

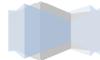


**RISA**

Research and Innovation  
Support and Advancement

**Grants Management and Systems Administration  
Masters and Doctoral Scholarships Grants Manual  
2016**

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## List of Acronyms

APR	Annual Progress Report
DA	Designated Authority
GMSA	Grants Management and Systems Administration
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HICD	Human and Institutional Capacity Development
RISA	Research and Innovation Support and Advancement
NRF	National Research Foundation



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Application guidelines are explained in this document. Please read this document together with the call or framework document of the funding instrument that highlights the funding instrument eligibility criteria and requirements.

For technical online enquiries, please contact the NRF Support Desk during office hours from 08:00 to 16:30 Monday to Friday.

Tel: 012-481 4202

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

## **1. Introduction**

This Manual provides an overview of the masters and doctoral scholarship funding instruments, application funding guidelines and processes. It should be read in conjunction with the funding instrument call or framework document, which can be accessed at <https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za>. It does not, however, constitute a complete set of the policies, procedures or systems used by the NRF.

## **2. Application Process**

The NRF issues a call for masters and doctoral scholarship applications that is published on the NRF website and is accessible online at <https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za>. The masters and doctoral scholarships funding instruments will not accept more than one application per applicant per year. 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 electronically to the institutional DA of the submitting institution for validation at the deadline date determined by individual institutions. Please enquire at your institution regarding their internal closing dates. The processing of a successful grant application takes approximately five (5) months from the time of submission until the commencement of funding.

## **3. How to Submit Applications**

Applications may be completed on the NRF Online Submission System at <https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za> from Monday, 22 June 2015. Applicants are advised to complete their applications as soon as possible to prevent IT system overload nearer the 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 were registered on the NRF Online System (<http://nrfonline.nrf.ac.za>) before February 2012, your details would have been migrated to the new NRF Online Submission System (<https://nrfsubmission.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

<https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za/nrfmkii/>

NRF Online Submission Sys... X

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

**NRF RISA**  
National Research Foundation  
Research and Innovation Support and Advancement

# NRF Online Submission System

[Home](#)

[New Registration](#)

[Forgotten Password](#)

[Home](#)

[Feedback](#) [Support](#)

**Instructions**

- ° If you have already registered on the previous systems (NRF Online and RISA), please click on the Log In link in the left-hand menu.
- ° If you have forgotten your password, please click on the Forgotten Password link in the left-hand menu.
- ° For technical online enquiries, please contact the Support Desk (Mondays to Fridays from 08h00 to 16h30) on:  
Tel: (012) 481-4202  
E-mail: supportdesk@nrf.ac.za
- ° To access call related documents, please refer to the Open Calls block below. Click on the icon next to the relevant call to show a list of document(s). To open the document, click on the relevant link.

**Log In**

ID/Passport/Unique Number:

Password:   Show Password

[Not registered? Click here to register.](#)

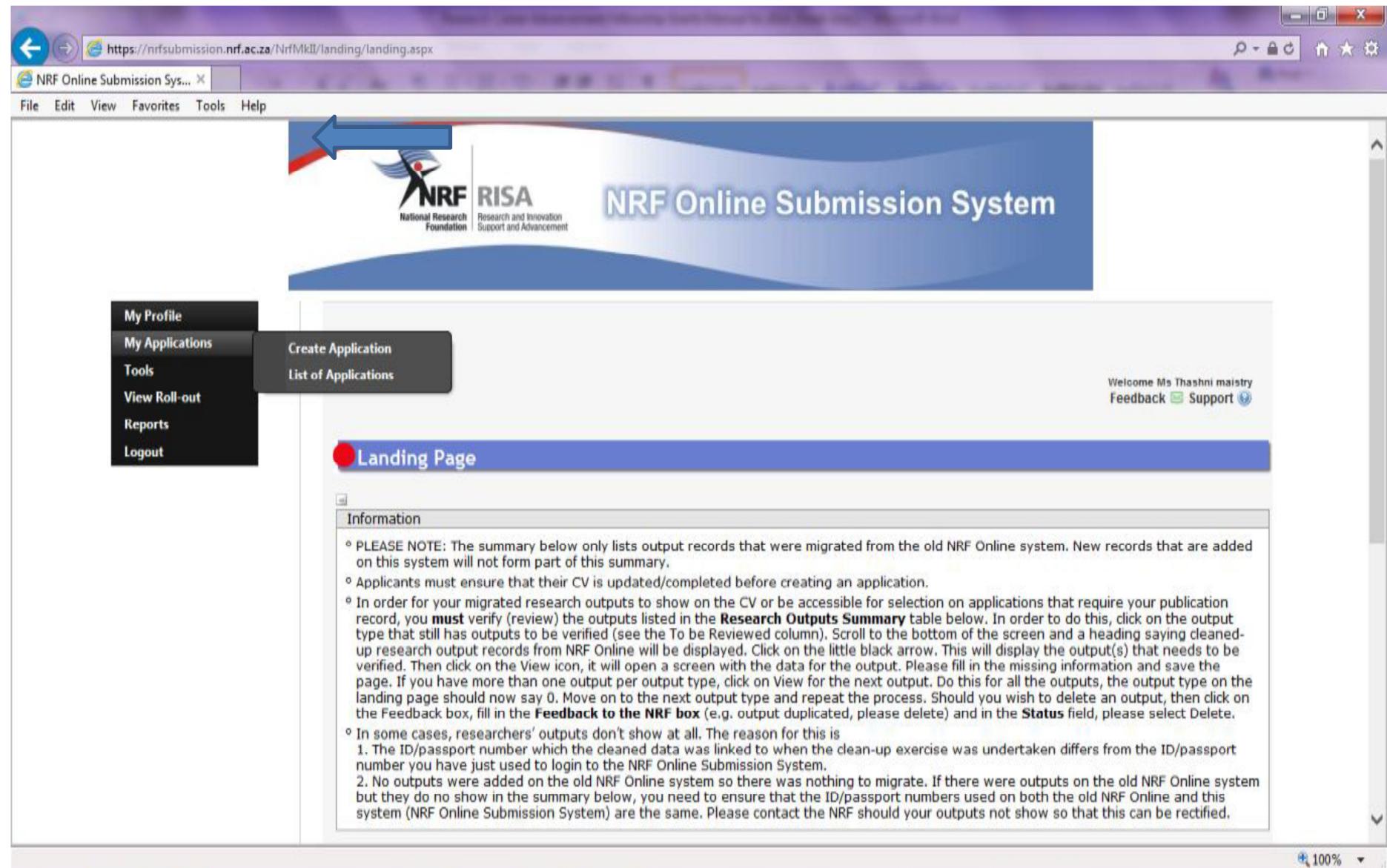
**Open Calls**

- ⊕ Competitive Programme for Rated Researchers 2013
- ⊕ Competitive Support for Unrated Researchers 2014
- ⊕ Professional Development Programme for 2014
- ⊕ Nanotechnology Flagships Project (NFP) (2014)
- ⊕ THRIP 2014
- ⊕ NRF and Innovation Postdoctoral Fellowships for 2014
- ⊕ NRF and Innovation Masters and Doctoral Scholarship for 2014
- ⊕ South African Square Kilometre Array Project (SKA SA) Masters

100% ▾

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**Step 2:** Once you have logged onto the NRF Online Submission System, on the landing page, go to the left hand side black menu (tab indicated with blue arrow) to create a new application, go to My Applications-Create Application



https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za/NrfMkII/landing/landing.aspx

NRF Online Submission Sys... X

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

**NRF RISA**  
National Research Foundation Research and Innovation Support and Advancement

**NRF Online Submission System**

My Profile

**My Applications**

Tools

View Roll-out

Reports

Logout

Create Application

List of Applications

Welcome Ms Thashni maistry

Feedback Support

**Landing Page**

**Information**

° PLEASE NOTE: The summary below only lists output records that were migrated from the old NRF Online system. New records that are added on this system will not form part of this summary.

° Applicants must ensure that their CV is updated/completed before creating an application.

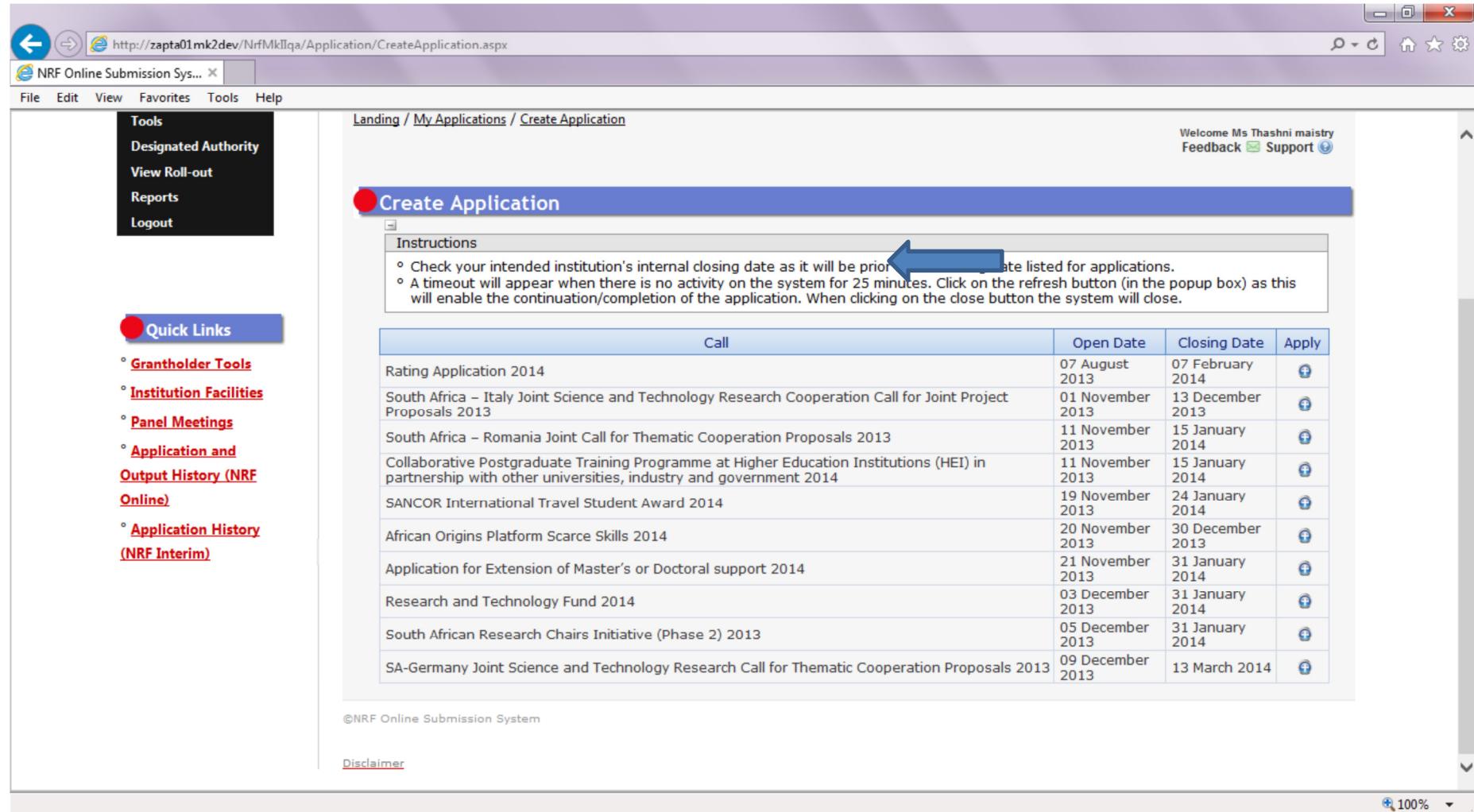
° In order for your migrated research outputs to show on the CV or be accessible for selection on applications that require your publication record, you **must** verify (review) the outputs listed in the **Research Outputs Summary** table below. In order to do this, click on the output type that still has outputs to be verified (see the To be Reviewed column). Scroll to the bottom of the screen and a heading saying cleaned-up research output records from NRF Online will be displayed. Click on the little black arrow. This will display the output(s) that needs to be verified. Then click on the View icon, it will open a screen with the data for the output. Please fill in the missing information and save the page. If you have more than one output per output type, click on View for the next output. Do this for all the outputs, the output type on the landing page should now say 0. Move on to the next output type and repeat the process. Should you wish to delete an output, then click on the Feedback box, fill in the **Feedback to the NRF box** (e.g. output duplicated, please delete) and in the **Status** field, please select Delete.

° In some cases, researchers' outputs don't show at all. The reason for this is

1. The ID/passport number which the cleaned data was linked to when the clean-up exercise was undertaken differs from the ID/passport number you have just used to login to the NRF Online Submission System.
2. No outputs were added on the old NRF Online system so there was nothing to migrate. If there were outputs on the old NRF Online system but they do not show in the summary below, you need to ensure that the ID/passport numbers used on both the old NRF Online and this system (NRF Online Submission System) are the same. Please contact the NRF should your outputs not show so that this can be rectified.

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



http://zapta01mk2dev/NrfMkIIqa/Application/CreateApplication.aspx

NRF Online Submission Sys...

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Tools

Designated Authority

View Roll-out

Reports

Logout

Quick Links

- Grantholder Tools
- Institution Facilities
- Panel Meetings
- Application and Output History (NRF Online)
- Application History (NRF Interim)

Landing / My Applications / Create Application

Welcome Ms Thashni mistry

Feedback Support

### Create Application

Instructions

- Check your intended institution's internal closing date as it will be prior to the date listed for applications.
- 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.

Call	Open Date	Closing Date	Apply
Rating Application 2014	07 August 2013	07 February 2014	
South Africa - Italy Joint Science and Technology Research Cooperation Call for Joint Project Proposals 2013	01 November 2013	13 December 2013	
South Africa - Romania Joint Call for Thematic Cooperation Proposals 2013	11 November 2013	15 January 2014	
Collaborative Postgraduate Training Programme at Higher Education Institutions (HEI) in partnership with other universities, industry and government 2014	11 November 2013	15 January 2014	
SANCOR International Travel Student Award 2014	19 November 2013	24 January 2014	
African Origins Platform Scarce Skills 2014	20 November 2013	30 December 2013	
Application for Extension of Master's or Doctoral support 2014	21 November 2013	31 January 2014	
Research and Technology Fund 2014	03 December 2013	31 January 2014	
South African Research Chairs Initiative (Phase 2) 2013	05 December 2013	31 January 2014	
SA-Germany Joint Science and Technology Research Call for Thematic Cooperation Proposals 2013	09 December 2013	13 March 2014	

©NRF Online Submission System

Disclaimer

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**Step 4:** Applicants are urged to complete or update ALL screens of the CV, including the Research Profile and Research Outputs (if applicable), as this information is evaluated in the review process and will impact on the overall assessment of your application.

**Step 5:** All sections marked with a red asterisks 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. You may enter information in these sections, if you have information to enter, such as research outputs. Completed sections will be indicated by a green tick on the main menu, while incomplete sections will have a yellow cross.

lost.

For Rating applications: When you open the NRF Online Submission System (before you log in) under the **Open Calls** heading on the right click on the which will open a table with the documents associated to the call for rating applications. These documents are also accessible via the Edit Application screen (NRF Call Information document) once you have created a rating application. Please **read** the documents, 'Guidelines and instructions for completing the application for evaluation and rating' and 'Information about the NRF Online Submission System' **before** attempting to complete an application for rating. A list of Names and Contact Details of staff members who will be able to assist with any queries you may have is also available.

A section marked with a cross () in the 'Complete' column indicates that the section is incomplete or needs to be checked for completeness/correctness of information. Should the section be compulsory this will be indicated by an asterisk (\*) at the end of a section. click on the Edit icon () and check/complete the section and then 'Save'. The will change to a to indicate that the section is complete/has been updated. The date in the 'Date Updated' column will change to the date the update was made.

Section	Complete	Date Updated	Edit
NRF Call Information Documents (Please read before starting this application)		19 Nov 2013	
Registration Details *		13 Jun 2013	
Contact Details *		13 Jun 2013	
Qualifications *		29 Apr 2013	
Career Profile *		29 Apr 2013	
Research Expertise *		16 Aug 2012	
Project Information *		19 Nov 2013	
Details of Research *		19 Nov 2013	
Preferred Panel *		19 Nov 2013	
Participating Members *		19 Nov 2013	
Attachments *		22 Nov 2013	
Possible Reviewers *		19 Nov 2013	
Excluded Reviewers		19 Nov 2013	
Financials: Operating Costs *		19 Nov 2013	
Financials: Student Support *		19 Nov 2013	
Print Preview		19 Nov 2013	

The application is ready to be submitted.

Final Submit

©NRF Online Submission System

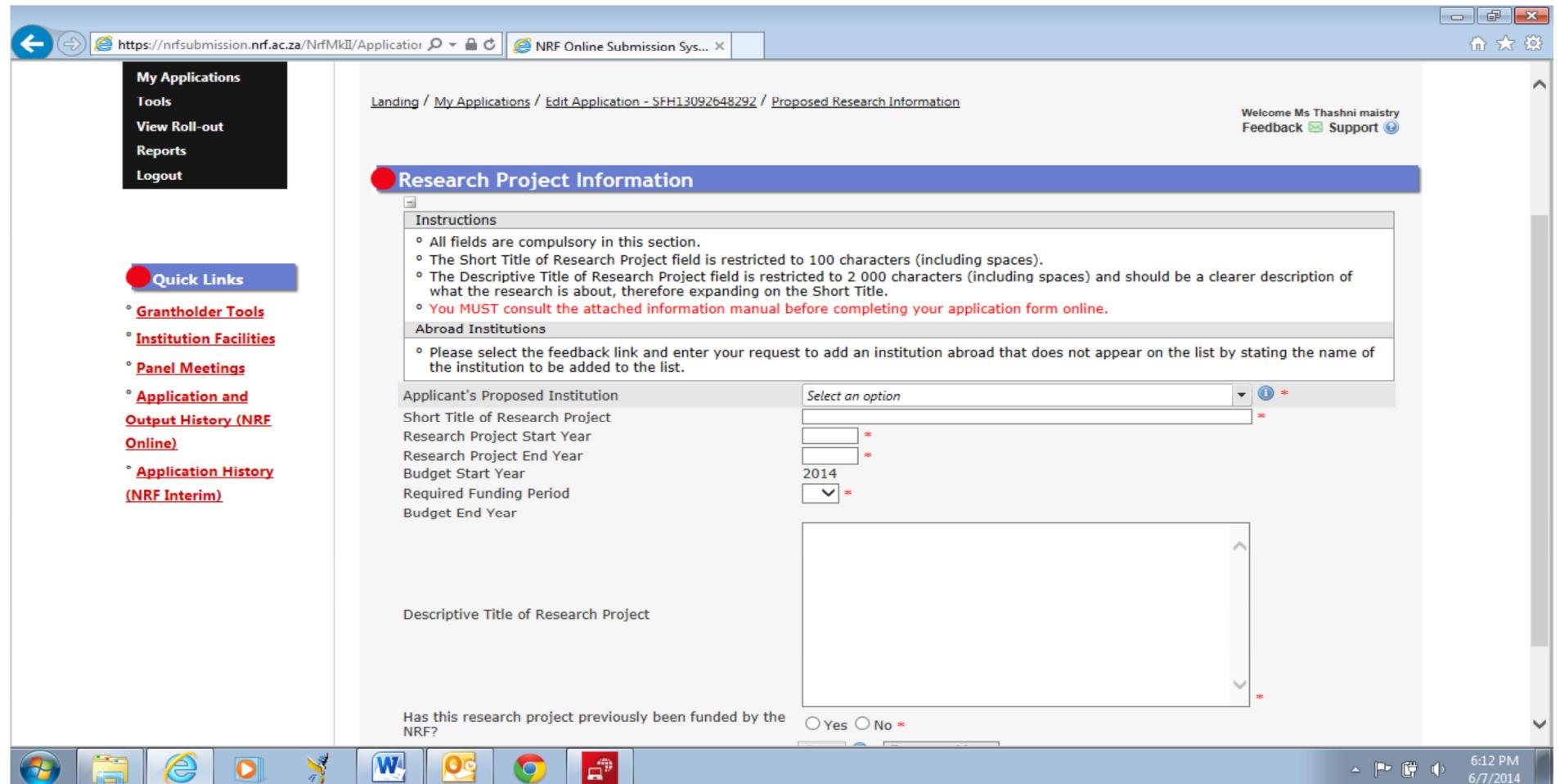
Disclaimer

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

**Step 6:** Most application screens have screen and application specific instructions to help you work through the section. Please read the instruction carefully before completing the section.

**Step 7:** The Research Project Information section will require you to select, from a drop down list, your proposed institution. If your institution is not on the list, please request by selecting the information or new button next to the question.



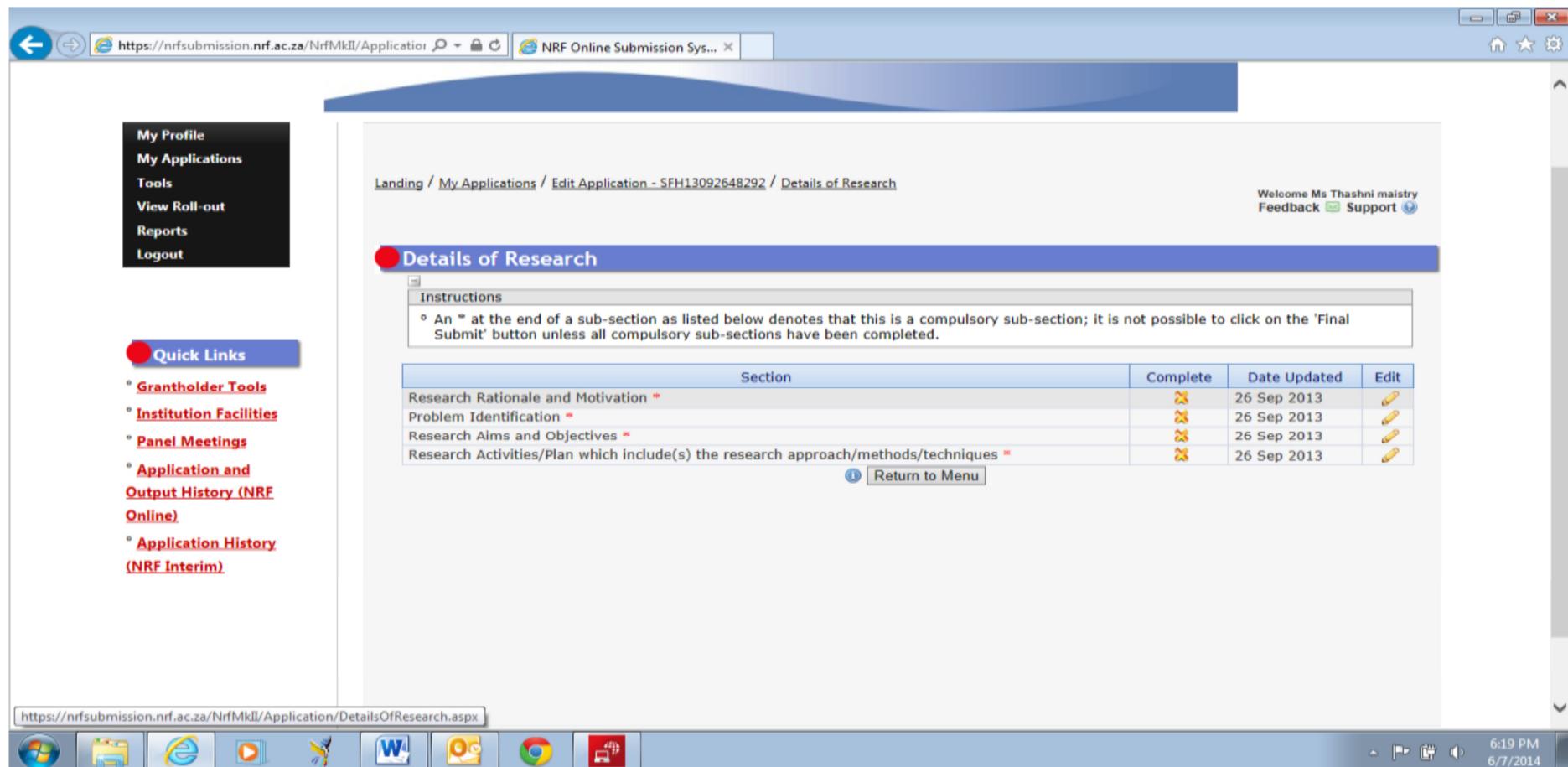
The screenshot shows a computer screen with a web browser displaying the 'NRF Online Submission System'. The URL in the address bar is <https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za/NrfMkII/Application>. The page title is 'Landing / My Applications / Edit Application - SFH13092648292 / Proposed Research Information'. On the left, a sidebar has 'My Applications' as the active tab, with 'Tools', 'View Roll-out', 'Reports', and 'Logout' options. A 'Quick Links' section lists 'Grantholder Tools', 'Institution Facilities', 'Panel Meetings', 'Application and Output History (NRF Online)', and 'Application History (NRF Interim)'. The main content area is titled 'Research Project Information'. It contains an 'Instructions' box with several bullet points, including a note that 'You MUST consult the attached information manual before completing your application form online.' Below this is a 'Select an option' dropdown menu for 'Applicant's Proposed Institution'. To the right of the dropdown are fields for 'Short Title of Research Project' (two empty text boxes with asterisks), 'Research Project Start Year' (a dropdown menu showing '2014' with an asterisk), 'Research Project End Year' (an empty text box with an asterisk), 'Budget Start Year' (a dropdown menu with an asterisk), 'Required Funding Period' (an empty text box), and 'Budget End Year' (an empty text box). Below these is a large text area for 'Descriptive Title of Research Project'. At the bottom, a question asks 'Has this research project previously been funded by the NRF?' with 'Yes' and 'No' radio buttons, the latter marked with an asterisk.

**Step 8:** In the academic achievement section, please enter your academic average from your previous degree by adding up all your marks and dividing by the number of courses. If your institution does not provide a mark, please enter pass in the field. The review panel will compare the scores entered with your requested academic transcript.

The final submit button will only appear once all compulsory sections are completed. Please remember to submit your application for consideration. When an application has been submitted by the applicant, it is automatically routed to the Designated Authority (DA) in the Research Office or Post Graduate Funding Office of the institution that you have selected, for internal review and validation. Late applications, additional supporting documentation or information received after the closing date will not be accepted or considered.



**Step 9:** The *Details of Research* section is one of the most important sections in the application. Please provide an overview of your proposed research study in these sections. The section has specific instructions related to each screen. Follow the instructions to complete the section. It is important that you enter detailed information into this section as the input is taken into consideration during the assessment of your application. Appropriate literature references must also be included.



The screenshot shows a web browser window for the NRF Online Submission System. The URL in the address bar is <https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za/NrfMkII/Application/DetailsOfResearch.aspx>. The page title is "NRF Online Submission Sys...".

The left sidebar has a black background with white text, containing links: "My Profile", "My Applications", "Tools", "View Roll-out", "Reports", and "Logout". Below this is a "Quick Links" section with a blue header and a red circular icon, listing: "Grantholder Tools", "Institution Facilities", "Panel Meetings", "Application and Output History (NRF Online)", and "Application History (NRF Interim)".

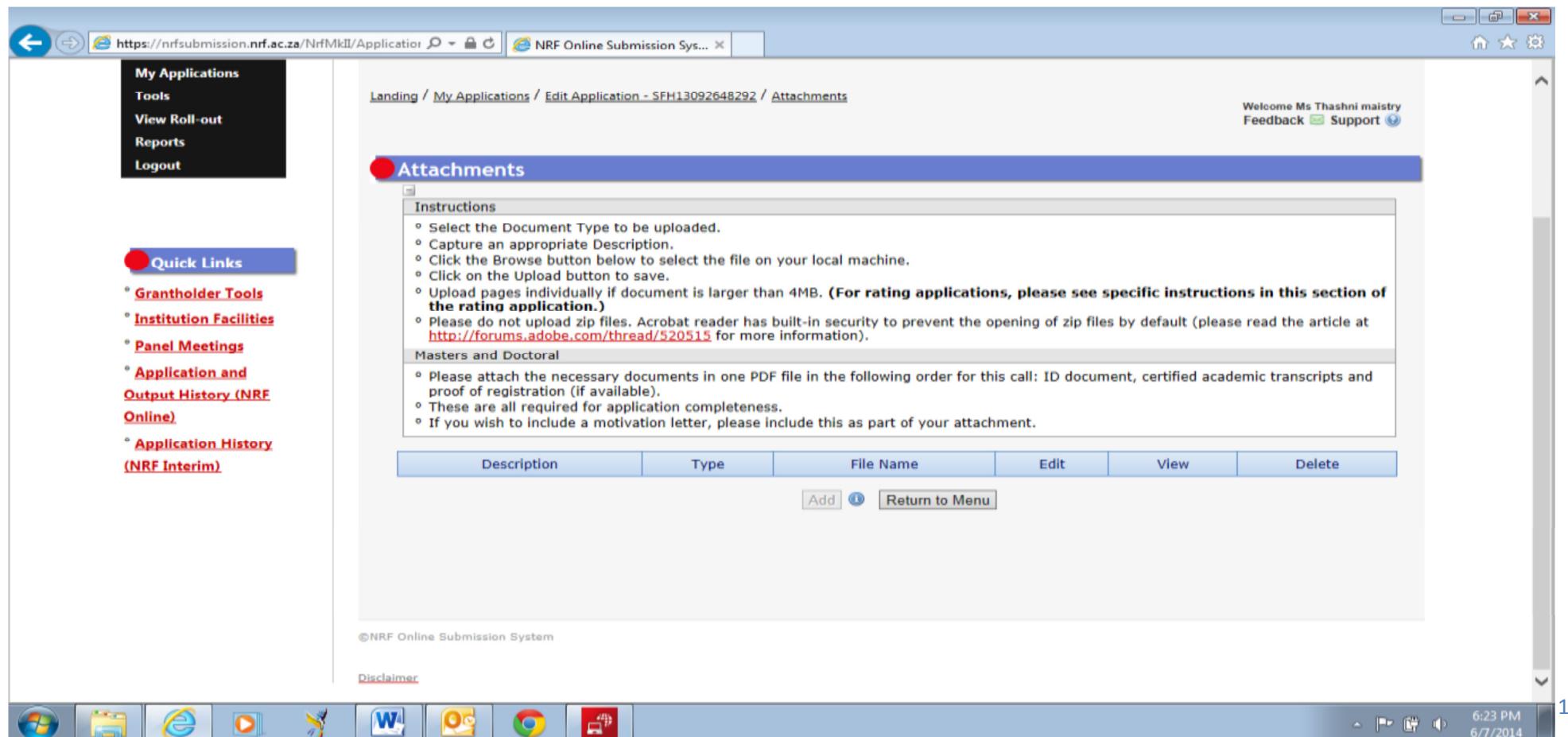
The main content area has a blue header bar with the text "Details of Research". Below it is a table with the following data:

Section	Complete	Date Updated	Edit
Research Rationale and Motivation *	X	26 Sep 2013	
Problem Identification *	X	26 Sep 2013	
Research Aims and Objectives *	X	26 Sep 2013	
Research Activities/Plan which include(s) the research approach/methods/techniques *	X	26 Sep 2013	

Instructions: An \* at the end of a sub-section as listed below denotes that this is a compulsory sub-section; it is not possible to click on the 'Final Submit' button unless all compulsory sub-sections have been completed.

Links at the bottom include "Return to Menu" and "Feedback Support".

**Step 10:** The attachment section provides specific instructions for uploading attachments to the application. Please print, certify and then scan in all documents together to be submitted as one attachment, save as a single PDF file and then upload the section as one document. If you are a student with disabilities, you may also upload a medical certificate in support of your disability.



The screenshot shows a web browser window for the NRF Online Submission System. The URL is <https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za/NrfMkII/Application>. The page title is "NRF Online Submission Sys...". The left sidebar has a black background with white text: "My Applications", "Tools", "View Roll-out", "Reports", and "Logout". Below this is a blue bar with "Quick Links" and a list: "Grantholder Tools", "Institution Facilities", "Panel Meetings", "Application and Output History (NRF Online)", and "Application History (NRF Interim)". The main content area has a blue header "Attachments". Under "Instructions", there are several bullet points: "Select the Document Type to be uploaded.", "Capture an appropriate Description.", "Click the Browse button below to select the file on your local machine.", "Click on the Upload button to save.", "Upload pages individually if document is larger than 4MB. (For rating applications, please see specific instructions in this section of the rating application.)", and "Please do not upload zip files. Acrobat reader has built-in security to prevent the opening of zip files by default (please read the article at <http://forums.adobe.com/thread/520515> for more information.)". Under "Masters and Doctoral", there are more bullet points: "Please attach the necessary documents in one PDF file in the following order for this call: ID document, certified academic transcripts and proof of registration (if available).", "These are all required for application completeness.", and "If you wish to include a motivation letter, please include this as part of your attachment." At the bottom of the content area are buttons for "Add", "Return to Menu", "Description", "Type", "File Name", "Edit", "View", and "Delete". The bottom of the page includes a footer with "©NRF Online Submission System", "Disclaimer", and a Windows taskbar with icons for Start, File Explorer, Internet Explorer, File History, Word, Paint, and Google Chrome. The date and time in the bottom right corner are 6:23 PM 6/7/2014. The page number 13 is in the bottom right corner.

**Step 11:** The reference section allows you to include referees for your application. Please make sure your referees are academic referees and can comment on your academic abilities. On final submission of the application the reference emails are sent to referees to provide a report on your academic abilities. **It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the referee email is correct and that the referees have responded as this category is assessed in the application.** The applicant can view the application PDF to check whether a referee has responded to the request for reference.

**Step 12: Applicants must ensure that they adhere to their institution's internal closing date for submission of their application to allow for internal institutional screening and review. The internal closing date will be determined by the respective research offices or Post Graduate Office and is usually at least two weeks prior to the NRF's closing date.**

It is important for all proposals to be screened and approved through internal institutional processes **before** being submitted to the NRF. 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.

**Step 13:** The final submit button will appear only if all compulsory sections are complete. If all the compulsory sections are complete and the final submit button does not appear, please select any section, and resave to refresh the application. You will then see the final submit button. Once you have selected final submit button, the application will be routed to your hosting institution for validation and further consideration by the NRF.

**The NRF will not process applications that are incomplete, contain insufficient or incorrect detail, or fail to comply with instructions.** Such applications will be rejected. The application must be completed in sufficient detail to allow for a 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 if required. Failure to supply such information or documentation upon request may result in the rejection of the application.

## 4. Screening and Review Processes

### 4.1 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 as set out in this Manual, as well as the requirements for completing the NRF Online application. Applications that fail to meet the stipulated requirements will be rejected and not considered for funding.

## **4.2 Overview of the Review Process**

The NRF's peer review policy requires that all applications be subjected to a review process. Applications submitted to this funding instrument will go through a panel review process.

### **4.2.1 Panel Review**

Panel members are selected from the NRF database that is updated on a continuous basis, and other sources. In compiling the review panel, the expertise and experience of individuals in application adjudication are taken into account. In assessing the application, agreed assessment criteria are applied in the form of a scorecard.

The Review Panel provides recommendations to the NRF and the final funding decision is made by the NRF. In awarding grants in this funding instrument, the NRF takes into account the recommendations of the peer review panels, the objectives and targets of the funding instrument, and the available funds.

## **5. Ranking of Applications**

The purpose of the scoring system is to evaluate applications, based on funding instrument criteria, in order to determine applications that are most deserving of the limited funds available. All research scholarship applications submitted to the NRF for funding are evaluated according to a number of predetermined criteria. Applications are assessed and ranked on the basis of criteria as listed in the table below. Each area may be given a weight to indicate its relative importance. Kindly consult the table below for details on the criteria used.



## NRF Scorecard for the Assessment of Master's and Doctoral Scholarship Applications

Assessment Category	Description
<b>The applicant's past, current and potential academic performance</b>	<p>This refers to the academic potential of the applicant, taking into consideration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The potential of the applicant to undertake an independent research project;</li> <li>• journal articles; conference presentations and proceedings; books and book chapters; and patents;</li> <li>• Leadership roles; and</li> <li>• Previous awards, prizes and honours.</li> </ul>
<b>The feasibility and merit of the applicant's research project proposal;</b>	<p>Research objectives to match aims of study – Reviewers will assess whether the research objectives are clearly stated and 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>Research Plan - is the research plan feasible and detailed.</p> <p>For students doing a Masters by coursework and dissertation, some idea of the research topic and understanding is required for assessment.</p>
<b>References</b>	<p>Referee's reports are considered in the assessment of the application. These provide an account of the student's academic capabilities in relation to the research and the research field. The reviewers will look for consistencies in the reference reports as well as support for the applicant, proposed research study, capacity to host the research (if required) and evidence of institutional infrastructure or resources to support the applicant and the research.</p>
<b>Research outputs and publication plan</b>	<p>Reviewers will assess whether the study has a potential for outputs in terms of knowledge generation, e.g. publications or patents and potential impact.</p>

## **6. Applications Feedback and Disputes**

Once the review and assessment processes have been completed and the recommended funding decision has been approved by the NRF, the NRF will publish a list of successful applications on the NRF website, [www.nrf.ac.za](http://www.nrf.ac.za). Thereafter, successful applicants will receive a letter of award. The application status online will not indicate whether or not the application has been approved for funding. This funding instrument does not provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants; if your name does not appear on the published list of successful applications it means that your application was unsuccessful.

Should an unsuccessful applicant require feedback, they are requested to follow the appeals process and queries *via* their institutional office. The NRF does not provide feedback to all unsuccessful applicants due to the high volume of applicants within this funding instrument.

Unsuccessful applicants that wish to appeal the funding decision taken by the NRF must follow the appropriate Appeals Process of the NRF. Appeals will only be considered for this funding instrument within a two month period after the official date of publishing of the results on the NRF website.

## **7. Awardee Responsibilities**

### **7.1 Reporting**

Continued funding beyond the first year is dependent on the submission of an Annual Progress Report (APR) to the NRF during a call for APR's in October / November of each grant year. Continued funding will be considered based on satisfactory progress.

An APR must be submitted by the awardee / grant-holder in a format provided by the NRF, documenting progress made against set objectives and research outputs. The NRF may in consultation with the Research Office, request interim progress reports for the purpose of implementing corrective measures timeously to ensure that stated objectives are met within stipulated timeframes.

### **7.2 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.

## 7.2.1 Change Requests

### 7.2.1.1 Prior Approval Requests

Applicants must submit all change requests in writing to the NRF for approval before effecting any changes. The request must have institutional DA endorsement and be submitted to the NRF *via* the Research Office / Post graduate funding Office for approval prior to the change.

### 7.2.1.2 Changes in Project Scope, Supervisor or Institution

Changes may occur where a project scope, supervisor or institution needs to be changed from the original research proposal, supervisor or institution respectively. The request must have institutional DA endorsement and be submitted to the NRF *via* the Research Office. Such requests must be forwarded to the NRF 30 days before the change is intended to take place.

## 8. Scientific Compliance

### 8.1 Methodology

The student takes scientific responsibility for the research to be undertaken, including its objectives and the methodology outlined in the project proposal. The student 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.

### 8.2 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, 1* which will override this condition of grant.

### 8.3 Ethics

The student 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.

## List of References

- 1 RSA (2008). Intellectual Property Rights from Publicly Financed Research and Development Act 51 of 2008. *Government Gazette*, 22 Dec 2008. Vol 522, No 31745

