

TRANSCRIPT OF LECTURE DELIVERED ON APRIL 6TH, 2019 (FORUM 3)

Focus: **The South Africa National Research Funds (NRF)**

Bursury

Presented by:



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Moderator:



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Background

The National Research Foundation (NRF) was established on the 11th of April 1999 as an autonomous body to administer funding for academic research and human resources development. The scholarship is available for the pursuit of Masters and Doctoral degrees in the field of Science, Engineering, Technology, Social Sciences, and Humanities at public universities in South Africa.

NRF offers variety of scholarships including NRF-DAAD, NRF-TWAS, NRF-SASOL, and DST-NRF Masters and Doctoral Scholarships. This presentation focuses on securing DST-NRF M.Sc. and Ph.D. Scholarship.

The Requirements

1. A certified academic transcript with an average mark of 70% or more in previous degree(s) is required **(those with 65% and above can also try their luck)**.
2. Needless to say, a certified copy of passport is important.
3. All applicants should identify a suitable supervisor; it is incumbent upon all prospective recipients to consult a proposed supervisor prior to submission of an application. You have to make sure he/she agrees with the specific aspects and proposed work plan in your application.
4. Prospective Masters Students should ensure they submit a letter of support from their identified supervisor and reference letters from at least two referees. In addition to these, Doctoral students must submit a letter of support/reference letter from their previous MSc supervisor.
5. MSc/PhD research proposal is a very important criterion (I will shed more light as I proceed).
6. TOEFL (IELTS) or GRE is not required.

7. SAQA (South African Qualification Authority) evaluation (**not a requirement for NRF bursary but some SA universities require it for admission**).

Selection Hints

This is the most sensitive and critical part of the application. You will be successfully considered once you get this aspect right.

NB: What is worth doing is worth doing well. Make sure you give your application the best, as the scholarship is very competitive especially for non-citizen and non-permanent resident of South Africa.

The scoreboard for assessment of applicant's applications consists of eight (8) important components:

1. **Academic merit:** This takes 15% of the total mark
2. **Proposed problem statement:** Covers 5% for both MSc and PhD applicants
3. **Proposed Rationale and Literature review:** 25% for (MSc) and for 20% (PhD) respectively
4. **Proposed Aims and Objectives:** 5%
5. **Proposed methodology and research plan:** 25%
6. **Anticipated outputs,** in the form of a thesis, publications and posters: 10%
7. **Potential impacts:** 5% (MSc) or 10% (PhD). Your research should be envisaged to impact positively the socio-economic sector of South Africa, Africa and the whole world as a whole.

NB: These people love their country so much that they won't even waste even waste money on any research that won't benefit their country.

8. **Alignment to National Research Strategies:** 10% (MSc and PhD applicants)

NB: It is apparent from the **selection hints** above that a well-written proposal with desirable objectives is the major factor for a successful application, as it accounts for 85% of the total marks. It is therefore advisable to take the proposal issues at heart and always keep in touch with your prospective supervisor(s) while drafting your proposal to sort out necessary issues, and to seek their scholarly and professional opinions since they are already familiar with the whole system.

The Scholarship Packages

- The bursary is between **R90,000** and **R120,000** per annum for two years and three years for MSc and PhD candidates respectively.

- MSc scholarship holders are eligible for **R15,000** travel grant to attend local conferences while Doctoral candidates are eligible for **R15,000** and **R50,000** to attend local and international conferences (or workshops) respectively

NB: The bursary is only expected to cater for your tuition, accommodation and living expenses as your supervisor will fully fund your research, and he/she may decide to give you some extra funds depending on your rapport.

R indicates **South African Rand**

The NRF Application

The good news is that NRF online application is free. However, some SA Universities demand application fee for around **R100** to **R400**. However, University of Free State, the University of Johannesburg and North West University et cetera to be precise offer free online application.

The application is expected to be open by May or June 2019n (I will communicate that appropriately). Before it opens do some favor of securing a prospective supervisor and drafting a research proposal. Start surfing various Universities for potential supervisor and make sure your introduction letter truly represents you.

For those applying for **science-relation degrees**, it is usually possible to get appointed as a Research/Teaching Assistant, where you are paid roughly R2,000 per month. I am surely for my Varsity, but i can hardly speak much for other Varsities. For non-science students, tutorials, computer lab, library work and other part time jobs are usually available on campus.

Unlike for many other scholarships, you are allowed to work for 15 hours per week (this align with the study visa requirement).

Application submission: <https://nrfs submission.nrf.ac.za/nrfmkii/>

NRF scholarship call: <https://www.nrf.ac.za/>

Generic Questions and Answers

Q. May you shield more light on the anticipated output in the form of thesis, publication and posters?

A. i meant the result of the research work should be envisaged to be made available to benefit large audience via academic conference and symposium presentation, thesis etc.

Q. Does the bursary application covers for masters by taught program?

A. It is mainly for research MSc but if the taught MSc comes with a mountainous, you may give it a trail. Anyway, it is advisable to do Thesis based MSc here. You can also try other bursaries like Rhode Mandela scholarship for that.

Q. Was informed new session in SA starts around March, can one still get admission this year?

A. For most SA Universities, new session begins late January to early February and not March. **For research Masters/PhD you can apply anytime of the year.**

Q. What is the assurance of job vacancies for those in science related fields?

A. About job vacancies, I can't touch vouch for that, but if you have what it takes you will definitely get one. It is also advised to get the PR before one finishes to increasing the chance of securing a job.

Q. Aside NRF, does University of Free State demand application fee? For instance, when applying for Mandala-Rhode Scholarship.

A. No, University admission application and NRF application are independent likewise Rhode Mandela bursary.

Q. Is it advisable for a first year to apply?

A. Yes, but they will only cater for your subsequent years.

Q. How best can I go about getting a potential supervisor as advised?

A. Let's discuss that later.