



**DSI-NRF POSTGRADUATE STUDENT FUNDING POLICY:
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)**

Updated: March 2021

Acronyms

NRF	National Research Foundation
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
ISFAP	Ikusasa Student Financial Aid Programme
FCS	Full Cost of Study
PCS	Partial Cost of Study
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DSI	Department of Science and Innovation
STEM	Science Technology Engineering Mathematics
SADC	Southern African Development Community
NQF	National Qualification Framework
UID	Unique Identification Number

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DSI-NRF Postgraduate Student Funding Policy Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

The National Research Foundation (NRF) implemented the DSI-NRF Postgraduate Student Policy for the first time in the year 2021, that uses postgraduate student funding as a lever to address the challenges of inequity of access, success and throughput. The purpose is to retain high academic achievers in the system to pursue postgraduate studies up to the doctoral level, as part of a national drive to grow the next generation of researchers and academics to sustain South Africa's knowledge enterprise.

This document answers frequently asked questions (FAQs) related to the DSI-NRF Postgraduate Funding Policy and the 2022 Call for applications. These FAQs will be updated from time to time and the updated FAQs will be posted on the NRF website (www.nrf.ac.za). Should you have further questions that are not addressed here please send an email to busisiwe.sibiya@nrf.ac.za.

Application Process

1. How do I apply for NRF Postgraduate funding?

Applications for funding must be made through the NRF Online submission system on <https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za/>. The call for applications opens in April annually. All applications will be reviewed at the university and only applications that meet all the requirements will be submitted by the university to the NRF. **Please consult the university at which you are intending to register for your degree for their internal closing date before you apply.**

Financial Means Assessment

2. How will the NRF establish financial need?

The NRF will identify students that have previously been assessed as financially needy by National Students Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) or the Ikusasa Students Financial Aid Programme (ISFAP). In addition, students who have not undergone a financial need assessment will be subjected to a Household Financial Means Assessment by the NRF in partnership with ISFAP. Only students that complete the consent form and provide the requested information will be subjected to a Household Financial Means Assessment by the NRF.

3. Who is regarded as a financially needy student?

A student with a combined gross family income of R350 000.00 (three hundred and fifty thousand rand) per annum or less will be regarded as financially needy by the NRF. The combined gross family income of the student's parents/spouses and/or legal guardians will be used to undertake the Household Financial Means Assessment. This will apply to all scholarship applicants intending to study for full-time studies irrespective of their age or level of postgraduate study.

4. What does combined gross family income mean?

Combined gross family income is defined as a measure of the combined income of parents/spouses and/or legal guardians who earn income both from the formal and informal sector (e.g., salaries and wages, grants, pension and other sources of income including business and/or rental income). This applies to all students applying to the NRF for postgraduate funding.

5. If I was previously funded by NSFAS or ISFAP, will I still need to undergo a financial means test to be eligible for NRF postgraduate funding?

No, applicants who were previously identified as falling into the category with a combined gross family income of R350 000.00 (three hundred and fifty thousand rand) per annum or less, by either NSFAS or ISFAP, will not need to undergo a financial means test. Such applicants must attach proof that they are financially needy on the NRF Online Application template. The attachment must be an official university stamped financial statement or acceptance of an award from NSFAS or ISFAP.

6. If I was previously funded by the University Financial Aid, will I be required to undergo a financial means test?

Yes, you will be required to undergo a financial means test for postgraduate funding in order to establish your financial need status i.e. whether you fall into the category with a combined gross family income of R350 000.00 (three hundred and fifty thousand rand) per annum or less.

7. What if my combined gross family income is just above R350 000, for example R355 000, will the NRF exclude me from obtaining funding?

No, you would be eligible for Partial Cost of Study (PCS) funding on condition that you meet the university and NRF eligibility criteria and academic requirements.

8. How will students older than 18 years of age who are no longer minors or living with their parents or guardian be accommodated?

The NRF offers funding support to students studying/intending to study on a full-time basis and who will not be in a full-time salaried, contractual or permanent employment while pursuing postgraduate studies. The financial means test will be based on the combined gross family income which is defined as a measure of the combined income of parents/spouses and/or legal guardians who earn income both from the formal and informal sector (e.g., salaries and wages, grants, pension and other sources of income including business and/or rental income). This will apply to all applicants for NRF funding irrespective of the age of the student.

Funding Period

9. What will be the maximum period of support for full-time study at the various postgraduate levels of study?

Level of study	Maximum period of support
Honours	One (1) year
Master's	Two (2) years
Doctoral	Three (3) years
Master's upgrade to doctoral	Four (4) years, of which 1 or 2 years may be for master's studies
Extension Support for master's and doctoral	Six (6) or twelve (12) months

10. Some students may need more than three years to complete a doctoral degree. Will the stipulated three years for completion be sufficient?

The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) minimum prescribed period for full-time master's and doctoral studies are one (1) and two (2) years respectively. NRF funded students are eligible for two (2) years of funding for master's studies and three (3) years of funding for doctoral studies. Under exceptional circumstances, students may apply for extension support of six (6) or twelve (12) months for completion of the master's or doctoral degree.

11. What does 'uninterrupted study support' mean?

Uninterrupted study support is funding of postgraduate students from the honours up to the doctoral level, however, they will have to make a new scholarship application for each study level.

12. How will the NRF cater for female students that have taken time off from their studies in-between degrees to raise a family?

The maximum age limits for applying for NRF funding makes provision for an interruption period of up to six (6) years during postgraduate studies, which enables female students who wish to take a break during their postgraduate studies to raise a family. Female students that take a break during their postgraduate studies to raise a family will be eligible for uninterrupted postgraduate funding provided that they meet all other eligibility criteria.

13. Is it possible for students who started a doctoral or master's degree without NRF funding to then apply for the funding from their second year onwards?

Yes, full-time students that have commenced their master's or doctoral studies without NRF funding may apply for funding for completion of their master's or doctoral degree provided that all other eligibility criteria have been met including the age of entry requirement. Master's students will not be funded beyond their second year of registration and doctoral students will not be funded beyond their third year of registration and the initial date for registration of the degree will be considered.

14. Can students apply for funding at any level of study?

Yes, students may enter at any level of their postgraduate studies provided that they meet the NRF eligibility criteria and university requirements. For example, a student that did not meet the 65% requirement in their honours/four year undergraduate degree will not be funded for master's studies and a student that did not meet the 65% requirement in the master's degree will not be funded for doctoral studies.

15. How many years will students who upgrade from a master's to doctoral registration have to complete their studies?

A student who is upgrading from a master's to doctoral studies will receive funding for a total of four (4) years. A student who upgrades after receiving one (1) year of funding will receive funding for a further three (3) years and a student who upgrades after receiving two (2) years of funding will receive a further two (2) years of funding to complete the doctoral degree.

16. Will the NRF still be considering applications for extension support and at what level of study?

Yes, the NRF will maintain its mechanism for providing extension of funding support at the master's and doctoral level only. Recipients of both Full Cost of Study (FCS) and PCS bursaries may apply for extension support funding, however such extension will only be provided under exceptional circumstances and will not exceed twelve (12) months. Students who are awarded extension support will be awarded according to the value of their scholarship received in the year of extension support application.

17. How will students who started the first year of their master's or doctoral studies in the year 2020 and before with NRF funding be funded under the DSI-NRF Postgraduate Student Funding Policy?

Master's or doctoral students who started their first year of studies in 2020 or before will continue on the old funding model until completion of their degrees. The phasing out process of the old funding model will reach its end in 2023. From 2024 onwards all students will be on the new postgraduate funding model.

Eligibility Criteria

18. Which postgraduate degrees will be funded?

Postgraduate student funding will be made for full-time honours, master's, and doctoral degrees only. It must be noted that the NRF will not fund the following:

- a. Undergraduate qualifications, regardless of National Qualifications Framework (NQF) exit level;
- b. Postgraduate certificates or diplomas, regardless of NQF exit level and
- c. Professional master's and doctoral degrees, regardless of NQF exit level.

Further clarification of the professional degrees can be obtained from the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF) approved by the DHET.

19. What is the academic minimum requirements for NRF postgraduate funding?

A student must obtain:

- A minimum average of 65% for major subjects in the final undergraduate year of study for honours funding;
- A minimum average of 65% at the honours level or final year of a four year degree for master's funding; and
- A minimum of 65% at the master's level for doctoral funding.

20. If a student does not have a numerical mark indicated for the master's degree, will the NRF fund such students?

Where universities classify master's' students' results in the categories of "Pass" or "Pass with distinction", the university must disclose to the NRF the numerical mark for making such classification. Students without a numerical pass mark will not be eligible for NRF funding. Exception of the numerical mark will be made for international students only.

21. What are the minimum academic requirements for students that are financially needy or living with a disability to be eligible for Full Cost of Study (FCS) funding by NRF?

A student must obtain:

- A minimum average of 65% for major subjects in the final undergraduate year of study for honours funding;
- A minimum average of 65% at the honours level or final year of a four year degree for master's funding; and
- A minimum of 65% at the master's level for doctoral funding.

22. What are the minimum academic requirements for students to be considered as exceptional academic achievers for FCS funding by the NRF?

A student who obtains:

- A minimum average of 75% for major subjects in the final undergraduate year of study for honours funding;
- A minimum average of 75% at the honours level or final year of a four year degree for master's funding; and
- A minimum of 75% (or cum laude) at the master's level for doctoral funding.

23. Will international students that are exceptional academic achievers or living with a disability be eligible for FCS funding?

No, students from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the rest of the world will only qualify for PCS funding.

24. Does the age limit for NRF postgraduate students funding apply across all NRF funding programmes?

Yes, the age limit applies to all students receiving NRF postgraduate funding across all NRF Programmes.

25. Under the NRF age limit for postgraduate student funding, how will the NRF cater for female students that have taken time off from their studies to raise a family?

The maximum age limits for applying for NRF funding have already made provision for an interruption period of up to 6 years during postgraduate studies, which enables female students who wish to take a break during their postgraduate studies to raise a family. For example a student who completes her undergraduate degree at the age of 21 has a period of 11 years in which to complete a master's degree and apply for funding for doctoral studies by the age of 32 years.

26. Is the introduction of age limit for NRF postgraduate funding not restrictive in the South African context? That is, will this not exclude students from previously excluded communities from accessing postgraduate training?

The proposed age limits for accessing NRF postgraduate funding are intended to significantly decrease the average age at completion of doctoral degrees to around 35 years. Early completion will allow adequate time for research productivity that leads to becoming an established and internationally recognised researchers. In addition, a high proportion of NRF-funded students pursuing full-time postgraduate studies complete their postgraduate degrees within these age limits.

27. How did the NRF come up with the prescribed age restrictions?

The average completion age for an undergraduate degree as published by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) was 21 years. In addition, the NRF analysed a cohort of 60 000 postgraduate students funded by the NRF over a six-year period and looked at the

average age at completion for honours, master's and doctoral students. The prescribed ages for qualifications were obtained as an outcome of this analysis.

28. Will international students at all levels of postgraduate studies be eligible for NRF postgraduate funding?

No, international students will not be eligible for NRF honours postgraduate funding. International students will be only be eligible for funding at the master's and doctoral levels and will be funded at PCS only.

29. Will the NRF fund part-time studies?

No, only full-time studies will be funded. Students who commenced their master's and doctoral studies on a part-time basis and wish to be considered for funding for completion of their studies on a full-time basis, will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Postgraduate Students living with a disability

30. How does the NRF define a person living with a disability?

The Strategic Policy Framework on Disability for the PSET (2018), defines Disability as *“the loss or elimination of opportunities to take part in the life of the community, equitably with others, encountered by persons having physical, sensory, psychological, developmental, learning, neurological or other impairments, which may be permanent, temporary or episodic in nature, thereby causing activity limitations and participation restriction within mainstream society. These barriers may be due to economic, physical/structural, social, attitudinal and/or cultural factors.”*

31. What are the minimum academic requirements for students that are living with a disability to be eligible for FC funding?

A student must obtain:

- A minimum average of 65% for major subjects in the final undergraduate year of study for honours funding;
- A minimum average of 65% at the honours level or final year of a four year degree for master's funding; and
- A minimum of 65% at the master's level for doctoral funding.

32. Will students living with a disability be funded strictly for 1, 2 or 3 years for honours, master's or doctoral studies respectively?

No, students living with a disability may be supported for an additional 12 months should the disability impact on the time for completion of the requirements for fulfilment of the degree.

33. Will students living with a disability be eligible for an upgrade from master's to doctoral studies?

Postgraduate students living with a disability that upgrade from a master's to a doctoral degree may be funded for maximum of five (5) years should the disability impact on the time for completion of the requirements for fulfilment of the degree. The NRF will only upgrade master's bursaries to doctoral level upon receipt of official university upgrade confirmation documents.

34. What will FCS cover for students living with a disability?

Full Cost of Study will cover tuition, accommodation, living allowance, meal allowance and a once-off allowance for electronic study device.

35. Will students living with a disability be eligible for any other allowances?

Students living with a disability may apply for additional funding for an assistive technology device of up to R20 000 per annum. This is the maximum amount allowed during the tenure of the scholarship.

Funding Exclusions

36. Will students who are intending to register for part-time studies be considered for NRF Student Postgraduate Funding?

No, students must be intending to register for full-time studies at any public university in South Africa.

37. Which qualifications will not be funded by the NRF?

- a. Undergraduate qualifications, regardless of National Qualification Framework (NQF) exit level;
- b. Postgraduate certificates or diplomas, regardless of NQF exit level; and
- c. Professional master's and doctoral degrees, regardless of NQF exit level (*Further clarification of the professional degrees can be obtained from the Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF) approved by the DHET*).

38. Will the NRF still support grantholder-linked scholarships?

No, the DSI-NRF Postgraduate Student Funding Policy is adopting a one call approach, scholarships will no longer be included in research grant awards as was previously the case. All students must apply through the NRF Online submission system on <https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za/> to be considered for postgraduate funding.

Areas of Support

39. Will the fields of study to be supported be aligned to the NRF Research Strategy?

Yes, the fields of study will be aligned to the NRF strategy, in that the majority of student bursaries will be allocated in a directed manner so as to respond to national priorities, vulnerable disciplines and fields important for socio-economic development, as may be identified by the NRF from time to time.

40. Does the NRF gender target of 55% not restrict access to female applicants entering the system?

No, the proposed gender target of 55% female is aimed at encouraging women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) not only to remain in the system, but to progress from honours up to doctoral studies.

41. Why are professional degrees not considered for funding?

The NRF mandate states that the objective of the foundation is to contribute to national development by supporting, promoting and advancing research and human capacity development, through funding and the provision of the necessary research infrastructure, in order

to facilitate the creation of knowledge, innovation and development. It is for this reason that the NRF has taken a strategic decision based on its mandate not to fund: postgraduate certificates or diplomas (e.g. PGCE), professional master's (e.g. MBA) and doctoral degrees, regardless of the NQF exit level.

Academic Support Activities for Students

42. Will students be paid for the 80 hours per annum of academic service work that they will be rendering?

No, students will not be paid for academic service work rendered, either by the NRF or the university, as the academic service work will be done in the spirit of making a contribution to society.

Review of applications

43. If I do not have results for my current in-progress degree e.g. master's results when applying for doctoral funding, will my application be considered for funding?

Yes, you may apply with the results of your previous degree e.g. by using honours results or final year result if you have completed a four-year undergraduate degree. However, if you are awarded a scholarship, it will be provisional depending on whether you pass your master's degree with the minimum NRF academic requirement of 65%.

Awarding Criteria

44. How many students received funding for postgraduate studies annually from the NRF?

Approximately 12 000 students were awarded funding in 2020 and approximately 8 000 in the year 2021, this is dependent on the availability of the budget.

45. Will combining the SADC students with students from the rest of the world in the funding allocations targets, not undermine the SADC protocol on education and training which states that “member states shall reserve at least 5% of admissions for students from SADC nations other than their own” and also states that, “member states are required to treat students from SADC countries as home students for purposes of tuition and accommodation”?

No, while this proposal states that postgraduate funding should be allocated to 95% South Africans (including permanent residents) and 5% students from the rest of the world including students from SADC countries. The 5% allocation is expected to advance South Africa's global partnerships, which would include commitments to SADC.

Full Cost of Study (FCS) and Partial Cost of Study (PCS) funding

46. Who will be eligible for FCS?

FCS will be available to South African citizens and permanent resident students, who (i) are either financially needy (ii) living with a disability; or (iii) are exceptional academic achievers.

47. What costs will FCS cover?

The FCS funding will cover tuition fee, accommodation allowance (i.e., university owned accommodation and private rental accommodation), living and transport allowance, food allowance and electronic study devices as indicated in the DSI-NRF Postgraduate Student Application and Funding Framework document.

48. Who will be eligible for PCS?

The PCS will be available to (i) South African citizens and permanent resident students who are not eligible to be funded under FCS; (ii) students from SADC countries; and (iii) students from the rest of the world.

49. What are the minimum academic requirements for students to be considered for PCS funding by the NRF?

A student must obtain:

- A minimum average of 65% for major subjects in the final undergraduate year of study for honours funding;
- A minimum average of 65% at the honours level or final year of a four year degree for master's funding; and
- A minimum of 65% (or cum laude) at the master's level for doctoral funding.

50. What costs will PCS cover?

The PCS funding will cover tuition fee and accommodation allowance (i.e., university owned accommodation and private rental accommodation). In the event that a student is not residing in any of the prescribed accommodation (university owned accommodation or private rental accommodation), PCS funding will cover tuition fee and living and transport allowance only, as indicated in the DSI-NRF Postgraduate Student Application and Funding Framework document.

51. How will NRF allowances be paid out to students?

- **Tuition fee** will be capped and paid as per each university invoice. Tuition fee, inclusive of registration fees, is the agreed institutional fee for the actual programme of study. Qualifying NRF students will not be required to pay registration fees upfront to the university.
- **Accommodation allowance** will be limited to the maximum cost of the equivalent university owned accommodation at a particular institution and paid per invoice. Students accommodated in private rental accommodation must provide proof of a valid lease agreement.
- **Food allowance** will be included with the accommodation allowance if a student resides in a catering residence. For students not staying in catering residences, this allowance will be paid monthly into the student's personal bank account by the university at which the student is registered.
- **Living and transport allowances** will be paid monthly into the student's personal bank account by the university at which the student is registered.
- **Electronic study devices allowance** will be provided as a once-off allowance for the duration of postgraduate studies.

52. Who decides which students receive FCS or PCS funding?

The NRF decides the on the type of support awarded to students based on an assessment of financial need, academic achievement, disability and citizenship.

53. Will students funded under PCS receive uninterrupted study support?

Yes, however, they must complete their degree within the NRF funding period and obtain the required minimum of 65% in their degree. Refer to question 11 under uninterrupted study support.

54. If the NRF is held as a primary funder on all DSI-NRF Postgraduate Student Funding, what does this imply?

The NRF conditions of award supersedes other funder agreements and conditions of award, therefore the NRF will remain the primary funder irrespective of whether the student receives the FCS or PCS scholarship from the NRF.

55. If all NRF scholarships are proposed to cover at least tuition and accommodation, will an NRF funded student who is residing at home during postgraduate studies, also qualify for the same value of the scholarship?

All the NRF funded postgraduate students are expected to reside at the university or in private rental accommodation, closer to the university so that they have easy access to research laboratories, libraries, supervisors etc. If a student resides at home, the student will not be eligible for the accommodation allowance but will be eligible for a living and transport allowance in place of the accommodation allowance.

56. Will all students who are awarded NRF FCS funding receive the same scholarship value? That is, will the cost of living in each city and region be taken into consideration?

Tuition and accommodation fee will be capped. Tuition will be paid as per invoice by the respective universities and accommodation will be capped at the university owned accommodation rates.

57. Will a student who receives NRF FCS funding be allowed to hold other scholarships?

No, students receiving FCS funding may not receive another scholarship from any other source (Government or Private sector funder). Top-up funding may not cover any of the amounts already covered by the NRF funding. However, in cases where there is a shortfall for tuition or accommodation, other funding can be accessed to cover this shortfall.

58. Will a student who receives NRF PCS funding be allowed to hold other scholarships and/or top-up funding?

Yes, students on PCS are eligible to hold other scholarships or top – ups to the combined maximum amount not exceeding the NRF FCS amount, then the NRF funding awarded, will be reduced accordingly. The NRF may not pay for the amounts already covered by another funder.

59. How did the NRF determine the amounts for food allowance?

The meal allowance was determined based on data made available from Statistics South Africa.

60. Will students whose master's degree have been upgraded to a doctoral programme be considered under FCS or PCS for the doctoral studies?

Students who upgrade from a master's to doctoral registration and that have demonstrated exceptional achievement to date may be considered for FCS. The NRF will consider motivations from the student and supervisor submitted through the university Designated Authority.

61. Will a student who receives a merit award from their institution be allowed to receive NRF postgraduate funding?

If the student receives a merit award from their institution, the NRF funding will also be reduced accordingly, so that the FCS is covered.

Awards

62. How will an applicant know if their application was successful?

The outcome documents are linked to the application on the NRF Online Submission, therefore if a successful award logs into their account, they will be able to view their award documents. In addition, a list of successful applicants is published on the NRF website at https://www.nrf.ac.za/Bursaries_Outcomes.

63. What is a grant number and where can an awardee find this information?

For postgraduate scholarship, the grants are created on the granting system after outcome letters are received by the awardee. Once the grant creation task has been completed, the NRF send a list of grant numbers (UIDs) to the institutions across the country. A student can query the grant number with their research office, or the student can view their grant details via NRF Online Submission (under the *grantholder tools* section).

64. How will an awardee know if they were awarded FCS or PCS?

The value of the scholarship that has been awarded to an awardee is indicated in the award or outcome letter which student will receive in the event of being successful.

65. Will unsuccessful applicants receive feedback from the NRF?

Unsuccessful applicants will receive “regret” letters from the NRF. These applicants are those eligible to receive an award, but not be awarded due to budget constraints. Should additional budget become available, applicants in this category may then be considered for funding.

With respect to feedback from the review panel, this is up to the institution to manage as the institutions run the postgraduate application review process. Please enquire with your institution should you require reviewers’ feedback.

Changes on Project or Funding Support

66. Who should a student contact if they have queries about the NRF scholarship?

Students should contact the institutional research or postgraduate office for any queries relating to DSI-NRF Postgraduate Student funding.

67. Will the NRF allow changes of the award from FCS to PCS or vice versa?

Yes, if a student was awarded PCS but is eligible for FCS, proof of NSFAS funding and/or proof of academic merit (>75% for the previous degree) or confirmation of financial need by ISFAP as well as a formal request for reconsideration must be submitted to the NRF via the institutional research office.

68. Does the NRF allow project changes from what was submitted in the original application that was funded?

Yes, changes are allowed however these changes have to be approved by the NRF. A formal letter explaining the project change which is signed by the student and supervisor should be submitted to the institutional research or postgraduate office. Thereafter the office will forward the letter to the NRF. Project changes should be logged with the NRF within the first year of the grant.

69. What should be done if the supervisor of the NRF-funded project has changed?

The NRF requires a release letter from the previous supervisor as well as a confirmation of supervision letter from the new supervisor.

70. Are transfers from one institution to another permitted?

Yes, transfers are permitted. The student should contact the institutional research or postgraduate office for assistance

71. Are deferments of scholarships permitted?

Yes, an award can be deferred to the second semester of the year of award. The student will have to write a formal letter to the NRF requesting such a deferment with an explanation of why the deferment is required. Note: Deferments to the next year are not allowed.

Financial Control

72. What will the recourse be should students receiving either FCS or PCS funding fail to complete the degree within the NRF stipulated time?

By accepting FCS or PCS funding from the NRF, the student agrees to complete the degree in the stipulated period i.e. within a year after NRF funding has ceased. Failure to meet this commitment, especially if it is determined that it was due to negligence, would constitute a breach of contract and students must return all the monies paid to the NRF together with interest at the prevailing prime rate charged by the NRF bankers, unless a de-registration is approved by the NRF due to exceptional and extenuating circumstances.

73. What will happen in instances where the university provides a certain percentage fee waiver or where tuition fee is not charged?

The funds allocated for the fees will not accrue to the student and will not be used as an additional subsistence allowance, but will be made available as a research grant to cover running expenses of the postgraduate research project. Running expenses are categorised as small equipment, materials and supplies, data collection, site visits and technical assistance for specialised skills. The claim should be against the actual cost of the fee waiver. If the actual cost for the PhD fees including registration is R15 000.00 per annum and the university fee waiver policy is 100%. Only the actual cost can be claimed and made available as running expenses.

74. What will happen to the once-off electronic study device funds should the student not utilise it during the first year of the award?

If the electronic study device funding is not claimed in the first year of the award, the NRF will allow a carry forward of funds into the second year of the award. However, should the carry forward not be utilised in the second year, these funds will be forfeited.

75. Can the tuition fees be used to offset outstanding debt?

No, the tuition cannot be used to pay any outstanding debt. The scholarship must be used for the degree for which it was awarded only, and in accordance with the payment guidelines.

76. Does the scholarship cover visa and travel fees for international students (awarded a PCS scholarship) to come to South Africa?

No, the PCS scholarship is limited to covering tuition fees and accommodation in South Africa. It is the responsibility of the student to cover their own visa and travel costs.

77. Can the accommodation portion of the scholarship be used to cover travel costs to and from the university?

The accommodation portion of the scholarship has to be used to cover accommodation costs only. Provision for travel is made under the living and transports allowance, if a student is funded on FCS and not residing in any of the prescribed accommodation (university owned accommodation or private rental accommodation) they will be eligible for tuition fee, living and transport allowance, food allowance and a once-off allowance for electronic study device. If a student is funded on PCS and not residing in any of the prescribed accommodation (university owned accommodation or private rental accommodation) they will be eligible for tuition fee and living and transport allowance only.

78. How often will scholarship payments be made to students?

Allowances for meals, personal care and accommodation will be paid to the student on a monthly basis. Tuition will be paid to the institution once-off for the year. The electronic study device payment is a once-off payment for the duration of the scholarship. i.e. If you are awarded another NRF scholarship for master's or doctoral studies, the electronic study device funds will not be included as it was part of the first scholarship any unused funding will be returned to the NRF. Refer to the DSI-NRF Postgraduate Student Application and Funding Guide for guidelines on payments.

Appeals

79. Can a student whose application was unsuccessful appeal the funding decision?

The NRF has an appeal process each year after awards have been made. However, the appeal process is limited to applications that were not recommended for funding during the review process (conducted by the institution). Applicants whose applications were submitted to the NRF for review cannot appeal against decision made by the NRF. Appeals cannot be done against a type of approved funding amount i.e. FCS or PCS.

Reporting

80. Will a student be expected to report their progress to the NRF?

Yes, completion of progress reports are compulsory for continuation of funding. Biannual progress reports have to be completed by mid-February and end of August. Scholarships will be cancelled in the event of non-submission of progress reports.

81. What will happen to the scholarship if the student fails to complete a progress report?

The scholarship will be cancelled and the student will have to return the funding that has already been paid out to the NRF.

Completion of degree

82. What happens if a student does not complete the degree for which funding was awarded within the given timeframe?

The Defaulting Student Process will be followed whereby the student will be contacted by the NRF to repay the scholarship that was awarded to them.

83. What should be done once the degree for which funding was awarded has been completed?

The student is required to upload the final corrected version of the dissertation or thesis in an approved electronic format (single Adobe readable (PDF) to the NRF. The Institutional office responsible for the award should ensure that the student submits the handle or link of the dissertation or theses deposited in the University Library's digital repository to the NRF before or a month after the graduation ceremony to the following address:

http://www.nrf.ac.za/nrf_funded_thesis_dissertation_requirements .

Grantholder-linked associated students

84. Where does a student indicate on their application that they are linked to an NRF grantholder's research grant?

The NRF grantholder should be listed as the student's supervisor in the *references* section of the application. There will be a space for the student to enter either the grant number (UID) or the application reference number of the NRF grantholder. This is imperative as this is the only way grantholder-linked associated students can be identified and considered for funding.

85. Will grantholder-linked associated applicants automatically be awarded scholarships?

No, eligibility criteria as outlined in the DSI-NRF Postgraduate Student Application and Funding Framework document are still applicable. Applications submitted to the NRF for review will be screened to check eligibility and application requirements and final. Only eligible applications will go through to the funding decisions stage.

END.