



CDS

Centre for Development Studies

Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala

PhD in Economics

Admission – 2026

Prospectus

The Centre for Development Studies (CDS) invites applications for admission to its PhD programme in Economics. Candidates with a post-graduate or equivalent degree in any discipline and who have qualified UGC-NET for admission to PhD programmes, in accordance with the prevailing UGC Regulations, are eligible to apply. The programme focuses on applied economics and PhD scholars are exposed to diverse frameworks and methodologies. The degree is awarded by the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi. Admission to the PhD programme follows the guidelines of the JNU PhD Ordinance 2022 in compliance with University Grants Commission (Minimum Standards and procedures for Award of Ph.D. Degree) Regulations, 2022.

1 About CDS

The CDS is an autonomous research centre supported by the Government of Kerala and the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR). It was set up in Thiruvananthapuram in 1970 under the intellectual leadership of Prof. K. N. Raj with the mission of promoting research, teaching, and training in disciplines relevant to development. The Centre is internationally known for its applied economics research relevant for development. The CDS runs two regular academic programmes, MA in Applied Economics and PhD in Economics. It has one of the country's finest libraries for Economics and development subjects. The CDS library has a total collection of over 1,60,000 titles in print and eBook formats. The library also provides access to more than 15,000 e-journals. The Centre subscribes to all leading econometric and statistical software. The campus, including hostels, is Wi-Fi enabled.

2 About the Programme

The PhD programme in CDS was launched in 1975 and so far 131 scholars have been awarded the PhD degree. The programme has a strong orientation towards development with a core focus on economic aspects. PhD research topics are usually aligned with the research interest and expertise of CDS faculty members. **Applicants are advised to go through the research profiles of current faculty members and PhD supervision vacancies (see www.cds.edu).**

Broadly, the research interests and expertise of current faculty members include macroeconomic issues of the Indian economy, industrial development, international trade, innovation and technological progress, gender and development, migration, poverty, vulnerability and social security, labour and employment, and agriculture and plantations.

3 Duration of the Programme

The programme involves one year of coursework and a dissertation. The coursework, spread over two semesters, comprises courses on economic theory, research methodology, and topics in Indian economy. For the dissertation, scholars have the opportunity to choose topics of research from a diverse set of fields. The PhD programme has a minimum duration of three years and a maximum duration of six years from the date of admission. The minimum residency period is three years.

4 Eligibility

Candidates who have completed:

A 1-year/2-semester master's degree programme after a 4-year/8-semester bachelor's degree programme or a 2-year/4-semester master's degree programme after a 3-year bachelor's degree programme or qualifications declared equivalent to the master's degree by the corresponding statutory regulatory body, with at least 55% marks in aggregate or its equivalent grade in a point scale wherever grading system is followed.

Or equivalent qualification from a foreign educational institution accredited by an assessment and accreditation agency which is approved, recognized or authorized by an authority, established or incorporated under a law in its home country or any other statutory authority in that country to assess, accredit or assure quality and standards of the educational institution.

Provided that a candidate seeking admission after a 4-year/8-semester bachelor's degree programme should have a minimum of 75% marks in aggregate or its equivalent grade on a point scale wherever the grading system is followed.

Candidates who have completed the MPhil programme with at least 55% marks in aggregate or its equivalent grade in a point scale wherever grading system is followed or equivalent qualification from a foreign educational institution accredited by an assessment and accreditation agency which is approved, recognized or authorized by an authority, established or incorporated under a law in its home country or any other statutory authority in that country to assess, accredit or assure quality and standards of educational institutions, shall be eligible for admission to the PhD programme.

A relaxation of 5% marks or its equivalent grade will be applied to those belonging to SC/ST/OBC (non-creamy layer)/Differently-Abled, Economically Weaker Section (EWS) categories. The applicable relaxation provisions are common to all the sections mentioned above.

Those awaiting results of the qualifying degree may also apply. Such candidates, if selected, can join the programme only if their previous institutions certify that they have completed all the requirements for award of degree. In the event that a candidate fails to acquire the relevant degree or the relevant marks/ grades stipulated above, they will be automatically removed from the Centre & University.

ADMISSION THROUGH UGC NET Examination (three categories)

The CDS considers the following categories of candidates based on performance in the UGC-NET examination:

Category 1: Candidates who have qualified for JRF

Category 2: Candidates who have qualified for Assistant Professorship without JRF

Category 3: Candidates outside Categories 1 and 2 but whose NET score qualifies them for "PhD only" in accordance with UGC regulations.

For Category 1, candidates should make sure that the JRF certificate is valid at the time of physical verification of documents. Candidature will be rejected in case the JRF certificate is found to be invalid at the time of physical verification of the documents.

Note that the percentile score from UGC-NET examinations from June 2025 onwards will be taken into account for admission eligibility for the academic year 2026-27. Scores prior to the June 2025 examination will not be considered for admission eligibility.

5 Number of intakes and reservation

- Not more than twelve candidates will be selected for the programme.

The CDS provides statutory reservation for Indian candidates belonging to SC, ST, OBC (NCL), Economically Weaker Section (EWS) & Persons with Disability (having more than 40% disability) as per Government of India rules.

- Foreign nationals and officials nominated by the Government of Kerala will be considered separately.

6 Admission Process

The admission process is different for UGC-JRF and non-JRF holders. Candidates with fellowships other than UGC-JRF (such as NFSC, NFST, NFOBC, etc.) will be considered under the category of non-JRF and the corresponding admission procedure will be applicable.

Candidates with a valid JRF qualification can choose to apply through the non-JRF admission category instead of the JRF category by selecting the option 'JRF Qualified Applying under NET Category' in the application portal. Their admission will then be processed according to the non-JRF rules/criteria.

Admission of JRF holders

In the case of candidates with a valid JRF qualification, admission will be based solely on in-person interview for which the date will be announced later.

Admission of non-JRF holders

In the case of non-JRF candidates (Categories 2 & 3) and JRF candidates who apply through non-JRF admission category, admission will be on the basis of the UGC-NET score and in-person interview (with weightage of 70% and 30%, respectively).

Research proposal and interview:

Candidates must submit a research proposal written in English along with their application. The research proposal should not be more than 2000 words. While we encourage candidates to be innovative in approach and presentation, we expect the research proposal to have a critical understanding of the body of knowledge in the proposed area of research and to be

specific in terms of study issues and objectives and to demonstrate some understanding of the analytical framework and data. The research proposal should not be a copy of a study presented as part of any other programme. **An application without a research proposal will not be considered.**

The interview focuses on the following:

- The competence of the candidate to undertake the proposed research.
- The suitability of pursuing the proposed research at the Centre.
- The potential of the proposed research to contribute to the relevant literature.

7 Confirmation of Admission

A candidate who has been provisionally admitted to the PhD programme, is eligible for confirming their admission as PhD Research Scholar if:

1. The candidate has completed the coursework with minimum CGPA of 5.0 (4.5 CGPA for candidates belonging to SC/ST/OBC (non-creamy layer)/Person with Disability categories), and
2. The candidate's research proposal has been approved. Candidates admitted to the PhD programme are required to have their research proposal approved by the Academic Programmes Committee (APC) of the CDS within one year from the date of completion of coursework. The research proposal approved by the APC will be presented before the JNU-CDS Committee of Direction for ratification. A candidate who fails to fulfil the above two conditions will be automatically removed from the Centre and the University.

8 Fellowships

Students who have already cleared doctoral research fellowship schemes like JRF can avail them for their PhD research at the CDS. PhD students can also apply for ICSSR doctoral fellowships which are awarded on the basis of an all-India competition. **Please note that admission to the PhD programme does not guarantee a fellowship. Candidates who do not have fellowships must inform the CDS about how they propose to finance their doctoral research.**

9 Internship opportunities

For PhD scholars, the CDS offers internship opportunities at universities and research institutes abroad. Selection is through a competitive process.

10 Fees

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 Tuition Fee: | Rs. 120/- per semester |
| 2 JNU Registration & Enrolment fee: | Rs. 10,115/- (one-time fee) |
| 3 Miscellaneous Charges: | Rs. 500/- |

PhD students and scholars can use hostel facilities at CDS subject to availability. All rooms have attached bath and are modestly furnished. The monthly rent for a hostel room is **Rs. 500/person**, which includes electricity and water charges. If a scholar receives House Rent Allowance (HRA) as part of their fellowship, then the monthly hostel rent charged to them will be the same amount as the HRA they are eligible to receive. All hostel residents are attached to the mess and must pay the monthly mess bill in advance within first five working days of each month.

11 How to apply

Candidates are required to apply through the online application portal available at www.cds.edu. The application fee is **Rs. 500/-** (non-refundable), which is to be paid online. There is no application fee for candidates belonging to SC, ST and Persons with Disability (having more than 40% disability) categories. It is the responsibility of the candidate to ensure that all the relevant details are correctly entered. Applications that are found to be incomplete or to contain incorrect information at any stage of the admission process will be rejected without any notice.

12 Jurisdiction clause

Any disputes arising in connection with the admission process shall be subjected to the exclusive jurisdiction of the Kerala High Court. Further, this prospectus is subject to modification/addition/deletion as may be deemed necessary by the Centre from time to time.

13 Important dates

Opening date of online applications	June 02, 2026 (9 am)
Closing date of online applications	June 23, 2026 (5 pm)
Tentative dates of in-person interviews	July 20-24, 2026
Commencement of PhD programme (tentative)	September 02, 2026

Candidates are advised to check the CDS website for latest updates on admission-related matters. For any queries or additional information please contact the Academic Programme Office at 0471-2774253/4 during office hours (9 am to 5 pm) or at admissionphd@cds.edu.