

NOTICE

No.: AB-CSIR0HRDG(OT)/11/2024-Admin-HRDG

Dated: 13-01-2026

Subject: Introduction of the Joint CSIR–UGC–DBT JRF-NET Examination, to be implemented from the December 2026 cycle – Background, Concerns and Clarifications

A proposal has been approved to **merge the CSIR-NET (Life Sciences) and DBT-BET (Biotechnology) examinations**, along with syllabus to establish a **single, unified National-level eligibility examination** for **Junior Research Fellowship (JRF) and Lectureship** in the biological sciences.

This **Joint CSIR–UGC–DBT JRF/NET examination** is intended to **come into effect from the December 2026 examination cycle**.

The primary objective of this integration is to **streamline the national examination framework**, eliminate redundancy in testing, and create a **cohesive and efficient assessment system** that reflects the **increasingly interdisciplinary nature of contemporary biological research and development**.

During the initial rounds of discussion and stakeholder consultations, **students and aspirants highlighted several key concerns**, which had been carefully examined to ensure a **smooth and equitable transition** to the unified examination system. The following were the major concerns of the stakeholders:

1. **Reduction in Total Number of Seats:** It was apprehended/expressed that the merger may lead to a possible reduction in the total number of fellowships available, thereby limiting opportunities for eligible candidates.
2. **Increased Academic Complexity for Life Sciences Students:** Students from traditional life sciences backgrounds expressed concerns that the inclusion of biotechnology-related topics could increase the difficulty level and potentially affect their performance.
3. **Increased Competition for Biotechnology Students:** Students from biotechnology backgrounds raised concerns that the larger candidate pool, including life sciences students could intensify/ increase the level of competition.

After careful consideration, the following **clarifications and measures** are hereby placed on record:

1. **No Impact on the number of Seats:** It is hereby clarified that there shall be **no impact on the total number of fellowships** on account of syllabus. CSIR and DBT will continue to provide the fellowships as per present process and only the selection will be through common Exam.

2. **Balanced Question Paper Design:** The merged examination will feature adequate **optional questions** covering both traditional Life Sciences and Biotechnology domains. The examination pattern will ensure **equal opportunity** for candidates from diverse academic backgrounds to attempt adequate number of questions from their respective areas of expertise.
3. **Fair and Inclusive Evaluation:** The question paper and the evaluation process will be designed to assess **conceptual understanding, analytical ability, and research aptitude in fundamental broader concepts** rather than narrow and specialized subject-knowledge. Additionally, this new pattern will ensure a fair and inclusive assessment framework for all candidates, reducing redundancy in the examination process.

Additionally, it is informed that the Joint CSIR-UGC-DBT-JRF Net exam qualified candidates of Biotechnology will also be eligible for all three categories (Category 1- Award of JRF and appointment as Assistant Professor, Category 2- Appointment as Assistant Professor and admission to Ph.D. and Category 3- Admission to Ph.D. only) as per the guidelines, unlike previously in the case of DBT BET.

The merger of the CSIR-NET and DBT-BET examinations is a unique step towards creating a unified and efficient system for evaluating research aptitude, necessitated by the dynamic growth of inter-disciplinary research in biological sciences. With the above measures in place, the interests of all stakeholders—students, researchers, and academic institutions—will be safeguarded, while simultaneously promoting interdisciplinarity and fostering excellence for a pool of new generation researchers.