ISHBT-ICH Student Research Grant / Thesis Financial Support Scheme

Background and mandate

As per the EC discussion in the mid-term meeting dated April 3-4, 2026, ISHBT decided to support research of hematology subjects through annual grants for students, with the following ceiling and number of awards per year: up to Rs 50,000 for 10 UG students, up to Rs 1 lakh for 10 MD students, and up to Rs 1 lakh for 5 DM/DrNB students. The guidelines were finalized in the EC meeting held on 05 August 2026.

ISHBT-ICH Student Research Grant / Thesis Financial Support Scheme

Objectives: The objectives of the scheme are as follows:

1. To encourage undergraduate, postgraduate, and super-specialty trainees to undertake supervised high-quality research relevant to clinical and laboratory hematology practice and related patient care.
2. To improve the visibility, dissemination, and academic output of student research work done in the field of hematology.
3. To encourage the development of future clinician-researchers and academic leaders in the field of hematology.

Categories and annual number of awards

The scheme shall support the following categories:

1. Undergraduate (UG) students: up to 10 awards per year, maximum of Rs 50,000 per award.
2. MD students: up to 10 awards per year, maximum Rs 1,00,000 per award.
3. DM/DrNB students: up to 5 awards per year, maximum Rs 1,00,000 per award.

The number of awards may remain below the maximum number in any year if suitable applications are not available. The above are maximum ceilings, and ISHBT may sanction the full amount or a lower amount based on budget justification and committee recommendation.

Definitions

For the purpose of this SOP:

- **Applicant** means the student seeking support under the scheme.
- **Guide** means the supervisor(s) responsible for scientific, ethical, and administrative oversight of the thesis.
- **Hematology-related thesis** means a thesis directly relevant to clinical hematology, laboratory hematology, hemato-oncology, coagulation/hemostasis-thrombosis, nutritional and hemolytic anemias, bone marrow pathology, stem cell transplantation, cellular therapy, hematology education, epidemiologic and public health aspects of blood disorders, or any other area approved by the review committee as relevant to hematology.
- **Tenure** means the period within which the thesis must be completed.
- **Competent endorsing authority** means the Head of Institution, Dean, Principal, Medical Superintendent, Registrar or another authority authorized by the institution to endorse the application and fund utilization documents.

- **Selection Committee** is a committee constituted by ISHBT to examine eligible applications, assess scientific merit and feasibility against award criteria, conduct presentations/interviews (only if required, at the selection committee's discretion), and recommend candidates for award consideration.

Eligibility and Rules

1. The thesis/dissertation/project's subject **must** be related to hematology.
2. The M.D. level award is restricted to M.D. Pathology, M.D. Internal Medicine or M.D. Pediatrics or their equivalents only (i.e., specialities where there is scope for the candidate to be working in hematology directly in the future).
3. The D.M. level award is restricted to DM/DrNB theses in the specialities of Clinical Hematology or Hematopathology/Laboratory Hematology or their equivalents only.
4. For MBBS, there is no restriction, provided that topic criterion (1) above and the Guide criterion (5) below are met.
5. The Guide **must** be a clinical or laboratory hematologist who is an ISHBT life member.
6. The applicant must be enrolled in a recognized course in a recognized institution in India during the period of application and grant tenure.
7. For MD and DM (or equivalent candidates), the applicant must have enrolled in the course within the last one year of their emailing their application.
8. The applicant must have sufficient time left to be able to complete the thesis/project within the tenure of the course.
9. The Guide shall be entirely responsible for scientific oversight, ethical compliance, financial propriety, and timely reporting.
10. Applicants may apply to other funding sources concurrently and use ISHBT as a partial funder, provided there is full disclosure of all existing or pending sources of support, the budget clearly justifies the need for additional ISHBT assistance, no line item is double-funded, and the guide certifies that there is no duplication of expenditure.
11. Applicants are encouraged to present the results in annual Haematocon meeting.
    Decision of the selection committee for a proposal meeting the above eligibility requirement will be final and non-negotiable.

Eligible thesis/project types

- Thesis and dissertation projects are eligible for MD/DM level awards.
- For MBBS students, short projects of approximately 6 months are eligible.
- Studies may be prospective, retrospective, laboratory-based, translational, educational, epidemiological, or clinically oriented, provided they are scientifically sound and relevant to hematology.

Duration of support

- The MD/DM thesis must be completed within the tenure of the applicant's course.
- The MBBS short projects must be completed within approximately 6 months of release of grant instalment 1.

- Any request for extension beyond the candidate's registered course/sanction period must be justified in writing by the student and the Guide and approved by the competent authority and the ISHBT review committee before expiry of tenure.
- The above request for extension, if envisaged, should reach the Secretary ISHBT not less than 3 months before the completion of tenure of the applicant.

Call for applications

- The scheme shall ordinarily have two calls per year, i.e., in March and September, every year.
- Approximately two-thirds of the grants in each subsection will be opened in March every year, and the remainder in September that year. Any grants leftover in March will carry forward in the September round of that year.
- The call for applications shall specify the last date, the category-wise number of awards, application format, supporting documents, and review timeline.

Application process

- Applications shall be invited through an open notification by ISHBT on its website and via email to all ISHBT members.
- All applications shall be submitted electronically only, via email to the Secretary, ISHBT in the prescribed format with all required enclosures.
- The application must be endorsed by the Guide and the competent institutional authority.
- A structured research proposal shall be submitted, preferably including title, background, rationale, objectives, methodology, sample size or case selection, statistical plan, timeline, expected implications, and references. A reasonable budget should be included.
- The above research proposal should not exceed 5 single spaced pages with Times New Roman font size 12.

Required documents

Each application should include the following documents sent by email to the Secretary ISHBT:

1. Completed application form.
2. Research proposal with prescribed headings and including a budget with justification.
3. Student undertaking (Annexure 1).
4. Guide undertaking (Annexure 2).
5. Institutional endorsement by competent authority (Annexure 3).
6. Proof of course enrolment and year of training.
7. Proof of ISHBT membership of the Guide (in the form of life membership number).
8. Ethics approval certificate, or evidence of ethics submission (for conditional sanction before final mandatory ethics approval).
9. Short CV/bio-data of applicant and of the Guide.
10. For the selected theses/projects, copies of Aadhaar and PAN cards as well as complete bank account details of the Guide will be required after the sanction letter is issued.

Review and selection process

- All eligible applications received till the **closing dates** (28th Feb and 31st Aug for the two rounds per year respectively) shall undergo scientific review by an ISHBT Selection Committee.
- This Selection Committee shall ordinarily consist of President, President Elect, Secretary, Editor-in-Chief, Dean (ICH) and Secretary (ICH). It may additionally include other EC members and/or a separate designated sub-committee may be constituted by ISHBT. The above members may co-opt any further experts that they deem essential to evaluate the proposals received.
- Members of the Selection Committee shall recuse themselves from appraisal where there is a conflict of interest.
- The final list of selected applicants shall be approved by the competent ISHBT authority or EC
- All applicants will be informed of the outcome of their application by email. Successful applicants shall receive a formal Sanction Letter.

Scoring domains

The detailed scoring rubric may be finalized separately, but may include the research thesis':

- Relevance to hematology.
- Scientific merit and originality.
- Clarity of objectives.
- Appropriateness of methodology and analysis plan.
- Feasibility within time and budget.
- Ethical adequacy.
- Expected academic or clinical impact.
- [Only if the committee asks for a presentation/interview] Quality of presentation and ability to defend the research.

Per-institution distribution

A cap may be applied per institution to improve national distribution of awards.

1. Undergraduate (UG) and MD students: Maximum 2 theses from the same institute per year.
2. DM/DrNB students: Maximum 2 theses from the same institute per year.

Nature and quantum of financial support

1. Undergraduate (UG) students: up to 10 awards per year, maximum of Rs 50,000 per award.
2. MD students: up to 10 awards per year, maximum Rs 1,00,000 per award.
3. DM/DrNB students: up to 5 awards per year, maximum Rs 1,00,000 per award.

NOTE:

- These are maximum ceilings, and ISHBT may sanction the full amount or a lower amount based on budget justification and committee recommendation.
- Requests for enhancement of grant numbers or amount over and above the limits defined above shall not be entertained.
- The thesis/project may have a higher budget, however, the ISHBT will then fund partially as per the maximum amount defined above.

Allowable expenditure

Subject to institutional rules, the following expenses are permitted if directly related to the approved thesis:

- Consumables and laboratory reagents.
- Diagnostic or specialized tests not otherwise funded.
- Data collection and data entry costs.
- Software essential for thesis execution or analysis.
- Field travel or local travel directly related to data/sample collection.
- Publication-related expenses.
- Thesis-related manpower, if specifically justified and approved.

Non-permissible expenditure

Unless specifically approved, major capital equipment purchase, personal devices, non-thesis hospitality expenditure and travel shall not be allowed.

Fund release mechanism

The grant shall ordinarily be released in two installments:

- The first installment (50%) will be released after selection and completion of required formalities, including submission of undertakings and ethics approval as applicable.
- The second installment (50%) shall be released after the receipt of the satisfactory interim report after 3 months in the case of MBBS or 1 year in the case of MD/DM grants respectively. The selection committee must review and approve the progress report before release of the second grant.
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Payment route

Funds shall be released through electronic bank transfer to the Guide who is an ISHBT member only.

Financial accountability, Monitoring and progress reporting

- Grant funds must be used strictly for the approved thesis purpose.
- Proper accounts, bills, vouchers, and utilization records must be maintained.
- ISHBT may require a utilization certificate and statement of expenditure at the time of second installment and/or thesis closure.
- Any unspent balance must be returned or adjusted as directed by ISHBT.
- Grant awardees shall submit progress report / updates in the format prescribed by ISHBT: Yearly in case of MD/DM, and at 3-months for MBBS candidate.
- ISHBT may request clarification, modifications, or additional documents during the thesis period.

Change in protocol, guide, institution, or budget

- Any major change in title, objectives, methodology, sample size, study site, Guide, budget head, or host institution must be reported to ISHBT in writing.
- Such changes shall require prior approval when they materially affect the scientific, ethical, or financial basis of the sanctioned thesis.

- Change of institution or withdrawal from course may lead to termination or recovery proceedings, depending on the circumstances.

Completion and deliverables

The following documents must be sent to the ISHBT Secretary at the end of the grant:

- Thesis/dissertation submission proof
- Soft copy of the final thesis/ project report.
- A 2-page summary of the thesis/project (single-spaced font size 12, Times New Roman)
- Manuscript submission proof and, preferably, publication arising from the work.

IMPORTANT: ISHBT support must be explicitly acknowledged in the thesis as well as all resulting posters, presentations, abstracts, and publications.

Non-compliance, misconduct, and recovery

- Misuse of funds, plagiarism, fabricated or falsified data, non-submission of required reports, or breach of ethical requirements may result in cancellation of the award.
- ISHBT may withhold further installments, seek return of released funds, and debar the applicant and/or Guide from future applications, and decide on withholding future financial support for the institution from the ISHBT for a period determined by the EC.
- If the student leaves the course before completion, the amount may be recovered in full or in part depending on the circumstances and EC decision.

Administrative authority

- ISHBT shall issue the call, receive applications, coordinate review, communicate decisions, and maintain records.
- The Selection Committee shall also oversee policy decisions, selection, and dispute resolution.
- Authorship disputes, if any, shall remain the responsibility of the applicant and host institution, but ISHBT may seek documentation before recognizing outputs under the scheme.
- Interpretation of this SOP shall rest with ISHBT, subject to EC approval where required.

The following documents are available as annexures to the final SOP:

- Application form including thesis protocol and budget sheet and justification form.
- Student undertaking.
- Guide undertaking.
- Institutional endorsement format.
- Progress report
- Utilization certificate / statement of expenditure format.

CONTACT DETAILS:

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