

Revised Guidelines for Postgraduate Grant Scheme - National Center for Advanced Studies (NCAS) in Humanities and Social Sciences

1. Purpose of the Scheme:

The purpose of the Postgraduate Grant Scheme is to strengthen the research capacity of state universities and Higher Educational Institutions ((HEIs) under the University Grants Commission in the fields of Humanities and Social Sciences by way of financially supporting academics in such disciplines to acquire required postgraduate qualifications for their career advancement.

2. General Requirements

- 2.1 The applicant shall be a permanent member of the academic staff of a University/HEI operating under the University Grants Commission and from a core discipline of humanities, social sciences and arts or recognized associated disciplines (management, law, education, library science etc.)
- 2.2 The Maximum age limit for this grant scheme to the closing date of the application is as follows:

Grants for PhD/ MPhil leading to PhD - 50 Yrs.
Grants for Masters. - 36 Yrs.

- 2.3 Grants shall be available generally for local/foreign PhDs, and MPhils leading to PhDs and equivalents. In exceptional circumstances grants shall be available for foreign Masters provided there is a strong justification from the Head of Department endorsed by the Dean of the Faculty and approved by the Vice Chancellor of the University/Head of the HEI.
- 2.4 No applicant is eligible for funding from the NCAS for his or her postgraduate studies if he/she receives financial support from the postgraduate funding scheme operated by the University Grants Commission, a Government project (i.e. World Bank, Asian Development Bank sponsored projects) or a recipient of foreign/local scholarship through the Government or a related institution for the same purpose. However, a candidate who has received partial funding support for his/her PhD/MPhil from any other source less than the maximum permissible level of funding per candidate under the NCAS grant scheme can seek additional funding support from the NCAS for the same study programme. All applicants need to declare any form of foreign and local funding (scholarships, tuition waivers, partial funding, research support, and living stipend etc.) available for his or her intended postgraduate studies with the application for funding. If such funding is available the amount/s has/have to be disclosed with the source/s.

Applicants shall also be required to declare any subsequent funding from other sources that would be available for the study programme after the NCAS has decided to grant an award to support his/her postgraduate studies.

Applicants are further required to inform the NCAS if they have any valid scholarship from the registered University, unless otherwise mentioned in the Letter of Confirmation of Enrollment (CoE), in the form of a confirmation, obtained from the respective University that he/she does not receive any scholarship from them.

The NCAS reserves the right to revise the already approved grant amount at the event of revealing alternative source/s of funding for the same purpose in the form of grant, scholarship, tuition/ fee waiver etc.

- 2.5 All applicants of NCAS grants for postgraduate studies are required to achieve the following minimum overall band score of IELTS (Academic) in order to qualify for a grant under this scheme.

	Overall minimum Band Score
(I) The applicants who wish to follow Doctoral (Ph.D) degrees	6.5
(II) The applicants who wish to follow Master's Degree in English Medium	6.5

If the IELTS requirement other than the above is specified by the Study University and it differs from the above, the IELTS requirement of the respective University will be considered as the IELTS requirement to be fulfilled by the candidates of the NCAS Grant Scheme who wish to apply for that University

The applicants who wish to follow Masters/Doctoral program in any language other than English and the expected University/Institute does not require fulfilling English proficiency test are exempted from IELTS bench mark requirement. (This exemption will only be applicable for those who wish to apply for local Universities and certain other Universities that does not require English as a requirement.)

(Applications can be submitted pending submission of English language requirements)

The NCAS also accepts the IELTS equivalents i.e. TOFEL or PTE (Academic) for this purpose.

English Test	Overall	Listening	Reading	Writing	Speaking
IELTS	6.5	06	06	06	06
TOFEL IBT	79-93	20-23	19-23	24-26	20-22
PTE Academic	59-64	57-60	61-64	74-77	54-57

- 2.6 All applicants for NCAS grants are expected to register in recognized universities for their postgraduate studies. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the applicant to check the credentials of the intuitions and the prospective supervisor/s prior to registration for the intended postgraduate programme. For this purpose the NCAS recommends the applicants to visit the latest versions of the following databases recognized by the University Grants Commission of Sri Lanka.

1. Commonwealth University book : <https://www.acu.ac.uk/our-members/>
2. International hand book of Universities: <https://www.iau-aiu.net/List-of-IAU-Members?lang=en>

The NCAS may also request the candidate to provide the credentials of prospective supervisor/s in terms of his/her/their qualifications and research publications, by way of a short profile/ curriculum Vitae of the intended supervisor.

- 2.7 All the applicants are required to submit a copy of the letter of registration or the letter of acceptance for the intended postgraduate programme issued by the HEI at which he/she intends to start or has already started his/her postgraduate studies.
- 2.8 The NCAS Grant Scheme provides a maximum of only 03 years funding for PhD/Doctoral studies and 02 years funding for Masters. A candidate applied for the NCAS funding after registration for his or her postgraduate studies might not be eligible for funding for the full period as indicated below.
- i. A candidate applied within six months of registration could be considered for funding for full period of his or her studies subject to a maximum of 03 years for PhD and equivalent and 02 years for Master's.
 - ii. A candidate applied within second six months of registration could be considered for funding for 2 years and 6 months or 1 year and 6 months of his or her PhD or Master's respectively.
 - iii. A candidate applied within third six months of registration could be considered for funding for 2 years or 1 year funding for his or her PhD or Master's respectively.
 - iv. A candidate applied within fourth six months of registration could be considered for funding for 1 year and 6 months of his or her PhD.
 - v. A candidate applied within fifth six months of registration could be considered for funding for 1 year of his or her PhD.
 - vi. In case of PhD/Doctoral studies, a candidate applied within sixth six months of registration or after could not be considered for funding under the NCAS grant scheme. Similarly, in case of Master's, a candidate applied within fourth six months of registration or after could not be considered for funding under the NCAS grant scheme.
- 2.9 In case of candidates registering with foreign universities/HEIs for his/her postgraduate studies, the amount of grant will be determined based on the academic fees payable to the respective university/HEIs by the candidate and the country specific living allowance subject to a maximum ceiling determined by the NCAS from time to time. However, living stipend could be proportionately reduced for the period the candidate lives in Sri Lanka within his period of study.
- 2.10 In case of candidates registering with local HEIs for his/her postgraduate studies, the amount of grant will be determined based on the academic fees payable to the respective HEI by the candidate and research expenses for the intended study.
- 2.11 All candidates who have been qualified to receive financial support under this scheme shall report periodic progress of his/her studies once in every six months to the NCAS through his supervisor through the proper channel. Non submission of due progress reports will cause for non-disbursement of grants on time.

In addition to the half yearly progress report, each applicant is required to submit

either

- a. Evidence of presenting his/her research findings in National/International Conferences. (Minimum 1 abstract per year)
- or
- b. Evidence of publishing full research papers in reputed/ peer reviewed/ refereed journals based on the research findings. (Minimum 1 article per year) in order to release the succeeding disbursement of grants.

In either case, the applicant must submit the manuscript (abstract/ article), the place and date

of presenting/publication (to be proved by the cover page and the content page/ the link, in the case of E-Journals),

- 2.12 The candidates who register with foreign University/HEIs are supposed to fully spend his intended period of studies in respective foreign countries in order to disburse the full amount of grant. If they wish to visit Sri Lanka during the intended period of studies they shall inform the NCAS of such visits with justifications and the dates of travel. The living stipend will not cover the period the grantee stays in Sri Lanka.
- 2.13 In addition to the above clause 2.12, all the grantees who have registered in foreign Universities/ HEIs should send the scanned copy of the entire passport including the bio page, alterations and any visas, departures and arrivals, along with the six (06) monthly progress report through the proper channel in order to disburse the next installment of the grant. The same must be followed by the grantees who obtained all three installments regardless of any disbursements in order to receive the 2% of the grant money retained by the NCAS.
- 2.14 A selected candidate for a NCAS award under the NCAS Postgraduate Research grants should fulfill all the requirements and make a formal request for the release of the first installment of the grant within a period of one year. If any candidate fails to fulfill this requirement his or her grant will automatically come to cease after one year from the award of the grant.
- 2.15 If the applicant is a probationary lecturer, not confirmed in service he/she should show the evidence that he/she could complete the intended postgraduate programme at least six months prior the expiry of his/her probationary period, i.e., in case of a candidate who wishes to use the grant for 3 year PhD programme, his/her probationary lecturer status should be valid (extendable) to a minimum of another 3 years and 6 months from the time of commencement of his planned studies.

Moreover, every grantee should submit a detailed work plan of his/her studies approved by the supervisor within three months of commencement of his/her postgraduate programme.

3. Decision of the Grant

The final decision of the grant with regard to each applicant will be taken by the Governing Council of the NCAS based on the recommendation of the panel appointed by it. The panel will peruse all the documents submitted by each candidate including research proposals and will call the candidate for an interview before making its recommendation.

4. Documents to be submitted with the Application

- i. Registration letter /Placement letter for the intended postgraduate programme. In case of an applicant intended to register with a foreign university/HEI, acceptable level of communication with the university/HEI is sufficient at the application stage.
- ii. A well written research proposal (approximately 1500 words for Masters and 2000 words for PhDs)
- iii. A letter issued by the University/HEI where the applicant is employed at, certifying the availability of study leave
- iv. Each applicant will need to provide the details of **two referees** as specified in the application who can provide academic references written in English.

- v. Candidates applying after six months of his registration shall submit a progress report of his or her studies through his or her supervisor.
- vi. Documentary evidence for the relevant course fees payable to the intended postgraduate programme
- vii. A declaration of other sources of funding available for the intended study programme by way of scholarships partial funding, tuition waivers, living stipend etc. by the applicant. (any subsequent funding secured by the candidate should be declared to the NCAS immediately by the candidate)
- viii. A record of research and publication by the candidate.
- ix. Certified copies of IELTS results sheet.
- x. The total budget of the research expenses certified by the supervisor (only for the locally registered candidates)
- xi. Credential of his/her prospective supervisors in terms of qualifications and research Publications. Locally registered candidates should provide a letter from the Registrar of the university certifying the name of the supervisor appointed by the Senate with his/her institutional affiliation.
- xii. A copy of the National Identity Card

5. Documents to be submitted prior to the release of first installment of the grant

- i. An applicant can request further time to submit documents mentioned under item ix to xi of the section for **4 above** at the time of interview if those documents are not ready. Such candidates are supposed to submit them prior to the release of first installment of the grant.
- ii. A certificate from the Vice Chancellor of the university or Head of the HEI where the applicant is currently employed whether the applicant has secured any funding in the form of scholarships, tuition waivers, partial funding, research support, and living stipend etc. from the university/HEI at which applicant is employed or any other local or foreign organization. If such funding is available the amount/s has/have to be disclosed with the source/s.
- iii. Every candidate shall submit an intended plan of activities in relation to his or her study programme including date of commencement and the intended date of completion. In this plan, intended activities shall be divided into six monthly periods from the date of commencement. In case of a candidate who is going to start or already started their postgraduate studies in foreign universities, and intended to spend a part of the study period locally, should indicate the period/s planned to spend locally within his intended study programme with justifications.
- iv. A personal health report endorsed by the University Medical Officer of the University at which the applicant is employed.
- v. A certified copy of the surety bond and the agreement with University/HEI including the breakdown of the bond.
- vi. A letter certifying the approval of the study leave for the intended postgraduate studies by the university/HEI at which the applicant is employed.