

Guidelines for INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship Scheme

The Department of Science and Technology, Government of India, has launched the “**Innovation in Science Pursuit for Inspired Research (INSPIRE)**” program in 2008. The program aims to attract talent for study of science and careers with research. INSPIRE includes many components. The **INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship Scheme** offers contractual research fellowships to young achievers and an opportunity for independent research in the near term and emerge as a future leader in the long term.

a) Purpose

- To provide attractive opportunities to young achievers for developing independent scientific profiles and launch them in fulfilling long term careers.
- Expected to augment high quality scientific manpower for scientific and educational institutions, especially the Central and State universities.
- While the vertical migration among students in different INSPIRE components would be encouraged, the Scheme would also provide opportunity to students for lateral entry into this component.
- This component would provide an opportunity for independent research and does not a guarantee regular position after 5 years.

b) Eligibility

Essential

- Indian citizens and people of Indian origin including NRI/PIO status with PhD (in science, mathematics, engineering, pharmacy, medicine, and agriculture related subjects) from any recognized university in the world.
- Those who have submitted these PhD theses and are awaiting award of the degree are also eligible. However, the award will be conveyed only after confirmation of the award of the PhD degree.
- The **upper age limit as on 1st January of the Year of Advertisement should be 32 years** for considering support for a period of 5 years. However, for SC and ST candidates upper age limit will be 35 years.
- Publication(s) in highly reputed journals demonstrating research potential of the candidate.
- Candidates shall possess minimum 60% marks (or equivalent CGPA) throughout his/her academic profile starting from the Higher Secondary Examination (Class 12 onwards).
- Candidates who are employed in regular/contractual position within India may apply for INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship towards improvement and enhancement of their career prospects but upon selection, the candidate need to resign (no lien or deputation or any type of leave would be accepted) from the current job and organization for implementation of INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship.

Desirable

- Candidates who are within top 1% at the School Leaving Examination, IIT-JEE rank holders, 1st rank holders either in graduation or post-graduation level university examination (which are used presently for identifying INSPIRE Scholars at under-graduate level and INSPIRE Fellows for doctoral degree).

c) Applications

- Two routes viz. **Direct and Nomination** mode are available for application by the eligible candidates,
- Candidates, who intend to apply through **Direct or Nomination Mode**, should apply online **only**. To apply **ONLINE**, please visit the website: www.online-inspire.gov.in and follow the process prescribed therein. After successful submission **ONLINE**, the candidate must obtain a print of the application thus submitted.
- Nominations from academic institutions or Industry R&D Centers can also be sent through Vice-Chancellors/ Directors of Institutions/ Head of Institutions/ Presidents and Fellows of Science Academies or Eminent Scientists from India and Abroad based on personal knowledge. Nominations to be sent to the Indian National Science Academy (INSA), New Delhi.

d) Method of Selection

- A three-tier selection process viz. Discipline-based Expert Committee for candidates under 'Direct' and 'Nomination' mode which is followed-by selection through the Apex Level Committee. Finally, INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship Council selects candidates in both modes.
- The Indian National Science Academy (INSA), New Delhi, in coordination with DST will be implementing this INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship Scheme up to the selection of candidates for the INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship.
- Discipline-wise Committees of INSA would evaluate and screen the candidates who wish to apply under the Direct and Nomination Routes without support from host-institutions.
- The Apex Committee shall finally select short-listed candidates for offering INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship under this Scheme and decision of the Apex Committee for selecting candidates under this Scheme shall further be considered at the INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship Council whose decision will be final for offer of INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship.

e) Amount and Duration

- Each selected INSPIRE Faculty Fellow shall be eligible to receive a consolidated amount of Rs.1,25,000/- with an annual increment Rs.2000/- per year. In addition, a Research Grant of Rs.7 lakh per year for 5 years shall also be provided to each successful candidate. This consolidated amount Rs1,25,000/- per month is an all-inclusive fellowship and taxable as per IT Act.
- The INSPIRE Faculty position is for a maximum period of 5 (five) years. However, one cannot avail two fellowships concurrently during the tenure of this award.

f) Issuing of Offer Letter

- The Offer Letter for **Direct and Nomination Mode** candidates is issued through the web portal (www.online-inspire.gov.in).
- Selected candidates, who have not identified host institutions at the time of their application, should do so immediately after their final selection. Selected candidate shall avail the INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship within 3 months of issue of the Offer Letter of selection. Otherwise, the Offer will get forfeited. Only, in exceptional situations a 3 months' extension may be considered, subject to receiving adequate justification from the candidate.
- A Selected candidate, who is yet to be awarded the PhD degree, receives only intimation for submission of his/her PhD degree certificate within 3 months to avoid forfeiting the Offer. Upon submission of the PhD degree certificate, the Offer Letter is issued to the candidate through web portal only for INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship Award with 3 months' validity to implement the Offer at the chosen Host Institution.
- Selected candidates are advised not to choose the Institution from where they have done their PhD degree as their Host Institution.
- Selected INSPIRE Faculty Fellows joining private academic/research institutes will receive only the research grant and their host institutes/universities will have to pay the fellowship amount equal to the scheme norms.

g) Terms and Conditions for implementation:

- In case the INSPIRE Faculty Fellow finds a permanent position during the tenure of the INSPIRE Fellowship in the same or any other Institution within the country, the Fellowship amount shall be discontinued from the day the INSPIRE Faculty Fellow joins the permanent position, but he/she shall continue under the INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship Scheme availing the Research Grant for the remaining period to carry out research in the new Host Institution.
- The INSPIRE Faculty Fellow is eligible for applying for any competitive grants from all funding agencies during the tenure of the INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship.
- Provision is available for supporting a research staff out of Research Grant during the Fellowship tenure of 5 years as per host institutional guidelines. In the event of getting employment elsewhere in the country other than the present Host Institute, the Fellow will also be allowed to move the research student, equipment etc., along with him/her to the new Host Institute.
- The annual Research Grant of @ Rs.7 lakh per year (100%) [Rs.35 lakh for 5 years] shall be utilized for incurring expenditure under all Recurring and Non-Recurring budget heads like ad-hoc Manpower cost, Consumable, Equipment. The amount under Travel, Contingencies and Overhead budget heads will be limited to 10% (i.e. Rs.70000/- per year), 10% (i.e. Rs.70000/- per year) and 5% (i.e. Rs.35,000/- per year) respectively.
- Every Fellow needs to provide a budget proposal with detailed break up as above for utilization of the Research Grant to DST-INSPIRE program division along with joining documents. Fellow/ Host Institution needs to adhere the approved break up for the entire period of 5 years.
- In case, Fellows who have joined the Indian host institution leave/quit the Scheme pre-maturely

within 6 months of his/her joining, he/she needs to forego his/her Fellowship as well as the Research Grant amount for the said duration.

- Fellows will be eligible to undertake visits to any international Laboratory/ University/ Institute for further exposure and training and carry out research activities up to a maximum period of 18 months either in one or multiple slots during the 5 years of fellowship. The short term visit abroad will be considered only after availing of 12 months of INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship. However, multiple slots would be preferred (not more than 6 months in a slot) and the short term visit will also be preferable to other than his or her post-doctoral place. This period will be treated as part of the Fellowship period. In the event of receiving sustenance allowance from the visiting Institute/ University/ Laboratory, the Faculty fellow may not be eligible for availing the Fellowship amount during the visiting period.
- Fellow will be required to utilize the web portal for submitting the annual financial documents and Annual Progress Report to DST-INSPIRE Cell. Performance evaluation at the end of 2nd and 4th years shall be done on the progress made in research work by a national level Expert Committee. Participation in the performance evaluation is mandatory and continuation of support to any Fellow shall depend upon the performance assessment by the Committee.
- The Faculty Fellow shall administratively be governed by the prevailing rules and regulations of the Host Institution, especially regarding all types of leaves and other administrative matters. There will be no separate rules provided by DST-INSPIRE.

h) Transfer or Change of Host Institution

- Transfer or Change of Host Institution either upon getting i) permanent employment in another Institution; ii) or for any other reason, is permissible under the Scheme.
- In all such cases the Faculty Fellow needs to inform the DST-INSPIRE immediately with following documents to effect the change and smooth facilitation of transfer of funds etc. to fellows:
 - Appointment Letter of permanent employment or justifications for change of Host,
 - NOC from present Host Institute and Acceptance Letter from New Host Institute,
 - Joining Letter at New Host Institute due to transfer or permanent employment (either same or different Host Institution),
 - Fresh Signed copy of the Undertaking (not required in case of permanent employment in the same Host Institution),
 - Up-to-date financial documents from the present Host Institute (also in case of permanent employment in the same Host Institute).

i) Role of Host Institutions

- Host institutions are requested to provide a congenial atmosphere to the Fellows to excel in their work, and should view them as potential assets for faculty development. Besides, it will be desirable if host institutions introduce new areas/directions of research through this Scheme.
- Host institutions are supposed to provide access to all common infrastructural facilities, acceptable laboratory and office space (independently or on shared basis), computing facility, library etc.,
- Host institutions may provide information on whether the INSPIRE Faculty Fellow will be allowed to supervise Ph.D students, hire research fellows, independently or jointly with a

permanent faculty member while accepting to host the candidates.

- INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship shall not be available for renewal after completion of 5 years' duration. Host institutions are expected to consider "INSPIRE Faculty Fellow" for permanent positions in due course, subject to meeting institutions' performance assessment criteria.
- In-breeding by host-institution is generally not encouraged. However, in case host-institutions are willing to nominate their own Ph.D students under this Scheme, specific justifications and commitment for development of independent directions of research should be clearly provided.

