nasscom foundation

Request for Proposal

Optum Scholarship Project

Evaluation Study

About Nasscom Foundation

Established in 2001, nasscom foundation has been witness to the transformative power of technology for over two decades. Part of the nasscom ecosystem, we are the only neutral not-for-profit organization representing the Indian tech industry. We remain rooted to our core philosophy of TechForGood, where our efforts are focused on unlocking the power of technology by creating access and opportunity for those who need it the most. We work on helping people and institutions transform the way they tackle social and economic challenges through technology. We have five key areas of intervention – Digital Literacy, Skilling and Employability, Women Entrepreneurship, Scaling Social Innovation and Empowering NGO Ecosystem.

About the Project

The Scholarship Project FY 2026–27, implemented by Nasscom Foundation with CSR support from Optum Global Solutions (India) Pvt. Ltd., supports students from economically weaker and marginalized backgrounds to complete higher education in STEM disciplines and transition into employment. The project provides a scholarship of INR 30,000 per student towards tuition fees, accommodation, study materials and essential living expenses to 147 students (19 continuing scholars from the previous cycle + 128 new scholars), drawn from 4–6 partner colleges in Delhi, Bengaluru and Hyderabad. Preference is given to students in the 3rd and 4th year of B.E., B.Tech, Computer Science, Pharmacy and Life Sciences programmes, and to SC, ST, OBC, PwD, single-parent, orphan and women applicants (minimum 65% in Class 12; annual family income up to INR 8 lakh).

This year the project goes beyond financial assistance and combines it with structured career-readiness support:

- **Tech platform** for online applications, eligibility screening, verification, disbursement tracking and student communication
- **Mentorship and career development** – 4 virtual sessions and 3 physical engagements in each location, with Optum employees volunteering as mentors (networking and communication, academia–industry gap, LinkedIn and personal branding, resume and interview preparation)
- **Industry exposure visits** for selected students to Nasscom/corporate offices across the three cities
- **Alumni and peer support network** of current and former scholars

The project aims to improve academic continuity and retention, reduce financial stress, enhance soft skills and career awareness, and increase preparedness for internships and entry-level employment.

Project Period: July 2026 – January 2027 (7 months)

Project Progress

The project has onboarded the tech platform for application management and disbursement, and outreach has been conducted through partner colleges in all three cities. As of October, 147 students have been selected, and each student has received the first tranche of the scholarship amounting to ₹15,000. The remaining disbursements and engagement activities are scheduled to be completed by January 2027.

Scope of Work

As part of program learning, accountability and continuous improvement, Nasscom foundation seeks to commission an independent end-of-project evaluation of the Optum Scholarship Project FY 2026–27. The study will assess the relevance, effectiveness and perceived value of the scholarship and career-readiness support, with a focus on students' academic retention and employment readiness, from the perspective of students, parents, colleges and mentors. Findings will be submitted as part of the final grant report to Optum. The evaluation will address the following questions:

For Student Beneficiaries – Scholarship Support

- Did students receive the scholarship support as communicated (amount, timelines, components)?
- What specific education-related expenses (tuition, accommodation, study materials, living costs) were covered using the scholarship?
- How has the scholarship helped them continue or complete their education, and has it reduced financial stress or the risk of dropout or course discontinuation?
- What challenges, if any, did students face during application, verification or disbursement on the tech platform?

For Student Beneficiaries – Mentorship, Career Readiness and Industry Exposure

- How relevant and useful were the virtual and physical mentorship sessions and the interaction with Optum volunteer mentors?
- Has the program improved students' soft skills, confidence, career awareness and preparedness for internships, placements and interviews (e.g. resume, LinkedIn profile, interview preparation)?
- What did students gain from the industry exposure visits?
- What are students' current placement, internship or higher-education status and plans?

For Continuing Scholars (second-year support)

- How has continued support across two cycles influenced academic progression, course completion and transition to employment?

For Parents/Guardians

- How do parents perceive the need for scholarship support for their child's education?
- In what ways has the scholarship reduced the household's financial burden?
- Has the scholarship influenced decisions related to continuation of education or career choices?
- Are there any challenges parents observed in documentation, communication or timelines?

For Colleges, Mentors and Program Team

- How do partner college coordinators perceive the outreach, selection process and value of the program for their students?
- How do Optum volunteer mentors assess student engagement and the mentorship model?

Process & Implementation

- Are there procedural gaps, delays or bottlenecks in outreach, application, verification or fund disbursement?
- How effective is communication with students and parents regarding processes and timelines?
- What programmatic or operational improvements are required for the next cycle?

Suggested Research Design

The study will adopt a mixed-methods approach. The agency will review relevant program documents – scholarship guidelines, selection and disbursement records from the tech platform, mentorship session records, timelines and communication material (as shared by Nasscom Foundation) – to understand the project design and develop the methodology. Responses from students and their families will be the primary reference, triangulated with program data and the views of colleges and mentors. Proposed methodology includes:

a) Online Survey – All Scholars

- Short structured survey (online/telephonic) of all 147 scholars to capture receipt and use of funds, academic status, participation in mentorship and exposure activities, self-reported career readiness and placement/internship status

b) In-depth Interviews (IDIs) – Students

- Qualitative interviews with a representative sample of scholarship recipients, conducted in person across Delhi, Bengaluru and Hyderabad wherever feasible
- Interviews to explore education continuity, financial impact, career readiness and overall student experience

c) In-depth Interviews (IDIs) – Parents/Guardians

- IDIs (in person or telephonic) with parents/guardians of a sub-sample of student beneficiaries
- Focus on household-level economic impact, decision-making and perceived value

d) Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)

- Partner college coordinators/faculty, Optum volunteer mentors and the nasscom foundation program team

Sampling Framework

The agency should propose the sample size and justify it. Indicative minimums are:

Method	Respondents	Indicative sample
Online survey	All scholars	147 (census)
IDIs	Students	8
IDIs	Parents/guardians	5
KIIs	College coordinators, Optum mentors, program team	2
Case stories	Students	8-10

The sampling approach should ensure representation across:

- Gender (with focus on women beneficiaries)
- Year of study (3rd and 4th year) and student type (continuing vs. new scholars)
- Geography (Delhi, Bengaluru, Hyderabad) and partner colleges
- Course categories (B.E./B.Tech, Computer Science, Pharmacy, Life Sciences)
- Social category (SC/ST/OBC, PwD, first-generation learners)

Participatory methods will be adopted to facilitate photo documentation and the development of compelling student case studies. The study will include in-depth case stories of at least 8 scholarship beneficiaries, capturing their educational journeys and illustrating how the scholarship and mentorship support has contributed to academic continuity, skill development and career advancement. These case studies will combine quantitative progress with qualitative narratives on the impact of the program on students' personal and professional trajectories.

Responsibility of Consultant/Agency

The responsibilities of the agency include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Develop an inception report and finalize multilingual research tools (English, Hindi, Kannada, Telugu as required) in consultation with Nasscom Foundation

- Deploy trained qualitative investigators with prior evaluation experience in education/scholarship programs
- Establish robust mechanisms for data collection, quality monitoring and reporting
- Submit a comprehensive final report with findings, success stories, case studies and recommendations
- Present findings to Nasscom Foundation and key stakeholders for program improvement

Ethics, Confidentiality and Data Protection

- Obtain informed consent from all respondents (and from parents/guardians where applicable) before interviews, photographs or video/audio recording
- Use personal data of students, parents and other respondents only for this study, store it securely, and return or delete it on completion, in compliance with the Information Technology Act, 2000 and applicable data protection rules
- Treat all program information, data and findings as confidential; no information, photographs or case studies may be published or shared with any third party without prior written approval of Nasscom Foundation
- All data, photographs, recordings and reports produced under this assignment will be the property of Nasscom Foundation and its CSR partner

Key Deliverables and Timelines

The study must be completed **by 31st January 2027**, in line with the project period.

Deliverable	Due by
Award of contract	10th November 2026
Inception report and finalized data collection tools	15th November 2026
Completion of survey, field visits and interviews	5th December 2026
Topline presentation of findings	20th December 2026
Draft evaluation report	30th January 2027

Study Costs

Proposals exceeding INR 2,50,000 (all inclusive of professional fees, data collection, logistics and taxes) will not be considered.

Submission Instructions

Proposals must include:

- **Technical Proposal** – approach, methodology, sampling plan, work plan and timeline, key staff profiles, past work references
- **Financial Proposal** – detailed budget with breakdown of costs (fees, travel, data collection, logistics, taxes)
- **Work Profile and Consultant CVs**

Proposals should be submitted by **6th November 2026, 5:00 PM IST** to: rfp@nasscomfoundation.org with the subject line: "Evaluation Study – Optum Scholarship Project FY 2026–27". Late submissions will not be considered.