



INCENTIVE FUNDING FOR RATED RESEARCHERS

Knowledge Fields Development Directorate

Funding Guide

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1 Executive Summary

In 2007, Higher Education South Africa (HESA) conducted a review of the National Research Foundation's evaluation and rating system. Following this review, HESA acknowledged and endorsed the value that evaluation and rating add to the NRF's research support and advancement vision. The report of the review recommended that the National Research Foundation (NRF) re-establishes the evaluation and rating system link to funding. Based on this recommendation, Incentive Funding for Rated Researchers (IFRR) was created.

2 Strategic Context

The HESA review recommended that the NRF uses the evaluation and rating system to identify and fund quality research. Incentive Funding for Rated Research is awarded to rated researchers who hold valid NRF rating on an annual basis for the duration of their rating and based on their current rating level. These grants are to be used for research-related purposes. There is considerable flexibility built into the administration of the funds to allow researchers to use the money in various ways in keeping their research activities afloat during the occasions when other funding is scarce.

3 Objectives

This funding aims to incentivize excellent research. Collateral objectives include encouraging researchers to:

- a. Subject themselves for rating,
- b. Maintain their ratings once they are rated, and
- c. Attain ever higher ratings until they reach the top rating (A1).

4 Application Process and Timelines

All applications must be completed online at <https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za>

The NRF Online system for applications opens on **13 January 2015**

The online application form consists of two sections:

- **Funding Information** - where the system displays the rating, researchers have to complete the fields to compose their research profile.
- **Budget**- this is not a research proposal, but a budget motivation per annum must be provided for the duration of an NRF rating. The section that was completed for the rating application called "Ongoing and planned future research" will be migrated from the rating application at <https://submission.nrf.ac.za> to the section "Total Expected Outputs" to guide researchers to align the budget to these goals. If the rating application was done on an earlier online system, this field will be empty.

The **NRF closing date** for endorsed Incentive Funding applications is **17 February 2015**. It is the responsibility of each applicant to familiarise themselves with the internal closing date, set by their institution in order to meet the NRF closing date. Incomplete OR late submissions will not be accepted.

The institutional authorities should take particular care regarding the budgeting information included in the applications. **The institution's commitment in the co-funding of P, Y, and L rated researchers will be audited and therefore must be adhered to.** Should the institution not have the funds to cover this co-funding then the application should be held over until such time that the necessary resources are available.

5 Eligibility

5.1 Full-time Academic Staff

Funding will be awarded to rated researchers currently holding full-time academic or research positions at qualifying institutions. Researchers who allow their rating to lapse, or who lose their rating in the re-evaluation process will not qualify for NRF support under Incentive Funded for Rated Researchers until such time that they have regained a valid NRF rating

5.2 Retired rated researchers

Funding will be awarded to rated researchers affiliated to an NRF recognised research institution provided that:

- there is a demonstration of institutional support in the form of an employment contract, office space, administrative support, access to research equipment and space. The institution must ensure that minimum reasonable time is spent at the facility for the purpose of research and research capacity development.
- the researcher has a research track record which includes but is not limited to the successful training of research students.

5.3 Joint appointments

In order to receive Incentive Funding, researchers who hold joint appointments, between a South African (SA) and a foreign institution:

- a. must be actively involved in research capacity building locally and mentoring/training postgraduate students/young research staff
- b. are appointed by the SA institution on a full-time basis for a period of at least six months per annum and spend six months per annum in SA.

6 Funding Levels

Funding will be awarded to rated researchers on an annual basis for the duration of their rating. There will be no direct competition for these funds as the rigorous evaluation and rating process will provide a global competitiveness necessary to remain a fair process.

The funding is guaranteed but not automatic and according to audit requirements, no grant can be made without an application.

The NRF account to the Auditor-General and hence, must follow the already formalized and transparent application processes without exception.

The funding levels are shown in **Table 1 below**.

Rating	A	B	C	P	Y	L
Maximum amount contributed by the NRF / R 000	100	80	40	40	20	20
Matching amount contributed by host institution / R 000	0	0	0	40	20	20
Total / R 000	100	80	40	80	40	40

Table 1: Value of Incentive Grants per annum

The timeline for these grants is illustrated in **Figure 1**.

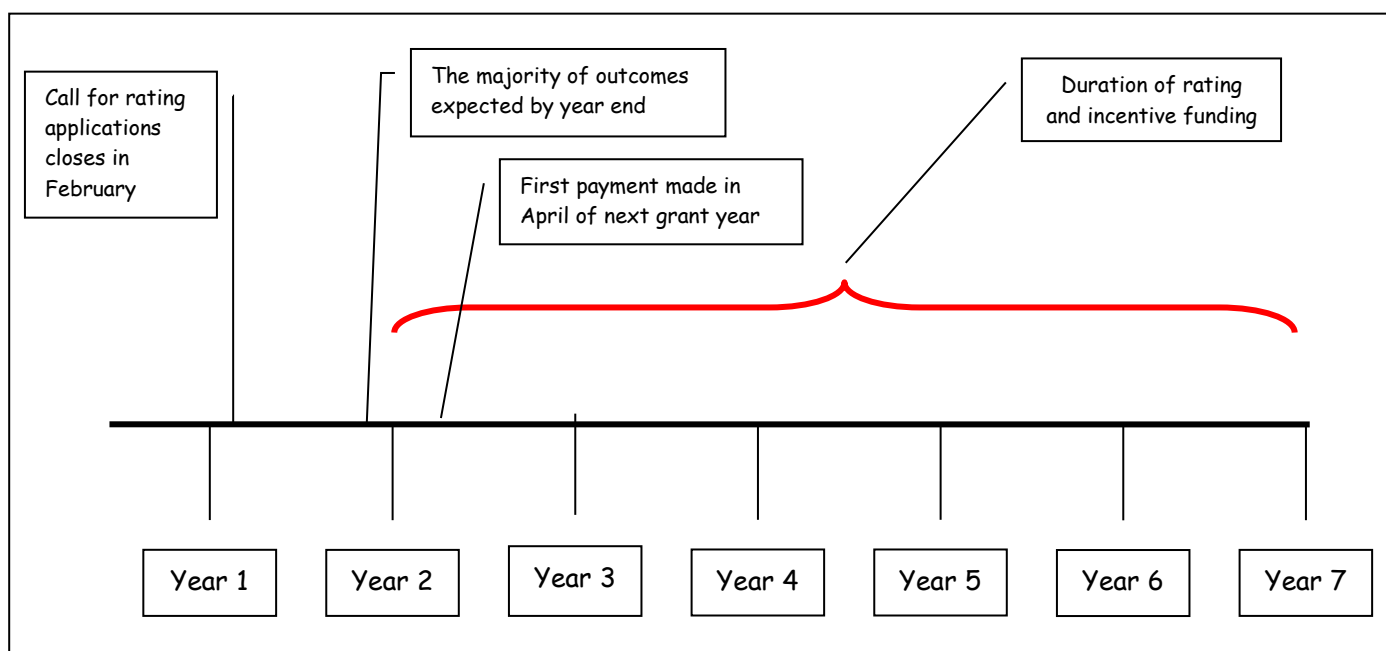


Figure 1: Timeline of Incentive Funding for Rated Researchers

7 Financial Control

The allocated research funds are to be used strictly for research-related activities. It will be awarded against running costs but can be used to cover the following research related costs and researchers will be required to report annually on the categories below.

7.1 Student support (Should researchers allocate the funds towards a full bursary, they need to conform to the standard NRF rules for bursaries and the full commitment or study duration will need to be adhered to).

- Final year Undergraduate (100% SA citizens with a minimum ratio of 1:1 for Black and White participants- 1 year)
- Honours/BTech student assistantships(100% SA citizens with a minimum ratio of 1:1 for Black and White participants – 1 year)
- Masters bursaries (90% to South Africans and 10% to candidates from other African countries – 2 years)
- Doctoral bursaries (80:15:5, SA: Other African: Rest of the World – 3 years)
- Postdoctoral bursaries (Open to all who undertake research in South Africa – 2 years)

7.3 Materials and Supplies

All research related running expenses

The NRF **does however, not** provide financial support for:

- Basic office equipment including computers and consumables unless the computer is required for the research itself or the applicant/team member is based at a museum.
- Basic office stationery, photocopying costs, printing costs unless these items form part of the research tools or the applicant/team member is based at a museum.
- Journal publication costs, journal subscription costs, book costs unless the applicant/team member is based at a museum.
- Telephone, fax and internet costs unless the applicant/team member is based at a museum.

7.4 Travel and subsistence

- International conference attendance
- International visits
- Local conference attendance
- Local travel

7.5 Research / Technical / Ad hoc Assistants

- The NRF does not pay for any salaries or buy-out time for lecturing staff
- Researchers may remunerate an assistant when specific and/or highly specialized research/technical expertise is required.
- Administrative assistance / or research assistance DOES NOT qualify as technical assistance.

7.6 Equipment

Researchers may use the funds for small laboratory equipment.

7.8 Sabbatical

Sabbaticals to other research organizations and institutions of higher learning

8 Reporting

8.1 Annual Progress Reports

Annual Progress Reports submitted by 31 March of the subsequent year of funding at <https://nrfs submission.nrf.ac.za> – Quick Links, must report on how the funds were spent during the previous financial year according to the categories above in 7. This will assist the NRF in assessing the returns of investing in research excellence as well as get a sense of where and how the Incentive Funding for Rated Research money is spent.

Failure to submit an annual progress report will result in funds of the subsequent year not being released. This funding will fall under the NRF audit requirements of beneficiary institutions and grant holders' and institutions' Designated Authority will be required to sign the Conditions of Grant document before funds are released.

NB !!!!! No carry forward of unspent funding will be allowed for these grants in any event.

8.2 Return on Investment

Researchers will be required to report on the research impact annually in terms of:

- Community / Society benefit
- Public policy
- Future research
- Advocacy and public awareness

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