

Five new South African SKA Research Chairs

South Africa will soon have five new research chairs at South African universities dedicated to the Square Kilometre Array (SKA) project. These new Chairs will form part of the South African Research Chairs Initiative of the Department of Science and Technology and the National Research Foundation.

The Chairs will be available to South African universities as part of South Africa's commitment to strengthen cutting edge science and engineering in South Africa and to hosting the Square Kilometre Array. The Chairs will be awarded for a period of 15 years, subject to review every five years, and are together worth a total of R240 million (€ 22 million) over this period. This is in addition to the R140 million which the Department of Science and Technology has already committed to a bursary programme for study in astronomy, physics and engineering in fields related to the Square Kilometre Array and South Africa's MeerKAT Radio Telescope.

South African universities have been invited to apply for the Research Chairs in an open, competitive process. The allocation of the five research chairs to South African universities will be known on 04 November 2009. Thereafter the successful universities will be expected to find an internationally recognised and dynamic researcher to take up the post. The intention of this initiative is to strengthen and further build up a world class and dynamic astronomy and instrumentation community in Southern Africa.

The Department of Science and Technology's SKA bursary programme has since 2005 provided grants to eleven postdoctoral fellows, 82 PhD and MSc students and 43 undergraduate and honours students. This programme, called "Youth into Science and Engineering", is a key part of South Africa's SKA Project.

South Africa is also building the MeerKAT Radio Telescope Array in the Northern Cape Province. This is a world class telescope which will start doing science in 2013.

**VALUE OF EACH RESEARCH
CHAIR:**

R 3 million per year (\$390,000)

DURATION OF THE CHAIRS:

15 years, subject to review after each five year period

RESEARCH AREAS:

1. Observational radio astronomy
2. Observational multi-wavelength astronomy
3. Radio astronomy instrumentation, specializing in one or more of the following
 - a. Digital signal processing
 - b. Distributed data processing
 - c. RF broadband feeds, receivers and cryogenic packages
 - d. EMC and EMI

Outstanding candidates in related fields of astronomy and instrumentation will also be considered.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION
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