



# **DOCTORAL FUNDING WINDOW GUIDELINES – 2025/2026**

**FOR EMPLOYED AND UNEMPLOYED APPLICANTS**

**Closing Date: Friday, 24<sup>th</sup> October 2025**

## **BANKSETA FUNDING WINDOW GUIDELINES**

### **1. Purpose**

This document has been developed to guide the application process for BANKSETA Discretionary Grant Funding Windows. It considers the SETA Grant Regulations and the BANKSETA Discretionary Grant Policy. This document provides guidelines for the opening of funding windows, inviting applications, evaluation of applications, allocation of funds and payment of funds. This document aims to ensure a consistent, fair, and transparent process.

**Definition:** A funding window is an invitation to stakeholders to apply for funding from the SETA for the programmes that the funding window is intended for. The window period has a specified opening date and a specified closing date.

### **2. Objective**

The objective of this funding window is to invite qualifying Doctoral students to apply for bursary funding relating to their doctoral qualification.

### **3. Invitation Process**

- BANKSETA will publish all funding window invitations on the BANKSETA website [www.bankseta.org.za](http://www.bankseta.org.za)
- Each funding window will remain open for at least 6 weeks.

### **4. Who can apply?**

Employed or unemployed applicant who have a South African citizenship and whose studies/research topic is aligned to Banking or Alternative Banking Sector.

### **5. Eligibility Criteria**

**Applicants must have the following to be eligible for funding consideration:**

- Copy of South African ID
- Proof of registration for 2025 or 2026 Academic year.
- Approved Research Proposal
- Approval letter / Proof of approval of the research proposal
- Completed application form
- Signed Proof of employment on an employer letterhead with a clear commencement date of employment.
- In case where an applicant is unemployed, they must attach an affidavit confirming that they are unemployed.

## **6. Evaluation and Allocation Process**

- In all cases an evaluation panel shall be established to evaluate applications.
- All panel members will be required to sign a declaration of interest.
- The evaluation panel and decision will be recorded for audit purposes.
- Allocation of funds to the successful applicants will be done in accordance with the approved guidelines.

### **6.1 Allocation Criteria**

- All grants are VAT inclusive, and this funding is specifically for training costs, local travel/ accommodation costs, research, and editing.
- Funding does not include international conferences costs.
- Feedback on the status of the application will be provided to un/successful applicants.
- The total funding per learner per year will be capped at R70 000.00 for a period not exceeding 3 years. This is payable in two tranches per year, BANKSETA will outline the requirements for tranche payment during the contracting phase.
- BANKSETA intends to enter into a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with the successful applicants for the year of study. BANKSETA reserves the right to terminate the funding agreement if the student does not adhere to the terms of the agreement.

## **7. Submission Process**

- No late applications will be accepted.
- Applicants must submit **all** the required documentation (as requested in the Eligibility Criteria) before the closing date. The funding window will be closed on **24<sup>th</sup> October 2025 at 16h00**.
- Only applications relating to the 2025 and 2026 academic years will be considered.
- Applications must be submitted via email to a specified e-mail address – [DoctoralFunding2025@bankseta.org.za](mailto:DoctoralFunding2025@bankseta.org.za) . Submission of the application may be acknowledged on request; however, applicants must note that the completeness and correctness of applications will only be evaluated after the closing date.
- Applicants must keep a copy of their submission for their internal use and backup purposes.

## **8. Approval, Appeal and Change Request Process**

- The evaluation documentation will be submitted for Probity Review. The probity review report will be submitted for recommendation to the CEO. The BANKSETA Board may delegate approval functions to the CEO as indicated in the BANKSETA Delegations of Authority Policy.
- Should an (unsuccessful) applicant wants to appeal the decision, this must be done in writing and **within one month** of receiving the evaluation outcome. Should there be grounds for an appeal this will be submitted to the CEO office to reconsider. After the reconsideration, the decision is final.
- Where applicable, a change request must be submitted to the BANKSETA with motivation for the change. The approval of the change request is at the discretion of the CEO provided that the approved amount is not exceeded and that the change is still in line with the guidelines.

## **9. Contracting, Commitment Schedule and Project system update**

- BANKSETA will sign a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with the applicant and educational institution or employer for any application that is approved.
- The approval notification to the applicant will include a deadline date for the return of signed MoAs to the BANKSETA so that funds are not left uncommitted for long periods of time.
- The project manager will monitor all the received MoAs and any MoA not signed and returned to BANKSETA by the agreed date will be cancelled.
- If the MoA has expired, and no project extension request is received by BANKSETA before the lapse of the MoA or if BANKSETA detects there is no project activity taking place and no reasonable cause has been provided, the MoA will be terminated, and the funding forfeited.

## **10. Invoicing / Funds Disbursement Process**

- Upon approval of the application, the Applicant, university and BANKSETA will sign a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) to formalize the application and to agree to the disbursement schedule (in line with the specific application)
- The first invoice to the BANKSETA must be accompanied by official proof of banking details.
- The final invoice will be paid subject to all the project requirements being met. This may include a monitoring and evaluation audit conducted by BANKSETA.
- Progress Reports are to be submitted with invoices as required (BANKSETA to send template).
- Invoices will be paid provided all project requirements are met and supporting documentation are provided.
- Successful applicants and payments are subject to a monitoring and evaluation process.
- The BANKSETA will only be paying for beneficiaries who successfully complete the programme as required and only make final payments once all other tranche criteria requirements are met.
- Applicants are reminded that all supporting documentation related to their funding should be submitted within one month of signing the MoA.

- Completion letter or completion certificates should be submitted within one month of the learner successfully completing.

## **11. Extensions**

- Applicants should endeavor to meet deadlines and complete their qualification within the acceptable timeline. If, however, this is not possible the applicant should apply in writing to have the timelines extended and where needed to sign an addendum to the MoA to extend the end date. This request for extension must be submitted at least three (3) months before the end date of the MoA.

## **12. Disclaimer, Termination and Breach**

- In all instances, BANKSETA reserves the right to approve / decline funding at its discretion.
- The BANKSETA reserves the right to verify, monitor and audit any of the above approved grants during the implementation period by a designated BANKSETA representative. Payments are also subject to these processes as per the quality requirements stipulated by BANKSETA.
- The BANKSETA may withhold grants or recover any grants paid to an applicant if it is found that the grants allocated are not being used for the purpose for which the grant was intended. This includes but are not limited to the employment status of intended beneficiaries stated incorrectly (employed / unemployed), fraudulent identity documents (deceased learners), etc.
- Non-compliance will lead to summary termination of the agreement and the Contracting party will, due to non-compliance have neither right to any grants or disbursements nor any other right out of this agreement.

## **13. Confidentiality of information**

In compliance with the requirements of the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPI), BANKSETA wishes to inform all its stakeholders that in applying for funding, invoicing the BANKSETA and providing supporting information for such invoices, the below standards will apply:

- BANKSETA undertakes to keep all information obtained or received by it for purposes of funding applications, funding agreements, invoicing and performance information disclosed or provided by the employers in confidence and in a safe and secure manner.
- Information shall be revealed only to the representatives, agents, and employees whose knowledge of the information is required for the purpose related to administering the funding applications, funding agreements, invoices and supporting documentation.

The purpose related to administering the funding applications, funding agreements, invoices and supporting documentation includes the following:

- reporting skills development initiatives to the Department of Higher Education and

Training.

- reporting enrolments and achievements of programmes to the South African Qualifications Authority.
- reporting on quality assurance functions to the Quality Council of Trades and Occupations.
- evaluating and processing applications for access to funding.
- compiling statistics and other research reports.
- providing personalized communications.
- providing information for internal and external auditing purposes
- complying with the law; and/or
- for a purpose that is ancillary to the above.

Information related to Memoranda of Agreement will be kept for 5 years after the stated end date. After 5 years it will be destroyed.

If BANKSETA is required by legal process to disclose any of the information, it shall provide the employer with prompt notice of such requirement so that the employer may seek a protective order or agree to the provision of information. If a protective order or other remedy to ensure that only information covered by such other or other remedy is obtained, the BANKSETA shall use all reasonable efforts to ensure that only the information covered by such order or other remedy is disclosed. Whether or not a protective order or other remedy is obtained, or the employer party agrees to the provision of information, BANKSETA shall take all the reasonable steps to ensure that only the portion of the information which it is legally required to disclose, is disclosed.

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