

DSI-NRF Centre of Excellence for Integrated Mineral and Energy Resource Analysis (CIMERA) FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

For Postgraduate Students and Research Fellows:

Q: I am a student/fellow interested in applying for funding. What is the next step?

A:

1. As early as possible in the academic year, identify a supervisor/host working in your area of interest at one of our 12 partner universities. Refer to the list of active academics on our website under the focus areas: cimera@uj.ac.za
2. Supervisor/host formulates project proposals by July each year.
3. Postgraduate students needing a bursary must apply on the NRF system for funding before the deadline (typically early July each year). Postgraduate students and research fellows only applying for running costs do not need to apply on the NRF system.
4. The supervisor/host must submit the project proposal to CIMERA (typically by the same deadline as the NRF deadline). No proposals submitted by students or fellows will be considered.
5. Supervisor/host must wait for feedback on the project proposal outcome from CIMERA (mid-September) and student funding eligibility from the NRF (mid-December).

Q: Why should I apply for funding as a grant holder bursary linked to CIMERA rather than applying for the NRF free-standing bursary?

A: All CIMERA-approved projects include project running costs, which may be used for analyses, fieldwork or conference travel. CIMERA also ensures that all postgraduate students receive a full scholarship. If a CIMERA-linked student receives a partial scholarship (PCS) from the NRF, CIMERA tops up the scholarship to the value of a full scholarship (FCS). In summary, benefits of CIMERA funding include:

- Ability to receive a top-up on all partial cost scholarships awarded by the NRF.
- Automatic project running costs, in addition to bursary funding, to be used for analyses, fieldwork conferences etc, to support the project.
- Access to a vast network of local and international researchers through our existing MoAs and MoUs with academic institutions, government agencies and industry.
- Access to CIMERA short courses, workshops and networking events.
- Administrative support from the NRF CoE Team.

Q: Why do I need to include the CIMERA UID (91487) in my NRF application?

A: Students requiring a CIMERA-linked bursary and applying on the NRF system are required to include the CIMERA Unique ID (**91487**) on their application when prompted to ensure they are linked to the CoE. This expedites the process of extracting their applications for consideration under

the CoE Instrument at the NRF. Students who do not include the UID will be funded under a different funding instrument and will not have access to the administrative and financial benefits of CoE-linked students.

Q: Does CIMERA fund part-time studies?

A: Part-time students (if successful) are only eligible for running cost support from CIMERA, and not a bursary, stipend, or tuition fees. The student would need to apply for a scholarship from a different source. The project would still need to be assessed by the CIMERA Scientific Advisory Committee; the prospective supervisor would need to submit the project proposal to CIMERA before the deadline.

Q: What do I do to upgrade from MSc to PhD?

A: Students upgrading to PhD must apply on the NRF system under the normal PhD funding application process before the deadline (normally July each year), including the CIMERA UID in the application. Note the upgrade request in the application. The supervisor must submit to CIMERA the student's upgrade acceptance letter from their host university and proof of registration. These must be sent to the CoE Manager. This is very important PhD upgrades affect our budget.

Q: What are the benefits of submitting photographs of myself and/or my work to CIMERA?

A: The CIMERA brand has increased significantly over the past years. Sharing your field excursions, lab work, outreach or conference photographs will increase the visibility of your scientific work, giving you access to our wide audience on our website and social media channels. All content for social media and our quarterly newsletter must be submitted to Khanya Matiwane at kmatiwane@uj.ac.za with appropriate captions and use the hashtag #DSINRFCIMERA. Follow and engage with us here:

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/cimera-dst-nrf>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CimeraSA>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/CimeraSA>

Q: I received a partial cost scholarship (PCS). Is my bursary top-up renewed annually?

A: Yes, all CIMERA-linked postgraduate students receiving a partial cost scholarship from the NRF will receive their top-ups on a yearly basis until completion of their degree, provided that the supervisor submits their annual progress report and the student completes their NRF progress report on time. Underperforming students may not automatically be funded for their second or third year of study.

Q: Are my project running costs renewable each year?

A: Yes, all CIMERA-linked students and fellows receive project running costs on a yearly basis until the completion of their degree (excluding the extension period if applicable). However, underperforming students may not receive automatic renewal.

Q: I received a full-cost scholarship (FCS). Do I qualify for a bursary top-up?

A: No, only CIMERA-linked postgraduate students receiving a partial cost scholarship from the NRF qualify for a bursary top-up. Please note that you are required to declare ALL bursaries/scholarships when accepting the NRF PCS or FCS award.

Q: I am on an extension grant. Am I eligible for project running costs and a top-up?

A: Students on an extension grant are not eligible for project running costs. However, students previously funded under a partial cost scholarship are eligible for a top-up on their extension grant. Such students must inform the CoE of the need for such a top-up and provide their proof of extension award letter from the NRF.

Q: I am a postdoctoral fellow and want to apply for another postdoc at a different university. Will I be considered for funding under CIMERA?

A: Yes, however, the project must be different to that currently funded.

Q: I am a postdoctoral fellow and want to apply for another postdoc at the same university. Will I be considered for funding under CIMERA?

A: It is highly recommended that postdoctoral fellows transfer to a different university to gain diverse experience. However, should the need arise for a re-appointment at the same institution, we strongly encourage that the fellow consults their host institution and the applicable NRF postdoctoral fellow funding policy.

Q: I require additional funding support for conference attendance. Can I submit a request to CIMERA?

A: Yes, we accept ad hoc applications for additional funding requests, which are considered by the CoE Management team. All incomplete requests will not be considered. Further information on the ad hoc process is available here along with the template for application: https://cimera.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/AD-HOC-FINANCIAL-SUPPORT-REQUESTS_DSI-NRF-CIMERA.pdf.

For Supervisors

Q: I am an academic interested in applying for funding for my project. What is the next step?

A: CIMERA welcomes new academic staff from collaborating universities working under the various focus areas of the CoE. All interested in applying for funding must submit their project proposals during the annual call for projects (announced in April, closing date in July annually). Academics based at a university that is currently not a CIMERA partner cannot submit a proposal for funding consideration. Should the academic wish to facilitate a Memorandum of Agreement between CIMERA and said university, they are welcome to approach the CoE for a discussion.

Q: Who assesses the project proposals?

A: All projects submitted to CIMERA are accessed by the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC). The Committee meets annually in August to score the project proposals. Outcomes are conveyed with feedback from the Committee to the supervisor applicant. Suggestions for improving rejected proposals are provided for future resubmission in the next cycle. The SAC has the right to reject proposed students should they not adhere to the NRF demographic targets.

Q: What are the demographic targets of CIMERA?

A: As a DSI-NRF CoE, CIMERA is required to adhere to the demographic targets set out by the NRF:

Black Students: **90%**

Female: **55%**

South African citizen or permanent resident: **95%**

Please be mindful of these targets when identifying prospective students.

Q: The student/fellow linked to my CIMERA-approved project declined the offer. What must I do?

A: For PDRF: Inform the CoE Manager and readvertise the position in the same academic year. If the position is not filled in the year of the award, the project will need to serve at the Scientific Advisory Committee Meeting against the new pool of project proposals.

For postgraduate students: Inform the CoE. If the supervisor finds a replacement student who has already applied for an NRF bursary and is, therefore, in the NRF system, inform the CoE Manager so the student can be linked to CIMERA. Note that the appointment of a replacement student is subject to the approval of the CoE. The replacement student might or might not receive the same scholarship but will also be eligible for a top-up should this be required.

Q: What happens if my student deregisters?

A: The supervisor should inform the CoE Manager when the student deregisters, whether the student received a bursary or running costs only. Students who received a bursary will be required to reimburse all funds received and spent from their student accounts, including their stipend, registration and tuition fees, as per their agreement with the NRF. Any residual running costs are to be managed and used by the supervisor for the benefit of the CIMERA-approved research project.

Q: My project only requires running costs. Do I need to have a student identified when I submit my project proposal to CIMERA?

A: No, projects requiring running costs only do not need a student identified beforehand, as these students do not apply to the NRF system. However, once a student is identified, do inform the CoE Manager. As with all CIMERA-linked projects, the CoE has the right to reject proposed students should they not adhere to the NRF demographic targets.

Q: My project only requires a student bursary. Do I need to have a student identified when I submit my project proposal to CIMERA?

A: Yes, projects requiring bursaries must have a student identified before the proposal is submitted to CIMERA. This is because the student must have applied on the NRF system for their bursary, with the CIMERA UID. Supervisors are advised to ensure their students have applied on the NRF system before submitting their project proposals. Please submit the name of the student to the CoE Manager as well.

Q: Are my supervisor running costs renewable?

A: Yes, all CIMERA-linked academics receive supervisor running costs on a yearly basis as long as the supervisor continues to supervise at least one student or PDRF. Please note the supervisor running costs are not a savings account and must be used annually / within 2 years.

Q: I have more than one student. Will I receive more than one supervisor running cost award from CIMERA?

A: No, supervisor running costs are granted per supervisor, regardless of the number of students. Please note the supervisor running costs are not a savings account and must be used annually / within 2 years.

Q: My student is on an extension grant. Am I eligible for supervisor running costs?

A: No. This applies if the supervisor has only one student and that student is on an extension grant. A supervisor with other students who are not on extension grants will receive their supervisor running costs as normal. Please note the supervisor running costs are not a savings account and must be used annually/within 2 years.

Q: How do I submit an invoice for my student's top-up (where applicable), project running costs and supervisor running costs?

A: All invoices generated by the respective universities must be submitted to the CoE Administrative Officer at vkoti@uj.ac.za, with all supporting documents (proof of registration, signed CoE Conditions of Grant). No invoices will be processed if the supporting documents are not provided.

Q: I am interested in submitting a non-degree project proposal. Is this possible?

A: Yes, outreach, geoeducation, geotourism and geoheritage projects fall under our Focus Area 9, Geology for Society. Projects submitted under this focus area still need to be submitted to CIMERA and assessed by the Scientific Advisory Committee along with degree-bearing project proposals. The proposal should be supported by a detailed budget.

Q: What is the official reporting season for CIMERA-affiliated academics and research associates?

A: Supervisors will typically receive the CIMERA Annual Progress Report template in November, with a deadline in early to mid-January. Supervisors who fail to submit their progress reports by this deadline will have the funds of their students and supervisor running costs frozen until their reports have been received. Only supervisors must complete this template. Students complete and submit a separate progress report on the NRF system, subject to the NRF deadlines.

Q: I am an academic interested in applying for funding for my project but am an academic from a non-collaborating university/institution. What is the next step?

A: Academics based at a university that is currently not a CIMERA partner cannot submit a proposal for funding consideration. Should the academic wish to facilitate a Memorandum of Agreement with CIMERA, please contact the CoE.

For Non-Students and Non-Researchers

Q: I am an industry member interested in applying for funding for my project, but I am neither an academic, researcher, nor student. What is the next step?

A: Industry members cannot apply directly for funding from CIMERA. The individual is advised to partner with an academic from one of our collaborating universities. The academic will have to be the main supervisor for the project, and the industry individual will be the co-supervisor. Note that all industry-linked projects benefitting the company in question will only be eligible for running costs.

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