

BIRLA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY AND SCIENCE PILANI

POLICY AND GUIDELINES ON

INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH INTERNSHIP FOR DOCTORAL STUDENTS

This policy and guideline document is applicable to full-time PhD students of BITS Pilani.

1. Purpose of the policy on industrial research internship

This policy establishes a framework to support and enable doctoral student internships in industry to foster academia-industry collaboration and enhance doctoral training. The internships will allow students to gain practical, industry-relevant experience directly aligned with their doctoral research. The anticipated advantages of doctoral internships include working on industry relevant and translatable research, skill improvement, understanding corporate work environment, increasing employability, developing social and leadership skills.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all full-time registered doctoral students who have successfully completed their coursework, passed qualifying exams, and submitted thesis proposal.

3. Policy Statement

Doctoral students are permitted to undertake industry internships of 3 to 12 months duration as part of their academic program, subject to the following conditions.

3.1 Alignment with Doctoral Research

- The internship must be broadly relevant to the student's approved thesis topic.
- The host industry must provide an opportunity for the student to engage in research or development work aligned with the academic objectives of the dissertation.
- A brief internship plan outlining alignment must be submitted by the student and approved by the supervisor and doctoral advisory committee and recommended by DRC.

3.2 Industry Partner Eligibility

- The host industry must be a recognized industry partner in the student's field of research (private company, government research lab, research and development center, start-up, etc.).
- The host must agree to provide a monthly stipend to the student during the internship period.
- The host must agree to provide mentorship and necessary resources to support the research engagement.

3.3 Stipend

- The host industry must provide a stipend for the entire duration of the internship. The stipend may be disbursed directly to the student. The recommended minimum stipend is equivalent to the fellowship amount the student was receiving at the time of joining the internship, on a per-month basis.
- The continuation of institute fellowship or fellowship from a sponsored project (if any) during the internship period will depend on the quantum of stipend paid by the industry. In cases where the fellowship is drawn from a sponsored project, it will be governed by the terms and conditions of the respective project grant.

4. Internship Duration, Timing and Location

- Minimum duration: 3 months
- Maximum duration: 12 months (can be taken in a single stretch or in 2 sessions of at least 3 months each)
- Internships can be pursued only after successful completion of the coursework, qualifying examination, and proposal submission. Internships should not be taken during the semester of thesis submission.
- Internships can be started at any time in a year. However, it is desirable to have internships aligned with the semester timelines. Doctoral students will be relieved from teaching assistantship responsibilities during internship.
- In general, the location of internship is at the company premises. Internships can be pursued in companies outside India. However, there could be flexibility depending on the nature of the internship work.

5. Supervision and Progress Monitoring

- Students will remain enrolled and would register for thesis units during their internship. The supervisor and mentor at the Industry would evaluate the performance to assign grade for thesis units during internship.
- Students must have regular interaction with the supervisor (at least once in a month) to share work updates while undertaking internship.
- A mid-term and final report must be submitted by the student and reviewed by the supervisor and industry mentor.

6. Approval Process

To be eligible, the student must submit the following for approval to the **AGSRD through supervisor, DAC and DRC**.

- a) **Internship Proposal Form** (including company details, plan of work, expected outcomes, alignment with thesis project, duration, location)

- b) **Offer Letter** from the host industry indicating stipend, duration, and mentor.
- c) **Supervisor Approval Letter** confirming relevance of internship work to thesis and academic support.
- d) **Conflict of Interest Declaration**, if applicable. It is desirable that doctoral students do not pursue internship in their family or supervisor companies. However, decision will be taken on a case-to-case basis on applications with a conflict of interest.

Approvals must be sought **at least 4 weeks** before the start date of the internship.

7. Intellectual Property and Confidentiality

- The institute retains rights over research conducted as a part of the thesis.
- Any IP generated jointly with the company must be governed by an agreement between the institute (supervisor and student), and host company, based on mutual agreement.

Students must not sign any agreement that conflicts with the institute policies without prior approval of the concerned office.

8. Thesis Evaluation

- Time spent in the internship will be considered towards the total period of doctoral research.
- Upon return, students must integrate relevant findings into their thesis, and may be required to present a seminar on the internship work.
- The doctoral thesis must maintain academic rigor and originality, irrespective of the internship work.

9. Operational Mechanism

- AGSRD with the support of doctoral students, faculty, research and innovation division, placements unit, practice school division will identify internship opportunities. There will be a dashboard created to view, share and apply for opportunities.
- Any situation that is not addressed in the guidelines document will be considered on a case-by-case manner.

Dean, AGSR