



# South African Radio Astronomy Observatory

## Application Guide for SARAO Freestanding Honours Scholarships for 2027

**READ THE ENTIRE GUIDE BEFORE APPLYING FOR  
A SARAO FREESTANDING HONOURS SCHOLARSHIP**

**Closing Date for Applications: 31 August 2026**

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### **1. Eligibility for a SARAO Freestanding Honours Scholarship**

#### **1.1. Eligibility: Nationality**

SARAO will consider applications from South African citizens and permanent residents, as well as from citizens of Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia and Zambia.

#### **1.2. Eligibility: Undergraduate Degree**

SARAO will consider applications from students who completed one of the following BSc degrees in 2025, or who are completing one of the following degrees in 2026:

- Physics and Mathematics (up to third year level); OR
- Astronomy/Astrophysics, with Physics and Mathematics up to at least second year level; OR
- Computer Science and Mathematics (up to third year level).

#### **1.3. Eligibility: Minimum Academic Requirements**

SARAO will consider applications from students who achieved a minimum average (GPA) of 65% for one of the BSc degrees mentioned in point 2.2.

Note:

- (i) For students currently studying towards a relevant BSc degree, applications will be evaluated based on their most recent university results. Only those with a minimum average of 65% in their latest university results will be considered for a scholarship.

- (ii) If a student currently enrolled in a relevant BSc degree is offered a SRAO Honours scholarship based on their current results, but fails to achieve a minimum of 65% upon completion of their degree, the scholarship offer will be revoked.
- (iii) Students at universities that provide results as symbols (A, B, C etc.), and not as percentages, must provide SRAO with the equivalent percentage for each of their courses.

#### 1.4. Eligibility: Honours Degree

SRAO will only consider applications from students who wish to study towards a BSc Honours degree in Physics/Astronomy/Astrophysics, or Computer Science and Mathematics, at a South African University.

### 2. How to apply for a SRAO Freestanding Honours 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 NRF Postgraduate Scholarships, then select SRAO Honours Scholarship
- 2.4. Students may only submit ONE application.
- 2.5. Students MUST upload all 4 required documents (see Section 3), in the Attachments Section of the application form. **IF ANY OF THESE 4 DOCUMENTS ARE NOT ATTACHED TO YOUR APPLICATION, SRAO WILL NOT CONSIDER YOUR APPLICATION.**
- 2.6. Your application must be supported by at least 2 letters of reference (see Section 4). **IF YOUR APPLICATION IS NOT SUPPORTED BY 2 LETTERS OF REFERENCE SRAO 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.
- 2.8. In order for your application to be considered for funding, you must submit your application on or before 31 August 2026.

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

You MUST upload **ALL 4** documents listed below, in the **Attachments Section** of the application form.

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

Document	Details
1. Identity Document or Passport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- For South African citizens and permanent residents: A copy of your South African ID</li> <li>- For non-South Africans: A copy of your passport</li> </ul>
2. University Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All your university academic results, from the start of your studies until now, and where relevant for all other degrees completed to date.</li> <li>- <b>Please attach all your results per degree/qualification as ONE PDF Document</b></li> </ul>
3. An up-to-date Curriculum Vitae	
4. Letter of Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 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).</li> <li>- You must provide a letter of about 750 words motivating why you should be awarded a SARAQ Honours Scholarship. In this letter you should include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Your academic progress at undergraduate level.</li> <li>- The undergraduate courses that interested you the most, and why.</li> <li>- Details of academic achievements.</li> <li>- Why you wish to study the Honours degree you have selected, and how this degree is relevant to a career in radio astronomy.</li> <li>- Your personal strengths, passions and career aspirations.</li> <li>- Other achievements and interest beyond your studies.</li> <li>- Any community outreach work you may have been involved in.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

#### 4. **!! Letters of Reference!!**

- 4.1. Your application must be supported by **TWO** letters of reference.
- 4.2. One of the two reference letters should be written by a 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 **31 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 Honours 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 SRAO Freestanding Honours Scholarships**

- 5.1. The 2027 SRAO honours scholarship level is R190,000
- 5.2. Students are also eligible for a once-off laptop grant of R15,000.
- 5.3. The duration of a SRAO honours scholarship is one year. However, SRAO will provide two years of funding to students who are accepted for the NASSP Extended Honours in Astronomy course.

**6. Enquiries Regarding SRAO Freestanding Honours Scholarships**

Mkhululi Jodwana on (011) 268-3412 / [mjodwana@srao.ac.za](mailto:mjodwana@srao.ac.za)