General Guidelines on Eligibility for Support:

DSTI-CSIR Inter-programme Bursary Scheme

The Department of Science, Technology and Innovation (DSTI) established the Inter-programme Bursary Scheme (IBS) to support postgraduate studies and capacity development in critical, strategic and priority areas identified in key departmental strategies. The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) supports the DSTI in developing skills in these areas.

1. Eligibility

- All students who have been accepted or registered for **full-time** studies at any South African public university.
- All students who intend to register or are registered for the following:
  - **Honours/fourth-year engineering/postgraduate diploma;**
  - **Master's; and**
  - **Doctorate.**
- Academic performance:
  - A minimum average of **65%** for the final undergraduate year of study for honours, 4th year engineering and postgraduate diploma bursaries.
  - A minimum average of **65%** at the honours level for the master's bursary
  - A minimum average of **65%** at the master's level for doctoral bursary

DSTI-CSIR IBS applications are restricted to students **whose degrees align with the thematic research areas and research themes/technology streams indicated below.** Supervisor endorsement and motivation will be required for each bursary application for master's and doctoral studies.

Preference will be given to applicants from previously disadvantaged backgrounds and people living with disabilities.

2. Funding amounts

Level of study	Funding amount	Once-off laptop allowance
Honours	R130 000	R10 000
Master's	R140 000	R10 000
Doctorate	R160 000	R10 000

3. Payment process and conditions of the bursary

- **The full bursary amount will be credited to the student's university account to cover registration and tuition fees. The balance will be allocated to the student on a monthly or quarterly basis by the university**;
- This funding cannot supplement existing bursaries from other government sources (e.g., National Research Foundation (NRF) or other government-derived bursaries). If a student applies for more than one government-derived bursary and becomes successful in more than one, they must select **only one** before accepting this award. Once the funds are deposited into the student's university account, **they cannot be reversed later during the academic year**;
- Funding allocated for each bursary is for the specific academic year in which it was awarded. For first-time registration, an honours/fourth-year engineering/postgraduate diploma award will be limited to one year, a master's award to two years and a doctoral award to three years;
- Funding is only guaranteed for one year. Continuation of funding is dependent on the student's performance and the availability of funds from the sponsor; and
- The period of the award is calculated from the first year of study or research registration, regardless of the IBS funding. **For example, a master's student who obtains support in their second year of registration will only be funded for one year.**

4. Feedback

- Once an application has been submitted, applicants will be able to check their application status using the login details supplied to them during the initial application process; and
- Communication will be sent to all applicants within two months of the deadline to notify them of their application status.

5. Reporting requirements

Honours/fourth-year engineering/postgraduate diploma

- Students are expected to submit their results at the end of each semester.

Master's and doctoral students

- Students are required to submit mid-year progress reports, which must be signed off by the supervisor. At the end of the academic year, students must submit an annual progress report (APR); and
- An official template for the APR will be provided to ensure that the stated objectives are met within the stipulated timeframes.

6. Work back requirements

Students are **NOT** subject to any work-back agreement with the CSIR upon completion of their studies.

7. Thematic research focus areas

Preference will be given to projects within the areas mentioned below.

Honours, fourth-year engineering and postgraduate diploma-level students should clearly state which thematic research focus area they are applying for to demonstrate their potential contribution to future pipeline development. It will be an added advantage to demonstrate whether their final year project aligns with the research focus area.

Thematic research areas of interest for bursary support are outlined below.

Thematic area	Research focus areas	
Biotechnology	Biopharming	
	Bioprocessing	
	Bio-catalysis	
Health	Pharmaceutical Sciences	Pathology
	Biomedical Sciences	Forensic Medicine
	Health Sciences (excluding Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Science)	Nutrition
	Biochemistry	Biokinetics, Recreation and Sport Science
	Pharmacology	Synthetic Biology
	Microbiology	Precision Medicine
	Physiology	Molecular Biology
Information and Communications Technology	Information Systems	Statistics
	Computer Science	Data Science
	Information Technology	Mathematical Statistics
	Electrical and Computer Engineering	Applied Mathematics
	Electronic Engineering	Epidemiology and Biostatistics
	Information Systems Management	Artificial Intelligence
Indigenous Knowledge Systems	Bioeconomy (food security, health, technology, nutraceuticals and cosmeceuticals)	Agriculture (Indigenous Agricultural Practices)
	Climate Change (Environmental Management)	Engineering (Product And Process Development)
	Technology Innovations	Ethnobotany and Ethno-pharmacology

	Energy (alternative and clean sources)	Community Engagement and Scientific Research
Microsystems technology (areas relating to microfluidics and micro-electro-mechanical systems (MEMS), broadly referred to as microsystems technology)	Microfluidics	
	MEMS	
	Printed functionality	
	Sensors	
Mining (areas to support the People-centred Mine Modernisation drive)	Mining Engineering	Energy and Renewable Energy
	Rock Engineering	Civil Engineering/Geotechnical
	Engineering Geology	Data Modelling and Machine Learning
	Systems Engineering	Environmental Engineering/Environmental Science
	Software Engineering	Software Engineering (Software Design and Integration)
	Mechatronics Engineering	Electrical and Electronics Engineering (Sensor Design Engineering)
	Bioinformatics	

Modelling and digital sciences	Token-based authentication (including, but not limited to, Smart Card Systems)	
	Cybersecurity	
	Data Science	
Photonics	Free-space and Fibre Optics	Quantum Control with Photonic Systems
	Optical Tweezing	Laser-cooled Atomic Systems Research
	Bio-photonics	Laser Welding
	Quantum Optics	Free-space and Fibre Optical Communication Systems
	Laser Research	
Water Research	Water Science and Technology	Aqueous Geochemistry
	Water Resource Management	Hydrogeology
	Water Quality Modelling	Environmental Engineering and Technology
	Environmental Sciences and Management with a focus on Water	Civil Engineering with an emphasis on Water
	Environmental Chemistry	Chemical Engineering focusing on Water
Titanium (manufacturing elements): priority will be given to focus areas that support the	Primary Metal (Titanium) Production	High-performance Machining
	Titanium Powder Consolidation	Friction Welding
	High-Speed Additive Manufacturing	Sheet Forming

Titanium Centre of Competence (TiCoC)	Investment Casting	Cross-cutting aspects such as Physical Metallurgy and Characterisation, Design, Simulation and Modelling will also be considered
Please note that students who are already funded under TiCoC will not be considered for funding in this programme.		

8. Continuation of funding

The award is for the 2026 academic year, and continuation for master's and doctoral students will depend on the availability of funds and the student's academic progress (as captured in the APR with input from the supervisor of the proposed research). Students will be notified about the outcome of their renewal via direct correspondence.

The applicant and supervisor must indicate when they submit their APR whether continuation support is required.

9. Successful completion of the online application form

Applicants are required to complete their online application forms in full. **Incomplete application forms will not be considered**.

All applications must be accompanied by the following supporting documents:

- Proof of South African identity document or passport (for international students) and permanent residency; and
- Transcript of academic record indicating a minimum cumulative academic achievement in the previous degree.

Note: **It is the student's responsibility to find a suitable supervisor and ensure that the supervisor supports their application.**

Contact details

For enquiries, please contact the CSIR by email at bursaryprogramme@csir.co.za.