



*Grants Management and Systems Administration*  
*Human and Institutional Capacity Development Grants*  
*Thuthuka Programme*  
*2013 Grants Manual*

*May 2012*

---

## Endorsements

Prepared by - Director: Capacity & Strategic Platforms Grants, GMSA		
Name	Signature	Date
Ms Anthipi Pouris		

Noted by - Programme Director: ICP		
Name	Signature	Date
Dr Claire Botha		

Supported by Executive Director: HICD		
Name	Signature	Date
Dr Romilla Maharaj		

Approved by Executive Director: GMSA		
Name	Signature	Date
Dr Ndanduleni B Nthambeleni		

## Contents

<b>ENDORSEMENTS.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>CONTENTS.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>LIST OF ACRONYMS .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>CONTACT DETAILS .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1 INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>2 THUTHUKA PROGRAMME.....</b>	<b>6</b>
2.1 OVERVIEW.....	6
2.2 OBJECTIVES.....	7
<b>3 ELIGIBILITY .....</b>	<b>7</b>
3.1 PHD TRACK .....	7
3.2 POST-PHD TRACK.....	8
3.3 NRF RATING TRACK .....	8
<b>4 GRANTING RULES .....</b>	<b>9</b>
4.1 FUNDING DURATION .....	9
4.2 PARTICIPATION ACROSS FUNDING TRACKS.....	9
4.3 EXCLUSIONS.....	9
4.4 CO-FUNDING.....	10
4.5 CARRY FORWARD OF GRANT FUNDING.....	10
4.6 MULTIPLE GRANTS.....	10
<b>5 BUDGET BREAKDOWN AND FUNDING MODEL.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>6 CATEGORIES OF SUPPORT .....</b>	<b>11</b>
6.1 HUMAN CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT (GRANTHOLDER-LINKED STUDENT AND FELLOWSHIP SUPPORT) .....	11
6.1.1 <i>Student Assistantships</i> .....	12
6.1.2 <i>Postgraduate Bursaries</i> .....	13
6.1.3 <i>Postdoctoral Fellowships</i> .....	13
6.1.4 <i>Staff Development Grants</i> .....	13
6.2 OPERATING COSTS.....	14
6.2.1 <i>Lecturer Replacement</i> .....	14
6.2.2 <i>Research and Technical Assistance</i> .....	15
6.2.3 <i>Research Materials and Supplies</i> .....	15
6.2.4 <i>External Supervisory Support</i> .....	16
6.2.5 <i>Conference Attendance</i> .....	17
6.2.6 <i>Funding for Persons with Special Needs</i> .....	18
6.2.7 <i>Study Visits/Sabbatical Leave</i> .....	18
6.2.8 <i>Visiting Scientist/Senior Advisor</i> .....	21
6.2.9 <i>Research Equipment</i> .....	22
6.2.10 <i>Domestic Travel</i> .....	23
<b>7 APPLICATION PROCESS .....</b>	<b>25</b>
7.1 HOW TO SUBMIT APPLICATIONS.....	25
7.2 SCREENING AND REVIEW PROCESSES.....	26
7.2.1 <i>Overview of the Screening Process</i> .....	26

7.2.2	<i>Overview of the Review Process</i> .....	26
7.3	RANKING OF PROPOSALS .....	26
7.4	APPLICATION FEEDBACK AND DISPUTES .....	31
7.5	ACCOUNTABILITY WITHIN NRF .....	31
<b>8</b>	<b>GRANTHOLDER RESPONSIBILITIES</b> .....	<b>31</b>
8.1	REPORTING .....	31
8.1.1	<i>Reporting: Extenuating Circumstances</i> .....	32
8.2	MANAGING CHANGES DURING THE PROJECT LIFE CYCLE .....	32
8.2.1	<i>Change Requests</i> .....	32
8.3	SCIENTIFIC COMPLIANCE .....	32
8.3.1	<i>Methodology</i> .....	32
8.3.2	<i>Intellectual Property Rights</i> .....	33
8.3.3	<i>Ethics</i> .....	33
8.3.4	<i>Access to data</i> .....	33
8.4	SUPERVISION.....	33
8.5	PREMATURE TERMINATION .....	33

## List of Acronyms

APR	Annual Progress Report
DA	Designated Authority
DST	Department of Science and Technology
GMSA	Grants Management and Systems Administration
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HICD	Human and Institutional Capacity Development
HICD-G	Human and Institutional Capacity Development Grants
ICP	Institutional Capacity Programme
NRF	National Research Foundation
RISA	Research and Innovation Support and Advancement

## Contact Details

### Grants Director:

Mrs Anthipi Pouris: Capacity & Strategic Platforms Grants  
 Telephone: (012) 481 4240  
 Fax: 086 571 6577  
 e-mail address: [anthipi@nrf.ac.za](mailto:anthipi@nrf.ac.za)

### Acting Grants Coordinator:

Ms Sushie Pillay: Capacity & Strategic Platforms Grants  
 Telephone: (012) 481 4178  
 Fax: 086 656 3632  
 e-mail address: [ppillay@nrf.ac.za](mailto:ppillay@nrf.ac.za)

The **Grants Coordinator** is responsible for the coordination of grant administration processes.

The **Grants Officers** are responsible for the management of grants.

The **Liaison Officers** are responsible for the administration of grants.

Region	Grants Officers	Liaison Officers	Institutions responsible for
Free State / Limpopo/ Natal / Vaal Triangle	MacGregor Kufa (012) 481-4183 <a href="mailto:Macgregor.kufa@nrf.ac.za">Macgregor.kufa@nrf.ac.za</a>	Judith Mahlanya (012) 481-4063 <a href="mailto:judith.mahlanya@nrf.ac.za">judith.mahlanya@nrf.ac.za</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Central University of Technology</li> <li>University of the Free State</li> <li>Vaal University of Technology</li> <li>University of Venda</li> <li>University of Limpopo</li> </ul>
		Sushie Pillay (012) 481-4178 <a href="mailto:ppillay@nrf.ac.za">ppillay@nrf.ac.za</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>University of KwaZulu-Natal</li> <li>Durban University of Technology</li> <li>Mangosuthu University of Technology</li> <li>University of Zululand</li> </ul>
Western Cape	Simon Lotz (012) 481-4125 <a href="mailto:simon.lotz@nrf.ac.za">simon.lotz@nrf.ac.za</a>	Motlatsi Matlakala (012) 481-4283 <a href="mailto:motlatsi.matlakala@nrf.ac.za">motlatsi.matlakala@nrf.ac.za</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>University of the Western Cape</li> <li>Stellenbosch University</li> </ul>
		Gita Maharaj (012) 481-4175 <a href="mailto:gita@nrf.ac.za">gita@nrf.ac.za</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cape Peninsula University of Technology</li> <li>University of Cape Town</li> </ul>
Gauteng (UJ) / North-West	Lutanani Rambau (012) 481-4208 <a href="mailto:lutanani@nrf.ac.za">lutanani@nrf.ac.za</a>	Tebogo Raphetane (012) 481-4195 <a href="mailto:tebogoraphetane@nrf.ac.za">tebogoraphetane@nrf.ac.za</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>University of South Africa</li> <li>Tshwane University of Technology</li> <li>University of Pretoria</li> <li>North-West University</li> </ul>
		Judith Mahlanya (012) 481-4063 <a href="mailto:judith.mahlanya@nrf.ac.za">judith.mahlanya@nrf.ac.za</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>University of Johannesburg</li> </ul>

Gauteng (UW) Eastern Cape /	Nosisa Dube (012) 481-4312 <a href="mailto:nosisa.dube@nrf.ac.za">nosisa.dube@nrf.ac.za</a>	Motlatsi Matlakala (012) 481-4283 <a href="mailto:motlatsi.matlakala@nrf.ac.za">motlatsi.matlakala@nrf.ac.za</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>University of the Witwatersrand</li> </ul>
		Gita Maharaj (012) 481-4175 <a href="mailto:gita@nrf.ac.za">gita@nrf.ac.za</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University</li> <li>Rhodes University</li> <li>University of Fort Hare</li> <li>Walter Sisulu University of Technology &amp; Science</li> </ul>
All Regions		Judith Mahlanya (012) 481-4063 <a href="mailto:judith.mahlanya@nrf.ac.za">judith.mahlanya@nrf.ac.za</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Science councils</li> <li>National laboratories</li> <li>National facilities</li> <li>Research institutions</li> <li>Museums</li> </ul>

Grant applications are processed by the National Research Foundation's (NRF's) Grants Management and Systems Administration (GMSA). Full details of application procedures are explained in this document.

For technical online enquiries, please contact the NRF Support Desk during office hours (08:00 – 16:30), on:

Tel: (012) 481 4202

E-mail: [Supportdesk@nrf.ac.za](mailto:Supportdesk@nrf.ac.za)

## 1 Introduction

This Manual is intended to inform potential and existing Thuthuka grantees of the operational procedures for participation in the Programme. It should be read in conjunction with the Framework document, which can be accessed at [http://www.nrf.ac.za/funding\\_overview.php](http://www.nrf.ac.za/funding_overview.php).

The Manual provides a brief overview of the Thuthuka Programme, including issues of eligibility, funding tracks, the application process, funding guidelines and review procedures. It does not, however, constitute a complete set of the policies, procedures or systems used by the NRF.

## 2 Thuthuka Programme

### 2.1 Overview

The Thuthuka Programme, initiated in 2001, is central to the NRF's human capital development strategy in so far as it relates to advancing the equity and redress agenda within the research sphere. The Programme is located within the Institutional Capacity Programme (ICP) sub-directorate, which falls within the Human and Institutional Capacity Development directorate at the NRF (<http://hicd.nrf.ac.za/>). Operating within the ever-evolving higher education landscape, the Programme aims to develop human capital and to improve the research capacities of designated researchers (black [African, Indian and Coloured], female or disabled) with the ultimate aim of redressing historical imbalances. This is done in partnership with public HEIs, Science Councils and other research institutions.

## 2.2 Objectives

The strategic objectives of the Programme are to:

- Promote the attainment of a Doctoral qualification by early-career academics employed at South African universities, Science Councils and other research institutions;
- Promote the research development of early-career academics employed at South African universities, science councils and other research institutions;
- Promote the attainment of an NRF rating by early-career academics, in particular black and female researchers and persons with disabilities;
- Promote the attainment of an NRF rating by academics that have not been able to realise their potential or sustain their research ability by virtue of the lack of an enabling research environment;
- Promote the attainment of an NRF rating by academics that have not been able to realise their potential or sustain their research outputs due to family responsibilities;
- Foster a culture of research excellence and aid in the development and expansion of the national knowledge-based economy by boosting research outputs and human capital development; and
- Effect a transformation in the demographic composition of the established researcher community at publicly funded HEIs, Science Councils and other research institutions, with respect to gender, race and persons with disabilities.

## 3 Eligibility

The Thuthuka grants are limited to academics and researchers, with academic and/or joint academic and administrative professional appointments, at public HEIs, Science Councils and other research institutions. Where applicable, applicants must provide proof that the institution, at which the individual is employed, recognises such a joint appointment. Applicants must be employed in these institutions on a full-time permanent or contractual basis. In the case of a contract the appointment must extend for the duration of the approved three-year funding cycle.

The Thuthuka Programme consists of three distinct tracks. Applicants may apply for funding in one of the following three tracks:

### 3.1 PhD Track

The following eligibility criteria apply in respect of the PhD Track:

- Only South African citizens.
- Should have obtained a minimum of a Masters degree.
- Registered for a Doctoral degree.
- Generally under the age of 45 years at the time of first application.

- Proof of a commitment from the employing institution pledging to allow the applicant time off for research and relief of teaching duties to conduct fieldwork/research.
- Endorsement by a nominated supervisor supporting the proposed Doctoral work to be undertaken.

Note:

- The relevant NRF form, completed by the supervisor, must be signed and submitted with the application.
- Successful applicants must provide proof of registration renewal annually for the consecutive years of NRF funding. Failure to comply will lead to the cancellation of the grant.
- Should a grantholder not have obtained his/her Doctorate within six years of funding in this Programme, no further funding will be considered beyond the sixth year.
- If applying in Thuthuka for the first time and the project was previously funded by the NRF for a grantholder-linked or free-standing student support, progress to date needs to be provided in the proposal. The years of previous funding for the Doctoral degree will be taken into consideration when funding is to be awarded.

### **3.2 Post-PhD Track**

The following eligibility criteria apply in respect of the Post-PhD Track:

- Only South African citizens.
- Should have obtained a Doctoral degree no more than five years prior to the date of first application.
- Generally under the age of 45 years at the time of first application.

### **3.3 NRF Rating Track**

The following eligibility criteria apply in respect of the NRF Rating Track:

- Only South African citizens and permanent residents.
- A first-time applicant should NOT be an NRF rated researcher, but may become rated during the tenure of the Thuthuka grant. Should NRF Evaluation and Rating and Thuthuka applications be submitted simultaneously and both are successful, then the latter will not be awarded any funding.
- Should have obtained a Doctoral degree or undergone equivalent research training based on research experience and research outputs. Applicants without a Doctoral degree should demonstrate a proven track record of research outputs.
- A research focus has been identified in an area in which the applicant plans to establish a research track record.
- Applicants must demonstrate in the proposal that they have been unable to establish themselves as researchers due to limited research opportunities (e.g. working in an



institution with limited research infrastructure and research activity or due to family responsibilities). If such limitations are not clear from the proposal and confirmed in the applicant's career profile, the application will not be considered.

**The Institutional Support form as provided by the NRF, has to be uploaded as an attachment to each electronic application to confirm and verify their support to the applicant for the proposal research.**

**No application with a research operating budget total of less than R25 000 requested from the NRF will be considered for funding. Applicants are requested to read the Guide for costs eligible for inclusion.**

## 4 Granting Rules

### 4.1 Funding Duration

Funding is available for a maximum period of six years (in two three-year cycles) within all Tracks. Grantholders may apply for participation in a different track for the second funding cycle after successfully completing their project in the first cycle.

The following applies if a grantholder in the PhD Track completes his/her Doctoral degree within a three-year cycle:

- If the Doctoral qualification is completed in the first three-year cycle, the grantholder may apply for funds for a new project in the Post-PhD Track for a second cycle, after which he/she will be eligible for a third three-year cycle in the same Track.
- If the qualification is completed in the second three-year cycle, the grantholder may apply for funds for a new project in the Post-PhD Track for one additional cycle.

Grantholders in the PhD Track are therefore eligible for up to three 3-year cycles (9 years) in total within the Programme.

### 4.2 Participation across Funding Tracks

Applicants may not hold two Thuthuka grants simultaneously. Grantholders may also not apply for funding within a Track in which they have already received funding for two funding cycles.

### 4.3 Exclusions

The Thuthuka Programme does not award funding for:

- Infrastructure development for which the Research Infrastructure Support Programme makes provision;
- Budgets only requesting funding for travel, student support, equipment and conference attendance;
- Single year grants or grants for less than three years, unless the applicant is in the process of completing a doctoral study.

## 4.4 Co-funding

The NRF policy on co-funding in this Programme is a 1:1 funding ratio commitment by the NRF and the applicant's employing institution. By validating the application, the applicant's institution declares its funding commitment for operating costs at the ratio of 1:1. The onus is on the institution to ascertain that all budget rules have been adhered to.

## 4.5 Carry Forward of Grant Funding

In principle, the carry forward of unspent/claimed funds to the next financial year is not automatic and will only be considered according to the regulations provided in the '*Guidelines for the Carry Forward of Unspent/claimed Grant Allocations*' and under exceptional circumstances with strong motivations.

## 4.6 Multiple Grants

Grantholders may not hold Thuthuka grants concurrently with:

- Grants as a Director of an NRF Centre of Excellence or Industrial Centre of Excellence, or as a participant in the South African Research Chairs Initiative or Research Niche Area Programme.
- Any NRF Knowledge Fields Development grants.
- Any NRF free-standing or grantholder-linked student support.

## 5 Budget Breakdown and Funding Model

The Programme supports the advancement of individuals from Masters to Doctoral level in all scientific fields. Grants are awarded for well-structured research projects that demonstrate the prudent use of funds. Projects should have clear aims and sound methodologies that support the study objectives. The NRF does not fund any clinical trials projects.

The budgeting model for the Thuthuka Programme takes into account two dimensions, namely the human-capital dimension (in terms of race, gender and disability) and the funding Track. Funds are allocated in terms of a horizontal budget split across the three funding Tracks (namely, PhD, Post-PhD and NRF Rating) with weights assigned to each Track on the basis of its relative importance. For example, the PhD Track is allocated 40% of the overall budget in line with the NRF's initiative of the 'PhD as Driver' for the knowledge-based economy strategy.

Since the Thuthuka Programme is aimed at development and the advancement of designated groups per race and/or gender, the Programme has set the following targets for allocation of grants to designated groups to bring about this transformation:

- **PhD Track:** 80% of all funded grantholders to be Black; up to 60% of all funded grantholders to be female.
- **Post-PhD Track:** 80% of all funded grantholders to be Black; 50% of all funded grantholders to be female.

- **NRF Rating Track:** 80% of all funded grantees to be Black; 50% of all funded grantees to be female.

The intended Programme budget split in respect of the overall budget is:

- PhD Track: 40%
- Post-PhD Track: 30%
- NRF Rating Track: 30%.

The grant covers research operating costs and student support; it excludes costs incurred by the researcher or institution for research prior to the approval of the Thuthuka award.

## 6 Categories of Support

When completing the project budget, one needs to consider all costs that could impact on undertaking the research, such as the direct, indirect and human capacity development costs. The amounts allowed per item, by the NRF, need to be considered as shown below.

The NRF has provided researchers with the Budget Assist Costing Tool to prepare the budget offline in order to assist with a more realistic planning of the budget. A number of pre-loaded budget items are available for selection from drop-down lists. All budgets should be costed using the **BUDGET ASSIST COSTING TOOL** and included as an attachment to the NRF Online Submission System. Use the **QUICK BUDGET REFERENCE**, which is a summary of all the Financial Categories with examples of cost calculations as to **HOW-TO** in completing your budget.

**The Budget Assist Costing Tool should be used to calculate the cost; and the applicant needs to transfer only the item total into the application on the NRF Online Submission System.**

### 6.1 Human Capacity Development (Grantholder-linked Student and Fellowship Support)

Grantholder-linked student support is available only to the applicant's human resources (students, postdoctoral fellows and staff) **directly involved in the grantholder's project**. Greater participation of women, black and disabled students, is specifically encouraged.

The grantholder is expected to provide mentoring and supervision to all NRF funded students and fellows and the number of students per grantholder is therefore carefully monitored in accordance with the experience of the grantholder.

Student support is available in the following four categories:

- **Student Assistantships:** For full-time final-year undergraduate/diploma and Honours/BTech students.
- **Postgraduate Bursaries:** For Doctoral and Masters students with a research component of more than 50%.

- **Postdoctoral Fellowships:** For candidates who have completed their Doctoral degree no more than five years prior to their first nomination for participation in the Thuthuka Programme.
- **Staff Development Grants:** For staff members who are registered for a Masters or Doctoral degree under the grantholder's supervision or co-supervision and are linked to the research plan for which the grantholder is funded in the Thuthuka Programme.

Staff Development Grants, Postgraduate Bursaries and Student Assistantships are awarded for a full calendar year or for a semester, depending on the date of registration of the student, the date of submission of the nomination and the period for which the award is requested, as indicated in the table below. Postdoctoral Fellowships are awarded on a monthly *pro rata* basis within a calendar year, and nominations may therefore be submitted on an *ad hoc* basis.

Staff members of an applying institution are not eligible for Masters and Doctoral grantholder-linked bursaries and should not be nominated in that category but in the Staff Development Grant category, which provides for Masters or Doctoral nominees. In this case, the grantholder has to be the (co-) supervisor of the staff member registered for a higher degree.

No bursaries for new Doctoral students will be awarded to grantholders in the last year of the second cycle of a project (6<sup>th</sup> year of funding).

The award of bursaries in each Track is restricted to the following total per level, viz.

PhD Track	2 Student Assistantships (Final-year Undergraduate and/or Honours/BTech) 1 Masters
Post-PhD Track	1 Postdoctoral Fellow 2 Doctorates 2 Masters Honours as requested and depending on available funds
NRF Rating Track	1 Postdoctoral Fellow 4 Postgraduate Students (any combination of Masters and/or Doctoral) Honours as requested and depending on available funds

**Note:** Staff Development Grants get preference and are allocated within the total numbers indicated above.

### 6.1.1 Student Assistantships

Student Assistantships are available to full-time final-year undergraduate/diploma and Honours/BTech students. Nominees should show potential for postgraduate study and research; participate in the grantholder's research project in addition to their normal studies; and have maintained acceptable grades. The grantholder is responsible for supervising and mentoring these students. The purpose of these assistantships is both to provide assistance to the grantholder and to attract promising students to postgraduate studies.

At least 50% of the students nominated by each grantholder for Student Assistantships must be black (African, Indian or Coloured) South African citizens. Permanent residents of South Africa are not eligible for Student Assistantships.

### 6.1.2 Postgraduate Bursaries

Grantholder-linked postgraduate bursaries are available to students who are supervised or co-supervised by the grantholder and who work on his/her Thuthuka funded project.

Bursaries for Masters degrees by coursework are supported provided that the research component of the degree comprises at least 50% and is externally evaluated.

### 6.1.3 Postdoctoral Fellowships

Doctoral graduates that are not otherwise employed may hold grantholder-linked Postdoctoral Fellowships provided that the Doctoral degree was obtained no more than five years prior to first nomination. In order to expand the research experience and exposure of emerging researchers, Postdoctoral Fellowships are normally not tenable at the institution at which the Doctoral degree was obtained. In cases where the candidate intends undertaking postdoctoral research at the institution at which the Doctorate was obtained, a detailed motivation must accompany the nomination.

### 6.1.4 Staff Development Grants

Applicants **are not** eligible for Staff Development Grants for themselves. The following criteria and rules apply:

- Staff Development Grants are available to staff members at the applicant/grantholder's own institution who will receive a higher qualification (Masters or Doctoral degree); or staff at other universities who are registered for a higher qualification, through their direct involvement in the grantholder's project.
- The grantholder should be either the supervisor or the co-supervisor of the staff member for whom a Staff Development Grant is requested.
- If the nominee is employed on a fixed-term appointment, this should be on a full-time basis and specified as such on the nomination form.
- The Thuthuka Programme funding should contribute towards the staff member's running costs for research, and/or costs for travel and accommodation to visit the local external supervisor. The funding may not be used for registration fees, conference attendance abroad, general textbooks, computer hardware or stationery (the 'Use and Management of Funds' document attached to the award letter provides further detail). A strong motivation should be provided for consideration should funding is requested for any of these items. Budgets should be clear on funding requested with appropriate detail on items and a motivation for its usage.

The maximum period of support for a Staff Development Grant is three years for a Masters' degree and five years for a Doctorate.

The maximum NRF contribution is R25 000 per year awarded on a *pro rata* basis, based on the approved budget submitted in the nomination form.

## Awards and Maximum Period of Support

LEVEL	VALUE OF SUPPORT (per annum)*	MAXIMUM PERIOD OF SUPPORT
<b>Student Assistantships</b>		
Final-year undergraduate degree/diploma	R8 000	1 year
BTech/Honours (only full-time)	R20 000	1 year
<b>Postgraduate Bursaries</b>		
Masters full-time	R40 000	2 years
Masters part-time	R10 000	3 years
Doctoral full-time	R60 000	3 years
Doctoral part-time	R12 000	5 years
<b>Fellowships</b>		
Postdoctoral Fellowships	R80 000	2 years
<b>Staff Development Grants</b>		
Masters level	R25 000	3 years
Doctoral level	R25 000	5 years

\* Proportional amounts are available per semester for periods of less than a year; however, Postdoctoral Fellowships are awarded on a monthly *pro rata* basis within a calendar year, and Staff Development Grants are based on the proposed budget as approved.

## 6.2 Operating Costs

### 6.2.1 [Lecturer Replacement](#)

#### **Goal**

Support to an applicant who is leaving their position for research project specific purposes, thus creating a temporary vacancy. When determining the replacement costs, researchers are requested to estimate the duration the person will spend in the position, i.e. hours, days, hours per week, etc.

#### **Eligibility**

- Applies to applicants in all funding Tracks, who wish to undertake research and training during their leave period.
- Applicants in the PhD Track also qualify for this support, for writing up of their theses.

#### **Applicants are required to submit**

- A letter of confirmation of leave (either granted or conditional).
- Approval of the programme by the Head of Department, stating outputs to be generated during the leave period.
- A work plan stating the outputs to be accomplished during the leave period.

#### **Exclusions**

- Carry forward of funding for this item will not be permitted and applicants must reapply when submitting the annual progress report and budget.

- Grantholders may not concurrently hold grants in the sabbatical travel and lecturer replacement categories for the same period of time.

### **Maximum Funding**

The NRF contribution will be limited to a maximum of R4 000 per month for a maximum period of six months.

### **6.2.2 Research and Technical Assistance**

#### **Goal**

To provide support, at a specialised technical skill level, to an applicant to complete the project if a skills gap exists in the research team.

#### **Eligibility**

- Applies to applicants in all funding Tracks.

Technical Assistance Support (e.g. services of a statistician) includes using statistical software packages (e.g. SPSS, SAS, HLM etc.) to analyse data. Applicants are required to submit:

- Detailed on research assistance required.
- A list of the available skills of the research team working on the project.
- Identified skills gap in the research team.
- Expected skills transfer, if applicable.
- Detailed cost breakdown, e.g. technical assistant work for three hours per day for a total period of three months, at a rate of R80 rand per hour.

#### **Exclusion**

- Administrative and secretarial costs.

### **Maximum Funding**

The NRF contribution will be limited to a maximum of R40 000 per year, awarded on a *pro rata* basis.

### **6.2.3 Research Materials and Supplies**

#### **Goal**

To provide support to applicants for the direct cost incurred on a research project. These items must be directly related to the project and are considered the 'consumables' for the proposed research e.g. disposables and consumables.

**Consumables** are any items with a life expectancy of generally less than a year, and which are consumed in the normal course of operation. **NB. Laboratory consumables** such as equipment with a value of less than R3 000 should be captured under consumables even if not consumed in the normal course of operations e.g pipettes.

### **Eligibility**

- Applies to applicants in all funding Tracks.
- Only direct costs are covered.
- Every type of purchase must be clearly identified individually and be well motivated in the budget submission.

### **Applicants are required to submit:**

- A detailed itemised list, e.g. description of the consumable, quantity, reagent grade and cost per unit.
- Survey related costs, e.g. number of questionnaires, stationary, photocopies, etc.
- Details of singular items above R2 000.

### **Exclusions**

- Indirect costs (overheads)
- Registration fees for enrolment
- Basic office equipment
- General stationary, photocopying and printing costs
- Journal publications, journal subscription costs and textbooks
- Telephone, fax and internet costs
- Personal laptops, computer hardware, and purchase or renewal of software licences.
- Any funding line that is listed as: 'miscellaneous, other' or 'etc.'

### **Maximum Funding**

The NRF contribution will be limited to a maximum of R100 000 per year.

#### **6.2.4 External Supervisory Support**

##### **Goal**

To provide support to an applicant who requires external supervision from supervisor(s) not based at their own institution. Where the applicant is registered for a Doctoral degree at her/his employing institution but external supervision is required for the qualification, funding may be requested. Support will only be considered in cases where there is no adequate supervision within the institution itself and there is a clear agreement between the institution and the supervisor concerned. This must be fully motivated.

The NRF will consider a funding arrangement such as this only in cases where the external supervisor is an experienced and reputable researcher. The particulars of the supervisor should be clearly stated in the application. The NRF may request further information before taking a funding decision.



When determining the costs pertaining to external supervisory support researchers must bear the following in mind when costing travel:

- Make provision for incidentals, e.g. Toll gate fees, rail and parking fees (where applicable); and
- Use the most economical appropriate and safe mode of travel.

#### **Eligibility**

- Applies to applicants in the PhD Track only.
- Applies only when the supervisor and the applicant are not at the same institution.

#### **Applicants are required to submit:**

- Cost breakdown, e.g. travel or teleconference, number of visits, duration of visit(s).

#### **Exclusions**

- Applicable only if the supervisor is not supported in the category of visiting scientist/senior advisor.

#### **Maximum Funding**

- Funding may be used to cover travel and/or communication costs incurred by the applicant or external supervisor.
- The NRF contribution will be limited to a maximum of R20 000 per year.

**NB:** No funding will become available if the supervisor/co-supervisor is not confirmed in the Supervisor/Co-supervisor form submitted with the application.

### **6.2.5 Conference Attendance**

#### **Goal**

To provide support to an applicant that intends to use national and international conferences as a mechanism to further the goals of their projects.

In all cases, **a detailed motivation including an itemised budget should be submitted.**

#### **Eligibility**

- Applies to applicants in all funding Tracks who are presenting a paper or poster at a conference in the field of research project funded by the NRF and the conference is in the field of the research project.
- Applies to applicants where:
  - A conference has been identified.
  - An abstract (talk or poster) has been accepted. If abstract submission only opens later in the year, a draft abstract must be submitted with this application, or
  - An invitation to present at a conference was received.

In addition, preference will be for conferences where applicants can demonstrate:

- Networking opportunities.
  - Launch of collaboration.
  - Professional society/associations meetings.
- 
- Attendance of subsequent international conferences will be considered only if the grantholder's paper at the previous international conference for which funding was awarded has been published in a peer-reviewed journal or proceedings, or if evidence of acceptance for publication is supplied.
  - Grantholders may apply for support for all nominated postgraduate students, to attend reputable local events (conferences, seminars and workshops). The grantholder should motivate how their participation and attendance will benefit the research project.

**NB:** Attendance of a workshop will only qualify if the workshop is attached to the conference, with capacity building initiatives.

**Exclusions:**

- Visa and permit fees.
- Events not attached to the conference.
- Presentation of the same work at multiple conferences.
- Attendance of more than one conference abroad per year.

**Maximum Funding:**

The NRF contribution will be limited to a maximum of.

- R4 000 per year for local conferences held in South Africa.
- R17 000 per year for conferences held abroad.

**6.2.6 Funding for Persons with Special Needs**

Funding may be considered for applicants/team members with disabilities and other special needs as specified in the *Code of Good Practice on Employment of People with Disabilities*, as stated in the Employment Equity Act (No. 55 of 1998). A clear motivation should be provided in the Research Materials and Supplies category of funding.

**6.2.7 Study Visits/Sabbatical Leave**

Application can be made for a funding contribution towards a study visit or sabbatical leave by the grantholder.

### 6.2.7.1 Study/Training Visit

#### **Goal**

To support an applicant who plans to undertake a study visit or training visit for research in a well-developed research environment either in South Africa or abroad, to advance and complete the research project and or equip the applicant with specific and special skills required to add value to the research project.

In all cases, **a detailed motivation including an itemised budget should be submitted.**

**The study visit** must contribute to the advancement and the completion of the research project.

**The training visit** must equip the applicant with specific and special skills required to add value to the research project.

#### **Eligibility**

Applies to applicants in all funding Tracks.

**Study Visit:** Applies where the applicant's home institution does not have well-developed infrastructure or facilities to accommodate the research to be undertaken.

**Training Visit (for Human Capacity Development (HCD) purpose):** Applies where the applicant requires specific skills in order to contribute to the advancement and completion of the research project and beyond the life of the project.

For the training visits, the following must be explained:

- Local: Explain why the employing institution of the applicant cannot accommodate the training.
- Abroad: Explain that the training is not obtainable in South Africa or why the training institutions in this field in South Africa cannot currently accommodate the applicant.

#### **Applicants are required to submit**

- A detailed work plan or programme for the study or training visit, including its duration.
- A detailed cost breakdown, with all the costs related to this visit.
- Letter of confirmation from hosting institution.
- Letter of approval by the Head of Department of the applicant.
- Letter of motivation why the selected hosting institution was chosen for this visit.
- Indication of other institution(s) having been contacted for the visit, listing at a minimum
  - If they agreed to accommodate the applicant, or
  - Why they cannot accommodate the applicant.

### **Exclusion**

The combined duration of all visits in this category is not to exceed six weeks.

### **Maximum Funding**

The NRF contribution will be limited to a maximum of -

- R4 000 per week for a maximum of six weeks for local visits.
- R6 000 per week for a maximum of six weeks for visits abroad.

#### *6.2.7.2 Sabbatical Travel Grant*

### **Goal**

To support applicants in undertaking a research visit to another institution.

The applicant should clearly specify if the requested amount is for a Sabbatical Travel or a Study Visit.

### **Eligibility**

- Applies to applicants in all funding Tracks.
- Only awarded once in a three-year funding cycle.
- Applicants in the PhD Track may use this category to write up their theses.

### **Applicants are required to submit**

- A detailed cost breakdown.
- A letter of invitation by the host institution.
- A letter of approval (or conditional approval based on funding approval) by the applicant's employing institution.

Expected outputs/deliverables that must at the minimum address:

- A list of outputs to be achieved.
- An indication of how the skills set will be enhanced.
- The impact on the level of supervision, related to supervisory skills that will be improved.
- Details of other sources of funding obtained.

### **Exclusions**

- Sabbatical travel requests that are less than three months in duration.

- Applicants may not receive funding in the sabbatical travel and lecturer replacement categories for the same period.

### **Maximum Funding**

The NRF contribution will be limited to a maximum of R10 000 per month for a maximum of six months.

**NB:** Applicants to note the following with regards to the Sabbatical Travel Grant:

- Indicate the commitment to return to South Africa after the sabbatical leave, for a period equivalent to the duration of the sabbatical.
- Funds not used during a year of funding will not be carried over to the next year.
- Recipients of Sabbatical Leave funding are expected to report on the outputs of the sabbatical period in their Annual Progress Reports (APR) to the NRF.

### **6.2.8 Visiting Scientist/Senior Advisor**

#### **Goal**

To provide support to applicants to invite a visitor(s) to the institution of the applicant, who has special skills that can add value to the project at the technical, scientific, strategic and/or human capacity building levels. Visiting scientists should be individuals of good standing in their research fields and may be drawn from institutions in South Africa or abroad.

#### **Eligibility**

- Applies to applicants in all funding Tracks.

The visiting scientist should make a contribution to the research project in the following categories:

- Technical skills or knowledge transfer, and
- Human capacity building: student interaction (faculty interaction, seminars and lectures).

#### **Applicants are required to submit**

- At the minimum a preliminary plan that must have been discussed with the visiting scientist.
- A specific work plan, listing tasks that will be accomplished, including itinerary and schedule stating the nature of discussions and interaction with students, postdoctoral researchers and academic staff.
- A detailed cost breakdown.
- Information on other sources of funding available.
- A letter of acceptance by the visiting scientist.
- An outline of the outcomes that will be achieved including:
  - Skills or knowledge transfer; and

- Contribution to the research at a strategic level.

There are no limits on the number of visitors, e.g. the visiting scientist and senior advisor need not be the same visitor. Repeat visits by the same scientists will only be considered if active research collaboration exists.

### **Maximum Funding**

The NRF contribution will be limited to a maximum of R60 000 per year per applicant, awarded on a *pro rata* basis.

### **6.2.9 Research Equipment**

#### **Goal**

To provide support to applicants for the purchase of new equipment, contributing to the purchase of large equipment, or covering the maintenance, service or upgrade costs for equipment.

**Equipment** is defined as any piece of tangible asset with a unit value of R3 000 or more, has life expectancy of generally more than one year, and which is not consumed in the normal course of operation.

#### **Eligibility**

- Applies to applicants in all funding Tracks.

#### **Applicants are required to submit:**

- Details of laboratory equipment to be purchased, e.g. balance, water bath, autoclave, water purification system, gel dryer, micro pipettes.
- A motivation for specialised hardware and software, e.g. Audiovisual equipment, and specialised software.
- If more than one item of a particular piece of equipment is purchased, a motivation per application should be provided.
- Maintenance costs, for new equipment that is purchased, must be budgeted for (if not requested in this application).
- If the purchase price of a single piece of new equipment, or the contribution to the purchase of large equipment, is higher than R10 000 the following should be provided:
  - Three quotes, giving preference to local suppliers where applicable.
- If the funds are not used to purchase equipment, but to cover equipment maintenance/ service/ upgrade costs, provide at the minimum the following:
  - Detailed description of the equipment.
  - Details of the specific maintenance or service or upgrade.

## **Exclusions**

- Licence fees or renewal of licences of non-specialised software (e.g. MS office).
- Personal laptops, net books, hand held notebooks, and personal digital assistant (PDA) devices.

## **Maximum Funding**

The NRF contribution will be limited to a maximum of R50 000 per year per applicant.

**NB:** Requests for equipment valued between R200 000 and R7 000 000 should be directed to the Research Infrastructure Support Programme (RISP). Information is available at [http://www.nrf.ac.za/funding\\_overview.php](http://www.nrf.ac.za/funding_overview.php).

### **6.2.10 Domestic Travel**

#### **Goal**

To provide support to applicants, or students of the applicant (only those funded by the NRF within this project), to cover travel for research and fieldwork that is related to the research project.

When determining the cost pertaining to domestic travel, researchers must bear the following in mind:

- Make provision for incidentals e.g. toll gate fees, rail and parking fees (where applicable); and
- Use the most economical, appropriate and safe mode of travel.

#### **Eligibility**

- Applies to applicants and their students for application in all the funding Tracks.

#### **Applicants are required to submit:**

- A motivation and purpose of the travel that is related to the project objectives and methodology.
- Detailed budget breakdown including:
  - Cost for economic air travel.
  - For travel by road, number of kilometres to be travelled and costs based on the applicant's institutional rates.
  - Type and cost of accommodation and duration of stay.
  - Subsistence allowance based on the applicant's institutional rates.
  - Incidentals (allowance granted for incidental costs linked to an event).

## **Exclusions**

Meetings, workshops, networking and collaboration events.

## **Maximum Funding**

The NRF contribution will be limited to a maximum of R10 000 per year per applicant.

### **Categories of Support and Maximum Amounts Funded**

<b>CATEGORY OF SUPPORT</b>	<b>MAXIMUM AMOUNT</b>
Lecturer replacement	R4 000 per month <i>pro rata</i> for a maximum of six months
Research, technical and <i>ad hoc</i> assistance	R40 000 per annum awarded on a <i>pro rata</i> basis (not for the PhD Track)
External supervisory support	R20 000 per annum (for the PhD Track only)
Local conference	R4 000 per annum
Conference abroad	R17 000 per annum
Study/training visit (local)	R4 000 per week for a maximum of six weeks
Study/training visit (abroad)	R6 000 per week for a maximum of six weeks
Extended study visit (abroad)	R10 000 per month for a maximum of six months, plus airfare.
Sabbatical leave	R10 000 per month for a maximum of six months
Visiting scientists/mentorship	R60 000 <i>pro rata for a</i> maximum of 12 months
Research equipment	R50 000 maximum
Research materials and supplies	R100 000
Domestic travel	R10 000

In order to realistically gauge the full extent of the proposed research, details of other sources of financial support for the research must be submitted in the application budget. This in no way compromises or disadvantages the proposal; instead, knowledge of the commitment and contribution of other contributors (where applicable) serves to better understand the feasibility of the proposed research project.

**All grants are subject to compliance with the NRF Conditions of Grant as specified in attachments to the award letter.**



## 7 Application Process

The NRF issues a call for Thuthuka proposals annually, which is placed on the NRF website and is accessible online at <https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za>. All applications must be duly authorised and approved by the designated authority (DA) of the research administration at the institution that submits the application. Applications must be submitted to the NRF electronically, by the Designated Authority (DA) of the submitting institution, no later than **Monday 16 July 2012**.

The NRF does not accept more than one application per applicant within a three-year funding cycle; although a project proposal that has previously been rejected by the NRF may be revised and resubmitted. In such cases, any revision or reworking of the proposal to accommodate the reviewers' feedback on the original application, should be explained and pointed out.

The processing of a successful grant application takes approximately six months from the time of submission until the commencement of funding.

### 7.1 How to Submit Applications

The application process will be accessible online at <https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za> from Friday, **25 May 2012**. Applicants are advised to complete their proposals as soon as possible to prevent IT system overload near the closing date.

This is an electronic submission system and applicants need to be registered on the electronic system. If already registered on <http://nrfonline.nrf.ac.za>, it is essential that applicants update their existing Curriculum Vitae (CV) as this is pulled into the PDF application for review purposes. If not yet registered on this site, applicants should register on the submission system at <https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za> on which the application is being submitted. Applicants are urged to complete or update **ALL** screens of the CV, including the Research Profile and Research Outputs screens as this information is referred to in the review process in order to reach an informed decision on the proposal.

When final submitted by the applicant, the application will be routed to the (DA) for internal institutional review and validation. The DA must submit the validated applications to the NRF electronically no later than **Monday 16 July 2012**. Late applications, additional supporting documentation or information received after the closing date will not be accepted or considered. 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 announced by the respective research offices and is usually at least two weeks prior to the NRF's closing date.

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

It is important that all proposals are screened and approved by internal institutional processes **before** being submitted to the NRF. Institutional authorities should take particular care regarding the budget information included in applications. It should be taken into consideration that the amounts requested from the NRF constitute 50% of the required total as the employing institution will be committed to funding the balance. Applicants should provide a **detailed motivation** for each item

for which funds are requested. 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.

## **7.2 Screening and Review Processes**

### **7.2.1 Overview of the Screening Process**

All applications validated by institutions and submitted to the NRF are screened by the NRF for compliance with the requirements of the Call for Proposals, the stipulations set out in this Manual, and the content requirements indicated in the online application screens. Applications that fail to meet the requirements and stipulations are rejected.

### **7.2.2 Overview of the Review Process**

The NRF's peer review policy requires that all applications be subjected to a two-tiered review process: namely, firstly a postal and secondly a panel review process.

#### **7.2.2.1 Postal Peer Review**

After the closing date for the submission of applications, all eligible and appropriately completed applications are subjected to postal peer review. The reviewers are selected from a list provided by the applicant plus additional reviewers selected by HICD-G staff from existing databases and other sources. Applicants are encouraged to suggest reviewers from abroad. A minimum of six written reviews per application are solicited, with the ultimate aim of eliciting at least three postal review reports per application for submission to the panel review process.

Applications are forwarded for review to researchers with selected research knowledge and insight in relevant disciplines; and written evaluations are submitted to the NRF. The postal review reports together with the applications and supporting documentation are then deliberated upon in the panel review process.

#### **7.2.2.2 Panel Peer Review**

Following the postal review process, applications are subjected to panel peer review. The postal reviewers' reports serve as the basis for discussion and review by the panel members.

Panel members are selected from the NRF database which is updated on a continuous basis and other sources. In making the selection, the expertise and experience of individuals in application adjudication are taken into account. In assessing the proposals, the postal reviewers' reports are referred to, and agreed assessment criteria are applied in the form of a scorecard.

The Panel makes recommendations to the NRF and the NRF takes the final decision on whether to fund and, if so, the amount to be awarded. In awarding grants in this programme, the NRF takes into account the recommendations of the peer review panels, budget motivations by the applicant, the objectives and equity targets for the Programme, and the available funds.

## **7.3 Ranking of proposals**

The purpose of the scoring system is to evaluate applications, based on Programme criteria in order to determine those that are most deserving of the limited funds available. All research proposals submitted to the NRF for funding, irrespective of the funding Track, are evaluated according to a

number of predetermined criteria. Applications are assessed and ranked on the basis of seven qualifiers as listed in the table below. Each area is given a weight to indicate its relative importance. Kindly consult the table below for details on the criteria used per funding Track as well as their relative weighting.

### NRF Scorecard for the Assessment of Proposals for Thuthuka Funding

Criterion	Description	% Weighting		
		<i>PhD Track</i>	<i>Post-PhD Track</i>	<i>NRF-rating Track</i>
Track Record of Applicant	<p>This refers to past research outputs recognised by the NRF. This refers to outputs such as the professional development of the applicant; journal articles; conference presentations and proceedings; and books and book chapters; and patents.</p> <p>Reviewers will be required to comment on whether the standing and research record of the researcher suggest that the applicant has the appropriate research experience to undertake the proposed research.</p>	5	5	5
Research Proposal	<p>This refers to scientific contribution; originality and new knowledge; interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary aspects; match between the research question and the proposed research methodology and alignment with the applicant's institutional strategy and/or any national research strategy.</p> <p>Scientific and Technical Quality – Reviewers will evaluate whether the project will make a contribution to new knowledge and new methodologies in the field; apply existing knowledge and methodologies in the field; Involve unique application of existing knowledge and methodologies in the field or utilise the application of existing knowledge and methodologies in the field.</p> <p>Interdisciplinary or Multidisciplinary aspects – reviewers will assess whether Interdisciplinary or Multidisciplinary aspects have been fully- partially or not explored in the research proposal.</p>	35	25	25

Criterion	Description	% Weighting		
		<i>PhD Track</i>	<i>Post-PhD Track</i>	<i>NRF-rating Track</i>
	<p>Research objectives to match aims of study – Reviewers will assess whether the research objectives are clearly stated and on whether they are appropriate to meet the aims of the study; are sound but have inconsistencies and can be refined; are appropriate but only partially address the aims of the study or are not appropriate to meet the aims of the study.</p> <p>Research methodology to match research objectives – Reviewers will comment on whether the research methodology is appropriate to meet objectives of study; is sound but has inconsistencies and can be refined; is appropriate but only partially addresses study objectives; or not appropriate to meet objectives of study.</p>			
<p>Human Capital Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student involvement</li> <li>• Representation from designated /under-represented groups</li> </ul>	<p>Greater emphasis is placed on the number of students trained and the participation of researchers and/or students from under-represented groups (i.e. black, female and disabled) in research projects.</p>	10	20	20
<p>Project Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project organisation</li> <li>• Project scheduling</li> <li>• Budget</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Project organisation refers to how project teams and human resources are composed; the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of team members; the proposed research activities; and supervision.</li> <li>▪ Project scheduling refers to the work breakdown of the project to ensure that specific outcomes are achieved; as well as the objectives and associated timeline in place to divide the scope of work into manageable activities.</li> <li>▪ Project budgeting refers to effective planning and budgeting of resources.</li> </ul>	20	20	20

Criterion	Description	% Weighting		
		<i>PhD Track</i>	<i>Post-PhD Track</i>	<i>NRF-rating Track</i>
Collaboration on Research Project	<p>In order to address historical imbalances, research collaboration between researchers at various institutions is encouraged, especially between institutions with limited research infrastructure and research activity and research-intensive institutions with varied capabilities.</p> <p>Reviewers will be required to comment on whether research collaborations are required to meet the study objectives and have been considered and, to also comment on whether the research collaborations are appropriate to meet objectives of the study and have been fully addressed; are appropriate but only partially meet the study objectives or are not appropriate to meet the study objectives.</p>	5	10	10
Supervision/Mentorship	In the Post-PhD and NRF-rating tracks, the supervisory track record of their academic standing and past outputs.	10	5	5
Expected Outputs	This refers to NRF recognised research outputs such as the professional development of the applicant; journal articles; conference presentations and proceedings; and books and book chapters; and patents. Successful applicants will be expected to deliver on all anticipated outputs or risk suspension of their funding. Reviewers will be required to assess whether the proposed outputs are fully-, partially- or not achievable within the given timeframe.	10	10	10
Potential Impact	Particular attention is paid to proposals with the potential to contribute to the strategic goals of the knowledge economy.	5	5	5

## 7.4 Application Feedback and Disputes

Once the review and assessment processes have been completed and the recommended funding decision has been approved by the Executive Director: HICD, applicants are notified by the GMSA by letter of the outcome of their application and feedback on the review process.

Any disputes resulting from the review process or contractual arrangements will be resolved according to the provisions in the contractual agreement. The level of resolution will depend on the nature and complexity of the dispute. The following escalation process will be followed in resolving disputes:

- Grants Director: Capacity and Strategic Platforms
- Executive Director: GMSA
- Programme Director: ICP
- Executive Director: HICD
- Deputy CEO: RISA
- CEO of the NRF

Any such appeal needs to follow the appropriate Appeals Process, as managed by the GMSA.

## 7.5 Accountability within NRF

The NRF operates a matrix management system with a centralised GMSA Directorate responsible for managing grants across a wide portfolio of programmes.

The Executive Director: HICD is accountable for the Thuthuka Programme, and the Programme Director: ICP is responsible for programme management.

Responsibility for the effective management and administration of grants in the Thuthuka Programme rests with the Grants Director for Capacity and Strategic Platforms Grants, who is accountable to the Executive Director: GMSA.

# 8 Grantholder Responsibilities

## 8.1 Reporting

Continued funding beyond the first year is dependent on the submission of an APR to the NRF by 31 August of each grant year. Continued funding will be considered based on satisfactory progress.

A Final Report must be submitted three months after completion of a three-year cycle, or after the completion of the project by 31 March of the following year. A comprehensive report is required, covering the full period of support for the particular project. Financial reporting forms part of the Final Report and should be completed with the assistance of the institution's Financial officer.

**A new application must be submitted for each three-year cycle.**

### 8.1.1 Reporting: Extenuating Circumstances

Based on unusual or extenuating circumstances the Thuthuka Programme, however, permits exceptions to these reporting requirements or the deadline. A deviation from the general reporting requirement will only be considered in cases due to illness, injury, bereavement, or personal circumstances which may affect performance and/or render a grant holder unable to report on the outputs for the reporting period.

## **8.2 Managing changes during the project life cycle**

Changes may occur during the project life cycle due to unforeseen and extenuating circumstances. Please note the following on how to manage the award and subsequent changes (planned or unanticipated) should they arise during the project life cycle.

### 8.2.1 Change Requests

#### 8.2.1.1 Prior Approval Requests

All change requests must be preceded by prior NRF-approval made in writing to the GMSA at least 30 days before the proposed change. The request must have institutional DA endorsement and be submitted to the NRF via the Research Office.

#### 8.2.1.2 Changes in Grant Holder

This change maybe triggered by a number of things, from a change of status of a grant holder to a grant holder's untimely death in which case the grant and/or project needs to be transferred or handed over to someone else. For this type of change to be approved, the institution, must provide evidence that the grant holder(s), nominated to take over the project, is suitably qualified and able to achieve the research aims of the project before the NRF will agree to continue the grant funding.

#### **Exclusions:**

Applicants in the PhD Track working on their doctoral dissertation may not transfer the TTK grant to another grantholder.

#### **Changes in project scope**

Changes may occur where a project scope needs to be modified from the original research proposal/project design. The request must have institutional DA endorsement and be submitted to the NRF via the Research Office. Grant holders should notify, the Grants Management and Systems Administration ([hyperlink](#)), in writing of the proposed changes as soon as possible.

## **8.3 Scientific Compliance**

### 8.3.1 Methodology

The grantholder takes scientific responsibility for the research to be undertaken, including its objectives and the methodology outlined in the project proposal. The grantholder is required to devote the necessary time to the research project in compliance with the workplan for the research proposal approved by the NRF so as to achieve the project's stated aims and objectives.



### **8.3.2 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*<sup>1</sup> which will override this condition of grant.

### **8.3.3 Ethics**

A grantholder 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.

### **8.3.4 Access to data**

The data generated from the proposed research must become available to other researchers working in the same field. Therefore, it is important that the data is provided to domain specific databases or in their absence, to the South African Data Archive (SADA).

## **8.4 Supervision**

In the PhD Track, the grantholder or the appointed supervisor has a commitment to his/her nominated students working on the NRF-funded project. They must ensure that such students receive adequate supervisory support to undertake project-related research that contributes towards the degree for which the students are registered. Grantholders are required to submit an APR on the NRF electronic submission system, detailing both project- and student-related progress during the given funding year. Failure to comply with this requirement, or submission of a report that the NRF considers inadequate, may lead to the suspension or termination of the research grant.

## **8.5 Premature Termination**

If a grantholder is unable to complete a research project for which the NRF has awarded a grant, it is the responsibility of the grantholder, through the institution's DA, to notify the NRF's GMSA staff of the intention to prematurely terminate the project. Premature termination of a research project may occur for a number of reasons. Taking into account the circumstances and reasons for termination, the grantholder, in consultation with the NRF, will decide on the best course of action and possible outcomes, including, but not limited to, the final termination of the project and the recall of funds expended. Irrespective of the decision taken, the grantholder is required to submit a Project Closure Report to the NRF. The grantholder must ensure that each student involved in or directly linked to the project completes a progress report on their research project, which is endorsed by the grantholder and the institution's DA. These progress reports will be used in considering any further applications for NRF funding to complete the work, according to the criteria applicable to the programme to which any such application is submitted.

---

<sup>1</sup> RSA (2008). *Intellectual Property Rights from Publicly Financed Research and Development*. Act 51 of 2008. Government Gazette, 22 Dec 2008. Vol 522, no 31745.

## Quick Overview of the Thuthuka Programme

	<b>PhD TRACK</b>	<b>POST-PhD TRACK</b>	<b>NRF-RATING TRACK</b>
<b>Eligibility Criteria</b>	Applicant must be a South African citizen.	Applicant must be a South African citizen.	Applicant must be a South African citizen or a permanent South African resident.
	Applicant should be generally under the age of 45 years at the time of first application.	Applicant should be generally under the age of 45 years at the time of first application.	No age restrictions apply.
	Applicant must be employed at a South African university, science council or museum on a full-time permanent or full-time contract basis. The contract appointment must extend for the duration of the approved three-year grant.	Applicant must be employed at a South African university, science council or museum on a full-time permanent or full-time contract basis. The contract appointment must extend for the duration of the approved three-year grant.	Applicant must be employed at a South African university, science council or museum on a full-time permanent or full-time contract basis. The contract appointment must extend for the duration of the approved three-year grant.
	Applicant must hold a Masters degree.	Applicant must hold a Doctoral degree awarded no more than five years prior to the date of first application.	Applicants without a Doctoral degree should demonstrate a proven track record of research outputs.
	The institution at which the applicant is employed must be committed to a 1:1 funding partnership with the NRF, based on the total research operating costs awarded.	The institution at which the applicant is employed must be committed to a 1:1 funding partnership with the NRF, based on the total research operating costs awarded.	The institution at which the applicant is employed must be committed to a 1:1 funding partnership with the NRF, based on the total research operating costs awarded.
	The proposal must be endorsed by the DA of the institution at which the applicant is employed.	The proposal must be endorsed by the DA of the institution at which the applicant is employed.	The proposal must be endorsed by the DA of the institution at which the applicant is employed.
	Proof of registration for Doctoral studies must be attached to the application on submitted with the signed Conditions of Grant.	First-time applicants to the Programme should NOT be rated scientists, but may become rated during the tenure of the Thuthuka grant. Once rated, a grantholder must complete the current cycle and exit the Programme.	First-time applicants to the Programme should NOT be rated scientists, but may become rated during the tenure of the Thuthuka grant. Once rated, a grantholder must complete the current cycle and exit the Programme.

	<b>PhD TRACK</b>	<b>POST-PhD TRACK</b>	<b>NRF-RATING TRACK</b>
	Recommendation by the supervisor/project leader in support of the Thuthuka award/application is required.	N/A	N/A
	N/A	N/A	Applicants must have identified a research focus in an area in which they plan to establish a research track record.  Applicants must demonstrate that they have been unable to establish themselves as researchers due to limited research opportunities (e.g. working in an institution with limited research infrastructure and research activity).
<b>Types of support</b>	Research materials and supplies.	Research materials and supplies.	Research materials and supplies.
	Grantholder-linked Student Support (up to Masters level) (limited to a maximum of one Masters and two final-year/Honours bursaries per grantholder).	Grantholder-linked Student Support.	Grantholder-linked Student Support.
	Assistance to visit a supervisor or co-supervisor if he/she is at another institution.	Provision for postdoctoral fellowships.	Provision for postdoctoral fellowships.
	Provision for the establishment of a mentoring relationship.	Provision for the establishment of a mentoring relationship.	N/A
	Lecturer replacement.	Lecturer replacement and research/technical assistance.	Lecturer replacement and research/technical assistance.
	Provision for a staff development grant for staff members who will obtain a Masters degree by participating in the grantholder's project.	Provision for staff development grants for staff members, <u>other than the applicant</u> , who will obtain a Masters or Doctoral degree by participating in the grantholder's project.	Provision for staff development grants for staff members, <u>other than the applicant</u> , who will obtain a Masters or Doctoral degree by participating in the grantholder's project.

	<b>PhD TRACK</b>	<b>POST-PhD TRACK</b>	<b>NRF-RATING TRACK</b>
	Research instrumentation/ equipment. The maximum contribution by the NRF is R50 000.	Research instrumentation/ equipment. The maximum contribution by the NRF is R50 000.	Research instrumentation/ equipment. The maximum contribution by the NRF is R50 000.
	A well-motivated research study visit to an established laboratory/centre/department (local or international).	A well-motivated research study visit to an established laboratory/centre/ department (local or international).	A well-motivated research study visit to an established laboratory/centre/department (local or international).
	A well-motivated budget for local travel for research purposes.	A well-motivated budget for local travel for research purposes.	A well-motivated budget for local travel for research purposes.
	One local conference per annum for the applicant, to present a paper or poster.	One local conference per annum for the applicant, to present a paper or poster.	One local conference per annum for the applicant, to present a paper or poster.
	One conference abroad for the applicant biennially to present a paper or poster from which a peer-reviewed published article should be produced. An application for any subsequent conferences abroad will be considered only if the requirements for the previous one have been fulfilled.	One conference abroad annually to present a paper or poster from which a peer-reviewed published article should be produced. An application for any subsequent conference abroad will be considered only if the requirements for the previous one have been fulfilled.	One conference abroad annually to present a paper or poster from which a peer-reviewed a published article should be produced. An application for any subsequent conference abroad will be considered only if the requirements for the previous one have been fulfilled.
	<p>Funds may be made available to attend a workshop on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ proposal/report writing and writing for publication;</li> <li>▪ supervision of postgraduate students; or</li> <li>▪ research project management.</li> </ul> <p>Funds may be made available to attend a research development course to further the applicant's development.</p>	<p>Funds may be made available to attend a workshop on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ proposal/report writing and writing for publication;</li> <li>▪ supervision of postgraduate students; or</li> <li>▪ research project management.</li> </ul> <p>Funds may be made available to attend a research development course to further the applicant's development.</p>	<p>Funds may be made available to attend a workshop on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ proposal/report writing and writing for publication;</li> <li>▪ supervision of postgraduate students; or</li> <li>▪ research project management.</li> </ul> <p>Funds may be made to attend a research development course to further the applicant's development.</p>

	<b>PhD TRACK</b>	<b>POST-PhD TRACK</b>	<b>NRF-RATING TRACK</b>
<b>Outputs per three year cycle</b>	A minimum of one publication biennially on the Thuthuka-funded research project in a peer-reviewed journal, or a recognised equivalent research output.	A minimum of two publications per cycle on the Thuthuka funded research project in peer-reviewed journals, or recognised equivalent research outputs.	A minimum of three publications on the Thuthuka funded research project in peer-reviewed journals, or recognised equivalent research outputs.
<b>Outputs at end of full support period</b>	N/A	At least two postgraduate students at Masters and/or Doctoral level supervised or co-supervised and completing their studies.	At least two postgraduate students at Masters and/or Doctoral level supervised or co-supervised and completing their studies.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completion of a Doctoral degree.</li> </ul>	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NRF rating or application for NRF rating by the end of the funding period.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least three papers presented at local and/or international conferences.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least six papers presented at local and international conferences.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At least six papers presented at local and international conferences.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A minimum of three publications in peer-reviewed journals or recognised equivalent research outputs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A minimum of six publications in peer-reviewed journals or recognised equivalent research outputs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A minimum of six publications in peer-reviewed journals or recognised equivalent research outputs.</li> </ul>