



## **Research Grants: Thuthuka**

### **Online Application Guide**

**Directorate:** Grants Management and Systems Administration (GMSA)  
**Date:** February 2020

## Table of Contents

Contact Details .....	3
Introduction .....	4
Application Process .....	4
How to Submit Applications .....	4
CV section – notes .....	8
Application section – notes .....	12

## Contact Details

When making enquiries please use “Thuthuka Call for 2020” in the subject line of the email.

For NRF online application and grants management related queries please contact:

### **Director: GMSA**

Ms Thashni Pillay: Emerging Researchers

Tel: (012) 481-4241

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

### **Professional Officer: GMSA**

Ms Melissa Govender: Thuthuka

Tel: (012) 481-4311

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

For funding instrument related queries contact:

### **Professional Officer: HICD**

Ms Maphuti Madiga: Thuthuka

Tel: (012) 481-4150

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

For technical online enquiries, please contact the NRF Support Desk during office hours

(08:00- 16:30) Monday to Friday on:

Tel: (012) 481-4202

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

## Introduction

This document serves as a guideline on how to complete the online application for the Thuthuka Funding Instrument. This document should be read hand-in-hand with the attached **Thuthuka Framework** to the current call. The Framework will provide all the detailed information about the Thuthuka Funding Instrument including eligibility criteria, funding principles as well as the review scorecard.

## Application Process

The NRF is issuing this pooled call for Thuthuka applications that is published on the NRF website and is accessible online at <https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za>. Each applicant is limited to only one (1) application per year. Once an applicant submits an application, it will be duly authorised and approved by the Designated Authority (DA) of the research administration at the South African host institution where the applicant is **employed**. Applications will be automatically routed to the institutional DA of the submitting institution for validation at the deadline date determined by individual institutions. Applicants have to enquire with their institutions regarding internal closing dates. The processing of a successful grant application takes approximately six (6) months from the closing date for applications until the commencement of funding.

## How to Submit Applications

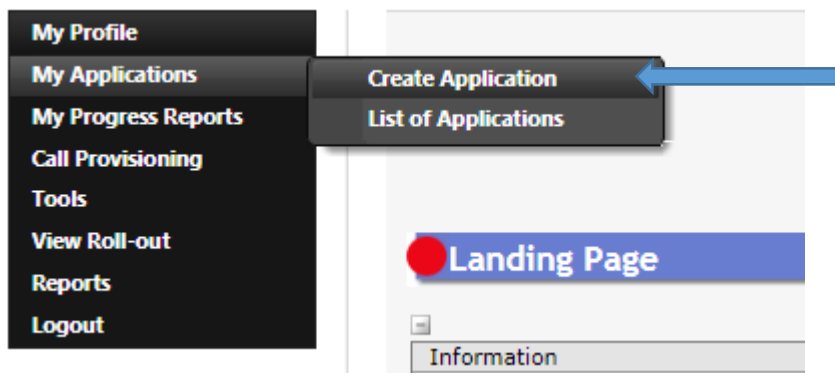
Applications may be completed on the NRF Online Submission System at <https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za>. Applicants are advised to complete their applications soon after the call is opened to prevent IT system overload nearer the **closing date**. The deadline for the institution to submit applications to the NRF for review for funding in 2021 is **30 April 2020**. Although the system will remain open, any applications submitted after this date will not be considered for funding.

**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 and is usually at least two weeks prior to the NRF's closing date.**

**Step 1:** This is an electronic submission system and applicants must be registered on the system in order to create and complete an application. If you had previously registered and submitted an application on the NRF Online System (<http://nrfonline.nrf.ac.za>) before February 2012 and your application was not successful, your details would have been migrated to the new NRF Online Submission System (<https://nrfs submission.nrf.ac.za>). If you experience problems accessing the system with your NRF Online password, use the Reset Password button. If you are not yet registered on the NRF Online Submission System, you must register to access the application form.



**Step 2:** Once you have logged onto the NRF Online Submission System, you will get to the 'landing page' where you will find a menu at the top left side of your screen (tab indicated with blue arrow). To create a new application, click on My Applications-Create Application.



**Step 3:** Select the funding call for which you are applying on the create application screen and a new application will open to complete. Please note that this must be selected only once. To continue working on an application, go to My Applications- List of Applications.

**Create Application**

**Instructions:**

- Check your intended institution's internal closing date as it will be prior to the closing date listed for applications, where applicable.
- A timeout will appear when there is no activity on the system for 25 minutes. Click on the refresh button (in the popup box) as this will enable the continuation/completion of the application. When clicking on the close button the system will close.
- Due to potential international review of applications and progress reports, the NRF requires that all applications and progress reports be completed in English.
- Please consult the Funding Framework and Funding & Application Guide for more information to assist you in your choices.

>	Funding Category	Create
	Concept Notes	🔒
>	Customised Programmes	
>	Institutional Grants	
	Masters and Doctoral Grants	🔒
	Postdoctoral Grants	🔒
>	Research Grants: General	
>	Research Grants: International	
>	Research Grants: Without student support	
	Research Grants: Thuthuka	🔒
	Student Block Grants	🔒
>	Travel, Training and Conference Grants	

\*Applicants are urged to complete or update ALL screens of the CV, including the Research Profile and Research Outputs as this information is evaluated in the review process and will impact on the overall assessment of your application.

#### Step 4: Complete Online Application

The online application consists of the:

1. CV section (*Registration Details to Other Recognised Research Outputs*)
2. ORCID: once you have linked your ORCID ID, this will not appear on the application.
3. Application portion (*Project Information to References*)

Section	Complete	Date Updated	Edit
NRF Call Information Documents (Please read before starting this application)		11 Apr 2017	
Registration Details *		02 Aug 2016	
Contact Details *		11 Apr 2017	
Career Profile *		11 Apr 2017	
Qualifications *		11 Apr 2017	
Research Expertise *		11 Apr 2017	
Student Supervision Record *		11 Apr 2017	
Personal Profile		11 Apr 2017	
Absence from Research		11 Apr 2017	
Disability *		11 Apr 2017	
Books		11 Apr 2017	
Chapters in Books		11 Apr 2017	
Articles in Refereed/Peer-reviewed Journals		11 Apr 2017	
Refereed/Peer-reviewed Conference Outputs		11 Apr 2017	
Patents		11 Apr 2017	
Keynote/Plenary Addresses		11 Apr 2017	
Articles in Non-refereed/Non-peer Reviewed Journals		11 Apr 2017	
Other Significant Conference Outputs		11 Apr 2017	
Technical/Policy Reports		11 Apr 2017	
Products		11 Apr 2017	
Artefacts		11 Apr 2017	
Prototypes		11 Apr 2017	
Other Recognised Research Outputs		11 Apr 2017	
Project Information *		11 Apr 2017	
Details of Research *		11 Apr 2017	
Attachments		11 Apr 2017	
Ethical Clearance *		11 Apr 2017	
Possible Reviewers *		11 Apr 2017	
Excluded Reviewers		11 Apr 2017	
Preferred Panel *		11 Apr 2017	
Financials: Operating Costs *		11 Apr 2017	
Financials: Other Sources *		11 Apr 2017	
Financials: Student Support *		11 Apr 2017	
Science Engagement *		11 Apr 2017	
Student Resources *		11 Apr 2017	
Participating Members		12 May 2017	
References		11 Apr 2017	
Print Preview		11 Apr 2017	

Final Submit

All sections marked with a red asterisk (\*) are compulsory sections in the application. These sections must be completed in order for the final submit button to appear. The sections without asterisks are non-compulsory sections. Completed sections will be indicated by a green tick on the main menu, while incomplete sections will have a yellow cross. Please ensure that once you complete information in a section, press the “save” button before returning to the main menu.

All compulsory sections will guide you with error messages at the top of the screen. Please follow these messages to help you complete the section correctly.

Most application screens have application specific instructions to help you work through the section. Please read the instruction carefully before completing the section.

## CV section – notes

Please upload a copy of your ID/passport under **Registration Details**. This is a requirement. You will not be able to submit your application without having done this.

### *Registration Details*

- Only South African citizens may apply under the PhD and Post-PhD tracks.
- Only South African citizens and South African permanent residents (with a valid South African identity number) may apply under the NRF Rating track.
- Applicants in the PhD and Post-PhD tracks should be under the age of 45 years at the time of first application. Applicants over the age of 45 **must** submit a motivation as to why they were not able to achieve their doctoral qualification or research capabilities by the stipulated age.
- No age restriction applies to applicants in the NRF Rating track.
- First-time applicants to Thuthuka should NOT be rated researchers, but may become rated during the tenure of the Thuthuka grant. Once rated, a grantholder must complete the current cycle and exit the Funding Instrument. However, should an NRF Evaluation and Rating application and a Thuthuka application be submitted simultaneously and both are successful, then the Thuthuka grant will not be awarded or will be cancelled.
- The Thuthuka grant may not be held concurrently with the Black Academics Advancement Programme grant. In cases where the Black Academics Advancement Programme and Thuthuka applications are submitted simultaneously and both are successful, then the Black Academics Advancement Programme will be awarded. The same applies to any Established Researcher awards and those who have already held two cycles of Freestanding Postdoctoral Fellowships.

### *Career Profile*

- The Thuthuka funding instrument awards are limited to **academics** and **researchers**, with academic and/or joint academic and administrative professional appointments, at **NRF**



**recognised public universities, Science Councils and other public research institutions** as recognised by the NRF.

\*The term “academic” relates to lecturing duties as part of their job.

- If any of the following “positions” (current career) are indicated under the Career Profile section of your CV, your application will be deemed ineligible:
  - Doctoral student
  - Postdoctoral fellow
  - Lab technician
  - Coordinator
  - Administrator
  - Research Fellow
- Applicants must be employed at the institutions on a full-time permanent or full-time contractual basis. If the applicant is appointed on a full-time contractual basis, the appointment date must extend to cover the duration of the grant.
- Female applicants that are appointed on a fixed-term half-day appointment in order to accommodate family responsibilities are eligible to apply. This is limited to women raising children of four (4) years of age and below. A copy of the child’s birth certificate should be included in the online application. In the case of a contract, the appointment must extend for the duration of the approved three (3) year funding cycle.

#### *Qualifications*

- PhD track
  - Master’s degree should be the highest qualification
  - If the Master’s degree is “in progress”, then the date of completion should be before February 2021.
  - Applicants who received previous freestanding and/or grantholder-linked doctoral scholarships are not eligible to apply for further funding under the same level.
- Post-PhD track
  - Applicants should have obtained a Doctoral degree no more than five (5) years prior to the date of first application.

- If the Doctoral degree is “in progress”, then the date of completion should be before February 2021.
- Applicants who received 2 cycles of freestanding and/or grantholder-linked postdoctoral funding are not eligible to apply.
- NRF Rating track
  - Applicants should have obtained their Doctoral degree no more than eight (8) years prior to the date of first application.

#### *Personal Profile and Absence from Research*

Applicants under the NRF Rating track should use these sections to demonstrate that they have been unable to establish themselves as researchers due to limited research opportunities (e.g. working at an institution with limited research infrastructure and research activity, or due to family responsibilities). If such limitations are not clearly confirmed in the applicant’s CV, the application will be rejected and not considered for funding.

#### *ORCID*

This is a requirement. Create or link your ORCID ID.

*Applying for a 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle?*

*Funding is available for a maximum period of 6 years (2 cycles) within a track.*

*Applicants who completed a cycle (3 years) under Thuthuka are eligible for a 2nd cycle (3 years) under the same track. Example: if a grantholder had one cycle under Post-PhD track, they can apply for a 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle under the Post-PhD track. Progression from Post-PhD to NRF Rating track is not allowed due to the different eligibility criteria.*

*The only “progression” that is allowed are for those who started under the PhD track and received their doctoral qualification within the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle. The **incentive** for these grantholders is being eligible for further funding under the Post-PhD track (2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle).*

Researchers who do not qualify for Thuthuka or for further funding under Thuthuka are encouraged to apply to the Competitive Support for Unrated Researchers (CSUR) funding instrument.

Also take note that a researcher does not have to hold Thuthuka NRF Rating Track funding in order to apply for individual rating via the Rating Call.

## Application section – notes

### *Project Information*

This is your project at a glance i.e. institution, abstract, project duration and budget duration. Please note that the budget duration selected will determine the funding years that appear in the Financials section e.g. if 2 years is selected, then only 2021 and 2022 will appear in the Financials section.

### *Details of Research*

The details of research section is one of the most important parts 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 have to be completed with as much detail as possible. Character limitations are indicated in each sub-section. Sub-sections include the following:

- Potential Impact
- Problem Statement
- Rationale and Literature Review
- Aims and Objectives
- Methodology and Proposed Research Plan
- Transformation
- Anticipated Outputs
- Alignment to National Imperatives
- Data Management and Utilisation

\*Note: If you choose to **migrate** information from a previous application, please ensure that this information is edited and updated prior to final submission.

\*\*Note: If a previous application was submitted after the cut-off date in 2019, a new application has to be completed for the 2020 call. The “**migrate from previous application**” function can be used to populate the new application.

### *Attachments*

Should any of the required documents not be attached, the application will be rejected without review. The following attachments are required for Thuthuka:

- Completed (signed and stamped) **Institutional Support Form**. This form is an attachment to the call. This document is submitted to confirm and verify the institution's support to the applicant for the proposed research. \*It is also used to verify the Thuthuka track (PhD, Post-PhD or NRF Rating) under which the applicant is applying. If not track has been indicated or if the incorrect track has been indicated, the application will be rejected without review.
- Applicants with a joint academic and administrative professional appointments must attach proof thereof. This can be in the form of a letter from the institution confirming the joint appointment.
- Female applicants that are appointed on a fixed-term half-day appointment in order to accommodate family responsibilities are eligible to apply. This is limited to women raising children of four (4) years of age and below. A copy of the child's birth certificate must be attached.
- Applicants in the PhD and Post-PhD tracks over the age of 45 **must** submit a motivation as to why they were not able to achieve their doctoral qualification or research capabilities by the stipulated age.

### *Ethical Clearance*

Indicate if ethical clearance for is required for your research and if it has been obtained already.

\*Note: If your application is successful and if ethical clearance is required for your research then the ethical clearance certificate has to be sent to the NRF together with the signed Conditions of Grant. Without this certificate, funds cannot be released.

### *Possible Reviewers*

Please indicate potential subject experts who would be suitable to review your application. A minimum of six (6) reviewers are required.

### *Excluded Reviewers*

Please indicate any reviewers who would not be suitable to review your application.

### *Preferred Panel*

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

### *Financials: Operating Costs*

Please refer to the **Framework** for more information about the Thuthuka granting rules, financial control and categories of support.

\*\*Please include all financial details (i.e. budget breakdown) in the space provided in the application. **Do not** add attachments with the required detail to the application. This will not be looked at during the funding decisions process.

\*\*Only indicate the NRF contribution in the application.

The seven (7) financial sub-categories supported by the NRF and the maximum amount that will be awarded per sub-category are indicated in Table 1. The NRF will award a maximum total amount of R100 000 (one hundred thousand rand) per annum for running expenses. The applicant's institution must match the NRF awarded amount in a 1:1 ratio – this is confirmed via the Institutional Support Form that has to be attached to the application.

**Table 1: Financial Sub-categories supported and maximum amounts funded.**

No.	Category of Support	Maximum amount (NRF contribution)
<b>A. Equipment</b>		
1.	Research equipment	R50 000 maximum per annum
<b>B. Running Expenses</b>		
2.	International conference	R17 000 per annum
3.	Local conference	R5 000 per annum
4.	Local Travel	R10 000 per annum
5.	Materials and Supplies	R70 000 per annum

6.	Research / technical / <i>ad hoc</i> Assistants	R20 000 per annum
7.	Visiting Scientists	R60 000 for a maximum of 12 months

**All grants allocated are subject to compliance with the NRF Conditions of Grant (CoG) as specified in the attachments to the Award Letter to successful applicants.**

The following seven (7) financial Sub-categories are NOT supported by the NRF.

**Table 2: Financial categories NOT supported under the Thuthuka Grant**

Category of support	NOT supported under Thuthuka Grant
<b>B. Running Expenses</b>	
Accommodation	Not Funded (to be included where applicable under International conference, Local conference or Local Travel)
Airfare	Not Funded (to be included where applicable under International conference, Local conference or Local travel)
Costs for joint conferences and workshops	Not Funded
International travel	Not Funded
Subsistence	Not Funded (to be included where applicable under International conference, Local conference or Local travel)
<b>C. Sabbatical</b>	
Lecturer Replacement	Not Funded
<b>D. Science Engagement</b>	
	Not Funded

**Note:** Applicants must include a detailed and well-motivated budget for each of the three (3) years in the three (3) year grant application. The budget for each of the three (3) years will be approved at the time of the grant award.

Budget requests and motivations that are NOT consistent with the permissible funding categories will NOT be considered in the Funding Decision process. Budget requests must be well motivated according to the requirements of the Thuthuka Funding Instrument. Budget requests that are not well motivated according to the requirements of the Thuthuka Funding Instrument will not be approved for funding.

For more information on the **Financial Categories** supported under Thuthuka, please refer to **Section 7** of the Framework.

### *Financials: Other Sources*

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.

If there are no other sources of funding, please select “add” under the section, then select “N/A” from the dropdown list under “source”. You can then enter 0 values for the different years.

### *Student Support*

Please indicate if any student support will be required for your project. Enter the level (Honours, Master’s and/or Doctoral) as well as the number of students required per level in each year.

If no student support is required, please tick the relevant box.

**Student Support**

**Instructions**

- Please provide the number of students per level you envisage supervising through this project.
- All students have to apply through the "NRF Postgraduate Scholarships" funding opportunity on the NRF Online Submission System.
- This opportunity will be available from April onwards.

Category	2021	2022	2023	Edit
Honours/BTech	0	0	0	
Masters	0	0	0	
Doctoral	0	0	0	

No students/fellows will be supported

There is no longer any grantholder-linked student support available under Thuthuka. Students will have to apply to the NRF Postgraduate Call in 2020 for funding in 2021 and indicate either the grant number (UID) of the Thuthuka grantholder or the application reference number of



the Thuthuka applicant/granthead in their postgraduate application in order to be prioritised for funding.

Please refer to **Section 7.1** in the Framework for more information about the new Postgraduate Student Policy.

#### *National Infrastructure Platforms*

Indicate the infrastructure platform (i.e. planned equipment or data) that will be accessed outside your own institution during the course of the grant.

#### *Science Engagement*

List any science communication or public engagement activities that will take place during the course of the grant.

#### *Participating Members*

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

#### *References*

Applicants under the **PhD track** have to add their supervisor's details in this section. Once the application has been submitted, an e-mail will be generated requesting the supervisor to complete the reference report electronically. Please ensure that the contact details provided in the application are correct. \*The supervisor's report is **compulsory** and without this the application will not be considered for funding.

There are NO compulsory references required for applicants under the Post-PhD or NRF Rating tracks. Applicants can add the details of any academic referees who may be able to comment on their work.

### *Final Submit*

Once all the compulsory sections of the application has been completed, the “final submit” button will become active. If this does not happen, please edit one for the compulsory sections and resave the application – the “final submit” button should then become active.

Please remember to submit your application once it is complete. The application is then routed to the Designated Authority (DA) at the relevant institution for final checking and endorsement. The DA has to submit the application to the NRF for review. Applications that have not been submitted to NRF for review will not be considered by the NRF. Kindly direct all queries regarding your completed application to the institutional research office.