



science and technology

Department:
Science and Technology
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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for the advancement of science in developing countries



NRF - TWAS Doctoral Scholarships

NRF - TWAS African Renaissance Doctoral Scholarships

Framework document

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1. Background

The core mandate of the National Research Foundation of South Africa (NRF) is to promote and support research through funding, human resource development and the provision of the necessary facilities in order to facilitate the creation of knowledge, innovation and development in all fields of research. In order to realise this mandate, the NRF has made great commitment and investment towards supporting “next generation” researchers and to intensify and strengthen African and global networks. This is in line with the National Development Plan (NDP) 2030, and the national priorities as set out in the Medium term Strategic Framework (MTSF). The continuous improvement in research and innovation sets South Africa on a competitive global platform globally to leverage effective partnerships and funding.

The NRF and The World Academy of Sciences (TWAS) partnered to pursue this goal through the establishment of two Doctoral Scholarships namely; the NRF - TWAS Doctoral Scholarship and the NRF - TWAS African Renaissance Doctoral Scholarship. TWAS is based in Italy and operates as a programme of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for the advancement of science in developing countries. The parties entered into a contractual agreement to support Doctoral scholars from Africa and developing countries who will be funded per annum for a maximum of three (3) years to pursue full-time research training in South Africa. There will be an intake of 70 doctoral scholars each year for three (3) years, starting in 2017. The doctoral scholarships will be awarded under two funding instruments annually as follows:

- **NRF - TWAS Doctoral Scholarship funding instrument:** 20 scholars from developing countries outside Africa; and
- **NRF - TWAS African Renaissance Doctoral Scholarships funding instrument:** 50 scholars from Africa.

2. Rationale

International strategic partnerships remain the vehicle for development within the context of the advancement of research and human capacity development. Through this funding instrument, South Africa will contribute to effective science collaboration on the African continent and globally. In particular, ensuring capacity development of promising next generation and emerging researchers in developing countries will make headways towards exchange of knowledge and improving the quality of research, leading to innovative ideas for socio-economic development.

3. Objectives

The objectives of the doctoral scholarship funding instruments are to:

- Increase the number and quality of doctoral scholars in Africa and in other developing countries;
- Foster scientific and technological cooperation by facilitating brain circulation between countries;
- Attract young scientists and professionals of the highest calibre from developing countries to access world class strategic and applied research opportunities in order to advance their professional competitiveness; and
- Support human capacity needs and thus position the developing countries for global competitiveness in scientific and technological fields.

4. Areas of Support

The successful candidates will undertake full-time doctoral studies in South Africa and may be based at any South African public research institution including Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), Science Councils and National Research Facilities.

For details of Recognised HEIs and other Public Research Institutions [click here](#).

Applicants who wish to pursue research under Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) disciplines will be supported through the Scholarship.

5. Eligibility

In selecting applicants for consideration for the doctoral scholarships, the following criteria will apply:

- The NRF-TWAS Doctoral Scholarship funding Instrument is open to **citizens and permanent residents from developing countries outside Africa**. Refer to Appendix 1 for the list of eligible developing countries or [click here](#);
- The NRF-TWAS African Renaissance Doctoral Scholarship funding instrument is open to citizens and permanent residents from **Africa except South Africa**. Refer to Appendix 1 for **Table 3: Eligible developing countries**;

- The following individuals are **not eligible** to apply under either funding instrument:
 - South African citizens;
 - Foreign citizens who hold permanent residency permits of South Africa;
 - Foreign citizens who are already resident in South Africa or in any developed country and hold temporary residence permits (this includes study permits);
 - Citizens and permanent residents of any developed country; and
 - Foreign citizens who were previously employed or studying towards a degree or undertaking research in South Africa, and have returned to their country of origin but have been in their country of origin for less than two (2) years.
- Applicants must be thirty five (35) years of age on 31 December of the year of application for the doctoral scholarship ;
- Applicants must hold a university degree that will satisfy requirements for admission to doctoral studies at a South African public university, which is generally a Master's Degree; and
- Visa and immigration laws of the applicant's home country and South Africa must be met by the applicant.

6. Application Requirements

- Applicants must provide an official letter from their host South African institution, department or laboratory and motivation from the applicant's host. **It is the responsibility of the applicant to contact the respective institution to apply for acceptance. In addition, it is also the responsibility of the applicant to secure a supervisor for the study;**
- The research project must be registered and approved by the host institution (a letter of support from the prospective supervisor must be attached to the application.); and
- Applicants must have all foreign qualifications (obtained from non-South Africa universities) evaluated by the South African Qualification Authority (SAQA). Proof that at least the applicant has submitted his/her qualification for evaluation at SAQA must be submitted with the application, failing which the application will be rejected. Further information on the process can be accessed by logging on to www.saqa.org.za.
- The applicant must secure their own visa's or study permits under the programme for study in South Africa. The NRF will not be responsible for assisting with visa requirements.
- Upon completion of the studies, all successful applicant MUST return to their country of origin to plough back

7. Selection Criteria

Applications that meet the eligibility criteria and are completed appropriately will be subjected to a competitive merit review process. If any information that should have been submitted as attachments is not included in the application, it will be rendered incomplete resulting in a rejection without review. The reviewers are selected by the NRF from existing reviewer databases and other sources and may include reviewers suggested by the applicant. TWAS may also submit names of potential reviewers to the NRF.

The feasibility and academic merit of the research projects will be assessed in line with the scorecard published together with the call documents on the NRF website. In assessing the proposals, the reviewers' reports are referred to, and agreed assessment criteria are applied in the form of a scorecard during the panel review process.

The following will be considered in evaluating all Doctoral applications (**Table 1**) in a competitive merit review process:

- Problem statement;
- Rationale and literature review;
- Aims and objectives;
- Methodology and proposed research plan;
- Anticipated outputs;
- Potential Impact;
- Alignment with National Research Priorities;
- Support from the Masters Supervisor, identified Doctoral supervisor and referee.

Table 1: Scorecard for the Assessment of Proposals for TWAS Doctoral Scholarships

Criteria	Description	Weight
Academic Merit	Average cumulative percentage mark for previous degree or cumulative percentage for major subjects.	15%
Problem Statement	Description of the problem statement informing the proposal	5%
Rationale and Literature Review	Description of rationale including a literature review with references.	20%
Aims and Objectives	Description of the aims and objectives of the study.	5%
Methodology and proposed research plan	Research methodology, work plan and project organisation.	25%
Anticipated outputs	Anticipated realistic outputs of the research such as publications, poster and/or oral conference presentation.	10%
Potential impact	Potential for socio-economic impact of the research in South Africa. In addition, applicants must demonstrate the novelty and scientific contribution to new knowledge. Where applicable multi-disciplinary aspect of the project must be described.	10%
Alignment to National Research Strategies	Alignment with one or more National Research Strategies.	10%
		100%

8. Awarding Principle

- Priority will be given to applicants from the 66 states endorsed by TWAS as priority in capacity development in Science and Technology. Refer to Appendix 2 for the list of TWAS endorsed developing countries or [click here](#);
- Priority will be given to female applicants and the target is to award 50% of scholarships to female scholars; and
- 50 scholars will be from countries in Africa; and 20 scholars will be from developing countries outside Africa in accordance with the two types of scholarships.

9. Conditions of Scholarship

- The scholarship shall be held as the primary funding for the doctoral Scholarships;
- Scholarships may not be held simultaneously with a scholar from any other TWAS, South African government or NRF administered source;

- Doctoral scholars may not concurrently hold the scholarship with any full-time employment position;
- Doctoral scholars hold non-binding supplementary grants or emoluments to the institutional capped value;
- Successful applicants will be required to give a written undertaking that they will return to their home country upon completion of the scholarship; and
- Candidates must meet the following requirements of the English Language Proficiency Academic test:

IELTS 6.5 (no band less than 6.0); or TOEFL (paper) 575 (TWE 4.5); or TOEFL iBIT (min. 20); or Cambridge minimum 58. Information on the IELTS tests can be obtained from the British Council in home country or accessed on: www.ielts.org. Further information on the TOEFL test can be accessed on: www.toefl.com. Applicants may consult the British Council in the home country for assistance.

10. Value of Scholarship

The NRF - TWAS African Renaissance doctoral scholarship (Table 2) will be granted for the duration of three (3) years renewable annually subject to satisfactory performance.

Table 2: The breakdown of the award will be as follows:

Category of support	Value (Rand)	Duration
Stipend	120 000	Per Annum
Local travel	25 000	Maximum allowed during the funding period based on need
International travel	50 000	Maximum allowed during the funding period based on need
Cost towards mobility of the scholar	15 000	Once off travel (from home country to South Africa and from South Africa to home country)

The costs for the mobility of the scholar will include the following:

- Travel visa and study visa; subject to submission of proof of expenditure.
- A single economy airfare for travel from the scholar's home country to South Africa; to the maximum of 15 000.

- A single economy airfare from South Africa to the scholar's home country, upon completion of the doctoral degree to the value of 15 000.

Successful candidates are also eligible for a once-off travel grant of up to R25 000, for local travel, and up to R50 000, for international travel. The travel grants may be used to contribute towards the costs of attending local or international conferences; workshops; visiting a laboratory or; any other activity that supports the beneficiaries' research training. This is the maximum amount permitted over the tenure of the scholarship. Scholars who wish to access the travel grant must complete a travel grant application form available on the NRF Online Submission System <https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za/>.

11. Responsibilities of Scholars

It is the responsibility of the scholar to:

- Obtain appropriate Visas;
- Secure a supervisor at a South African Institution who is willing to host them for the duration of scholarship
- Arrange own accommodation in South Africa for the duration of the scholarship

The scholarship **does not** cover the following:

- All financial expenses of accompanying family members must be carried out by the individuals. Scholars must also ensure that accompanying family members have the correct documentation for entry and stay in South Africa; and
- Comprehensive medical insurance for the period of the scholar's or family member's stay to meet any untoward incidents and major ailments during travel and stay in South Africa.

12. Application Process

The NRF invites applications from scholars who wish to pursue Doctoral degrees at any South African public research institution including Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), Science Councils and National Research Facilities.

Applicants may apply by following the steps below:

- Applications must be submitted through an online application process to the NRF.
 - **Applicants must apply for the 2018 NRF-TWAS Doctoral/African Renaissance Doctoral Scholarships by accessing the link: <https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za/>**
 - **Register / Login using your ID number and password.**

- Go to “My Applications”
- Select “Create Application”.
- Select the call for which you are applying to viz. **NRF-TWAS Doctoral/African Renaissance Doctoral Scholarships call for 2018.**
- Click on the “Apply” icon.
- Remember to complete all compulsory sections of the application as incomplete applications will not be considered for support by the NRF. Please follow the step-by-step directions supplied in the *Funding Guide*.
- Remember to **submit** your application on completion.
- Complete applications will be directed to the host University for Verification before being forwarded to the NRF for further processing. **It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the university has approved the application and forwarded it to the NRF.**
- Incomplete applications will not be considered.
- Applications that do not meet the eligibility criteria will not be considered (please refer to section 5 for details on eligibility for the NRF-TWAS Doctoral/African Renaissance Doctoral Scholarships).
- Please contact the NRF if you have any queries.
- The closing date for submitting applications is **18 July 2017.**

13. Attachments

Please attach the following documents on the attachment section of your online application:

1. Certified Passport;
2. SAQA Certificate or proof of SAQA Application;
3. English language proficiency certificate (if available at the time of the application);
4. Acceptance letter from the South African university; and
5. Certified academic record

14. Reporting

For continuous monitoring of the funding instrument, the scholars will be required to submit Annual Progress Reports (APR) in a format provided by the NRF, against deliverables as outlined in the application form and the signed Conditions of Grant. The NRF may in consultation with the grant holder’s research office, request interim progress report for the purpose of implementing corrective measures timeously to ensure that stated objectives are met within the stipulated timeframes. All scholars will be requested, to submit an exit report to the NRF-TWAS, upon completion of their Doctoral studies, on their overall experience, achievements and outputs.

Scholarships for qualifying continuing scholars will be released upon submission of an Annual Progress Report in accordance with the NRF Scholarship Agreement.

15. Financial control

These awards will be managed in terms of standard NRF financial policies and procedures. The payment of the grant by the NRF to successful applicants will be administered by the Grants Management and Systems Administration (GMSA) Directorate to the relevant institutions' cost centres. The institutions will in turn administer the funds on behalf of the successful grant holder to the value of the full sum awarded by the NRF.

Additionally, the scholarship-holder must obtain the degree for which the scholarship was awarded by the contractual date which is within one (1) year after NRF funding has ceased and notify the NRF via the university authority. Should the scholarship-holder not complete the degree for which the scholarship was awarded, the funds will have to be returned to the NRF plus interest at the prevailing prime rate charged by the NRF bankers.

Scholarships not taken up within six (6) months of the grant award will be cancelled by 1 July for reallocation unless otherwise approved by the NRF.

Appendix 1

TABLE 3: ELIGIBLE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

155 ELIGIBLE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES					
1	Afghanistan	53	Grenada	105	Palau
2	Albania	54	Guatemala	106	Palestine, State of
3	Algeria	55	Guinea	107	Panama
4	Angola	56	Guinea-Bissau	108	Papua New Guinea
5	Antigua and Barbuda	57	Guyana	109	Paraguay
6	Argentina	58	Haiti	110	Peru
7	Armenia	59	Honduras	111	Philippines
8	Aruba	60	Hong Kong, SAR	112	Qatar
9	Azerbaijan	61	India	113	Romania
10	Bangladesh	62	Indonesia	114	Rwanda
11	Bahamas	63	Iran, Islamic Rep.	115	Samoa
12	Bahrain	64	Iraq	116	São Tomé and Príncipe
13	Barbados	65	Jamaica	117	Saudi Arabia
14	Belarus	66	Jordan	118	Senegal
15	Belize	67	Kazakhstan	119	Serbia
16	Benin	68	Kenya	120	Seychelles (Transitional)
17	Bhutan	69	Kiribati	121	Sierra Leone
18	Bolivia	70	Korea, Dem Rep.	122	Solomon Islands
19	Bosnia and Herzegovina	71	Kosovo	123	Somalia
20	Botswana	72	Kuwait	124	South Sudan
21	Brunei	73	Kyrgyz Republic	125	Sri Lanka
22	Brazil	74	Lao PDR	126	St. Lucia
23	Bulgaria	75	Lebanon	127	St. Vincent and the Grenadines
24	Burkina Faso	76	Lesotho	128	Sudan
25	Burundi	77	Liberia	129	Suriname
26	Cabo Verde	78	Libya	130	Swaziland
27	Cambodia	79	Macedonia, FYR	131	Syrian Arab Republic
28	Cameroon	80	Macau	132	Taiwan, China
29	Central African Republic	81	Madagascar	133	Tajikistan
30	Chad	82	Malawi	134	Tanzania

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31	Chile	83	Malaysia	135	Thailand
32	China	84	Maldives	136	Timor-Leste
33	Colombia	85	Mali	137	Trinidad and Tobago
34	Comoros	86	Marshall Islands	138	Togo
35	Congo, Dem. Rep	87	Mauritania	139	Tonga
36	Congo, Rep.	88	Mauritius	140	Tunisia
37	Costa Rica	89	Mayotte	141	Turkey
38	Côte d'Ivoire	90	Mexico	142	Turkmenistan
39	Cuba	91	Micronesia, Fed. Sts.	143	Tuvalu
40	Djibouti	92	Moldova	144	Uganda
41	Dominica	93	Mongolia	145	Ukraine
42	Dominican Republic	94	Montenegro	146	United Arab Emirates
43	Ecuador	95	Morocco	147	Uruguay
44	Egypt, Arab Rep.	96	Mozambique	148	Uzbekistan
45	El Salvador	97	Myanmar	149	Vanuatu
46	Eritrea	98	Namibia	150	Venezuela
47	Ethiopia	99	Nepal	151	Vietnam
48	Fiji	100	Nicaragua	152	Western Samoa
49	Gabon	101	Niger	153	Yemen, Rep.
50	Gambia, The	102	Nigeria	154	Zambia
51	Georgia	103	Oman	155	Zimbabwe
52	Ghana	104	Pakistan		

TABLE 4: TWAS Endorsed Countries

LIST OF 66 TWAS ENDORSED COUNTRIES		
1. Afghanistan	25. Guinea	49. Solomon Islands
2. Angola	26. Guinea-Bissau	50. Somalia
3. Bangladesh	27. Haiti	51. South Sudan
4. Benin	28. Honduras	52. Sri Lanka
5. Bhutan	39. Kenya	53. Sudan
6. Bolivia	30. Kiribati	54. Swaziland
7. Burkina Faso	31. Lao PDR	55. Syrian Arab Republic
8. Burundi	32. Lesotho	56. Tajikistan
9. Cambodia	33. Liberia	57. Tanzania
10. Cameroon	34. Madagascar	58. Timor-Leste
11. Central African Republic	35. Malawi	59. Togo
12. Chad	36. Mali	60. Tuvalu
13. Comoros Islands	37. Mauritania	61. Uganda
14. Congo	38. Mongolia	62. Vanuatu
15. Côte d'Ivoire	39. Mozambique	63. West Bank & Gaza Strip
16. Congo, Dem. Rep	40. Myanmar	64. Yemen
17. Djibouti	41. Nepal	65. Zambia
18. El Salvador	42. Nicaragua	66. Zimbabwe
19. Equatorial Guinea	43. Niger	
20. Eritrea	44. Paraguay	
21. Ethiopia	45. Rwanda	
22. Gambia	46. São Tome and Principe	
23. Ghana	47. Senegal	
24. Guatemala	48. Sierra Leone	

TWAS has identified 66 developing countries whose capacity in science and technology is still lagging, these include the 48 UN-listed Least Developed Countries, some low Income countries and other countries with specifically low research capacity. For this reason, TWAS is focusing special attention on capacity-building efforts in these countries. In 2017, TWAS issued a list of 81 science and technology lagging countries. The above list reflects changes and advances in global development patterns.