

Five new South African SKA Research Chairs announced

South Africa has announced 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 (SARChI) of the Department of Science and Technology (DST) and the National Research Foundation (NRF).

South Africa has announced 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 (SARChI) of the Department of Science and Technology (DST) and the National Research Foundation (NRF).

The Chairs have been made available to the following 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:

University	Research Focus for SKA Research Chair
Stellenbosch University	Electromagnetic Systems and EMI (Electromagnetic Interference) Mitigation for SKA
Rhodes University	Radio Astronomy Techniques and Technologies
University of Cape Town	Extragalactic MWL (multi wavelength) Astronomy
University of the Witwatersrand	Radio Astronomy
University of the Western Cape	Astronomy and Astrophysics

Each of the successful universities is now expected to find an internationally recognised and dynamic researcher to take up the position. 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 Chairs were awarded for a period of 15 years, subject to review every five years, and together are worth a total of R240 million (€ 22 million) over this period. This is in addition to the R140 million which the DST has already committed to a bursary programme – the *SKA Youth into Science and Engineering* - for study in astronomy, physics and engineering in fields related to the Square Kilometre Array and South Africa's MeerKAT Radio Telescope.

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

South African universities were invited to apply for the Research Chairs in an open, competitive process.