

**NASCERE scholarship program - Jimma and Ghent University**

**Guideline for assessment and decision on requests for extended stay in the north**

1. **Background**

This guideline is developed in accordance with Article 2 of the MOU signed between Ghent University and Jimma University on June 2, 2020. It addresses cases where NASCERE PhD candidates request for an extended stay in the north beyond the default duration of 12 months. Requests for extra time can occur because of many reasons including lack of infrastructure and advisory support in the south, capacity problem of the student, nature, and complexity of the research area, etc. Therefore, this guideline addresses situations where the candidate cannot complete her/his study within the regular time of 12 months study time in the north due to a justifiable reason(s) and not caused by the negligence of the student promoters, or the management of the program.

The assessment and approval of these requests should follow a rigorous process and should be executed carefully because any mistake can lead to abuse of this opportunity. Besides, extended stay in the north means, at the end the program cannot produce the number of PhDs that Jimma University agreed with the Ministry of Science and Higher Education (MOSHE). It is important to note that the huge devaluation of the Birr has already seriously affected the financial capacity of the program.

1. **Scope of application**

This guideline is applicable to the NASCERE program PhD students who request an extended stay in the North for min. 1 to max. 6 months. The requested extension must be strictly for academic purpose and clearly linked to their PhD study and confirmed by her/his promoters. Extended stay up to two weeks can be handled by the student herself/himself with cost ticket rescheduling covered by the program.

1. **Assessment of request for time extension**

In scrutinizing the requests of the PhD candidates for extra time, it is important to verify that:

1. The request has been evaluated and endorsed by both north and south promoters
2. The candidate has properly used the elapsed time and devoted her/his time to the study
3. The promoters have been supporting the student adequately
4. The nature and complexity of the discipline and the research topic merits the request
5. That the progress and the stage of the study is proportional to the time used before the application
6. An additional period in the North is essential for the completion of the PhD
7. There is limited support from the south in terms of infrastructure and tutoring to complete the study in the regular time
8. The requested duration is justified by the time needed to complete the remaining works.
9. **Application handling procedure**

Students intending to ask for extended stay in the north shall submit their application to the north promoter in writing with a cc to the south promoter. The north promoter would review the application and if she/he finds it unacceptable would immediately reply to the student about the decision with a cc to the south promoter. If she/he finds it acceptable she/he will consult the south promotor(s) and submit their common recommendation to the program coordinators. The program coordinators will deliberate on the recommendation and pass their decision to the applicant. NASCERE students that have a promoter at UGENT are always requested to apply first for extra study months in Belgium via the “UGent Short Research Stay” and this until 1 September 2022.

1. **The importance of the strict scrutiny**

It is important to strictly control requests for extra time stay in the north because it can easily get out of hand. It must be a privilege offered to legitimate students who otherwise will not be able to continue and finish their study but only after carefully considering conditions listed under article 3, above. Therefore, the promoters should be sensitized about the guideline before its implementation so that they apply it in a responsible and accountable manner.

Within the framework of his/her PhD the candidate needs to have at least one scientific paper accepted and show an independent working attitude (to be confirmed by the Belgian promoter) before an extension of a study stay in Belgium can be requested.

The PhD student is requested to develop a clear *ex-ante* research plan in which the extra months in Belgium are justified.

1. **Student performance and progress monitoring system**

The NASCERE program develops and introduces a mechanism for tracking the performance and progress of PhD students. This progress monitoring log will be used in assessing request for extension of the duration of study and stay in the north. This log will help in verifying issues indicated in article three (3) above. Students are therefore requested to send a copy the annual progress reports for the Flemish University and a proof of the approval of this progress report to Jimma University via Kassahun Ebba: kasahun.eba@ju.edu.et).

1. **Method of financing the extended time**

Request for time extension that has undergone the above scrutiny and found to be justified will be supported. The monthly stipend paid to the student for the extended time does not exceed 1500 euro. Similarly, there will be only one round flight allowed during the extended period where the student is in the south. If the student is already in the north, then there will be only return ticket at the end of the extra period. Generally, because of se of the tight budget of NASCERE and the all-evident problem Birr devaluation, the north promoters are encouraged to find funding from other sources to finance the extended stay of the student.

1. **Maximum duration of extension**

The extra time allowed to a student is proportional to the remaining works. The allowed time can range from min. 1 to max. 6 months depending on the remaining works. The total extra time including SRS funding for UGENT-NASCERE students shall not exceed 6 months.

1. **Areas excluded from the time extension**

NASCERE students come from different disciplines including social sciences, humanities, and business. Those disciplines that do not need lab facilities and infrastructure are not eligible for extra time application.

1. **The central responsibility of the program coordinators**

The north and south program coordinators shall put in place a mechanism to ensure that the students are supported by the respective promoters in north and south. Also, they will implement ways tracking PhD students to see that they are putting their full time and energy into the study. Students are therefore requested to send a copy the annual progress reports for the Flemish University and a proof of the approval of this progress report to Jimma University via Kassahun Ebba: kasahun.eba@ju.edu.et.