



Ehsaas Undergraduate Scholarships Policy

Introduction

The objective of Ehsaas Scholarships is to ensure that no eligible student is deprived of higher education because of financial need.

Justification

Education beyond grade 12 is one of the surest ways of rising out of poverty. However, access to higher education is itself distributed very unevenly. For example, only 0.4% of the children from the lowest income quintile (from the relevant age cohort) are enrolled in higher education institutions, which is far below the national average of 9%. Ehsaas scholarships aim to eliminate this source of unequal access.

Unlike past scholarships that were aimed at MS or PhD programs, Ehsaas Scholarships focus on the most critical segment, namely the 4-year undergraduate program, which contributes the most to income potential.

Eligibility

All students in Pakistan who are admitted to a four-year degree program in an HEC-recognized public sector university or its affiliated college, with family income below a poverty threshold (to be fixed every year by the Ehsaas Scholarships Steering Committee) are eligible to receive the scholarship.

Among the eligible students, scholarships will be awarded on merit.

50 per cent of the scholarships are reserved for female students.

The program is open to students in all major fields of education, namely agriculture, arts and humanities, business education, engineering, medical, physical sciences, and social sciences.

The continuation of scholarship in future years will depend upon the maintenance of academic performance.

In the initial years of operation, the program will reach 50,000 students. It will be expanded with support from the Ehsaas program as well as other federal and provincial government entities and other donors.

Terms and Procedures

Scholarships will cover tuition and other fees, plus a stipend to cover essential expenses.

The program will be overseen by the Ehsaas Scholarships Steering Committee, co-chaired by Chairman HEC and Chairperson BISP.

All participating universities will be required to establish scholarship offices and scholarship award committees (if such institutions do not exist already) in order to administer the program in a transparent, equitable, and efficient manner.

An Ehsaas Scholarships Portal (<http://ehsaas.hec.gov.pk>) has been established to receive applications from registered undergraduate students at all public sector universities. In case of difficulty in uploading supporting documents, hard copies may be submitted to the financial aid offices, who will make arrangements for uploading them. The applications will be considered only when all materials are properly uploaded on the national portal.

HEC as well as all participating universities will announce the scholarships and invite applications, together with necessary background documents, i.e., grade sheets, income or salary statements of the applicants' families, household expenditures, type of accommodation, and type and value of physical assets, if any.

The university's scholarships award committee will make provisional decisions on the basis of documents received, and recommend them for ratification by the program steering committee. The provisional decisions will be confirmed after formal ratification as well as follow up scrutiny, including income verification, verification of supporting documents, and personal interviews by the scholarship award committee.

The disbursement of the scholarship will take place directly from the fund. The stipend will be deposited electronically into the bank accounts of the student, while tuition and fees will be paid directly to the participating university. All recipients will be required to open bank accounts.

HEC and BISP have set up a joint M&E framework to ensure that the programs are running in a transparent, equitable, and accountable manner. The M&E system will report directly to the Ehsaas Scholarship Steering Committee.