



Attend NRF Information sessions

Review the eligibility criteria to ensure you qualify



Create a profile on NRF Connect

Select the applicable application category

Complete the application process on NRF Connect

Upload the required supporting documents

Submit your application via NRF Connect

### Application

NOTE: Students apply for funding in the year preceding study



## NRF Funding Applications

A step-by-step guide to the process

The National Research Foundation (NRF) provides postgraduate funding aimed at promoting research and innovation in South Africa. This funding scheme is designed to support postgraduate students in their pursuit of an Honours, Masters, Doctoral and Postdoctoral study/research. The NRF provides these grants based on both merit and potential for the research to contribute to the knowledge economy of South Africa. The funding covers a range of costs associated with postgraduate study including tuition fees, living expenses, research costs and travel grants for conference or research visits. This document is intended to serve as a guide to assist (1) New Honours, (2) First time Masters and Doctoral, (3) Extension Masters and Doctoral and (4) SARAO Honours, Masters and Doctoral applicants in applying for funding from the NRF.

STEPS: # = Applicant, # = NRF, # = PGFO

- 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

### Assessments

10 Recommended- scored & submitted to NRF for final consideration



Ineligible and Not recommended applicants are rejected via NRF Connect System and are notified

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PGFO consolidate and action all assessment and review outcomes

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UCT's Internal Review panel reviews eligible applications and recommends applicants\*

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PGFO assesses applications (by the closing date)

\* Excluding Honours, SARAO Honours, SARAO Masters and SARAO Doctoral applications

### Allocation

NRF selects applicants from the recommended list and confirms final outcomes. These include successful and unsuccessful applications.



Monitor your emails for correspondence from NRF and PGFO

### Acceptance



Register at UCT



Log on to NRF Connect to accept award

Log on to PeopleSoft to accept your award and upload required documentation



PGFO (DA) accept students award on NRF Connect



NRF releases funds to UCT



PGFO processes awards



- 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19

# NRF Funding Applications



## Call advertised:

### Where will the NRF call be advertised?

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The NRF call will be advertised on a number of different platforms namely:

- PGFO website
- Social media
- Vula site
- Posters around campus
- NRF website (NRF Connect and main site)

### What is the closing date for applications?

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NRF communicates their dates with all universities each year and UCT sets internal closing dates for NRF applications per application category. Please ensure you take note of these deadlines to avoid disappointment. Remember you are applying for funding for the next academic year.

[NRF Funding Table](#)



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## Step 1: Attend NRF information sessions

### How do I know which NRF information session to attend?

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The bio for each NRF information session will detail the subject matter for each training session. Make sure you review the bio to ensure you attend the relevant one.

### How are the NRF information sessions provided and who can attend?

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The NRF Information session is offered via Zoom and is open to all.

### Are the NRF information sessions compulsory?

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The sessions are not compulsory, although it is highly recommended that you attend the NRF information sessions as representatives from NRF will be present to guide on the eligibility criteria and to take you step by step through the actual application form. Attending the sessions will allow you to submit complete and accurate applications in turn improving your chances of success.



### What happens if I cannot make the NRF information sessions

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Do not worry! A recording will be made available online for you to view on the PGFO website.



Review the eligibility criteria to ensure you qualify

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### Step 2: Review the eligibility criteria to ensure you qualify

#### How do I know what NRF awards I am eligible for?

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You can only apply for NRF awards to which you are eligible. The NRF information sessions provide clear guidelines and information on eligibility criteria and NRF also has a framework document which can be used to determine your eligibility. To save you time and effort, please review the eligibility criteria carefully before applying to an NRF grant. Ineligible applications will not be considered.

[NRF Eligibility Criteria](#)



#### Can I hold other awards along with an NRF award?

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Yes, you can hold multiple awards subject to the concurrency rules. If successfully awarded, you will be assigned an award claim form on which all concurrent rules will be recorded. Click on the link here to read the NRF's concurrent rules:

[NRF's concurrent rules](#)



Select the applicable application category

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### Step 3: Select the applicable application category

#### NRF Connect is asking for a Grant Holder UID?

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In instances where you are applying under a grant holders UID you need to include the UID number in your application. This is a grant holder serial number that consists of either 5-6 digits or a series of letters and numbers e.g. (SANAP123456). Please request this number from your supervisor if this is applicable to you.

Complete the application process on NRF Connect

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## Step 4: Complete the application process on NRF connect

### What is an ORCID and how do I create one?

You will need an ORCID in order to apply on NRF Connect. The NRF information sessions provide information on how to do this and there is also a “How to Guide” on the NRF website. Your supervisor will also need an ORCID which will be generated once they register their profile. Please ensure you have consulted with your supervisor and that they have created a profile.

[NRF training videos](#)

[NRF How To Guide](#)

### Why can I not see my Supervisors details in the NRF Connect system?

Your supervisor needs to create an ORCID on NRF Connect in order for their details to be linked to the system. When you are creating your ORCID please engage with your supervisor to ensure they create a profile as well. It can also be because the email address you have is not the one your supervisor is linked to on ORCID.

### My supervisor has an ORCID but is not receiving my request for a reference?

The email address entered into your application needs to match the email address used by your supervisor when they created their ORCID. Correspondence will be sent to the ORCID registered email only. Sometimes emails are not received but supervisors can access the applicant's report by logging onto their profile, clicking on Final Submissions>Reports and clicking on NRF Postgraduate funding where all reports will be listed.

[UCT Faculty table](#)

### My Faculty is not listed on the NRF Connect options?

NRF uses slightly different naming conventions for their Faculties. Please review the faculty list and select the NRF option that is closest to the UCT option.

Upload the required supporting documents

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### Step 5: Upload the required supporting documents

#### Which documents do I need to upload?

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The following documentation needs to accompany your application:

- Certified copy of your ID
- Certified copy of Final academic transcript
- Financial aid means information and supporting documentation (if applicable). These can be your NSFAS statement/contract or your bank statement clearly showing NSFAS payments etc.

Please note that if documents require certification, than certification within 3 months required (if student certification is within the application period). Documents may be certified at a police station, post office, or by a notary (e.g., lawyer or registered CA(SA).

#### What happens if my transcript has not yet been finalised?

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You can upload your latest transcript, but should a provisional offer be made to you, you will need to ensure that your final transcript is uploaded onto the NRF Connect and PeopleSoft systems.

#### I have submitted my final transcript, but the NRF calls for a % GPA and I only have a grade listed as PASS,GIP what do I do?

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Do not worry about this. FOR EXISTING UCT students, the PGFO will communicate with your faculty office to confirm your % GPA. EXTERNAL applicants are required to provide the final certified copy of academic transcripts as well as a faculty letter on which their % GPA is confirmed. This letter should be on an official letterhead and signed by relevant authorities.

Submit your application via NRF Connect

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### Step 6: Submit your application

#### I have missed the closing date for applications. What can I do?

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The NRF receives thousands of applications and unfortunately late applications will not be considered. Please take note of the closing dates and ensure you submit your application timeously to avoid disappointment.



### **How will I know that I have submitted my application?**

You will know that your application has been successfully submitted when the status indicator changes from “application in progress” to “designated submission authority review” and a reference number is allocated to you. NRF Connect system will notify you by email.

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PGFO assesses applications

### **Step 7: PGFO assesses applications**

#### **What do PGFO look at as part of this review?**

PGFO will review applications for completeness and eligibility. Incomplete applications will be returned for amendment. You then have 24 hours to complete the application or upload missing documentation. Failure to do so will result in your application being marked as INELIGIBLE.

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UCT's Internal Review panel reviews eligible applications and recommends applicants\*

### **Step 8: UCT's Internal Review panel reviews eligible applications and recommends applicants**

#### **Which applications will be required to go through an internal UCT review?**

Eligible first time Masters, Doctoral and Extension Masters & Doctoral applications (based on completeness and eligibility criteria), will be forwarded to UCT's internal review panel who will review applicants and provide recommendations to NRF. Recommended applicants are sent to NRF by PGFO. \*Honours, SARAO Honours, SARAO Masters and SARAO Doctoral applications do not require internal review. Eligible applications are submitted directly to NRF for selection. Ineligible applications will be rejected.

#### **What will UCT's internal review be assessing my application on?**

The internal review panel looks at your research/project outline and Alignment to National Imperatives sections (training to be provided). It is therefore very important that you fully and accurately complete these sections of the application form to give you the best chances for success. The attached Score Sheet can be used as a reference when completing this section.

[Review criteria document](#)



# NRF Funding Applications

## FAQ's

### Allocation

NRF selects applicants from the recommended list and confirms final outcomes. These include successful and unsuccessful applications.

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### Step 11: Allocation

#### Where and when will the list of successful awardees be published?

Successful applicants: A list of provisional awardees will be published on the NRF website and the profiles of successful applicants on NRF Connect will be updated with the conditions of grant.

Unsuccessful applicants: Unsuccessful applicants will be notified via email and their profiles on NRF Connect will be updated with regret letters.

### Acceptance



Register at UCT

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Log on to NRF Connect to accept award

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Log on to PeopleSoft to accept your award and upload required documentation

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### Steps 13 to 15: Acceptance

#### I applied for NRF funding under UCT and was awarded by NRF, but was rejected an offer to study at UCT and accepted at another institution, how do I transfer my funds?

You will need to complete the "Change in Beneficiary" section on NRF Connect under Grant Management to effect this change.

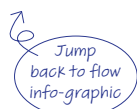
#### How do I accept my award?

Once the provisional results have been published, the PGFO will notify you of the award for acceptance. You must FIRST accept your award on NRF Connect and upload the following supporting documents:

- Certified copy of ID (not older than 3 months)
- Proof of registration
- Certified copy of final academic transcript
- ISFAP - Financial Aid documentation where applicable

THEN log onto PeopleSoft to accept your award there. You will need to upload the following documentation onto PeopleSoft:

- Claim form
- Proof of registration
- Record of other non-PGFO administered scholarships for this aid year (if applicable)
- Proof of employment (if applicable)
- Contract of employment and salary slips
- Final academic transcripts (certified no older than 3 months)





## **I want to request a change in research/course and or supervisor at UCT?**

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Contact the PGFO informing them of your decision. They will advise what steps you are required to follow. All such requests will require the NRF's approval and is not automatically approved.

## **How do I know if my scholarship is administered by PGFO or other?**

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Please review the PGFO Handbook 14 for a list of PGFO administered scholarships. (Sections 2, 3, 4 and 7 where applicable). If your scholarship is not listed in this Handbook you need to declare it and attach the contract/letter of award in PeopleSoft when accepting your NRF award.

## **I am no longer planning to study for the degree/course for which my NRF funding was approved?**

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In order to receive your funding you will need to register for the degree for which your funding was approved. You should notify the PGFO in writing that you will no longer be studying and will therefore decline the award.

1. Apply for deferral of your award via NRF Connect in cases where you will register for the awarded degree in the start of the second semester OR
2. Apply with NRF via NRF Connect for a change of course/research/ supervisor if you are not registering for the awarded degree.



PGFO (DA)  
accept students  
award on NRF  
Connect

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## **Step 16: PGFO acceptance**

### **I have accepted my award on NRF Connect and PeopleSoft, what next?**

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Once you have accepted your award PGFO will conduct a final check on your eligibility and will then log on to NRF Connect to accept. Your award will be processed to your UCT Student Fees Account if you meet all criteria and your funds have been released to UCT.







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## Step 19: Award paid

### **I have accepted my award on NRF Connect and PeopleSoft and I have registered at UCT for the course for which my award is granted, but I am still deemed ineligible for payment?**

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PGFO will conduct a series of checks before they process your award. You need to satisfy all of the below criteria to have your award paid:

- Registered for the awarded degree
- Cannot work more than 12 hours week
- Combined income from all sources of funds cannot exceed the degree income limit
- Cannot be registered for a professional qualification
- Research weighting for Masters and Doctoral degrees cannot be less than 50%
- Academic criteria must be met (e.g. GPA, status of submission)
- Concurrency rules must be met
- All supporting documentation uploaded and meets the requirements

### **Where will my award be paid?**

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Your award will be paid into your UCT Fees Account in line with the contract. The amount paid will be after all University charges are cleared. There are 2 types of NRF scholarships.

- Monthly payments
- Bi-annual payments

PGFO will pay accordingly depending on the type of award.