

HEC POLICY FOR INTERIM PLACEMENT OF FRESH PHDs PHASE-II



HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION, ISLAMABAD

1. **Short Title:** This program will be called “Interim Placement of Fresh PhDs Phase-II”.
2. **Background:**

The IPFP (**Interim Placement of Fresh PhDs Program**) was launched in 2009 with the objective of providing employment to selected fresh PhDs for one year as Assistant Professor against vacant TTS (Tenure Track System) positions in public or private universities. During the placement, the host universities are expected to advertise these positions and give equal opportunity to the IPFP faculty for securing permanent positions in BPS/TTS pay scales; until April 2019, about 75 per cent of the 4,337 IPFP scholars were able to land permanent faculty positions at universities. The program also supports universities in attracting emerging scholars, by reducing search costs and providing necessary experience to potential candidates. Universities appear to be satisfied with this program.

However, the number of PhD graduates is increasing rapidly, with proportional increase in the demand for such opportunities. On the other hand, the current financial stringency makes it difficult for HEC to expand the program. Also, the same stringency has forced universities to cut back on new recruitment, with adverse results for PhD employment.

This calls for a radical rethinking of the program, both to expand its size and scope (within budgetary limits), and ensure that it continues to serve the needs of the PhD graduates as well as the universities. The revised policy incorporates these concerns. The key changes proposed are summarized below.

3. **Proposed Changes in the Program**

Keeping in view the lesson learned during implementation of the program and data collected against already placed IPFP faculty members, the following changes are proposed to make the program more viable and effective:

- i. **Objectives:** the objective of the program is to assist fresh PhD graduates in acquiring the skills and exposure needed to enter the academic job market.
- ii. **Capacity Building and Mentoring:** In the past the program took a rather passive approach towards the career aspirations of the participants. Instead, it is proposed to transform it into a more integrated and proactive program, which will support participants in realizing their academic aspirations. To this end, the program will develop an integrated capacity building program, including a one-month **training** workshop at the newly established **NAHE** (National Academy of Higher Education) prior to placement, assignment of a **faculty mentor** at the host university to guide them on major career-related issues, arranging a series of interactions throughout the year with relevant private and public sector institutions, and organizing **job fairs** and

similar **network development opportunities**. The financial cost of the capacity building program will be included in the program budget.

- iii. **Title:** One of the problems with the current structure is the premature assignment of the title of Assistant Professor to individuals who have yet to compete formally in the academic job market. Instead, in accordance with international practice, it is proposed that the program be treated as a postdoc affiliation, and participants have the title of **IPFP Fellows**.
- iv. **Remuneration:** Again, in line with international practice, the remuneration of the participants may be fixed in between that of a regular faculty position and a graduate student scholarship.
- v. **Benefits:** Facilitating the participation of the incumbents in voluntary benefit schemes that may be transferable to regular academic positions, including a voluntary pension scheme (VPS) and a voluntary health insurance scheme.
- vi. **Scope of Work:** Some IPFP Fellows complain that the host universities assign a heavy teaching load to them, which makes it difficult to pay adequate attention to research and publication. It is proposed that IPFP scholars be required to teach only one course per semester. Also, their faculty mentor will be asked to set academic targets and supervise their work in order to ensure a high degree of research productivity.
- vii. **Locational Targeting:** It is proposed that policies be introduced to encourage placement at universities in remote areas or those with a paucity of (i.e., below 40 per cent) PhD faculty. These policies may include incentives as well as regulation, e.g., a locational allowance (say 5 per cent) for placement in remote areas, or a quota system favoring disadvantaged universities.
- viii. **Host Institutions:** It is proposed to expand the scope of IPFP to allow placements in R&D organizations in the public and private sectors. HEC will conduct job fairs by involving potential employers and partners, e.g., R&D institutions in the public and private sectors, NGOs, multinational companies, chambers of commerce and industry, and media organizations.
- ix. **Recruitment Process:** It is proposed to enhance the quality of the recruitment process in order to provide positive signals to the host universities.
- x. **Monitoring:** Currently, some program participants complain that host universities (deliberately) delay their regular recruitment processes in order to avoid giving permanent jobs to IPFP Fellows. It is proposed to agree upon a strict calendar with host universities regarding the advertisement and completion of the regular recruitment process. Universities that fail to adhere to the calendar will be excluded from the program.

- xi. **Miscellaneous:** Further changes in eligibility criteria and selection process have been elaborated in relevant section.

4. Objective:

The objectives of IPFP Phase II include:

- i. Facilitating the transition of fresh PhD scholars to the academic job market.
- ii. Providing a platform for PhD graduates to compare notes and experiences.
- iii. Supporting universities (including public as well as eligible private universities), especially those in remote areas, in attracting qualified scholars.
- iv. Reducing the search costs of recruitment for universities.

5. Demands from IPFP Fellows

- i. HEC should analyze the needs of different universities in different disciplines, and maintain a record of the faculties of public sector universities.
- ii. HEC should require participating universities to announce faculty positions in a timely manner and give a fair chance to IPFP Fellows to compete for permanent positions.
- iii. HEC should require participating universities to refrain from converting permanent faculty positions into contractual or temporary positions.
- iv. HEC should enforce regulations regarding minimum PhD faculty in approved departments.
- v. HEC should approach federal and provincial governments to promote lateral induction of PhD graduates in government department where relevant.
- vi. HEC should place IPFP Fellows on in departments that have graduate programs (MS/MPhil/PhD) and fulfill the minimum HEC quality criteria for such programs.
- vii. HEC should coordinate with relevant regulatory bodies (e.g., SECP, PMDC, PEC) to ensure placement of PhD graduates in governmental and private sector entities.
- viii. HEC should allow IPFP Fellows to leave the program if they get a faculty position elsewhere.
- ix. HEC should place IPFP Fellows only in public sector universities and eligible private sector universities (i.e., those eligible for HEC funding).

6. Proposed changes in eligibility criteria:

Existing Eligibility Criteria	Eligibility Criteria under Consideration
The applicant should be a Pakistani / AJK national	No change
<i>The age at the time of applying not over 45 years of age.</i>	Reduce to 40 years.
The applicant must be unemployed at the time of applying.	Those with sub-optimal jobs (e.g., irregular, contract jobs) may also be allowed to apply.

	If selected, they will have to resign and submit a clearance certificate. Exceptions are non-gazetted employees (i.e., not on BPS 17 or above) who wish to retain their lien.
PhD degree from a Pakistani university or an HEC-recognized foreign university	No change
<i>PhD completed within the past 4 years.</i>	PhD completed within the past two 2 years.
Preference to those who have completed their PhD recently or will complete it within four months of the date of application.	PhD completion is mandatory.
<i>Evidence of PhD completion:</i> i. HEC scholars (indigenous or foreign): copy of PhD degree attested by a gazetted officer. ii. Non-HEC indigenous scholars: HEC Attested copy of PhD degree. iii. Non-HEC foreign scholars: equivalence certificate of PhD degrees from the HEC.	<i>Evidence of PhD completion:</i> All are required to submit HEC-attested copy of PhD degree, or equivalence certificate of PhD degrees from HEC Equivalence Cell.
<i>No publication requirement.</i>	Must have at least two research publications in HEC-recognized journals or indexed journals.

7. Application & Selection Procedure:-

Existing Procedure	Proposed Procedure
Submit hard and soft copies of duly completed IPFP application forms (only spiral-bound copy accepted) along with the following documents: 1. Detailed Résumé. 2. List of publications. 3. Abstract of PhD Thesis. 4. Copy of PhD Degree. 5. Copies of other degrees or certificates. 6. Copy of CNIC. 7. Short profile in Excel Sheet (Soft only) 8. Three reference letters, including one from a PhD supervisor (in case of foreign scholars, at least letters must be from international referees).	All submissions to be online. The CV should be uploaded directly on the HEC careers portal.
HEC scholars to submit NOC from the scholarship section concerned.	No change

Prior to acceptance of application, initial scrutiny will be carried out on the eligibility criteria.	No change
Approval of batch from HOD of HRD for eligible candidates for placement on rolling basis	No change
<i>Other selection requirements: no requirements</i>	Eligible applicant will be required to attend the specially designed, one-month training program at NAHE, which will recommend or not recommend placement (as the case might be) based on performance. In case of failure, the candidate will be given one more opportunity to appear in the NAHE-administered test.
(Upon completion of selection process) HEC will request the university or universities selected by the applicant to accept placement.	(Upon completion of selection process) HEC will circulate names and details of the applicants to the universities, which will make placement decisions as per their requirements. If necessary, HEC can send request directly to a specific university. In case of R&D institutions or private sector entities, HEC will liaise with them directly or through their regulatory bodies.
Placement of applicants on rolling basis throughout the year.	Placement in universities to take place only at the start of each semester, i.e., Jan-Mar and Aug-Oct. In other organizations, placement may take place as and when required.
Issue of Offer Letter: Upon receipt of acceptance from university on consent form.	No change except other organization added
Issue of Contract Agreement: Upon submission of Joining Report on specimen form from university with valid date	No change except other organization added
Release of Salary: Upon receipt of signed copy of Contract Agreement from u	No change except other organization added
Follow up upon completion of stint: HEC will monitor the absorption of IPFP Fellows in respective universities. IPFP Fellows are required to provide feedback regarding their university experience on prescribed form.	No change except other organization added
<i>Other Support: none</i>	HEC to arrange job fairs at least once in a year.

	HEC to arrange training workshops, through NAHE, on key issues HEC to assign faculty mentor to each IPFP Fellow
	The program (if needed) can be advertised in national / international newspapers for general awareness of educated public.

8. Duration of IPFP Assignment:

- i. The duration of IPFP will be one year. The university may extend it by another year from its own resources.
- ii. Eligible candidates will undergo training at NAHE for one month (or more, if needed).
- iii. Fellows may avail paid leave during the program, with the approval of HEC as well as the host organization. However, paid period cannot be extended beyond one year.
- iv. In case of emergency (e.g. family leave, illness), on the recommendation of the faculty supervisor, the IPFP Fellow may take leave without pay, which will not be treated as part of the regular assignment period. However, the total paid period will remain the same i.e., one year.

9. Financial Support to be provided by HEC:

Existing Support and Benefits	Proposed Support and Benefits
Funds will be provided from the recurring budget head "IPFP program" of HEC	No change
HEC will pay a salary equivalent to that of an Assistant Professor on TTS per month lump sum for one year. In the case of private universities, the cost is shared by the HEC and the private institution on 50%: 50% basis. The salary can be revised according to any revision in the TTS pay scale.	HEC will pay a fixed stipend (amount to be determined) for placement at universities as well other organization would be negotiable as per direction of Commission. HEC will arrange voluntary benefit schemes.
The salary will be transferred to host universities in advance on a biannual basis.	No change. However, in case of participation in voluntary benefit schemes, the deductions would be made before the transfer
<i>Support Expenses</i> HEC will pay PKR 0.5 million as a start-up research grant at the time of placement to all who submit a concept paper to R&D Division. No additional support provided for.	Amount should be increased to PKR 1.0 million. Concept papers should be submitted and approved during NAHE training. The PMU must follow the impact of the research done. HEC will reimburse approved infrastructure expenses, including stationary, furniture, equipment, or contingencies. HEC will cover the cost of a pre-service training workshop at NAHE, including

	<p>workshop fees as well as a stipend. The workshop will be for one month.</p> <p>HEC will cover travel expenses to attend job fairs, networking events, workshops or conferences.</p> <p>HEC will support program improvement, including research on impact analysis and program efficiency, and advertisement or media material.</p> <p>The program budget improves the cost of essential staff at HEC, including the PMU and program implementation expenses.</p>
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9. Benefits:

- i. Preparing fresh PhD graduates to enter the academic job market, by investing in capacity building programs, enabling practical experience in teaching, academic management, research, fundraising, and grant-writing, and facilitating networking.
- ii. Developing a post-PhD mentorship system.
- iii. Investing in optimal placement of PhD graduates.
- iv. Creating a platform for placement of PhD graduates, and linking it with the careers portal.
- v. Supporting universities by providing access to freshly trained graduates.
- vi. Reducing the search costs of universities for faculty recruitment.
- vii. Promoting the employment of PhD graduates in suitable positions in the industrial and business sectors as well as NGOs and R&D organizations.
- viii. Supporting academia-industry linkages.

10. Responsibilities IPFP PhD Researcher at Universities

The responsibilities of IPFP Fellows include, but are not limited to:

- i. Conformance to the highest standards of academic conduct, including responsible conduct in research, teaching, and public behavior.
- ii. IPFP Fellows are expected to contribute to the university in all three areas, namely teaching, research, and service to the institution.
- iii. IPFP Fellows are expected to be active researchers and publish scholarly works (e.g., journal articles, papers, monographs, book chapters, or books) and to meet their tenure requirements.
- iv. Maintenance of a laboratory notebook and/or other comparable records of research activity, which will remain the property of the University upon termination. Adherence to university standards regarding e.g., use of isotopes, chemicals, infectious agents, animal testing, or human subjects.
- v. Collegial conduct towards others, including members of the department, research laboratories, or others.

- vi. Compliance with all applicable university policies and applicable terms of sponsored support agreements.
- vii. IPFP Fellows are expected to be involved in teaching undergraduate as well as graduate courses as assigned by the host departments. The teaching load should be less than that of full time faculty members in order to allow them to sustain their research momentum.
- viii. IPFP Fellows are expected to contribute actively to scholarly activities on campus, including conferences, seminars, or workshops.
- ix. IPFP Fellows are expected to contribute actively to the academic mission of the university.

11. Responsibilities of Universities/ DAIs/Other organizations

- i. Universities will accept IPFP Fellows on merit and without favoritism.
- ii. Universities will provide the opportunity of absorption as faculty members during the IPFP tenure.
- iii. Universities will provide adequate office space, research facilities, and opportunities of learning to appointed IPFP Fellows.
- iv. They may have equal level of opportunity to access /use laboratories, research facilities and capacity enhancement programmes similar to other faculty members.
- v. The focal persons must keep the record of IPFP faculty.
- vi. Performance of the IPFP faculty members during the tenure period of one year should be submitted to HEC.
- vii. The services of IPFP faculty should be utilized fairly.
- viii. In case of any mismanagement on the part of university can lead to take action as per policy including restricting further placement.
- ix. Any suggestion for improvement is encouraged in this regard.

12. Performance Evaluation

Universities or other host organizations are required to provide a written evaluation of IPFP Fellows on a six-monthly basis.

13. Termination

- i. The appointment of an IPFP PhD researcher may be terminated through resignation, non-renewal of appointment, loss of funding which supports the appointment, or dismissal for just cause during the appointment period. "Just cause" includes poor performance, work-

related misconduct, violation of university policies, or other serious reason as determined by the university.

- ii. In case an IPFP Fellow is appointed to a faculty position or any other job during the Fellowship period, he/she would be allowed to leave the position immediately.
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