

# INSPIRE Fellowship Guidelines (August 2017)

*In suppression of previous guidelines, this new guideline will now be effected from August 2017 for all INSPIRE Fellows*

**Mode of application:** Online

## **Selection Process:**

Two-tier selection process i.e. screening of eligible applications by an Internal Committee, followed by final selection through an Expert Committee shall be used. However, the selection process will be expected to complete within 6 months from the last date of submission of application at the DST and the result of the selection process will be communicated to individual selected candidate through online web portal ([www.online-inspire.gov.in](http://www.online-inspire.gov.in)) only. No hardcopy of the Offer Letter (Provisional & Final) shall be sent to the candidate by any other modes.

## **Eligibility:**

- **INSPIRE Scholar** having secured minimum 65% marks in aggregate or equivalent CGPA at M.Sc. or Integrated MS/ M.Sc. course.
- **1<sup>st</sup> Rank Holders** at University Level Examination (not at Autonomous College Level Examination) of overall full time post-graduate program in science, engineering /technology / agriculture / pharmacy / other applied science streams and undergraduate in Medicine i.e. MBBS. However, University shall consider providing 1<sup>st</sup> Rank to a student having a minimum batch size of 10 students in that University level examination with minimum aggregate of 65% marks of the entire course/ program. Toppers in any subject specialization in post-graduation 2<sup>nd</sup> year are not eligible. However, merely fulfilling the eligibility criteria for the INSPIRE Fellowship will not guarantee for the final offer of fellowship. Expert Committee will finally take decision on selections based on the academic merit, research proposal, host institution etc. submitted by the candidate.

## **Terms and Conditions:**

### **1. General**

- This Fellowship shall be available only for pursuing full-time PhD program in any recognized University / Institution/ R&D Laboratory/ in the country.
- The Junior Research Fellow (JRF) or Senior Research Fellow (SRF) under this scheme shall be termed as 'INSPIRE Fellow'.
- The Fellowship shall be governed through the Office Memorandum of this Ministry of Number A.20020/11/97-IFD dated 6<sup>th</sup> August 2007, 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010 and 21<sup>st</sup> October

2014 [No. SR/S9/Z-09/2012] shall be liable to be revised from time to time as per Government Order. However, the HRA to the Fellows shall also be applicable as per GoI norms, depending upon the location of the Host Institution.

- The Fellowship shall be tenable for a maximum period of five years or completion of the Ph.D. program (i.e. till the final defend of the Ph.D. Thesis), whichever is earlier.

## 2. Issuing of Fellowship Offer:

- Availing multiple (more than one) fellowships concurrently from different sources will not be allowed.
- In case of availing any fellowship prior to INSPIRE Fellowship, the Effective Date of availing INSPIRE Fellowship would be as under:
  - Fresh applicants who have already taken admission into Ph.D. course prior to submission of application, the date of acceptance or joining or switching over from any other fellowship to INSPIRE Fellowship will be the Effective Date. However, in any case the Effective Date would not earlier than the date of application received at the DST.
- Applicant who will be placed during selection process under “Provisional Selection” category from 9<sup>th</sup> advertisement onwards and subsequently issued “Final Offer” by gaining admission into Ph.D., the “Effective Date” would be **the date of uploading documents** related to confirmed Ph.D. Admission or **date of Ph. D. Admission**, whichever is later. However, in case the Candidate already enjoying some other fellowship and resigns to join in to INSPIRE Fellowship, the “Effective Date” would only after the date of resignation. In no case the candidate would be allowed to resign from other fellowship before date of Final Offer of INSPIRE Fellowship. For Final selection under INSPIRE Fellowship, the admission into Ph.D. program is necessary.
- Upon Final Selection under INSPIRE Fellowship, the Fellow or the Host-Institution / University shall require to inform DST (by uploading in online portal) about the date of joining of the INSPIRE Fellow in that Institution / University in the Format of Joining-cum-Acceptance Letter, provided by the DST-INSPIRE Program Division within one month of date of issuing the final offer, failing which, his/her Final Offer will be liable for cancellation and no further correspondence will be entertained in this matter.

## 3. Change of Host Institute:

- Since the final selection to offer INSPIRE Fellowship has the weight-age on Research Proposal and type of Host Institute, Fellows are advised to firm up carefully both Research Proposal and Host Institute before uploading such documents to the Web portal. Once the Final Offer is made by DST-INSPIRE based on these, the INSPIRE Fellow shall not be allowed for transferring the Fellowship to any other University/ Institute / Laboratory in the country or change of Research Proposal during 5 years of Fellowship tenure in any situation, except in a very extra-ordinary circumstances like dislocation due to marriage (for a female candidate), death of present Research Supervisor,

proven case of sexual harassment etc., Even in such cases, the new Research Proposal and new Host Institute need to be evaluated again for consideration of any change and the outcome of evaluation by the Expert Member shall be accepted to the Fellow. In no other reason, such request for change of Research Proposal or Host Institute would be accepted from any Fellow. In case change is acceptable due to any of the reasons above, the Fellow must seek prior permission from DST-INSPIRE Program Division for such change of Host Institution by submitting following documents:

- i. No Objection Certificates (NOCs) from both Host Institutes and Research Supervisors,
- ii. Detailed Justifications for changing / shifting of Host Institute for implementation of Fellowship,
- iii. Area of Ph.D. works with an up to date technical Progress Report,
- iv. CV of the Research Supervisor at the new Host Institute,
- v. Up to date Financial Statement from the old Host Institute (in case the fellowship amount has been released to Fellow).

However, shifting/ change of Host Institute or Research Proposal without prior written permission from DST-INSPIRE may be called for termination of the INSPIRE Fellowship. In case a fellow does this on his/ her own without prior permission/ approval, DST-INSPIRE shall not be liable for continuation of his/her INSPIRE Fellowship. Moreover, such shifting/ change of Host Institute may be allowed only one time in 5 years of Fellowship tenure and that too within one year from “Effective Date” of Fellowship at that Host Institute.

#### **4. Short Term Research Internship:**

- INSPIRE Fellow shall be allowed for availing short-term Research Internship activities at any national or international Laboratory/ University/ Institute up to a maximum period of 18 months either in one or multiple slots during 5 years of Fellowship tenure. This research internship would either be arranged by DST or by the individual Fellow and, the Fellow shall be required to obtain prior permission from DST-INSPIRE along with recommendation of Ph.D. Research Supervisor as well as confirmation from Research Internship provider for obtaining prior permission. In the event that the Fellow receives full financial support of the overseas institution, the INSPIRE Fellowship for the period of Overseas stay will not be remitted.
- Upon availing the Research Internship the Fellow must submit his/her Internship Report as well as Joining Report to Host Institution, with intimation to DST.
- Positioning under HOPE and Newton Bhabha shall be dealt in separate call. However, incaseofavailingNewton-BhabhaInternshipofferedbyanyotheragencyotherthan the DST, the Fellow shall require to obtain written permission from DST-INSPIRE before departure, otherwise it will be treated as absent from the PhD works and fellowship amount shall be stopped during that period.

## 5. Release of Fellowship amount:

- The fund with respect to INSPIRE Fellow(s) shall be made available with the Host institution by the Department of Science & Technology, New Delhi for payment of the Fellowship along with Contingency Grant to the Fellow(s) following Government of India and Institute / University norms. In such case, Host institute require to register in PFMS (Public Finance Management System: <https://pfms.nic.in>) and needs to provide unique agency code and details of authorized account of head of institute, to DST.
- While to continue release of fellowship in subsequent years, the Host-Institute or the concerned fellow shall submit the financial year-wise Statement of Expenditure & Utilization Certificate (through online portal: [www.online-inspire.gov.in](http://www.online-inspire.gov.in)) for each INSPIRE Fellow attached to them, the INSPIRE Fellow will be required to submit Progress Report every year duly authenticated by their concerned Ph.D. supervisor.
- To consider of releasing fellowship to an ongoing Fellow, the amount of unspent balance on account of Fellowship including HRA shall be less than Rs. 40,000.

## 6. Up gradation from JRF to SRF:

- The entry level position of the Fellow in the Scheme shall be only as 'Junior Research Fellow (JRF)'.
- The up-gradation of Fellowship i.e. Junior Research Fellowship (JRF) to Senior Research Fellowship (SRF) would normally be considered after two (2) years as JRF counted from "Effective Date" as JRF. This will be done through performance assessment on the progress made in the Ph.D. program. However, this performance assessment can also be conducted at any time after completion of one year at JRF level upon publication of at least one paper (1st Authorship) in any peer-reviewed SCI indexed journal within one year by the INSPIRE Fellow out of the PhD work done at that Host Institute.
- For up-gradation of Fellowship status, a three (3) Members Assessment Committee needs to be constituted by the Host Institute's Vice-Chancellor of the University or Director of the Institute to assess the progress of concerned INSPIRE Fellow.
- The composition of said Committee would be one Member (drawn from the list of Chair-Persons & Expert Members available at the INSPIRE Website: [www.inspire-dst.gov.in/List\\_of\\_Chairpersons\\_Members.pdf](http://www.inspire-dst.gov.in/List_of_Chairpersons_Members.pdf), depending upon local needs) besides

the Research Supervisor of the concerned INSPIRE Fellow and one Internal Faculty as Member of the Committee.

- Choice of external Expert member within the same Host Institute should be totally avoided in this Assessment Committee. The assessment shall be carried out by the Host Institute/ University as per above process and upon assessment, the Fellow shall be required to upload the `Assessment Report` of the Committee in the format of DST of the concerned Fellow, in online portal of DST-INSPIRE for further actions.
- In case performance of any JRF is assessed within one year of the “Effective Date” by virtue 1<sup>st</sup> Authorship publication, the Fellow must upload the copy of at least one claimed publication along with Assessment Report. Otherwise such assessment shall be treated as invalid.
- The expenditure related to such assessment shall not be borne by DST INSPIRE.
- In case any other guidance needed for appointing Expert Member for the process, DST can be contacted for the same.
- Generally, up-gradation of JRF to SRF would be effected as per above norms, however, in case assessment is delayed beyond the 2 years for any reasons, the assessment date/ Date of communication of Assessment Report would be considered as ‘SRF Effective date’.

#### **7. Completion of Fellowship Tenure and Award of Ph.D. degree:**

- On completion of the tenure of Fellowship, the INSPIRE Fellow shall be required to provide the copy of the awarding of Ph.D. degree certificate along with soft copy of thesis and the complete financial documents (SE, UC) to final settlement of the fellow. However, the unspent balance shall be sent by means of demand draft in favor of “DDO, DST, New Delhi”
- INSPIRE Fellows must settle their claims within one year of leaving the Fellowship. No claim will be admitted by DST after one year of leaving the Fellowship.

#### **8. TERMINATION OR DISCONTINUATION of INSPIRE Fellowship shall occur at the following events:**

- Upon successful viva-voce of awarding Ph.D. degree or completion of 5year Fellowship’s tenure, whichever is earlier,
- Resignation from the Fellowship before awarding PhD degree and acceptance of resignation by DST based on the Research Supervisor’s recommendation,

- Migration of Fellow to another Institution from present Host Institution without prior approval from DST,
- Failed to gain admission into Ph.D. within 365 days after issuing Provisional Offer,
- Non-Acceptance of Final Offer within 30 days from the date of Final Offer issued
- In case, any of the previous admission(s) by the Fellow is/are found wrong and the Fellow found ineligible in future for any reason(s) (including any unintentional computer error or printer's devil etc.)

#### **9. Duties of INSPIRE Fellow:**

- Keep update DST always about your progress in Research or any other disciplinary action taken at University.
- The INSPIRE Fellow is not to take any assignment other than related to his/her approved research program, paid or unpaid. However, if required, the fellow may assist the host institute in its academic work/other activities, as per guidelines of its PhD program, provided such assignments should not hamper the progress of research work of the fellow. This has to be governed by Host Institution.
- Once INSPIRE Fellow accepts the Fellowship and joined, he should complete the research for the normal tenure of the fellowship or for such lesser duration in which the original objectives of the research problem have been achieved.
- INSPIRE Fellow should inform about his discontinuation within one week of date of discontinuation through online portal and upload all required documents in portal. Failing to do so will reflect into settlement of the case.
- The INSPIRE Fellow shall keep DST informed about his/her getting the Ph.D. degree, submission of thesis for Ph.D., etc. and submission/ acceptance/ publication of any research paper arising out of the research work done during the tenure of the fellowship. He/ She must acknowledge the support of DST in the publication(s). One copy each of all the research papers published must be sent to DST at each stage of publication/ manuscript/reprint.

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