

Mahatma Gandhi National Council of Rural Education

Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education

GUIDELINES FOR THE MAJOR AND MINOR RESEARCH PROJECTS

1. Introduction

1.1 Promotion of rural research is one of the major objectives of the MGNCRE. Research grant is direct financial support to research projects undertaken by the Indian researchers. MGNCRE provides funding to Indian scholars to conduct cutting edge research in various fields of concern relating to rural India have theoretical, conceptual, methodological and policy implications. The Research Projects may belong to any of the disciplines or may be multi-disciplinary in nature.

The broad disciplines of study are:

1. Rural Management
2. Swachhata Education
3. Experiential Learning
4. Skill Integrated Education
5. Sustainability in College and Villages
6. Rural Engagement and Institutional Social Responsibility

1.2 Categories of Research Projects

The MGNCRE awards two types of research projects on the basis of the scope, duration of the study and budget:

- (a) Major Project – Duration from 12 months to 21 months with a budget Rs 5- Rs.7.5 lakh.
- (b) Minor Project – Duration from 6 months to 9 months with a budget upto Rs.3 lakh.

2. Eligibility

2.1 Research Institutes/institutes of national importance as defined by the Ministry of Education (MoE) / UGC recognized Indian universities / deemed universities under 12 B etc. are eligible to apply. However, other registered organisations with established research and academic standing may collaborate with any of the above mentioned institutions for implementation of the study and may form a joint team consisting of Project Director, Co-Project Director/s etc. Such collaborations have to be clearly stated in application itself.

2.2 Professional researchers who are regularly employed or retired as faculty in a UGC(University Grants Commission) recognized Indian university/deemed university/colleges with requisite research infrastructure/institute of national importance and Research Institutes, and possessing a Ph.D. and demonstrable research experience through publications of books/research papers/reports are eligible to apply. Both the Project Director and Co- Director must possess a Ph.D. degree and a proven track record of high quality research as evidenced by past studies, publications and their academic background. The condition of Ph.D. for a Co-Director can be relaxed if he/she has very credible research publications.

2.3 Senior government and defence officers (not less than 25 years of regular service) and persons with proven research expertise possessing a Ph. D. degree or equivalent research work in relevant disciplines and demonstrable research experience through publications of books/research papers/reports can also apply, preferably in collaboration with a faculty in a relevant discipline from institutions given in 2.1 above.

2.4 Individual scholars can apply maximum of two projects at a time. However, in case both projects are selected, the applicant can choose only one project. Institutes having good research infrastructure and resources may affiliate a number of Project Directors.

3. How to Apply

- 3.1 The applications will be invited through an advertisement on MGNCRE website and if required, in print media.
- 3.2 The applicants shall submit an online application which includes the Research Proposal Format, given in the Application Form. At this stage, the applicants need not submit any document other than those referred in application form. All scholars are required to keep the hard copies of their application and annexures ready, duly forwarded by the competent authorities of the university/college/institute so that they may submit the required hard copies, within ten days after the completion of the process of screening. It is being done for the sake of convenience of the applicants so that they get more time for preparing the hard copies.
- 3.3 In case, the hard copy of application is not received within 10 days of asking, the application shall be treated as withdrawn/cancelled.
- 3.4 Research proposals and final reports should either be in English or Hindi. (Use Devanagari to fill Application form in Hindi).
- 3.5 One applicant can apply only once under a particular Research Project scheme. However, he / she can apply separately for another scheme.

4. Procedure for Awards

4.1 Applications are scrutinised by the MGNCRE/and or by a Screening Committee in respect of eligibility. Eligible applications are then examined by the Expert Committee (s). Shortlisting of the programme is done for the purpose of interaction/presentation at MGNCRE (in person or through technology). The expert committee/s make(s) recommendation for award of studies and also suggest budget for the recommended studies.

4.2 The recommendations of the Expert Committee(s) are then placed before the requisite Committee(s) of the MGNCRE for their approval.

5. Duration and Value

5.1 The duration of a Major Project is twelve to twenty one months and that of Minor Project is six to nine months. This period can be extended only in exceptional circumstances up to a maximum of three months by the MGNCRE.

5.2 The budget for Major Project ranges from Rs.5-7.5 lakh and for Minor Projects it is up to Rs.3 lakh. The amount will be disbursed in number of instalments, depending on the phases and duration of the study, as indicated in the Sanction Letter. MGNCRE reserves the right, based on Expert opinion, to convert a proposal for Major Research Project into Minor Research Project or vice versa.

5.3 The budget estimates for these proposals are to be prepared on the basis of the format given in the guidelines. The Institute/group of scholars will propose the budget subject to the following broad expenditure sub-heads. Those Project Director would like to work without Research Personnel, especially under Minor Research Project would apply separately. For that, the limits of expenditure, duly approved by the Expert Committee will be separately indicated in the sanction letter. The expenditure can be interchanged between heads within the overall budget sanctioned.

S.No	Heads of Expenditure	Value
1	Research Staff : Full time/Part-time/Hired Services	Not exceeding 45% of the total budget.

2	Fieldwork: Travel/Logistics/Boarding, Survey Preparation or Consultancy etc.	Not exceeding 30%
3	Equipment and Study material: Computer, Printer, Source Material, Books, Journals, Software, Data Sets etc.	Not exceeding 10%
4	Contingency:	Not exceeding 5%
5	Publication of Report	App. 5%*
6	Institutional Overheads	Affiliating Institutional overheads @ 5% of the approved budget, subject to a maximum limit of Rs.37,500/- for Major Research & Rs.15,000/- for Minor Research
	TOTAL	MGNCRE will finally make it 100%

* a. The Project has to be implemented immediately after receiving the project sanction letter. Funds will be released based on the submission of Inception Report, acceptance and undertaking from Project Director details of the bank account in this regard.

* b. The allocation for publication amount will be retained by the MGNCRE for publication of the final report if it is found to be high quality by the expert/experts appointed by the MGNCRE.

5.4 Remuneration and Emoluments of Project Staff

- a) Project staff could be engaged by the Project Director on a full/ Part-time basis during the research work and the duration/consolidated monthly emoluments of their employment may be decided by the project director within the limits of the sanctioned financial allocation and as per the MGNCRE rules.
- b) **Research Associate** @ Rs.20,000/- p.m.
(Qualification – Post graduate in relevant discipline (55% minimum) with NET /M.Phil. / Ph.D.)
- c) **Research Assistant** @ Rs.16,000/- p.m.
(Qualification-Ph.D./M.Phil./ Post graduate in relevant discipline with minimum 55%)
- d) **Field Investigator** @ Rs.15,000/-p.m. (not exceeding 6 months)
(Qualification- Post graduate in relevant discipline with minimum 55%)
- e) Retrospective payment for work already done is not permissible.

5.5 The Institution may re-appropriate expenditure from one head to another (except capital expenses and publication of report). Sanctioned budget under the recurring head cannot be utilised for non-recurring or capital expenses.

5.6 Selection of Research Staff should be done through a public announcement and a selection committee consisting under Project Director. Engagement of project personnel is totally internal matter of the project.

5.7. For all field work related expenses of Project Director and project personnel, rules of affiliating institutes/ universities shall be followed.

5.8 All equipment and books purchased out of the project fund shall be the property of the affiliating institution. However, MGNCRE may ask for books or/and equipment if it so requires.

5.9 The scholar should acknowledge the support of MGNCRE in all publications resulting from the programme output (Research Paper, Books, Articles, Reports, etc.) and should submit a copy of the same to the MGNCRE during its course and even after completion.

6. Joining and Release of Grants

6.1 The Project Director has to join the project within one month of the award letter. For this the Project Director has to submit an 'undertaking' on an Rs.100 stamp paper, date of commencement of the study towards the first instalment.

6.2 The grant for research project (Major and Minor) will be released in instalments as indicated in the Sanction Letter.

a) The first instalment (25% of the first year/project amount if the project is for less than 1 year) is released after completing necessary formalities i.e., submission of Inception Report, acceptance and undertaking from Project Director details of the bank account in this regard.

b) The second instalment (25%) is released after receiving a satisfactory two months for Minor Research and four months for Major Research Progress Report, simple statement of account of first instalment, publication in peer reviewed journal - if published (for Major Project) towards the second instalment.

c) The third instalment (20%) will be released after receiving second Progress Report (depending on the duration of the project), simple statement of accounts of the second instalment towards the third instalment.

d) The fourth instalment (15%) will be released after receiving book length Final Report in soft copy (both word and PDF format), Executive Summary of Final Report in soft copy (both word and PDF format), 500 words abstract of the Final Report in soft copy, research papers published in peer reviewed journals duly acknowledging MGNCRE, similarity index score sheet, simple statement of accounts of third instalment towards the fourth instalment. Project Director is required to submit hard copies of the Final Report only after the confirmation from the MGNCRE after incorporating the suggested changes.

e) The publication grant (5%) will be retained by the MGNCRE & will be spent by the MGNCRE Publication Division if the Final report is found publishable by an Expert Committee constituted by the MGNCRE.

f) Final instalment (10%) will be issued after receipt of recommendation of the expert for acceptance of the Final Report, Audited statement of accounts (AC) in prescribed format with utilization certificate (UC) in GFR-12A form for the entire approved project amount duly signed by the Finance Officer/Registrar/Director of the affiliating Institution, verification of all documents and decision on retaining of equipment and books etc. The institutions of which the accounts are not audited by CAG/AG, their utilisation certificate will be signed by the Finance Officer and a chartered accountant.

6.3 The Overhead Charges to the affiliating institution will be released after the Final Report has been accepted and documents verified by the MGNCRE. The MGNCRE reserves the right to change the affiliation if it is found that the affiliating institute is not co-operating with the scholar and it is not facilitating timely completion of the study.

6.4 The Project Director will ensure that the expenditure incurred by him/her conforms to the approved budget heads and relevant rules. Audited Statement of accounts with Utilization Certificate in GFR of 12A form is for the entire project amount approved for the project.

6.5 A separate bank account in the name of the Project (Non-individual account) shall be opened (preferable) and maintained till the completion of the project. All the receipts and

payments related to the project are to be done through this bank account only. No other funds shall be mixed with this bank account. The funds will be released by the MGNCRE to this account only. Interest earned on the Project Funds, shall be refunded to MGNCRE or will be adjusted against the subsequent instalments.

6.6 In exceptional cases and at the sole discretion of MGNCRE the project funds will be released to the bank account of the concerned University/Institute of the Project Director.

7. Monitoring of Research Projects

7.1 Research undertaken by a Project Director will be reviewed through the submission of periodic progress reports in the prescribed format and the project may be discontinued/terminated if research progress is found unsatisfactory or any MGNCRE rules are violated.

7.2 During the course of the project, the scholars are required to publish at least two research papers (one paper in the case of Minor) in peer reviewed high quality journals (such as Scopus, UGC Care list etc.) related to the theme of the research project while duly acknowledging MGNCRE's support for the research and publication. MGNCRE expects the Project Director to submit a final report of very high quality which is worth publishing by a reputed publisher. Depending upon the recommendation for publication of Final Report as a book/monograph, with suggested modifications or improvements, the MGNCRE will have first right to publish under its rules and policy.

7.3 Acknowledgement – The scholars should acknowledge MGNCRE while getting their research paper published. The acknowledgement should mention “The Project Director namely _____ is the awardee of MGNCRE Research Projects (Research Programme or Major/Minor Project as the case may be). This book/paper is largely an outcome of the Research Project sponsored by the Mahatma Gandhi National Council of Rural Education (MGNCRE). However, the responsibility for the facts stated, opinions expressed, and the conclusions drawn is entirely that of the author”. If there is a different policy at the end of the publishers, pre-publication acknowledgement may be sent to MGNCRE for approval.

7.4 All project related queries will be addressed to the Project Director/ Affiliating Institution for their timely reply.

7.5 The MGNCRE may, at any time ask for verification of accounts and other relevant documents related to the Project. Books of account shall be maintained by the Project Director.

7.6 Mid Term Appraisal of Research Programme: The MGNCRE may hold a mid-term or an annual review of a research project through a team of experts.

7.7 Final report submitted by the Project Director is mandatorily evaluated by an Expert appointed by the MGNCRE before considering the release of the final instalment.

7.8 As per the directions of the Ministry of Education (MoE) the amount of grant sanctioned is to be utilized within the duration of the project. Any amount of the grant remaining unspent shall be refunded to the MGNCRE immediately after the expiry of the duration of the project. If the grantee fails to utilize the grant for the purpose for which the same has been sanctioned/or fails to submit the audited statement of expenditure within the stipulated period, the grantee will be required to refund the amount of the grant with interest thereon @ 10% per annum.

8. Completion of the Study

8.1 On completion of the study, the Project Director should submit the following:

- a) Soft copy (s) of the final report in a publishable form (in both PDF and word format), abstract in 5000 words (in both PDF and word format), Executive Summary of the final report in 500 words (in both PDF and word format) along with plagiarism report check carried out by the Project Director.
- b) Project Director is required to submit hard copies of the Final Report only after the confirmation from the MGNCRE post incorporating the suggested changes.
- c) After acceptance of the report by the MGNCRE, the Project Director would be required to submit: a) two hard copies of modified final report free from plagiarism; b) ten copies of executive summary, c) final soft copy (in both PDF and word format) in pen drive and d) published research papers on the approved theme of research duly acknowledging MGNCRE (minimum one for Minor Project and two for Major Project).

8.2 MGNCRE gets every report checked for plagiarism and the similarity report is also generated. As a policy MGNCRE does not accept contents beyond 15 per cent on similarity index. Project Director s are required to get their final report checked on their own for similarity index and attach a report of the same at the time of submission.

8.3 The Project Director should acknowledge support of MGNCRE that the project has been sponsored by the MGNCRE, in all publications resulting from the project output (Research Paper, Books, Articles, Reports, etc.) and should submit a copy of the same to the MGNCRE during the course of the study or even after its completion.

8.4 The final report submitted by the Project Director will be considered as satisfactory only after final recommendation of acceptance by the expert appointed by the MGNCRE.

9. Obligations of the Affiliating Institution

9.1 The affiliating institution is required to give an undertaking in the prescribed format contained in the Application Form to administer and manage the MGNCRE grant.

9.2 It is also required to provide the requisite research infrastructure to the Project Director and maintain proper accounts.

9.3 The affiliating institution shall open / maintain a dedicated bank account for MGNCRE grant for release of the Project Grant without any delay.

9.4 The affiliating institution will be under obligation to ensure submission of the final report and an Audited Statement of Accounts and Utilization Certificate, (in the prescribed Proforma GFR 12-A) duly certified by the Competent authority of the institution including the refund of any unspent balance.

9.5 The affiliating institution shall make suitable arrangements for preservation of data such as filled in schedules, tabulation sheets, manuscripts, reports, etc. relating to the study. The MGNCRE reserves the right to demand raw data, or such parts of the study as it deems fit.

9.6 In case a Project Director leaves /discontinues/dies during project before completion tenure, the affiliating institution shall immediately inform MGNCRE, settle the accounts including the refund of any unspent balance within a year of submission.

9.7 The overhead charges shall be paid only after the completion of the project and on receipt of the final audited Statement of Accounts and Utilisation Certificate in prescribed formats. If the project is terminated by either parties i.e., MGNCRE & the affiliated University before the completion of the project duration or is not completed due to any other reasons the overhead charges will not be paid.

9.8 The Project Director shall communicate/coordinate with Member Secretary or any other designated officer of MGNCRE.

9.9 A checklist of documents as prescribed by the MGNCRE will need to be submitted to MGNCRE by the grantee Project Director for release of funds from time to time.

10. Other Conditions

10.1 The duration of the project shall be a maximum period of 21 months for Major Projects and nine months for Minor Projects which includes the time for Final Report writing. In case of exceptional circumstances, an extension of three months can be granted by the MGNCRE without any additional financial burden on being satisfied about the progress of the work including quality publication. Project Director is required to send a request at least three months prior to the completion for no-cost extension with a copy of the progress made, reason for the delay by justifying the extension. Retrospective extension will not be permitted.

10.2 The contingency grant may be utilized for stationery, computer typing related costs, specialised assistance such as data analysis, consultation for field trip etc. related to the research work.

10.3 Retired teachers and government/defence officers can also apply under the scheme but they are required to affiliate to recognised Research Institutes/institute of national importance/UGC recognized Indian university/deemed university of his/her choice with the prior approval of the MGNCRE.

10.4 The Project Director should acknowledge the support of MGNCRE in all publications resulting from the programme output (Research Paper, Books, Articles, Reports, etc.) and should submit a copy of the same to the MGNCRE during its course and even after completion.

10.5 MGNCRE follows Government of India Rules & Directives with regard to Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) categories.

10.6 Defaulters of any previous fellowship/project/grant of the MGNCRE will not be eligible for consideration until the applicant obtains the clearance from the concerned administrative division.

10.7 An applicant may submit more than one proposal against the call. However, The Project Director will be allowed to take up only one research programme/project at one point of time even if both the proposals recommended for award.

10.8 There will be a gap of minimum two years between two MGNCRE research programmes. However, in highly relevant and good proposals, this condition may be exempted by the relevant Committee(s).

10.9 No Project Director will be allowed to take up a research project along with any MGNCRE fellowship.

10.10 Foreign trip is not permissible within the Research Programme. However, the Project Director may undertake data collection outside India in exceptional cases and if warranted by the needs of the proposal. It can be borne from other sources.

10.11 No request for additional grant in excess of the sanctioned budget will be considered.

10.12 The Project Director shall be personally responsible for timely completion of the Project.

10.13 The Project proposal/final report cannot be submitted for the award of any University degree/diploma or funding by any Institution by any member of the project staff, including the project director. The MGNCRE however, will have no objection if any member of the project staff utilizes the project data for this purpose.

10.14 Purchase of equipment/ assets for the research Project is permissible only if it is originally proposed and approved by the MGNCRE and does not exceed the permissible amount and follows the rules of the affiliating institution.

10.15 The project director shall report to the MGNCRE in case he /she makes any changes in the research design at any stage. No major change can be made therein without the prior approval of the MGNCRE.

10.16 Regarding Transfer of a Project/Appointment of substitute Project Director:

a) On the request from a university/institute, the MGNCRE may permit the appointment of a Substitute Project Director in exceptional circumstances.

b) The MGNCRE may also appoint a Substitute Project Director if it is convinced that the original awardee of the Project will not be in a position to carry out the study successfully.

c) The MGNCRE may transfer the place of the Project from one affiliating institution to another subject to submission of the following:

- (1) Satisfactory progress report (s);
- (2) No objection certificate from both previous and the new university/institute;
- (3) Audited statement of account and utilization certificate along with unspent balance, if any.

However, no transfer of programme/ Project director should be requested in the last six months of the study.

d) Overhead charges will be apportioned proportionally among the institutes as per the grant released or as may be finally decided by the MGNCRE.

e) In case of superannuation of Project Director and if the rules of the institution so require the transfer of the project to a serving faculty member may be done with prior approval of the MGNCRE. The credit of Project shall belong to the original submitting Project Director.

10.17 Consideration under another call(s) would require a fresh proposal.

10.18 The Council reserves the right to reject any application without assigning any reason. It will not be responsible for any postal delays/loss.

10.19 Incomplete applications in any respect will not be considered.

10.20 The final authority related to the interpretation of the guidelines or any issue left is vested with the MGNCRE.

10.21 No queries will be entertained by the MGNCRE Secretariat until the final declaration of results against a call. Any lobbying for award will lead to disqualification.

10.22 While accepting Research Project from the MGNCRE, an awardee should not accept any other fellowship or research project or regular financial benefit/assignment from any other institution.

10.23 MGNCRE makes positive efforts to encourage less represented sections such as women, people belonging to Educationally Backward Areas/Districts, Minorities, etc.

10.24 The Project Director should not have been subjected to any disciplinary/legal action/proceedings/ financial penalties in his/her career/research career.

10.25 The final report submitted by the Project Director will be considered as satisfactory only after final recommendation of acceptance by the expert/experts appointed by the MGNCRE.

10.26 The MGNCRE reserves all rights to publish the project funded by it, provided the work is recommended for publication by MGNCRE appointed expert/experts. The Project Director can get it published on their own only if MGNCRE decides to & after seeking permission (NOC) from MGNCRE.

10.27 Research project may be discontinued/terminated if research progress is found unsatisfactory or any MGNCRE rules are violated.

10.28 Organising seminars/workshops from the project grant approved is not permissible.

10.29 The MGNCRE reserves the right to change the affiliation if it is found that the affiliating institute is not co-operating with the Project Director and it is not facilitating timely completion of the study.

10.30 As per the directions of the Ministry of Education (MoE), the amount of grant sanctioned is to be utilized within the duration of the project. Any amount of the grant remaining unspent shall be refunded to the MGNCRE immediately after the expiry of the duration of the project. If the grantee fails to utilize the grant for the purpose for which the same has been sanctioned/or fails to submit the audited statement of expenditure within the stipulated period, the grantee will be required to refund.

10.31 Filled in Application in the prescribed format for Major Research Projects shall be sent to the link given in this regard on our website www.mgncre.org before the last date 14.03.22