Application and Funding Guide for Extension Support for Master's and Doctoral Scholarships 2025

Date: April 2024

Contents

List of Acronyms

Acronym	Meaning
DA	Designated Authority
NRF	National Research Foundation

Contact Details

For Technical NRF Connect Enquiries

For NRF Connect Technical Enquiries, please contact the **NRF Support Desk** on weekdays, during office hours (08:00 to 16:30 Monday to Friday):

Telephone: 012-481-4202

E-mail: supportdesk@nrf.ac.za

For General Extension Support Enquiries

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1. Introduction

- This Application and Funding Guide provides an overview of the application process and funding guidelines for the Call for Extension Support for master's and doctoral scholarships for the 2025 academic year.

- This document should be read in conjunction with the DSI-NRF Postgraduate Student Application and Funding Framework for Funding in 2025 Academic Year (accessible on the NRF website under call documents). The framework document provides detailed information with respect to objectives of each funding opportunity, eligibility criteria, etc. This document does not, however, constitute a complete set of policies, procedures or systems used by the NRF.

2. Application Process

- The Call for Extension Support for master's and doctoral scholarships for full-time studies in 2025 is published on the NRF website.

- The application form is accessible online at https://nrfconnect.nrf.ac.za

- Applicants may only submit **ONE** application.

- Once the applicant submits an application, the application will automatically be routed to the institution where the applicant is applying to study.

- The applications will be screened for eligibility, reviewed, and scored by the institutions.

- Applications that meet the scholarship requirements will be submitted to the NRF by the institution.

- Applications close on 11 October 2024.

- All applications are processed by an NRF Designated Authority (DA) who is based at the University Research/Postgraduate Office. Should a DA contact you regarding your application, before your application is submitted to the NRF, please make sure you respond as soon as possible or within the timeline given in the communication. Failure to do so may result in the application being rejected at the institutional-review stage.

3. How to Submit an Application

- The Extension Support scholarship application is available on the NRF Connect System at https://nrfconnect.nrf.ac.za.

- Applicants are advised to complete their applications soon after the Call opens, to prevent IT system overload, which may occur close to the cut-off dates.

Step 1: Login or Register

- When accessing NRF Connect (https://nrfconnect.nrf.ac.za), the applicant will be directed to a Login (for registered users) and Register (for new users) page.
- All applicants are required to be registered on the NRF Connect system to make use of the relevant functionality.

Applicants must click the **ORCID (Open Researcher and Contributor ID)** icon to login or register.
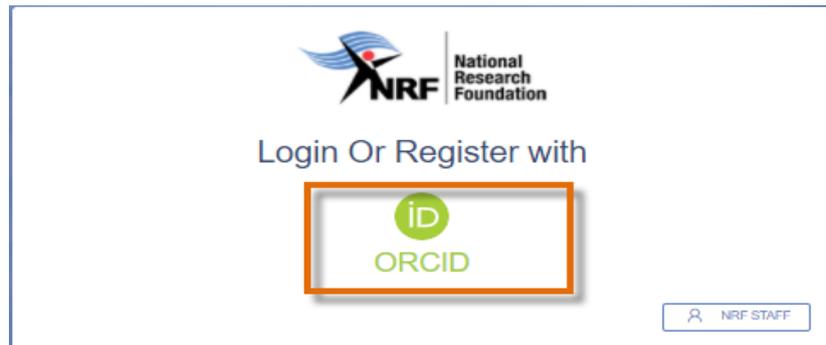
Step 2: Signing in with ORCID iD

Applicants already registered on ORCID, must sign in using one of the following options:

- ORCID iD
- Email address linked with your ORCID profile
- GMAIL account linked with your ORCID
- Facebook account linked with ORCID

When clicking on **Sign In**, the system will redirect you to the NRF Connect login page and automatically log you in.

Step 3: Creating the ORCID iD

Applicants that are not registered on ORCID, must click **"Register now"** and follow the steps to create an ORCID profile.
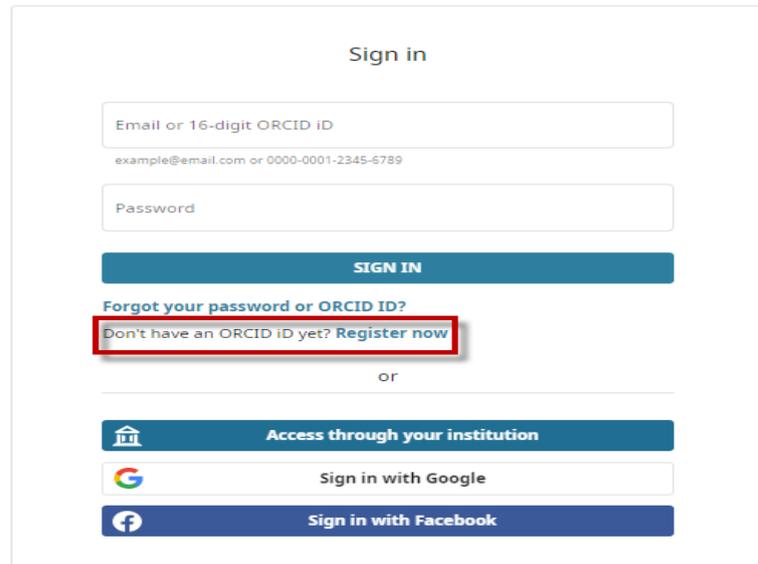
Step 4: Existing ORCID Profiles

- On clicking **'Register Now'**, the system will return the following message: *"We found some accounts with your name, which means you may have already created an ORCID iD using a different email address. Before creating an account, please confirm that none of these records belong to you. Not sure if any of these are you?"*
- If any of the listed profile(s) belong to you, click *"I already have an ID, go back to sign in"*
- If none of the profiles are yours, click *"None of these are me, continue with registration"*
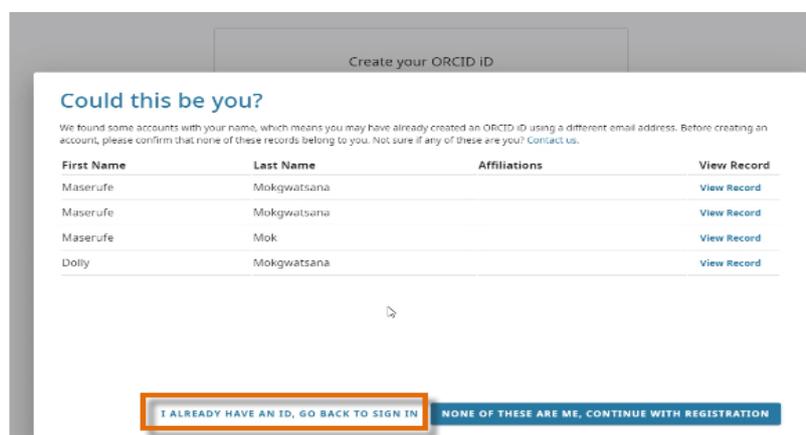
Step 5: Visibility of ORCID iD

Please select one of the options for the visibility of the ORCID records.

- Should you choose the first or second option, the ORCID records will be visible on NRF Connect
- Should you choose the third option; the records will not be visible on NRF Connect

Step 6: Authorize Access

Continue with the ORCID registration as prompted.

Step 7: Register on NRF Connect

When the ORCID registration process is complete, you will be redirected to NRF Connect login screen to register on the system.
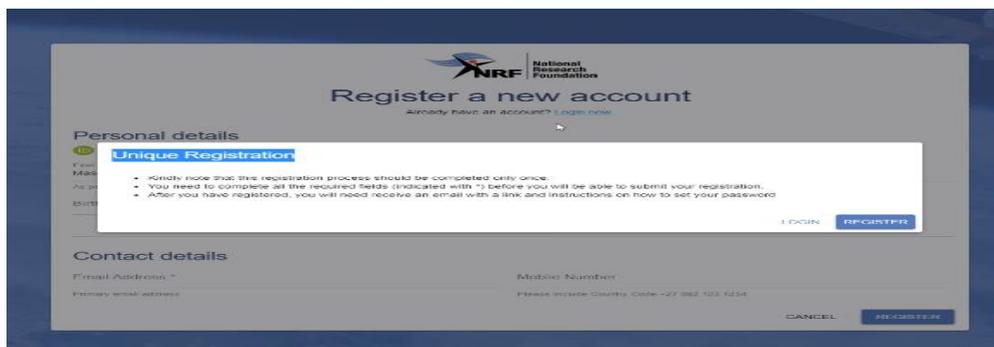
Step 8: Applicants with NRF Online Submission Profile

Applicants who are currently registered on the NRF Online Submission System, will be automatically logged in to NRF Connect with the ORCID profile.

Step 9: Applicants without NRF Online Submission Profile

If you are not registered on NRF Online Submission system, click **'Register'** to register and create a profile on the new NRF Connect system.
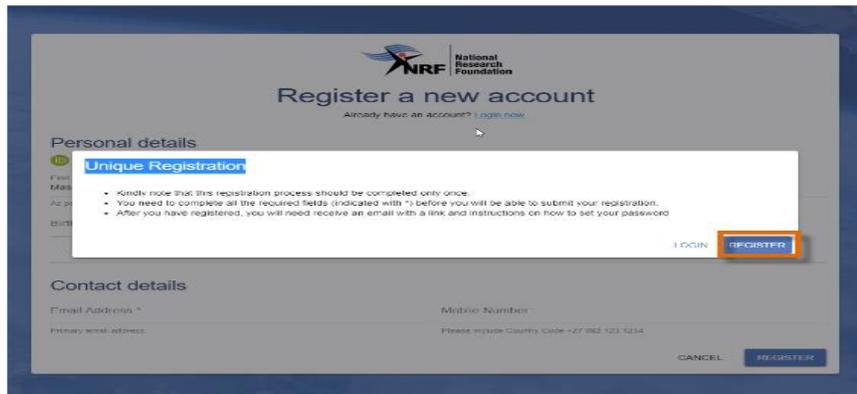
Step 10: Login on NRF Connect

Complete the missing fields and click **Register** to complete the process and the system will automatically log you in.
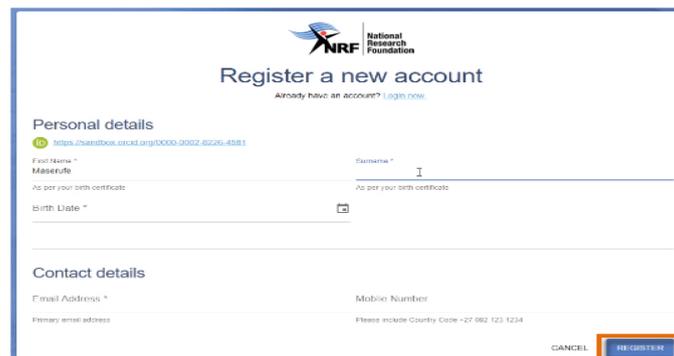
Step 11: Complete the "My Profile" and CV sections

- Applicants must first complete or update the section **'My Profile'** together with the CV section on the left side of the NRF Connect screen before they can complete the application.
- All fields with an asterisk * are compulsory.
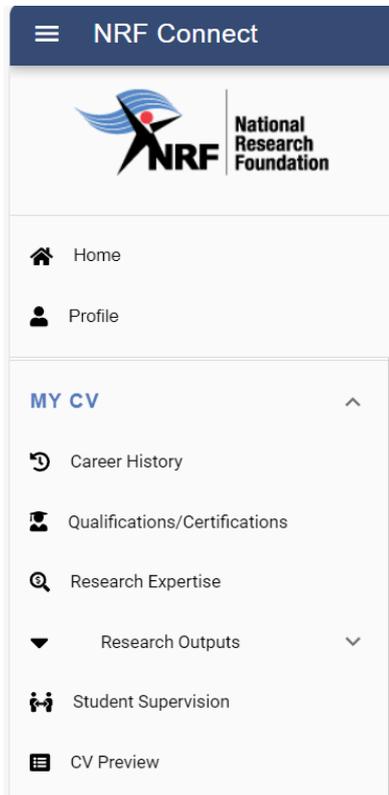
Navigation and Controls

Drop-down List Control

Click on the arrow on the drop-down to see a list of options. Then click on the relevant option(s) to select.
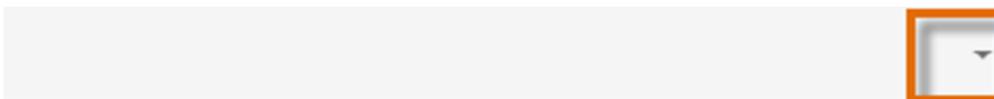
Upload Control

Click on the **Attachment** icon to upload required document(s).

Click here to upload the relevant document *

Calendar Control

Click on the **Calendar** icon to select the date, where a date is required.
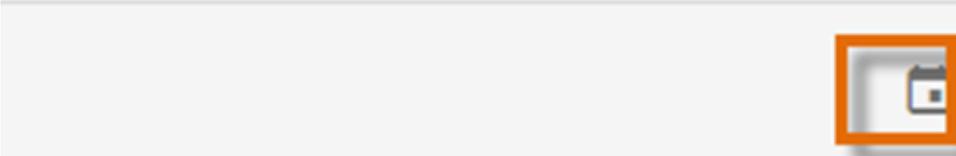
A full **Calendar** will be displayed to allow for selection of the relevant date (follow the sequence as follows: year, month, day).

| ‹ | April | › | ‹ | 2024 | › |
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

CLOSE
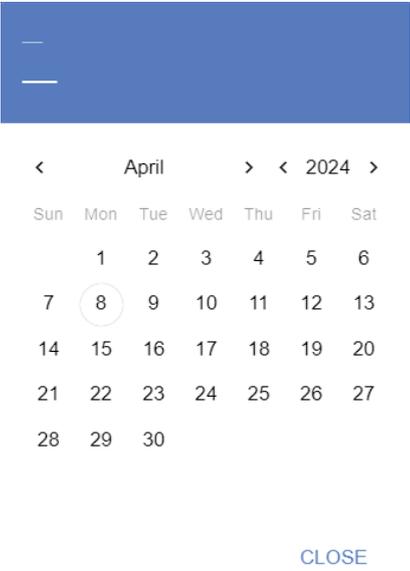
Toggle Control

Toggle to indicate **No**.

Full-time

Toggle to indicate **Yes**.

Full-time

Are you disabled in any way?
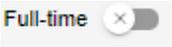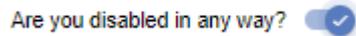
Please make sure that the toggle has fully marked no or yes based on your selection. Toggle not fully selected will not allow the section to complete.

Step 12: Accessing the application

To create an application, go to **"MY APPLICATIONS"** and select **"Applications"**
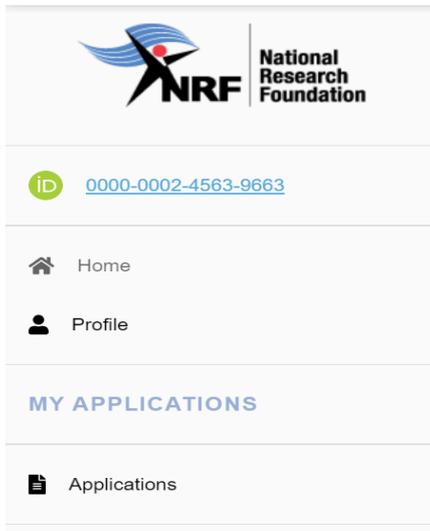
Step 13: Postgraduate Scholarship Level

Click on the plus sign on NRF Postgraduate Scholarships to view the postgraduate scholarship levels.
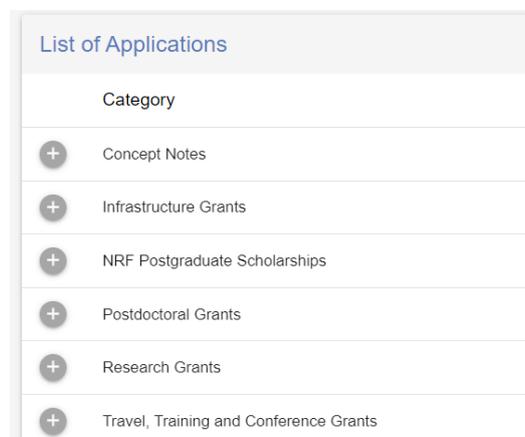
Step 14: Creating the application

- Click on **'Create'** to complete the extension support scholarship application.
- Please note that the application can only be created once. To continue working on the created application, you must click on the **'Edit'** button.

Step 15: Application Sections

- After creating the application, you will be taken to the landing page below.
- All sections marked with an asterisk (*) are compulsory. These sections must be completed in order for the final submit button to be activated.
- Completed sections will be indicated by a green tick, while incomplete sections will have a red cross.
- Applicants may complete the non-compulsory sections, if relevant.

Step 16: Application Category - Extension Support

- The **Application Category** section is a very important section as the applicant is required to select the level of study to be funded for.
- Only full-time applicants can apply for extension support.
- Note that extensions will only be granted under exceptional circumstances and will be for either six (6) or twelve (12) months.

Step 17: Details of Extension

- The **Details of Extension** section requires the applicants to indicate which institution they will be registered with.
- The fields "application/grant reference number" and "value of grant" are not editable as information is pulled directly from the system. If the applicant is an NRF grantholder in 2024, the grant details will pull into this section. If your grant details do not pull into the section, it means that the NRF system does not recognise you as a grantholder. Please call the NRF contact person for assistance.
- NB: **Block grant** and **grantholder-linked students** who were previously nominated under the block grant or their researcher's grant, will have to have been nominated again on the system in 2024 for your information to pull through.
- **For applicants funded under the PDP programme**, the applicant's institution must be the university you will be registered with (**not the Science Council or Research facility).**

Step 18: Original Problem Statement and Research Plan

The **Original Problem Statement** and the **Original Research Plan** sections are compulsory sections because the reviewer might not have the applicant's original application, therefore, the information is very important to determine what was originally proposed prior to the progress to date.
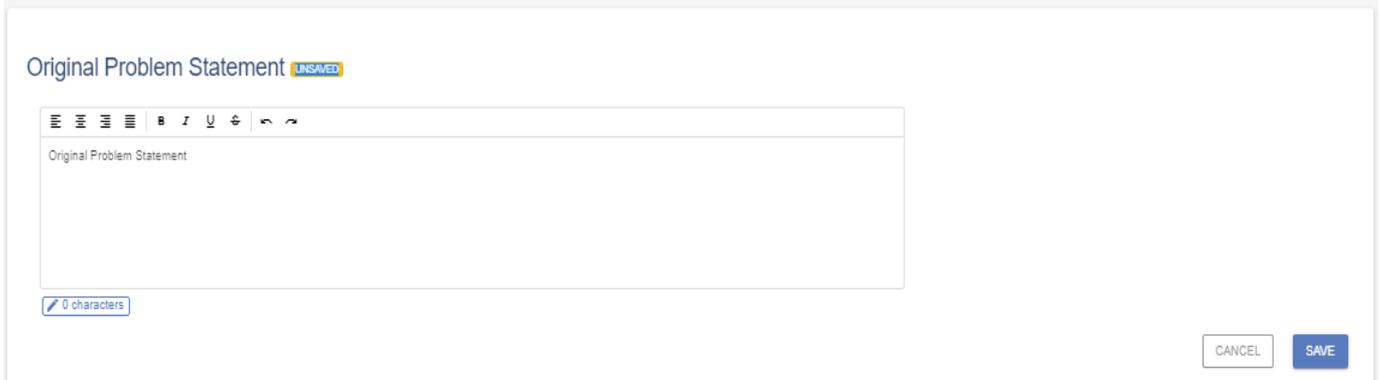
Original Problem Statement UNSAVED

Original Problem Statement

0 characters

CANCEL   SAVE

Step 19: Progress to Date

The **Progress to Date** section requires applicants to indicate the work done thus far under the Research Project.
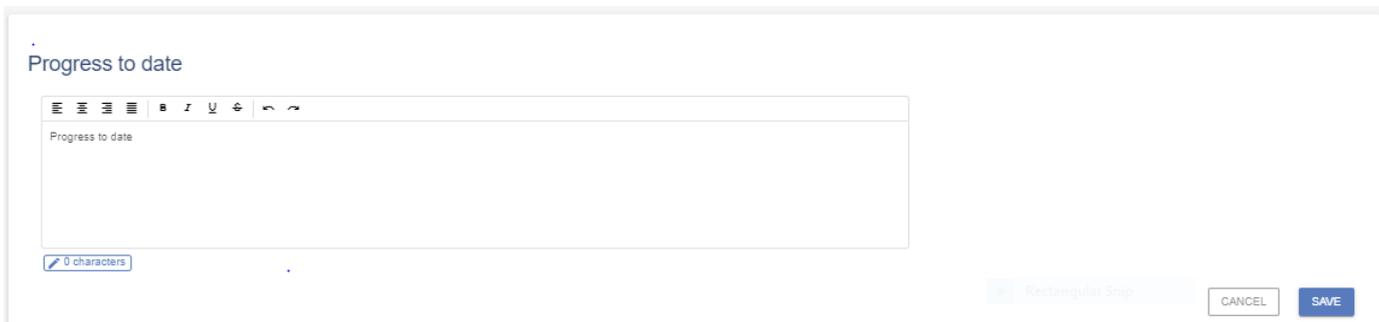
Progress to date

Progress to date

0 characters

CANCEL   SAVE

Step 20: Reasons why the study could not be completed

The **Reasons why the study could not be completed in the NRF maximum funding period** section requires an explanation as to why the study could not be completed within the NRF grant period.

Reasons why the study could not be completed in the NRF maximum funding period

0 characters

CANCEL   SAVE

Step 21: Work Plan

The **Work plan to complete the degree within the indicated timeframes** section requires the applicant to provide a work plan to complete the degree within the requested (6 or 12 months) extension period. Clear timelines of activities to take place during the period of extension should be provided.

Step 22: Attachments section

The following documents are compulsory for the Extension Support Application:

a. A letter from supervisor confirming support of the extension.
- Letter from the supervisor confirming supervision, on an institutional letterhead and signed.

- Confirmation that the institution has the necessary infrastructure to carry out all recommended research projects as detailed in the applications submitted to the NRF.
- Confirmation that NRF funded students will be given the necessary support during the period of study.
- Letter stamped by the DA at the institutional postgraduate office (responsibility of student).

Note: If a support letter from your supervisor is not attached, the application will be rejected.

4. Tracking the Application

This section explains different application statuses to assist the applicant in tracking the application. The status of your application will determine the stage the application is at. Applicants should direct queries to the University Research/Postgraduate Office if the application is still at the university.

Application in progress	• Applicant has created an application.
Application complete	• Application is complete but has not been submitted to the institution yet.
Submit application to institution	• Application has been submitted to the selected institution.
Designated authority submission review	• Application received by institutional designated authority (DA) and currently under review.
Designated authority submission eligibility review	• DA has completed review but still needs to complete eligibility criteria and/or scorecard.
Internal screening submission	• Application has been submitted to the NRF by the DA.
Internal screening approval	• NRF screening to check eligibility and application requirements. • If rejected, the applicant will receive a notification with the reason for rejection.
Funding decision allocation	• Eligible application now under awarding stage. • Unsuccessful applications will remain at this stage.
Award accepted	• Successful application i.e., an award has been made against the application. Awardee can log into NRF Connect to accept/reject award.

5. Screening Processes

5.1 Overview of the Screening Process

All submitted applications validated and reviewed by South African public institutions and submitted to the NRF, are further screened by the NRF for compliance with the eligibility criteria and requirements of the Call for applications. Applications that fail to meet the stipulated requirements will be rejected.

6. Applications Feedback and Disputes

Once the assessment processes have been completed and the recommended funding decision has been approved by the NRF, the NRF will publish a list of successful applicants on the NRF website at www.nrf.ac.za/bursaries/calls. The application status online will indicate whether or not the application has been approved for funding. If your name does not appear on the published list of successful applications, it means that your application was unsuccessful.

The Promotion of Administrative Justice Act (Act 3 of 2000) give effect to the right to administrative action that is lawful, reasonable and procedurally fair and to the right to written reasons for administrative action as contemplated in section 33 of the constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. The NRF and the universities are expected to provide feedback to all applicants on the status of their application.

Feedback from the University:

- Universities must provide feedback to applicants who were screened at the universities for eligibility and deemed not eligible for funding.
- Universities must provide feedback to applicants who were reviewed at the universities and were recommended not eligible for funding by the panel of reviewers.

Feedback from the NRF

- The NRF must provide feedback to applicants whose applications were recommended for funding but were not awarded funding due to budget constraints. In this instance, the NRF will send a regret letter directly to the affected applicants.
- The NRF must provide feedback to applicants whose applications were recommended for funding and approved for funding. In this instance, the NRF will publish a list of the successful applicants on the NRF website and share the list with the Research/Postgraduate Offices at respective universities.

The NRF will conduct an Appeals Process two (2) months after the official publication date of the results on the NRF website. Only those applicants who were not recommended by the institutional review panel or where a system issue was encountered with the submission of an application to the NRF, are eligible to appeal. An appeal must be justified with proof (e.g., email correspondence with the NRF for system related issues), and must be supported by the supervisor in order to be considered.

Note: Awarding of successful appeals will be contingent on the availability of the budget. Therefore, a successful appeal does not automatically constitute an award.

7. Scientific Compliance

7.1 Methodology

The student takes scientific responsibility for the research to be undertaken, including its objectives and the methodology outlined in the project proposal. The student is required to devote the necessary time to the research project in compliance with the work-plan for the research proposal approved by the NRF so as to achieve the project's stated aims and objectives.

7.2 Intellectual Property Rights

The intellectual capital generated by NRF funded research must be appropriately protected and exploited for the benefit of South Africa. This condition should not interfere with the Intellectual Property Rights arrangements already made, on condition that the majority of the benefits arising from the intellectual capital accrue to South Africa and its citizens. This condition is aligned with the Intellectual Property Rights Act, 1 which will override this condition of grant.

1 RSA (2008). Intellectual Property Rights from Publicly Financed Research and Development Act 51 of 2008.Government Gazette, 22 Dec 2008. Vol 522, No 3174

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