Indian Council for Cultural Relations
(Scholarship Division)

TERMS AND CONDITIONS/ GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS UNDER ICCR SCHOLARSHIPS (AY 2026-27)

1. Dos and DON'Ts for filling in the application on A2A portal

i. All applications will be accepted online through A2A ICCR Scholarship Portal (https://a2ascholarships.iccr.gov.in) only. **Once the student has obtained admission on A2A portal and the Mission/Post has decided to award scholarship to that particular student, he/she (student) may be advised to register on SII portal for obtaining Unique ID and further process including obtaining visa and registration with FRRO (VISA and registration with the FRRO are to be processed on Study in India (SII) portal)**.

ii. Applications will not be accepted physically in Indian Missions abroad/ICCR/Universities.

iii. Applications will not be accepted locally (in India).

iv. Applications should be complete in every detail to avoid rejection of the same by the A2A portal/University/Institute.

v. In case of documents available in local language, applicants are requested to upload certified copies of translations of these documents in English. In case of unavailability of English transcript, the application will be rejected.

vi. Applicants applying for Doctoral courses should submit a synopsis along with the application.

vii. Applicants wishing to pursue performing arts course should upload the latest video/audio/ YouTube link of their performance.

viii. Students who are already pursuing Under Graduate (UG) and Post Graduate (PG) courses in India and intend to pursue further studies will have to apply afresh through A2A portal to process their applications, as the applications will not be entertained and processed physically.

ix. ICCR scholarships are meant for admissions only in the Indian State/Central universities/Institutes or colleges affiliated to and recognized by the Indian State and Central Universities. The list of such Universities/Institutes, empanelled with ICCR, is available on the Portal.

x. Student has the option of applying in 5 Universities/Institutes of his/her choice in preferential order through A2A Scholarship Portal.

xi. In order to pursue studies in engineering/science, students should have studied Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry at Higher Secondary levels.

xii. In Biology-based science subjects, students should have studied Biology, Physics and Chemistry at Higher Secondary.

xiii. In order to avoid rejection from Universities/colleges, applicants are advised to make their subject choices carefully, based on the subjects they have studied at Higher Secondary. xiv. For admission in UG level courses, it is compulsory to have 10+2 i.e; (12 years) of schooling. It is, therefore, necessary that the student applying for UG level courses must complete 12 years of schooling.

xv. List of courses offered and the criteria/pre-requisites for admission in these Universities/Institutes may be referred to on the respective University website by the applicant. This is to avoid time delays in processing applications. A2A Portal has web links of each of the University and courses offered by them.

xvi. Applicants are advised to read all the instructions on the online portal for filling online application and leave no field blank.

xvii. Subsequent change of University/Institute or course after ICCR scholarship has been awarded will not be entertained.

xviii. Students should not be allowed or supposed to do any part time/full time job along with his/her studies.

xix. Age limit for availing scholarship Minimum/Maximum Age limit for students under various courses is as under:-

PhD – 50 Years maximum
UG/PG – 18 – 40 Years (<u>18 years as on date 01.07.2026</u>)

There is no upper age limit for courses in Hindi/Sanskrit/Indian performing arts such as Kathak, Bharatnatyam etc.

2. <u>Selection of Subjects, Courses and Universities</u>

i. For admission to science/engineering courses, an applicant should have studied Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry at Higher Secondary level to be eligible.

ii. Applicants should clearly mention the course to which they are seeking admission while mentioning choices.

iii. For choosing options for Universities, applicant must refer to University website or list of eligible Universities. List of Universities is available on the A2A Portal.

iv. As IITs provide admission in B.Tech Course through a separate procedure, ICCR scholarships are not offered for the same.

v. For MBA, GMAT score is mandatory.

vi. ICCR does not accept applications for Casual Research.

vii. The admissions in Medical/ Paramedical (Nursing / Physiotherapy / anesthesia etc.) / fashion / law courses / integrated courses such as BALLB (5 Years) / B Sc & M. Sc (5 Years) etc. are not admissible.

viii. Applicants of Ph.D. courses should upload Synopsis (Proposal) of the research work.

3. <u>Medium of instruction and English proficiency</u>

i. Medium of instruction is English in all the Universities in India. Applicants should therefore have good knowledge of English to the extent that they are able to speak fluently in English and comprehend lessons in English without any difficulty.

ii. While filling the application, the applicant has to write a 500 word essay in English language, on one of the topics / subjects mentioned in the A2A Portal.

iii. There is an optional provision of providing marks obtained in English Proficiency Test like TOFEL/LETS etc. Only the marks obtained in such exams should be filled in.

4. More than one application of one candidate on A2A Portal will lead to disqualification of candidate.

5. It is a compulsory requirement of Indian Universities/institutes for foreign students to have a passport to study in India, which also include applicants from countries not requiring passport for travel to India.

6. Passport size photograph of applicant with white background and visibility of both ears should be uploaded.

7. The application once submitted by student will directly go to selected Universities/Institutes through A2A Portal.

8. The application will be scrutinized by the respective Universities/Institutes for eligibility of admission of applicant in the applied course and stream.

9. Indian Universities/educational institutes are autonomous and independent bodies and have their own eligibility criteria. It is, therefore, for the students to satisfy themselves about the course chosen and about the Universities. Decision on admission is solely that of the respective University/Institute and queries on this thus should not be directed to ICCR. Admission is provisional till the time Universities satisfy themselves of the authenticity of requisite documents from the students. If on arrival, it is found that the student does not possess the required original documents on the basis of which the admission has been finalized, the students will themselves be responsible for the consequences including denial of admission by the Universities and student will have to return to his/her country at own cost. ICCR will not bear cost on such student's return airfare. The students while coming to India to join their respective University/Institute should invariably bring the following documents:-

i. Original documents relating to their qualifications for verification by the respective University/Institute.

ii. English Translation of the documents in original.

iii. Certified copy of the syllabus of the last qualifying examination.

iv. Valid passport with appropriate visa. Student visa for Undergraduate/Post graduate studies and research visa for Ph. D studies.

v. Award of scholarship letter issued by the concerned Indian Mission/Post abroad.

vi. Undertaking from the student that the course and the University as conveyed is acceptable and that he/she will not request for change at the time of admission.

vii. Undertaking from the student that they have read the terms and conditions/Guidelines of ICCR scholarship as specified in the Scholarship Manual 2026-27 [The one time undertaking will be applicable even when scholarship manual is updated (as per para 36 like provision)], available on ICCR website.

10. Admission of student by one or more than one Indian University does not guarantee award of ICCR sponsored scholarship. Indian Mission/Post for the respective country will decide on the award of scholarship to applicant and will issue letter of award of scholarship. For award of scholarship, the decision of the concerned Indian Mission/Post is final and any query regarding it should be taken up with them.

11. It is reiterated that the admission remains provisional till the time Universities verify the authenticity of original documents. If original documents are not found in order on which provisional admission has been granted by University, the admission offer will be revoked and the students) will have to return to their country at their own cost. In case Association of Indian Universities (AIU) Equivalence Certificate is required the offer letter for allotment of scholarship should be processed only after the AlU Equivalence Certificate has been obtained by the student. Such expenses for the same will be borne by the student himself (nonreimbursable). Once the scholarship is considered, Indian Mission/Post will issue an offer of admission with award of scholarship for acceptance of by applicant. Applicant will have 7 days time to accept / reject the offer. In case applicant wishes to accept the offer, an automated acceptance letter, signed digitally by applicant, has to be submitted by the applicant on portal for further process.

12. After submitting the acceptance, the applicant should approach the concerned Indian Mission/Post for issuance of appropriate Student/Research Visa with the required documents and letter of award of ICCR scholarship.

13. Once the Indian visa is granted, a copy of the visa should be uploaded by the Mission on A2A Portal.

14. <u>Pre-departure formalities</u>

i. The student should request the Indian Mission/Post to book the ticket up to (if offered in the scholarship) the airport nearest to the place of University/college where the admission has been confirmed. While booking the ticket, students must ensure that there insufficient gap between the timings of the connecting flights so that there is enough time to complete the transit formalities, particularly in view of the Covid-19 induced restrictions or regulations. There have been instances when the students have missed their connecting flights due to insufficient layover.

ii. The student should also check the allowed baggage regulations. There may be difference of baggage allowance in domestic and international flights. Students must carry the baggage equivalent to the limit of the lower category (domestic / international). In any case, ICCR will not pay any additional amount on account of excess baggage.

iii. Immediately on purchase of ticket, the Mission should upload their travel details on the A2A portal to enable the relevant University/Institute/ICCR Zonal and sub Zonal Office to make necessary arrangements. Flight details should ideally be conveyed at least 15 days prior to the journey. If airport reception facilitation is not required, students should specifically mention that they do not require any assistance at the airport on arrival.

iv. Students should go through the Covid Protocol/requirements at all relevant points in their route such as RT-PCR test/quarantine requirements and follow the same to avoid any complications. Student may check with the concerned Indian Mission/post the latest Covid-19 regulations in India applicable to them at the time of their travel. All such expenses on Covid-19 including on related test will not be borne by ICCR.

v. Students should carry yellow fever/other such vaccination certificate wherever necessary.

vi. Students are advised to carry with themselves at least US$ 700 or equivalent to Indian Rupees. 50,000/- to meet immediate expenses. This is suggested since there may be a time period between first arrival and receipt of first stipend. Scholarship expenses will be managed into two parts, which are as follows:-

A. Hostel Issue:- On arrival, all these expenses are to be managed by the scholar.

- **Hostel fee, Mess Fee, Electricity charges, Caution money and Application fee**
- **Health insurance**
- **FRRO registration late fee**

B. Stipend/OCF/Other dues- After completion of procedural formalities, dues can be released by ICCR but it takes minimum two months time to complete the process.

- **Stipend, HRA, ACA and thesis charges (to be paid directly to scholar)**
- **Tuition Fee/OCF (to be paid to University/Institute on receipt of demand)**
- **Air-tickets (as per admissibility)**

vii. On arrival, students should contact the respective Zonal/Sub Zonal Office of ICCR and get themselves registered with them. Students must also get themselves registered with Foreign Regional Registration Office (FRRO) within a period of 14 days of their arrival in 4 India. This is in addition to contacting the University/Institute being joined. As a good practice, the students should also inform their respective Embassy/diplomatic representative in India about their stay in India on arrival.

viii. Each student has to procure a medical insurance policy for a value of at least Rs. Five lakhs or equivalent. As per the latest ICCR guidelines, medical insurance is compulsory for the students (at their cost). Students may buy medical insurance in their country before departure. It is up to the students to select the insurance package. During the ICCR scholarship in India, in case of no medical insurance, ICCR is not liable to bear the medical expenses of the scholar. In case of exigencies, the student should contact his/her respective Embassy/diplomatic representative in India.

15. Once travel arrangements are completed, 'Travel Details' should be filled in by the Mission on A2A Portal. An email should also be sent to the International Student Advisor (ISA) of the University endorsing copy to ICCR Zonal/Sub Zonal Office for arranging reception on arrival in India. This should be done at least 15 days prior to departing for India so that transit accommodation detail sand coordinates of concerned person(s) who will receive them are informed to the student.

16. On arrival, students advised to buy a local Mobile Sim-Card.

17. On arrival a welcome kit shall be handed over to student. The kit will contain addresses, email, mobile no. of Zonal/Sub Zonal Office, International Student Advisor (ISA), FRRO, city guide booklet, financial norms of Scholarship Scheme in which student is enrolled, bank account opening process and any other relevant information as deemed appropriate by Zonal/ Sub Zonal Office.

18. Immediately on their arrival, students will have to open an account with bank for which bank opening form and a letter from ICCR's Zonal/Sub Zonal Office/University concerned would be required recommending immediate opening of bank account at the nearest branch of State Bank of India . Students should carry with them passport-size photographs for opening the bank account. It is important to note that student will not be paid any money in cash or otherwise till the bank account is opened. Therefore student must carry minimum money as advised above to meet initial expenditure. Three months advance stipend/scholarship through direct bank transfer will be released once bank account is opened and registered with ICCR.

19. After completing the requisite formalities, student should fill up the Joining Report (JR) in prescribed Performa and get it duly counter signed by International Student Advisor/Head of Department of University. The columns related to Tuition fee/other compulsory fees structure for the entire duration of course in the Joining Report are to be filled in and certified by ISA/Ho

Do f University/Institute. While filling up the JR, it is advised to fill the details related to date of birth, nationality, course, college details, registration number etc with utmost care.

20. The Joining Report complete in all aspects should be uploaded on the Gyan Setu App/submitted with concerned Zonal/Sub Zonal office within one month of joining the University/Institute .It may be noted that unless the JR is received by the Zonal/Sub-Zonal office, except for advance stipend, no other money will be released.

21. ICCR will aim to organize an Orientation Programme for newly arriving students within the first few weeks of their arrival. Cultural immersion programmes shall be organized by Zonal/Sub Zonal Office in due course.

22. ICCR Zonal/ Sub Zonal office shave a WHATSAPP group for foreign students and shall remain in touch with them through it or other means on a regular basis.

23. The student should ensure that regular half yearly progress report/results of semester exams along with certificate of attendance issued by Head of Department/ ISA of University/Institute and thevalid medical insurance policy are submitted to ICCR Zonal/Sub Zonal Office for smooth release of stipend etc.

24. After admission, the students are advised to stay in the University/college hostel. However, in case they choose to stay in private accommodation, they will have to give an undertaking that they themselves are responsible for their security. If they are staying in University/College hostel, they would have to adhere to hostel policies. Failing to observe hostel rules will lead to disciplinary action by University/College. Hostel dues should be settled by students before their departure or discontinuation of the Scholarship.

25. Residential address outside of the enrolled University/Institute should be informed to ICCR Zonal /Sub Zonal Office and FRRO compulsorily. In case of change of accommodation, the new address should also be conveyed to ICCR Zonal/Sub Zonal Office and FRRO immediately.

26. ICCR has the right to bring in changes in the scholarship policy as well as financial terms of the scholarship and implement it as and when it is decided so by ICCR under intimation/dissemination of decision through Zonal/ Sub Zonal Offices, to which every current ICCR scholar has to abide.

27. <u>Guidelines with respect to deduction of stipend of ICCR sponsored international students for Ex-India period</u>

Guidelines on payment of stipend to ICCR sponsored international students prescribe that students who travel abroad during the academic year are not entitled to stipend for the period they remain out of India. The guidelines have been reviewed and now stand amended to the extent indicated below:-

i. Ex-India period will continue to be deducted from the stipend of the students as per the current practice i.e, "If any student remains in his country for more than one month, stipend for complete duration of Ex-India will be deducted". However, HRA will be paid maximum period of two months during Ex-India period.

ii. To ensure the valid enrolment of students, in addition to the submission of Joining Report (JR) in the beginning of the academic year, half-yearly certificate to be issued by the competent authority of the University/Institute confirming continuation of studies by the student may be obtained by ZOs/SZOs/RPOs.

iii. Students should keep informed the Zonal/Sub Zonal Office about their movement within India in advance. If, leaving for their country/abroad, intimation or permission from Zonal/Sub Zonal Office should be obtained.

iv. Any of the norms in consistent with the above stands amended to that extent.

28. No student shall indulge in criminal/anti-social activities or political activities or Anti-India activities or in violation of the laws of India/relevant Indian State/UT. If found indulged in such activities and thus rusticated by the University/Institute, the ICCR scholarship will be terminated immediately.

29. In case of any miss happening all expenditure on repatriation of student or otherwise will be borne by the student or the family members or their embassy in India. The student should give an undertaking to this effect, duly countersigned by one of the family members and submit to the Indian Embassy/Consulate.

30. The scholarship tenure cannot exceed a period of 3 weeks after declaration of consolidated results of all the semesters/final year by the respective University/Institute. The tenure of scholarship for regular Ph.D student is 3 years. It should be an endeavour of each research student to complete the dissertation work within 3 years of regular Ph.D. study tenure. In any case, extant ICCR norms restrict the maximum period of scholarship up to 5 years for Ph.D course. In addition ICCR provides maximum 6 months of scholarship to defend the thesis / for Viva Voce for Ph.D students.

31. Ph.D scholars travelling outside the country of data collection are eligible to draw 2 months stipend and HRA for the ex-India period only once during their scholarship tenure, subject to the necessary certificate from their supervisor and invitation of host organization and advance approval from the concerned ZOs/SZOs/RPOs well in advance. All travel expenses are to be borne by the students themselves.

32. It is emphasized that ICCR scholarship is only for the individual applicant so awarded, for the duration of the enrolled course in India. As such, ICCR is not liable in any manner, financially or otherwise, for other individuals related to the ICCR scholar.

33. Scholarship shall be disbursed on the basis of regular progress of the student at his/her course.In case student fails in prescribed examination and does not get promoted to next level of study/ programme, the scholarship will be discontinued. No scholarship shall be paid for clearing backlog (there is a special provision however for Afghan scholarship schemes).

34. In case a new student fails in first year, his/her scholarship would be suspended for one –year and he/she would have to self-finance his/her studies. Scholarship may be revived from next year (at the end of 2nd year) provided student clears the first year. In case student fails second time, his/her scholarship will stand terminated and he/she would have to complete his/her course as a self-finance student or return to his/her country on own expense, if so chosen. In any case, scholarship would not be given for more than the prescribed length of course. The same applies if it occurs in any of the other years.

35. This Manual supersedes provisions in previous versions and is applicable for all current ICCR scholars in India. Supplementary regulations/provisions may be issued/ intimated separately from time to time.

36. ICCR strives to ensure welfare of ICCR scholars during their stay in India. ICCR Hqrs and its Zonal/Sub Zonal Offices welcome suggestions/feedback from its scholars any time.

Role of Scholars/students-Post Arrival of Students in India

i. Students are directed to report their arrival on the Gyan_Setu web application on an immediate basis by uploading their travel plans including air ticket.

ii. Submission & Verification of Documents/Confirmation of Admission-To submit the original documents including passport, previous degree certificates, country's unique identification number to confirm the admission.

PLEASE NOTE – The details entered in the Portal, if in case, does not match with the original documents, the admission of the said student will stand CANCELLED.

iii. Upon arrival students are required to coordinate with their Universities/institutes/ICCR/ZO/S-ZO/RPO regarding updation of their details such as joining report on the app.

Guidelines for return journey to home country

i. Student should leave the country immediately after the completion of their studies. Under normal circumstances, the time gap between completion of studies and final departure should not exceed one month.

ii. Student should submit his/her request for return leg air ticket after successful completion of his/her course at least 15 days prior to the journey.

iii. If a student decides to return to his/her country before the completion of the course, he/she also would not been titled for a return passage. The expenditure would need to be borne by the student himself/herself.

iv. ICCR will not pay airfares or any other expenses related to students travelling outside India during vacations or during the duration of the course.

v. Student should upload the alumni details on India Alumni portal (https://indiaalumni.almaconnect.com) before leaving India. This will help alumni of ICCR to be in touch for future ICCR activities and will also be helpful in future for Indian Missions/Posts abroad to remain engaged with the Alumni.

vi. It should be ensured that the local bank account is closed before leaving India. This will ensure security from misuse of the dormant bank account.

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