

Ministry of Higher Education and Highways
University Grants Commission

**Accelerating Higher Education Expansion and
Development (AHEAD)**

Results Area Two:
Improve the Quality of Higher Education

Human Resource Development (HRD)

SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMME FOR PHDs

GUIDELINES FOR UNIVERSITIES, CAMPUSES & INSTITUTES

July 2018



ABBREVIATIONS

AHEAD	Accelerating Higher Education Expansion and Development
ELTU	English Language Teaching Unit
HEI	Higher Education Institute
HRD	Human Resource Development
MHEH	Ministry of Higher Education and Highways
OMST	Operation and Monitoring Support Team
OTS	Operations Technical Secretariat
SDC	Staff Development Centre
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
UGC	University Grants Commission

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

The development of the higher education sector is of central importance to enable Sri Lanka to develop from a Lower-Middle Income Country (LMIC) to an Upper Middle-Income Country (UMIC). Recognizing this, the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) and the World Bank have agreed, as part of the Bank's Country Partnership Strategy (CPS) FY17-FY20, to support the higher education sector through a Bank funded Accelerating Higher Education Expansion and Development (AHEAD) operation.

THE AHEAD PROGRAM

Accelerating Higher Education Expansion and Development (AHEAD) operation is organized into two components. The first is a Program Component that supports the national Higher Education Development Program (HEDP). The second is a systems strengthening, capacity building and technical assistance component that will assist GoSL to strengthen the higher education sector and achieve the objectives of the AHEAD program component. This second component will also cover monitoring and evaluation, policy analyses, program coordination and communication.

The implementing agency is the Ministry of Higher Education and Highways (MHEH). The MHEH will be assisted at the national level by the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the Sri Lanka Institute for Advanced Technological Education (SLIATE). The Operations Monitoring and Support Unit (OMST) of the MHEH will coordinate and support all AHEAD activities between the MHEH, UGC, SLIATE, Universities and Advanced Technological Institutes (ATIs).

1.2. Result Area Two: Improve the Quality of Higher Education

Objective: To increase the academic quality, and economic and social relevance, of higher education programs.

Sub-Result Area 2.1: Increase the proportion of Ph.D. qualified academic staff for the state universities.

The supply of qualified academic staff needs to be expanded urgently. The quality of academic staff is a central determinant of the performance of a higher education system. Yet, there is a severe scarcity of Ph.D. qualified academic staff in Sri Lankan universities. Out of approximately 5,000 academic staff, less than 50 percent are Ph.D. qualified. Among academic staff below 45 years of age only 24 percent have Ph.Ds. Of the academics below 35 years, only less than 10 percent have Ph.Ds. Yet Ph.D. qualified staff are a necessary condition for the high performance of modern universities with their research, innovation and postgraduate teaching mandates. Sri Lanka needs to staff its universities with appropriately qualified academics as an urgent priority.

1. A sub-component under the 'quality' component is 'Increasing Qualified Academics in universities'. Under this, AHEAD will assist HEIs to strengthen the quality of their academic staff through suitable PhD programmes. This scholarship program will be offered in collaboration with the UGC and NCAS scholarship schemes.
2. The allocations have been made to universities and undergraduate institutes on an equitable basis while also ensuring gender equity.
3. All PhD programs are expected to be done in English medium (unless under exceptional circumstances) on full time leave.
4. Funding will be provided for upto 36 months support towards completion of a three year full time PhD programs in overseas universities or full time Split-Site PhD programs.

1.3. Split-site PhDs

Under the split-site PhDs,

1. the candidates are mainly expected to register in a University other than which they are employed in, with exceptions granted under special circumstances (e.g. disciplines where only one Department or Faculty is available in Sri Lanka or where the Faculties/Universities have existing MOUs with foreign universities for Split-site PhD opportunities for staff),
2. all PhD programs are expected to be done in English medium (unless under exceptional circumstances) on full time leave,
3. candidate should visit the overseas/trainer university at least in two instances, where the total time period spent in the overseas university should exceed 12 months (this condition can vary depending on the provisions of the MOU or the university requirements of the Split-site program), and

4. PhDs should be followed on a full time basis. The candidates should be on full time leave from the Home University.

1.4. Full PhD programs in overseas universities

PhD programs in overseas universities will also be supported, within the given allocation. These programs should be of 3 year duration.

2. DISTRIBUTION OF ALLOCATIONS

Grants will be made available in four rounds, as two rounds each in years 2018 and 2019.

3. FUNDING ALLOCATION

Percentages of funding allocations for 2018 and for 2019 according to the discipline area are as follows;

STEMS	HEMS including ELTUs , Law and Education
35%	65%

1. Under a maximum allocation of LKR 9 million for a candidate, the grant amount will depend on factors such as whether it is a full or split site program, living cost of the country, and registration/course fee of the program, etc.
2. Individuals winning the grant for a full time PhDs will receive the program registration fees and the cost of living allowances/monthly allowance for the a maximum of three years as well as any other research expenses incurred.
3. Individuals winning the grant for split-site PhDs will receive the program registration fees and the cost of living allowances/monthly allowance for the time period that they are abroad for the a maximum of three years as well as any other research expenses incurred.

4. Universities/candidates are encouraged to explore the possibilities of scholarships in good countries/universities where the registration/course fee as well as cost of living is low.
5. Candidates are also encouraged to use existing agreements (MOUs) with foreign universities (arrived by Faculties/Universities or UGC) in selecting PhD opportunities.

4. ELIGIBILITY

The Scholarships will be available to Probationary Lecturers, Lecturers and Senior Lecturers of Universities, Campuses and Undergraduate Institutes without PhD qualifications, subject to the following eligibility criteria:

1. The Candidate should be less than 40 years of age to the date of closing of applications
2. The Candidate should be a permanent member of the academic staff
3. The Candidate should be entitled for full time leave for the entire period of PhD
4. The Candidate should have obtained IELTS minimum score 7.0 or equivalent at the time of commencement of training
5. The Candidate should fulfill the eligibility requirement of the Trainer University

5. NOMINATION PROCESS

1. The application form is given in Annex 1.
2. Instructions to Candidates are given in Annex 2.
3. Selection process will be as follows

Candidates will make their applications to the OMST with the recommendation of the university/institution where the candidate is employed. The following documents should be submitted together with the application form

- i. Registration letter/placement letter or other forms of acceptable level of communication with the intended university/HEI
- ii. A well written research proposal (approximately 2000 words)
- iii. A letter issued by the University/HEI where the applicant is employed at, certifying the availability of study leave

- iv. Details of two referees who can provide academic references written in English.
 - v. Documentary evidence for the relevant course fees payable to the intended postgraduate programme
 - vi. 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 UGC immediately by the candidate)
 - vii. A record of research and publication by the candidate.
 - viii. Certified copies of IELTS results sheet.
 - ix. Credential of his/her prospective supervisors in terms of qualifications and research publications.
4. Panel appointed by the OMST shall carry out the selection based on the selection criteria given in table 6.1. 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.
 5. The panel shall also ensure that the selections have been made to universities and undergraduate institutes on an equitable basis and that gender equity is maintained.
 6. OMST will notify the award of scholarships to the University and the respective Operations Technical Secretariat (OTS) with copy to the selected candidates
 7. The marks thus allocated and the decision will be fair and transparent and made available for all candidates to see.
 8. If the candidates wish to contest the decision of the committee, an appeal can be made to the UGC Chairperson.
 9. The Key Steps of Nomination Process is given in Annex 3

6. SELECTION CRITERIA

6.1 Criteria for Selection of Faculty/Campus/Institute Nominees

	Criteria	Maximum points
1	Academic qualifications (<i>refer 6.1.1 below</i>)	50
2	Research and publications (Abstract- 0.5, full paper – 1; Chapter in a book – 2, Paper in refereed journal- 4, Books reviewed by recognized experts - 4)*	10
4	Academic distinctions during and after undergraduate studies (prizes, medals, scholarships excluding Mahapola) (2 per event)	10
5	Faculty contribution (organization of/ active contribution to activities) (2 per event)	10
	Total	80

** In selection of the candidates based on this criteria, consideration has to be given to the plausibility of the candidate to carry out these activities within the time period the candidate has been in service. And hence, a reasonable comparison needs to be carried out only among the candidates of the same level in terms of working experience.*

5. Academic Qualifications - Allocation of points will be on the following basis:

First Degree- 1st Class (Special) - 40 pts.

Upper 2nd (Special) - 30 pts.

Lower 2nd (Special) - 20 pts.

1st Class (General) - 15 pts.

Upper 2nd (General) - 10 pts.

Postgraduate- Masters - 10 pts

7. AWARD OF SCHOLARSHIPS

1. The award of scholarships shall be notified to the selected candidates, the Vice Chancellor and the relevant Dean of the Faculty/Rector of Campus/ Director of Institute of the respective University by the OMST.
2. The candidate shall find a placement/register for the stipulated PhD programme at a University as per the given instructions and obtain an IELTS score of 7.0, within a

maximum period of 6 months of obtaining the scholarship. Candidates can explore the existing MOUs signed by Universities and Faculties in obtaining placements.

3. Failure by the Candidate to secure a placement and obtain the required IELTS score, within 6 months shall result in the transfer of the scholarship to the reserve candidate.
4. Candidate should also reveal full information of any other funding/scholarships obtained for the same purpose to the UGC.

8. RELEASE OF FUNDS

1. The registration and tuition fees will be released according to the rules and regulations of the Trainer University.
2. OMST will release the scholarship amounts to the respective universities and the OTSs of the universities will be responsible for releasing the funds to the scholarship holder.
3. Living allowance will be released to the scholarship holder biannually, upon the progress of the candidate, by the OTS.
4. For the foreign training component of the split-site PhD program, the candidate may utilize the provision of airfare from the UGC.
5. Prior to the release of first installment of the grant, the following documents needs to be submitted to the OTS of the Home University and OMST.
 - i. Placement letter/registration letter with the registration payment information
 - 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/HIE 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. 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. Candidates of split site programs should indicate the period/s planned to spend in the foreign university and locally (inception report)
 - 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.

9. AGREEMENT AND BOND

The Candidate will sign an Agreement and Bond with the Home University as per UGC circular No. 920 of 5/2/2010. Those shall also include clauses to recover funds in case of misuse of funds and non-completion of training.

10. REPORTING

1. Documents related to the progress and the expenditure should be submitted to the respective home university/OTS as follows,
 - Inception report submitted within one month of the award of the grant
 - Progress report should be submitted every six months, with the recommendation of the supervisor, declaration of other sources of funding is any and the probable date of completion.
2. A Copy of the thesis should be submitted to OMST on completion of the degree.

11. PROGRESS MONITORING

1. The Progress will be regularly monitored by the UGC, Home University OTS and OMST.
2. If the progress is reported as unsatisfactory, after giving adequate warning, the grants will be recalled.
3. The Vice chancellor of the university will be asked to recover the grant amount and send to the OMST.

12. TIME LINE FOR APPLICATIONS

Call for applications for the grant will be carried out in years 2018 and 2019.

Annex 3 - Key Steps

