



**Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment  
Department of Social Justice and Empowerment**

**ANNUAL ACTION PLAN**

**NATIONAL FELLOWSHIP FOR OBC STUDENTS 2020-21**

The scheme aims at providing financial assistance to the OBC students in obtaining quality higher education leading to degrees such as M.Phil. and Ph.D. in universities, research institutions and scientific institutions. This will not only enable them to be eligible for employment to the posts of Lecturers lying vacant in various colleges and universities but will also equip them to effectively take advantage of the growing opportunities at the national and international level in the context of the new economic order.

**SCOPE**

The scheme is designed to provide a total number of 300 Junior Research Fellowships per year from the year 2014-15 and 300 Senior Research Fellowships from 2016-17 to Other Backward Class (OBC) students. The number of intake of JRF has been enhanced from 300 to 1000 per year onwards to undertake advanced studies and research leading to M.Phil./Ph.D. Degrees, who have qualified in the following tests:

- i) National Eligibility Test – Junior Research Fellowship (NET-JRF) of UGC (for Humanities/Social Sciences) or
- ii) UGC-Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (UGC-CSIR) NET-JRF Joint Test (for Sciences)

**DURATION OF FELLOWSHIP**

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

Therefore, maximum of 2900 students can avail benefits under the scheme in a year. However, it is observed that while 1000 slots per annum are approved under the scheme and accordingly, 1000 candidates are given approval for the fellowship, but the students who actually avail benefits under NFOBC are less than the allocated slots of 1000 every year.

### **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 Backward Classes, 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 1000 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”.

### **YEAR WISE AMOUNT RELEASED AND BENEFICIARIES FOR 2017-18 TO 2019-20.**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Fund released (in crore)</b>	<b>Actual beneficiaries by UGC</b>
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2017-18	20.00	910
2018-19	30.00	683
2019-20	52.50	933 + (Selection of 1000 yet to be done by UGC for 2019-20 )

### **OUTCOME**

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

- a) Selection of 1000 new students.
- b) Release of 1<sup>st</sup> installment of funds to UGC in 1<sup>st</sup> Qtr., preferably in the month of April.
- c) Release of 2<sup>nd</sup> Installments of funds during 3rd Qtr.

### **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.

### **FUNDING**

- a) Total budget allocated for the 2020-21 is Rs. 120.00 cr which will be utilized.
- b) Unspent balance of Rs. 56.15 crore is available with UGC at the end of Dec-2019 qtr. Therefore, unspent balance shall be utilized during 2020-21.
- c) Expenditure on selection of 1000 fellowship for FY 2019-20 is likely to be carried forward in next FY viz. 2020-21.

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

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