

NIF - AcSIR Doctoral Fellowship

For

i-PhD Programme

An innovative, imaginative and industry-linked doctoral programme

About the Programme

The iPhD is a doctoral fellowship offered jointly by NIF and the Academy of Scientific and Innovative Research (AcSIR). It is designed to turn a research student into a science entrepreneur. Research Fellows will pursue their Ph.D. through AcSIR, focusing on research problems arising from grassroots innovations, under the mentorship of eminent scientists from CSIR and NIF.

Selection in the iPhD programme is through open advertisement issued from time to time.

Thrust Areas

Research problems are offered across:

- Engineering
- Agriculture
- Human Health and Veterinary Sciences
- Policy and Impact Assessment

Who can apply

- Existing AcSIR Ph.D. scholars, preferably in their first year of study, who are working on societal challenges aligned with NIF's mandate, may be considered under this programme. Such scholars will be jointly mentored by their designated CSIR Supervisor and a NIF Scientist serving as Co-Supervisor, ensuring strong scientific guidance and alignment with grassroots innovation needs.
- Candidates who are not yet registered for a Ph.D. programme at AcSIR. They will undertake research on problems identified and assigned by NIF, aligned with its mandate and societal priorities. The Ph.D. supervision will be led by a NIF Scientist as the Supervisor, with a CSIR Scientist serving as Co-Supervisor, ensuring strong academic and research support through the CSIR–NIF ecosystem.

Coursework

Beyond the standard research components, the curriculum is built around innovation and entrepreneurship, with courses on entrepreneurship, business proposals, marketing, ethics, and IPR.

Students complete 18 credits, with the flexibility to finish coursework within three years from portal such NPTEL, Swayam, etc.

Fellowship

Research Fellows will receive a fellowship equivalent to the CSIR–JRF along with applicable HRA, funded by NIF for up to five years, with upgradation to SRF after two years as per prescribed norms, and will also be provided contingency support for research-related activities.

Duration

The duration of the programme shall be a minimum of three years (including coursework) and a maximum of six years. All Fellows will have access to NIF's Technology Business Incubator, providing infrastructure, mentoring, and institutional support to translate research outcomes into deployable technologies and innovations.

Expected Output

Fellows will be expected to translate their research into a working technology achieving Technology Readiness Level 4 (TRL-4) and above, sufficient for the award of the Ph.D. degree. The resulting technology may subsequently be advanced through a startup venture or industry partnership, ensuring that the doctoral research culminates in a deployable innovation.