

NRF Fellowships for Postdoctoral Research Abroad 2016 Call for Applications

The National Research Foundation (NRF) is mandated by an Act of Parliament, the National Research Foundation Act (Act No. 23 of 1998) to: *“Support and promote research through funding, human capacity 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”*.

In support of this mandate, the NRF makes funds available to support postdoctoral that are awarded on a competitive basis. In addition to the suite of funding instruments in support of full-time postdoctoral research at South African public universities, science councils and national research facilities, the NRF makes funds available to support a small number of fellowships for postdoctoral research abroad, with the objective of increasing the number and quality of South African postdoctoral fellows in South Africa. **Applicants to this funding instrument, will need to ensure that supplementary funding can be secured as the NRF fellowship may not cover the full cost of tuition and living expenses abroad.**

1. Areas of Support

The funding is intended to support fellows to pursue research studies **at a university abroad** in all areas of:

- Science
- Engineering
- Technology (SET)
- Social Sciences; and
- Humanities

Preference will be given to applications to undertake postdoctoral research in a vulnerable discipline, emerging research area or where there exists a paucity of research infrastructure and/or suitably qualified research experts in South Africa.

2. Eligibility criteria

The eligibility criteria listed below applies to all applicants' for this fellowship:

- Fellowships are open to **South African citizens, including permanent residents, only;**
- Applicants who were registered at South African institutions and obtained their PhD within 5 (five) years of submitting an application to the NRF;
- Applicants who are currently completing their Doctoral dissertation for submission may apply however, **awards that are not taken up by 30 September 2016 will be cancelled by the NRF;**
- Applicants who are applying for a third postdoctoral research placement are not eligible;
- Full- time employees of Higher Education Institutions (HEI's) are not eligible to apply;

3. Value of the NRF Free-standing Postdoctoral Fellowship for 2016

The value of the award will be calculated as the equivalent of the United States Dollar (USD) of 26 000 per annum, for a maximum of four years, and will be paid out in the currency of the country in which the postdoctoral research will be undertaken. In addition, the NRF will cover the cost of:

- A single economy airfare for travel to the country in which the postdoctoral research will be undertaken; and
- A single economy airfare to return to South Africa upon completion of the postdoctoral research abroad.

The NRF **will not** cover any costs for accompanying family members or any other related costs associated with the postdoctoral research. The applicant will be responsible for securing additional funding to cover any shortfall in funding required to undertake his/her postdoctoral research abroad.

4. Conditions of the Fellowship

- The fellowship shall be held as the primary funding for the postdoctoral research training;
- Fellowships may not be held simultaneously with a fellowship from any other government or NRF source or NRF administered source;

- Postdoctoral fellows are permitted to spend a maximum of 20% of their time undertaking lecturing and student supervision;
- Postdoctoral fellows may not concurrently hold the fellowship with any full-time employment position; and
- Postdoctoral fellows may hold non-binding supplementary grants or emoluments to the institutional capped value.

5. Equity and redress

In line with the national imperative of equity and redress, the bursary scheme prioritises support for appropriately qualified applicants from designated groups *viz.* black, female and persons with disabilities, while ensuring that only applications that meet the NRF merit review and selection criteria are supported. The set equity targets are 80% blacks, 50% women and 4% students with disabilities.

With respect to citizenship of successful applicants, the awards will be allocated in line with the following percentages:

- 84% to South African citizens and permanent residents; and
- 5% Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries
- 4% Other African countries
- 4% Non-African

6. Application process

Applicants may apply by following the steps below:

- Applications must be submitted through an online application process to the NRF.
- Applicants must apply for the NRF Free-standing-Scarce Skills-Innovation Postdoctoral Fellowship Call for 2016 by accessing the link: <https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za/>.

On accessing the link, please follow the instructions as follows:

- Register/Login using your Identity (ID) or passport number and password.
- Select “My Applications”.
- Select “Create Application”.



- Select the call for which you are applying: **NRF Free-standing-Scarce Skills-Innovation Postdoctoral Fellowship Call for 2016.**
- Select “Apply now”.
- Complete all compulsory and non-compulsory (CV) sections of the application form.
- Please attach the necessary documents in **one PDF file in the following order: ID document, proof of permanent residence (if applicable) and certified copies of Masters or Doctoral certificates (if available).** Should you not follow the guidelines for attaching the necessary documents, your application will not be considered.
- Remember to submit your application on completion.

Please note the following:

- Complete applications will automatically be forwarded to the host Institution for verification before being submitted to the NRF for further processing.
- Incomplete applications will not be considered.
- Applications that do not meet the eligibility criteria will not be considered.
- Contact the university postgraduate or research office for queries related to institutional processes and deadlines.
- NRF contact persons are listed below for NRF related enquiries.

The closing date for submitting applications is **01 September 2015.**

7. Review process

After the closing date for the submission of applications, all eligible and appropriately completed applications are subjected to a competitive merit review process. Any information submitted as attachments that should have been completed as part of the application renders the application incomplete resulting in a rejection. All applications considered will be evaluated in a competitive merit review process. The reviewers are selected by the NRF staff from database existing databases and other sources and may include the reviewers suggested by the applicant's. The applications are sent to reviewers before the panel. In assessing the proposals, the reviewers' reports are referred to, and agreed assessment criteria are applied in the form of a scorecard during the panel.

The purpose of the scoring system is to evaluate applications in order to determine applicants that are most deserving of the limited funds available. All research proposals submitted to the NRF for funding are evaluated according to the predetermined criteria.

Each area is given a weight to indicate its relative importance. Kindly consult the table below for details on the criteria used as well as their relative weighting.

Scorecard for the Assessment of Proposals for Postdoctoral fellowships

Criteria	Sub-Criteria	Weight (Total = 100%)
Track Record of Applicant	Applicant expertise/training that will enable the applicant to successfully undertake the proposed research.	10%
	The applicant's research track record which could include peer reviewed publications, conference proceedings, research prizes and awards.	10%
Scientific and Technical quality of proposed research	Literature review with citations, significance of the research in terms of the problem statement, aims and objectives. Scientific contribution; originality and new knowledge to be generated.	20%
	Research design, methodology developed to address aims of the research. Provision of workplan and feasible timelines and milestones for the research.	20%
	Alignment with national and institutional research priorities.	5%
Institutional Support	Institutional support for the postdoctoral fellowship through infrastructure and facilities for an enabling environment.	10%
Potential Research Outputs and Impact of the research	Details of envisaged realistic outputs of the research such as publications, conference proceedings, toolkits, policy documents.	5%
	Contribution to postdoctoral research skills development in a priority research area (human capacity development of the applicant)	10%
	Potential for socio-economic impact of the research in South Africa	10%
		100%

8. Reporting

For continuous monitoring of progress, the awardees will be required to submit an Annual Progress Report (APR), in a format provided by the NRF, against deliverables as outlined in the application form and the signed Conditions of Grant.

9. NRF contact persons

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

Ms Zikhona Lose

Professional Officer: Grants Management and Systems Administration (GMSA)

Telephone: 012 481 4365. E-mail: zikhona.lose@nrf.ac.za

For funding instrument related enquiries, please contact:

Ms Nompumelelo Thwala

Professional Officer: Human and Infrastructure Capacity Development (HICD)

Telephone: 012 481 4232. E-mail: nompumelelo.thwala@nrf.ac.za