



5 September 2017

Auroville Entry Policy 2017

Final Draft for a Residents' Assembly Decision

The Governing Board of the Auroville Foundation has promulgated the Auroville Foundation (Admission and Termination of persons in the Register of Residents) Regulations, 2017 (hereinafter called 'the Regulations'). In accordance with these Regulations, the Residents' Assembly has created this Auroville Entry Policy 2017.

The Entry Policy 2017

This policy may be called the Auroville Entry Policy. It shall come into effect on the date it has been approved by the Residents' Assembly of the Auroville Foundation. Following The Mother's wish that Auroville's organization be evolutionary and experimental in character, the Residents' Assembly, via its mandated bodies, may amend this Auroville Entry Policy.

Definitions

All words and expressions in this Entry Policy have the meanings as assigned in the Regulations and the Auroville Foundation Act, 1988 (54 of 1988). In this document, unless otherwise specified:

- Entry Service means Admission Service;
- Entry Board means Admission Committee

Criteria Applicable to all Applicants

The following criteria apply to all applicants who wish to join Auroville under one of the categories / statuses specified in the annexes of this policy.

“Greetings from Auroville to all men of goodwill! Are invited to Auroville all those who thirst for progress and aspire to a higher and truer life.”

- The Mother

To join Auroville, one should:

1. Be inspired by the Auroville “Charter” and aspire to realize the ideals of Auroville, as expressed in The Mother’s guidelines and such documents as “The Dream” and “To be a true Aurovilian” (refer to Annex A);
2. Be willing to further the manifestation of the ideals of Auroville according to his/her capacity;
3. Be willing to contribute to the collective welfare through work, offerings in kind or with money;
4. Agree not to use Auroville as a platform for personal gain. For example, using the name and symbol of Auroville as well as its facilities, immoveable assets and services for personal / private or sectarian activities;
5. Abstain from any form of violence;
6. Not engage in national politics by standing for elections or belonging to a political party;
7. Abide by the laws of India

The Entry Service

The Entry Service consists of three parts:

1. The Entry Board,
2. The Entry Secretariat,
3. The Mentor Pool.

1. The Entry Board

The constitution and mandate of the Entry Board are as described in the Regulations for the Admission Committee. The relevant paragraphs are copied below:

With reference to regulation 3. of the Regulations -

Constitution of the Admission Committee. -

(1) The Resident's Assembly shall constitute an Admission Committee whose members shall be appointed directly by the Resident's Assembly or by a committee constituted by it for this purpose.

(2) The Admission Committee shall consist of nine members, at least six of whom have been resident of Auroville for a minimum period of five years.

(3) The Resident's Assembly or such other committee constituted by it for this purpose shall ensure that, -

(i) the ' Admission Committee' is composed of residents of different ages and nationalities and that there is a gender balance; and

(ii) the members are qualified for the assigned work as per the mandate provided in regulation 4 and that they have required communication and organisational skills.

(4) The members of the Admission Committee shall hold office for a period of three years but on expiration of every year three members shall retire and three new members shall be appointed in their place. Outgoing members shall be eligible for re-appointment after a gap of two years.

(5) The Resident's Assembly, at any time, shall have the right to remove any of the members of the Admission Committee and replace them with other persons as members if it considers that it is in the larger interest of the community of Auroville.

(6) Any vacancy arising in the Admission Committee either by way of resignation, expiry of term of office, or otherwise, shall be filled by the Resident's Assembly or the committee constituted by it for the purpose.

With reference to regulation 4. of the Regulations -

Mandate of the Admission Committee. -

(1) The Admission Committee shall have the following mandate, namely: -

(i) to welcome, register and assist any applicant seeking admission to Auroville;

(ii) to accept or reject an applicant in accordance with these regulations;

(iii) where applicable, to request the Secretary to recommend the appropriate visa for an applicant and his or her descendants or wards;

(iv) to recommend to the Secretary that the name of an applicant may be entered in the Register of Residents.

Method of working of the Entry Board:

The Entry Board is to function as a Participatory Working Group (PWG), and is to be selected in a similar manner as described in the PWG document approved by the Residents' Assembly.

The members of the Entry Board:

1. Will review and approve applications for all statuses (e.g. Newcomer / Aurovilian, Friend of Auroville, Associate, etc) as described in the various annexes of this Entry Policy.
2. Will listen in depth to the applicants and provide relevant advice / information for their settling in Auroville, such as regarding the purpose of the Mentor system and the Mentor Pool,
3. Are accountable to the community,
4. Will not deal with anonymous objections against applicants,
5. Will inform the concerned applicant of confidential objections, but may decide not to disclose the name of the objector,
6. Will make minutes of all official meetings accessible to the Residents. However, the Entry Board may decide not to give access to its minutes, after having obtained the opinion of the Working Committee, if it considers that that would adversely affect the interests of Auroville, an individual or the person concerned or if it is covered by a confidentiality agreement,
7. Will process feedback from the community based on the "Criteria Applicable to all Applicants" as defined in this Entry Policy,
8. Will cancel the process of an applicant as enumerated in the annexes in this Entry Policy,
9. Will oversee the good functioning of the Entry Secretariat,
10. Will make regular reports to the Auroville Council together with the Mentor Pool on the functioning of this Entry Policy and, if necessary, suggest improvements.

Term and removal of members of the Entry Board:

The term and removal of members of the Entry Board will happen as described in the ratified version of the PWG document. Relevant paragraphs from the PWG (March 2016) document are copied here for quick reference:

TERM, MANDATE AND TURNOVER

- Members are selected for a period of 3 years unless the Working Group mandate states differently.
- Having completed 3 years, Members can be selected by nomination or self-nomination for a second term through open participation in the 3-Day Selection Process. After 2 terms there has to be a time lapse of 2 years before a Member can again nominate her/himself or be nominated for membership in the same working group.
- There will be a yearly selection process in November when approximately a third of the Members of a working group will be replaced. This will ensure continuity in the Working Groups with a system of staggered turnover.
- In the beginning of September together with the initiating of the yearly selection process, the working group informs the community via the Residents' Assembly Service through News & Notes and Auronet which Members will be replaced and which skills are needed from the new-to-be Members.
- For Working Groups not yet acquainted with it the staggered membership process. It is proposed to keep on 2 Members from the earlier group for one year only. For the second year the shift can happen naturally by Members choosing to resign. If this is not the case, the working group team will make the decision, if needed in collaboration with the community through the Residents' Assembly Service. After this period of transit, the staggering will take place naturally. (Some of the mandates of the Working Groups may have to be adjusted in order to function this way.)

RESIGNATION OF MEMBERS

- When a Member wants to resign during the term, s/he is requested to stay on until November and to make a proper handover of all her/his tasks. If this is not possible, the working group can ask a suitable individual from within the Resource Pool or the community at large to join as an interim solution and fill the role as a Member but without decision-making powers.
- The interim person will stay on till the yearly selection process in November and can, if so wished, nominate her/himself or be nominated for the selection process.

REMOVAL OF MEMBERS DURING THE TERM

To be Member of a working group implies effective participation, conscientious presence and teamwork. Members who are not executing their work as assigned by the group and/or turn out to be ill-matched with the team, can – after all attempts of integration have failed – be asked by the Working Group to step out. For specific tasks they can serve the Group as a Resource Person. In a case like this, it will to be announced in the monthly working group report and through the RAS in a transparent, open way.

Decision-making and the Entry Board:

1. A minimum of seven Entry Board members constitutes a quorum in order to arrive at a decision,
2. The Entry Board will involve the Mentors of the applicant, and the applicant, before arriving at a decision,
3. In the case that an applicant or Newcomer needs to leave Auroville (from 1 to 3 months at a time) for personal reasons, the Entry Board together with the Mentors will put the Newcomer process on hold. The duration of time that the Newcomer has been out will then be added to the Newcomer period upon the Newcomer's return.
 - 3.1. In the case that an applicant is absent for more than 3 months, the Entry Board together with the Mentors may decide to either cancel his / her Newcomer process or choose to further extend it.
4. After a discussion with the applicant, the Entry Board, together with the Mentors, may decide that the applicant is better suited for another category / status to join Auroville and will recommend the same to the applicant. The Entry Secretariat will then guide the applicant through the relevant administrative process,
5. One member of the Entry Secretariat shall attend the Entry Board meetings, but shall not participate in its decisions,

2. The Entry Secretariat

The Entry Secretariat is the administrative body that performs the daily operations and is accountable to the Entry Board.

Joining and leaving the Entry Secretariat

The Auroville Council together with the Working Committee will approve appointments/re-appointments/replacements or removal of members of the Entry Secretariat, after consulting with the Entry Board. Members of the Entry Secretariat are required to have good communication and computer skills and to be open to participate in relevant trainings.

Responsibilities and tasks of the Entry Secretariat

The Entry Secretariat shall:

1. Welcome applicants, provide relevant information, register applicants for Welcome Talks, information programmes and
2. Verify that applicants have attended these programmes
3. Welcome and register all applicants for each of the categories or statuses mentioned in this Entry Policy and assist Newcomers, Returning Aurovilians, Students, Spouses /

Partners, Friends, Children of and Associates of Auroville with their admission into Auroville,

4. Make application forms available in hard copies and through the Entry Service website,
5. Maintain and update a list of Mentors in the Mentor Pool
6. Verify that Mentors have undergone the Mentor Trainings,
7. Function on a full-time basis,
8. Publish regular updates in Auroville's weekly bulletin, "News and Notes", and on AuroNet;
9. Maintain proper files, data, statistics and notes of interviews and meetings,
10. Ensure that one of its members attend the Entry Board meetings to maintain the flow of information, to take notes and to minute its meetings,
11. Ensure the timely submission to the Auroville Council of reports made by the Entry Board together with the Mentor Pool on the functioning and suggested improvements of this Entry Policy. The reports will be on a quarterly basis in the first year, and on an annual basis in subsequent years,
12. Assure confidentiality of all information handled by the Entry Secretariat.

3. The Mentor Pool

The Mentor Pool is a group of committed and informed Residents of Auroville (already registered in the Register of Residents) with a minimum three (3) years Auroville experience and aged 21 or above, who wish to assist the entry process.

The Mentor Pool is an integral part of the Entry Service (along with the Entry Secretariat and the Entry Board). Mentors will be responsible for supporting applicants and Newcomers by helping them integrate into the life of the community. The Mentors will be the bridge between Newcomers and the Entry Secretariat, the Entry Board.

Joining and leaving the Mentor Pool

1. A Mentor is an Aurovilian who is preferably registered in the Register of Residents for 3 years or more and resides in Auroville. Exceptions can be made by the Entry Board.
2. To join/rejoin the Mentor Pool, the resident may register with the Entry Secretariat in person, via an online form, or by email.
3. Alternatively, a Mentor can be chosen by an applicant from the community at large, who agrees to participate in Mentor trainings.
4. A Mentor is free to leave the pool at any time, unless he/she is mentoring a Newcomer. However, the former Mentor is welcome to re-join the Mentor Pool at any time.

5. If a Mentor is inactive for more than three (3) months and / or absent for six (6) months, he / she may be removed from the Mentor Pool by the Entry Secretariat after approval of the Entry Board,
6. The Entry Board may remove any Mentor, at any time, from the Mentor Pool if the Mentor behaves in contradiction to the ideals of Auroville.
7. No more than five (5) applicants, at any given moment, can be mentored by one Mentor.

Commitment of each Mentor of the Mentor Pool

1. A Mentor agrees to go through a mentor training, for which the Entry Secretariat will provide information and verify that the training has been attended,
2. A Mentor agrees to support the Newcomer during the entire Newcomer period and agrees to support and to report to the Entry Secretariat periodically and as requested by the Entry Board.
3. How much time a Mentor commits to the Newcomer is entirely up to the Mentor and the Newcomer. However, if a Mentor feels he is offering too little time, or if the Newcomer feels he needs more guidance, the Entry Secretariat may assign a new Mentor to the Newcomer as a replacement.
4. No Mentor shall be a relative or employer of the applicant.

Responsibilities and tasks of a Mentor

1. To assist a Newcomer through the Newcomer period, offering guidance, support, and to be a solid link to the community,
2. To discuss feedback with the Newcomer and to assist the Newcomer in resolving difficulties, if necessary, in consultation with the Entry Board,
3. To offer as much assistance as possible to the Newcomer in helping to find answers to the Newcomer's questions,
4. To communicate about the Newcomer as often as needed with the Entry Board and the Entry Secretariat and with the other assigned Mentors, and to provide the information needed for the administrative process,
5. To be a part of the decision-making process, together with the Entry Board as outlined in this Entry Policy for the approval of the Newcomer and Aurovilian status.

Decision-making

1. A decision should be arrived at within the stipulated time as outlined in this policy,
2. At any time during the Newcomer period, if both Mentors, together with the applicant, believe that the applicant is not ready for Auroville, they will inform the Entry Board, and

together with the Entry Board, may extend or cancel the Newcomer process. The applicant will be informed in writing as well as in person, with the reasons explained,

3. In the case that an applicant or Newcomer needs to leave Auroville (from 1 to 3 months at a time) for personal reasons, the Entry Board together with the Mentors will put the Newcomer process on hold. The duration of time that the Newcomer has been out will then be added to the Newcomer period upon the Newcomer's return.
 - 3.1. In the case that an applicant is absent for more than 3 months, the Entry Board together with the Mentors may decide to either cancel his / her Newcomer process or choose to further extend it.
4. Alternatively, the Mentors, together with the Entry Board, may decide that the applicant is better suited for another category to join Auroville and will recommend the same to the applicant. The Entry Secretariat will then guide the applicant through the relevant administrative process,
5. The Mentors of the applicant will be involved in the decision-making with the Entry Board.

Guideline for Implementing the Entry Policy

In implementing this Policy, the Entry Service (the Entry Board, the Entry Secretariat and the Mentor Pool) agrees to embody the above mentioned "Criteria applicable to all Applicants" and will do its best to ensure that all decisions are made with sincerity, all information gathered is factual, all help provided to applicants is done in a welcoming spirit, and that the Auroville community is well informed and included, as described in the Participatory Working Groups (PWG) guidelines.

Annex Section

The following annexes describe the various categories/statuses for applying to be part of Auroville:

1. Annex A: Words of the Mother and more
2. Annex B: Aurovilian, and how to apply
3. Annex C: Friend of Auroville, and how to apply
4. Annex D: Student of Auroville, and how to apply
5. Annex E: Spouse or Partner of Auroville, and how to apply
6. Annex F: Associate of Auroville, and how to apply