

Guidelines for INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship Scheme

The Department of Science and Technology, Government of India, launched the “Innovation in Science Pursuit for Inspired Research (INSPIRE)” [www.online-inspire.gov.in] Programme in 2008. This programme which covers the age group of 15-35 years, aims to attract young Indian talent towards study of science leading to careers in science. INSPIRE includes four components out of which the INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship Scheme offers post-doctoral fellowships to young achievers for independent research in the near term and emerging as a future leader in the long term.

A) Purpose

- To provide attractive opportunities for young achievers for developing independent scientific profiles and launch themselves towards fulfilling long-term careers.
- To augment high-quality scientific manpower in scientific and educational institutions, especially the Central and State universities.
- While vertical migration from the other INSPIRE components would be encouraged, this Scheme will also provide opportunity to meritorious candidates for lateral entry into the scheme.
- **This scheme provides an opportunity to young post-doctoral fellows for carrying out independent research and does not a guarantee regular position after 5 years.**

B) Eligibility**Essential**

- Indian citizens and people of Indian origin with PIO status having PhD degree (in science, mathematics, engineering, pharmacy, medicine and agriculture related subjects) from any recognized university in the world.
- Candidates shall possess a minimum of 60% (or equivalent CGPA) marks throughout their academic profile starting from the Higher Secondary Examination (Class 12 onwards).
- Those who have submitted their Ph.D theses and are awaiting the award of the degree are also eligible. However, the selection for INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship will be confirmed only after confirmation of the award of the Ph.D degree.
- **The upper age limit as on 1st Jan 2020 is 32 years for General Category. However, for SC and ST candidates, the upper age limit will be 35 years. For persons with benchmark disabilities (Divyangjan with not less than 40 percent of a specified disability), the upper age limit will be 42 years.**
- Publication(s) in highly reputed journals demonstrating outstanding research potential of the candidate.
- Candidates who are employed in regular/contractual positions within India may also apply for INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship for improvement and enhancement in their career prospects but,

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upon selection, the candidates will need to resign (no lien or deputation or any type of leave would be accepted) from the current job and organization before taking up the INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship.

Desirable

- Candidates who are within top 1% in Class 12 examination, IIT-JEE rank holders, 1st rank holders either in graduation or post-graduation level university examinations.

C) Mode of Application

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

D) Method of Selection

- The Indian National Science Academy (INSA), New Delhi, in coordination with DST, is implementing this INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship Scheme up to the stage of recommendation of candidates for INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship.
- A three-tier selections process, viz. recommendations by discipline-based Expert Committees of INSA in case of candidates under Direct and Nomination modes/routes, followed by the Apex Level Committee of INSA. Based on the recommendations of these committees, DST makes the final selection.

E) Amount and Duration of INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship

- Each selected INSPIRE Faculty Fellow will be eligible to receive a consolidated amount of Rs.1,25,000/-p.m as fellowship. In addition, a Research Grant of Rs.7 lakh every year for 5 years will also be provided to each successful candidate including the carry-forward amount, if any, from the previous year. The consolidated amount of Rs.1,25,000 per month is an all-inclusive fellowship and taxable as per the Indian IT Act.
- The INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship is for a maximum period of 5 (five) years. No Fellow shall avail two fellowships concurrently during the tenure of this Fellowship period.

F) Issue of Offer Letter

- The Offer Letter for Direct and Nomination Mode candidates is issued through the web portal (www.online-inspire.gov.in).
- Candidates, who have not identified host institutions at the time of their application, should do

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so immediately after their final selection. All selected candidates should avail the INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship within 3 months of their selection.

- A selected candidate, who is yet to be awarded the PhD degree, will receive an intimation for submission of his/her PhD degree certificate within 3 months to avoid forfeiting the opportunity. Upon submission of the PhD degree certificate, the Offer Letter will be issued to the candidate through web portal with 3 months' validity to undertake the fellowship at the chosen Host Institution.
- Selected candidates are advised not to choose the Institution where they have done their earlier doctoral and post-doctoral work if any.
- Selected INSPIRE Faculty Fellows joining private academic/research institutes shall receive only the Research Grant and their host institutions will have to pay the fellowship amount as per Scheme norms.
- In case an INSPIRE Faculty Fellow finds a permanent position during the tenure of the Fellowship, the fellowship amount shall be discontinued from the day the INSPIRE Faculty Fellow joins the permanent position but he/she may continue with the INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship Scheme availing Research Grant only for the remaining period to carry out research while occupying the new position.
- The INSPIRE Faculty Fellow is eligible to apply for any competitive grant from various funding agencies during the tenure of the INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship.

G) Terms and Conditions for Implementation

- A provision exists for supporting a research staff out of the Research Grant during the Fellowship tenure of 5 years as per host institution's guidelines. In the event of getting employment elsewhere in the country other than the Host Institute, the Fellow will also be allowed to move the research student, equipment, consumables etc., along with him/her to the new Host Institute with prior consent of both the institutions.
- The annual Research Grant of @ Rs.7 lakh every year (100%) including carry-forward amount, if any, from previous years shall be utilized for incurring expenditure under all recurring and non-recurring budget heads like Project Manpower Cost, Consumables, Chemicals, Equipment. The amount under Travel, Contingencies and Overhead Charges will be limited to 10% (i.e. Rs.70,000 per year), 10% (i.e. Rs.70,000 per year) and 5% (i.e. Rs.35,000 per year), respectively.
- Every Faculty Fellow needs to provide a budget proposal with detailed break-up as above for utilization of the Research Grant to DST-INSPIRE Programme Division along with joining documents. The Fellow and the Host Institution need to adhere to the approved break-up over the entire duration 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 to carry out research activities up to a maximum period of 18 months in multiple slots during the 5 years of fellowship. The application to visit countries

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abroad will be considered only after availing 12 months of INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship tenure and the visit should preferably to a place 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 visit period.

- Fellow will be required to visit the web portal for submitting the annual financial documents and Annual Progress Report to the DST-INSPIRE Programme Division. Performance evaluation at the end of 2nd and 4th year will be done by national-level Expert Committees. Participation in the performance evaluation is mandatory and continuation of support to any Fellow shall depend upon the performance assessment by the Expert Committees.
- The Faculty Fellow shall administratively be governed by the prevailing rules and regulations of the Host Institution, especially regarding all types of leave 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 is permissible under the Scheme either upon getting i) permanent employment in another Institution; ii) or for any other valid reason.
- In all such cases, the Faculty Fellow needs to inform the DST-INSPIRE Programme Division immediately with the following documents to effect the change and smooth facilitation of transfer of funds etc.
 - Appointment Letter of permanent employment or justification for change of Host Institution.
 - NoC from the present Host Institute and Acceptance Letter from the new Host Institute.
 - Joining Letter from the 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 and requirements of Host Institutions

- Host institutions are expected to provide congenial atmosphere to INSPIRE Faculty Fellows to enable them to excel in their work, and should view them as potential assets for faculty development. Host institutes should utilize the presence of INSPIRE Fellows to introduce new areas/directions of research.
- Under no circumstances the “INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship” is renewable after 5 years. Host institutions are expected to consider the “INSPIRE Faculty Fellows” for permanent positions in due course, subject to their meeting institutional performance assessment criteria.
- Host institutes should provide acceptable laboratory and office space (independently or on shared basis), ensure access to all common infrastructural facilities, computing facilities, library etc., to the INSPIRE Faculty Fellows.
- Under the Nomination Mode, in-breeding by host institutions is generally not encouraged.

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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 provided for consideration.

- Host institutes should 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 hosting the Faculty Fellows.

