

GUIDELINES FOR RWANDAN STUDENTS ABROAD

Bursary/Loan application

The student wishing to apply for a loan shall write an application letter accompanied with all the required documents. The complete application file shall be submitted to SFAR. The file of the applicant is examined by SFAR management which submits it to the Board of Directors for decision. It is to be noted that the ordinary meeting of the Board is held once every quarter. After the Board of Directors has taken decisions, they are officially published and posted on the SFAR website as well as on the SFAR notice board. In case the application for a loan is not approved, the applicant has the right to re-apply. In this particular case, he/she must submit a new application file. Below is the loan application checklist:

1. A letter of request addressed to the Director General of SFAR
2. The admission letter from the University where the applicant will pursue his/her studies
3. Certified (notarized) copy of the diploma
4. Recommendation from the employer (if the applicant is employed)
5. Photocopy of the ID or passport
6. Curriculum Vitae
7. Two photos passport
8. An abstract (2 pages) of the research project (for those who apply for doctoral studies)
9. An academic progress report (if the applicant is already studying)

Bursary/Loan disbursement

SFAR will pay the student through the Rwandan Embassies in foreign countries. The Embassies thereafter transfer the funds received for each student to the student's individual account. If there is no Embassy, SFAR may channel the funds either through a recognized Rwandan students organization or directly to the students account opened in the host country. Bursary/Loan is terminated in case the student repeats the year (except if the relevant office of the host institution certifies that the repetition was due to a valid reason that is examined and accepted by SFAR). Once the student is promoted to the following year, he/she may re-apply to SFAR for continuation of the bursary/loan.

Bursary/Loan is also terminated in case the student suspends his/her studies (for any reason) during the cycle for which the bursary/loan was granted. Bursary/Loan to any student will be automatically terminated at the end of the record period of study for which the bursary/loan was granted without prior notice. No student should plan to exceed the record time of completion of his/her studies.

Request for Extension

Students are informed that any request for extensions beyond the record date of completion of studies will not be automatic. Such requests shall be subject to the decision of the SFAR management after analyzing the extension application file of the student. Requests for extension of Bursary/Loan should be addressed to SFAR and must include the following:

- a. Letter requesting for the extension clearly specifying the reason
- b. Recommendation from the institution with justification of the need for extension
- c. Period of extension (from to) and any financial implications
- d. Full academic progress report
- e. Research proposal and progress on research done (only for PhD) if extension is requested to carry out research

When SFAR receives the complete application dossier for extension, the request is processed and a decision is taken within a period not exceeding three days after receiving the application. The applicant is afterwards informed about the decision taken.

Request for Research fees

Students are entitled to research fees. For students who are doing Bachelors or Masters degree they should apply for research fees at the beginning or in the middle of the final year of their studies and after their final research project has been approved by the supervisor.

Students doing PhD may apply for research fees at the beginning or in the middle of the second year of their studies and after the approval of their final research project by the supervisor. Below is the research fees application checklist:

1. A letter of request addressed to the Director General of SFAR
2. Academic progress report for the completed academic year and a registration certificate for the current academic year
3. An abstract (2 pages) of the research project
4. Confirmation letter from the supervisor approving the research project
5. A report showing the progress of the student's research (only for PhD student)

When SFAR receives the complete application dossier for research fees, the request is processed and a decision is taken within a period not exceeding three days after receiving the application. The applicant is afterwards informed about the decision taken. In case the application is approved, the research fees will be processed and sent to the student not later than the next quarter.

Request for Air tickets

SFAR gives air tickets to students who request to return back home after completion of their studies. Air ticket can also be given to a student who has lost a direct member of his/her family (Father, Mother, Brother or Sister, spouse, child) and wishes to come to Rwanda for burial.

Processing of air tickets normally takes some time, therefore students who wish to return to Rwanda after completion of their studies are required to apply for an air ticket at least 21 days before the expected date of travel. Applications for air tickets addressed to SFAR must be done in writing through email or Fax, specifying the expected day and month of travel and the name of the airport of departure. No applications for air tickets shall be accepted on telephone. No refund will be made to students in respect of tickets purchased without written authorization from SFAR.

Excess luggage

Only 30 kg excess luggage is allowed for returning students after completion of their studies. SFAR will transfer to the student the equivalent amount of money for those 30 kg, calculated according to the unit cost structure fixed for each country of study/host country. The transfer of this money is effected with the last tranche of the living allowance.

Leaving the Country of study

Any student wishing to leave the country of study to Rwanda (or any other country), for research or any other reason either related to studies or not, must inform SFAR through email or fax and specify the following:

- a) The reason for leaving the country of study/host country;
- b) Who is expected to pay for his/her air ticket/travel expenses;
- c) The expected date of departure from and return to the country of study/host country

Payment of tuition fees

All the students should well understand that school fees payment can be processed only when the student has sent the tuition fees invoice clearly showing the exact amount to be paid. It is therefore requested that all tuition fees invoices should be forwarded to SFAR office at least one month before the deadline for payment.

Loan Recovery

A student who has received a loan from SFAR to pay for his/her higher education, has to pay back the loan received after completion of his/her studies and after getting an employment.

The loan repayment mechanism is one of the components of the student loan scheme aimed at facilitating all those who benefited from the Government loan to study higher education to pay back the loan. According to the Ministerial Order No 002/08 of 03/09/2008, the loan granted to a beneficiary to enable him/her to pay for his/her higher education can be paid back in two (2) ways:

- i) By deducting the loan from the monthly salary of the loan beneficiary, this is done by the employer. The employer deducts 8% of the gross salary every month until the total amount of loan is repaid.
- ii) By paying directly to SFAR, this is done by the loan beneficiary himself/herself. The loan beneficiary has the right to decide between paying back at once the total amount or through installments.

The employer has the obligation to declare to SFAR every employee who has benefited the student loan and to deduct the amount of money meant for repayment from his/her salary in respect to the law.