



South African Radio Astronomy Observatory

Application Guide for SARAO Freestanding BSc and BEng Undergraduate Scholarships for 2027

READ THE ENTIRE GUIDE BEFORE APPLYING FOR A SCHOLARSHIP

Closing Date for Applications: 14 August 2026

1. Eligibility for SARAO Undergraduate Scholarships

1.1. Eligibility: Nationality

SARAO will only consider applications from South African citizens and permanent residents

1.2. Eligibility: Undergraduate Degree

SARAO will only consider applications from students who are currently studying, or who plan to study, any of the following degrees at a South African university:

- Bachelor of Electronic Engineering
- Bachelor of Electrical Engineering
- Bachelor of Mechanical Engineering
- Bachelor of Mechatronic Engineering
- Bachelor of Computer Engineering
- Bachelor of Science in Physics and Mathematics/Applied Mathematics
- Bachelor of Science in Physics and Electronics
- Bachelor of Science in Physics and Astronomy/Astrophysics
- Bachelor of Science in Computer Science and Mathematics/Applied Mathematics

1.3. Eligibility: Academic Results

- For students who wish to study any of the engineering degrees listed in 2.2, a minimum of 70% in Mathematics in Grade 12, or a minimum grade point average of 65% at undergraduate level, is required for their application to be considered.

- For students who wish to study any of the science degrees listed in 2.2, a minimum of 70% in Mathematics and Physical Science in Grade 12, or a minimum grade-point average of 65% at undergraduate level, is required for their application to be considered.

Note:

- (i) For students currently in Grade 12, applications will be evaluated based on their final Grade 11 results and/or most recent Grade 12 results. If a student currently in Grade 12 is offered a SARAO undergraduate scholarship based on their final Grade 11 and/or most recent Grade 12 results, fails to achieve the minimum academic requirements upon completion of Grade 12, the scholarship offer will be revoked.
- (i) For students currently studying towards one of the degrees listed in 2.2, applications will be evaluated based on their most recent university results. If a student currently enrolled in one the degrees listed in 2.2 is offered a SARAO undergraduate scholarship based on their current university results, fails to achieve a minimum of 65% at the end of their current year of study, the scholarship offer will be revoked.

2. How to apply for a SARAO Freestanding Undergraduate Scholarship

- 2.1. Application forms are accessible online at <https://nrfconnect.nrf.ac.za>
- 2.2. Complete the Profile section first
- 2.3. From MY APPLICATIONS, select Undergraduate and Diploma Scholarships, then select SARAO Undergraduate Scholarship
- 2.4. Students may only submit ONE application.
- 2.5. Students MUST upload all **THREE** required documents (see Section 3), in the Attachments Section of the application form. **IF ANY OF THESE THREE DOCUMENTS ARE NOT ATTACHED TO YOUR APPLICATION, SARAO WILL NOT CONSIDER YOUR APPLICATION.**
- 2.6. Your application must be supported by at least two letters of reference (see Section 4). **IF YOUR APPLICATION IS NOT SUPPORTED BY TWO LETTERS OF REFERENCE SARAO WILL NOT CONSIDER YOUR APPLICATION**
- 2.7. Once you submit your application, it will automatically be routed to the institution where you are applying to study.

3. !!Supporting Documents to be Attached to your Application Form!!

You MUST upload **ALL THREE** documents listed below, in the **Attachments Section** of the application form.

IF ANY OF THESE DOCUMENTS ARE NOT ATTACHED, SARAO WILL NOT CONSIDER YOUR APPLICATION!!!!

Document	Details
1. Identity Document	A copy of your South African ID
2. School and University Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A copy of your final Grade 11 results - A copy of your final/latest Grade 12 results - All your university results, from the start of your degree until now <p>Please attach all your school and university results as ONE PDF Document</p>

<p>3. Letter of Motivation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The letter of motivation is CRITICAL for the review of your application. - Take the time to draft an excellent motivation! - Your motivation could be the deciding factor in whether you are awarded a scholarship or not. (DO NOT USE AI). - You must provide a letter of about 500 words motivating why you should be awarded a SARAQ Undergraduate Scholarship. In this letter you should include the following information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Your academic progress at school and/or at undergraduate level. - The school subjects and/or the undergraduate courses that interested you the most, and why. - Details of academic achievements. - Why you chose to study the degree you are studying, or have selected to study, and how this degree is relevant to a career in radio astronomy. - Your personal strengths, passions and career aspirations. - Other achievements and interests beyond your studies. - Any community outreach work you may have been involved in.
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4. !! Letters of Reference!!

- 4.1. Your application must be supported by **TWO** letters of reference.
- 4.2. Where possible, one of the two reference letters should be written by a teacher or university lecturer.
- 4.3. Members of your family and your friends may **NOT** write a letter of reference on your behalf.
- 4.4. Referees must send the letters of reference to **study.research@sarao.ac.za** before **14 August 2026**.
- 4.5. Please ask the referees to include the following information about you, in their letters of reference:
 - How the referee knows you, and for how long they have known you.
 - Your academic performance, and attitude to your studies.
 - Your potential to succeed at an undergraduate level.
 - Notable attributes, skills or accomplishments that the referee has observed, or is aware of.
 - Any other relevant information about you that the referee may wish to bring to SARAQ's attention.

5. Funding Levels and Period of Support for SARAQ Freestanding Undergraduate Scholarships

- 5.1. The 2027 SARAQ Undergraduate scholarship level is R183,000.
- 5.2. Students are also eligible for a once-off laptop grant of R13,000.
- 5.3. For Bachelor of Engineering degrees, the duration of a South African Radio Astronomy Observatory (SARAQ) undergraduate scholarship is one year for fourth-year students, two years for third-year students, three years for second-year students and four years for first-year students.
- 5.4. For Bachelor of Science degrees, the duration of a South African Radio Astronomy Observatory (SARAQ) undergraduate scholarship is one year for third-year students, two years for second-year students, and three years for first-year students

6. Enquiries regarding SARAQ Freestanding Undergraduate Scholarships

Mkhululi Jodwana on (011) 268-3412 / mjodwana@sarao.ac.za