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Government of India
Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment
Department of Social Justice and Empowerment
(SCD-V)

ANNUAL ACTION PLAN -NATIONAL FELLOWSHIPS FOR SCs

1. BACKGROUND

- a. Government of India launched a Central Sector Scheme, namely, National Fellowship during the financial year 2005-06 to increase opportunities to Scheduled Castes students for pursuing higher education leading to degrees such as M.Phil. and Ph.D. The scheme caters to the requirements of the meritorious Scheduled Caste students for pursuing research degree in universities, research institutions and scientific institutions. This not only enables them to be eligible for employment as Lecturers in various colleges and universities but also equips them to effectively take advantage of the growing opportunities at the national and international level. The scheme has been revised with effect from 1.4.2018.
- b. The total number of fellowships awarded to the Scheduled Castes students under the scheme is 2000 every year. Out of the 2000 slots available under National Fellowship scheme for SC students, 1500 are allocated for Humanities/ Social Sciences stream and remaining 500 are for Science stream. These 2000 slots are over and above the number of SC students selected under the normal reservation policy of the Government for UGC Fellowships. Students are selected through UGC- Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (UGC-CSIR) NET-JRF joint test (for science stream including Engineering & Technology).
- c) Duration of Fellowship, which a student can avail under the scheme is as under:

Name of the Course	Maximum duration	Admissibility of JRF and SRF	
		JRF	SRF
M.Phil	2 years	2 years	Nil
Ph.D	5 years	2 years	Remaining 3 years
M.Phil + Ph.D	5 years	2 years	Remaining 3 years

- (d) Therefore, maximum of 10,000 students can avail benefits under the scheme in a year. However, it is observed that while 2000 slots per annum are approved under the scheme and accordingly, 2000 candidates are given approval for the fellowship, but the students who actually avail benefits under NFSC are less than the allocated slots of 2000 every year. In case of 2019-20,

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total number of students selected as per previous Scheme guidelines and receiving scholarships are 5498. 2311 students have been selected for 2018-19 as per the new Scheme guidelines.

2. METHODOLOGY OF IMPLEMENTATION

- a. University Grants Commission (UGC) is the nodal agency for implementing the Scheme and is responsible for laying down procedures/ guidelines for implementing it including selection of beneficiaries and disbursement of fellowships to selected candidates. For the purpose, UGC notifies the scheme by releasing suitable advertisements in the Press. State Governments/ UT Administrations are not involved in the implementation of the scheme.
- b. Any student belonging to Scheduled Caste category, irrespective of their family income, who has qualified National Eligibility Test – NET-JRF of UGC or UGC – CSIR Joint Test, is eligible for the fellowship subject to his/her position in National Merit and subject to finding placement in Universities / IITs / Institutions. The validity period of the offer is three years w.e.f the date of issue of JRF Award letter. However, in case of candidates who have already joined M.Phil/ Ph.D, the date of commencement of fellowship shall be from the date of declaration of NET result or date of their joining, whichever is later.
- c. However, the number of selected candidates that are actually availing of the fellowship is much less than the available slots of 2000 per year. Therefore, many of the meritorious students who have cleared UGC-NET do not take admission in the doctoral programme immediately. As a result, on one hand we have students who have qualified NET studying in the doctoral programme but do not get fellowships, and on the other hand, we have students who have been given fellowships but are not studying in any University. Therefore, it has been approved by HMSJE to carry out following changes in selection procedure from selection year 2020-21 onwards:

“while the merit for award of fellowships under NFSC will be drawn up through the NET examination as at present, preference will be given to such students who have already secured admission. However, in case sufficient such candidates are not available, candidates who have not secured admission will also be selected in the order of merit in the NET examination. A separate merit list will be drawn up for such candidates if required”.

3. Year wise amount released and beneficiaries for 2017-18 to 2019-20.

Year	Selections	Fellowship disbursed by UGC
2017-18	2000	215.20
2018-19	2311	255.81
2019-20	1152 (against the first cycle of NET exam)*	204.43

*The next NET exams have been conducted in Dec/Jan and results are expected shortly.

4. OUTCOME

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The targeted outcome for the 2020-21 are listed below:

- a) Selection of 2000 new students.
- b) Release of 1st installment of funds to UGC in 2nd Qtr., as unspent funds of around Rs. 40.00 crore is available with UGC from previous year releases which will be utilized during 2020-21.
- c) Release of 2nd Installments of funds during 3rd Qtr.

5. MONITORING

As UGC-NET and Joint CSIR-UGC Joint Test for selecting students are conducted two times in a year viz. June/July and December/January, monitoring at Ministry level with UGC shall be held to ensure timely declaration of results.

6. FUNDING

- a) BE for the 2020-21 may be kept at Rs. 200.00 cr, which may be revised upward in RE if needed.
- b) Unspent balance of Rs. 40.63 crore is likely to be available with UGC as on 31.03.2020, which shall be utilized during 2020-21.
- c) No commitment for FY 2019-20 is likely to be carried forward in next FY viz. 2020-21.

7. Mechanism of the change in selection procedure in FY 2020-21.

Modifications for selection for students have been made wherein while the merit for award of fellowships will be drawn up through the NET examination as at present, preference will be given to such students who have already secured admission. This should result in all the available slots being filled up. However, in case sufficient such candidates are not available, candidates who have not secured admission will also be selected in the order of merit in the NET examination. A separate merit list will be drawn up for such candidates if required. UGC has been requested to take necessary action

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accordingly, to revise the Registration Form from June-July 2020 UGC-NET/ CSIR-NET Joint Test.
