



science  
& technology

Department:  
Science and Technology  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



National  
Research  
Foundation

## COMMUNIQUÉ

### Masters and Doctoral Scholarships for Full-time Studies for 2019

21 May 2018

---

The NRF Free-Standing, Innovation and Scarce Skills Call has attracted an increasing number of new applications over the recent years. In 2017, the NRF reviewed 3 221 and 2 339 applications for Masters and Doctoral studies respectively. Of these reviewed applications, only 22% (723) of the Masters and 27% (651) of the Doctoral applications were funded due to budget limitations. The implication is that a high number of applications which cannot be funded with the available budget are reviewed at a considerable cost to the NRF. In addition, the Scarce Skills Development Fund (SSDF) allocation for postgraduate scholarships has been reduced significantly over the past two (2) years and is expected to decline further in the 2019/20 allocation.

The NRF is therefore instituting a ceiling on the number of Masters and Doctoral applications that may be submitted by each institution. This is intended to reduce the cost and burden of review of poor quality applications and/or applications that cannot be funded within the available budget and/or equity targets as stipulated in the *Ministerial Guidelines on improving equity in the distribution of bursaries and fellowships (2013)*. Additionally, limiting the number of applications to align with the proportion that may be funded will reduce the number of students that are disappointed at a later stage following the conclusion of the awarding process. This decision was discussed with the Deputy Vice Chancellors (DVCs), at the recent DVC Forum held in Grahamstown on 04 May 2018.

The NRF has clustered the universities into three (3) groups based on (i) the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) Masters and Doctoral enrolment figures for 2016; (ii) the number of applications submitted to the NRF by each institution for 2018; and (iii) the number of applications awarded to each institution for 2018 following the merit review of

applications. The number of Masters and Doctoral applications that may be submitted by each university is indicated in Table 1.

Institutions are required to carefully screen and select applications for submission to the NRF. Each university must give preference to students that meet the following criteria:

- Students that obtained an average mark of 65% and above in their previous degree;
- Students that have received an NRF scholarship for Honours' or Masters studies and/or who are currently funded for postgraduate studies by the NRF; and
- Students that have completed their previous degree within regulation time and/or that will be completing their current postgraduate degree within regulation time.

Institutional Designated Authorities (DAs) must ensure that the proportion of Masters and Doctoral applications submitted by each institution meets the targets indicated in the Ministerial Guidelines namely:

- 87% South African citizens and permanent residents.
- 80% black (African, Coloured and Indian).
- 5% students from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region; 4% students from the rest of Africa; 4% students from non-African countries
- 55% Female
- 4% students living with a disability

The maximum number of scholarship applications to be submitted will comprise the total number for all categories of Masters and Doctoral scholarships included in this Framework **excluding the NRF-TWAS Doctoral.**

**Any enquires related to this communique must be addressed to: Dr Mbulelo Ncango, [Mbulelo.ncango@nrf.ac.za](mailto:Mbulelo.ncango@nrf.ac.za) or 012 481 4390**

**Table 1: Maximum number of applications that may be submitted per institution under the call for applications for Masters and Doctoral Scholarships for Full-time Studies in 2019.**

Institutions	MASTERS	DOCTORAL
	Maximum number that may be submitted excluding TWAS	Maximum number that may be submitted excluding TWAS
Cape Peninsula University of Technology	100	80
Central University of Technology		
Walter Sisulu University		
Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University		
Vaal University of Technology		
Durban University of Technology		
Rhodes University		
University of South Africa		
Nelson Mandela University		
University of Zululand		
University of the Free State		
Tshwane University of Technology		
University of Limpopo		
University of the Western Cape	150	120
University of Fort Hare		
University of Johannesburg		
University of Venda		
University of the Witwatersrand	200	160
University of Pretoria		
North-West University		
Stellenbosch University		
University of Cape Town		
University of KwaZulu-Natal		