

Revised Guidelines for PMRF

1. Background

The Prime Minister's Research Fellows (PMRF) Scheme has been designed for improving the quality of research in various higher educational institutions in the country. With attractive fellowships, the scheme seeks to attract the best talent into research thereby realizing the vision of development through innovation. The scheme was announced in the Budget 2018-19.

2. PMRF Granting Institutions and Seat Allocation

The institutes which can offer PMRF will be:

- (i) all IITs
- (ii) all IISERs
- (iii) IISc, and
- (iv) Central Universities/NITs offering science and/or technology degrees which appear in the list of top 25 institutes in the NIRF ranking (overall) in the previous year.

We shall refer to these institutions as "PMRF Granting Institutions". Each PMRF granting institute is allotted PMRF seats every year according to the following rule:

- (i) A PMRF Granting Institute appearing in top 10 NIRF ranking (overall) gets 3.5% of the existing PhD students strength on 1st May of the respective year as PMRF seats,
- (ii) A PMRF Granting Institute appearing in top 11-25 positions in the NIRF ranking (overall) gets 2.5% of the existing PhD students strength on 1st May of the respective year as PMRF seats, and
- (iii) Remaining PMRF Granting Institutes get 1.5% of the existing PhD student strength on 1st May of the respective year as PMRF seats.

In case the total PMRF seat requirement for a particular year exceeds 1000, the above percentages will be scaled down proportionately so that the total seat requirement does not exceed 1000.

3. Eligibility and Application Procedure

Candidates can apply for PMRF through two channels:

DIRECT ENTRY CHANNEL

To apply for PMRF through this channel, the candidate must satisfy all of the following criteria:

(1) The applicant should have satisfied one of the following criteria in the preceding three years from the date of submission of the application :

(a) completed or be pursuing the final year of four (or five) year undergraduate or five year integrated M.Tech. or 2 year M.Sc. or five year undergraduate-postgraduate dual degree programs in Science and Technology streams from IISc/IITs/NITs/IISERSs/IEST and centrally funded IIITs. These candidates should have secured a CGPA/CPI of at least 8.0 (on a 10-point scale). For applicants in the five year integrated or dual degree programs, if separate CGPAs/CPIs are awarded for UG and PG parts of the program, the CGPA/CPI of the UG part (first four years) will be considered.

OR

(b) completed or be pursuing the final year of four (or five) year undergraduate or five year integrated M.Tech. or five year integrated M.Sc. or 2 year M.Sc. or five year undergraduate-postgraduate dual degree programs in Science and Technology streams from any other Institute/University recognized in India, not covered in 1(a) above. These candidates should have secured a minimum CGPA of 8 or equivalent apart from a minimum score of 650 in the respective GATE subject.

OR

(c) qualified GATE and be pursuing or have completed M.Tech./MS by research at one of the PMRF Granting Institutions having a minimum CGPA or CPI of 8.0 (on a 10-point scale) at the end of the first semester with a minimum of four courses. For those candidates who are applying after the first semester, the CGPA or CPI requirement of 8.0 will be based on all the courses, labs, thesis that the candidate has completed.

(2) They apply for Ph.D. programme in one the PMRF granting institutes and get selected in the programme.

(3) The PMRF granting institute, which has admitted the student in the Ph.D. programme makes a strong recommendation, and uploads the relevant information at the PMRF web-portal. Student can only get admission in those institutes where he/she has got selected and wishes to seek admission (i.e., selection in one institute and availing PMRF from another institute which does not support the student for PMRF will not be allowed).

(4) The metrics on which the candidates will be judged will include (but not restricted to): research exposure, publications, performance in international

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competitions (like Math. Olympiad, ACM ICPC Programming Contest), grades and recommendation letters.

(5) Within 12-18 months of admission into the PhD programme, the progress of the candidate will be reviewed by the PMRF panel, and continuation of PMRF will be subject to candidate's satisfactory performance. A strong research proposal is mandatory, and a clear assessment from the host institution in support of continuation of PMRF status. Due weightage would be given to publication in reputed journals/conferences.

LATERAL ENTRY CHANNEL

To apply for PMRF through this channel, the candidate must satisfy all of the following criteria:

(1) The candidate should be pursuing Ph.D. in one of the PMRF granting institutions. Further, he/she should have completed at most 12 months in the PhD programme if he/she joined the programme with a Master's degree; and should have completed at most 24 months in the PhD programme if he/she joined the PhD programme with a Bachelor's degree. The relevant period of 12 months or 24 months will be counted from the date of admission in the PhD programme till the date of application for lateral entry. A candidate can be considered at most twice through lateral entry channel PMRF. In case of Integrated M.Tech/MSc and PhD programmes, the candidate will be eligible to apply within 12 months of the date of satisfying the Master's degree requirement.

(2) The candidate should have completed at least four courses in the PhD programme, each of which should be a full-semester course, and obtained aggregate CGPA of 8.5 (out of 10) or higher.

(3) The PMRF Granting Institute, in which the student is enrolled, makes a strong recommendation for the candidate and uploads the relevant information on the PMRF web-portal. This includes a research proposal and soft copies of publications (which could include those under submission).

(4) Candidate continues work only in the host institute and transfer to another PMRF eligible institute is not allowed. Further, once enrolled in a PhD programme through lateral entry, the candidate cannot be considered for direct entry channel in a subsequent year.

(5) The metrics on which the candidates will be judged include (but not restricted to) a strong research proposal, publications record and grades. Due weightage should be given to publication in reputed journals/conferences.

4. Evaluation Process and Nodal Institutions

- (a) The disciplines will be broadly classified into 5 or 6 broad areas (on consultation with the NCC). For each broad area, a Nodal Institution (NI) will be appointed.
- (b) The NI for each broad discipline will rotate once in two years. The NCC will decide on the Nodal Institutions.
- (c) Each PMRF Eligible Institute will designate a PMRF Coordinator who will be responsible for uploading and communicating all the relevant information for the candidates.
- (d) A Central Portal would be developed for submission of applications by the PMRF Granting Institutions. Each PMRF Granting Institute shall make at most as many recommendations as 1.25 times the number of PMRF available seats allotted to it for the existing year. The number of direct entry recommendations should not be more than 25% of the PMRF seats allotted to the institute. The portal will automatically send the applications to the respective Nodal Institutes.
- (e) Each NI would constitute reviewers consisting of subject matter experts to go through all the applications and make recommendations for selection.
- (f) Each NI will send the recommendations to a National Level Committee. The committee will release the final allocation of PMRF seats to candidates.
- (g) The selection process will be held twice a year. The national level committee shall meet twice a year (in the first week of July and in the third week of December).

5. Deliverables

- (a) At the time of joining, each Fellow shall be given deliverables to be achieved each year. This will be decided by the assigned guide and the department which the fellow is joining.
- (b) The deliverables are to be designed keeping in view the topic selected by the fellow.
- (c) There shall be an annual review of PMRF fellows. The candidates would continue to avail the fellowship in the next year only if their performance is found satisfactory by the review committee. The review will be a rigorous process, and can be done in the form of a national convention (for each discipline). The nodal institute for the discipline may form multiple expert panels to evaluate the progress of the PMRF fellows. Each such panel can have 3-4 members, with at most 2 members from the host institution.
- (d) Each fellow is expected to teach once a week in a neighbourhood ITI/Polytechnic/Engineering College, as per modalities approved by the Government.

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- (e) If the deliverables are not achieved, the fellowship could be brought down to the institutional fellowship level or even discontinued.

6. IPR

The IPR policy shall be as per the Institute's Policy on IPRs. The IPRs are owned by the Institution where the Fellow has worked.

7. Administration System

- (a) National Coordination Committee (NCC): The NCC shall be the Apex Body concerned with the implementation of the scheme and shall be constituted by the MHRD.
- (b) The National Coordinator will chair the NCC and shall be nominated by MHRD from one of the PMRF Granting Institutions.
- (c) The NCC shall comprise of 7-8 Heads of PMRF Granting Institutions.
- (d) The NCC will be empowered to suggest changes in eligibility conditions, including CGPA etc., with detailed justification, for effective implementation of the scheme.
- (e) The NCC will be fully empowered to decide the maximum and the minimum number of research projects to be taken up under the scheme in such a manner that there is balanced growth of research in each discipline.
- (f) The NCC shall form a core group consisting of stakeholders from the industry, medical profession, defence/para military, etc., where they would deliberate and identify the areas of research, list it out on priority basis, and identify institutes which have core strengths in these areas. The areas shall be frontier areas in science and technology, preferable focussing on national priorities.
- (g) Nodal Institutions will have the following roles and responsibilities:
- To receive, review and recommend the candidates
 - To constitute the selection committees
 - To conduct the annual review of PMRF fellows.

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The NCC will periodically review and monitor implementation of the scheme. The NCC will report to MHRD with the status of the scheme, fund flow and utilization thereof, and policy changes, if any, required to make the scheme more effective. Apart from this, the monitoring will be done in the manner detailed below:

- (a) There will be internal reviews twice a year.
- (b) There will be a web-site set up by the NCC showcasing the areas of work of each PMRF which will list all the publications.
- (c) There will be a National Convention every year where selected PMRFs will showcase their work. This will be an occasion for the Industry to participate in the Convention.

9. Financial Implications

(a) The following administrative costs will be met from the scheme funds:

- i. Cost of selection by the Nis
- ii. Cost of travel of experts for the selections
- iii. Cost of maintaining website and monitoring system
- iv. Cost of meetings including the annual review meetings
- v. Cost incurred by the coordinating institute
- vi. Annual Convention Cost

(b) An amount of Rs 5 Crore per year would be placed with the NCC for covering incidental costs related to the above.

(c) The following would be the fellowship for the PMRFs:

Year	Amount (Rs.)
Year 1	70,000

Year 2	70,000
Year 3	75,000
Year 4	80,000
Year 5	80,000

- (d) Apart from this, each Fellow would be eligible for a research grant of Rs. 2 Lakhs per year (total of Rs 10 Lakhs for five years).
- (e) The tenure of fellowship will be till the end of the 4th year of PhD for students from integrated courses and till the end of the 5th year of PhD for B.Tech. (or equivalent) students. For students selected through the lateral entry channel, the PMRF scholarship and obligations will continue only for the remainder of the student's stay in the doctoral program. No retrospective payment will be made.
- (f) Industry participation in the PMRF program would be explored through CSR funding or otherwise to enable industry to sponsor Fellows.

ANNEXURE-I

Central Universities and NITs in top 25 NIRF ranking (overall) for 2020-21 selection

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S. No.	Institute	NIRF Rank (overall)
1	Jawaharlal Nehru University	7
2	Banaras Hindu University	10
3	University of Hyderabad	11
4	Aligarh Muslim University	18
5	Jamia Millia Islamia	19
6	University of Delhi	20
7	National Institute of Technology Tiruchirappalli	24