Grants Management and Systems Administration

DST-NRF Fellowships for Early Career Researchers from the United Kingdom

Application and Funding Guide 2017
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**List of Acronyms**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>APR</th>
<th>Annual Progress Report</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DA</td>
<td>Designated Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>GMSA</td>
<td>Grants Management and Systems Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEI</td>
<td>Higher Education Institution</td>
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<tr>
<td>HICD</td>
<td>Human and Institutional Capacity Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>RISA</td>
<td>Research and Innovation Support and Advancement</td>
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<tr>
<td>NRF</td>
<td>National Research Foundation</td>
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<tr>
<td>DST</td>
<td>Department of Science and Technology</td>
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Contact Details

When making an enquiry use **DST-NRF Fellowships for Early Career Researchers from the United Kingdom (UK) Call** as the email subject line.

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

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For technical online enquiries, please contact the **NRF Support Desk** during office hours from 08:00 to 16:30 Monday to Friday.

Telephone: 012 481 4202
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Application and funding guidelines are explained in this document. Applicants must read this document together with the following documents: **DST-NRF Fellowships for Early Career Researchers from the UK Framework** which highlights the eligibility criteria and requirements of this funding instrument.
1. Introduction

This Guide provides an overview of the application process and funding guidelines for the NRF funding instrument. It should be read in conjunction with the above-mentioned Framework document which can be accessed at https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za. The Framework document provides detailed information with respect to the objectives of the funding instrument and eligibility criteria for potential applicants. This document does not however, constitute a complete set of the policies, procedures or systems used by the NRF.

2. Granting Rules

2.1 Conditions of DST-NRF Fellowships for Early Career Researchers from the UK

- The fellowship will be awarded for a period of between three to six (3-6) months only.
- The fellowship-holder will be accepted as a postdoctoral research fellow during the tenure of the fellowship to assist partners to undertake and disseminate scientific research and contribute to broader scientific capacity building at the institution.
- The period of support is calculated from the initial commencement date of the fellowship. Nothing herein contained shall however, create an expectation that the fellowship shall be renewed for a subsequent period.
- The fellowship may not be held simultaneously with another fellowship from any other South African government or NRF administered source.

2.2 Values of DST-NRF Fellowships for Early Career Researchers from the United Kingdom (UK)

The package for the DST-NRF Fellowships for Early Career Researchers from the UK for 2017 is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Item</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R330 000</td>
<td>Maximum amount of support for a period of up to 6 months for living expenses and ground transport based on the duration of the stay in SA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The costs of the cheapest economy return flight from the UK to South Africa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The applicant will be responsible for securing additional funding to cover any shortfall in funding required to undertake his/her fellowship in South Africa.

3 Application Process

The NRF is publishing the DST-NRF Fellowships for Early Career Researchers from the UK Call on the NRF website that is accessible online at https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za. Each applicant is limited to only one (1) application per year. Once an applicant submits an application, it will be duly authorised and approved by the Designated Authority (DA) at the research administration office of the prospective South African host institution where the applicant intends to undertake the fellowship. Applications will be automatically routed to the institutional DA of the submitting institution for validation on the deadline date determined by individual institutions. Applicants must enquire with their host institutions regarding internal closing dates. The processing of a successful application takes approximately five (5) months from the closing date of applications to the awarding of fellowships.

4 How to Submit Applications

Applications may be completed on the NRF Online Submission System at https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za starting from Wednesday, 4 May 2016. Applicants are advised to complete their applications soon after the call is open to prevent IT system overload nearer the closing date of Thursday, 30 June 2016.
**Step 1:** This is an electronic submission system and applicants must be registered online in order to create and complete an application. If you had previously registered and submitted an application on the NRF Online System (http://nrfonline.nrf.ac.za) before February 2012 and your application was unsuccessful, your details would have been migrated to the new NRF Online Submission System (https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za). If you experience problems accessing the system with your NRF Online password, use the Reset Password button. If you are not yet registered on the NRF Online Submission System, you must register to access the application form.

Most application screens have screen and application specific instructions to help the applicant work through the sections. Please read the instructions carefully before completing the section.
Step 2: On logging onto the NRF Online Submission System, you will get to the ‘landing page’ where there is a menu at the top left side of the screen (tab indicated with blue arrow below). To create a new application, click on My Applications/Create Application.
Step 3: Select the funding instrument for which you are applying on the create application screen and a new application will open to complete. Please note that this must be selected once only. To continue working on an application, go to My Applications- List of Applications.

Applicants are urged to complete or update ALL screens of the CV, including the Research Profile and Research Outputs as this information gets evaluated during the review process and will impact on the overall assessment of your application.
Step 4: All sections marked with a red asterisk are compulsory sections. These sections must be completed in order for the final submit button to appear. Sections without asterisks are not compulsory; an applicant may enter information in these sections if they have information for the section, such as research outputs. Completed sections will be indicated by a green tick on the main menu, while incomplete sections will have a yellow cross. Please ensure to press the “save” button after completing each section before returning to the main menu.
Step 5: The “Career Profile” section is a compulsory section. The applicant must list positions held in the past up to the current position. Please complete the section accurately and keep the following in mind: (1) successful applicants will have until the end of June 2017 to take up the award; (2) the research can only be conducted in SA.
Step 6: The “Research Experience” section is compulsory. Please list your postdoctoral experience chronologically, and your postdoctoral experience should not exceed a maximum of 7 years to qualify for funding. The NRF will consider the number of years that the applicant has been active as a postdoctoral researcher, discounting any career breaks.
Step 7: The **Research Project Information** section requires applicants to select the proposed institution. SA Higher Education Institutions (HEI) as well research institutions will be in the list. Should the institution you want to select not be on the drop-down list, please request it by selecting the support tab on the far right at the top of the screen. Please note that it is the applicant’s responsibility to find an institution and supervisor in South Africa that is willing to host them for the duration of the scholarship.

Step 8: The **Details of Research** section is one of the most important sections in the application. The section has specific instructions related to each screen. Follow the instructions to complete the section. You are required to give a concise overview of your proposed research in this DST-NRF Fellowships for Early Career Researchers from the United Kingdom: Application and Funding Guide for 2017.
section as the input is taken into consideration during the assessment of your application. Appropriate literature references must also be included in this section. The Scorecard that will be used to assess your application can be viewed in Section 6 of this document.

*Please note that the Details of Research section will only mark as complete when all the sub-sections are completed.
Step 9: The **Attachments** section provides specific instructions with respect to the **compulsory** documents required and for uploading attachments to the application. The applicant is required to attach a certified doctoral certificate; certified copy of academic transcript; a letter of acceptance from an SA host researcher; a letter confirming affiliation to a government-funded UK University or research institution; and a copy of the passport. If you are an applicant with a disability, you may also upload a medical certificate in support of your disability.
Step 10: The Reference section allows applicants to include academic referees who can comment on the applicant’s academic abilities. On final submission of the application, the emails containing a reference response are sent automatically to the nominated referees to provide a report on the academic and research capabilities of the applicant.

The applicant must ensure that the referees’ email addresses are correct and that the referees have responded by the closing date of 30 June 2016 as this category of the application is assessed. The applicant must periodically view the application PDF to check if a referee has responded to the request.
Step 11: Applicants must ensure that they adhere to their institution’s internal closing date for submission of their application to allow for internal institutional screening and review. The institution’s internal closing date will be determined by the respective research offices or Post Graduate Office and is usually at least two weeks prior to the NRF’s closing date.

DAs ensure that all proposals are screened and approved through internal institutional processes before submitting the applications to the NRF. The NRF assumes that the respective DAs are satisfied with the standard of all proposals validated and submitted, and that the institution approves and supports the proposed research.

Step 12: The final submit button will appear only if all compulsory sections are complete. Press OK to submit your application. If all the compulsory sections are complete and the final submit button does not appear, select any section and resave to refresh the application; you will then see the final submit button. A submitted application is automatically routed to the DA in the Research Office of the institution that you selected, for internal review and validation. Late applications, additional supporting documentation or information received after the closing date will not be accepted or considered.

The NRF will not process applications that are incomplete, contain insufficient or incorrect detail, or fail to comply with instruction as such applications will be rejected. The application must be completed with sufficient detail to allow for a comprehensive review and evaluation by external reviewers. In addition to the electronic application and required attachments, the NRF may request additional information or documentation to support an application if required. Failure to supply such information or documentation upon request may result in the rejection of the application.

5 Screening and Review Processes

5.1 Overview of the Screening Process

All applications validated by institutions and submitted to the NRF are screened by the NRF for compliance with the eligibility criteria of the Call for applications, as well as the requirements for completing the NRF Online Submission application. Applications that fail to meet the stipulated requirements will be rejected.

5.2 Overview of the Review Process

The NRF’s peer review policy requires that all applications be subjected to a review process. Applications submitted to this funding instrument will go through a panel review process.
Panel members are selected from the NRF database and other sources, which is updated on a continuous basis. When selecting the review panel, the expertise and experience of individuals in application adjudication are taken into account. In assessing the application, agreed assessment criteria are applied in the form of a scorecard (please refer to Section 6).

The Review Panel provides recommendations to the NRF and the final funding decision is made by the NRF taking strategic and policy objectives into consideration. In awarding grants in this funding instrument, the NRF takes into account the recommendations of the peer review panel, the objectives and targets of the funding instrument, and the available funds.

6 Ranking of Applications

The purpose of the scoring system is to evaluate applications based on funding instrument criteria, in order to determine applications that are most deserving of the limited funds available. All research proposals submitted to the NRF for funding are evaluated according to a number of predetermined criteria. Applications are assessed and ranked on the basis of criteria as listed in the table below. Each area may be given a weight to indicate its relative importance. Kindly consult the table below for details on the criteria used.
Scorecard for the Assessment of Proposals for DST – NRF Fellowships for Early Career Researchers from the UK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Sub-Criteria</th>
<th>Weight (Total = 100%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Track Record of Applicant</strong></td>
<td>Applicant expertise/training that will enable the applicant to successfully undertake the proposed research.</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The applicant’s research track record which could include peer reviewed publications, conference proceedings, research prizes and awards.</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Scientific and Technical quality of proposed research</strong></td>
<td>Literature review with citations, significance of the research in terms of the problem statement, aims and objectives.</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Research design, methodology developed to address aims of the research.</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alignment with national (at applicant’s home country) and institutional research priorities (at host institution).</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Institutional Support</strong></td>
<td>Institutional support for the postdoctoral fellowship through infrastructure and facilities for an enabling environment.</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Potential Research Outputs and Impact of the research</strong></td>
<td>Details of envisaged realistic outputs of the research such as publications, conference proceedings, toolkits, policy documents.</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Contribution to postdoctoral research skills development in a priority research area (human capacity development of the applicant).</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Potential for socio-economic impact of the research in South Africa.</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7 Application Feedback and Disputes

Once the NRF has completed the review and assessment processes, and has approved the recommended funding decision, the NRF will publish a list of successful applicants on the NRF website www.nrf.ac.za/bursaries/calls. Successful applicants will thereafter receive a letter of award. The application status online will not indicate whether or not the application has been approved for funding. **This funding instrument does not provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants**; if your name does not appear on the published list of successful applications it means that your application was unsuccessful.

An unsuccessful applicant who requires feedback is advised to contact their institutional office to request feedback from the NRF. The NRF does not provide feedback to all unsuccessful applicants due to the high volume of applications received across its funding instruments.

Unsuccessful applicants that wish to appeal the funding decision taken by the NRF must follow the appropriate Appeals Process of the NRF. Appeals will only be considered for this funding instrument three (3) months after the official date of publishing of the results on the NRF website.

8 Change Requests

8.1 Prior Approval Requests

Applicants must submit all change requests in writing to the NRF for approval before effecting any changes. The request must have institutional DA endorsement and be submitted to the NRF via the Research Office for approval prior to the change.

8.2 Changes in Project Scope, Supervisor or Institution

Changes may occur where a project scope, host or institution needs to be changed from the original research proposal, host or institution respectively. The request must have institutional DA endorsement and be submitted to the NRF via the Research Office. Such requests must be forwarded to the NRF thirty (30) days before the change is intended to take place.

9 Scientific Compliance

9.1 Methodology

The applicant takes scientific responsibility for the research to be undertaken, including its objectives and the methodology outlined in the project proposal. The applicant 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.
9.2 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.

9.3 Ethics

The fellow is required to maintain the highest ethical and safety standards in conducting the research, particularly when human and animal subjects are involved. It remains the responsibility of the project leader to comply with all relevant regulations in this regard, including those of the institution at which the research is carried out. An ethical clearance certificate (where applicable) must be submitted to the NRF in respect of successful applications before funding can be released.

10 References