



higher education
& training

Department:
Higher Education and Training
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



RISA

Research and Innovation
Support and Advancement

Scarce Skills Development Fund Postdoctoral Research Fellowships

1. Background

The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) commits grant funds from the National Skills Fund (NSF) towards a bursary programme, the Scarce Skills Development Fund (SSDF), for targeted students and fellows. The management of the SSDF programme is performed in accordance with the memorandum of agreement (MoA) between the National Research Foundation (NRF) and the DHET. The programme which is located within the Human and Institutional Capacity Development (HICD) Directorate of the NRF was implemented in 2002.

2. Objectives

The programme supports students and fellows at South African higher education institutions (HEI's) and science councils. The objectives of the SSDF programme are:

- To continue increasing the number and quality of South African postgraduate students and fellows in specified scarce skills areas;
- To continue working towards increased race and gender representation; and
- In conjunction with the higher education sector and industry, to support the development of postgraduate courses and research to meet specific needs of the country.

3. Scarce Skills Areas

Since the inception of the programme, the following disciplines have been supported:

- **Management:**
Financial Management

- **Financial sector:**
Accounting, Auditing, Statistics, Actuarial Science
- **Biological sciences:**
Biotechnology
- **Physical sciences:**
Mathematical Sciences, Physics, Geology, Computer Science, Information Systems, Chemistry
- **Engineering (all fields)**
- **Sector specific:**
Agricultural Sciences, Transportation Studies, Tourism, Demography

4. Value of the Award

Postdoctoral research fellowships: R165 000 per annum plus R35 000 running expenses. Fellows may access a **once-off** travel grant during the period of funding as follows:

Local travel	International travel
R15 000	R40 000

5. Criteria for Selection

5.1. Eligibility

Fellowships are open to only *bonafide* South African citizens with a doctoral degree. All applicants must have graduated less than five years. Full time employees of Higher Education Institutions are not eligible to apply.

5.2 Funding Proposals

The management of the programme will be conducted by the NRF who is mandated by the National Research Foundation Act, Act No.23 of 1998 to promote and support research. The NRF will select high caliber fellows on the basis of merit (qualifications, experience, research outputs and proposed research) through selection panels employing NRF peer review processes. Despite the obligation to meet race and gender targets, quality remains the desired outcome.

5.3. Equity

In line with the national imperative of equity and redress, the programme prioritises support for appropriately qualified Blacks, women and disabled students without sacrificing

quality. Fellowship funds are allocated, with every attempt being made to meet the following targets:

◆	Black students	(African, Coloured, Indian)	85%
◆	Women students	(African, Coloured, Indian, White)	54%
◆	Students with disabilities	(African, Coloured, Indian, White)	4%

5.4. Location of research work

The Fellowship will preferably not be granted to an individual in the same university department immediately after completion of a doctoral degree at that institution. Special consideration will be given to applicants where the individual's research training and outputs may be enhanced by continuing with postdoctoral research at the same institution or under the same mentor. In such instances the applicant must provide a detailed motivation describing the benefits to the applicant and for advancing innovation. Fellowships will be awarded for full-time research at higher education institutions.

6. How to apply for funding

Applicants can apply by following the steps below:

Application: <http://nrfinterim.nrf.ac.za> and **Update CV information on:** <http://nrfonline.nrf.ac.za>

- Login using your registered username (ID number) and password for the above systems.
- **PLEASE NOTE:** First time users should register with the same ID and password on **both systems.**
- Carefully read through the Scholarships and Fellowships funding manual and guidelines for applicants.
- Select the call for which you wish to apply for (refer to step by step guideline for applicants).
- Remember to complete all sections of the application and attach all the necessary documentation including certified full academic transcripts, certificates and identity documents.
- Applicants must also update their CV on the NRF online system.
- Remember to submit your application on completion.

- Complete applications will go to the host university for verification before being forwarded to the NRF for further processing.
- Incomplete applications that do not include updated CV information will not be considered.
- Applications that do not meet the eligibility criteria will not be considered (please refer to funding manual for details on eligibility of fellowship programmes).
- Please contact the university post graduate office or research office if you have any queries.
- The closing date for submitting applications is **30 September 2011**.