000 per annum

Masters: R60 000 per annum

Doctoral: R90 000 per annum

Postdoctoral research fellowships: R165 000 per annum plus R35 000 running expenses.

Students may access a **once-off** travel grant during the period of funding as follows:

	Local travel	International travel
Master students	R10 000	Not applicable
Doctoral students	R15 000	R40 000
Posdtoctoral Research Fellows	R15 000	R40 000

5. Criteria, Race and Gender Targets

Criteria for awarding scholarships are based on academic potential and excellence as well as research potential and, funding is awarded on a competitive basis. This is to ensure that despite the obligation to meet race and gender targets, quality remains the desired outcome.

Therefore, in line with the national imperative of equity and redress, the programme prioritises support for appropriately qualified Blacks, women and disabled students without sacrificing quality. Scholarship and fellowship funds are allocated, with every attempt being made to meet the following targets:

♦	Black students	(African, Coloured, Indian)	85%
♦	Women students	(African, Coloured, Indian, White)	54%
♦	Students with disabilities	(African, Coloured, Indian, White)	4%

Applications for support are invited from students who wish to enrol for Honours, Masters, Doctoral studies and postdoctoral research training at public Higher Education Institutions in the scarce skills study areas for the 2011 academic year.

5. How to apply for funding

- Applications must be submitted through an online application process to the National Research Foundation (NRF).
- Applicants can apply for the Scarce Skills Scholarship Call by accessing the link: <http://phoenweb.nrf.ac.za/FPF2>
- Register/ Login using your email address and password.
- Select create new application from the list of existing calls.
- Select the call for which you are applying to: Scarce Skills Scholarship Call.
- Select Apply now.
- Complete all screens and sub- screens online for application summary, project information, supervisor and referees and research outputs.
- Once complete click on the check completeness and submit form tab to check if all sections are complete.
- Click on the submit application tab.
- Your application will be directed to the NRF for further assessment and selection through a panel review process.
- A list of successful applicants' names can be found on the NRF website under the student link in the middle of July 2011.
- **Deadline: Applications should be submitted by / on 30 June 2011.**