



UCT POSTGRADUATE FUNDING OFFICE

An intro to our team, services & scholarships

We're here to help
postgraduates at UCT
navigate funding opportunities

Last updated: Dec 2025

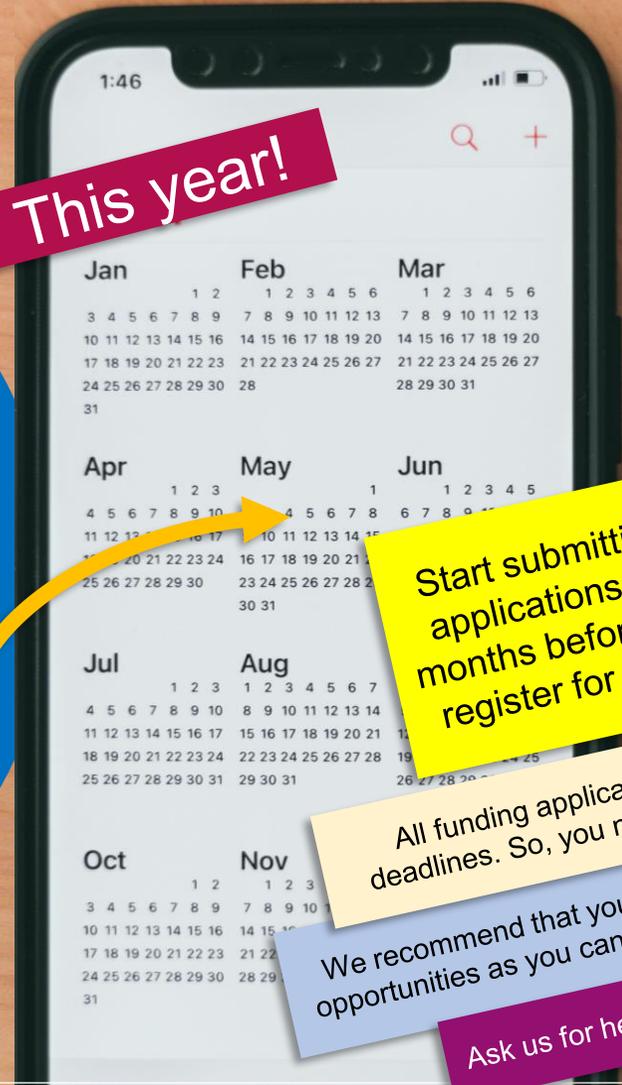


UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
IYUNIVESITHI YASEKAPA • UNIVERSITEIT VAN KAAPSTAD

Do you need funding for your postgraduate studies **NEXT** year?

Start applying for opportunities that are advertised **THIS** year!

This year!



Start submitting funding applications at least six months before you plan to register for your degree.

All funding applications have fixed deadlines. So, you need to plan ahead!

We recommend that you apply for as many opportunities as you can throughout the year.

Ask us for help when you need it!

“Starting postgrad studies is not an overnight decision – lots of thinking goes into it! Finding and applying for funding is a key part. Every year, my team assists thousands of students kickstart their individual postgraduate journeys. For assistance, all you need to do is knock on our door”

Chantal Swartz | Senior Manager, Postgraduate Funding Office

Web



Visit us

Level 3, Otto Beit building,
University Avenue North,
Upper Campus, UCT



[Click here](#) to find
our building on Google Maps

Contact us

If you are a UCT student:

Instead of emailing us, log into PeopleSoft and create a Postgraduate Funding Office (PGFO) Service Request.

Scan the QR code for a step-by-step guide on how to do this.



Book a consultation through our virtual help desk



If you are **not yet** a UCT student:

- **Phone:** +27 21 650 3622
- **Email:** pgfunding@uct.ac.za

Meet the PGFO leadership team

Three teams make up the PGFO.
Two teams support postgraduate
students, and one team supports the
Postdoctoral Research fellows



Chantal Swartz
SENIOR MANAGER

We are responsible for the management and administration of postgraduate and postdoctoral awards, as well as for monitoring the postgraduate and postdoctoral sectors and for the development of policies and procedures for financial and other types of support.



Stacey-Lee Harrison
MANAGER



Chantel Reed
MANAGER



UCT & DONOR FUNDING

PORTFOLIO OVERVIEW

- Financial Aid/GAP for South African and permanent residents
- International Students Scholarships
- Refugee Students Scholarships

- JW Jagger Centenary Scholarships
- JW Jagger Trust Scholarship

- John Davidson Educational Trust
- Margaret McNamara Memorial Fund
- Women Scientist Fellowship
- Commonwealth
- Lestrade
- Garden Cities
- Dr J Graaf & Dr A Strebel
- IBM Bursary
- RAPCAN

These awards & grants are covered in detail online. Refer to Handbook 14





UCT & DONOR FUNDING

PORTFOLIO OVERVIEW

Travel Grants

- By independent application form
- Doctoral Conference Travel Grants
 - International Travel Scholarships
 - Scarbrow Bursary

Prestigious Fellowships

- By independent application form
- The Annette-Campbell White Scholarship
 - Andrew Alexander
 - DSI-CSIR Inter Bursary Support Programme
 - Beit Trust Postgraduate Scholarships
 - Dutkiewicz Family Scholarship

Awards by nominations

- Graduation awards, 3-Year Bachelor and Senior Scholarships
- Midgley Prize

These awards & grants are covered in detail online. Refer to Handbook 14



PARASTATAL & POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH AWARDS

PORTFOLIO OVERVIEW

National Research Foundation (NRF) Scholarships

- Innovation, Scarce Skills, Freestanding, DAAD
- Nuffic (Single/Split Site)
- TWAS Doctoral
- Grant Holder/SARChI Bursaries
- SARAO
- Extension
- Full Cost of Study (FCS)
- Partial Cost of Study (PCS)
- Other funding is available on the NRF's website:
www.nrf.ac.za/funding/

NRF Travel Grants

Respective Departments

- Departmental Scholarships
- Consult the Departments/Faculties

These awards & grants are covered in detail online. Refer to Handbook 14



Book your
FREE
consultation
with us



Don't leave it until the eleventh hour to reach out for support from the PGFO. If you need help, contact the PGFO at least a few weeks before the deadline to submit the funding application.

We are here to help you
navigate funding applications

Does the thought of submitting an application for funding feel overwhelming and intimidating?

The PGFO is available for one-on-one sessions to help you navigate the application process. All you have to do, is book a consultation with us.

FINDING FUNDING

7 KEY THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT FUNDING YOUR POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

- 1 BE FLEXIBLE.** Financial assistance for postgraduates comes in various forms. Some are administered by the university and others by external agencies and donors. Be sure to investigate a range of options.
- 2 KEEP THOSE MARKS UP.** Many postgraduate awards are based on either academic merit alone or a combination of financial need and merit. While there are awards based only on financial need, the better your academic scores, the more awards are available.
- 3 PLAN AHEAD.** Start looking for funding opportunities well in advance. Opportunities for funding are often announced months before the deadline to register for your degree (e.g., in the year preceding the start of your postgraduate studies).
- 4 FOLLOW @UCTPOSTGRADS** Our Twitter account announces bursaries, scholarships and other opportunities. Otherwise, details are available on the Postgrad Hub's electronic noticeboard.



5 GATHER AS MUCH INFORMATION AS POSSIBLE. The Postgraduate Funding Office (PGFO) offers a range of material to help you find funding for your studies. Booklets, such as this one, and handbooks can be obtained from the PGFO or downloaded from the Postgrad Hub.

6 PREPARE FOR A BALANCING ACT. With the exception of some prestigious scholarships and a specific group of UCT-supported, full-cost awards, full financial support via a single award is rare. This means financing your postgraduate studies is likely to involve a combination of bursaries, part-time employment and loans. Bear in mind, some awards cannot be held concurrently with others. So, when you plan, consider as many sources of support as possible.

7 ASK FOR HELP. The PGFO is within easy walking distance of most faculties and departments on Upper Campus. Our staff are there to advise you on the diverse funding opportunities available to postgraduates and help with the submission of applications. Also speak to researchers and potential supervisors as they may have access to grantholder bursaries.

IMPORTANT POINTS TO CONSIDER REGARDING FUNDING ELIGIBILITY

Postgraduate funding is not automatically granted based on admission to UCT or as a follow-on to the undergraduate funding you may have had. There are many awards, each with specific criteria and rules that must be fulfilled/matched. Hence there is an application process for all awards, including deadlines for submission dates, which must be adhered to.

Our go-to-places for funding opportunities

Our electronic
funding noticeboard



Handbook 14
Financial Assistance for
Postgraduate Study and
Postdoctoral Research



Follow us on X



[@UCTpostgrads](https://twitter.com/UCTpostgrads)

UCT's Prestigious
Fellowships for
postgraduates



Take note!
Funding opportunities
are announced
throughout the year,
so make sure you keep
an eye on these
platforms!

Your department
might have funding
opportunities for their
registered students.

Contact the designated
postgraduate administrator
in your faculty or department
to find out what's available.



Main areas of support/sources of funds

The PGFO is the guardian of all these funds. We are responsible for managing these funds and ensuring that the recipients of each scholarship are paid.

University of Cape Town - General Operating Budget

Funds provided by UCT Council to the General Operating Budget

Postgrad Research Scholarships

Funds are derived by individual academics, academic departments and/or units

Donated Funds

Donated funds are received from sponsors

Invested Funds

Part of the annual income from specific investments that are held by the university are used for scholarship support

National Research Foundation (NRF)

NRF is a government-funded agency that provides funds to support research at universities

R435 MILLION*

Total postgraduate funding in 2024

↑ R393.7 million in 2023

*This figure includes external awards that are not administered by the PGFO and are processed by the Fees Office, to the value of R63.6 million funding +/-850 students.

Funding tenure & income limits

FIRST THREE YEARS of doctoral study

R315 000 funding limit

FIRST TWO YEARS of master's study

R254 000 funding limit

ONE YEAR of honours study

R190 000 funding limit

Annual funding limitations

Apply to the scholarships and bursaries managed by the PGFO. Students can accept more than one scholarship as long as the total amount doesn't exceed these figures each year.

Please note that financial need* applicants will be awarded a bursary which is a contribution towards cost of attendance which is calculated as follows:

- tuition
- once-off book allowance
- res/rental or live-at-home allowance
- food allowance
- travel allowance

Eligibility criteria

- **TYPES OF DEGREES:**
Honours, master's & doctoral
- **STUDENT STATUS:**
Most funding opportunities are only available for full-time studies, but there are a few options available to students studying part-time
- **NATIONALITY:**
Most of the scholarships are only available to South African citizens or permanent residents. However, there are a few scholarships for students located elsewhere in the world

Ineligible categories

- These degrees do not qualify for funding from the PGFO because they do not have a research focus: diplomas, certificates, BArch & LLB.
- Any fourth year linked to an undergraduate degree
- In addition, a second degree at the same level as one they already hold e.g. a second honour's degree

Read the [UCT policy on funding for postgraduate students](#) (Honours, Master's and Doctoral only) for more details.

*UCT allocates a variety of postgraduate funding awards for South Africans and permanent residents based on merit, financial need or both.

Do you want to apply for financial aid from UCT?



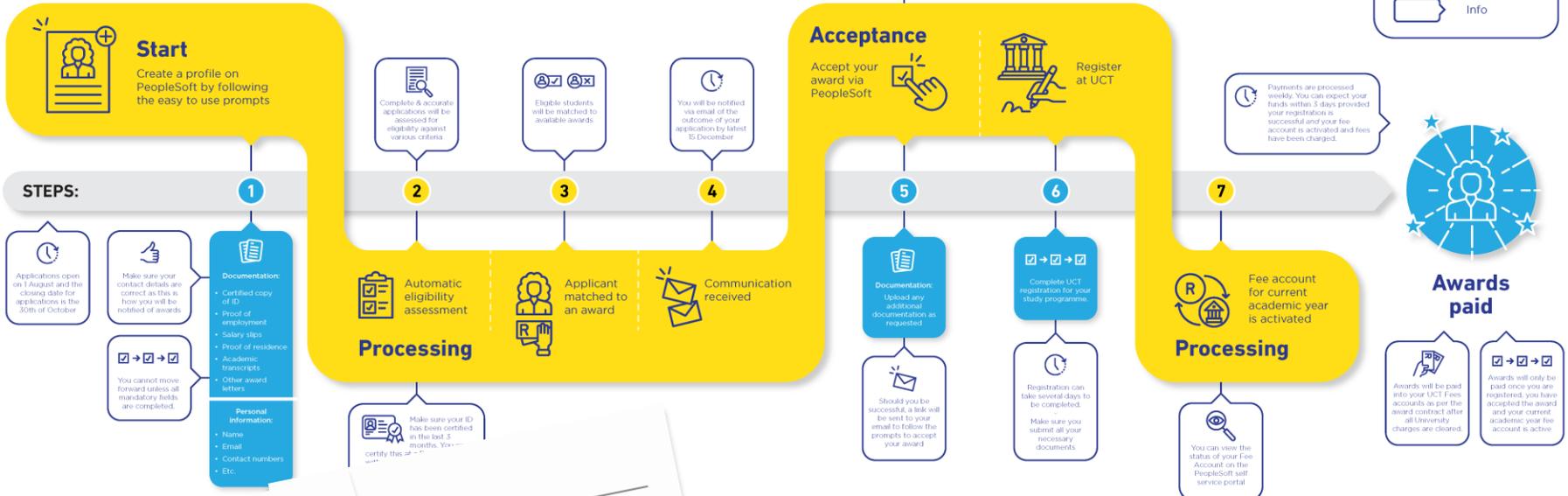
Postgraduate Financial Aid

A step-by-step guide of the process

UCT allocates a variety of postgraduate funding awards for South Africans and permanent residents through the Postgraduate Online Funding Application. These awards are allocated based on merit, financial need, or both. This document will guide you through how to apply.

Key

- Journey
- Student Steps
- UCT Steps
- Actions
- Info



Postgraduate Financial Aid FAQ's

How do I know what I am eligible for?
UCT manages many awards and funds within the financial aid process. The eligibility for these awards differ. Depending on the information you upload, the system will determine your eligibility for various awards and match which financial aid awards you are eligible for, the system does this for you.

Why is my document not being accepted?
Make sure you are uploading an accepted file type. These are listed on the portal. There is no size limit but large files may cause system or browser timeout. You can compress your documents to reduce the file size.

Which documents do I need to upload?
The online application page will list the required documents that need to be uploaded. Please note that if documents require certification, the certification needs to be no older than 3 months. You can get documents certified at a police station or by a notary (e.g. lawyer or registered CA(SA).)

How long does the Postgraduate Financial Aid application process take?
The application process opens annually on the 1st of August and the application portal closes on 31 October. You will be notified the outcome of your application by 31 January. Responses to the PGFO must be received within 3 days of successful selection and acceptance of

Where will my award be paid?
Your award will be paid into your UCT Fee Account in line with the contract. The amount paid will be after all University charges are cleared.

Where can I get help on how to apply for financial aid?
There are a number of useful tools to assist you in completing your online application. These include an online tutorial and in-person training sessions.

Can I appeal the Financial Aid decision?
Postgraduate students can submit an appeal based on legitimate reasons, as agreed by the Postgraduate Studies Funding Committee, which include:

- a. Request reassessment of the online funding application for changed financial circumstances
- b. Exemption from rule to hold awards concurrently
- c. Extension of funding tenure
- d. Request to hold funds that exceed maximum award limit
- e. Deferral of award, and
- f. Change to programme of study.

The appeals form is available on the website (see link below). Completed appeals forms should be submitted to the Postgraduate Funding Office on PGApp@uct.ac.za. No appeals based on missed deadlines or late applications will be considered.

Please note: the decision on your appeal is final, please do not re-apply for financial aid support as available

Scan this QR code to download the full step-by-step guide here



How to apply for Postgrad Research Scholarships: Follow these steps

Stage 1: Setup

Setup only needs to be followed for new awards. Existing awards can jump straight to Stage 2.

- Student/fellow → ●
- Postgraduate Funding Office (PGFO) → ●
- Academic/ fund holder → ●
- Fund administrator → ●
- Systems Access division → ●
- Notes → ●



Departmental Awards Research Support Transformation Project

Departments at UCT offer funding support to postgraduate students/fellows meeting certain qualifying criteria. Student's/fellow's who are interested in the departmental awards listed in Handbook 14 (Section 4B) must review the conditions and eligibility criteria before applying.

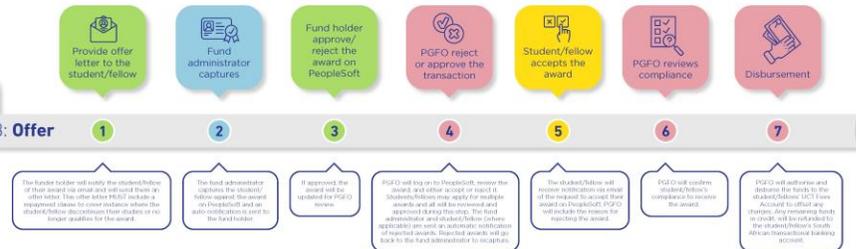
The process flow details the steps involved in applying for, selecting and offering departmental awards and can serve as a guide for all stakeholders including students/fellows, fund holders and fund administrators.

Stage 2: Selection

Existing awards can skip Stage 1: Setup and start at Stage 2: Selection



Stage 3: Offer



Scan this QR code to download the full step-by-step guide here

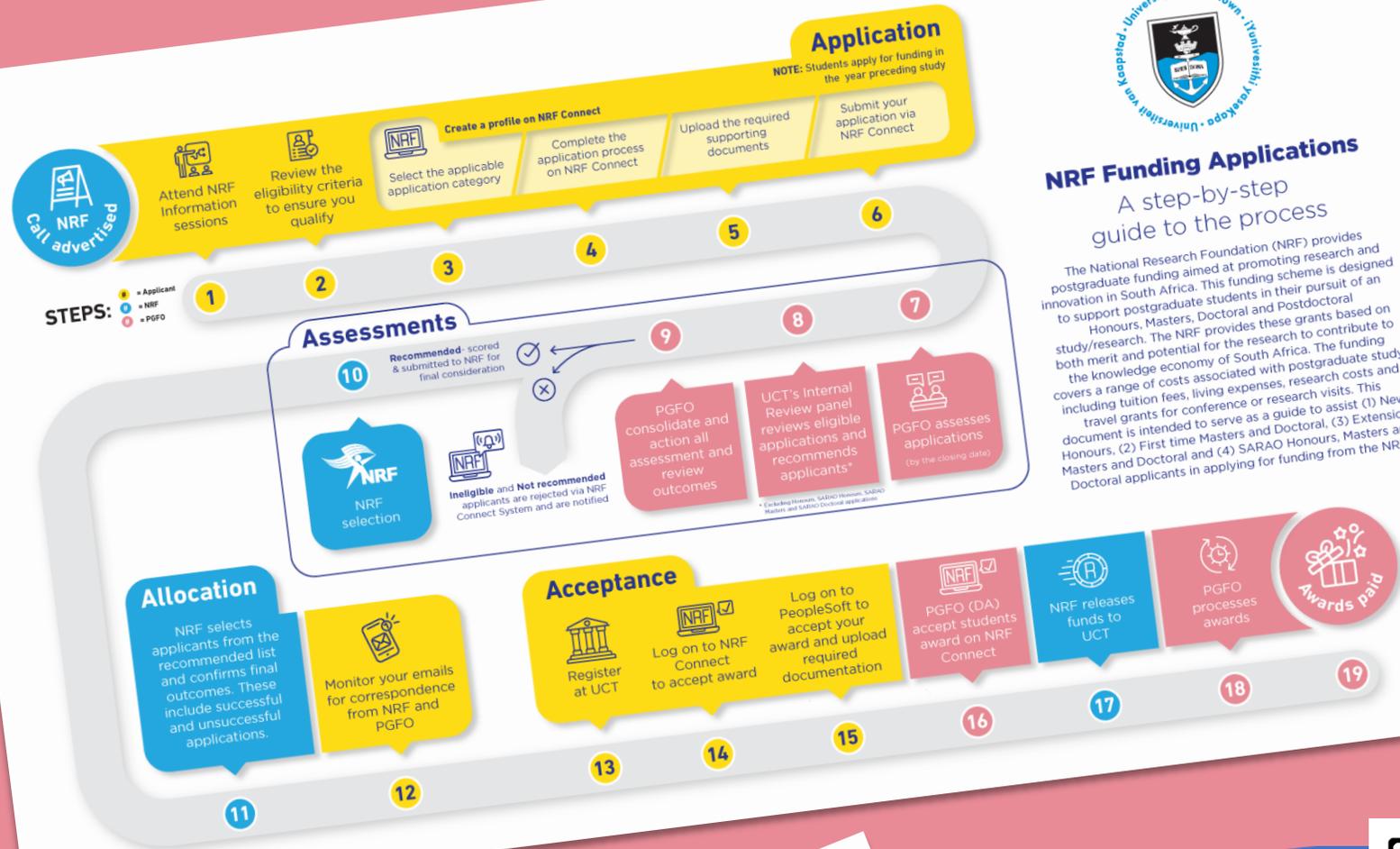


Do you want to apply for funding from the NRF?



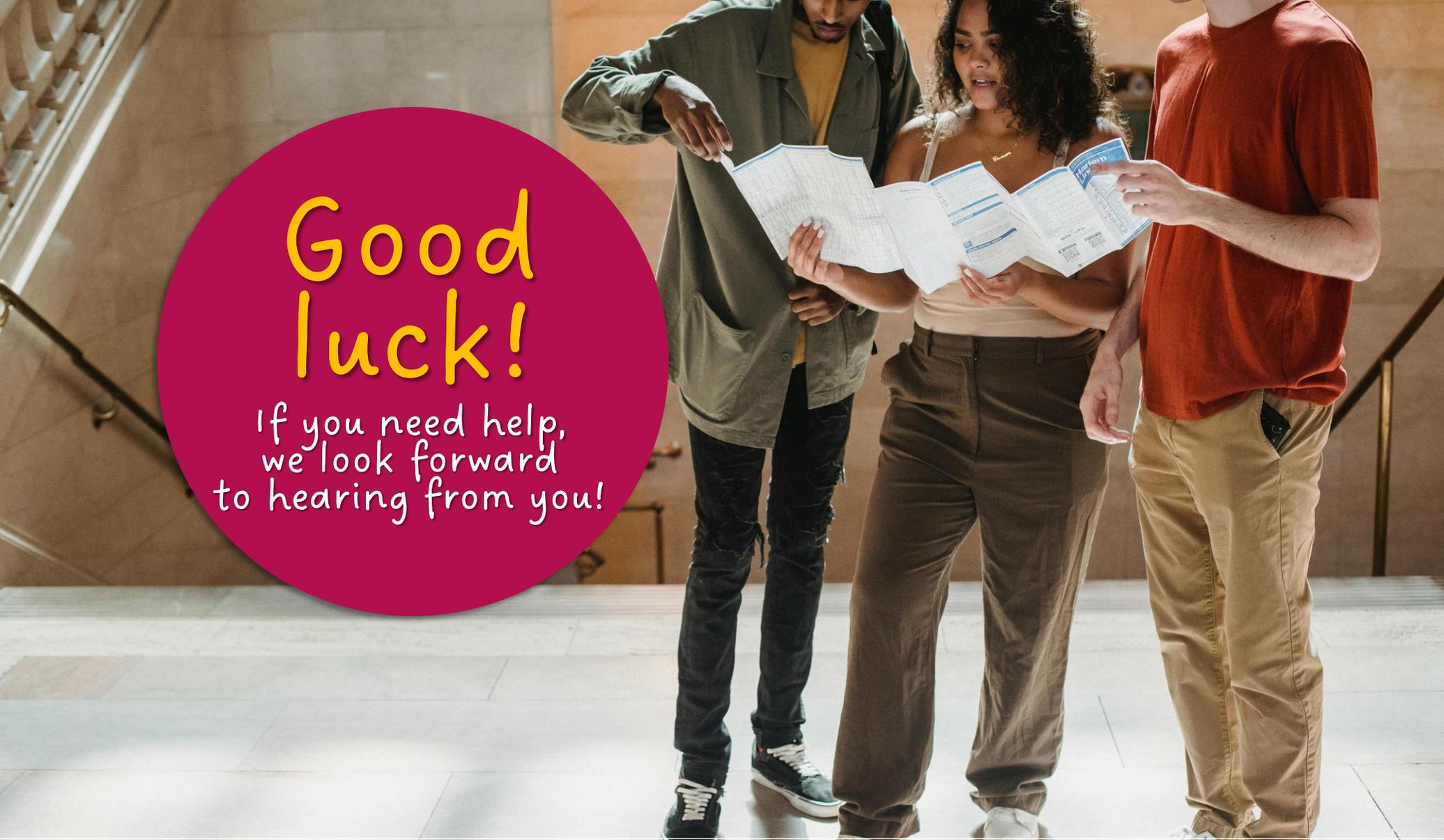
NRF Funding Applications A step-by-step guide to the process

The National Research Foundation (NRF) provides postgraduate funding aimed at promoting research and innovation in South Africa. This funding scheme is designed to support postgraduate students in their pursuit of an Honours, Masters, Doctoral and Postdoctoral study/research. The NRF provides these grants based on both merit and potential for the research to contribute to the knowledge economy of South Africa. The funding covers a range of costs associated with postgraduate study including tuition fees, living expenses, research costs and travel grants for conference or research visits. This document is intended to serve as a guide to assist (1) New Honours, (2) First time Masters and Doctoral, (3) Extension Masters and Doctoral and (4) SARAO Honours, Masters and Doctoral applicants in applying for funding from the NRF.



Scan this QR code to download the full step-by-step guide here



A photograph of three people (two men and one woman) standing in a hallway, looking at a large map or document. The man on the left is pointing at the map. The woman in the middle is holding the map. The man on the right is also looking at the map. They are all dressed in casual attire. The background shows a staircase and a hallway with a tiled floor.

Good
luck!

If you need help,
we look forward
to hearing from you!

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FUNDING OFFICE



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