

INDIAN STATISTICAL INSTITUTE

PROCEEDINGS

68th MEETING OF THE ACADEMIC COUNCIL OF THE INSTITUTE

HELD ON NOVEMBER 14, 2018

Members/Invitees Present in the Meeting			
Srl. No.	Name	Srl. No.	Name
1.	Sanghamitra Bandyopadhyay	22..	Md. Zafar Anis
2.	Amita Pal	24.	Mahuya Datta
3.	Antar Bandyopadhyay	25.	Indranil Mukhopadhyay
4.	Prasun Das	26.	Subir Ghosh
5.	Bimal Roy	27.	Preeti Parashar
6.	Tarun Kabiraj	28.	Banasri Basu
7.	Krishnendu Mukhopadhyay	29.	Dhurjati P. Sengupta
8.	Sandip Das	30.	Amlan Banerjee
9.	Nabanita Das	31.	Supratik Pal
10.	Mridul Nandi	32.	Nityananda Sarkar
11.	Guruprasad Kar	33.	Amita Majumder
12.	Partha Sarathi Ghosh	34.	Bhabatosh Chanda
13.	Rajat Subhra Hazra	35.	Rajat Kr. De
14.	Arup K. Das	36.	S.M. Srivastava
15.	Samarjit Bose	37.	Pradipta Bandyopadhyay
16.	Sourabh K. Ghosh	38.	Dilip Saha
17.	Subhamoy Mitra	39.	Ashish Ghosh
18.	Susmita Sur Kolay	40.	Goutam Mukherjee
19.	Subhas Chandra Nandy	41.	Swagato Kumar Roy
20.	Dipti Prasad Mukherjee	42.	Biswabrata Pradhan
21.	Nandini Das	43.	

AGENDA ITEM 1.1

Opening remarks by the Chairperson of the Academic Council of the institute.

The Dean welcomed everybody to the 68th Academic Council meeting and requested the Chairperson to deliver the welcome speech. The Chairperson began by drawing attention to the scarce attendance and suggested shifting to a smaller venue henceforth, to avoid using such huge infrastructure for a handful of attendees.

Academic calendar falling behind schedule

Following this the Chairperson brought up the problems faced by the Dean's office during examinations, resulting from the delay in submission of exam schedules and marks. She requested the teachers to stick to the academic calendar henceforth.

Academic vs. administrative arguments

There was some argument on whether such discussions were under the scope of the meeting. Krishnendu Mukhopadhyay argued that fixing exam schedules and deadlines were strictly administrative issues and should not be discussed in the council. The Chairperson countered this by saying the council meeting was the perfect platform for reiterating administrative and financial matters which involved academia. The Dean suggested that his office could issue a fresh notice regarding the submission deadlines, citing that new teachers may not be aware of the tradition.

Resolution: *It was resolved that the teachers would cooperate with the class teachers to adhere to the schedules of the existing academic calendar.*

AGENDA ITEM 1.2

Confirmation of the proceedings of the 67th meeting of the Academic Council held on September 05, 2018.

A revised draft of the proceedings was circulated and the Dean did not receive any comments on the revised draft. Sourabh Ghosh reminded of a comment by Mahuya Datta and himself on a proposal of M.Tech. (QROR) projects which had 400 marks. The Dean confirmed that he has asked Amitabha to discuss the same with the colleagues and revert, but he was yet to receive any further comment on that.

Resolution: *Since there were no comments on the revised draft, the agenda was considered approved.*

AGENDA ITEM 2 - GROUP A : REPORTING MATTERS.

AGENDA ITEM 2.1 and 2.2 (ANNEXURE 1)

Introduction of the Programmes PGDSMA and Part Time Certificate Course in Statistical Quality Control at ISI Chennai, from the Academic Year 2019-20 .

The Dean informed that the head of the Chennai centre Dr. Sampangi Raman, after a meeting with his colleagues had expressed his interest about introducing the above programmes at the Chennai centre. Both the programs being established programs (PGDSMA being offered in Tezpur and the later in Hyderabad and Bangalore centres) the Dean noted that these could be introduced at Chennai after reporting it in the Academic Council.

Course fee removal

Surajit Pal objected against the removal of course fee from the PGDSMA course in the final proposal. He reminded that other institutes like CMI were charging for similar programs while existing courses like the PGDBA were also not free. The Dean clarified that as discussed with Dr. Raman this being an administrative affair would be discussed later. He said that he was made aware of the issue by the Chennai head, who suggested him to charge for the course to incur certain infrastructural expense.

Sushma Bendre expressed her dismay at the M.Stat. Program being discontinued without any intimation. She also advocated charging course fees to help the institute in revenue generation. The

Dean asked if Chennai was willing to start the programme provided the course fee issue to be considered later. Sushma Bendre said that they agree to start the programme in principle from July 2019.

Change in syllabus and electives

Since the PGDSMA course in Chennai unlike Tezpur was not going to be in association with TCS, Sushma Bendre mentioned that it would require certain syllabus modification. Krishnendu Mukhopadhyay objected to this idea saying two courses with the same name cannot have different syllabus, even if they are being offered at different centres. The Dean replied that the centres would be providing different electives, and thus the syllabus has to vary accordingly.

Sourabh Ghosh was against the idea of varying electives, which he thought would be unfair to the students who won't have access to all the electives owing to their centre of admission. The Chairperson and Dean jointly contradicted this idea, saying this was not a major issue and was inevitable due to varying faculties at the centres. Abhay Bhatt pointed out that the same practise is followed for M.Stat. course as well.

Sushma Bendre requested the Dean to form a committee to discuss issues regarding academics and fee structure for the courses. The Dean urged the centre to form the committee and discuss the academic issues while he said the fees would be decided administratively by the institute. Before wrapping up Krishnendu Mukhopadhyay inquired the Dean if any feasibility study has been done regarding introduction of these courses in Chennai. The Dean confirmed that the Chennai Head has issued an official letter assuring the same.

Resolution : *Both the programmes would be introduced at the Chennai centre from 2019 onwards. The administration would discuss the matter of any course fee introduction for PGDSMA. The Chennai centre is to discuss any syllabus changes to be brought about in comparison to what is being offered at Tezpur.*

AGENDA ITEM 2.3 (ANNEXURE 2)

The revised report of the Committee formed by Office Order No. DS/2018-19/232 dated June 25, 2018 to review the course-work requirements for research Fellows in Computer Science is attached for approval.

Susmita Sur-Kolay pointed out that the initial report was discussed in the last meeting and the resolution stated that it was accepted subject to the suggested modifications regarding the merger of two groups of courses, and the revised report was not required to be produced in the current AC meeting. It was confirmed that the modified report would be enforced from next academic year.

Resolution: *The issue was considered approved and not discussed any further and it would be enforced from the next academic year.*

AGENDA ITEM 2.4 (ANNEXURE 3)

The revised report of the Committee formed by Office Order No. DS/2017-18/971A dated March 23, 2018 to formulate a comprehensive policy regarding sponsorship of candidates to the M.Tech. (CS), M.Tech. (QROR), M.Tech. (CrS) and MS(QMS) of the institute is attached for approval.

Approval status of the proposal

There were some confusion regarding the current approval status of the proposal. The Dean assumed that the proposal was accepted in principle as a revised report was requested in the last AC meeting. Prasun Das added that the revised report was submitted to the Chairperson who had passed it on to the Standing Committee on Admission. But it was established that the revised report was not circulated, following which the Council decided to discuss the revised report in the meeting itself.

Organisation repute and selection procedure

Sushmita Mitra discussed the two main issues that underwent changes in the revised report. The first point (refer point 2 in Annexure 3) was regarding the repute of the organisation of the sponsored candidate. It clarified that the sponsored candidate can only be from government, semi-government, government-aided or private organisations, prohibiting self-sponsored candidates to apply. The second point (No. 8 in Annexure 3) was regarding the selection procedure of sponsored candidates. While some selection criteria were waived for sponsored candidates initially, such had been reverted and the selection procedure now remains the same for all.

Relaxed Cut-off or Longer Merit List

The issue that was discussed intensely was if there should be a relaxed cut-off for sponsored candidates. Mahuya Datta suggested that instead of a relaxed cut-off, they could have a common longer than usual merit following the likes of the JRF programmes. She held that the regular seats would be filled by the top rankers, while the sponsored seats could then be filled by the lower ranking candidates. Sushmita Mitra argued against withdrawing all leverages for sponsored candidates especially during the initial years of the programme. She was apprehensive that such could result in the Institute failing to attract any sponsored candidate, since none might make it into the common merit list. The Chairperson agreed and added that candidates from institutes like DRDO and ISRO has already been tested in their respective fields. Since they may be out of touch with academics it would be unfair gauge such experienced candidates on the same yardstick as the regular ones.

Exclusion of private organisations

The above discussion overlapped with another discussion of whether to incorporate private organisations at this juncture. Mahuya Datta suggested that though the selection criteria may be relaxed for government institutes it must not be so for private ones. The Chairperson entirely questioned the necessity to include private institutes insisting it was better for ISI to take one step at a time. Bhabatosh Chandra backed the idea reminding that the institute has limited experience with sponsored candidates, and thus advocated learning the ropes with government institutes first.

The council agreed to this idea and decided that only government, semi-government and government-aided organisations would be considered. Sushmita Mitra asked if the selection criteria of the non revised report, which waived some examinations for the sponsored candidates can then be

reconsidered. Mahuya Datta objected to this and said there won't be any waiver of examinations but just a relaxed cut-off for sponsored candidates. Bhabatosh Chandra also backed the idea of having a separate merit list for sponsored candidates. Finally it was agreed that the revised proposal holds good except private organisations were to be omitted from it.

Deciding on the cut-offs

Prasun Das inquired about the exact cut-off for the exams. The Dean suggested that there should be a uniform cut-off for all the four programmes. Prasun Das agreed but pointed out that since the parameters are different so cut-off has to be decided on that. Susmita Sur-Kolay requested the Dean to convene a meeting with the Standing Committee on Admission, chairpersons of the M.Tech.(CS & CRS), M.Tech.(QROR), MS(QMS) of the admission test committee 2019 and the chairperson of the committee formed by Office Order No. DS/2017-18/971A dated March 23, 2018, to deliberate on the relaxed cut-offs. Since this cut-off needs to be reflected on the 2019 prospectus Prasun Das urged the Dean to hurry on this, mentioning that the task was already behind schedule.

Questions like determination of tuition fees, kinds of sponsorship, considering hostel facilities came up from Prasun Das and Abhay Bhatt. While the Chairperson duly took note of these, she announced they would be discussed in a separate forum later. The Dean finally asked Prof. Mitra to submit a fresh report incorporating the changes discussed in the meeting.

Resolution : *Sponsored candidates would be selected from government, semi-government and government-aided organisations only. Private organisations were not be considered at this point in time. As mentioned in the revised report, though the selection procedure for sponsored candidates would remain the same and they would have a relaxed cut-off. The Dean would convene a meeting with the Standing Committee on Admission, chairpersons of the M.Tech.(CS & CRS), M.Tech.(QROR), MS(QMS) of the admission test committee 2019 and the chairperson of the committee formed by Office Order No. DS/2017-18/971A dated March 23, 2018. It was also resolved that the tuition fees for the sponsored candidates would be decided administratively later.*

AGENDA ITEM 3 - GROUP B : FOR DISCUSSION & DECISIONS.

AGENDA ITEM 3.1 (ANNEXURE 4)

A Proposal to formulate the procedure to compute final combined marks of candidates with the waiver for JRF (QROR)

The Dean announced that the report was forwarded to the standing committee on admission. Mahuya Datta read out the report which said that external candidates appearing for the JRF(QROR) admission test are hardly being able to secure 50 out of 120, whereas internal candidates are being waived the test and assigned 75 percent marks directly. This is adversely affecting the qualifying chances of the external candidates.

Susmita Sur-Kolay suggested adopting the M.Tech.(CS) admission formula for JRF(QROR) where the range for both the admission test and GATE score is considered. Prasun Das disagreed pointing out the small number of candidates for JRF (QROR) . He argued that external students failing to fare well in the admission test could be no reason to penalize the internal students. He suggested sticking to

the current 75 percent rule. The chairperson somewhat disagreed pointing out that the current policy was obscuring chances even for the external students who were performing distinctively well in the interview. She recommended treating both internal and external students independently at the interview level.

Difficulty level of admission test

Mahuya Datta expressed concerns over the degree of difficulty of the question paper, since none was able to secure beyond fifty marks. Prasun Das concurred and proposed that faculties setting the M.Tech.(QROR) paper to be included in the JRF (QROR) committee, in order to reduce disparity between the difficulty level of the exams. Though he seconded the view of continuing with the 75 percent rule arguing that the incident mentioned in the report was an isolated incident.

Internal candidates choosing to take the admission test

Mahuya Datta queried if an internal candidate chooses to take the admission test, which of the two marks would be considered for such a candidate. Sumitra Purkayastha was quick to point out that the admission test's marks must be considered in such a scenario. If the student secures less than 75% on the same platform with the external candidates, raising his marks to 75% post admission test would be unfair for the external candidates.

Only two seats for JRF (QROR)

Abhay Bhatt claimed that candidates failing to qualify for JRF (QROR) was an issue of the scant number of seats rather than the cut-offs followed. He argued that within ISI, five students from M.Tech. (QROR) and MSQMS would be competing for only two JRF (QROR) seats. Thus external candidates barely stand a chance. He recommended that only the internal top rankers be given the prerogative of an exam waiver, while the rest be asked to take the admission test. But Mahuya Datta pointed out that the admission test is taken long before the internal results are declared.

Sourabh Ghosh queried if any protocol prevents keeping separate minimum cut-offs for different exam components. Mahuya Datta clarified that such provision was there in the policy clarification but suggested against any such implementation in the current year.

Current recommendation

Mahuya Datta read out the current recommendation, which instead of giving a flat 75 percent, suggested using the third quartile of the marks obtained in each paper by external candidates. This would be the weights behind determining the maximum marks to be assigned to the internal candidates. She questioned this formula stating that too many students in the fourth quartile may hamper an internal candidate's chance. She probably mistook the third quartile of marks, for the third quartile of the number of students, as was pointed out by some others.

Resolution: *Since this agenda was taking too long, the Chairperson requested everyone to mail their suggestions to Mahuya Datta. She asked the admission committee, Susmita Sur-Kolay, Prasun Das and Sourabh Ghosh to take everyone's suggestions and come to an informed decision. She suggested to circulate the report, take everyone's views and forward it for approval in two weeks time.*

AGENDA ITEM 3.2 (ANNEXURE 5)

Consideration of possible implementation issues of an approved proposal regarding written test in selection of JRF(CS). Report was placed in 63rd Academic Council dated December 06, 2016 and was accepted by 64th AC Meeting dated January 04, 2017. The report was referred to the standing committee on Admissions for views.

Change in the structure of the JRF(CS) afternoon test

The Dean requested Mahuya Datta to brief on the issue. She mentioned that the second half of the JRF(CS) admission test (CSB) consists of 4 different sections (a) Computer Science (b) Mathematics (c) Physics and (d) Statistics. A candidate is required to answer only of these. (Susmita Sur-Kolay later explained that the JRF(CS) admission committee used to set and evaluate the papers for all these sections. Thus it had a subcommittee comprising of faculties from other JRFs). The JRF(CS) committee had faced some problems owing to the above model (discussed later). They came up with an alternative which brings changes to the model of CSB. The proposal suggests that the JRF(CS) committee now will prepare questions for Section (a) only. The sections (b), (c) and (d) will be identical with part B of the JRF admission tests in Mathematics (MTB), Physics (PHB) and Statistics (STB) respectively. The recommendation would bring changes in the evaluation and paper setting process as well. Instead of the JRF(CS) subcommittee setting and evaluating the Maths, Physics and Statistics papers, the proposed system would require the respective JRF committee to evaluate. No separate question setting was required since papers would be identical to MTB, PHB, and STB. Other aspects of the selection procedure would remain unchanged.

Software implementation issues

The proposal though accepted faced some software implementation issues. The current online portal programme needs to be redesigned to accommodate the aforesaid changes. Hence the standing committee had suggested to form a small committee to oversee the software implementation. They also recommended to first deliberate on the feasibility of this modification with respect to the selection and admission policy. Mahuya Datta recommended to stick to the existing selection policy until the third year of the programme was complete.

Susmita Sur-Kolay briefed on the necessary software modification. She explained that the software programme denotes each academic course by a four lettered code, which is further linked to the test booklets. The JRF(CS) programme was represented by the code JCSX (X being the geographical location). An easy way around would be to use the third letter of the code to denote each of the subjects maths, physics, computer science and statistics. But this would result in four codes for JRF(CS) instead of one and might confuse the applicants. The other option is to populate a secondary field (with all the CSB sections) once JRF(CS) is selected. But this requires approaching the software company.

Effects of the recommendation on selection and admission policy

1) Mahuya Datta pointed out that if the number of papers to be evaluated is too high, it would burden the JRF committees.

2) Sourabh Ghosh pointed out a probable problem that may arise with the JRF(Math) paper. He mentioned that the JRF(Math) had two parts MTA (first half) and MTB (second half). These were

divided into topics, and the topics of the MTB exam may not match with JRF(CS) mathematics topic requirements. Susmita Sur-Kolay assured that the current syllabi of MTB perfectly aligns with the JRF(CS) requirements. But both Sourabh Ghosh and the Dean pointed out that the syllabi of MTB was not fixed and could be changed by the corresponding admission committee. Later Sumitra Purkayastha and Dipti Prasad Mukhopadhyay also asserted that the JRF(CS) pattern must not put restriction on JRF(Math) Paper setting.

Reasons for change in existing policy

1) Susmita Sur-Kolay mentioned that in the current policy examinees could choose the optional section after CSB paper was handed out. Many were avoiding their own subject papers and opting to answer the Math section instead, considering the difficulty level of the papers. She claimed this was adversely affecting the quality of the JRFs being admitted.

2) She added that since the sub-committees under the JRF(CS) committee consisted of merely one faculty, the responsibility of setting the entire question paper was on that member. In comparison the core JRF committees possess better faculty strength.

3) She said that most members of the JRF(CS) sub-committees are also members of the core JRF committees. Hence a faculty of say the JRF(CS) physics committee, was spending more time behind JRF(Physics) paper than JRF(CS) physics section.

She claimed the current recommendation would solve the above problems. She urged to try out the recommendation for one year reminding that the forthcoming policies needed immediate mention in the prospectus. The director endorsed and suggested to try out the recommendation. Prasun Das summed up the process as follows: a) The new policy would require the core JRF committees to set the paper b) The paper would be forwarded to the JRF(CS) committee to include in their test. c) Post exam the JRF(CS) committee would segregate and send back the respective subject papers to the corresponding JRF committees for grading.

Arguments against the recommendation

Mahuya Datta hesitated indicating that transfer of papers between committees was not a common practice. Others pointed out that this would require sending answer scripts not just to different committees but to committees across different geographical locations. The chairperson held that these are mere logistic issues.

Sumitra Purkayastha opposed insisting that the JRF(CS) committee was imposing the responsibility of grading their papers on other JRF committees. The chairperson vigorously contradicted this and stated that such had to be done for the sake of the institute. It was however seen that only the JRF(Math) may have a considerable amount of evaluation to do, while the other subjects would cause no concern. Mahuya Datta advocated a suggestion from the Dean to form an exclusive committee for evaluation purpose. Sourabh Ghosh added that burdening JRF committees could result in further delay of paper submission for the regular programs.

Separate committees for question setting and evaluation

Abhay Bhatt suggested separating the committees for question setting and evaluation. He and Mahuya Datta suggested that if the corresponding JRF committees provides sample answers to the JRF(CS) for evaluation, then the current recommendation can be exercised without burdening the JRF committees. Both the recommendation and the standing committee seemed to agree on this. Anish Sarkar enquired what method would be followed in case of parity in the total marks of the different JRF papers. Susmita Sur-Kolay assured the problem can be handled through scaling.

Providing JRF(Math) candidates the option to join JRF(CS)

Bhabatosh Chandra suggested to give the JRF(Math) candidates the option to join JRF(CS) programme through an interview to be conducted by the JRF(CS) admission committee. Prasun Das immediately pointed out that this may be against the Ph.D.& D.Sc. rule which required candidates to enrol for a programme in order to join it. The Dean contradicted suggesting it could lead to registration problems. Bhabatosh Chandra argued that previously M.Tech. (CS) examinees had the option to join the M.Tech.(QROR) programme through an interview of the QROR committee. Many members argued that implementing this could adversely impact the current selection policy. In the end Rudrapada Sarkar requested the Dean to record his disagreement with the entire proposal.

Resolution:

- 1) *JRF(CS) applicants would write the forenoon test as MMA.*
- 2) *The afternoon test (CSB) will have 4 different sections as before (a) Computer Science (b) Mathematics (c) Physics and (d) Statistics. A candidate can answer only from one of these sections which he has to choose before the exam.*
- 3) *The JRF(CS) Admission test committee will prepare questions for Section (a) only. The sections (b), (c) and (d) respectively will be identical with part B of JRF admission tests in Mathematics (MTB), Physics (PHB) and Statistics (STB).*
- 4) *The papers would be evaluated by the corresponding subject subcommittees within JRF(CS), with the help of sample answers to be provided by the respective JRF committees.*
- 5) *The interviews will be conducted only by the members of the divisions which will admit these JRF students.*
- 6) *Only how the second part of the JRF(Mathematics) exam (MTB) would stay aligned to the JRF(CS) requirement, would need to be resolved.*

AGENDA ITEM 3.3 (ANNEXURE 6)

Proceedings of the meeting of the chairperson and the conveners of the five Ph.D. & D.Sc. Committees the Institute convened by the Dean of Studies, pursuant to a decision taken in the 66th AC Meeting dated March 21, 2018.

Policies for discontinuation /extension of fellowship.

Amita Pal read out the current recommendations detailed in 'Annexure 6' regarding allowing research fellows to rejoin the programme at a later date, after having resigned. Following this Mahuya Datta pointed out the current absence of any formal evaluation system for the JRFs. She requested the Dean to consult the RFAC committees and bring into practise a much needed pass-fail system. She also insisted any such evaluation criteria be uniform across all research committees, though Abhay Bhatt opposed this and suggested to leave such decisions to the individual RFACs. When the Dean queried about existing rules mentioned in the RFAC course works, Mahuya Datta and Sourabh Ghosh confirmed that though examinations are conducted after the first year, no such specific pass-fail system exists after that. This makes discharging a JRF difficult, since ineligibility cannot be explicitly proved with the existing discontinuation rules. Susmita Sur-Kolay substantiated this by reading out the current JRF rule, which vaguely states ' every JRF needs to fulfil the course requirements in a satisfactory manner'. She pointed out that such statements are not specific and also varied significantly between different RFACs. The Dean and Chairperson decided that the issue needs to be discussed, and decided to form a committee consisting of the RFAC chairs to deliberate on the matter. The current recommendations although were approved unanimously.

Direct admission into M.Stat.

Another similar issue discussed was regarding lack of precise rules defining direct admission of B.Stat. graduates into the M.Stat. course. Anish Sarkar mentioned an undesirable incident where severe confusion arose when an otherwise ineligible B.Stat. graduate appeared and cleared the M.Stat. admission test. Sourabh Ghosh pointed out that there were chances that the M.Math. admission criteria may also require similar consideration.

The second issue was regarding protocols guiding admission of students into B-Stream or Non B-Stream of M.Stat. Both Abhay Bhatt and Sourabh Ghosh pointed out that the current practise is to put a B.Stat graduate from ISI in the B-Stream of M.Stat., notwithstanding his procedure of admission. They added that the number of seats in B-stream was not fixed unlike that of Non B-Stream. They observed that though such practises are currently followed, it was necessary to formally state these rules both in the prospectus and the brochure. The Dean duly noted there suggestions.

Resolution: *The current recommendations of 'Annexure 6' were unanimously approved. Decision was taken to form a committee consisting of the RFAC chairs to deliberate on the implementation of specific rules regarding JRF evaluation, criteria of discontinuation of fellowship and criteria of extension of fellowship. The issue regarding laying out a proper set of rules concerning direct admission to M.Stat./M.Math was duly noted.*

AGENDA ITEM 3.4 (ANNEXURE 7 & 8)

Recommendations of the Standing Committee formed by Office Order No. DO/2017/480 dated September 27, 2017 and Office Order No. DO/2017/490 dated October 11, 2017 to formulate and recommend a procedure for admission in the different Academic Programmes of the Institute.

The current standing committee recommendation

The recommendation suggested a common longer merit list, for both with and without external funding. The top rankers would be allotted the ISI funded seats. Candidates Externally funded candidates would be chosen from the lower part of the merit list.

Understanding the scenarios (This part is not an excerpt from the meeting, but written to facilitate understanding of the discussion)

Since ISI can only fund a limited number of research scholars (say 50), but research units have larger JRF requirements, a longer merit list (say 100) is declared. A JRF candidate may secure the following ranks:

1) Within top 50: He qualifies for ISI funding. If he also has an external fellowship he may chose between the two.

2) Between 51 to 100: (This category was the major source of controversy)

A) If they have external fellowship: They get selected and do research via external funding.

B) No external funding: Doesn't get selected.

For easier reference the above candidates are denoted as Type 1, Type 2A and Type 2B below. In the discussion it was assumed that there are 50 ISI funded seats.

It was clarified that top 50 candidates with external funding may choose between ISI and external funding. It was mentioned that such candidates almost always chose the ISI funding owing to its regularity and to avoid a five year restriction (this was discussed later) imposed by external fellowships.

Sushma Bendre enquired about the candidates, who having external fellowship are not required to appear in the admission test and only qualify through an interview? It was clarified that the admission test was only necessary only to get a degree from ISI. She argued why students with external funding but below the stipulated ISI funded merit list (**Type 2A**) are provided an ISI degree. Mahuya Datta clarified that this allures candidates to do research in ISI, thus allowing the research units to get enough JRFs.

Why not a separate merit list?

Anish Sarkar queried why a separate merit list was not being considered for candidates with external fellowship? Mahua Datta explained that cut-offs depend on a lot of criteria and could vary depending on several parameters. Cut-Offs could also vary from year to year. Since separate merit lists required different cut-offs implementing such a policy would me rather difficult.

Externally funded fellows who qualify JRF test later

Susmita Sur-Kolay enquired about a scenario where a student doing research with external fellowship qualifies ISI admission test at a later date during his research. She asked if such candidates needed to redo the courses they have already completed before registering with ISI. The Dean held that such candidates should not be asked to redo the course. Sourabh Ghosh pointed in the absence of any such

written formal instructions, the RFACs take ad-hoc decisions. The Dean suggested that the committee consisting of RFAC chairs to deliberate on agenda 3.3 could also deliberate and formulate a policy on this matter.

Impact of candidates with external fellowship shifting to ISI fellowship

Dipti Prasad Mukhopadhyay was apprehensive of candidates with external fellowship taking JRF test and shifting to ISI fellowship. He worried they might eat into the chances of newer students getting ISI funding. Mahuya Datta appeased him by stating that such candidates clearing the ISI admission test was very improbable.

While trying to determine the reasons why candidates shift Bhabatosh Chandra pointed out the irregularity of payments of external funding. Susmita Sur-Kolay added the five year time limit on research was another major reason. To prevent shifting she proposed that even if candidates with external fellowship clear ISI JRF test, they should be encouraged to carry on with the external funding. In case the research demands more than five years, ISI could fund them for the additional years, considering their JRF test qualification. The idea was well appreciated by both the Dean and the Chairperson.

Types of candidates eligible for institute funding after 5 years

Following the above proposal Rudrapada Sarkar proposed that candidates in the lower half of the merit list, (beyond the ISI funded seats) with external fellowship (**Type 2A**) also deserve ISI funding after five years, since albeit a low rank they were originally part of the merit list. Bhabatosh Chandra opposed stating institute fund is only for candidates who qualify for the ISI funded slots. The Chairperson concurring with Bhabatosh Chandra tried to summarize the scenario in the following points:

- **Type 1** candidates with external fellowship would be encouraged to continue with the external fellowship for the first five years. If required ISI would fund them for any additional years.
- **Type 2A** candidates would research under external fellowship for a maximum of five years, but they won't get any funding for additional years.

Mahuya Datta added that many **Type 2A** candidates are clearing JRF test during their research and thus continuing beyond five years with ISI funding.

Self Sponsored research.

Rajat De and Deepti Prasad Mukhopadhyay questioned why a candidate in the lower merit list without external funding (**Type 2B**) are denied scope of research. They argued that if a candidate ranking 100 with external fellowship be selected then one ranking higher must be allowed self sponsored research. Dipti Prasad Mukhopadhyay requested to have a relook on the recommendation. Mahuya Datta opposed this saying that a candidate with external fellowship has cleared two exams, both internal and external and thus deserves the advantage. She maintained that the current recommendation was devised to select externally funded candidates only, and candidates without any funding was not within the scope of this proposal. Rajat De disagreed stating an example from previous year's JRF(CS) admission, where 26 out of 39 candidates were funded. The remaining 13 in the merit list were

selected on mere eligibility and without any knowledge of their external funding status. The Dean suggested that the RFAC chairs committee could decide on this matter later.

Reason for a longer merit list

Sourabh Ghosh queried why in the first place 39 candidates are being chosen if only 26 can be funded. Rajat De mentioned that the number of candidates to fund is decided after the evaluation process, indicating this as an administrative problem. Sushmita Sur-Kolay said that a longer list was required since there is no guarantee that everyone would join. Sourabh Ghosh opposed citing the B.Stat. policy. Susmita Sur-Kolay inferred that then this issue was part of a broader context across other programmes. The Dean felt that a student considered in the merit list must not be disregarded later. But the chairperson opined that a longer merit list was more of a waiting list than a list of eligible candidates.

Distribution of JRF seats

Prasun Das wanted a clarification on a previous discussion he had with the Director regarding distribution of seats for the JRFs. He recalled that discussion as follows:

- 1) The Director would declare the total number of seats to be funded in advance.
- 2) These total no of seats would be distributed among the divisions depending on the faculty strength of each divisions. (Rather than depending on requirements)
- 3) The seats allocated to each division in step 2, would further be distributed among the units of the respective divisions depending on the unit's requirements.

Susmita Sur-Kolay also pointed out that the distribution policy needs to take into consideration the current number of existing fellows in particular divisions and a lot of other parameters. She firmly opposed the above top-down approach saying that research requirements should guide the total number of seats to be funded and not the other way round. The Director reminded of the lack of funds and suggested the units who have requirements beyond institute funding, must lookout for external grants.

Approval of current recommendation

While concluding on the approval status of the proposal Susmita Sur-Kolay held that the meeting's discussion was not in contradiction with the policy as far as the selection method of externally funded candidates is concerned. Rather if candidates in the lower merit list without funding should be included or not remains to be agreed upon. Mahuya Datta remarked that this was not specific to JRF, but a broader issue which includes B.Stat/B.Math as well.

Dipti Prasad Mukhopadhyay restated his demand for a separate merit list, and argued why only CSIR/NBHM/DBT funding is allowed. He questioned the non inclusion of other government institute and reputed private institute funding. The Chairperson noted that these needed further discussion and cannot be implemented currently. She and the Dean concluded that since the admission procedure was already running behind schedule, the existing policies would continue to be followed, until a solution is figured out in future meetings.

Resolution: *The committee consisting of the RFAC chairpersons would deliberate on the following matters:*

1. *If a student doing research with external fellowship, qualifies ISI admission test at a later date during his research, whether he would be required to repeat his courses or not.*

2. *If a candidate who fails to secure ISI funding but makes into the merit list, and does not have any sort of external funding be allowed to do self sponsored research.*

The Chairperson and the Dean concluded that since the admission procedure was already running behind schedule, the institute will continue adhering to the existing policies until a solution is reached on the JRF selection matters in future meetings.

AGENDA ITEM 4 - MISCELLANEOUS.

MISCELLANEOUS 1

Dipti Prasad Mukhopadhyay observed that the eligibility criterion for a JRF(CS) candidate, was an M.Sc., MCA, MA or equivalent degree. He suggested that the term "equivalent degree" be changed to "equivalent Master Degree". The Chairperson okayed the suggestion stressing that there won't be any change in the number of seats though.

MISCELLANEOUS 2

The Dean announced that in the 67th AC Meeting there was a proposal regarding introduction of a new Master Degree Course in ISI Delhi. The course was in Statistics intended for students with no previous background in Statistics and/or Probability. The proposal was accepted in principle and suggestions regarding the name or course-structure of the programme were asked to be sent to the Chairman of the corresponding committee. The committee were to submit a report in the current AC Meeting. The Dean got in touch with the Chairman who conveyed that some suggestions and feedbacks had been received. Accordingly the Dean requested him to send these feedbacks to him. But the Dean announced that he was yet to receive any such correspondence. Without which he mentioned any decision regarding introduction of the course was not possible. Hence the Dean notified the course is not going to be introduced in the next academic year. There were no disagreement regarding this.

Resolution: *The Master Degree course in Statistics proposed to be introduced in ISI Delhi, was postponed for the time being due to lack of communication from the committee chairman, and will not be introduced in the next academic cycle.*

SD/-

SD/-

GOUTAM MUKHERJEE

Dean, Indian Statistical Institute.

SANGHAMITRA BANDYOPADHYAY

Director, Indian Statistical Institute
and Chairperson, Academic Council,
ISI