CCRAS – STUDENTSHIP PROGRAMME FOR AYURVEDA RESEARCH KEN (SPARK)

CENTRAL COUNCIL FOR RESEARCH IN AYURVEDIC SCIENCES

MINISTRY OF AYUSH, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

STUDENTSHIP PROGRAM FOR AYURVEDA RESEARCH KEN (SPARK)

1) Background

1.1. The Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS) has initiated the STUDENTSHIP PROGRAM FOR AYURVEDA RESEARCH KEN (SPARK)" in order to promote interest and aptitude for research among Ayurveda undergraduates. The main objective of this program is to provide an opportunity to undergraduate Ayurveda students to familiarize themselves with research methodology and techniques undertaking short duration independent projects. This may inculcate research aptitude among them and also serve as an incentive for them to take up research as a career in the future. The Guide/ Institution must provide the student with all facilities for carrying out research. A total of 300 studentships per annum are approved, however, the number may vary as per the approval of the Competent Authority.

1.2. The value of the studentship will be *Rs.25,000/- per month* for *two months duration (Total Rs.50,000/- only)* and is meant to be a stipend for the student. This is paid only after completion of research and approval of final report. Costs of research must be borne by Institution/Medical College where research is conducted. CCRAS institutes may be approached by the Guide/student for any technical guidance in formulation and execution of research proposals. A Certificate of Recognition will be awarded to both the student and their research guide upon successful completion of the research project. The certificate will be formally issued and posted to Principal's office after 6-8 months on completion of research.

2) Eligibility

2.1. This program is only for interested Bachelor of Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery (BAMS) students [1st year to 4th year (before appearing in 4th year final exams)] studying in Ayurvedic Medical recognized by NCISM, before they appear in their final exams and therefore, interns/ PG students are not eligible to apply.

2.2. The student must carry out the research in his/ her own medical college under the guide who is regular faculty of the medical college. Only permanent full time faculty members working in any of the Department of the Medical College where the student is enrolled can act as the guide. Part time consultants/visiting faculty/ residents/ Tutors/ PG students cannot be the guide.

2.3. Only two students will be allowed to work under one guide. Two or more students are not permitted to work on the same topic in a group. Proposals submitted on the same topic by different students are liable to be rejected outright. The student may have one Guide. However, the help in the Research Work may be taken from other departments/ organizations as per need and their consent, but for any correspondence, responsibility/recognition/certification only the name of the Guide will be taken into consideration.

2.4. Only Indian National students who are studying in recognized Ayurvedic medical colleges of India can apply. *NRIs & Students from foreign institutes are not eligible for this program.*

2.5. One student can apply in any year of his undergraduate tenure but the studentship can be awarded only two times in different years to one student subject to selection of his application on merits.

3) Procedure

3.1. Students are requested to visit CCRAS SPARK website (http://spark.ccras.org.in/) and comply with instructions updated from time to time about SPARK program. There is a fully dedicated online portal for this program. No hard copies have to be submitted.

3.2. The student along with the guide is required to register online on CCRAS website (https://spark.ccras.org.in/) from the date of Notification i.e., 15th October and then submit the application form and proposal with the requisite documents on the online portal by 15th November; which will be screened and evaluated by the Council as per timeline given in the Portal. Result of selected students will be announced by 15th January and list of selected students will be displayed on the website. The selected student is expected to complete the project by 30th April and submit the final report online by 31st May till 5:00 P.M. The list of SPARK Awardees will be declared by 31st July on the CCRAS Website and SPARK Portal, subject to approval of his/her report. The student will be awarded stipend and a certificate by 14th August after receiving the online feedback.

3.3. The Guide must take overall responsibility for conducting the Research Project, Preparation and Submission of the monthly progress report and Final report along with the required enclosures within the stipulated time period.

3.4. One guide can only register for maximum two students and one student can apply only for one subject. The student can apply only for the subject of pursuing Year/ Professional of BAMS. The Guide should be of the subjects of the same Year/ Professional of the student.

3.5. **Only those proposals will be considered for further evaluation which are reviewed and recommended by the College Screening Committee and endorsed from the Head of Institute (Principal) in prescribed format after duly abiding by the 10% annual UG sanctioned strength clause for e.g., if a college has 100 UG seats annual intake, the college can send only 10 proposals for SPARK. Since BAMS students are not authorized to use interventions, the clinical proposals should not be based on use of Interventions by the student.**

3.6. The selected students by the College/ Institution screening committee will submit the proposal online along with the forwarding letter of the College/Institution authority duly signed and stamped by the Principal/ Director/Dean of the College/ Institution on the letter head addressed to DG, CCRAS, New Delhi in the prescribed format as available on the SPARK portal.

3.7. Selection of the candidates for award of research studentship will be done on the basis of two criteria, first on the total marks index (30%) in the previous year exam or in 10+2 in case of 1st year student and second (70%) after technical evaluation of the research plan on merits by a panel of experts in the CCRAS. If students are discovered to be falsifying the total marks index by inputting incorrect marks/percentage, their proposals will be automatically rejected by the integrated Spark Portal functionality.

3.8. The decision of the Council in regard to selection of students will be final. Requests for reconsideration will not be entertained and reasons for rejection of applications for award of studentship will not be provided.

3.9. The Guide of the student should obtain a clearance from the Institutional Ethics Committee (IEC) if the proposal involves research on human participants and from Institutional Animal Ethics Committee (IAEC) if the work involves use of animals. The IEC/ IAEC approval should be obtained any time before beginning of actual research work (even before the registration) so that final report may be submitted within stipulated time. The certificate may be submitted either along with proposal or with the report. Informed consent is to be obtained for research on human participants. For more information please refer to the Handbook on ICMR Ethical Guidelines 2018 and National Ethical Guidelines for Biomedical Research Involving Children, ICMR 2017.

3.10. The Guide of the student will ensure for CTRI Registration to be done for Clinical Studies.

4) Application Process

Submission of SPARK application/proposal is a two-step process:

4.1. REGISTRATION OF GUIDE/STUDENT DETAILS FOR SPARK, FROM 15th OCTOBER TO 15TH NOVEMBER

4.1.1. **Part-A: <u>Particulars of Guide</u>:** Firstly, the registration process for the SPARK program begins with the Guide Registration, followed by the Student Registration on the designated SPARK Portal. It is essential that complete and accurate details are provided during registration, including the Individual's Full name, His/her Designation, His/her department, affiliated medical college, and a Valid government-issued ID such as AADHAAR, PAN Card, Driving License, or Voter ID. Additionally, current contact information, including a functional mobile number and email address, must be submitted. *The Guide should take responsibility for ensuring a concise and achievable research topic for the studentship, ensuring that it can be completed within the stipulated timeframe without requiring an extension Under the SPARK program, each Guide may recommend proposals for up to two students per academic year.*

4.1.2. The Guide is encouraged to assist the student in selecting a clear, appropriate research topic that aligns with the guidelines of their respective College's Research Cell and secures approval from the IEC or IAEC, if applicable. Once the project title is entered and the proposal is submitted on the SPARK portal, it cannot be modified—even if the proposal is subsequently selected.

4.1.3. **Part-B: <u>Student Details</u>**

(i) Interested students should register their Mobile No. and e-mail address and other details carefully from **15th of October** onwards on the SPARK Portal.

(ii) Each SPARK application and research proposal should be submitted online along with duly attested **Application Attestation Form (AAF)** as available in the prescribed format on the SPARK Portal.

(iii) The Application attestation form should be filled up, signed, attested, scanned and saved as a PDF file. Online submissions of application/ research proposal will not be accepted unless accompanied by **Application Attestation Form (AAF).**

(iv) A student can submit one proposal on selected topic. In case a student submits more than one proposal, all the proposals will be automatically rejected.

(v) If the student is selected by the College or Institution's Screening Committee, they must submit their project proposal **along with a forwarding letter** from the College. This letter should be on the official letterhead, signed and stamped by the Principal/Director, or Dean, and addressed to the DG, CCRAS, New Delhi. Be sure to use the prescribed format **as available on the SPARK portal**—**uploading this letter is mandatory**, or the project may be rejected by the system.

4.2. SUBMISSION OF PROPOSAL ALONG WITH OTHER DETAILS BETWEEN 15th OCTOBER TO 15th NOVEMBER

4.2.1. Part-C: SPARK Application/Proposal

The proposal should describe a brief work plan of proposed research and also clearly stating the methodology having proper sample size with appropriate statistical methodology, which will be used along with implications of the research study. The student may include the case report form, informed consent form or any other questionnaire also as a part of project proposal or can submit them as separate attachments under the field "**ANY OTHER FORMS"** on the SPARK Portal. Students should take proper advise of a statistician for preparation of proposals having statistical applications and should provide sample size calculation.

The proposal should be prepared in brief with the following sections-

i. **References ID** – Provide only the reference SPARK ID (Generated upon registration) for identification on the top of the proposal. Identifying information like name of the student/ guide, contact details like contact numbers/ email addresses should not be provided in the proposal for unbiased review.

ii. **Title** - Title should be appropriate, short and relevant to research proposal. It should make the central objectives and variables of the study clear to the reviewer. **(Up to 25 words)**

iii. **Introduction** - The purpose of an introduction is to provide the rationale behind the work, so that the reviewer may understand and appreciate the objectives. Please describe the importance (significance) of the study. Defend the model- Provide a rationale and describe the reasoning that led you to selecting them. Briefly describe the experimental design and how it accomplished the stated objectives. Describe the situation and specify clearly the gaps in the existing knowledge and/ or controversy and

inconclusive evidence. The discussion should be supported with appropriate references**. (Up to 300 words)**

iv. **Objectives** - Should specify what kind of knowledge the study is expected to obtain. It should give a clear notion of what is to be described, determined, identified, compared or confirmed. Hypothesis may be stated and objectives should be specific, to the point and achievable**. (Up to 100 words)**

v. **Methodology** - Describes all the procedures that will be used to achieve the objectives and justify the study design including any techniques and procedures to be used. This may include: type of study and study design, study population, sample size and selection criteria, Proposed intervention (if applicable), Data collection procedures & instruments used, quality control, confidentiality, plan of analysis/ statistical tools, ethical considerations with all required forms. **(Up to 800 words)**

vi. **Implications** - Describes what is expected to be achieved or gained from the proposed research. This could be given in terms of knowledge gained by the student or in terms of scientific advancement. **(Up to 100 words)**

vii. **References** - Provide appropriate references from published journals/ literature supporting the proposed research. **(Up to 300 words)**

viii. **Exclusions of Identity** - The proposal/ project should not have any identifying information of the student or guide or college for unbiased review by reviewers. The following information should be removed from the SPARK proposal before online submission:

- **Name of the Student/ Guide/ College.**
- **Address/ Contact details.**
- **Telephone No.**
- **E-mail IDs.**
- **Or any other identity.**

4.2.2. Part-D: <u>Enclosures/ Attachments</u>

The enclosures may be scanned and saved as PDF file for submission. Please ensure that the file size should not exceed 1 MB.

i. **Compulsory attachment:** Submission of '**Application Attestation Form**' as per format provided is compulsory with the application. The blank form can be downloaded from website and this has to be filled in and passport size photograph should be pasted by the student. This may then be signed by the Guide and attested and forwarded by the Head of the Department and the Head of the Institution/ Principal/ Dean of the Medical College (with stamp/ seal of the institution). Once the Attestation Form is signed by all, the student must scan it and save it as a PDF file. This must be uploaded at the time of ONLINE submission. **Application will not be**

accepted unless accompanied with the duly filled up Application Attestation Form (AFF).

ii. **Optional Enclosures:** IEC and IAEC submission at the time of application submission is optional however mandatory along with the final report. Student is required to obtain clearance from Institutional Ethics Committee (IEC) or an Institutional Animal Ethics Committee (IAEC) for the research. However, submission of ethics committee approval at this stage is optional. In case IEC approval is not obtained at the time of submission of application, kindly do not submit any other document instead as submission of wrong documents can lead to disqualification. In addition, if there are plans to use an Informed Consent Form or any Case Study Form or Questionnaire, the same may also be enclosed. Please note that submission of IEC/ IAEC certificate is mandatory at the time of final report submission. Any clinical/experimental research carried out without appropriate IEC/IAEC approval, respectively, will be automatically rejected.

5) Declaration of Result

5.1.   The selection of the candidates for award of research studentship will be done after technical evaluation of the research plan by a panel of experts.

5.2.   The results will be displayed by 15th January and the list of selected students will be displayed on Council's Website and SPARK Portal.

5.3.   Selection letters will be issued to the concerned Colleges, endorsing a copy to the student/ guide. The students should print out the results / list of selected students from the website for future reference.

5.4.   The decision of the Council in regard to selection of students will be final.

5.5.   The decision of the Council regarding selection of students will be final since the selection of proposals is based on the merits of the proposals and last qualifying marks hence any query regarding the rejection of the submitted proposal will not be entertained.

6) General Instructions

6.1.   Students are requested to visit CCRAS SPARK website (https://spark.ccras.org.in/) and comply with instructions updated from time to time about SPARK program.

6.2.   **Only those proposals will be considered for further evaluation which are recommended by the College Screening Committee and endorsed from the Head of Institute after duly abiding by the *10% annual UG sanctioned strength clause for e.g., if a college has 100 UG seats annual intake, they can send only 10 proposals for SPARK.***

6.3.   The selected students by the College/ Institution screening committee will submit the proposal along with the forwarding letter of the College/ Institution authority duly signed & stamped by the Principal/ Director/ Dean of the College/ Institution on the letter head addressed to DG, CCRAS, New Delhi in the prescribed format.

6.4.   The last date for submitting Online Proposal Applications and other enclosures is *15th of November*. The student should have all documents ready before filling up online

application form (Research proposal/ attestation form/ other enclosures like College Approval Letter, IEC approval, CTRI, ICF, Case record forms etc.).

6.5. Scanned documents i.e., Application/ Report Attestation Form, Ethics Committee Clearance or other files viz., Case record, Questionnaire etc. should be submitted in readable PDF file (Text PDF not converted from image) only and other formats viz. MS Word, JPEG etc. will not be accepted.

6.6. **Guides/Students are requested to register on SPARK portal well in advance and not to wait for the last date to avoid the last-minute rush.**

6.7. The Council will not be responsible in case the student is unable to submit the proposal/ project in time due to any reason whatsoever and request for extension of last date will not be considered.

6.8. After completion of the project under SPARK, CCRAS and Ministry of AYUSH shall not be responsible to provide / ensure any kind of paid or honorary, part or full-time employment to the student in the Council or Ministry.

6.9. Guide may be changed only if required due to any unavoidable circumstances. Change of guide, in any case, must be intimated by email to CCRAS at: ccras.spark@gmail.com /spark.ayu@ccras.nic.in within 15 days with the acceptance of new guide under approval of Head of Intuition/Principal.

6.10. All disputes pertaining to this program shall fall within the jurisdiction of Delhi only.

6.11. All correspondence will be sent on e-mail and/or College address only.

6.12. Only online proposal will be entertained which has to be submitted on the SPARK portal itself. Neither physical form nor proposal forwarded via the email will be accepted. Still, if received it will be deemed cancelled.

6.13. **Registration by the Guide should be followed by Registration by the Student** *(One guide can only register for maximum two students and one student can apply only for one subject. The student can apply only for the subject of pursuing Year/ Professional of BAMS.)*

6.14. The Guide should be of the subjects of the same Year/ Professional of the student. The student and the guide should not be in blood relation.

6.15. For any further clarifications applicant may contact on given e-mail using Official e-mail id of their Academic Institute and the Reference ID (SPARK Id) in all the e-mail correspondence must be quoted for quick reference:

Director General
(Kind attention to SPARK Team)
Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences
(CCRAS), Ministry of AYUSH, Govt. of India
JLNBCHA Bhawan, No.61-65, Institutional Area,
Opp. 'D' Block Janakpuri, New Delhi-110058
E-mail: ccras.spark@gmail.com , spark.ayu@ccras.nic.in
Telephone: 01128525031

NOTE - Calls shall be entertained in office hours i.e. 9.30 am to 5.30 pm from Monday to Friday Only.