National Scholarship Portal

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

for

Pre Matric, Post Matric and Merit-cum-Means based Scholarship Schemes for minorities for

FY 2017-18

Ministry of Minority Affairs

Government of India

Table of Contents

1 National Scholarship Portal

1.1 Objective

The purpose of this document is to describe the life cycle of Scholarship disbursal process through National Scholarship Portal (NSP) and intermediary processes involved therein. This document attempts to identify different sub-processes, stakeholders, roles and responsibilities of stake holders, communication protocol between processes and feedback mechanism.

The scholarship applications have been classified into the following two categories: -

1. Fresh
2. Renewal.

2 The NSP Lifecycle

The entire Scholarship disbursal process for the Academic Year 2017-18 has been divided into the following Phases: -
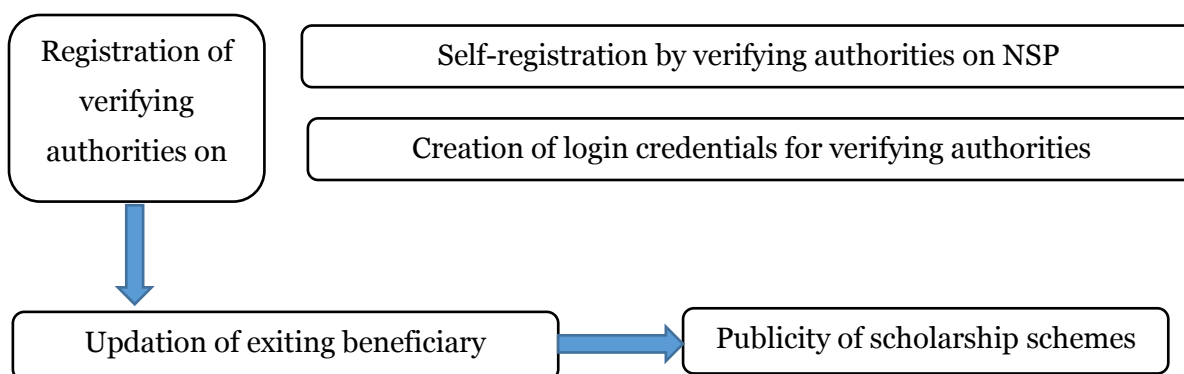
- Preparatory Phase
- Registration/Application Phase
- Verification Phase
- Merit List Preparation & Lot Generation Phase
- Scholarship Approval & Disbursal Phase

If the last date for various timelines indicated under each phase is a government holiday, then it will be considered to be the next working day.

2.1 Preparatory Phase

This phase pertains to different tasks that require to be completed before the Portal is made live to the general public for making scholarship applications for 2017-18. It, inter-alia, includes registration of verifying authorities, creation of credentials (login/password) for verifying authorities, updation of metadata by the institutes (courses, fee etc.) on Portal.

The following figure depicts an overview of the activities undertaken in the Preparatory Phase.

| Registration of verifying authorities on | Self-registration by verifying authorities on NSP |
| | Creation of login credentials for verifying authorities |

| Updation of exiting beneficiary | → | Publicity of scholarship schemes |

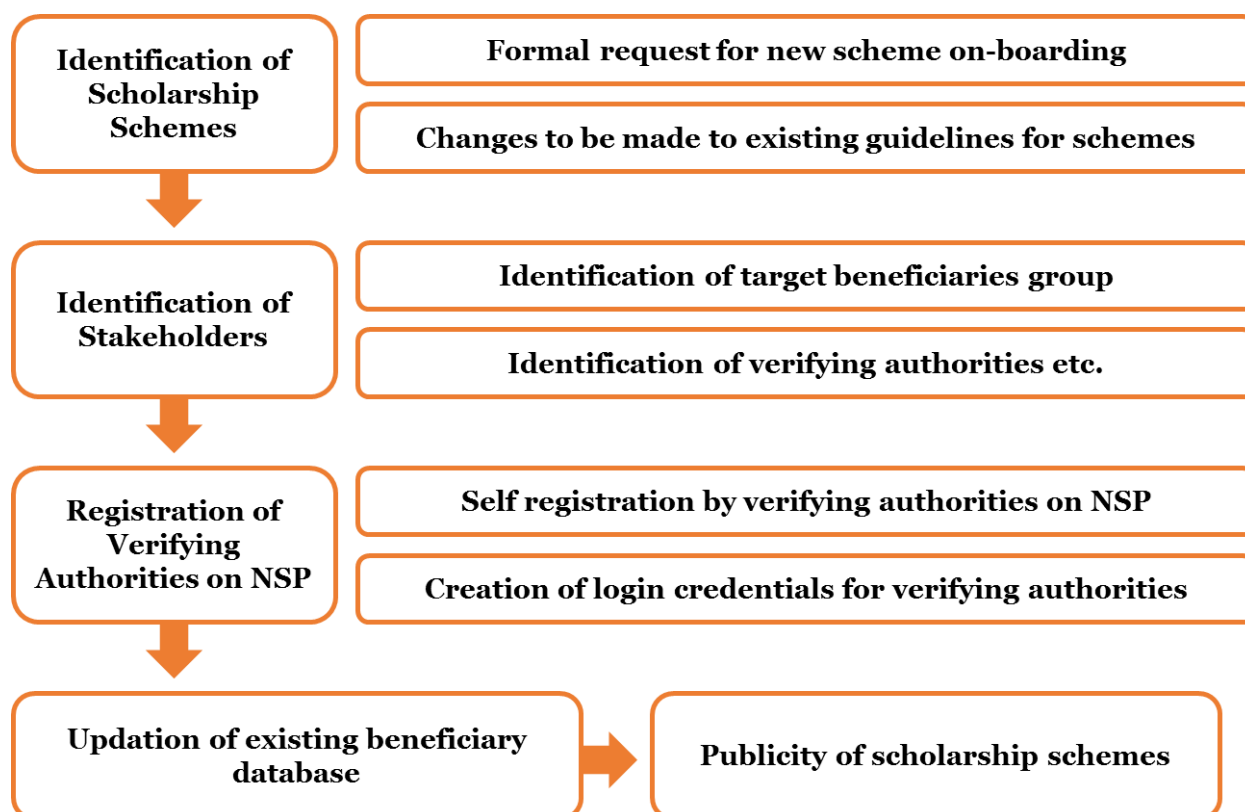**2.1.1 The Preparatory Phase will be an on-going process.** This phase pertains to different tasks that require to be completed before the Portal is made live to the general public for making scholarship applications for a particular AY. It includes identification of scholarship schemes to be on-boarded on NSP, identification of stakeholders, registration of verifying authorities, creation of credentials (login/password) for verifying authorities, updation of metadata by the institutes (courses, fee etc.) on Portal.

The following figure depicts an overview of the activities undertaken in the Preparatory Phase.

| **Identification of Scholarship Schemes** | **Formal request for new scheme on-boarding** |
| | **Changes to be made to existing guidelines for schemes** |

| **Identification of Stakeholders** | **Identification of target beneficiaries group** |
| | **Identification of verifying authorities etc.** |

| **Registration of Verifying Authorities on NSP** | **Self registration by verifying authorities on NSP** |
| | **Creation of login credentials for verifying authorities** |

| **Updation of existing beneficiary database** | → | **Publicity of scholarship schemes** |

2.1.2 Identification of Scholarships Schemes to be on-boarded on NSP

Besides already on-boarded schemes, any Ministry/Department desirous to on-board their scholarship scheme(s) in an AY shall make a formal request to NSP for the same providing detailed guidelines of the scheme(s). The concerned Ministry/Department will also provide a **detailed FAQ** incorporating possible scheme specific queries/clarification along-with contact details of relevant officials. The concerned Ministry/Department is suggested to make necessary procedural changes in the scheme guidelines to accommodate all the existing procedures of the identified schemes.

2.1.3 Identification of Stakeholders

On the basis of scheme documents the stakeholders (target beneficiary group, verifying authorities etc.) will be identified and their roles and responsibilities will be finalized.

2.1.4 Registration of verifying authorities (State authority/District authority/Institute/School etc.) on NSP

Though, registration is a continuous process, the Verifying Authorities (State authority/District authority/Institute/School etc.) may register themselves on NSP by **30th September, 2017** to be eligible to participate in 2017-18. It will be the responsibility of all the States/UTs to sensitize their respective Verifying Authorities to register themselves on NSP by the stipulated date. This would include registration by the Institutes/Schools. For registration, Institutes/Schools are required to have **DISE/AICHE codes**. Institutes/Schools desirous to onboard on NSP will make request by filling up a registration form available on NSP. This registration form will capture details of the Institute/School viz. name, address, registration number, affiliation, contact no, email, etc. Additionally, the Institute / School are also required to fill up details of such courses they want to register, including name of the course, duration of the course, recognition, annual course fee, eligibility criteria of admission etc. Thereafter, the next verifying authority viz. District authority (for Delhi & U.P. exclusively) or State authority (for all other States/UTs), as the case may be, will verify the details of the Institute/School and accord approval to it. Subsequently, the Institute/School will be added in the database of NSP and will be provided with **credentials (login/password)** for the Portal. Simultaneously, the verifying authorities will also verify and approve course details entered by the Institute/School in their registration form. On approval, these courses will be added in the NSP database against the Institute / School. Simultaneously, (school + course) details will also be associated with the relevant scholarship scheme. In case the School / Institute proposes to provide Scholarship to more than one category, the details of courses and credential of the School / Institute will need to be verified and approved by verifying authorities of respective scholarship schemes simultaneously. This is a continuous process

and **verifying authority needs to approve the request within 30 days period**. However, **Institutes/Schools/Courses added before the last date i.e. 30th September, 2017 will be only allowed to participate in the scholarship process for 2017-18**. Further, once added, the Institutes/Schools may be allowed to change only their contact details. Any request to change the metadata (course registered, course fee etc.) will be subject to verification and acceptance by the concerned verifying authority. **All existing verifying Authorities, in all cases, are, however, necessarily required to update their metadata (including contact details and course details) and get it validated in the beginning of every academic cycle.**

2.1.5 Database

A database of all the stakeholders containing contact details etc. will be maintained by NIC. NIC will take necessary steps to update this database, whenever a change occurs, and make this available to concerned stakeholders as per their requirement.

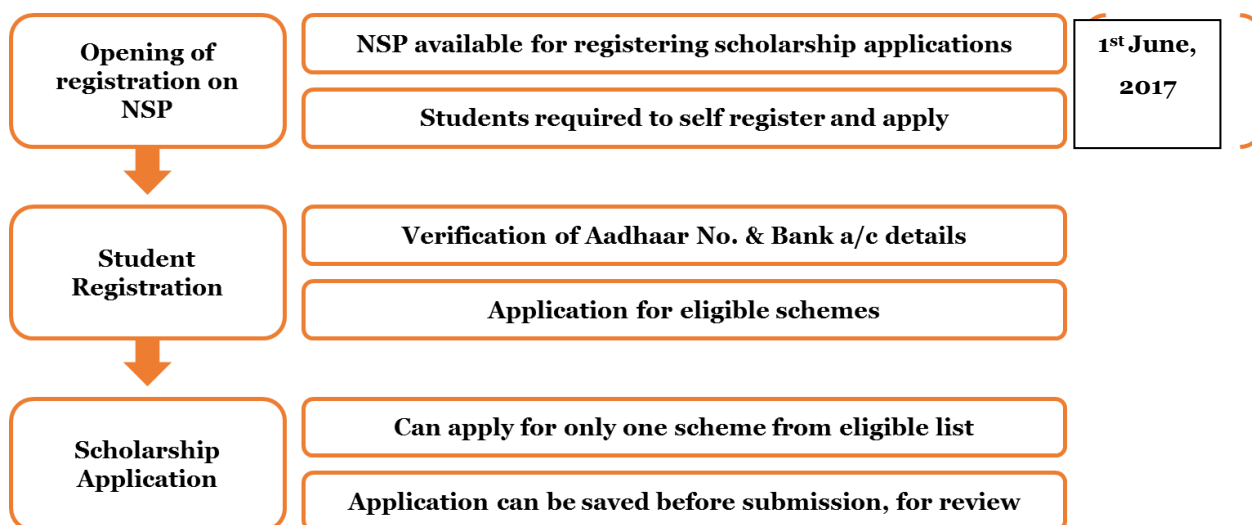### 2.1.6 Grievance Redressal Mechanism

NIC will suitably configure the Grievance Redressal Mechanism available on the portal so that grievances registered through it will be automatically routed to the concerned authority.

2.1.7 Publicity

All participating States/UTs may give wide publicity of the aforesaid three scholarship schemes viz. Pre-Matric, Post Matric and Merit-cum-Means based scholarship schemes for minorities and the National Scholarship Portal (NSP) through newspapers, websites, electronic media.

2.2 Registration/Application Phase

The following figure depicts an overview of the activities undertaken in the Registration / Application Phase.

Opening of registration on NSP	NSP available for registering scholarship applications	1st June, 2017
	Students required to self register and apply	
Student Registration	Verification of Aadhaar No. & Bank a/c details	
	Application for eligible schemes	
Scholarship Application	Can apply for only one scheme from eligible list	
	Application can be saved before submission, for review	

2.2.1 Time Lines

The Portal will be opened for registration w.e.f. **1st June, 2017** for Pre-Matric, Post- Matric and Merit-cum-Means based scholarship schemes for minorities and the last date for submitting applications will be **31st August, 2017**. These timelines may be strictly adhered to for timely disbursal of scholarships. **Extension of timelines will normally not be permitted, but done only under extra-ordinary circumstances as it will delay all subsequent processes.**

2.2.2 Registration of Students on the Portal

Before applying for a scholarship scheme on NSP, a student may keep following documents/information ready: -

1.   Aadhaar Number

 [Aadhaar Number is optional for the students at present. However, as the Gazette Notification under Section-7 of Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and Other Subsidies, Benefits and Services) Act, 2016 (18 of 2016) (with respect to this scheme) has been notified on 21st April, 2017 in the Official Gazette of India by Ministry of Minority Affairs, it will be necessary for the eligible applicants to provide Aadhaar number while applying for the scholarship and in case, an individual does not possess Aadhaar one can provide the details of alternative identification documents, as stated in the Gazette Notification, detailed below:

(a) (i) if she or he has enrolled, her or his Aadhaar Enrolment ID slip; or

(ii) a copy of her or his request made for Aadhaar enrolment, as specified in sub-paragraph (b) of paragraph 2; and

(b) (i) Bank passbook with photograph; or (ii) Ration Card, or (iii) Permanent Account Number (PAN) Card issued by the Income Tax Department; or (iv) Passport; or (v) Certificate of identity having photo of such student issued by a Headmaster or Principal of School under official seal of the school; or (vi) Driving license issued by the Licensing Authority under the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 (59 of 1988); or (vii) any other documents specified by the State Government or Union territory Administration.

[Note- For Assam, Jammu & Kashmir and Meghalaya, the documents mentioned at para (b) (i) to (vii) shall only be required]

2. An Aadhaar seeded Bank account – In his/her name exclusively for post-matric and Merit-cum-Means based scholarships. In his/her name either exclusive or joint account with any of his/her parent in case of pre-matric scholarships.

3. A valid Mobile Number (unique mobile no. for Merit-cum-Means SS; for Pre-Matric and Post-Matric- Maximum two applications per mobile)

4. An Email id (unique email Id. for Merit-cum-Means SS; for Pre-Matric and Post-Matric- Maximum two applications per email Id)

5. Parents/Guardian's Income certificate issued by the authority designated by the State Government/UT Administration (as per the scheme requirement).

6. Community certificate, Self-Certified/Declared.

7. Course and Course Fee for the academic (duly signed by the Institute Authority, with break-up, in case required to be uploaded on NSP for scholarship claims of more than Rs. 50,000/-).

8. Previous Qualifying Exam /Board Mark-sheet.

9. Residential/ Domicile Certificate.

The Registration and thereafter application for a scholarship scheme by Students will be segregated into two separate processes. An instant verification mechanism for Aadhaar Number Bank account details of the students will be enabled on the Portal. Students need to apply through the common application form for pre-matric scholarship and another common form for Post Matric & Merit cum Means based scholarships. On successful verification, the students will be allowed to fill up their details essential for establishing their eligibility for scholarships. The Portal will display a list of schemes for which the student is eligible to apply on the basis of his/her inputs (even non-minority scholarship schemes). Detailed guidelines and FAQ on these schemes will also be displayed. The students must go through the scheme details and FAQ to make an informed choice.

2.2.3 Applying for Scholarships

Only registered and verified students will be allowed to apply for scholarships. **A student will, however, be allowed to apply for one scheme only from the displayed list of eligible schemes. The Portal will incorporate a provision to save the application before making final submission.** The student will be allowed to make multiple changes in the saved details, before final submission. **However, after submission, the student will not be allowed to make any change(s) in his/her application, including change in opted scholarship scheme.**

The students may, however, be allowed to change their personal details except Aadhaar Number at a later stage, **in exceptional circumstances**, after due verification of authenticity of claim by an authority registered on NSP, not below the level of District Authority.

2.3 Verification Phase

The following figure depicts an overview of the activities undertaken in the Verification Phase.
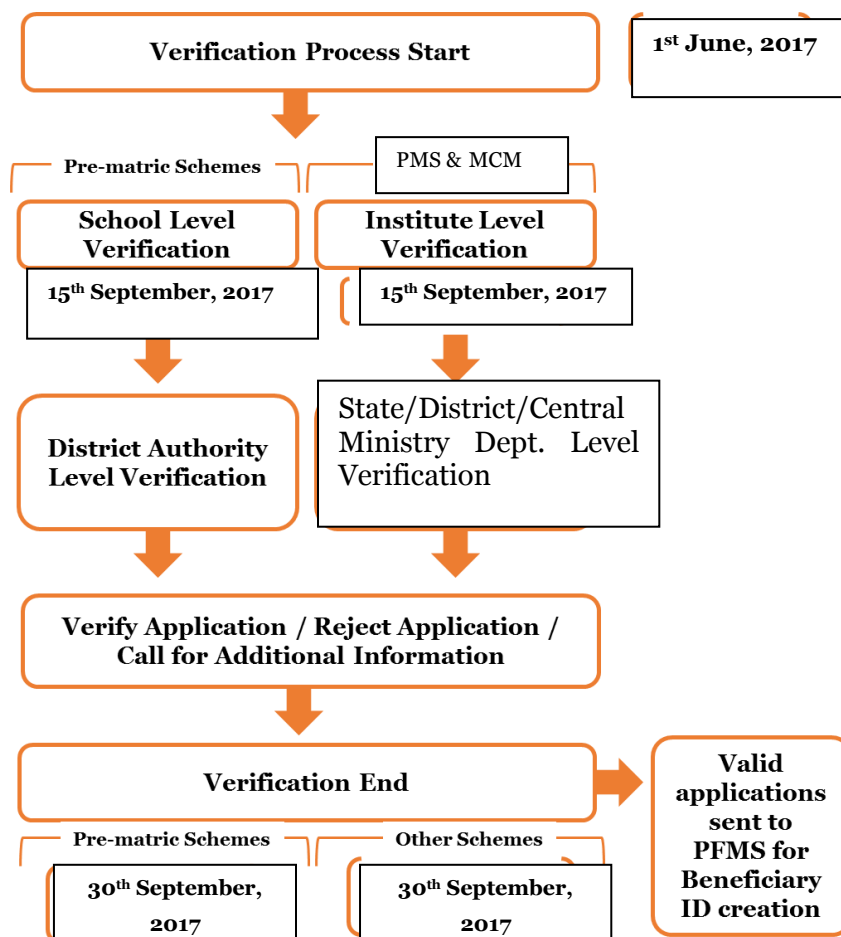
2.3.1 Time Lines

The Verification of applications will be undertaken concurrently along-with the application process. The verification process will therefore, start from **1st June, 2017**. The last date for verification for the pre-matric, Post Matric and Merit cum Means based schemes will be **30th September, 2017 (wherein the last date for the first level of verification will be 15th September, 2017)**

2.3.2 Stages of Verification

Only two phase verification will be available for all the aforesaid scholarship schemes. The first level of verification will be done at the School/Institute level and second level of verification will be at the District Authority level (for NCT of Delhi and Uttar Pradesh) and the State/UT concerned (for others). The NSP Portal will filter the applications on the basis

of School/Institute Code and make them available instantly under their login for verification. Since, Aadhaar details of the candidate will be directly verified from UIDAI at application stage, the **Aadhaar details of the applicants will not be shared with the Verifying Authorities to prevent accidental misuse.** A check list will also be provided by the Portal against which verification is required by the concerned authority.

For Verifying Authority following three options exist: -

1. To verify the application
2. To reject the application
3. To call for additional information for verification

If the Institute/School needs additional information for verification, the Portal will provide a facility to send SMS/Email to the concerned student. Further, at this stage only Institute / School will be allowed to make changes in application (in select fields only) and a log of the same will be maintained on the Portal. The Institute/School will verify every application individually and facility of bulk verification will not be available for the first level of Verifying Authority.

The first level of verification will ensure that the students are genuine and eligible and rule out duplication with other scholarship schemes of Centre and State. The second level verification will ensure the credentials of school/Institute as well as the claim of hostellers. The State/UT/District (for NCT of Delhi and Uttar Pradesh) shall be the final verifying authority.

An application duly verified by the first level of Verifying Authority (Institute/School) will be treated as **Valid Application** and counted for. An application which does not get verified by the first Verifying Authority will be treated as an **Invalid Application**. **The valid applications will be simultaneously sent for obtaining Beneficiary id from PFMS.**

Only **valid applications** will be displayed to the second level of Verifying Authority. The second level of Verifying Authority will be provided with the facility of bulk verification. **However, NSP may provide a mechanism to facilitate the second level of verifying authority (to State/UT even if it is not a verifying authority) for monitoring the progress of verification by the first level of verifying authority.**

NSP will provide a mechanism to monitor the verification process on real time basis. This mechanism will indicate reasons for delays, rejection report with reasons, and institute-wise pendency report.

2.4 Merit List Preparation & Lot Generation Phase

Duly verified Fresh applications received up to **30th September, 2017 for all schemes** will be treated as **Eligible Applications** and considered for Merit list preparation and thereafter lot generation.

The following figure depicts an overview of the activities undertaken in the Merit List Preparation & Lot Generation Phase.
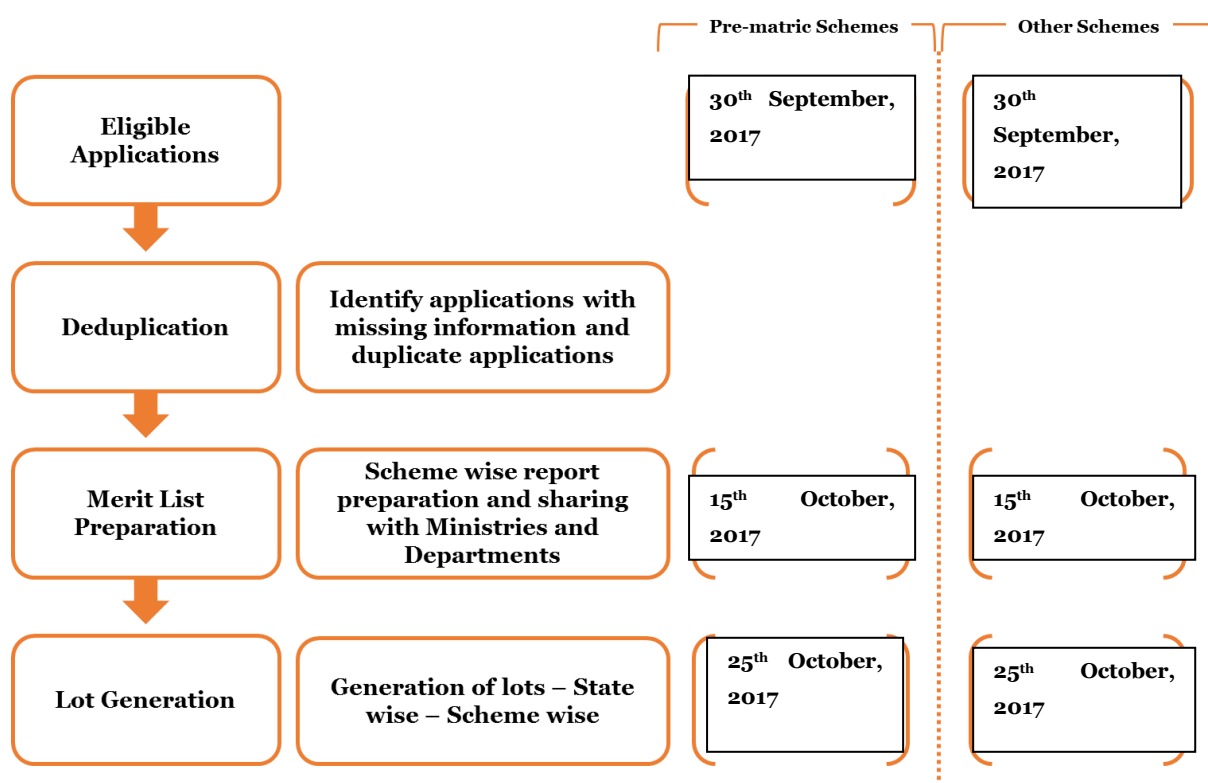
2.4.1 De-duplication

De-duplication algorithm will be run to identify all the duplicate applications including the ones which are without Aadhaar or in which crucial information like Bank account details are found to be incorrect during the verification phase.

2.4.2 Merit List preparation

All the de-duplicated applications will be bundled as per their schemes. A scheme-wise report will be prepared by NIC and shared with all the respective Ministries / Departments at this stage. Each Ministry / Department will share their methodology for merit list generation, with NIC. To facilitate the process, each Ministry/Department will constitute a team comprising of at least one officer from concerned Program Division and one NIC official attached with the concerned Ministry / Department. The merit list preparation

algorithm will be first tested on a sample data before preparing the final Merit list by **15th October, 2017 for all three scholarship schemes.**

In case after generation of Merit list, the state/UT-wise quota under a particular community remains unutilised, the same shall be first distributed amongst the same community of the remaining States/UTs proportionately from amongst the remaining completely verified applications in order of merit. In case the quota against a community still remains unutilised, the same shall be distributed amongst the other communities of all the States/UTs proportionately from amongst the remaining completely verified applications in order of merit.

2.4.3 Beneficiary ID

Since associating a beneficiary id with every record is an essential requirement for processing case on PFMS, all such records which have successfully been verified will be sent simultaneously to PFMS for obtaining the beneficiary-ids along-with for second level of verification (as also mentioned under para 2.3.2).
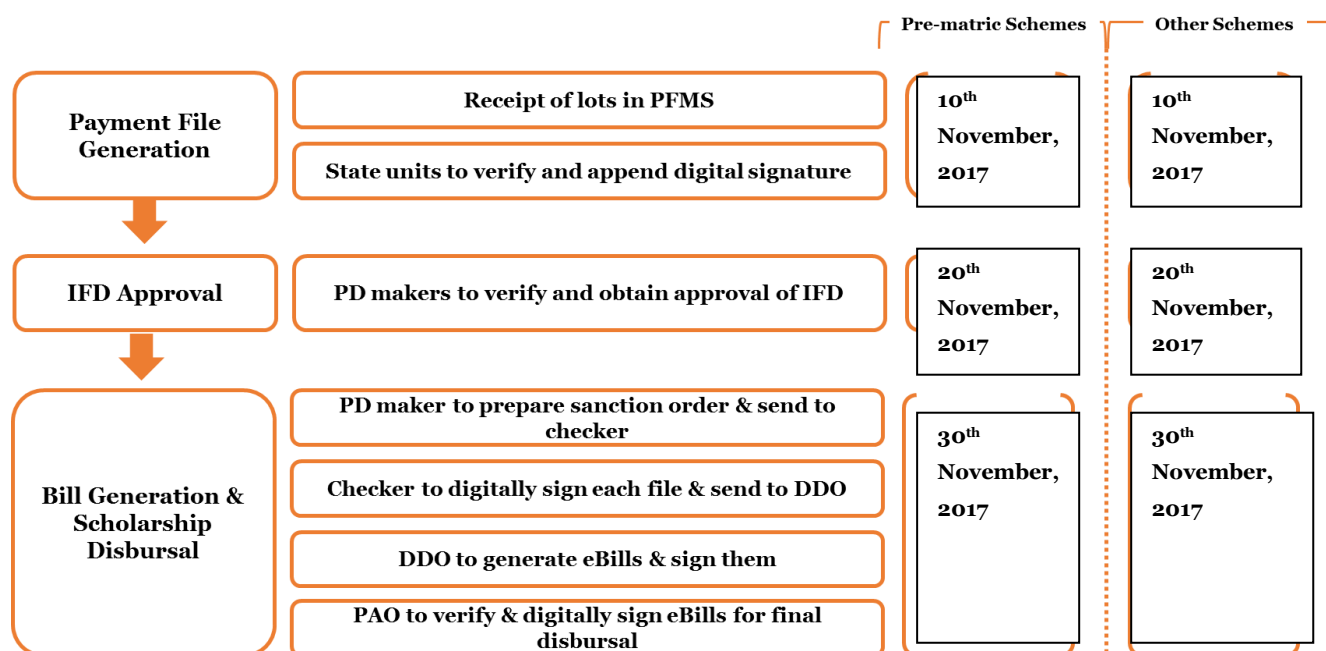
2.4.4 Lot Generation

NIC will segregate the applications, state-wise and scheme-wise, from a merit list to create lots. NIC will incorporate beneficiary-ids received from PFMS against each record and push these lots to PFMS over a secured channel for creation of payment files. These activities will be completed by **25th October, 2017 for all three scholarship schemes.**

2.5 Scholarship Approval & Disbursal Phase

This phase entails activities including payment file generation, digital signing of the concerned authorities, verification by makers and checkers, IFD approvals etc.

The following figure depicts an overview of the activities undertaken in the Approval & Digital Signing Phase.

		Pre-matric Schemes	Other Schemes
Payment File Generation	Receipt of lots in PFMS State units to verify and append digital signature	10th November, 2017	10th November, 2017
IFD Approval	PD makers to verify and obtain approval of IFD	20th November, 2017	20th November, 2017
Bill Generation & Scholarship Disbursal	PD maker to prepare sanction order & send to checker Checker to digitally sign each file & send to DDO DDO to generate eBills & sign them PAO to verify & digitally sign eBills for final disbursal	30th November, 2017	30th November, 2017

2.5.1 Payment File Generation

On receipt of lots, PFMS will create payment files against these lots and push them to concerned State/UT Units for verification and appending Digital signature. Once digitally signed by the concerned State/UT Units, payment files will be made available to the Program Division (PD) makers. These activities will be completed by **10th November, 2017 all scholarship schemes.**

2.5.2   IFD Approval

On receipt of digitally signed payment files, PD makers will verify and obtain approval of their IFD. It is desirable that the concerned PD may obtain scheme-wise blanket IFD approval to reduce the process time. The same IFD approval number can be mentioned against each payment file on NSP. These activities will be completed by **20th November, 2017 for all three scholarship schemes.**

2.5.3 Bill Generation & Scholarship Disbursal

Subsequent to IFD approval, the PD maker will prepare Sanction Order against each payment file and send them to the Checker. The Checker will digitally sign each file and, thereafter, the DDO of the Ministry/Department will tally details, generate eBills and digitally sign them. The eBill will, thereafter, be sent to PAO who will verify them and digitally sign them before sending them for payments using PFMS. **For disbursal of scholarships priority will be given to Aadhaar based payment failing which disbursal will be made to verified bank accounts of the beneficiaries.** These activities will be completed by **31st December, 2017 for all three scholarship schemes.**
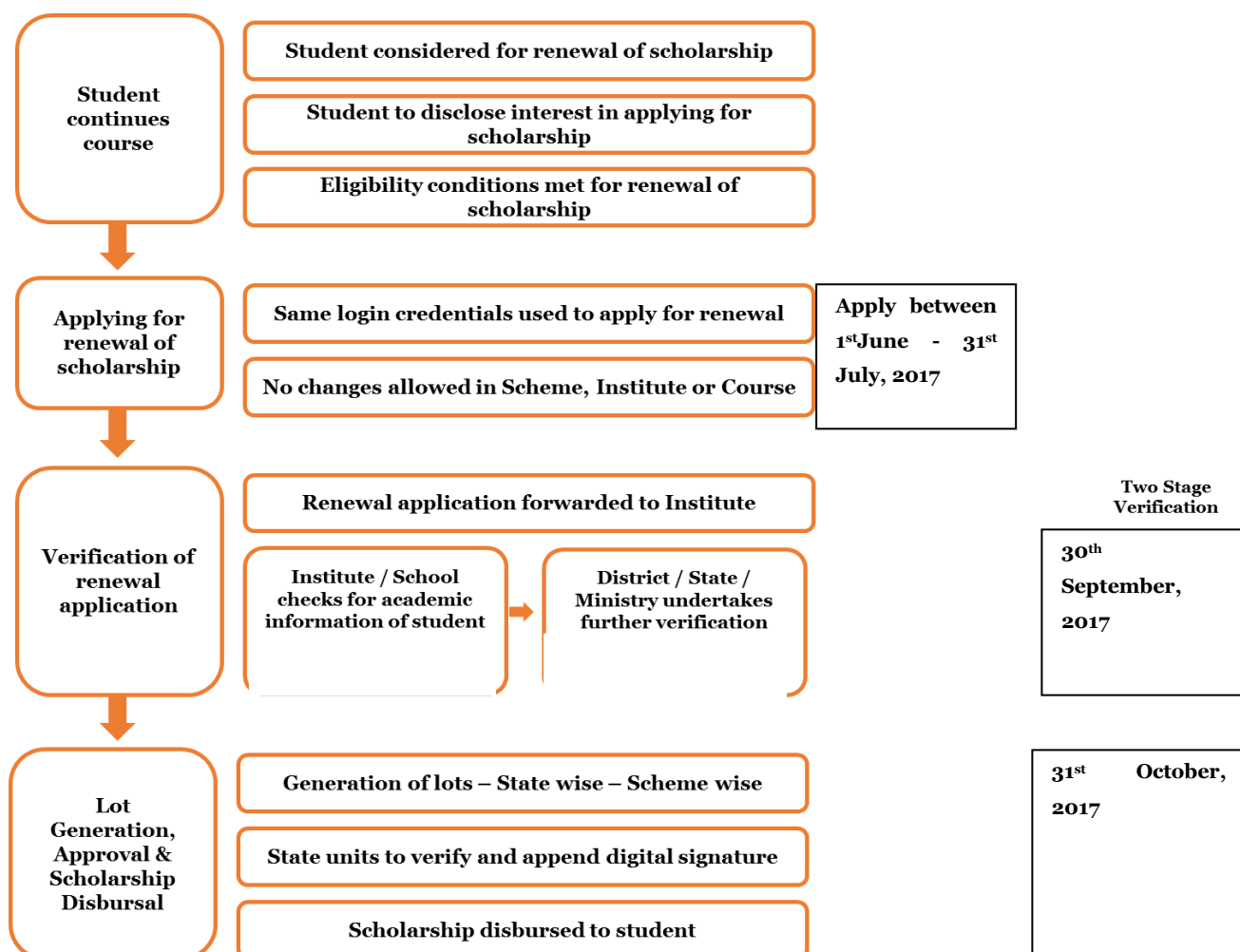
2.5.4 Feedback

Once payment is made, the feedback mechanism will enable sharing of information between banks, NPCI, PFMS and NSP regarding successful disbursal of scholarships. This information will be reflected on the user accounts of the beneficiaries/students as well as of the concerned Ministries / Departments.

3.   Renewal of Scholarships

All such applications where a student continues with the same scheme (Pre Matric, Post Matric and Merit cum Means scholarship schemes) in the same Institute/School will be considered as renewal of application. The renewal process for students is quite simple as compared to the process for Fresh Applications. As the system already has information about the student based on his/her application of previous academic year, the student has to just show his/her interest in applying for scholarship. To do so, students have to only update minimal details in the existing application form. Even the verification process for Renewal students is quite simple as they have already been verified during the previous academic session.

The following figure depicts an overview of the activities undertaken in the Renewal of Scholarships.

Student continues course
- Student considered for renewal of scholarship
- Student to disclose interest in applying for scholarship
- Eligibility conditions met for renewal of scholarship

Applying for renewal of scholarship
- Same login credentials used to apply for renewal
- No changes allowed in Scheme, Institute or Course

Apply between 1st June - 31st July, 2017

Verification of renewal application
- Renewal application forwarded to Institute
- Institute / School checks for academic information of student → District / State / Ministry undertakes further verification

Two Stage Verification

30th September, 2017

Lot Generation, Approval & Scholarship Disbursal
- Generation of lots – State wise – Scheme wise
- State units to verify and append digital signature
- Scholarship disbursed to student

31st October, 2017

3.1.1 Eligibility

A student will be considered eligible in this category if he/she is an existing scholarship recipient and continues in 2017-18, in the same scheme and in the same school/institute.

3.1.2 Time Lines

The student will apply for renewal **between 1st June – 31st July 2017**.

3.1.3 Applying for Renewal

The students will be able to login to portal using his/her login credentials created in previous academic session while applying for Scholarship. Upon successful login, personal and academic details of student and scheme will be auto- populated on the screen. The student may update following details in the application form:

1. Previous Year /Last exam passed Mark-sheet (for same/ongoing course.)
2. Parents/Guardian's Income certificate issued by the authority designated by the State Government/UT Administration, as per the scheme requirement
3. Aadhaar Details if not submitted in the previous AY.

    [Aadhaar no. is optional for the students at present, as the Gazette Notification under Section-7 of Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and Other Subsidies, Benefits and Services) Act, 2016 (18 of 2016) (with respect to this scheme) has been notified on 21st April, 2017 in the Official Gazette of India by Ministry of Minority Affairs, it will be necessary for the eligible applicants to provide Aadhaar number while applying for the scholarship and in case, an individual does not possess Aadhaar one can provide the details of alternative identification documents, as stated in the Gazette Notification, detailed below:

    (a) (i) if she or he has enrolled, her or his Aadhaar Enrolment ID slip; or

    (ii) a copy of her or his request made for Aadhaar enrolment, as specified in sub-paragraph (b) of paragraph 2; and

    (b) (i) Bank passbook with photograph; or (ii) Ration Card, or (iii) Permanent Account Number (PAN) Card issued by the Income Tax Department; or (iv) Passport; or (v) Certificate of identity having photo of such student issued by a Headmaster or Principal of School under official seal of the school; or (vi) Driving license issued by the Licensing Authority under the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 (59 of 1988); or (vii) any other documents specified by the State Government or Union territory Administration.

    [Note- For Assam, Jammu & Kashmir and Meghalaya, the documents mentioned at para (b) shall only be required]]
4. Mobile Number/Email Id (unique mobile no. & email Id. for Merit-cum-Means SS; for Pre-Matric and Post-Matric- Maximum two applications per mobile no./email Id)
5. Bank details- An Aadhaar seeded Bank account in his/her name exclusively for

post-matric and Merit-cum-Means based scholarships. In his/her name either exclusive or joint account with any of his/her parent in case of pre-matric scholarships.

6. Course details.
7. Course Fees for the academic (duly signed by the Institute Authority in case required to be uploaded on NSP for scholarship claims of more than Rs. 50,000/-).
8. Residential/ domicile certificate.
9. Community certificate.

The student will not be able to make changes in the Scheme and Institute. Upon successfully updating the information, the student can submit renewal application on the portal. **After submission, the student will not be allowed to make any change(s) in his/her application.**

3.1.4 Verification

Based on the nature of application, the Verification process will be   Two stage verification:

Since, all such applications may require changes / modification / alteration in crucial information such as bank account / course fee etc., it require two-stage verification i.e. will be first verified by the concerned Institute/School and thereafter, by the next verifying authority District/State before being sent for Lot generation.

A renewal application will be made available to the Institute/School for verification as soon as the application is made on the Portal. For renewal cases the first stage verification i.e. at the Institute/School level shall be completed by **31st August, 2017** and the second stage verification may be completed by **30th September, 2017.**

3.1.5. Lot Generation, Scholarship Approval and Disbursal

As renewal of scholarship does not require preparation of merit list or obtaining of beneficiary id, therefore, duly verified applications may be considered for lot generation. Subsequent to lot generation, the process for scholarship approval and disbursal will be similar to that for fresh applications. **The entire process including scholarship disbursal may be completed by 31st October, 2017 since there shall be two-stage verification cases.**

<center>*****</center>