# 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

**March 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,

- 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 UGC with the recommendation of the university/institution where the candidate is employed. The following documents should be submitted together with the application form

- 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. Penal appointed by the UGC 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. UGC will notify the award of scholarships to the University and the respective Operations Technical Secretariat (OTS) with copy to selected candidates
- 7. UGC shall send the full list of candidates along with the marks and ranking of all candidates to the OMST. The marks thus allocated and the decision made should 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 (refer 6.1.1 below)	50
2	Research and publications (Abstract- 0.5, 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

<sup>\*</sup> 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- 
$$1^{st}$$
 Class (Special) - 40 pts.  
Upper  $2^{nd}$  (Special) - 30 pts.  
Lower  $2^{nd}$  (Special) - 20 pts.  
 $1^{st}$  Class (General) - 15 pts.  
Upper  $2^{nd}$  (General) - 10 pts.  
Postgraduate- Masters - 10 pts

#### 7. AWARD OF SCHOLARSHIPS

- 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 UGC.
- 2. The candidate shall find a placement/register for the stipulated PhD programme at a University as per the given instructions, 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 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 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.
- 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 UGC 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

- 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 by the UGC in line with the UGC and NCAS call for applications in years 2018 and 2019, in two rounds each year.

# **Annex 1: Application Form**

## HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT PLAN - AHEAD

# Scholarship for PhD degrees for University Academic Staff

# **Application Form**

Reference No	
Selected	e Us
Reserved	Office
Rejected	1

Part A										
1. Personal I	nformation									
Family Name (Surname):				First	First/Other names:					
Rev./Dr./Mr./N	Is:			Gene	der:			Natio	onality:	
Date of Birth:	Day	Month	Year	Age				N.I.C	j	
E-mail Address						hicl		ndence	e should be	
Contact Numbers:	Offi	ce	Re	esidence			Mobile		Fa	lΧ
2. Qualificati	ons									
2.1 ACADEMI	IC: (Give fu	ll details ir	n chrono	logical	order)					
From Month/Year	To Month/Yea	University/ In: (Name, Pla			1 1		Main field(s) or Subject(s) of study		Points (Office Use)	
2.2 PROFESSION	ONAL (C'	C 11 1 4		1						
2.2 PROFESSI	,	ve full deta	ails in ch	ironolog	gical orde	er)				
From Month/Year	To Month/Yea	r F	Professional Body		y		Professional Qualification		on	
3. Employment Record: Starting with your present post, list in reverse order of positions held										
			vith your	r presen	t post, li	st in	i reverse o	rder o	f positions	held
3.1 PRESENT	EMPLOYN	IENT:				•				
Period (Month/Year) From To	Title of your po		ost Faculty		culty		Departm	ent	University	y/Institute
i										

3.2 PRI	EVIOUS I	EMPLOYMEN'	$\Gamma$ (if Other than Un	iiversity)				
Period								
(Month/Year)		,	Title of your post	Nar	ne and Addre	ss of the e	mployer	
From	То		• •					
			cles/Abstract/Cha onal pages when s		_	efereed J	ournals/	
Year			Points (For Office Use)					
	ndemic Di luding Ma		ing and after unde	ergraduate studie	s (Prizes, Me	dals, Scho	olarships	
Year		•	Points (For Office Use)					
6. Ext	ra Currio	ular Activities	(organization of/	active contribution	ı to, activities	·)		
Year		Description					<u>Points</u> (For Office Use)	
							,	
7. Lan	nguage Pr	oficiency						
For lo	anguages	other than mot	her tongue, enter	Tick $()$ next to	)		GCE	
		ber from code ( f your languag	1,2,3 or 4) below e knowledge	your mother tongue	Speak	Read	O/L Grade	
CODE:	1.Nil			Sinhala				
2.Limited				Tamil				
3.Satisfactory				English				
		••		1 0 1 (0 10)	1			
	4.Exc	ellent		Other (Specify)				
8. Sco	4.Exce		fessional Exams	Other (Specify)				
8. Sco	4.Exce	er English Pro	fessional Exams		Other (P	lease Spec	cify)	

Part	B
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9. Degree to be Registered for						
Please Tick ( $$ ) the type of PhD program						
Split- Site PhD [ ]	Full PhD in a	overseas University [ ]				
Field of Study:		Research Field:				
Are you Already Offered	· ·	Yes L	No L			
	the University/Institution:	ach a copy of the placement le Faculty/Deparment:	lier			
Traine and the address of t	are employ/migrication.	Tacarey, Department.				
l =	program, the foreign					
the planned time period for	ng will be carried out and					
the planted time period is	or roroign training					
Date of commencement	-	Intended date of completion	-			
10. Supervisors' Deta	ails					
Name	Institutional Affiliation	Highest Qualification	Contact Details			
11. Brief Description	of the Proposed Research	h				
•	•	Research (not more than 150 w	ords) Attach a			
separate paper if required.						
			i i			

12. Budget
<b>Fees and expenses</b> : course fees, registration fee, living expenses, bench fee etc. (provide expenses under separate headings)
Financially support by another Institution: Yes No
If yes, Please give the following details
Source
Approved Budget (Rs.)
Declaration
I certify that all information in this application to be complete and correct to the best of my knowledge
Cianatana afaha Anglianat
Signature of the Applicant Date

# Part C

13. Recommendations	
offer for placement has been received is relevant to	Teld of research/Degree programme for which an o the Department.  It can be released full time for the entire period of
Name and Signature of Head of Department	Date
The Application by Mr./Mrs./Msrecommended for submission.	is
Official Stamp	
Name and Signature of the Dean	Date
The Application by Mr./Mrs./Msrecommended for submission.	is
Official Stamp	
Signature of the Vice Chancellor	Date

# **Annex 2: Instructions for Applicants**

## Human Resource Development Plan - AHEAD Scholarships for PhD/ MPhil degrees for University Academic Staff

#### **INSTRUCTIONS TO APPLICANTS**

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

AHEAD project offers both full and split site PhD scholarships with 35% being offered to STEM faculties and 65% being offered to HEMS faculties. Probationary Lecturers and Senior Lecturers below 40 years of age will be eligible for the scholarships.

#### 2. KEY FEATURES OF THE SCHOLARSHIPS

- 1. PhDs should be followed on a full time basis. The candidates should be on full time leave from the Home University.
- 2. All PhD programs are expected to be done in English medium (unless under exceptional circumstances) on full time leave,
- 3. Split-site PhD program candidates should avoid registering with the same university in 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),
- 4. Split-site PhD program candidate should have two research supervisors, one each from the local university and the overseas university,
- 5. Split-site PhD program 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)
- 6. We strongly encourage prospective candidates to use existing agreements (MOUs) with foreign universities (arrived by Faculties/Universities or UGC) in selecting PhD opportunities.

#### 3. MAXIMUM GRANT PER CANDIDATE

- 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 he/she will be studying 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.

#### 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. Acceptable level of communication with the university/HEI related to the registration/placement for the intended program (e.g. a letter/email of a possible placement, acceptance of a proposal or other similar communication from the overseas university)
- 6. The Candidate should fulfill the eligibility requirement of the Trainer University

#### 5. APPLICATION PROCESS

- 1. Candidates will make their applications to the UGC with the recommendation of the university/institution where the candidate is employed. The following documents should be submitted together with the application form
  - Registration letter/placement letter or other forms of acceptable level of communication with the intended university/HEI (e.g. a letter/email of a possible placement, acceptance of a proposal or other similar communication from the overseas university)
  - 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.
- 3. Penal appointed by the UGC 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.
- 4. 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.
- 5. UGC will notify the award of scholarships to the respective University with copy to selected candidates
- 6. UGC shall send the full list of candidates along with the marks and ranking of all candidates to the OMST. The marks thus allocated and the decision made should be fair and transparent and made available for all candidates to see.

7. If the candidates wish to contest the decision of the committee, an appeal can be made to the UGC Chairperson.

#### 6. 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 UGC.
- 2. The candidate shall find a placement/register for the stipulated PhD programme at a University as per the given instructions, within a maximum period of 6 months.
- 3. Failure by the Candidate to secure a placement within 6 months shall result in the transfer of the scholarship to the reserve candidate.

#### 7. RELEASE OF FUNDS

- 1. The registration and tuition fees will be released according to the rules and regulations of the Trainer University.
- 2. The university will release the living allowance to the scholarship holder biannually, upon the progress of the candidate.
- 3. For the foreign training component of the split-site PhD program, the scholarship holder may utilize the provision of airfare from the University Grants Commission.
- 4. Prior to the release of first installment of the grant, the following documents needs to be submitted to the UGC 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

- 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.

#### 8. 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.

#### 9. REPORTING

- 1. Documents related to the progress and the expenditure should be submitted to the OTS of the University of the scholarship holder 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.

#### 10. 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.

## 11. TIME LINE FOR APPLICATIONS:

In line with the UGC and NCAS call for applications in the years 2018 and 2019.

