

## Frequently Asked Questions

| 1. GENERAL          |   |
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| 1.1                 | What is the NRF Fellowship?<br><br>The NRF Fellowship Scheme is an early career award, providing opportunities for outstanding young scientists from all over the world to perform independent research in Singapore. It provides a research grant of up to SGD 3.25 million (inclusive of 30% overheads) over five years, to enable the recipient to assemble and lead a small research team at a Singapore-based research organisation of choice. The 5-years research grant can be used to cover personnel, equipment, and consumables costs.                            |
| 2. ELIGIBILITY      |   |
| 2.1                 | Who is eligible for the NRF Fellowship?<br><br>The fellowship is open to researchers of all nationalities, in the early stages of their research careers. Please refer to the self-assessment checklist ( <a href="#">Annex A</a> ) to assess your eligibility.   |
| 2.2<br><i>[New]</i> | I was previously shortlisted to the final interview stage but was unfortunately not selected. Am I eligible to submit another application in the next call?<br><br>Applicants not selected for the NRF Fellowship award may reapply in subsequent calls, provided they continue to meet the prevailing eligibility criteria.  |
| 2.3                 | I am a recipient for an early career award in another institution. Can I apply for the NRF Fellowship?<br><br>Applicants who are recipients of similar early career award pegged at the same level as the NRF Fellowship in Singapore will not be eligible to apply for the NRF Fellowship. Examples of similar early career awards include the A*STAR Investigatorship, Temasek Research Fellowship, Nanyang Assistant Professorship, NUS Presidential Young Professorship etc.  |
| 2.4                 | I am a YIRG recipient. Can I apply for the NRF Fellowship?<br><br>A YIRG recipient can apply for the NRF Fellowship, as the NRF Fellowship is pegged at the next level of career progression. If an existing YIRG recipient is selected for the NRF Fellowship award, you will be required to relinquish the YIRG. However, there will be provision allowed for the remainder of the YIRG efforts to be folded under the NRF Fellowship. No further action is required for past YIRG recipients who have completed their grant prior to receiving the NRF Fellowship award. |

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| 2.5                 | I have not finished my PhD at the time of application – I will complete my PhD sometime after the application closes. Can I still apply for the NRF Fellowship?         | Exceptions can be considered for applicants in the fields of Engineering and Computer Science; A formal request must be made to NRF for approval, prior to the call closing date. For all other disciplines, the NRF Fellowship is eligible <u>only</u> to PhD holders.  |
| 2.6<br><i>[New]</i> | I have taken time off during my post-doc stints. Is there flexibility to extend the eligibility criteria beyond 7 years of post-PhD duration?                           | Exception can apply if there are grounds for deductible time after the PhD award that have affected the researcher's ability to gain scientific merits. This includes circumstances such as maternity leave, paternity leave, medical conditions, carer's responsibilities etc. Please write in to <a href="mailto:NRF_Fellowship@nrf.gov.sg">NRF Fellowship@nrf.gov.sg</a> to seek waiver request prior to submitting your application. |
| 2.7                 | I am currently working in one of the Singapore Institutes of Higher Learning (IHL). Am I still eligible for the NRF Fellowship?   | If you are currently a post-doc at a Singapore IHL, you are eligible for the NRF Fellowship if you meet all the eligibility criteria. Please refer to the NRF Fellowship Information Sheet for more details.   |
| 2.8                 | I am a clinician scientist. Can I apply for the Singapore NRF Fellowship scheme?  | Clinician scientists should apply through the relevant talent development schemes administered by NMRC ( <a href="http://www.nmrc.gov.sg">www.nmrc.gov.sg</a> ).   |
| 2.9                 | I am in an engineering field and have a good proposal on an innovative solution, which may not lead to scientific discovery. Can I apply for the NRF Fellowship Scheme? | Engineering candidates are welcome to apply for the NRF Fellowship and will be evaluated based on their ability to advance the field of engineering or engender engineering breakthroughs.   |
| 2.10                | I have a plan to commercialise my research and start-up a company. Am I eligible for the NRF Fellowship?  | The NRF Fellowship is not intended for deployment, commercialisation, and start-up activities. Please refer to other schemes under the RIE Innovation & Enterprise Horizontal.   |

### 3. APPLICATION PROCESS AND SUBMISSION PROCEDURES

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| 3.1 | I cannot login to the IGMS. What should I do? | <p>Please refer to the general information under the <a href="#">"Help"</a> section in the IGMS. For any other enquiries pertaining to the use of IGMS, or, queries pertaining to the IGMS Training Manuals, please contact the IGMS helpdesk at:</p> <p>Contact number:<br/>(65) 6556 8807 or (65) 6556 6971<br/>Email: <a href="mailto:helpdesk@researchgrant.gov.sg">helpdesk@researchgrant.gov.sg</a>.</p> |
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| 3.2 | I cannot upload my attachment.  | Please check that your attachment is of the type txt, doc, pdf, zip or xls. It should be less than 4MB in size. The file name should not contain any special characters (e.g. &%!).  |
| 3.3 | I have completed the online IGMS application and submitted the supporting documents for the NRF Fellowship through the system. Do I need to send a hardcopy of my application to NRF? | The <a href="#">online application</a> constitutes a complete submission. Please <u>do not</u> email or send the hardcopy application to NRF.  |
| 3.4 | Do I need to submit the names of <u>peer reviewers</u> ?  | <p>No, instead of submitting the names of peer reviewers, we require you to submit the names and contact details of 5 referees. Please fill in the referee contact details in the IGMS system under “<i>Research Team, Collaborators, Referees &gt; Referees</i>” section.</p> <p>These referees must be willing to provide NRF with a recommendation letter <i>if</i> contacted (<i>Note: There is no need to attach the referee’s CV or recommendation letter at this stage</i>). Recommendation letters are only required if you are shortlisted. Each referee must be familiar with your research work and be able to comment on your track record and personal character. Relatives or spouse should not be nominated as your referees. Examples of suitable referees include thesis advisor(s) and research collaborators.</p> |
| 3.5 | Do I need to submit the Host Institution Letter of Support at application?  | No, the host institution letter of support is required only if you are shortlisted for the final interview. NRF will provide further details to the finalists.   |
| 3.6 | Will there be an extension of the closing date for the NRF Fellowship grant call?   | The 17 <sup>th</sup> NRF Fellowship call will close on <b><u>20 March 2024, 3.00pm (GMT+8)</u></b> . You are advised to submit your application early. The system will block all submissions past the deadline. <b><u>The closing date will not be extended, and late submission will not be accepted.</u></b>   |

#### 4. SELECTION PROCESS

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| 4.1 | Can you tell me more about the NRF Fellowship selection process? | Applicants for the NRF Fellowship undergo a rigorous selection process. Eligible applications will be circulated to all the prospective host institutions for longlisting. Longlisted candidates are reviewed by NRF’s international panel comprising eminent scientists, who will further shortlist finalists to be invited for the final interview in Singapore. |
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| 4.2 | How does NRF shortlist proposals for consideration?                          | The NRF Fellowship selection is a competitive process. All applicants will be assessed based on their track records and scientific/technical merits of the research proposed.  |
| 4.3 | Can you tell me more about the interview process for shortlisted candidates? | All finalists will be interviewed by the NRF Fellowship Evaluation Panel (FEP). In judging the applicants, the panel look for individuals with track records of early achievement, evidence of maturity, readiness to lead independent research and the scientific merit of the proposed research. |
| 4.4 | Can I submit more than 1 host institution letter of support?                 | No. All final shortlisted candidates can submit only 1 host institution letter of support from their prospective host unless it is a joint appointment between two host institutions.  |
| 4.5 | How will I know if I have been shortlisted as a finalist?                    | Shortlisted finalists as well as unsuccessful applicants will be notified by email.  |

## 5. RECIPIENTS OF NRF FELLOWSHIP AWARD

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| 5.1 | What can I expect if I am selected for the NRF Fellowship award? | NRF will notify you of the selection outcomes and furnish details on the next step to finalise your research budget. After which, a formal letter of award will be issued, via your selected host institution. For the award to be activated, you will be required to submit the Statement of Acceptance to NRF. |
| 5.2 | Any other queries?   | For any other NRF Fellowship related queries, please email us at <a href="mailto:NRF_Fellowship@nrf.gov.sg">NRF_Fellowship@nrf.gov.sg</a> .  |

## ANNEX A

### **SINGAPORE NRF FELLOWSHIP** ***SELF-ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST***

This checklist serves as a self-assessment guide to evaluate your eligibility for the Singapore NRF Fellowship. Singapore National Research Foundation (NRF) however, reserves the right to accept or reject applications on a case-by-case basis.

#### **Assessing your Eligibility**

- You must have shown potential to lead an independent research group and demonstrate track record of early achievements.
- You must have a PhD degree in any disciplines of science and technology
- You must have no more than 7 years of post-PhD experience.
- You must not be a recipient of a similar early career award in Singapore.
- You must be committed to take up an independent research appointment on a full-time basis in Singapore, if selected.