

Indian Council for Cultural Relations

ICCR Scholarship Programme 2026-27

Timelines for Scholarship Process

Timelines	Scholarship Process
27 February to 15 April 2026	Opening of A2A Portal for students to apply
27 February to 30 April 2026	Opening of A2A Portal for the Universities to scrutinize the applications and upload provisional admission confirmation for selection by the Indian Missions/Posts
27 February to 15 May 2026	Opening of A2A Portal for the Indian Missions/Posts to initiate the selection process
16 May to 10 June 2025	Second-round of selection by the Indian Missions/Posts against any slots left vacant after the first-round of selection
June – August 2026	Indicative time-frame for foreign students to join their courses strictly according to the joining time-frame provided by the concerned University/Institution in the offer of scholarship issued by the Indian Mission/Post

Scholarship applicants are advised to contact the Indian Missions/Posts in their respective countries for any further information or clarification. Detailed guidelines for the applicants are placed on the A2A Portal

ICCR Scholarship Programme 2026-27

Guidelines for Indian Universities/Institutions

1. Academic Obligations

- a) **Sharing course content/syllabus/curriculum** - University/Institution to **publish course content, academic calendar, including the schedule and pattern of examination, regular/extra classes, English language classes etc. on its Website** as also share it with other relevant information with the foreign students at the time of their initial joining.
- b) **Medium of Instruction** – University/Institution to ensure that all the lessons should invariably be **conducted in English language** and the language other than English (Hindi or any other Indian language) should not be used for conducting academic lectures.
- c) **Monitoring Absence and sharing of Academic Progress** - University/Institute to organize Special Group/Individual Extra Classes for English language and the academic subjects chosen by the student ensuring the desired academic progress of foreign students is achieved and for their evolution in the Indian academic system. University/Institution should monitor any long-term or regular absence and bring it to the notice of the concerned ICCR ZO/SZO. University/Institution to **share academic progress semester-wise** within a period of one week after completion of each semester to ICCR ZO/SZO. University/Institution to share attendance of each foreign student on monthly basis by **uploading it on the Gyan Setu portal on the 25th day** of each calendar month.
- d) Any **failure, backlog of examination, shortfall in attendance or any other irregularity or indiscipline** hampering academic progress of the student and/or disturbing the general atmosphere should be taken up seriously by counseling the student and informing the concerned ICCR ZO/SZO recommending any corrective measures.
- e) Any action of indiscipline should be handled by the University/Institution under its rules and regulations with intimation to the concerned ICCR ZO/SZO.
- f) Universities/Institutions must ensure that the students are provided Ph.D. topics that are relevant to the Indian context and do not involve frequent travel of students outside India for research/data collection purposes. ICCR will permit only 60 days paid ex-India period for data collection abroad once in the entire duration of the course subject to the recommendation of the Supervisor/Guide/HoD and approved by the Vice-Chancellor/Head of the University/Institution. This 60-day paid Ex-India period can be availed only at a single stretch and not in parts.
- g) Universities/Institutions may ensure that the course completion formalities in respect of foreign students should be given priority and completed in a timely manner, not later than a month from the date of declaration of final results, including issuance of

course completion certificate, degree/diploma/certificate, statement of marks, transcription of course (if required by the student) and any other documents.

2. Infrastructure and other facilities

- a) **Website** – University/Institution to have a dedicated and interactive section on its Website for foreign students providing information on academic programmes, with course content, available for foreign students under ICCR Scholarship including a link to A2A Portal.
- b) University/Institution to have a dedicated **International Student Office** headed by International Student Advisor and comprising Dy. International Student Advisor and sufficient number of functional level officials according to the strength of foreign students to handle issues sensitization towards the local conditions (academic, cultural and social), course details, examination pattern/schedule, initial settlement issues (registration with local authorities, opening of bank account, accommodation, food etc.).
- c) **Single Window Facilitation Center** – University/Institution to have a Single-Window Facilitation Centre for foreign students from admission to other facilities such as issuance of University ID, Library Card, hostel accommodation, submission of documents, payment of caution money, membership fees etc.
- d) **Welcome on arrival** – University/Institution to ensure receiving foreign students at the nearest airport/railway station upon first arrival, provide transit/hostel accommodation, guidance on registration with local FRRO Office, opening of bank account, facilitating medical insurance, providing welcome kit with all important details about the University/State, Academic calendar, Advisory etc.
- e) **Counseling** – University/Institution should have the facility for counseling of foreign students to handle situations, home-sickness, depression, coping up with the academic pressure, general acclimatization, mixing up with peer group, adjusting to the local cuisine, social norms, living conditions etc.
- f) **Liaison/Coordination with local authorities** – University/Institution should liaise with the local police/immigration authorities to provide any assistance/support to the foreign students for registration, residential permit, renewal of visa, solving disputes with fellow students or with any local citizens in coordination with local police or other authorities.
- g) Universities/Institutions may also monitor that foreign student is **not violating the immigration/visa rules** such as non-renewal of Residence Permit with FRRO, bringing family without information and/or on valid visa, marriage with local citizen/foreigner, employment, involvement in any prohibited or unlawful or criminal activity such as sexual abuse, bullying/ragging/racism, consumption/sharing/selling any banned substance/material, drugs or narcotics punishable under the local laws.
- h) **Accommodation** - University/Institution to provide accommodation in its own international student hostel or private hostel hired/owned supervised/maintained by the University/Institution. Details of accommodation and food facilities to be provided

by the University/Institution to foreign students should be published along with costs on the website with photographs and videos. Providing accommodation of international standard at the expense of the student will be the sole responsibility of the University/Institution. Any accommodation related problem should be resolved on priority basis.

3. **Welfare measures**

- a) **Sensitization of Indian Students** - University/Institution should sensitize the Indian students for ensuring harmonious and cordial relationship among foreign and Indian students and avoiding any partiality, racism, ragging, bullying, stalking etc. Any issues of conflict among Indian and foreign students need to be handled delicately and on priority basis.
- b) **Orientation Session** University/Institution to organize orientation session for the newly arrived students with participation of ICCR representatives, local authorities such as FRRO, Police, Bank, Insurance Company, Faculty Heads etc.
- c) **Buddy System** – University/Institution to introduce Buddy System aimed at connecting the newly arrived students with senior Indian/Foreign students upon joining and for their immersion among the peer group.
- d) **Social, Cultural and Sports activities** for foreign students with Indian students, such as Community services, celebration of Indian/local festivals, cultural performances, field visits, study tours, participation in sports tournaments, picnics, interactive talks and debates on cultural and social issues etc. University/Institution to prepare a calendar of Social/Cultural/Sports Activities where foreign students can participate and share the same with the students on initial joining. Depending on the number, University to organize exclusive social, cultural and sports activities, quiz, competitions for foreign students.
- e) **Recognition of meritorious students** – University/Institution may recognize talented/meritorious students' academic, social, cultural, sports and other achievements through certificates, medals, awards, prizes etc.
- f) **Cultural Immersions** – University/Institution to facilitate cultural immersion of foreign students by way of conducting special weekend classes/workshops for them to understand local language/Hindi, cultural ethos, Yoga, dance, music etc. enabling them to appreciate the local social/cultural sensitivities and values.
- g) **Mental Health** – University to pay special attention on taking care of mental health of foreign students by way of conducting regular interactive sessions, Yoga and meditation classes and should have the facility of specialized counselors for individual counseling on need basis.
- h) In case a foreign student dies while studying, **University/Institution** will be responsible to send **mortal remains** on its own expenses in coordination with ICCR ZO and the concerned foreign Embassy in India in case the family of the student/local Embassy declines or not able to bear the expenses.

4. **Fee and other charges**

- a) University/Institution to have a uniform fee structure for ICCR-sponsored foreign students to be **at par with the fee structure for the Indian students** studying at the University/Institution without any distinction on the basis of group of countries/region and/or gender.
- b) **University/Institution** should fix fee for the ICCR-Sponsored foreign students in Indian Rupees and not in USD or in any other foreign currency.
- c) **University/Institution** to provide **fee structure applicable to ICCR-Sponsored foreign students before the commencement of each academic year**. If there is an increase in the fees over the last academic year, the same should be explained with a detailed justification.
- d) Hostel charges, security deposit, caution money, library or other membership charges may be charged directly from the student on monthly/quarterly/annual basis while keeping flexibility, so that the student can pay it comfortably. Students may be given 2-3 months' time at the time of initial joining for the payment of such charges if he/she is not able to pay immediately upon joining. However, the payment schedule for such charges may be provided to the student upon initial joining ensuring that student adheres to the same.
- e) **Fee demand** along with Joining Report of the student must be sent by the University/Institution to the concerned ICCR ZO/SZO within a period of three months from the date of joining of the new students and within a period of three months from the date of commencement of each new academic session for other students.
- f) **No fees should be charged** by the University either from ICCR or from the student on account of issuance of bonafide or any other certificate required for registration with local authorities or any other document such as mark sheet, course completion certificate, degree, transcript etc.
- g) ICCR will be responsible to **pay only tuition fees and other compulsory fees on annual basis**. ICCR will not be liable to pay any refundable amount, caution deposit, consumable charges, hostel mess charges, transportation charges, blazer charge, non-return penalties of Library, lamination charges, laboratory chemicals any incidental charges etc. ICCR **will not be responsible** if the foreign student is not able to pay any of the charges payable by him and/or the University/Institution fails to recover such charges from him.

5. **Health Support**

- a) While ICCR-foreign students upload the medical fitness report on the A2A Portal, University/Institution to conduct the mandatory medical examination for each ICCR-sponsored foreign students within a period of one month from the date of joining of the student through its own medical panel or Government hospitals or hospitals on its panel ensuring the medical fitness of the student

- b) University/Institution should ensure that each student has purchased **medical insurance cover** for the period of his/her studies while studying at the University/Institution, as per the guidelines of ICCR in this regard. ICCR mandates students to purchase Health insurance of 5 lakh rupees at the time of arrival in India.
- c) University/Institution to organize **obligatory health check** up on quarterly basis at the University/Institution as a welfare measure ensuring that any serious and/or terminal illness is detected in time.
- d) University/Institution to have a **streamlined health care system** for ICCR-Sponsored foreign students for their day-to-day medical needs (OPD).
- e) University/Institution to meet emergency medical needs which are not covered under the Medical Insurance cover which include admission in a reputed medical centre in case of any emergency at the expense of the University/Institution.
- f) Any severe illness, hospitalization, pregnancy etc. should be brought to the attention of concerned ZO of ICCR so that it can be intimated to ICCR HQs, the local Embassy of student and the concerned Indian Embassy.
- g) University/Institution should ensure that the student has registered on the Indian Alumni Portal before leaving India. The portal facilitates networking among Universities/Institutions, ICCR, Indian Missions abroad and students from across the globe who studied in India.

6. Admission Process on the A2A Portal -

- a) Foreign students will apply for admission to Indian Universities/Institutes for the award of ICCR Scholarship through the A2A Portal **ONLY** (<https://a2ascholarships.iccr.gov.in>).
- b) No physical applications from foreign students, received through any sources or mediums, such as e-mail, post, courier etc., shall be considered.
- c) Applications of foreign students submitted online on the ICCR A2A Portal will be received directly by the University on its Dashboard at the A2A Portal for scrutiny and to upload provisional admission confirmation
- d) Universities/Institutions should adhere to the timelines of the scholarship process, especially with regard to uploading the provisional admission confirmation on the A2A Portal after scrutiny of applications. It may be noted that the Universities/Institutions, if feasible for them, can upload the provisional admission confirmation as soon as they receive application of the student on the A2A Portal without waiting for the closure of application submission process for the students.
- e) Universities/Institutions must note that applicant has the option to apply for admission in 5 different universities/courses of his/her choice and therefore, timely scrutiny of applications and uploading the provisional admission confirmation by the University/Institution is very important.

- f) While the courses on offer to foreign students are mapped on the A2A Portal, Universities/Institutions should ensure that admission to the courses in the Medical or Paramedical streams (such as Nursing, Physiotherapy, Anesthesia, etc.), Law courses and in any integrated courses such as 5-year BA-LLB, 5-year or B.Sc. & M.Sc. or in any other discipline or any Short-term certificate/diploma courses, is not granted before uploading the provisional admission confirmation on the A2A portal. Diploma/certificate courses of duration of one year in the streams of Indian languages and the disciplines of visual/performing arts of India can be considered for admission.
- g) University/Institution should avoid granting admission to a course other than that has been applied by the student except in case where there is a discrepancy in the nomenclature of the course selected by the student.
- h) The University must scrutinize the eligibility of the applicant and upload the provisional admission confirmation letter on the A2A Portal.
- i) In case the applicant is not eligible for admission, Universities are required to update the status as **"Rejected"**.
- j) Each provisional admission confirmation must be uploaded and communicated exclusively on the A2A Portal and not to be communicated to students directly or to any other entity under any circumstances.
- k) Universities must ensure that they **DO NOT CONTACT** any applicant until the award of the scholarship is confirmed by the Indian Mission/ICCR.
- l) If the University needs to communicate with an applicant (solely for academic/admission documentation purposes), a **"Dialogue Box"** provision is available on the A2A Portal for this purpose.
- m) The University/Institute should write the message in the Dialogue Box, which will be delivered to student's registered email ID. Copies of such messages shall be endorsed to ICCR and the concerned Indian Mission for information.
- n) Please note that the final selection of foreign students for the award of scholarship is done by the concerned Indian Mission based on the availability of scholarship slots for the particular academic year. Therefore, the provisional admission confirmation will not be a guarantee that the student would join the course.
- o) Provisional Admission Confirmation should include name of the course, duration of the course, date of joining of the course, date of completion of the course, category of visa required, documentary requirements required to be fulfilled by the student at the time of joining, AIU Equivalence Certificate requirement (if any), etc.
- p) Provisional admission confirmation by the Universities/Institutions should categorically indicate the requirement of Student Visa (S-1) for UG, PG and Diploma level students and Research Visa (S-5) for Ph.D. students so that they do not face any inconvenience upon arrival in India due to the wrong category of visa issued to them. Indian Missions have also been sensitized on this aspect.

- q) Universities/Institutions should indicate the duration of the course with date of commencement and completion of the course to enable the Indian Missions to issue visa valid for the entire duration of the course with multiple number of entries.

7. Ph.D. – Course duration, extensions, topic and data collection norms –

- a) University/Institution to ensure that student completes his/her PhD course within the initial time-frame of 3 years. Extensions of six months each upto four times (maximum 2 years) could be considered by ICCR if it is recommended by the Supervisor/Guide/HoD and approved by the Vice-Chancellor/Head of the University/Institution. Upon submission of thesis, a student can be provided special extension of upto six months for viva-voce without payment of **stipend** by ICCR.
- b) The University must ensure that the students are provided Ph.D. topics that are relevant to the Indian context and do not involve frequent travel of students outside India for research/data collection purposes. Universities/Institutions must note that ICCR will permit only 60 days paid ex-India period for data collection abroad once in the entire duration of the course subject to the recommendation of the Supervisor/Guide/HoD and approved by the Vice-Chancellor/Head of the University/Institution. This 60-day paid Ex-India period could be availed only in a single stretch and not in parts.

8. Change of Course/Subject

- a) University must provide admission to a course as per the choice of the student as change of course upon joining is not permissible upon arriving of the student in India to join the University/Institution. Under exceptional circumstances, University/Institution may send such requests to the concerned ICCR ZO/SZO for consideration and approval subject to the conditions that there is no financial implication on the part of ICCR on account of TF/OCF and the duration of the course.

9. Verification and Confirmation

- a) Consequent upon joining of student, the University/Institute shall check and verify the details provided by him on the A2A portal from the original documents, including the Passport, eligibility with reference to previous qualifications, age etc., student visa of the admissible category and an other details.
- b) After scrutiny of the application with original documents, University/Institute may provide an Authentication Letter (Bonafide) with Hostel Accommodation details with final admission confirmation.

10. Campus Allocation

- a) The University/Institutions should provide admission to students in the main campus only. The campus allocation should be adjusted after the student reports to the University. Universities/Institutions shall not allot remote/distant campus to foreign students. As far as possible, students are accommodated in the main campus and in case the student is to be accommodated in an affiliated college of the University, it

should be ensured that the College is not at an isolated location and has the ranking of NAAC A or above or NIRF Ranking from 1 to 100.

11. Orientation –

- a) Students should be provided with a Welcome/Arrival Kit containing essential information about the university, city, FRRO registration process, bank account opening process, health insurance process, academic schedules, emergency contacts, and local support mechanism.
- b) Universities should strengthen coordination with the designated bank to facilitate smoother banking access for foreign students. Regular interactive sessions with local bank officials may be organized to explain procedures for opening accounts, using digital payment platforms, accessing other financial services, prohibited digital platforms/banking activities etc.
- c) Students must be guided through bank officials that ICCR-sponsored students are provided with a zero-balance bank account in the NRO category. These accounts are designed to facilitate receipt of funds from the student's home country in INR.
- d) Universities/Institutes must ensure that all required details including FRRO Registration Number/Residential Permit Number, bank account details, medical insurance policy number, Indian Mobile number, Roll Number, Enrollment Number and residential address (hostel/private accommodation - are filled by students in the Gyan Setu Mobile Application within **15 days** of arrival in India.

12. Reporting and Gyan Setu Updates

- a) The University/Institute should confirm the date of arrival of each student to the concerned ICCR ZO/SZO within 24 hours upon arrival of student in India.
- b) Arrival details, passport information, and other student details must be uploaded to the Gyan Setu web/mobile application by the respective University/Institute.
- c) Upon completion of admission formalities, a **Joining Report**, along with a bifurcated fee structure for the entire course, should be issued by the HoD and countersigned by the ISA.
- d) This report must be uploaded by the student on the Gyan Setu App, with an intimation and copy of the Joining Report sent to the ICCR Regional Office via email.
- e) **Grade Card Uploads:** At the end of each academic semester, the University must upload a **copy of the Grade card** for each student and validate the academic performance details entered by the student.

13. Scholarship Allowances –

Level of Course	Monthly Stipend	Monthly House Rent Allowance		Annual Contingent Allowance	One time thesis/ dissertation allowance
		Grade I Cities	Other Cities		
UG	INR 18000	INR 6500	INR 5500	INR 5000	*INR 7000
PG	INR 20000			INR 7000	*INR 7000
Ph.D.	INR 22000			INR 12500	INR10000

**only applicable to students in those courses where Project Report is to be submitted as per the prescribed course requirement.*

14. Ex-India Travel Guidelines:

- a) Student is expected to spend most of his/her time in India for study purposes as well as to explore India and its culture during this period. Universities/ Institutions are required to ensure regularity of foreign students in classes and any undue absence from classes by any foreign students should be handled as per the rules of the Universities/Institutions and brought to the notice of the concerned ICCR ZO/SZO
- b) Scholarship allowances are paid to students to sustain themselves in India, and any stay outside India more than the permissible limits attracts a deduction of scholarship allowances. Ex-India period waiver/deductions will be governed by the following rules from the commencement of the academic year 2026-27 –
 - 1) Student must note that the paid ex-India period for students of any levels of courses will not exceed 60 days in an academic year with the conditions that (a) Ex-India period can be availed maximum twice in an academic year; (b) Ex-India period upto 30 days at a time will not attract any deduction in scholarship allowances; (c) Any number of days of continuous ex-India period beyond 30 days and upto 60 days will attract 50% deduction on the amount of stipend; (d) Any number of days beyond 60 days limit will attract deduction of entire scholarship allowances (stipend and HRA); (e) Any number of days beyond the second time even if it is within the total 60 days limit will attract deduction of entire scholarship allowances (stipend and HRA).
 - 2) Ph.D. scholars are allowed to avail additional ex-India period up to 60 days without any deductions in scholarship allowance once in the entire duration of their course for the purpose of data collection if the University/Institution has granted formal permission and intimated the same to the ICCR Zonal/Sub-Zonal Office.
 - 3) The student must obtain prior written permission from the University/Institution for any planned travel outside India, clearly specifying the reasons for such a visit. The period of such absence must be based on genuine reasons and should not attract a shortfall in attendance that prohibits the student from appearing in the examination for promotion to the next level.

- 4) The student must also inform the concerned ICCR Zonal/Sub-Zonal Office well in advance regarding his/her absence and stay outside India. In emergencies, students should promptly inform the University and ICCR before their departure and seek formal permission from the University upon returning to India. In such cases, the payment of scholarship dues will be stopped until the student returns to India, seeks formal permission from the University, and sends the same to the ICCR Zonal/Sub-Zonal Office.
- 5) Waiver of scholarship deductions on account of ex-India absence is an enabling provision to support students in genuine cases and cannot be claimed as a matter of right. The student must note that no waiver or relaxation in deductions in stipend and other dues on account of the ex-India period will be granted.

15. Completion and final return to home country -

- a) The student is required to leave India immediately after the completion of his/her studies (declaration of final result), and the time gap between completion of studies and final departure should not exceed two months under any circumstances.
- b) After completion of his/her course, University/Institution should help student to complete all pre-departure formalities with University/Institution, Immigration/local authorities, settlement of dues/payments of Hostel authorities/landlord (in case of private accommodation), closure of Indian bank account etc. and submit his/her request for air ticket for his/her journey back home country with ICCR Zonal/Sub-Zonal Office immediately after the declaration of his/her final result along with relevant documents such as Passport copy, Valid Visa, Residential Permit, Course Completion Certificate/Marks Statement, No Dues Certificate from the University/Institution, details of Registration on the Alumni Portal, Exit Permit and any other documents/undertaking as demanded by ICCR.
