

Announcement of ONE CALL FOR APPLICATIONS for 2026 NRF Postdoctoral Grants



CALL FOR APPLICATIONS	INTERNAL APPLICATION CLOSING DATES
Postdoctoral Fellowships (Freestanding, Scarce Skills, Innovation)	7 April 2025 The internal Closing date is set to allow time for corrections and completeness before the NRF deadline.
SARAO Postdoctoral Fellowships	18 August 2025

The NRF has announced the opening of the NRF for Postdoctoral Grants.

Eligibility criteria

- Applicants must intend to undertake research at a public research institution in South Africa
- Applicants must have graduated with their doctoral degree within five (5) years of applying to the NRF. Applicants that obtained their doctoral degree prior to February 2020 are therefore not eligible to apply.
- Applicants who are currently completing their doctoral dissertation for submission may apply. However, should complete their doctoral degree by **31 December 2025**. The NRF must receive proof of having completed the doctoral degree at the time of commencement of the Postdoctoral fellowship grant. All awards that are not taken up by 30 June 2026 will be cancelled by the NRF and no exemptions will be made if the completion letter or Doctoral certificate has not been issued by this time.
- A Letter of Completion from the institution will be considered in lieu of the Doctoral certificate if the applicant is only awaiting the graduation formalities. A copy of the Doctoral certificate should however be forwarded to the NRF when received.
- Full-time employees of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) or other research institutions are only eligible to apply if they intend to take unpaid leave for the duration of the postdoctoral fellowship.
- Applicants who are applying for a second NRF Postdoctoral research placement will be eligible if they intend undertaking research on a new project (Please note applicants who are on a PDP fellowship will not be considered for a second PDP fellowship)
- Applicants who are applying for a second NRF Postdoctoral research placement to continue with research on the same project are not eligible.
- Applicants who are applying for a third NRF Postdoctoral research placement are not eligible.

How to Apply

All applications must be submitted through the NRF Connect system at <https://nrfconnect.nrf.ac.za/>.

(IMPORTANT – Please ensure that your PhD / Host application INPUT is completed before the deadline as your application may not be considered without it being completed timeously.)

Summary of the Postdoctoral fellowships

	FREESTANDING	INNOVATION	SCARCE SKILLS
Areas of support	Natural Sciences; Engineering; Technology; Social Sciences; and Humanities.	Biotechnology; Cellular and Molecular Biology; Engineering; Computer Science; Physics; Astronomy; Mathematical Sciences; Nanotechnology; Chemistry; Earth Science; Ecology; Medical Sciences; Social Sciences; and Humanities	<u>Management</u> : Financial Management; <u>Financial sector</u> : Accounting, Auditing, Statistics, Actuarial Science; <u>Biological sciences</u> : Biotechnology; <u>Physical sciences</u> : Mathematical Sciences, Physics, Geology, Computer Science, Information Systems, Chemistry; <u>Engineering</u> : All fields of Engineering.
Citizenship	SA and permanent residents and international citizens	SA and permanent residents and citizens from the African continent	SA and permanent residents
Value	R320 000	R320 000	R320 000
Tenure	2 years	2 years	2 years

It is important to read the relevant documents before deciding on which funding opportunity to apply to. All eligibility criteria, as well as the applicable requirements, must be taken into consideration.

Please download the

- [General Application Guide here](#)
- [Freestanding, Innovation and Scarce Skills Postdoctoral Fellowships Framework here](#)

Application Requirements

- Applicants should apply to undertake postdoctoral research (i) on a research project that is different from the doctoral research; (ii) located in a different department from that where the doctoral training was undertaken; or (iii) at a different institution to that where the previous study was undertaken, as fellowships will preferably be awarded to individuals that will be expanding their research training on a new project and/or at a new institution
- Special consideration will be given to applicants who are applying for a first NRF postdoctoral research placement where the individual's research training and outputs may be enhanced by continuing with postdoctoral research at the same institution; department; or under the same mentor. In such instances the applicant must provide a **strong motivation letter describing** the benefits to the applicant and for advancing research and innovation. Failure to provide the **motivation letter** will result in a rejection without review.
- Applicants must attach proof of their master's and doctoral qualifications to their application. For those who are in the process of completing their doctoral degree, a letter of confirmation from their current institution, stating that their doctoral qualification will be completed by December 2025 must be attached to the application.
- Requested information that is not included in the appropriate section of the online application form, but is submitted as an attachment instead, will render the application incomplete resulting in a rejection without review.

For Enquiries:

Please email Emile van Wyk in the UCT's Postdoctoral Administration Office – pdocs@uct.ac.za