



South African Radio Astronomy Observatory
Applications for an Undergraduate Block Grant starting in 2024
Application Guide
Closing date for applicants: 31 August 2023

NB: SARAQ will consider applications from both Science and Engineering Departments for Undergraduate Block Grants for 2024

1. SARAQ Undergraduate Block Grants

- 1.1. The objective of SARAQ's Undergraduate Block Grant Programme is to partner with South African universities to increase the number of South African graduates available to pursue postgraduate research in areas relevant to the SKA and MeerKAT radio telescopes.
- 1.2. Successful university departments will be awarded a grant, which will include funds for student scholarships, as well as for a laptop grant per student.
- 1.3. The selection of the students to be funded by a SARAQ block grant is the responsibility of the relevant university department, however, students selected for the programme must align with SARAQ HCD's transformation targets (see Section 5).

2. Eligibility for a SARAQ Undergraduate Block Grant

For 2024, SARAQ will consider applications from university departments that propose to support **between four to eight** South African citizens/permanent residents studying any of the following degrees:

- 2.1. Bachelor of Electronic Engineering
- 2.2. Bachelor of Electrical and Electronic Engineering
- 2.3. Bachelor of Mechanical Engineering
- 2.4. Bachelor of Mechatronic Engineering
- 2.5. Bachelor of Computer Engineering
- 2.6. Bachelor of Science in Mathematics/Applied Mathematics and Physics
- 2.7. Bachelor of Science in Physics and Electronics
- 2.8. Bachelor of Science in Astronomy/Astrophysics and Physics
- 2.9. Bachelor of Computer Science, with co-major in Mathematics/Applied Mathematics
- 2.10. Bachelor of Science in Physics and Electronics / Astrophysics / Computer Science

3. Structure of a SARAQ Undergraduate Block Grant for 2024

- 3.1. Successful university departments will be awarded a grant that includes funds for scholarships (at the same level as SARAQ free-standing undergraduate scholarships), and funds for the laptop grant per student.
- 3.2. The value of the award will be dependent on the number of students to be supported by the block grant.
- 3.3. Funding for this programme is for a maximum of four years (2024, up to and including 2027) for B.Eng degrees, to allow the full duration required by any student entering first year in 2024, to complete their B.Eng degree by 2027; and for a maximum of three years (2024, up to and including 2026) for B.Sc.

degrees, to allow the full duration required by any student entering first year in 2024, to complete their B.Sc. degree by 2026.

4. Evaluation of Applications for a SARAQ Undergraduate Block Grant for 2024

Applications will be evaluated using the following:

- 4.1. The university department's track record of graduating students, generally.
- 4.2. The university department's track record of graduating Black and Women South African students.
- 4.3. Support systems in place to ensure the success of the students selected for the undergraduate block grant.
- 4.4. Structure of the degree, and its relevance to MeerKAT/SKA, or the "ability" of the degree to prepare the students for postgraduate research in MeerKAT/SKA engineering.
- 4.5. Availability of postgraduate research in MeerKAT/SKA-relevant engineering at the university.

5. Conditions of Award for SARAQ Undergraduate Block Grant Programme

- 5.1. In the selection of students to be funded by the block grant, the university must meet the following targets: 100% to South African Students, of which 90% must be awarded to Black South Africans (African, Coloured and Indian), and 50% to South African Women.
- 5.2. The list of students selected by the university to be funded by the block grant must be submitted to SARAQ HCD for approval, prior to the university notifying the students.
- 5.3. Students selected for the programme must maintain a minimum average of 65% in their mid-year and year-end results. The university is required to submit the students' mid-year and year-end academic transcripts to SARAQ. Students who do not obtain a minimum of 65% may not be eligible to receive further funding from the programme, unless motivated for by the university, for SARAQ's consideration.
- 5.4. The grant is renewable each year, at the sole discretion of SARAQ, and is subject to the satisfactory performance of the students.
- 5.5. In the event that any of the students selected for the programme do not meet the minimum academic requirements, change their degree of study, do not graduate from their degree, or leave the programme for any reason, the university may NOT replace these students with new students.
- 5.6. If, in the first year of the grant, a university selects less than the number of students to be supported by the grant, the funds not used in the first year of the grant, may be carried over to the next academic year, if approved by SARAQ, for a maximum of one year only.
- 5.7. The annual grant provided by SARAQ will include scholarship funds, at the same level as freestanding SARAQ undergraduate scholarships, which is currently R168 000 per student, as well as a laptop grant, which is currently R12,000 per student.
- 5.8. The university must ensure resources and programmes are in place to support students who may require academic support, to maximise the success of the students selected for the programme.
- 5.9. On completion of studies supported by the block grant, the university is required to submit a copy of the respective student's degree certificate to SARAQ.

6. How to Apply for a SARAQ Undergraduate Block Grant

- 6.1. Download the application form at: <https://www.sarao.ac.za/students/funding/>
- 6.2. Complete the application form and submit as a PDF document to Mr. Mkhululi Jodwana, mjodwana@ska.ac.za, by **31 August 2023**.

7. SARAQ Contact Information

Should you have any queries with regards to the application requirements or the application procedure, please contact: **Mr. Mkhululi Jodwana Email: mjodwana@ska.ac.za; Telephone: (011) 268-3412.**