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Science and Technology
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

National Research Foundation

Application and Funding Guide for 2020

Extension Support for Masters and Doctoral Scholarships

Grants Management and Systems Administration

Table of Contents

1. INTRODUCTION 4

2. CONDITIONS OF GRANT 4

3. APPLICATION PROCESS 4

4. HOW TO SUBMIT APPLICATIONS 5

5. SCREENING AND REVIEW PROCESSES 18

    5.1. Overview of the Screening Process 18

    5.2. Overview of the Review Process 19

6. APPLICATIONS FEEDBACK AND DISPUTES 19

7. AWARDEE RESPONSIBILITIES 19

    7.1. Reporting 19

    7.2. Managing changes during the project life cycle 20

    7.2.1. Change Requests 20

    7.2.1.1. Prior Approval Requests 20

    7.2.1.2. Changes in Project Scope, Supervisor or Institution 20

8. SCIENTIFIC COMPLIANCE 20

    8.1. Methodology 20

    8.2. Intellectual Property Rights 20

    8.3. Ethics 21

List of Acronyms

PR	Progress Report
DA	Designated Authority
GMSA	Grants Management and Systems Administration
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HICD	Human and Infrastructure Capacity Development
RISA	Research and Innovation Support and Advancement
NRF	National Research Foundation

Contact Details

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Application and funding guidelines are explained in this document. Applicants must read this document together with the following document: Framework for Masters and Doctoral Scholarships for Full-time Studies which highlights the eligibility criteria and requirements of each funding instrument.

For technical online enquiries, please contact the NRF Support Desk during office hours from 08:00 to 16:30 Monday to Friday.

Tel: 012 481 4202

E-mail: supportdesk@nrf.ac.za

1. Introduction

This Application and Funding Guide provides an overview of the application process and funding guidelines for Extension Support for Masters and Doctoral Scholarships for the 2020 academic year. It should be read in conjunction with the above-mentioned **Framework**, which can be accessed at https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za and under the *NRF Call Information documents* on the application. The Framework provides detailed information with respect to objectives of the funding instrument, eligibility criteria, etc. This document does not, however, constitute a complete set of the policies, procedures or systems used by the NRF.

2. Conditions of Grant

- The NRF scholarship shall be held as the primary source of funding.
- The scholarship-holder may hold bursaries, awards, assistantships and receive emoluments from *private institutions* in conjunction with the NRF scholarship.
- The scholarship-holder will be accepted as a full-time student during the tenure of the scholarship. Scholarship-holders may not concurrently hold the scholarship with any full-time salaried employment position.
- The scholarship holder must obtain the degree for which the scholarship was awarded by the contractual date, which is within one (1) year after NRF funding has ceased and notify the NRF via the relevant university authority, unless otherwise approved by the NRF in writing. Should the scholarship holder not complete the degree for which the scholarship was awarded, the funds will have to be returned to the NRF plus interest at the prevailing prime rate charged by the NRF bankers.

3. Application Process

The NRF issues a call for the Masters and Doctoral Scholarships for Full-time Studies that is published on the NRF website and is accessible online at https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za. The Masters and Doctoral Scholarships for Full-time Studies call will not accept more than one (1) application per applicant. Current recipients of NRF Masters scholarships who wish to apply for half-year extension support as well as half-year Doctoral support under the first time applicant category will have to choose

between the two. Once an applicant submits an application, the application will be automatically routed to the institutional Designated Authority (DA) based at the Research/Postgraduate office at the university for validation before or on the deadline date determined by individual institutions. The applications will then be authorised and approved by the institutional DA through a screening process using the call requirements. The processing of a successful grant application takes approximately five (5) months from the time of submission until the commencement of funding.

4. How to Submit Applications

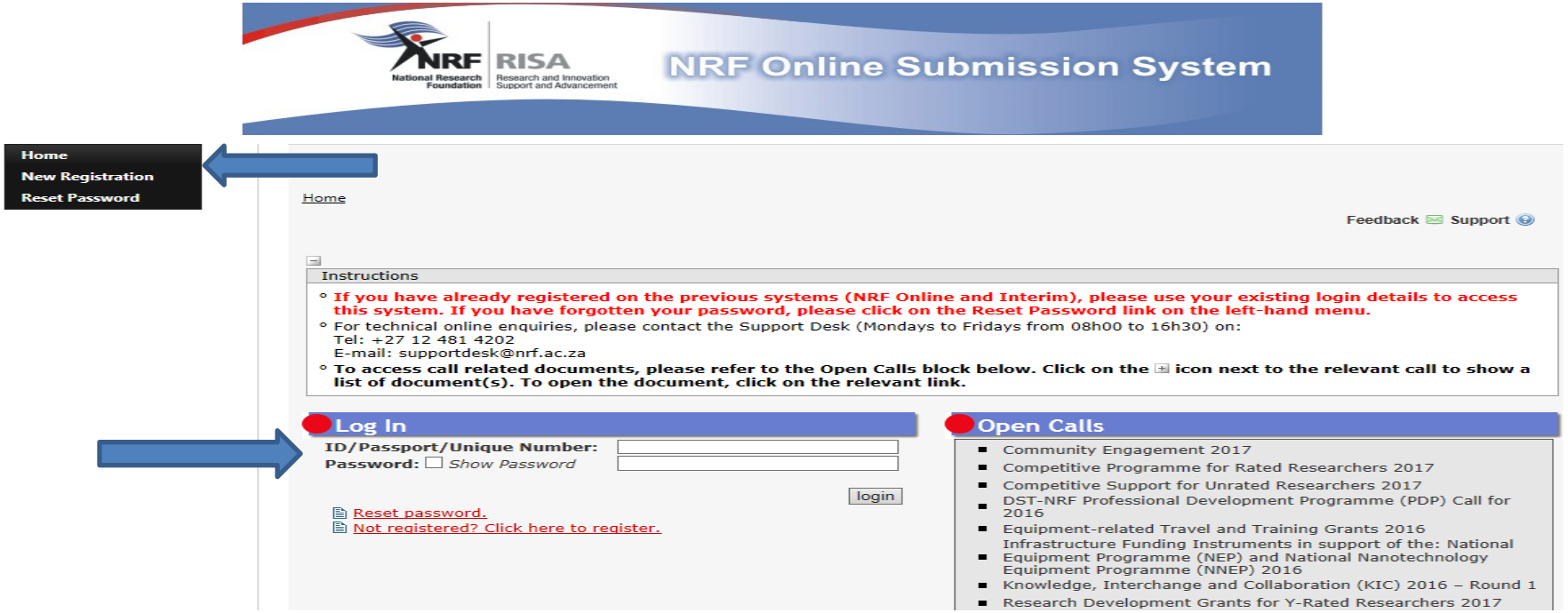
Applications may be completed on the NRF Online Submission System at https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za. Applicants are advised to complete their applications soon after the call opened to prevent IT system overload nearer the closing date.

Applicants must ensure that they adhere to their institution's internal closing date for submission of their application to allow for internal institutional screening and review. The internal closing date will be determined by the respective Research Office or Post Graduate Office and is usually at least two (2) weeks prior to the NRF closing date. It is the responsibility of the applicant to check the institution's internal closing date with the Research or Postgraduate office.

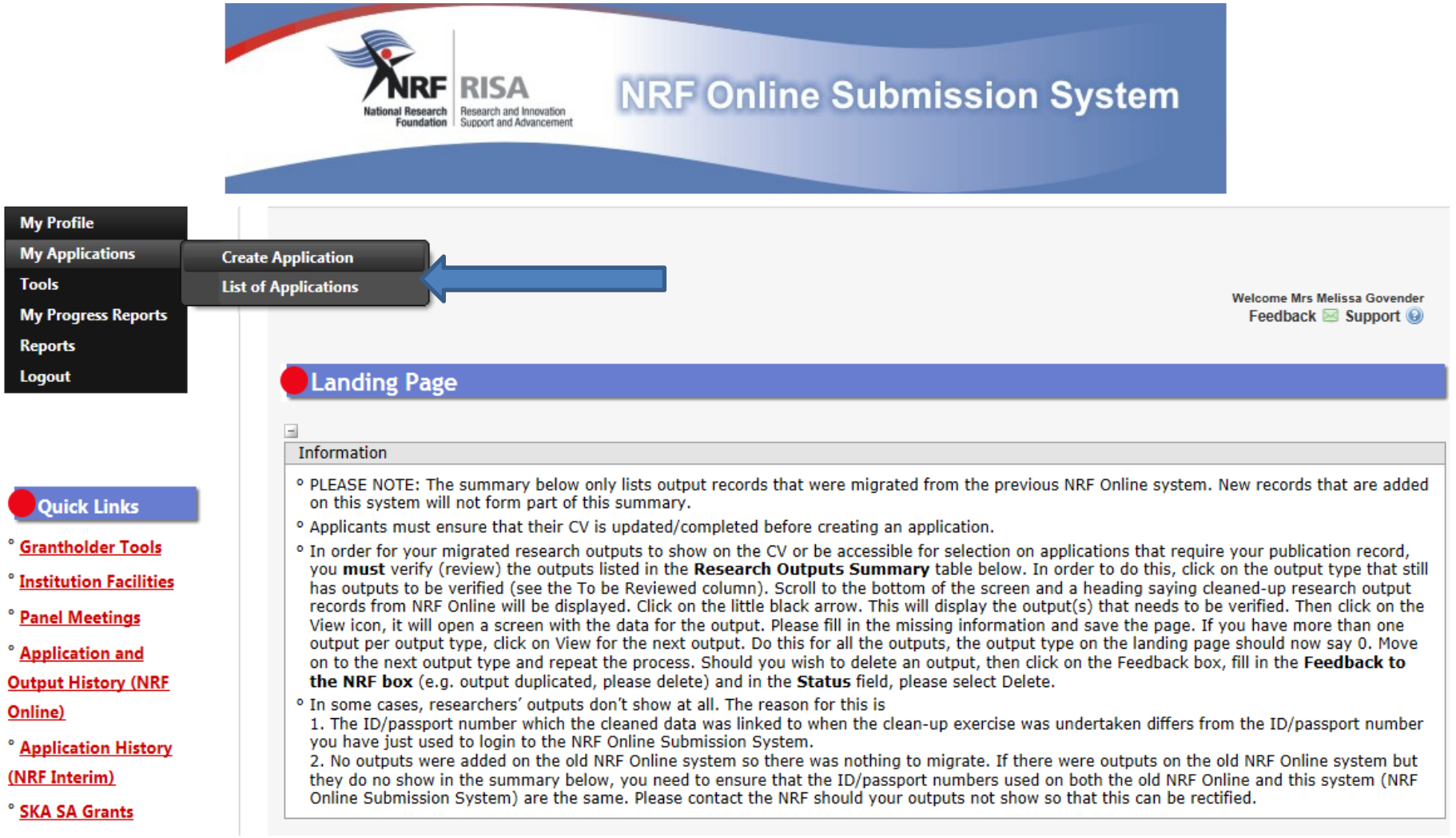
Step 1: This is an electronic submission system and applicants must be registered on the system in order to create and complete an application. If you had previously registered and submitted an application on the NRF Online System (http://nrfonline.nrf.ac.za) before February 2012, your details would have been migrated to the new NRF Online Submission System (https://nrfsubmission.nrf.ac.za). If you experience problems accessing the system with your NRF Online password, use the Reset Password button. If your e-mail address is outdated, please contact the NRF Support Desk for assistance. Contact details for the NRF support desk are in page 3 of this document.

If you are not yet registered on the NRF Online Submission System, you must register to access the application form.

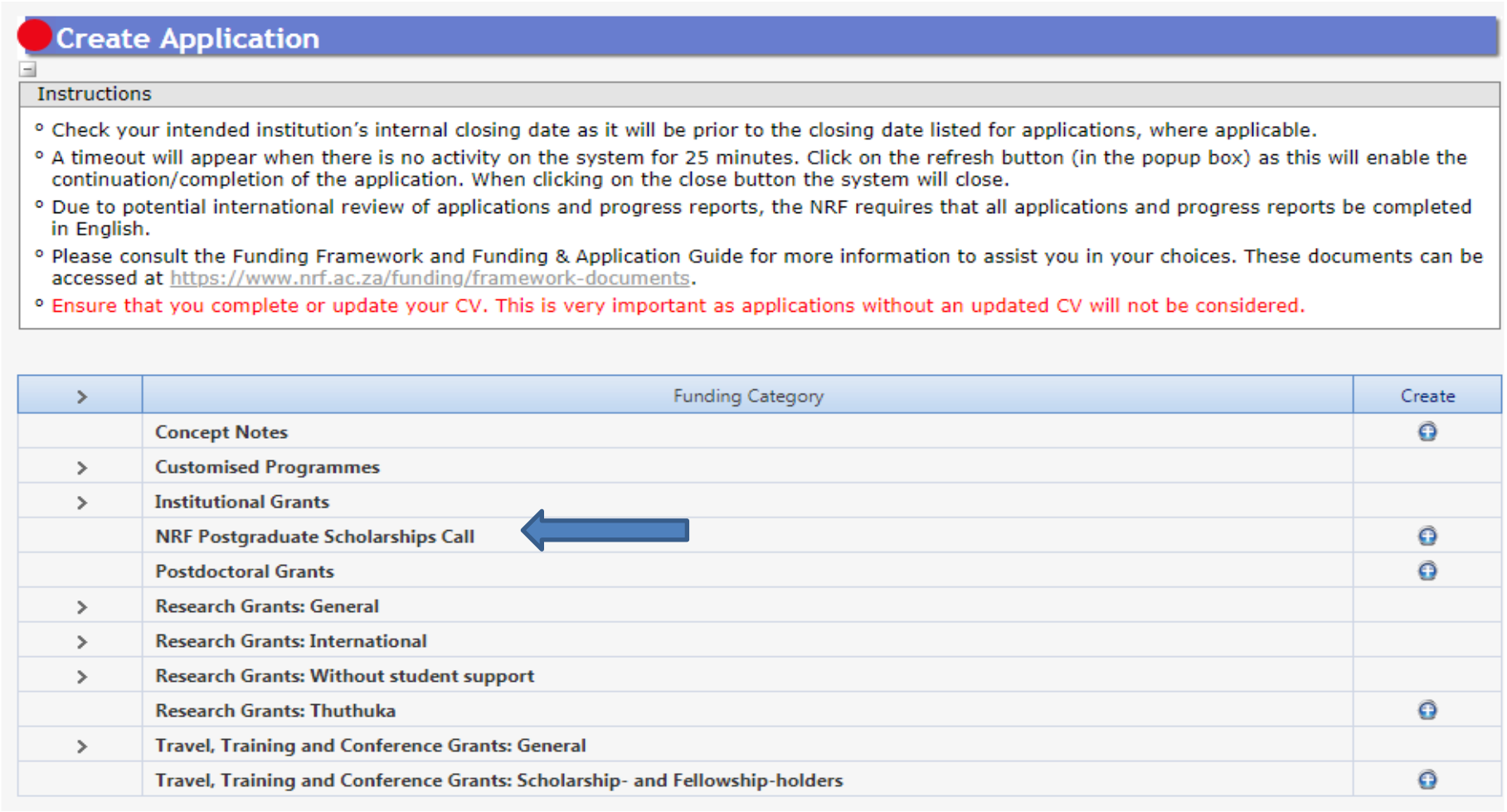
Most application screens have application-specific instructions to help you work through the section. Please read the instructions carefully before completing the section.



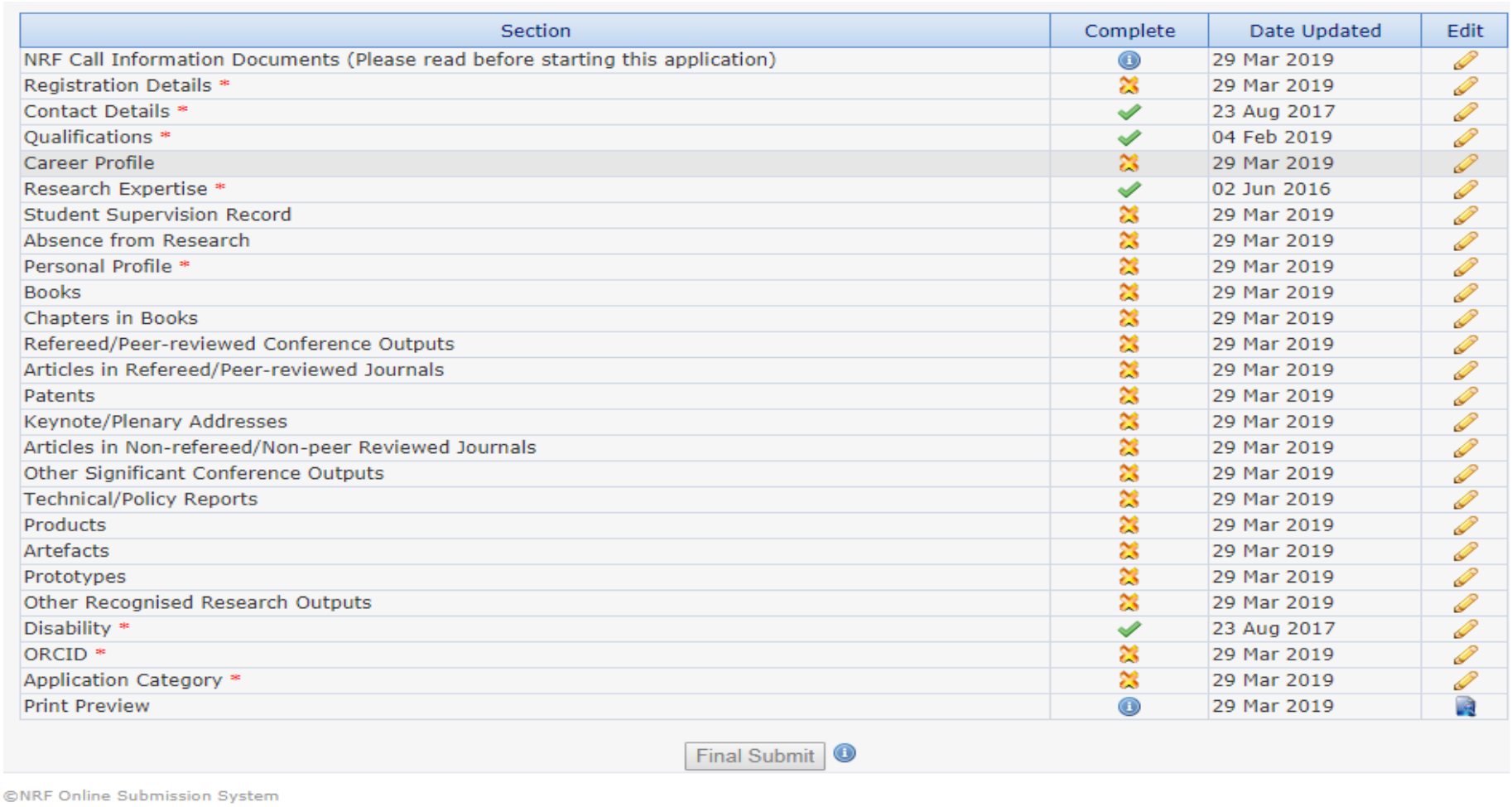
Step 2: After logging onto the NRF Online Submission System, applicants get to the **landing page** where there is a menu at the top left side of the screen (tab indicated with blue arrow below). Start by filling in all the sections under **My Profile – My CV** to create a CV. To create a new application, click on My Applications - Create Application.



Step 3: Select **NRF Postgraduate Scholarships Call NRF Postgraduate Scholarships Call*,*** on the ***Create Application*** screen and a new application will open for the applicant to complete. Please note that this must be selected only once. To continue working on the same application, go to My Applications - List of Applications, and click the Edit button.



Step 4: All sections marked with red **asterisks** (*) are compulsory. These sections must be completed in order for the final submit button to be activated. Applicants may enter information in the non-compulsory sections only if they have information to fill in, such as research outputs. Completed sections will be indicated by a green tick on the main menu, while incomplete sections will have a yellow cross.

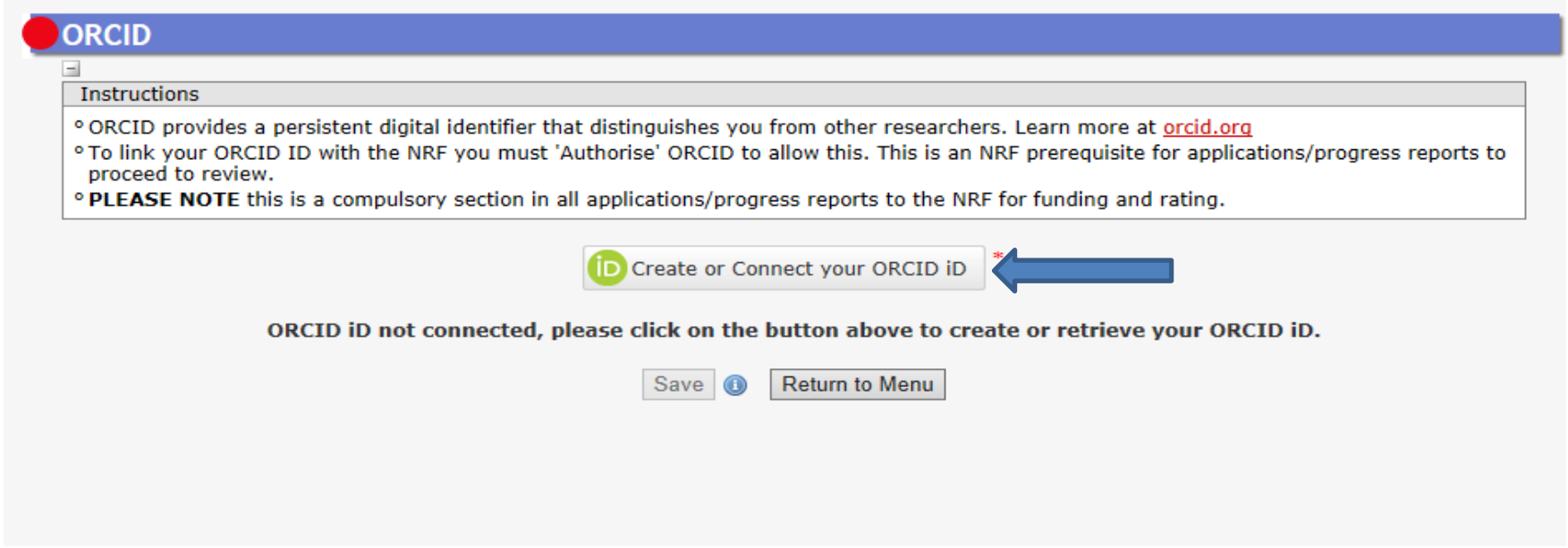


Section	Complete	Date Updated	Edit
NRF Call Information Documents (Please read before starting this application)		29 Mar 2019	
Registration Details *		29 Mar 2019	
Contact Details *		23 Aug 2017	
Qualifications *		04 Feb 2019	
Career Profile		29 Mar 2019	
Research Expertise *		02 Jun 2016	
Student Supervision Record		29 Mar 2019	
Absence from Research		29 Mar 2019	
Personal Profile *		29 Mar 2019	
Books		29 Mar 2019	
Chapters in Books		29 Mar 2019	
Refereed/Peer-reviewed Conference Outputs		29 Mar 2019	
Articles in Refereed/Peer-reviewed Journals		29 Mar 2019	
Patents		29 Mar 2019	
Keynote/Plenary Addresses		29 Mar 2019	
Articles in Non-refereed/Non-peer Reviewed Journals		29 Mar 2019	
Other Significant Conference Outputs		29 Mar 2019	
Technical/Policy Reports		29 Mar 2019	
Products		29 Mar 2019	
Artefacts		29 Mar 2019	
Prototypes		29 Mar 2019	
Other Recognised Research Outputs		29 Mar 2019	
Disability *		23 Aug 2017	
ORCID *		29 Mar 2019	
Application Category *		29 Mar 2019	
Print Preview		29 Mar 2019	

Final Submit

©NRF Online Submission System

Step 5: ORCID provides a persistent digital identifier that distinguishes you from other researchers and, through integration in key research workflows such as manuscript and grant submission, supports automated linkages between you and your professional activities ensuring that your work is recognized. If you don't have an ORCID ID, please click on *Create or Connect your ORCID iD,* you will be redirected to the ORCID website where you will have to register to obtain an ORCID ID. If you already have an ORCID ID, please click on *Create or Connect your ORCID iD* and your ORCID number will be pulled through.



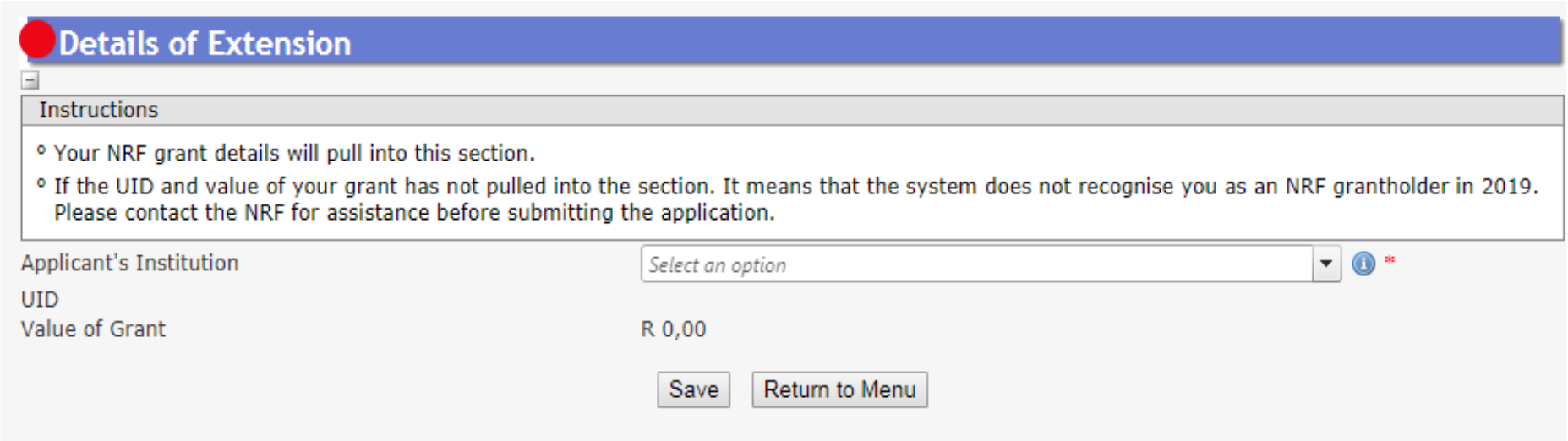
Step 6: Under the ***Application Category*** section, you have an option of applying for **Extension support** or applying as a **First time** applicant.

NB: **You can only apply for Extension support if you are a current recipient of an NRF scholarship and you need an additional year or six months funding to complete your current degree.**

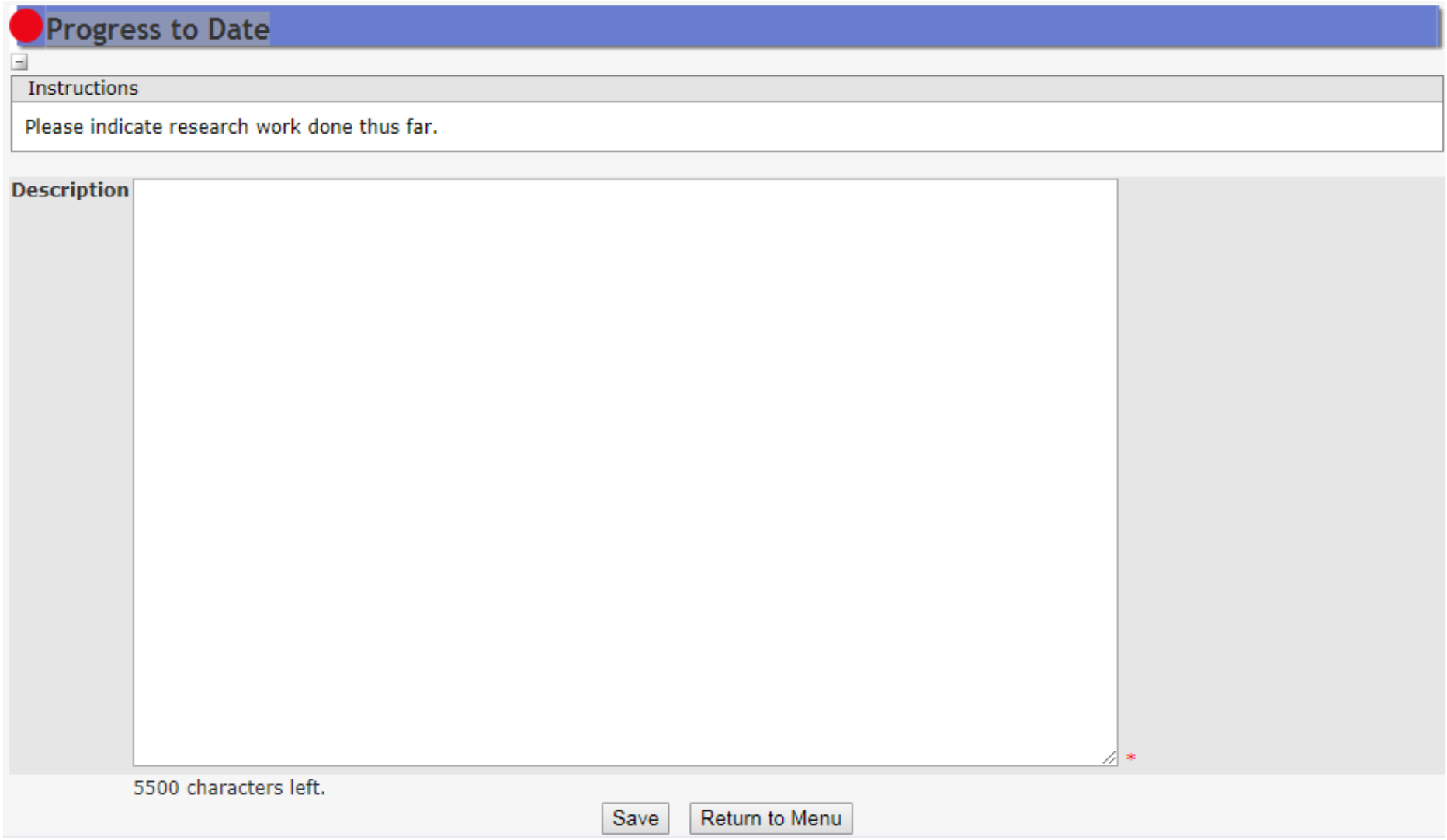
Select *Extension support Application* option and indicate the required period of support (6 or 12 Months).

Please note that the system will not allow you to make changes after the saving on this section. If you want to change something, please delete the application and create a new one.

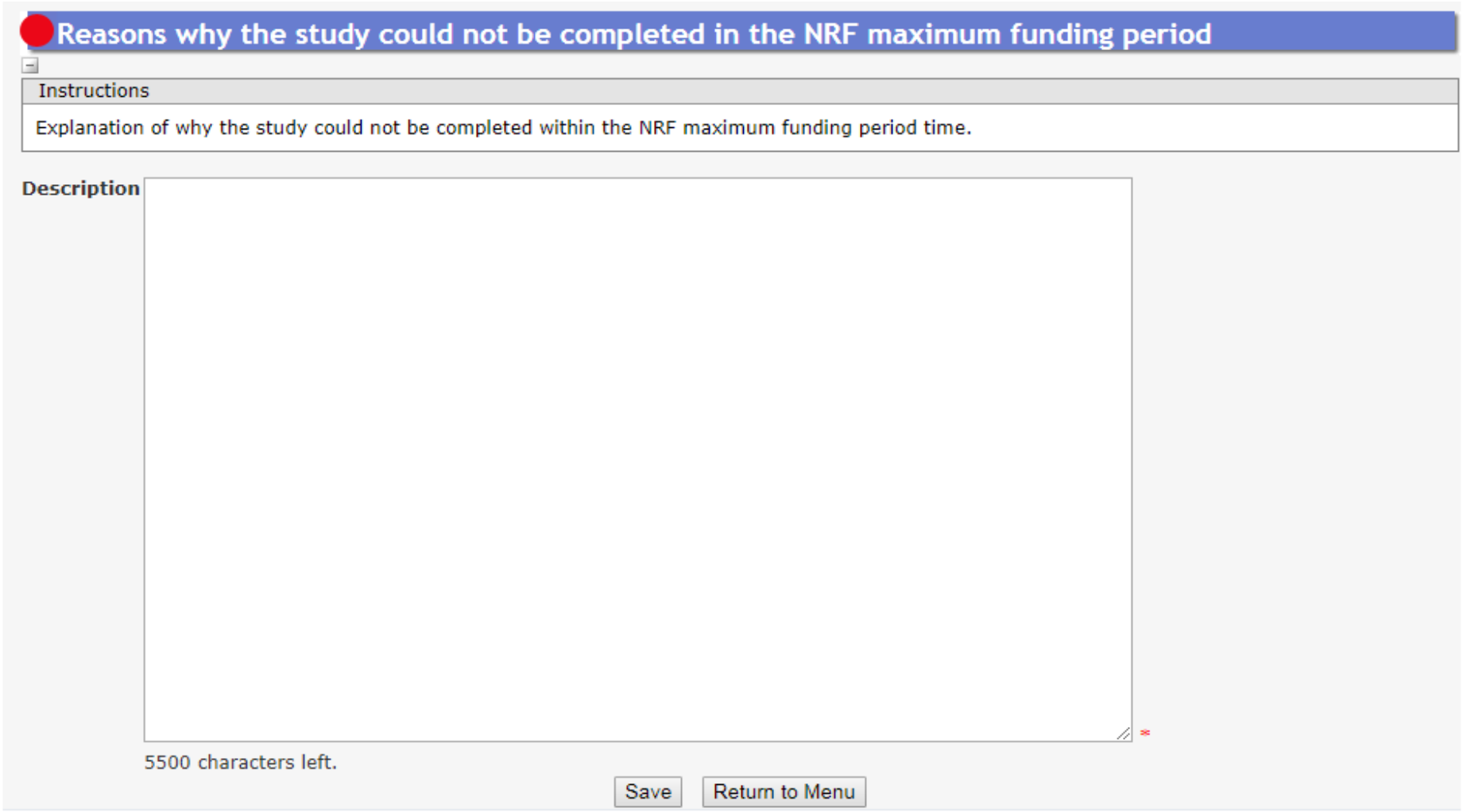
Step 7: The **Details of Extension** section requires applicants to select their institution. If the applicant is an NRF grantholder in 2019, the grant details will pull into this section**.** If your grant details does not pull into the section, it means that the NRF system does not recognise you as a grantholder. Please call the NRF contact person for assistance.



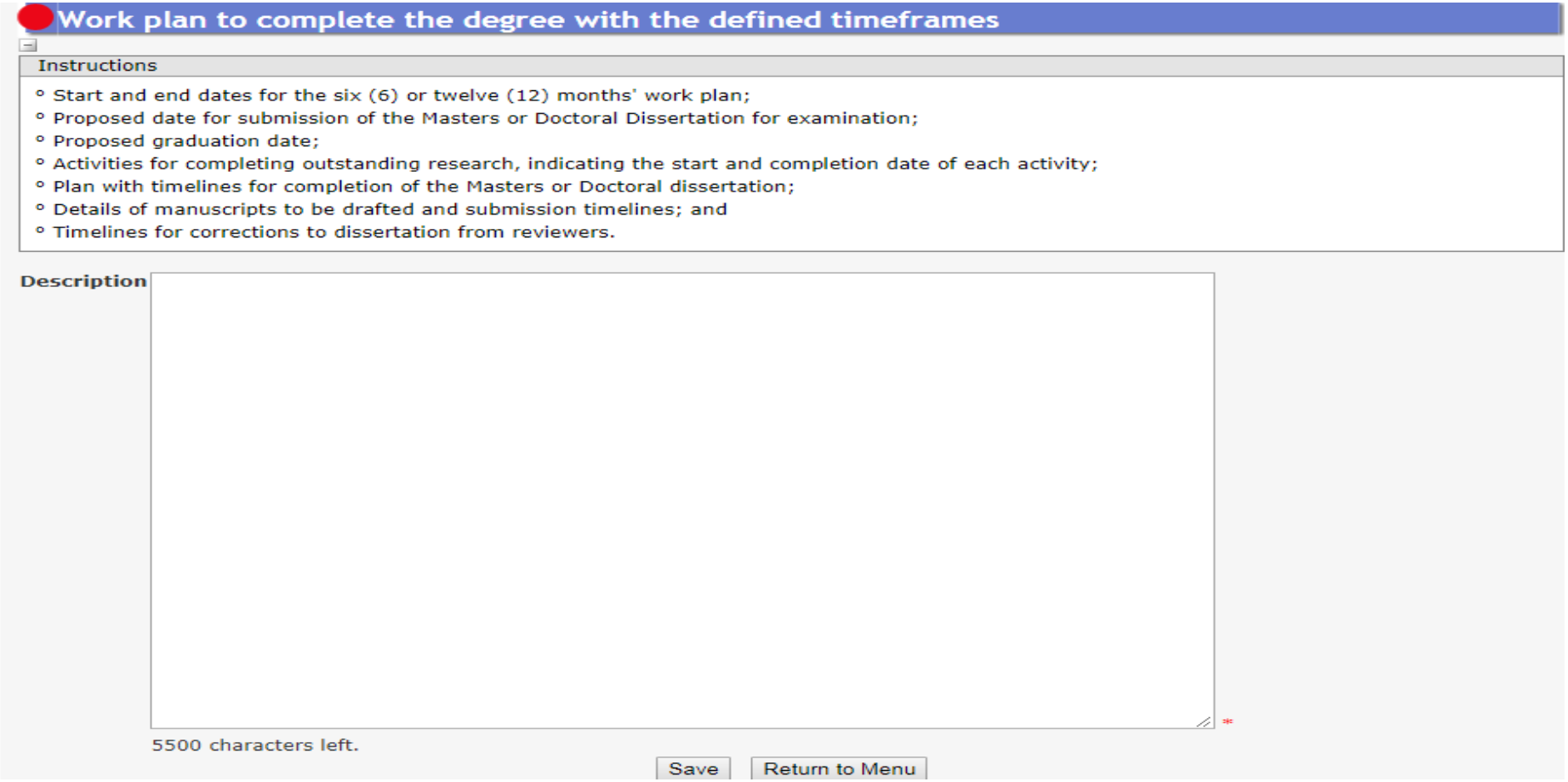
Step 8: The **Progress to Date** section requires applicants to indicate the work done so far under the Research Project.



Step 9: The **Reason why the study could not be completed in the NRF maximum funding period** section requires and explanation as to why the study could not be completed within the NRF maximum funding period time.

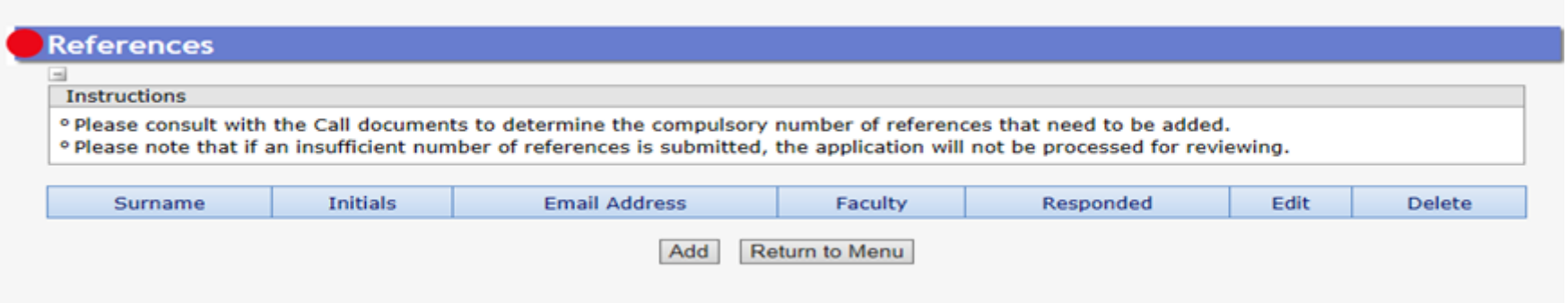


Step 10: The **Work plan to complete the degree with the defined timeframes** section requires the applicant to provide a workplan to complete the degree within the requested period of extension.



Step 11: The ***Reference*** section allows applicants to include academic referees who can comment on the applicant's academic abilities. On final submission of the application, emails requesting a referee's response, are sent automatically to the nominated referees to provide a report on the academic and research capabilities of the applicant. Applicants must ensure that the contact details for the referee are correct. The supervisor response under this programme is very important.

If there is no response from the supervisor, the application will be rejected without review.



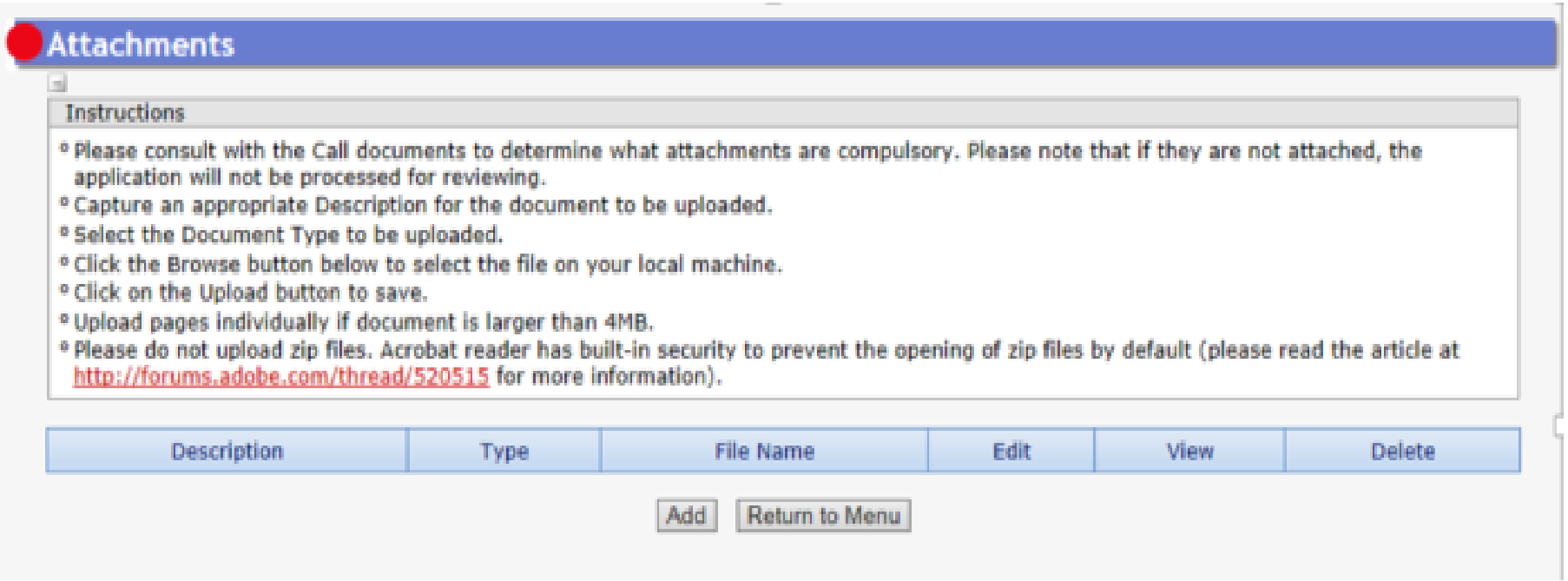
NB: The applicant must periodically view the application PDF to ensure referees have responded to the request.

Step 12: In the Attachment section, please print or make a copy, certify and then scan all the required documents and submit as a **single PDF file**. The applicant is required to attach the following documents:

(i) Certified South African Identity Document or Passport in the case of non-South Africans.

(ii) Certified academic record or, in case of applicants with outstanding fees due to the university, attach an official statement that is stamped and signed, as proof that the transcript is not issued due to outstanding fees owed to the university.

(iii) Official proof of National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) or University Financial Aid funding for applicants that have indicated that they were previously funded by NSFAS or University Financial Aid.



***Applications without the required attachments will be rejected.**

Step 16: Applicants must adhere to their institution's internal closing date for submission of their applications to allow for internal institutional screening and review. The Institution's internal closing date will be determined by the respective Research Office or Postgraduate Office and is usually at least two weeks prior to the NRF's closing date. DAs ensure that all proposals are screened and approved through internal institutional processes before submitting the applications to the NRF. The NRF assumes that the respective DAs are satisfied with the standard of all proposals validated and submitted, and that the institution approves and supports the proposed research.

Step 17: The final submit button will only be activated when all compulsory sections are complete. If all the compulsory sections are complete and the final submit button does not appear, resave the Project Information section to refresh the application. The final submit button should then be active. A submitted application is automatically routed to the DA in the Research or Postgraduate Office of the South African institution that was selected, for internal review and validation. Late applications, additional supporting documentation or information received after the closing date will not be accepted or considered.

The NRF will not process applications that are incomplete, contain insufficient or incorrect information, or fail to comply with instructions. These applications will be rejected. The application must be completed in sufficient detail to allow for a comprehensive review and evaluation by external reviewers. In addition to the electronic application and required attachments, the NRF may request additional information or documentation to support an application if required. Failure to supply such information or documentation upon request may result in the rejection of the application.

5. Screening and Review Processes

5.1. Overview of the Screening Process

All applications validated by South African institutions and submitted to the NRF, are screened by the NRF for compliance with the eligibility criteria and requirements of the Call for applications. Applications that fail to meet the stipulated requirements will be rejected.

5.2. Overview of the Review Process

The NRF's peer review policy requires that all applications be subjected to a review process. Applications submitted to this funding instrument will go through a panel review process.

5.2.1. Panel Review

Panel members are selected from the NRF database that is updated on a continuous basis, and other sources. In compiling the review panel, the expertise and experience of individuals in application adjudication are taken into account. In assessing the application, agreed assessment criteria are applied in the form of a scorecard (please refer to the **Framework Document**).

The Review Panel provides recommendations to the NRF and the final funding decision is made by the NRF. In awarding grants in this funding instrument, the NRF takes into account the recommendations of the peer review panels, the objectives and targets of the funding instrument, and the available funds.

6. Applications Feedback and Disputes

Once the review and assessment processes have been completed and the recommended funding decision has been approved by the NRF, the NRF will publish a list of successful applicants on the NRF website at www.nrf.ac.za/bursaries/calls. The application status online will indicate whether or not the application has been approved for funding. If your name does not appear on the published list of successful applications it means that your application was unsuccessful.

Unsuccessful applicants that wish to appeal the funding decision taken by the NRF must follow the appropriate Appeals Process of the NRF. Appeals for this funding instrument will only be considered two to three (2-3) months after the official publication date of the results on the NRF website.

7. Awardee Responsibilities

7.1. Reporting

A PR must be submitted by the awardee / grant holder in a format provided by the NRF, documenting progress made against set objectives and research outputs. The NRF may, in consultation with the Research Office, request interim progress reports for the purpose of implementing corrective measures timeously to ensure that stated objectives are met within stipulated timeframes.

7.2. Managing changes during the project life cycle

Changes may occur during the project life cycle due to unforeseen and extenuating circumstances. Please note the following on how to manage the award and subsequent changes (planned or unanticipated) should they arise during the project life cycle.

7.2.1. Change Requests

7.2.1.1. Prior Approval Requests

Applicants must submit all change requests in writing to the NRF for approval before effecting any changes. The request must have institutional DA endorsement and be submitted to the NRF *via* the South African institution's Research Office / Postgraduate Office for approval prior to the change.

7.2.1.2. Changes in Project Scope, Supervisor or Institution

Changes may occur where a project scope, supervisor or institution needs to be changed from the original research proposal, supervisor or institution respectively. The request must have institutional DA endorsement and be submitted to the NRF *via* the Research / Postgraduate Office. Such requests must be forwarded to the NRF 30 days before the change is intended to take place.

8. Scientific Compliance

8.1. Methodology

The student takes scientific responsibility for the research to be undertaken, including its objectives and the methodology outlined in the project proposal. The student is required to devote the necessary time to the research project in compliance with the work-plan for the research proposal approved by the NRF so as to achieve the project's stated aims and objectives.

8.2. Intellectual Property Rights

The intellectual capital generated by NRF funded research must be appropriately protected and exploited for the benefit of South Africa. This condition should not interfere with the Intellectual Property Rights arrangements already made, on condition that the majority of the benefits arising from

the intellectual capital accrue to South Africa and its citizens. This condition is aligned with the *Intellectual Property Rights Act,* [1] which will override this condition of grant.

8.3. Ethics

The student is required to maintain the highest ethical and safety standards in conducting the research, particularly when human and animal subjects are involved. It remains the responsibility of the project leader to comply with all relevant regulations in this regard, including those of the institution at which the research is carried out. An ethical clearance certificate (where applicable) must be submitted to the NRF in respect of successful applications before funding can be released.

[1] RSA (2008). Intellectual Property Rights from Publicly Financed Research and Development Act 51 of 2008.G*overnment Gazette*, 22 Dec 2008. Vol 522, No 3174