

NATIONAL FELLOWSHIP FOR PROVIDING FELLOWSHIP TO SCHEDULED CASTE STUDENTS TO PURSUE M.Phil. & Ph.D

GUIDELINES GOVERNING THE AWARD OF FELLOWSHIP (Effective from 25.11.2021) Modified on 13/03/2023

1. Background

National Fellowship scheme for Scheduled Caste Students is a Central Sector Scheme introduced during the financial year 2005-06 to provide. Opportunities to Scheduled Castes students for pursuing higher education leading to M.Phil/Ph.D degrees in Sciences, Humanities and Social Science streams.

2. Objectives:

The objective of the scheme is to provide fellowships in the form of financial assistance to students belonging to SC category to pursue higher studies leading to M.Phil/Ph.D in Science, Humanities, Social Science, in Indian Universities/Institutions/Colleges recognized by University Grants Commission (UGC)

3. Scope of the scheme

- i. The scheme provides for 2000 new Fellowships (1500 Junior Research Fellows for Humanities/ Social Sciences and 500 Junior Research Fellows for Science stream)per year to such Scheduled Caste students to undertake advanced studies and research leading to M.Phil/Ph.D Degrees, who have qualified in the following tests:
 - a. National Eligibility Test-Junior Research Fellowship (NET-JRF) of UGC or
 - b. UGC-Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (UGC-CSIR) NET-IRF joint test.)
- ii. These slots are over and above the number of SC students selected under the normal reservation policy of the Government for UGC Fellowships. The scheme is implemented on the pattern of the scheme of UGC Fellowships being awarded to research students pursuing M.Phil/Ph.D.
- iii. The scheme covers all Universities/Institutions recognized by the University) Grants commission (UGC) as under:
 - a. Central/State Universities (including constituent and affiliated institutions) included under Section 2(1) of UGC Act, 1956 and having valid accreditation from NAAC.

- b. Deemed Universities under Section 3 of UGC Act i.e. Institution for higher education notified by Central Government to be deemed University, in consultation with UGC and having valid accreditation from NAAC
- c. Institution fully funded by State/Central Government and empowered to award degrees.
- d. Institutions of National Importance as notified by Ministry of Human Resource Development.

(mhrd.gov.in/institutions-national-importance)

4. Implementing agency

National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation (NSFDC) has been declared as Central Nodal Agency (CNA) w.e.f. 01.10.2022 for implementing the scheme and is responsible for laying down procedures/ guidelines for implementing the scheme, including selection of beneficiaries and disbursement of fellowships to selected candidates.

5. Eligibility

- i. Fellowships shall be awarded to candidates for pursuing regular and full time M.Phil./Ph.D. courses in Universities/Research Institutions recognized by UGC
- ii. Scheduled Castes candidates who have already secured admission and qualify NET examination will be given preference. Such candidates will be required to join the fellowship within 3 months of the issue of the JRF award letter.
- iii. In case sufficient candidates, who have already secured admission are not available, candidates who have not yet secured admission will also be selected in the order of merit in the NET examination. Such candidates will be eligible to receive fellowship under National Fellowship for SC scheme, subject to admission for M.Phil/Ph.D in Universities/IITs/ Institutions. A field should be added by the UGC in the application to capture the current educational status of the student. Such students, who have either cleared their post graduate course or are in their final year of the course, shall be given preference for selection and would be allowed up to one year from selection to join. For other students a period of three years from the date of issue of award letter shall continue to be allowed for joining.
- iv. A scholar is eligible to receive only one fellowship at a time. The scholar is required to declare that he/she will not accept/receive any other monetary benefit/scholarship/fellowship from any other source. In other words, a scholar who is awarded fellowship under this scheme shall not accept any other fellowship/scholarship or hold any appointment, paid or otherwise, or receive any emoluments, salary, stipend etc from any other source during the tenure of the award (except in case of academic leave of one year).In case, a

scholar is already in receipt of any scholarship/fellowship, he/she will have to relinquish either the previous scholarship/fellowship/any other monetary benefit or to forgo the selection under this scheme.

- v. A scholar who does not complete his/her research work during the period of fellowship shall not be eligible to apply again under this scheme. Similarly, a scholar who has completely or partially availed any of these fellowships for Ph.D. earlier shall also not be eligible for fellowship under this scheme.
- vi. After two years of joining JRF, if the progress in the research work of the awardee is found satisfactory, his/her tenure will be extended for a further period of three years as Senior Research Fellowship (SRF) as per UGC Fellowship Guidelines issued from time to time in case of students enrolled for Ph.D or M.Phil.+Ph.D.
- vii. With regard to combined course of M.Phil and Ph.D., Fellowship will be provided initially for 02 years for M.Phil and after up gradation to Ph.D course, for another 03 years.
- viii. The fellowship will be payable from the date of issue of result of Joint CSIR-UGC-NET (in case, the candidate is already pursuing M.Phil/Ph.D) OR from the actual date of joining M.Phil/Ph.D, whichever is later. Therefore, if a candidate has already taken admission, for M.Phil/Ph.D through regular and full time mode, in any UGC recognised University/Institution and her/his roll number is given in the list, she/he should apply for fellowship within three months only.
- ix. In case of integrated Ph.D. or M.Phil. to Ph.D., the maximum tenure is 5 years including M.Phil. period of fellowship. For doing M.Phil. fellowship shall be granted for two years or upto the date of submission of M.Phil. dissertation, whichever is earlier.
- x. The maximum allowed gap period for continuation from M.Phil. to Ph.D. under this scheme shall be 2 years (from the date of declaration of result of M.Phil to date of admission to Ph.D.). However, the total tenure of fellowship shall remain five years excluding the gap period. No fellowship shall be paid during the gap period.
- xi. The fellowship shall be granted upto the date of submission of Ph.D.thesis or five years of tenure, whichever is earlier. No extension is permissible beyond the total period of five years of fellowship.
- xii. Employees of any University/College/Educational Institution/Central/State/UT Government shall be excluded from availing Fellowship, even if they are on Study Leave or Extra Ordinary Leave to pursue the M.Phil./Ph.D. course.

6. Number of Fellowships with effect from 2021-22;

- i. The scheme provides for new 2000 Fellowships (1500 Junior Research Fellows for Humanities/Social Sciences and 500 Junior Research Fellows for Science stream) per year. Out of the total slots available under National Fellowship Scheme for SC students 75% will be allocated for National

Eligibility Test-Junior Research Fellowship (NET-IRF) of UGC and remaining 25% for science category students through UGC-Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (UGC-CSIR) NET-IRF joint test (for Science streams).

- ii. If, the allocated slots earmarked for either UGC-CSIR-NET-JRF joint test or UGC-NET-JRF remain unfilled, the vacant slots may be filled up through the UGC-NET-JRF or the UGC-CSIR-NET-IRF joint test, as the case may be, for the same academic year.
- iii. If, in an academic year, the allocated slots remain substantially unfilled (25% or more), the slot allocation may be reviewed in the next academic year and revised accordingly.
- iv. These slots will be over and above the SC students selected under the normal reservation policy of the Government.
- v. There will be an inclusive provision of reservation for Person with Disabilities (PwD) who belongs to SC category for the consideration as per norms of existing quota of PwD. as per The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. The minimum degree of disability should be 40% in order to be eligible for any concessions/benefits.

7. Duration of Fellowship

Name of the Course	Maximum duration	Admissibility of JRF and SRF	
		Junior Research Fellowship (JRF)	Senior Research Fellowship (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

II. Rate of fellowships and other facilities

- i. The rates of fellowship for JRF and SRF will be at par with the UGC Fellowships. The rates applicable w.e.f. 01.01.2019 are as follows:

S No.	Head	Rates Applicable for	
		JRF	SRF
1.	Fellowship in all streams.	Rs. 31,000/- p.m. for initial two years	Rs. 35,000/- p.m. for remaining tenure
2.	Contingency for Humanities & Social Sciences	Rs. 10,000/- p.a. for initial two years	Rs. 20,500/- p.a. for remaining tenure.
3.	Contingency for Sciences.	Rs. 12,000/- p.a. for Initial two years	Rs 25,000/- p.a. for remaining tenure.
4.	Escort/Reader assistance (All Subjects) for physically and	Rs. 2,000/- p.m.	Rs. 2,000/- p.m.

	visually handicapped candidates	
5.	House Rent Allowance (HRA)*	@ 8%, 16% and 24% to those students who are not provided with hostel accommodation, in accordance with Govt. of India norms as applicable in the city/location where the research fellows are working.

Note regarding HRA:

- a. In case, hostel accommodation is provided to the scholars by their institutions, the scholar is eligible to draw only the hostel fee excluding mess, electricity, water charges etc.
- b. In case hostel accommodation offered by the university/institution is refused by the candidate, he/she will forfeit his/her claim of HRA.
- c. In case of non-availability of hostel accommodation, the scholar may be provided with single accommodation by the host institution. In such cases, the rent paid by the scholar on actual basis shall be reimbursed, subject to the ceiling of HRA as per Govt. of India norms.
- d. If the scholar makes his/her own arrangements of accommodation, he/she shall be entitled to draw HRA as per ceiling and categorization of cities by the Govt of India.
- e. In case the scholar wishes to draw HRA, he/she is required to claim HRA on monthly basis by submitting monthly confirmation Certificate in the prescribed format, to his/her institution.
 - ii. Other facilities such as medical facilities, leave including maternity leave will be governed as per the guidelines of UGC in case of their fellowship programme.

8. Procedure for Applying for the Scheme (JRF)

- i. NSFDC is the nodal agency for implementing the National Fellowship scheme for SC students.
- ii. The selection for the award of fellowship to students will be made on the basis of merit of each UGC-NET-JRF or UGC-CSIRNET-JRF examination.
- iii. While the merit for award of fellowships under NFSC will be drawn up through the NET examination, 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.

- iv. Candidates who have already secured admission are required to join the fellowship within 3 months of issue of JRF award letter under the Scheme. The duration for joining the course will not be extended, candidature of such candidates, who do not join the fellowship within 3 months, shall be cancelled.
- v. The qualified candidates, who have not secured admission at the time of application for Fellowship under the Scheme, are required to get admission for regular and full time M.Phil./Ph.D in a recognized research institution at the first available opportunity but no later than three years from the date of award of fellowship.
- vi. Genuineness of the Scheduled Caste Certificate furnished by the awardee. shall be verified by the concerned University/Institution before allowing the awardee to avail fellowship under the scheme.
- vii. The decision of the NSFDC in regard to awarding the Fellowship shall be final and no appeal would lie against any decision by NSFDC in regard thereof.
- viii. The results shall be published on NSFDC website. Award letters can be downloaded from NSFDC online application portal or as advertised by NSFDC.

9. Aadhar based I.D:

Payment of Fellowships and any other admissible allowance should be made to beneficiaries through their bank accounts. The Ministry of Social Justice vide notification number 428 dated 16th February, 2017 has notified Aadhaar as an identity document under Section 7 of Aadhaar Act 2016 for all Scholarship Schemes w.e.f. 16th February 2017. NSFDC henceforth will make provisions for capturing details of Aadhaar, Aadhaar EID and other alternative documents as provided for in the said notification on their respective Scholarship portals or otherwise for disbursement of fellowship directly into the beneficiary's account.

10. Disbursement of Fellowship

Confirmation for continuation of the fellowship shall be given by the University twice a year on a semester basis within the 10th of the initial month of the semester. Based on this certification, the research scholars would be released the fellowship within the 15th of every month without any further intervention of the university. The University will, however, be responsible for updating on the portal in case any research scholar discontinues the course, or is/has been on inadmissible leave and thus not entitled for the fellowship during this period.

In the event of discontinuation of the course or in case of inadmissible leave rendering him/her not entitled to the fellowship, the candidate will be responsible to intimate such position and he/she will be liable to refund the amount of over-payment, if any, of fellowship paid to him/her for the period beyond the date of such discontinuation, or for the such period of inadmissible leave.

In case any research scholar absents without intimation or is/ has been on admissible leave, the concerned Nodal Officer will be accountable to effect stopping of automatic generation of his/her fellowship and also to effect recovery of such over-payment, if any, made to the candidate.

11. Evaluation and Monitoring

- i. A dashboard to monitor progress, geographic spread, discipline wise students enrolled, sanctions, completion of courses, etc. shall be put in place by NSFDC on its portal to be accessed by Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment via login credential. NSFDC may provide the month-wise information (fresh+renewal) in terms of amount released and number of candidates to whom amount has been disbursed for fellowship to DoSJE regularly.
- ii. A grievance redressal portal and a call centre shall be set up by NSFDC to take care of complaints of students availing of JRF/SRF by NSFDC.
- iii. Portal for online verification by the University for the students of NFSC will be developed by NSFDC.
- iv. Online portal for capturing the academic progress of scholars at different stages of fellowship will be developed by NSFDC.
- v. Implementation charges payable to NSFDC will be based on actual expenditure, subject to ceiling of 1% of the total fellowship disbursed by the NSFDC.