General information

- The NRF online system for rating applications will open in September 2011 and will close on 15 February 2012.
- The Division for Research Development is responsible for submitting applications to the NRF, i.e. the NRF will not accept applications without institutional endorsement.
- Stellenbosch University has an internal evaluation process. The INTERNAL CLOSING DATE for applications is 5 December 2011. Applicants will receive feedback on their applications by mid-January 2012, whereafter alterations can be made for final submission by 15 February 2012.
- First-time applicants are welcome to contact the Division for Research Development to establish their rating-readiness.

Eligibility for NRF rating

- Researchers who are employed and remunerated on a full-time, part-time or contract basis at SU.
- Full-time temporary staff members at SU who enjoy the conditions of service that normally also apply to their permanent full-time colleagues.
- Postdoctoral fellows conducting research at SU.
- Persons who are being considered for full-time posts at SU (i.e. applications from such persons can be submitted before they are actually employed).
- Persons holding joint appointments between SU and a foreign institution who are actively involved in research capacity building locally. Such persons should be employed by SU in a full-time capacity for a period of at least six months per annum and should spend at least six months per annum in SA.
- Retired academics/researchers must meet all set criteria as stipulated below:
  - Resident in SA, and
  - Formally affiliated to UCT (e.g. appointed as an emeritus professor, honorary research associate/professor, contract employee) and whose application for rating is formally supported and endorsed by SU.
  - Active researchers with a distinguished track record in research and postgraduate student supervision, and
  - Actively mentoring/training postgraduate students/young research staff.

NRF Rating Categories

A: Researchers who are unequivocally recognized by their peers as leading international scholars in their field for the high quality and impact of their recent research outputs.

B: Researchers who enjoy considerable international recognition by their peers for the high quality and impact of their recent research outputs.

C: Established researchers with a sustained recent record of productivity in the field who are recognized by their peers as having:
  - produced a body of quality work, the core of which has coherence and attests to ongoing engagement with the field
  - demonstrated the ability to conceptualize problems and apply research methods to investigating them.

P: Young researchers (normally younger than 35 years of age), who have held the doctorate or equivalent qualification for less than 5 years at the time of application and who, on the basis of exceptional potential demonstrated in their published doctoral work and/or their research outputs in their early post-doctoral careers are considered likely to become future leaders in their field.

Y: Young researchers (40 years or younger), who have held the doctorate or equivalent qualification for less than 5 years at the time of application, and who are recognized as having the potential to establish themselves as researchers within a 5-year period after evaluation, based on their performance and productivity as researchers during their doctoral studies and/or early post-doctoral careers.

NRF Online – Getting Started

- Go to http://nrfinterim.nrf.ac.za
- You will need to register if you are a first-time user, or enter your id and password to get started.
- Click on the “Create New Application” button (on the left hand menu). This will open the option to apply to the call “2012 Rating Application”.
- Click on “Apply”. This is a once-off process. When logging in thereafter, click on the “My Applications” button (on the left hand menu), and then click on “Edit” to continue with your application.
- Please take note that your CV data should be completed on the NRF Online system (http://nrfonline.nrf.ac.za). When you log in, go to “Edit Detailed CV”.

About NRF Evaluation and Rating

- The evaluation and rating of individuals is based primarily on the quality of the research outputs in the recent past. “Recent”, in the context of the NRF evaluation and rating system, means outputs of the past eight years, and which, for the current closing date, 15 February 2012, is defined as 1 January 2004 to 31 December 2011.
- The evaluation is undertaken by national and international reviewers who are requested to critically scrutinize the research completed during the assessment period.
- Applications are made either by “established” researchers with a solid track record (categories C, B and A), or by “younger” researchers who show potential to become established within a five-year period (Y), or becoming future leaders in their field (P).
The online application is a time-consuming process, and it is recommended that you set aside at least two weeks for compiling the application, including the online entry. You need not enter the data during one session, but please remember to save your work after each entry.

Useful tips

✓ Read the guidelines and instructions provided by the NRF (provided in your handout).
✓ Use the offline template (provided in your handout) to compile your narrative sections (e.g. self-assessment and completed research), as this will allow you to spell/grammar-check your work and also to check the length. The narrative sections are limited to the equivalent of 5500 characters; the online system will automatically delete extra text!!

Advantages of Being Rated

- The rating is used as a national indicator of excellence and is to the advantage of your faculty and the University in terms of benchmarking.
- A successful rating allows you the option of applying for incentive funding from the NRF, the amount of which is directly proportional to the researcher’s rating.
- Apart from providing access to NRF funds, rating may assist in leveraging other SU funds, as well as outside funding.
- In some faculties, a rating may impact on the performance appraisal of an individual.

Useful Documents and Websites

Visit the NRF website, http://www.nrf.ac.za/risa.php?id=2&tab=projects&sub=Projects, for helpful documents and information:

- Offline template (MS Word format) to assist with the preparation of the rating application. This document is also available from the Division for Research Development.
- Key Research Areas and Types of Research Outputs. This document outlines which research outputs are taken into account in the rating process and their relative importance.
- Guidelines and instructions for completing the application for evaluation and rating. This document describes the rating process in detail and is also available from the Division for Research Development.
- Dates of panel meetings. Outcomes (when finalized) are usually made known 2-4 weeks after the panel meeting.
- Information on reviewers and the types of questions reviewers are generally asked to comment on.
- Facts and figures on currently rated researchers.

Contact us

For general information, questions or assistance with your application, please contact:

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Good luck with your application!!!