



Application and Funding Guide

Freestanding, Innovation and Scarce Skills Postdoctoral Fellowships 2024

Directorate: Grants Management and Systems Administration
Date: March 2023

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Contact Details

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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: 012-481-4155

012 481-4050

012 481-4072

E-mail: supportdesk@nrf.ac.za

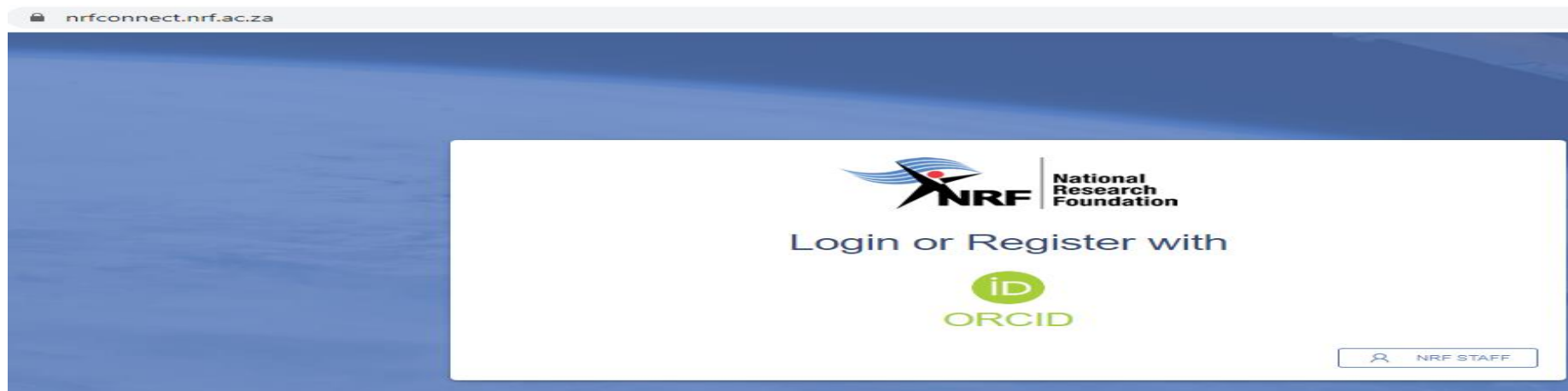
1. Introduction

This document provides an overview of the application process and funding guidelines for the Freestanding, Innovation and Scarce Skills Postdoctoral Fellowships funding instruments. An understanding of the application process is critical to successfully submitting your application.

This document should be read together with the Freestanding, Innovation and Scarce Skills Postdoctoral Fellowships Framework attached to the current call. The Framework provides detailed information with respect to objectives of the funding instruments, eligibility criteria and other relevant information for applicants. This document does not, however, constitute a complete set of the policies, procedures or systems used by the NRF.

2. Registering and accessing the system

The application must be completed on the NRF online system - NRF Connect: <https://nrfconnect.nrf.ac.za>, using the ORCID (Open Researcher and Contributor ID) credentials.



If not registered on ORCID, click Register now and follow the steps. Continue with the ORCID registration as prompted. If users are already registered on ORCID, they must sign in using one of the following options:

1. ORCID iD
2. Email address linked with your ORCID profile
3. GMAIL account linked with your ORCID
4. Facebook account linked with ORCID

Sign in

Email or 16-digit ORCID iD
example@email.com or 0000-0001-2345-6789

Password

SIGN IN

Forgot your password or ORCID ID?
Don't have an ORCID iD yet? **Register now**

or

Access through your institution

Sign in with Google

Sign in with Facebook

If you are currently registered on the NRF Online Submission System, you will be automatically logged in with the ORCID profile.

When the ORCID registration process is complete, new users will be redirected to NRF Connect login screen to register on the system.

The screenshot shows the NRF registration page with a modal window titled "Unique Registration". The modal contains the following text:

Unique Registration

- Kindly note that this registration process should be completed only once.
- You need to complete all the required fields (indicated with *) before you will be able to submit your registration.
- After you have registered, you will need receive an email with a link and instructions on how to set your password.

Buttons: LOGIN, REGISTER

The background form is partially visible, showing the "Register a new account" header and "Personal details" section with fields for First Name, Last Name, and Birth Date.

Complete the missing fields and click Register to complete the process and the system will automatically log the user in.

The screenshot shows the NRF registration page with the following details filled in:

Register a new account
Already have an account? [Login now](#)

Personal details

ID: <https://sandbox.orcid.org/0000-0002-8226-4581>

First Name *: **Maserufe**

Last Name *: **SAMURSE**

As per your birth certificate

Birth Date *:

Contact details

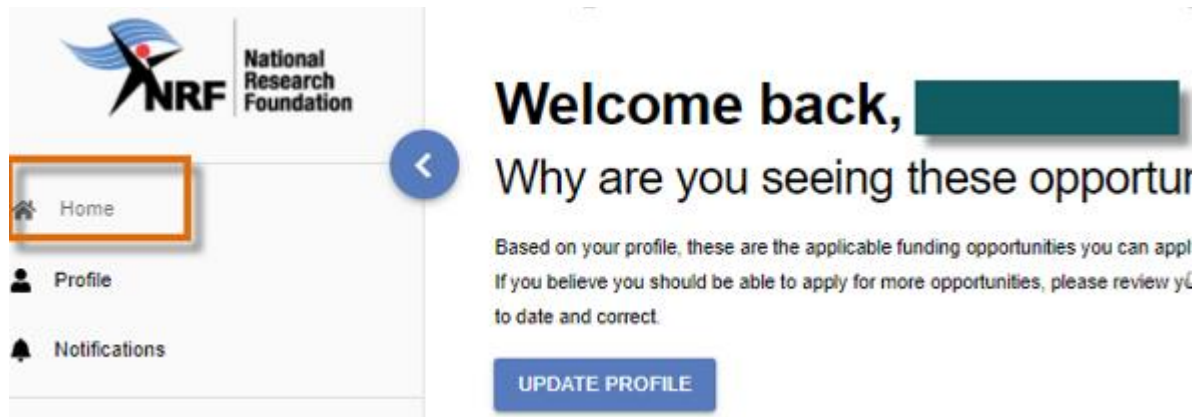
Email Address *:
Primary email address

Mobile Number:
Please include Country Code +27 062 123 1234

CANCEL REGISTER

3. Personal Details

After logging in, please click on the Update Profile button to update or complete the profile details



South African citizens and permanent residents must attach a certified copy of their South African Identity Document. Other foreign nationals must attach a certified copy of valid Passports. These documents must be attached under the Personal Details only, **please do not attach this document under the attachment section**. Should the above-mentioned documents not be attached, the application will be rejected.

4. CV section

Migrating the CV from the NRF Online Submission System

Should the user have an existing profile on the NRF Online Submission System, there is a functionality to migrate the CV from the previous system. Click **Verify** to link to the relevant account on the NRF Online Submission System.



Link Submission ...

Connect your old nrf submission profile

NO THANKS

VERIFY

Provide the ID/Passport number and password used on the NRF Online Submission System.

Enter your Old Nrf Submission Details

ID Number *

ID/Passport

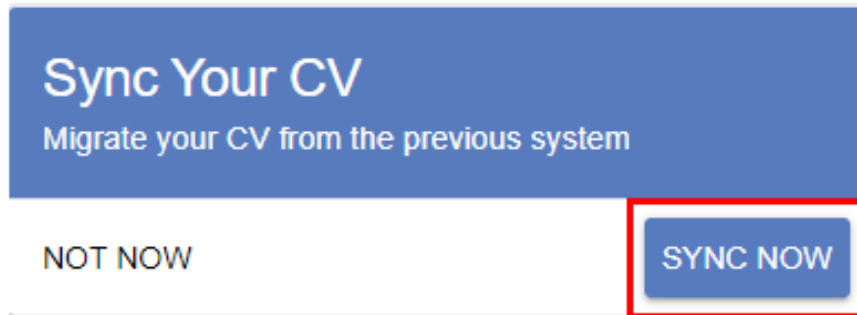
Password *

Your Old Password

CANCEL

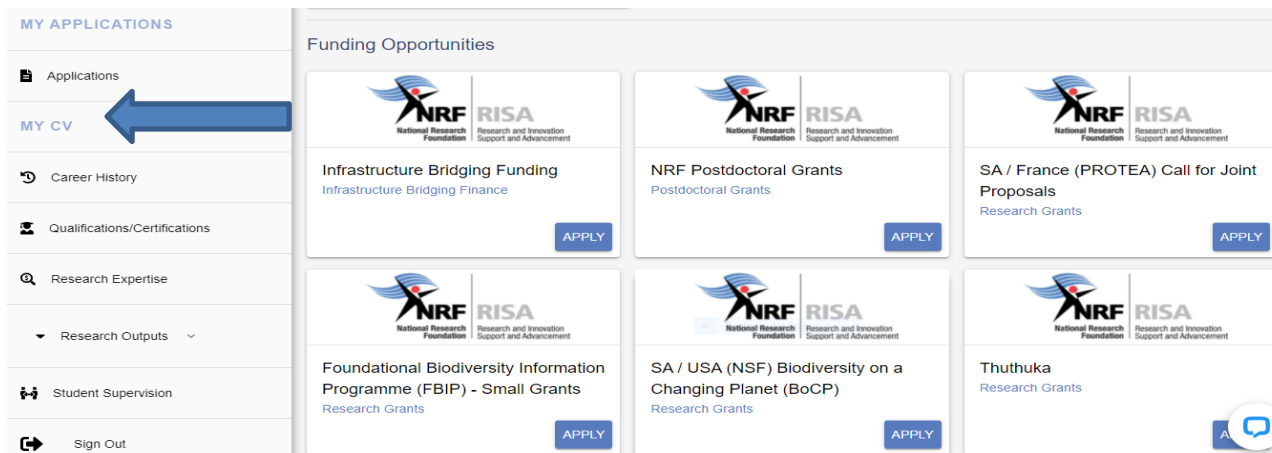
SUBMIT

Once the verification of the two accounts has been completed, confirmation will appear at the bottom of the screen.



For new users

The CV can be updated by clicking on the tabs under the CV banner on the left-hand side of the screen.



4.1. Sections of the CV

The CV includes the following sections:

4.1.1. Career History

The applicants must provide information about employment history, accomplishments, awards, prizes, as well as any period that the applicant was absent from research.

4.1.2. Qualifications / Certifications

Applicants must have graduated with their Doctoral degree within four (4) years of submitting an application to the NRF. If the Doctoral degree is “in progress”, then the degree should be completed by the 31st of December 2023

4.1.3. Research Expertise

Select the relevant primary research field and-, secondary research from the drop-down list. To search for a field of specialisation, please start typing any part of the word in the appropriate space.

4.1.4 Research Outputs - Primary or Secondary Outputs and Patents

Click on Research Outputs Menu to select the relevant output type. Should the outputs have been synched from NRF Submission, a list of outputs will be available for editing or deletion.

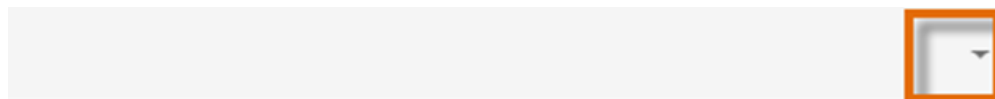
4.1.5 Student Supervision

This section is for capturing the student supervision track record.

5. Navigation and Controls

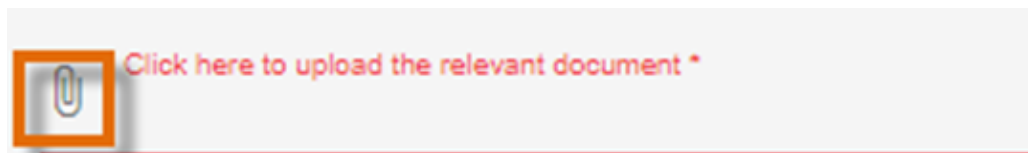
5.1. Drop-down List Control

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



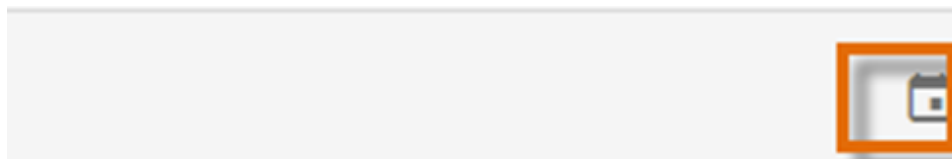
5.2. Upload Control

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

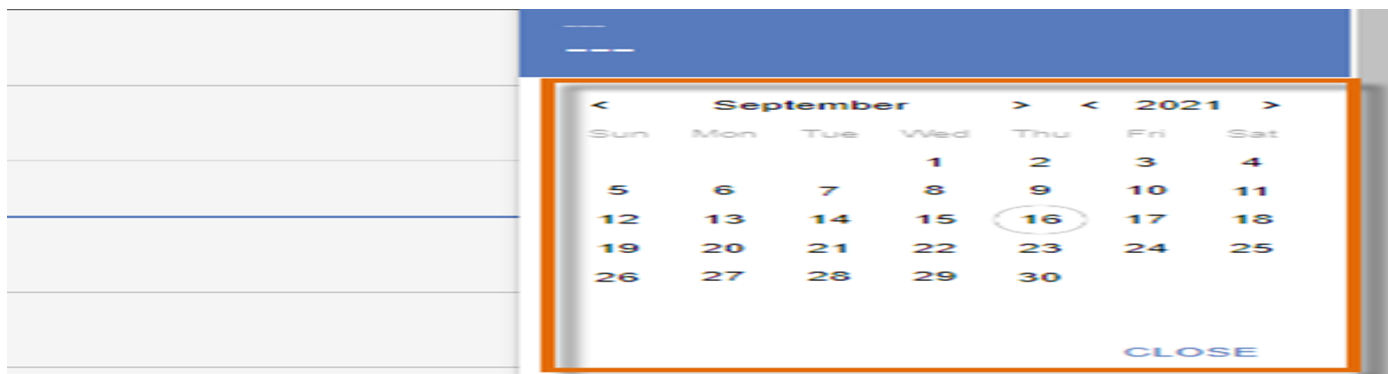


5.3 Calendar Control

Click on the **Calendar** icon to select the date, where a date is required.

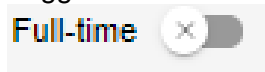


A full **Calendar** will be displayed to allow for selection of the relevant date (follow the sequence as follows: year, month, day).





5.4 Toggle Control

Toggle to indicate **No**.



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.

6. Creating the application

An application can be created from the **Home/Landing page** or from the **My Applications** menu.

Create Application from Home/Landing page

The Funding Opportunities listed under your profile will be those that the applicant might be potentially eligible to apply for based on the information captured under the CV section.

Click Apply on the funding call for which you are applying to create an application.

To continue working on an application, click **Edit** on the funding call you want to edit.

MY APPLICATIONS

Applications

MY CV

Career History

Qualifications/Certifications

Research Expertise

Research Outputs

Student Supervision


! Link Submissi...

Connect your old nrf submission profile

NO THANKS

VERIFY

My Applications



Masters


PMDS22062024921

[NRF Postgraduate Scholarships](#)

Applied 20/06/2022

Application in Progress

EDIT



Extension Support for Masters and Doctoral Scholarships


PMDS22070633063

[NRF Postgraduate Scholarships](#)

Applied 06/07/2022

Application in Progress

EDIT



NRF Postdoctoral Grants

PSTD23022879196

[Postdoctoral Grants](#)

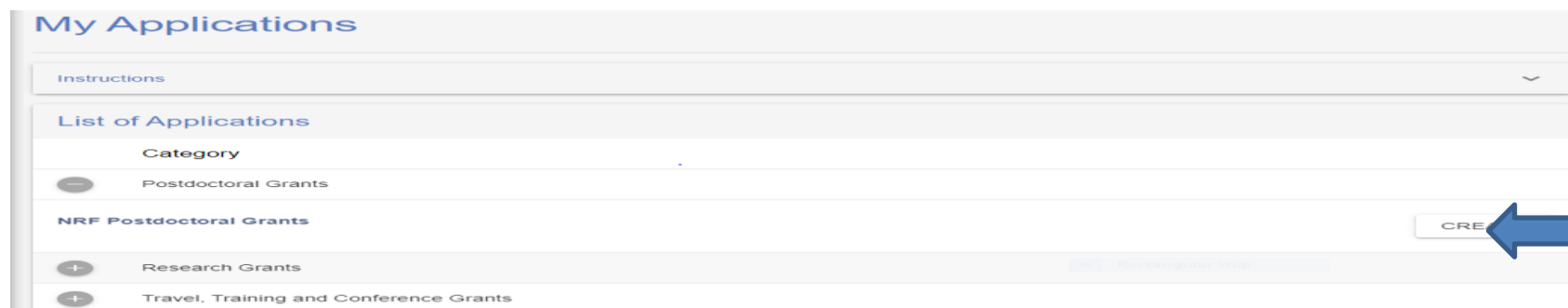
Applied 28/02/2023

Application in Progress

EDIT





















Create Application from My Applications Menu

Click the expand icon next to the relevant Category to see the Calls associated with the Category. Then Click **Create** next to the relevant Funding Opportunity to create a new application.



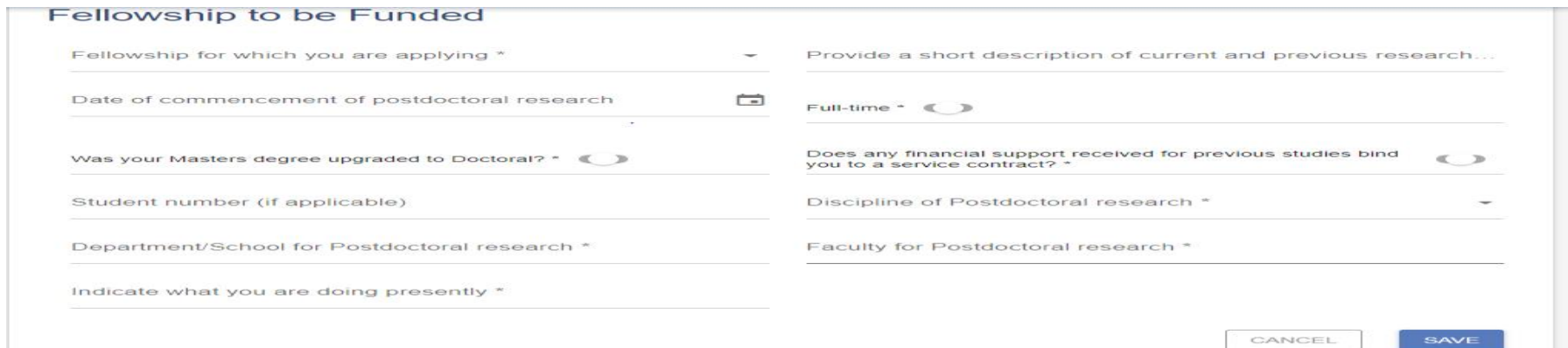
Sections of the application

- Please note that some sections (e.g Personal Details, CV Details) will be pre-populated, if they were completed on **Update Profile** and **MY CV** sections.
- Most application screens have application specific instructions to help you work through the section. Please read the instruction carefully before completing the section.
- Completed sections will be indicated by a green tick on the main menu, while incomplete sections will have a red cross. Please ensure that you press the “save” button after completing information in a section, before returning to the application.
- All sections marked with a red asterisk (*) are compulsory sections in the application. These sections must be completed for the final submit button to be active.

Section	Complete	Updated	Edit
Personal Profile *	✓	01/06/2022	
Qualifications/Certifications *	✓	28/02/2023	
Career History *	✓	28/02/2023	
Research Expertise *	✓	28/02/2023	
Research Outputs *	✓	28/02/2023	
Student Supervision	✓	28/02/2023	
Patents	✓	28/02/2023	
Fellowship To Be Funded *	✓	28/02/2023	
Basic Information *	✗		
Additional Information: Postdoctoral	✗		
Details of Research *	✗		
Ethical Clearance *	✗		
National Infrastructure Platforms *	✗		
Science Engagement *	✗		
Application Support Input *	✗		
Attachments	✗		
Reviewer	✗		
Preferred Panel *	✗		
Person History *	✗		
Other Sources of Funding *	✗		

6.1 Fellowship to be Funded

The *Fellowship to be Funded* section is a compulsory section. Please complete the section accurately and keep the following in mind: (1) Applicants must undertake Full-time Postdoctoral research; -(2) The Fellowship cannot be held concurrently with any fulltime salaried employment; and (3) Applicants may not be a rated researcher.




The screenshot shows a web form titled "Fellowship to be Funded". It contains two columns of input fields. The left column includes: "Fellowship for which you are applying *" (dropdown), "Date of commencement of postdoctoral research" (calendar icon), "Was your Masters degree upgraded to Doctoral? *" (radio buttons), "Student number (if applicable)" (text), "Department/School for Postdoctoral research *" (text), and "Indicate what you are doing presently *" (text). The right column includes: "Provide a short description of current and previous research..." (text), "Full-time *" (radio buttons), "Does any financial support received for previous studies bind you to a service contract? *" (radio buttons), "Discipline of Postdoctoral research *" (dropdown), and "Faculty for Postdoctoral research *" (text). At the bottom right are "CANCEL" and "SAVE" buttons.

This call is **ONLY** for candidates who will be conducting research at a South African institution; therefore all applicants must select “**General Postdoctoral Fellowship**”.

6.2 Basic Information

The *Basic Information* section requires you to select the proposed institution. Please select the proposed institution for Postdoctoral research in South Africa from the dropdown list. Please note that it is the applicant’s responsibility to find an institution and supervisor/mentor in South Africa that is willing to host them for the duration of the fellowship.

Basic Information

Institution *	Title *
Type part of the institution name to search	Maximum 100
Descriptive title/abstract *	
Maximum 2000	
 Funding start year 2024	Select max funding years *
	CANCEL SAVE

6.3 Ethical Clearance

The Ethical Clearance section is a compulsory section. It is the responsibility of the applicant, in conjunction with the institution, to ensure that all research activities carried out in or outside South Africa comply with the laws and regulations of South Africa and/or the foreign country in which the research activities are conducted. These include all human and animal subjects, copyright and intellectual property protection, and other regulations or laws, as appropriate. A research ethics committee must review and approve the ethical and academic rigour of all research prior to the commencement of the research.

Ethical Clearance

[BACK TO APPLICATION](#)

Ethical Clearance

Does this project require ethical clearance? ☐

Has ethical clearance been obtained? ☐

Additional comments on ethical clearance

Maximum 500









 Click here to upload the relevant document *

[REMOVE FILE](#) [EDIT FILE](#)

***Note:** If your application is successful and if ethical clearance is required for your research, then the ethical clearance certificate must be sent to the institution. The institution will have to provide the clearance certificate to the NRF, if required.

6.4 Details of Research

The *Details of Research* Section is one of the most important part of the application and is looked at during the review process (please refer to the detailed review scorecard in the Framework document). This section is made up of multiple sub-sections that must be completed with as much detail as possible. Character limitations are indicated in each sub-section.

Details of Research *			
Section	Complete	Updated	Edit
Problem Statement *	✕		
Aims and Objectives *	✕		
Rationale and Literature Review *	✕		
Proposed Activities/Methodology/Work Plan *	✕		
Anticipated Outputs *	✕		
Potential Impact and Outputs *	✕		
Alignment to National Imperatives *	✕		
Infrastructure Required *	✕		

***Please note that the Details of Research section will only mark as complete when all the sub-sections are completed.**

6.5 National Infrastructure Platforms

The *National Infrastructure Platforms* section is a compulsory section for reporting purposes. If you will not be accessing any infrastructure platforms, please select “*No plan to access platforms*” and save.

National Infrastructure Platform

BACK TO APPLICATION

National Infrastructure Platform

Type of Platform

Planned Usage

No data available

No plan to access platforms 

CANCEL

SAVE

6.6 Science Engagement

The *Science Engagement* section is a compulsory section for reporting purposes. If you will not be running any science engagement activities, please select “*No science engagement planned*” and save.



The screenshot shows a web form titled "Science Engagement". At the top right is a "BACK TO APPLICATION" button. Below the title bar, there is a "CREATE NEW" button. A table with five columns is visible: "Category", "Engagement to be undertaken and desired outcome", "People / audiences", "Intended engagement with audiences", and "Plan to ass". The table is currently empty, with a message "No data available" in the first row. Below the table, there is a section with the text "No science engagement planned" followed by a radio button. At the bottom right of the form are "CANCEL" and "SAVE" buttons.

6.7 Application Support Input

It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the referee email is correct and that the referees have responded by the deadline date indicated in the notification, as this category is assessed in the application. The applicant must view the application PDF to check if a referee has responded to the request for reference. Required references are from the proposed Supervisor/Host and Doctoral supervisor.

Applicants that have not finalised their PhD are required to enter their PhD supervisor as a referee and all applicants should enter their potential host of the postdoctoral study under this section. It is important that the supervisor and the host provide support for the applicant and application.

Application Support Input

Host of Research

Please select a role

Title

Initials

Email Address

Designation

Surname

First name

Institution

Phone Number

CANCEL SAVE

6.8 Attachments

The following documents are compulsory for the Freestanding, Innovation and Scarce Skills Postdoctoral Fellowships:

- Proof of Masters and Doctoral qualifications (if Masters was upgraded to Doctoral this needs to be clearly stated in your application).
- If your Doctoral degree is still “in progress”, a formal letter of confirmation from your institution, stating that your Doctoral qualification will be completed by December 2023, **must** be attached.
- If the institution, department and/or supervisor remains the same as your Doctoral study or first postdoctoral placement, a motivation letter **must** be attached.
- Official postdoctoral acceptance letter from the host institution (signed, stamped and on an official letterhead), **must** be attached. The letter should include details of the availability of specialised equipment, infrastructure and resources to enable the fellow to conduct their research.
- If you are a fellow with a disability, you **must** also upload a medical certificate in support of your disability.
- Proof of South African National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) or University financial aid scheme funding (if applicable).

***Please note that should any of the required documents not be uploaded to the application, the application will be rejected without review.**

Attachments

BACK TO APPLICATION

Instructions

- Please consult the Call documents to determine the compulsory attachments. Please note that if these are not attached, the application will not be processed for review
- Please do not upload a copy of your ID document or passport under this section. This is done under Personal Details.

Document Upload

Supporting Documents

0.0B / 0.00%

CANCEL

SAVE

6.9 Preferred Panel

Indicate the most suitable panel that your project should be evaluated under.

Preferred Panel

BACK TO APPLICATION

Preferred Panel

Primary Panel ~

Discipline ~

Secondary Panel ~

Discipline ~

CANCEL

SAVE

6.10 Person History

Person History section is a section required for statistical purposes by the NRF. It allows the NRF to ascertain who previously received NSFAS funding. Please also indicate if you were funded by an international donor.

6.11 Possible Reviewers

The *Possible Reviewers* section is compulsory in this call. The section requires that you add the names of possible reviewers in your field of research that will be able to provide a neutral review of your proposed research project. These may be reviewers that you have interacted with through conferences or other academic fora. A minimum of six (6) and a maximum of ten (10) possible reviewers are required. Please use the appropriate 'tab' to enter relevant information.

You can search for the reviewer on the system by typing part of their email address.

Should a reviewer not be found, please select the not found tab to add the reviewer details.

6.12. Participating Members

Add the details of additional people e.g., collaborators, who will be involved in the research project.

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 internal closing date will be determined by the respective research offices or Postgraduate Office.

DAs at institutions must ensure that all proposals are screened and approved through internal institutional processes **before** submitting applications to the NRF. The respective DAs will submit a **maximum of thirty (30) applications** from their university or research institution. The NRF assumes that the DAs are satisfied with the standard of all proposals validated and submitted, and that the institution approves and supports the proposed research. **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 cut-off 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. Such applications will be rejected. The application must be completed in 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.

7. Tracking the application

This section explains different application statuses to assist the applicant track their 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.

