On behalf of SAYAS, the *Feeding the Pipeline* task team presents:

Empowering your success for postgraduate (Hons, Masters, PhD & Post-doctoral Studies) funding applications

Before you start your application, it is crucial to ensure that:

1. Applicants adhere to the institutional cut- off dates and or closing dates of the applications.
2. Ample time is dedicated towards the application and that the application is commenced well on time to ensure submission of a quality application.
3. Applicants read and understand (all necessary documents) the framework and/or funding call before preparing the application.
4. Applicants must make sure to fulfil the bursary/funding eligibility requirements.
5. Applicants must ensure all sections of the online or hardcopy of the application form are adequately completed and seek help if needed (most funders have an email address to which queries can be addressed).
6. The application has been checked/revised for any errors before submission.
7. Potential supervisors and referees must have seen the proposal before their names are entered into the system or recommendation letters requested.
8. Applicants update their CV on the respective funder's website or platform if required
9. If you require a mentor to assist with your application (contact Mr K Mbhiza Kholani@assaf.org.za or Prof T Naicker Naickert1@ukzn.ac.za that can put you in touch with someone from the task team)

Criteria	What it means and Key information that should go under these headings/sections
Academic merit	Percentage mark for the previous degree, for example Master's degree if completed; OR if the Master's degree is in progress average percentage mark for the Honours degree (note your honours research mark may be important here for some institutions); OR Average percentage mark for major subjects in the final year of a four-year Undergraduate degree.
Completion Time	Time taken for completion of the Honour's/Master's degree. (Note: Even if the Honours or Master's degree is still in progress, consider <u>envisaged</u> completion time for Master's degree)
Track Record of Research Outputs	Evidence of research outputs in accredited peer-reviewed publications and presentations at conferences/symposiums. Peer-reviewed publication/s Conference podium or virtual presentation/s Poster presentations or symposium presentation/s Research prizes and/or awards. Take heed of predatory publishers because this will disadvantage your application. Kindly refer to DHET or NRF list of predatory publishers. It is encouraged that you always publish in DHET accredited journals.
Priority Research Area	Research aligned with one of the with funders/NRF listed research priority areas (Refer to Table 1 below). The study is highly aligned with more than one of the with funders/NRF listed research priority areas. This is supported with an elaborate explanation and thorough motivation.
Problem Statement	For the following sections, ensure to take note of the number of characters allowed per section before you attempt filling it in. Significance of the research in terms of the problem statement informing the proposal. The problem statement is clearly articulated, gaps in the existing literature are identified and supported by relevant literature (with in-text citations and reference list). The applicant must clearly indicate what the research problem is, why is it a problem and who is affected by the problem and how. For example, a research problem might be a gap in the field of knowledge or a problem that needs to be solved.
Rationale and Literature Review	Description of research rationale (i.e., motivation for the research) including a literature review with in with in-text citations and reference list. The research rationale provides strong and valid arguments on the importance of the research and clearly outlines how the research will address the gap or problem identified in the problem statement. The literature must be relevant and fully aligned with the problem statement and fully support the proposed research. Citations in text are included and the list of references can be an attachment or part of the text (depending on space availability, note for NRF applications, references can be submitted via an attachment). Please ensure that relevant and at least 60% current (not more than 5 years old) sources are consulted. Literature should also be from credible sources which are mainly from accredited journals/reports and conference proceedings.

Criteria	What it means and Key information that should go under these headings/sections
Aims and Objectives	Description of the aims and objectives of the study The research aim clearly indicates the main goal of the project and the objectives concisely indicate the key issues that the research will focus on. Both the aims and objectives should be aligned with the problem statement and proposed topic. Clear and SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time bound) must be outlined or listed. The objectives must not be a description of the methods, for example "to measure blood pressure using a BP monitor after giving compound Y" is not an objective. However, "to determine the effect of compound Y on blood pressure" is an objective. The aims and objectives should be crafted in a way that there is the main objective or aim supported by specific objectives.
Methodology and Proposed Research Plan	Research methodology, work plan and project organization (activities and timelines). In some institutions, there is a required financial needs plan as part of the workplan. The proposed methodology systematically details the approach that will be taken to resolve the research problem. Information on data collection, measurement and analysis is clearly outlined. The detail provided is aligned with the aims and research questions/objectives. The research work-plan lists project activities that are linked to realistic and feasible timelines. Issues of research ethics are to be included where necessary. Where the methodology invoked is doctrinal, doctrine relating to the research problem must be clearly interpreted, assessed and developed.
Anticipated Outputs	Anticipated realistic outputs of the research such as publications, poster and/or oral conference presentations. As an example, one research article/book chapter or any respective output for the specific discipline will be produced. In case of an article publication, the anticipated number of publications, title and target journals should be mentioned. For other outputs, information dissemination/ technology transfer is to be explicitly articulated. In addition, one conference to be attended has been identified and the work will be presented in a public forum/workshop (as a poster/oral presentation). The proposed topic and name of target conference(s) should be mentioned. The stated expected outputs should be realistic and achievable. It is important to note that journal choice need to be aligned to the open access policy of the funder, for example the funder may have an embargo clause for a specific duration for access to the article.
Potential Impact	Potential to contribute to national and international research strategies and the strategic goals of the knowledge economy. Impact refers to long-term effects. The stated impact should be very high, feasible and will contribute immensely to national research strategies and the strategic goals of the knowledge economy. This is supported with an elaborate explanation and thorough motivation. The candidate has to clearly define how this research will have socio economic/ environmental impact AND how the project will contribute to knowledge generation/commercial application /societal benefits nationally and or internationally. The candidate should also consider science or related field of communication and how they will disseminate their findings beyond the scientific or related field community using accessible platforms such as the conversation, local newspapers and blogs.

Criteria	What it means and Key information that should go under these headings/sections
Alignment with National Research Strategies	Alignment with one or more National and International Research Strategies The candidate has to list more than one national priority (in some cases from the drop-down menu on the funder's site) and has to explain how the proposed research fits AND contributes. In some cases, it has to be fully aligned to the stated strategy/s or Sustainable Development Goals.

NOTE: Historically Disadvantaged Institutions (HDI)

In some calls, collaboration with an HDI (either through student supervision or access to infrastructure) is a requirement or an advantage.
Please note that only the following eight universities will be recognized as historically disadvantaged in line with the Department of Higher Education and Training November 2015 Ministerial Statement on university funding:

- University of Limpopo (UL)
- University of Fort Hare (UFH)
- University of Venda (Univen)
- Walter Sisulu University (WSU)
- University of the Western Cape (UWC)
- University of Zululand (UniZulu)
- Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT)
- Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU).

Table 1: NRF Listed Research Priority Areas

Accounting	Actuarial Science	Agricultural Sciences	Astronomy
Auditing	Bioinformatics*	Biotechnology	Cellular and Molecular Biology
Chemistry	Climate Change*	Computer science	Demography
Drug Discovery and Development*	Earth Sciences	Earth Observation*	Ecology

Economic Sciences	Education	Engineering	Environmental Sciences
Financial Management	Functional Genomics*	Geology	Global Change, Society and Sustainability*
Health Sciences	Information Science	Information Systems	Indigenous Knowledge Systems*
Law	Mathematical Sciences	Marine Sciences*	Medicinal Plant *
Medical sciences	Nanotechnology*	Nuclear Technologies in Medicine and Biosciences*	Palaeosciences*
Polar Science*	Physics	Renewable Energy*	Social Science and Humanities
Space Science*	Statistics	Transportation Studies	Tourism

*DST Priority Research Areas