



South African Radio Astronomy Observatory

Application Guide for SARAO Freestanding BSc and BEng Undergraduate Scholarships for 2026

READ THE ENTIRE GUIDE BEFORE APPLYING FOR A SARAO FREESTANDING UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP

1. Eligibility for SARAO Freestanding Undergraduate Scholarships for the 2026 Academic Year

1.1. Eligibility: Nationality

SARAO will consider applications from South African citizens and permanent residents

1.2. Eligibility: Academics Results

SARAO will consider applications from students who achieved a minimum of 70% in Mathematics in Grade 12, or a minimum grade-point average of 65% at undergraduate level

1.3. Eligibility: Undergraduate Degree

SARAO will consider applications from students who are 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

2. How to apply for a SARAO Freestanding Undergraduate Scholarship for the 2026 Academic Year

- 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.
- 2.8. In order for your application to be considered for 2026 funding, you must submit your application on or before the cut-off date. It is YOUR responsibility to find out the application closing date with the university's research or postgraduate office.

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 style="text-align: center;">Please attach all your school and university results as ONE PDF Document</p>
3. Letter of Motivation	<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!- You must provide a letter of about 1000 words motivating why you should be awarded a SARAO Undergraduate Scholarship. In this letter you should include the following:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Details of academic, and other achievements.- Why you wish to study the degree you have selected, and how this degree will help you progress towards your ideal career.- Your personal strengths, passions and career aspirations.- Your understanding of radio astronomy generally, and more specifically of the MeerKAT and SKA radio telescopes.

4. !! Letters of Reference!!

Your application must be supported by **AT LEAST TWO** letters of reference. Please ask teachers or lecturers to submit letters of reference to study.research@sarao.ac.za, before 31 August 2025. Please ask the referees to include the following information in their letter of reference:

- The capacity in which the referee knows the applicant, and for how long they have known the applicant.
- The applicant's academic performance, and attitude to their studies.
- The applicant's written and verbal communications skills.
- Any other relevant comments regarding applicant.

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

- 5.1. The 2026 SARAO Undergraduate scholarship level is R178,040.
- 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 (SARAO) 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 (SARAO) 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 SARAO Freestanding Undergraduate Scholarships

Contact: study.research@sarao.ac.za