



South African Radio Astronomy Observatory

Postgraduate Scholarship Applications for 2025 (Master's and Doctoral Level)

Application Guide

Applications must be submitted electronically at <https://nrfconnect.nrf.ac.za>

Enquiries regarding SARAO Postgraduate Scholarships

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Closing date for SARAO Postgraduate Scholarship Applications for the 2025 Academic Year

Individual universities will set their own closing dates for applications.
Find out the closing date from the university where you intend registering for your degree, and ensure you submit your application on, or before that date.

1. Who can apply for SARAQ Postgraduate Scholarships for the 2025 Academic Year

SARAQ Masters and Doctoral Scholarships: ONLY students who wish to pursue Master’s or Doctoral research that is relevant to radio astronomy science or engineering.

2. Eligibility for SARAQ Postgraduate Scholarships for the 2025 Academic Year

	Masters	Doctoral
Nationality	South African citizens and permanent residents, AND citizens of Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia and Zambia	South African citizens and permanent residents, AND citizens of Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia and Zambia
Degree/Research Focus	Students who wish to pursue postgraduate research relevant to the scientific and technical goals of the SKA and MeerKAT radio telescopes – see section 2 for details	Students who wish to pursue postgraduate research relevant to the scientific and technical goals of the SKA and MeerKAT radio telescopes – see section 2 for details
Minimum Academic Requirement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minimum average of 65% at honours level <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minimum average of 65% at undergraduate level, for a four-year degree 	A minimum of 65% at Master’s level
Research Project	See section 3 of this document. SARAQ will only consider Master’s scholarship applications from students who have selected an approved 2025 SARAQ postgraduate research project.	See section 3 of this document. SARAQ will only consider Doctoral scholarship applications from students who have selected an approved 2025 SARAQ postgraduate research project.
Age requirement at time of application	30 years old or younger	32 years old or younger

3. IMPORTANT Research Projects for SARAQ Master’s and Doctoral Level for the 2025 Academic Year

- a. SARAQ will **ONLY** consider Master’s/Doctoral scholarship applications from students who have selected **an approved 2025 SARAQ postgraduate research project**, and obtained a signed agreement from the relevant supervisor stating that he/she will supervise the student.
- b. All projects approved by SARAQ for postgraduate research for 2025, as well as the contact details of the relevant supervisors, are available at: <https://www.sarao.ac.za/students/approved-masters-research-projects-2025/>
- c. Prior to submitting an application for a SARAQ Master’s/Doctoral scholarship, you must review the list of approved postgraduate research projects for 2025, and identify a project you wish to pursue for your Master’s/Doctoral degree.

- d. Once you have identified a project, you must then contact the supervisor of the project to discuss the project, and determine if you have the required qualifications, skills and abilities to undertake the project.
- e. If the supervisor of the approved project agrees to supervise you for your Master's/Doctoral degree, **the supervisor must provide you with a signed letter**, on a university letterhead, stating that he/she has agreed to supervise you for the relevant project. **You MUST upload a copy of this letter with your application, as an attachment. SARAO will NOT consider an application if there is no supervision-agreement letter. – See Section 3.**
- f. You must use the details of the research project, as provided on the SARAO website, to complete the “Research Project Information Section” of the application form.
- g. If you are awarded a SARAO Master's/Doctoral scholarship you will have to register at the university where the supervisor of the research project is based, and undertake your degree at that university.

Note: Supervisors are under no obligation to agree to supervise a student

4. Supporting Documents to be Attached to your Application Form

You MUST attach ALL FIVE documents listed below, in the **Attachments Section** of the application form.

IF ANY OF THESE DOCUMENTS ARE NOT ATTACHED, SARAO WILL NOT CONSIDER YOUR APPLICATION!!!!

- **Document 1: Identity Document or Passport**

- For South African citizens and permanent residents: A copy of your South African ID
- For non-South Africans: A copy of your passport

- **Document 2: University Results**

All your university academic results, from the start of your degree until now, and where relevant for **all other degrees** completed to date. **Please attached all your results as a single PDF Document**

- **Document 3: An Updated Curriculum Vitae**

- **Document 4: Supervisor's-agreement to supervise letter, for Master's and Doctoral Applications**

The supervisor of the project you have selected must provide you with a signed letter, on a university letterhead, stating that he/she has agreed to supervise you for the relevant project. Attach the letter of agreement.

The letter of agreement from the relevant supervisor is essential. If no such letter is attached to your application, your application will be REJECTED.

- **Document 5: Letter of Motivation**

Attach your motivation, which must include the information asked for below. Please refer to the relevant academic level below when drafting your motivation. **The motivation is CRITICAL to the review of your application. Take the time to draft an excellent motivation!**

Master's Application – Letter of Motivation

A letter of about 1000 words motivating why you should be awarded a SARA0 Master's Scholarship. In this letter you should include the following:

- Your academic progress from undergraduate to postgraduate level.
- Your understanding of radio astronomy generally, and more specifically of the MeerKAT and SKA radio telescopes.
- Why you chose to study the degree you have selected, and how this degree will help you progress towards your ideal career.
- How the research proposed for your Master's degree links to the science or engineering of the MeerKAT radio telescope and/or the SKA radio telescope.
- Details of academic, and other achievements.
- Your personal strengths, passions and career aspirations.

Doctoral Application – Letter of Motivation

A letter of about 1000 words motivating why you should be awarded a SARA0 Doctoral Scholarship. In this letter you should include the following:

- Your academic progress from undergraduate to postgraduate level.
- Your understanding of radio astronomy generally, and more specifically of the MeerKAT and SKA radio telescopes.
- A brief overview of your Master's research work.
- How your Master's research work links to the research proposed for your Doctoral degree, and how your Doctoral research will contribute to the science or engineering of the MeerKAT radio telescope and/or the SKA radio telescope.
- Details of your academic, and other achievements.
- Your personal strengths, passions and career aspirations.

5. Structure and Funding Levels for SARAO Postgraduate Scholarships for the 2025 Academic Year

	Master's	Doctoral
I. Scholarship	R185,795	R192,318
II. International Student Fee	Paid in full	Paid in full
III. Travel Grant	R34,000	R41,000
IV. Equipment Grant	R32,000	R46,000
V. Laptop Grant	NA	NA
VI. Home Travel Grant	Cost of one return ticket, with one change permitted, per year	Cost of one return ticket, with one change permitted, per year
VII. Repatriation Fee	Paid in full, if required	Paid in full, if required
VIII. Emergency Medical Insurance	Paid in full	Paid in full
IX. Assistive Technology Device	R20,000	R20,000

- I. Maximum duration of a SARAO Scholarship
 - a. Master's: Two years
 - b. Doctoral: Three years
- II. SARAO will pay the international student fee due to the university, for students from Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia and Zambia.
- III. Travel grants are awarded annually, for the duration of the scholarship.
 - a. The student must use the travel grant for travel related to his/her research. It is compulsory for a student to travel at least once a year to a conference/workshop for research purposes.
 - b. Travel grants, or any funds remaining from a travel grant, for a particular year, will be carried over to the following year, for the duration of the scholarship.
- IV. The equipment grant is a total amount available for the full duration of the scholarship (i.e. this is not an annual amount).
 - a. The equipment grant is available to the student to support the purchase of equipment required for his/her research.
 - b. Equipment grants, or any funds remaining from an equipment grant, will be carried over to the following year, for the duration of the scholarship.
- V. SARAO will organise and pay for one return ticket, per year, for students from Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia and Zambia, to travel to South Africa.
- VI. SARAO will pay the repatriation fee, if required, for students from Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia and Zambia.
- VII. SARAO will pay the cost of emergency medical insurance for students from Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia and Zambia.
- VIII. Students living with a disability may apply for a grant of up to R20 000. This is the maximum amount allowed during the tenure of the scholarship. An assistive device is defined as any device, product, equipment or tool that is designed or adapted to enable persons with disabilities to participate in activities, tasks or actions including: (i) mobility aids such as wheelchairs, prostheses and crutches as well as service animals (ii) communication aids such as hearing aids, Frequency Modulation (FM) systems; (iii) sensory aids such as white canes; noise reducing headphones and coloured lenses (iv) technology aids such as computers for alternate and augmentative communication, screen readers, magnifiers, texts in audio format (Strategic Policy Framework on Disability for the PSET, 2022).