

AD-HOC APPLICATION PROCESS FOR PROGRAMME-LINKED NRF HONOURS, MASTER'S AND DOCTORAL STUDENTS FOR FUNDING IN 2026

Applicants who have been recruited by an NRF-funded supervisor or Grant holder linked to an NRF funded grant, programme or project to be part of a research project and/ or group, under any of the NRF Funding Instruments listed below, may submit an *ad hoc* application as per the process indicated in **Figure 1. This will be a closed call process meaning only students recruited by supervisors who have submitted their ID or Passport numbers will be linked to the call.** Supervisors must share the ID numbers of the students recruited with their respective Designated Authorities (DAs). These students must have also registered and have an existing profile on NRF Connect to be linked to the call. Students who do not have an NRF Connect profile will not be linked and will be excluded from applying.

The Grant holder's research project must be in any of the following programmes:

- South African Research Chairs Initiative (SARChI).
- DSTI-NRF Centre's Excellence (CoE) - First semester only.
- DSTI-NRF Flagship Programme (active) Projects.
- DSTI-NRF National Institutes for Research Development and Innovation – First semester only
- NRF-FREF Black Academic Advancement Programme (BAAP)
- Global Change Research Plan (GCRP) Programmes such as
 - Earth Systems Science Research Programme (ESSRP).
 - Global Change Social Sciences Research Programme (GCSSRP); and
 - Centres for Global Change (CGCs)
- African Earth Observation Network (AEON)
- Foundational Biodiversity Information Programme (FBIP)
- African Origins Platform (AOP)
- Belmont Forum Collaborative Research Actions
- South African Earth Observation Network (SAEON)
- Southwest Indian Ocean Marine Protected Areas (SIOMPA) - First Semester only
- National Astrophysics and Space Science Programme (NASSP)
- Manus Matsci Scholarship

- French-South African Technology Institute (F’SATI) Special Grant for Postgraduate Funding Programme
- National Facilities (Innovation Honours, Masters and Doctoral)
- Research Development Grants for Y-Rated Researchers
- National Facilities (Innovation Honours, Masters and Doctoral)
- Research Development Grants for Y-Rated Researchers
- NRF - SASOL Young Academics Accelerator Programme (YAAP).

Figure 1 indicates the process to be followed by the honours, master’s and doctoral students who are recruited by the NRF funded supervisors at the beginning of an academic year or at the start of the 2nd semester, after missing the main open competitive postgraduate call process in the preceding year. If you were previously rejected by NRF/Institution due to academic merit, you are not eligible to apply in the same level of study for this call. However, you are eligible to apply if you were previously not funded due to budget constraints. These ad-hoc applications will be exempted from a merit peer-review process at the institution. However, applicants must submit proof of acceptance of their research proposal by the higher degrees committee either at the time of application or when they submit the progress report in November (In Programmes where applicable).

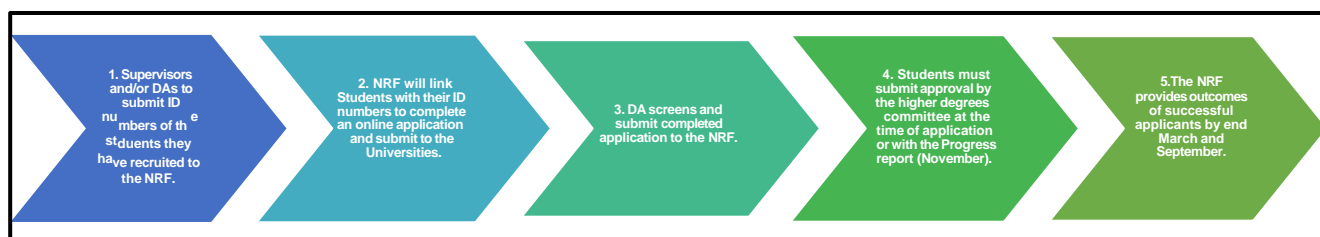


Figure 1: Flow diagram representing the ad-hoc funding application process to be followed by honours, master’s and doctoral students recruited by NRF-Funded Researchers in the beginning of an academic year.

Applicants must have been recruited by the Grant holder first before applying to the NRF. When an applicant applies on the NRF Connect system, the application is routed to the university where the applicant is registered. The NRF Connect system can be accessed on: <https://nrfconnect.nrf.ac.za>.

Further instructions on the application process will be made available in the [DSI-NRF Postgraduate](#)

[Student Funding for the 2026 Academic Year – National Research Foundation](#). **Table 1** shows the cut-off dates for students to apply for scholarships at each postgraduate level of study.

Table 1: Students' scholarships application closing dates for each level of study.

Level of study	First Semester			Second Semester		
	Opening date	Applicants Closing date	Submission to NRF by DAs	Opening date	Applicants Closing date	Submission to NRF by DAs
Honours						
First-time Master's						
First-time Doctoral						

This opportunity is **only** available to the students who will be linked to research projects/ programmes funded by the NRF as listed above. **Please Contact CGS Colleagues for internal closing dates for information on the above table (Lindiwe Booï, David Macheu, Mpho Lekoekoe)**

Important to note the following: a. academic requirement for postgraduate funding is 65%

- b. The awarding of ad hoc student bursaries remains competitive and will be dependent on the availability of funds.
- c. Students will be provided with an opportunity for a financial means test (FMT) assessment in August 2026, provided they submit completed consent forms that are fully signed and are stamped by a Commissioner of Oaths to their Designated Authorities before the deadline.
- d. **For NRF-FREF BAAP, Research Development Grants for Y-Rated Researchers and NRF - SASOL Young Academics Accelerator Programme (YAAP), only a maximum of three students per grantholder will be funded. This includes students who have previously received funding and whose grants are still active on the system.**
- e. The successful upgrade to Full Cost of Study (FCS) is contingent on the following:
 - Financial Means Test (FMT) results
 - Exceptional academic achievers (75% and above)
 - Proof of NSFAS/ISFAP funding
 - Living with Disability

This *ad hoc* opportunity is being implemented aligned to the DSTI-NRF Policy for Postgraduate Student Funding Policy and should also be read and interpreted in conjunction with the substance of the annual call documentation. **Please Contact CGS Colleagues for information on the Post-graduate Application and Funding Guide as they assist the applicants through the application process - (Lindiwe Booï, David Macheu, Mpho Lekoekoe)**

Please contact the Research office for more information:

Grant-holders:

Thabi Mosoetsa:

051 401 7708

Mosoetsat@ufs.ac.za

For DSTI-NRF CoEs, DSTI-NRF Flagships and DSTI-NRF National Institutes-related enquiries, please contact:

Ms Melissa Govender: Research Management Specialist– SI³

Telephone: 012 481 4311

Email address: M.Govender@risa.nrf.ac.za

For National Facilities related enquiries, please contact:

Mr. Lehlogonolo Phaahla: Research Management Specialist.

Telephone: 012 481 4315

Email Address: LA.Phaahla@risa.nrf.ac.za

For Manus Matsci related enquiries, please contact:

Ms Tshepiso Masemola: Research Management Specialist

Telephone: 012 481 4336

Email Address: T.Masemola@risa.nrf.ac.za

For NRF-SASOL enquiries, please contact:

Ms. Kgaugelo Molepo: Research Management Specialist

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For Technical related queries, please contact: NRF Supportdesk

Telephone: 012 481 4202

Email: supportdesk@nrf.ac.za

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