

Interview process



National Centre for Biological Sciences &
The Institute for Stem Cell Biology & Regenerative Medicine

Dear Students,

I write to extend a warm welcome on behalf of the community at NCBS and inStem. The call letter sent separately to you carries details on the dates, reimbursements and travel to NCBS. This handbook will familiarise you with the actual interview process, and would also be meaningful to students eventually joining the program. We hope that the experience will be enriching for you and look forward to seeing you on our campus.

Additional information on all laboratories and the programs on offer are available on the websites www.ncbs.res.in; www.instem.res.in.

With best wishes

Mukund Thattai
Head, Academics

Graduate studies at NCBS and InStem

PhD & Integrated-PhD programmes

NCBS offers a graduate programme leading to the award of a PhD degree to students who hold a Masters degree in a Basic Science or a Bachelors degree in an Applied Science such as Medicine, Engineering etc. The NCBS Integrated-PhD programme seeks students with an excellent academic record at the B.Sc. level, strongly motivated to pursue a career in research. A small number of students may be appointed to our M.Sc. by Research programme, and provided salary support on individual PI grants. Entry to this M.Sc. programme is via the wait list of the Integrated-PhD programme.

inStem offers a graduate programme leading to the award of a PhD degree to students who hold a Masters degree in a Basic Science or a Bachelors degree in Medicine.

Students register for a PhD typically 1.5 to 2 years after the date of joining, once they have met course requirements and passed a comprehensive examination. Students enrolled in the graduate programme at NCBS are registered at TIFR Mumbai, and enrolled at inStem are registered at Manipal University.

While most of the students in our graduate program have their primary degree in the Life Sciences, both NCBS and inStem welcome students with backgrounds outside of the Life Sciences. Students with a primary degree in Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics, Computer Science, or Engineering are encouraged to explore the exciting possibilities of doing research in cutting-edge problems in biology.

Academic Office

All queries should be addressed to phd@ncbs.res.in.

Matters related to the interviews are coordinated by the Academic Office. Ms. K. S. Vishlakshi is the primary contact for all correspondence related to selection and joining the programme.

All queries related to the interviews should be directed to phd@ncbs.res.in. Please do not call unless there is an emergency, and do not contact our faculty for information regarding the interviews.

In case of medical emergencies or clashes with exams or other interviews, suitably justified requests for rescheduling within the assigned durations of the Interviews may be submitted to phd@ncbs.res.in with the subject line Name_GS2017_date change.

Selection Process

Candidates are invited to apply in response to advertisements appearing in national newspapers in September every year. Candidates shortlisted on the basis of their performance in the Joint Graduate Entrance Exam in Biology and Interdisciplinary Life Sciences Exam (JGEEBILS) are invited to submit their biodata, research proposals, and letters of recommendation. These materials are used to shortlist candidates for interviews in Bangalore. Students who qualify in the TIFR Physics or Chemistry exams may also be invited to submit their applications to NCBS if they have indicated an interest in the Life Sciences. Interviews for the PhD and Integrated-PhD programmes are done in two rounds. Final offers are made on the basis of the performance in these interviews. We do not operate a cutoff based on the number of candidates, we only score on the merit of each candidate.

Note that the Department of Biological Sciences of TIFR Mumbai (DBS), as well as all the partner institutes participating in the JGEEBILS system, make offers independently. It is therefore possible that some candidates are offered admission at multiple locations. Candidates must accept the offer at only one centre.

Interviews

Please do not prepare for the interviews by memorising material! We are interested in your grasp of basics, your breadth of knowledge, and your ability to solve problems. Students with backgrounds outside of life sciences can mention this to their panel, we will ensure that an expert is available to interview candidates in their area of primary expertise.

Candidates must report by 7:45 AM on the first day of the interviews. There is a short session on the morning of the first day to orient you to the selection process and assign students to various panels. Our student volunteers will guide you through the process and help you find the location where your interview will be conducted.

The first round is a 20 minute interview with a 3 member panel. Candidates will be questioned in their basic understanding of Biology, Chemistry or Physics as well as quantitative and reasoning skills. The committee will probe your understanding of concepts taught in high school and at the undergraduate level. Based on performance in the first round, students are shortlisted for the second round. The second round is a 40 minute interview with a 4 member panel. This round will probe your depth or understanding and the ability to apply the knowledge of an area of special interest. Often the statement of purpose in the application package, or a candidate's research experience if they have had some, is used as a basis of questioning. The final list is based on performance in both rounds of the interview, which is announced at the conclusion of the interview process.

Overseas candidates

We invite applications from students enrolled outside the Indian Subcontinent for their undergraduate studies. The entrance test may be waived for overseas applicants who are unable to travel to India to take the JGEEBILS exam. However, students who would like to be considered for the graduate programme at NCBS/inStem are encouraged to write Head Academics or the Academic Office before November each year.

The Academic Office will assist you with the submission of an application package and the subsequent steps in the selection process. In some instances we offer the option to interview students via Skype/video conference if shortlisted for the interviews. If selected to the programme students are expected to join on August 1st or at the earliest possible date thereafter.

There are specific requirements for travel and visa documents for foreign nationals which have to be completed prior to arrival at NCBS/inStem. The Academic Office coordinates with the establishment office at NCBS/inStem to assist students through this process.

Accommodation and meals

Candidates are expected to make their own arrangements for stay during interviews, as we do not provide accommodation. Information regarding short-term leased accommodation and hotels close to our campus is provided in this brochure. NCBS/inStem will not act as an intermediary in these arrangements. Please do not forward requests for Guest House accommodation via members of the academic or non-academic staff during the period of the interviews.

Meals (breakfast, lunch and tea) are served to candidates on all days of the Interviews. There is no charge for this service. On the final day, all students shortlisted for second round interviews are invited to dinner with the NCBS faculty. Accompanying persons may purchase food at the cafeteria and canteen on the campus, which operate at set times. If staying on for dinner, please inform the canteen management at lunch time as dinner service is limited on campus.

Materials you should bring to the interviews

You **MUST** carry: Your call letter; proof of ID (university ID, PAN card, or government-issued ID); copy of ticket. The TA/DA form must be downloaded from our website and filled out. This should be submitted anytime on the first day of interviews. This is applicable only for candidates living outside Bangalore. A copy of your ticket is required to process the reimbursement, which will be given to you on the second day of the Interviews. Air travel is reimbursed to the extent indicated in the letter from NCBS. The incoming boarding pass has to be submitted to process reimbursement. Students traveling by bus are required to present copies of tickets or proof of the incoming journey.

Acceptance of the offer

A formal offer to join the programme will reach you within 15 days from the date of the interview. You are expected to inform us about your acceptance of the offer or otherwise by the date specified in the letter.

Accommodation for graduate students

NCBS and inStem offer accommodation to all students selected on the graduate programme. Students on the main lists of the PhD and Int-PhD have priority, followed by PhD students on grants and the MSc students. Rooms are allotted only after students arrive on campus and cannot be reserved. Rooms are allotted only after the submission of a joining report and completing administrative formalities in August.

Orientation and Rotations

New students join on August 1st. All new students must participate in the Orientation Programme. During the programme, sessions are arranged with faculty members who describe work ongoing in their laboratories. The programme also includes sessions with individuals who manage Research, Technical and Administrative Services on the campus. Students are guided through procedures such as the completion of the mandatory medical test and administrative formalities towards joining in the course of this program. Administrative staff will assist you in this. Additional information on rotations, courses etc. will be provided during the Orientation Programme. Laboratory allotments for graduate studies are ONLY made after the completion of laboratory rotations. No student in the graduate programme is exempt from laboratory rotations.

Hotels

Stayafford Service Apartment, No. 1629, C Block, Sahakar Nagar, Bangalore 92. Contact Mr. Santosh.
M: 9880194240

Satya Comforts Service Apartments, B-31, Chitrakut Century, Behind North Side Hospital, Sahakar Nagar, Bangalore. Contact Ms. Annapurna.
M: 9980101881 T: 08042031881/32951881 E: satyacomforts@hotmail.com

The Royale Senate, No 24, Bellary Road, Hebbal, Bangalore 56002424.
T: 080 23439860 E: info@theroyalesenate.com

Chairman's Resort, #14/1, Kodigehalli Main Road, Sahakarnagar, Bangalore 560092.
T: 080-40703703, 23546162 M: +919980269978

Narayana Comforts, No. 9/9, Kendriya Vihar Apts, Bb Rd, Yelahanka, Bangalore 560064.
Shreyas Residency 9/8 N.H 7 B.B Road, Amanikere, Yelahanka, Bangalore. Contact: Subhash Chandra.
M: +91 9886217208

Royal Orchid Resort & Convention Centre Allalassandra, Bellary Road, Yelahanka, Near Jakkur Flying Club, Bangalore 560 065.
T: 080 2856 0668 E: rooms@royalorchidhotels.com

Directions to campus

We are located to the north of Bangalore, on the way to the International Airport. From Mekhri Circle proceed north. DO NOT get onto the elevated highway to the airport, stay on the service road. The L&T factory is 8 km from Mekhri Circle after the Hebbal flyover on the left hand side of the road. Turn left after the L&T factory into GKVK campus. Take the next available left, which is after about one and half km, and proceed to the T-junction. Here you will see signs to NCBS. Take the left turn to reach the Academic Block.

