

Guidelines for INSPIRE Faculty Award Scheme

The Department of Science and Technology, Government of India, has launched the “**Innovation in Science Pursuit for Inspired Research (INSPIRE)**” [<http://www.inspire-dst.gov.in>] program in 2008. The program aims to attract talent for study of science and careers with research. INSPIRE includes many components. The importance of Assured Career Opportunity in R&D sector has been recognized. **INSPIRE Faculty Scheme** opens up an “**Assured Opportunity for Research Career (AORC)**” for young researchers in the age group of 27-32 years. It offers a contractual research awards to young achievers and 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, specially 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 a career opportunity and not a guarantee for tenure positions 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 their PhD Theses and are awaiting award of the degree are also eligible. However, the award will be conveyed only after confirmation of the awarding the PhD degree.
- The **upper age limit as on 1st January or 1st July of that 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 who are employed (in any form i.e. permanent, contractual) with any organization within India are not eligible to apply.

Desirable

- Candidates who are within top 1% at the School Leaving Examination, IIT-JEE rank, 1st Rank Holder 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

- Three routes i.e. **Direct, Nomination** and **Institution** mode are available for applying by the eligible candidates,
- Candidates, who intend to apply in **Direct or Nomination Mode**, may apply online **only**. Application Formats with detailed guidelines are available at the websites: www.inspire-dst.gov.in for information. To apply **ONLINE**, please visit the website: www.online-inspire.gov.in and follow the process prescribed therein. After successful submission through **ONLINE**, the candidate must obtain a print of the application thus submitted.
- Under '**Institutions Mode**', candidates may directly approach reputed academic institutes and the host academic Institute shall be required to adopt their own internal process and mechanism as available at the website: www.inspire-dst.gov.in.
- Nominations from academic institutions or Industry R&D 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 Indian National Science Academy (INSA), New Delhi.
- Eligible candidate who wishes to be considered in "Direct" and "Nominated" route, may also send applications directly to Indian National Science Academy (INSA), New Delhi for consideration.

d) Method of Selection

- A three-tier selection process i.e. Discipline-based Expert Committee in case of candidates under 'Direct' and 'Nomination' routes and in Institutional level short-listing under 'Institutional Mode' followed-by selection by the Apex Level Committee. Finally, INSPIRE Faculty Council selects candidates in all three routes of selection modes.
- Indian National Science Academy (INSA), New Delhi in coordination with DST will be implementing this INSPIRE Faculty Scheme up to the selection of candidates for awarding INSPIRE Faculty Award.
- Discipline-wise Committees of INSA would evaluate and screen the candidates who apply on Direct and Nominated Routes without support from host-institutions.
- Under Institute Mode selection reputed academic institutions enjoying the status of Centre of Excellence like IITs, IISc, IISERs, TIFR, CSIR Laboratories etc. and Central & State Universities selected under PURSE scheme of DST could employ their own internal processes as per mechanism for pre-selection of candidates as available at the website: www.inspire-dst.gov.in and submit the list of pre-selected list of candidates for the consideration by the Apex Committee.

- The Apex Committee shall select short-listed candidates for offering INSPIRE Faculty Award under this Scheme and decision of the Apex Committee for selecting candidates in this Scheme shall further be considered at the INSPIRE Faculty Council whose decision is the final to offer INSPIRE Faculty Award.

e) Number of INSPIRE Faculty position

- Maximum number of INSPIRE Faculty positions under INSPIRE Faculty Scheme shall be 1000 per year.

f) Amount & Duration

- Each selected INSPIRE Faculty shall be eligible to receive a consolidated amount equivalent to the scale of the Assistant Professor of an IIT as Fellowship amount with an annual increment @ 3.3% 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 is equivalent to Rs 80000 per month with all inclusive.
- The INSPIRE Faculty position is for a maximum period of 5 (five) years. However, one can not avail two fellowships concurrently during the tenure of this Award.

g) Issuing of Offer Letter

- The Offer Letter for **Direct and Nominated Modes** candidates is issued through webportal (www.online-inspire.gov.in) . For **Institute Mode** the concerned Head of Institution is informed by the DST-INSPIRE about the selection of the candidate from that Institute and upon submission of Application of the selected candidate by the Institute, the Offer Letter is issued to the candidate through webportal only.
- 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 Award within 3 months of issuing the Offer Letter of selection. Otherwise the Offer gets forfeited. Only, in exceptional situation one more set of 3 months' extension may be considered, subject to adequate justifications from candidate.
- Selected candidate who is yet to be awarded 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 webportal only for INSPIRE Faculty Award with 3 months' validity to implement the Offer at the chosen Host Institution.
- Selected candidates are advised not to choose the Host Institution from where they have done their PhD degree as Host Institution.

h) Post-Implementation of the Offer

- In case the INSPIRE Faculty finds a permanent position during the tenure of the position at the same or any other Institution within the country, the Award amount shall be discontinued from the day the INSPIRE Faculty joins in permanent position, but he/she shall continue with the INSPIRE Faculty Scheme availing Research Grant portion of the offer for the remaining period to carry out research at the new Host Institution.
- The INSPIRE Faculty is eligible for applying for any competitive grants from all funding agencies during the tenure of the INSPIRE Faculty position and would be favorably considered by DST for future support at the end of 5 years based on performance and technical merit.
- Provision is available for supporting a research staff out of Research Grant support during the Award tenure of 5 years. In the event of getting employment elsewhere in the country other than the present Host Institute, the Awardee could 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 expenditures under all Recurring and non-Recurring budget heads like ad-hoc Manpower cost, Consumable, Equipment, except Travel, Contingencies and Overheads which will be limited to 10% (i.e. Rs 70000 per year), 10% (i.e. Rs 70000 per year) and 5% (i.e. Rs 35000 per year) respectively.
- Each Awardee needs to provide budget proposal with detailed break up as above for utilization of Research Grant to DST-INSPIRE. Awardee/ Host Institution needs to adhere the approved break up for entire period of 5 years.
- Awardee shall be eligible to undertake short-term visit at any national or international Laboratory/ University/ Institute for further exposure and training to carry out research activities up to a maximum period of 18 months either in one or multiple slots during 5 years of Award tenure. The short-term visit will be considered only after completion of 12 months in Faculty Award position. However, multiple slots would be preferred (not more than 6 months in slot) and the short-term visit shall also be preferable in other than his or her post-doctoral place. This period will be treated as part of the Award period. In the event of receiving sustenance allowance from visiting Institute/ University/ Laboratory, the Faculty Awardee may not be eligible for availing the Award amount during the visiting period.
- Awardee shall be required to utilize the webportal for submitting the annual financial documents and Annual Progress Report to DST-INSPIRE Cell. Performance evaluation at the end of two (2) and 4 (four) years shall be done on the progress of research achieved by a national level Expert Committee and further continuation of support to each Awardee shall depend upon the performance assessment by the Committee.
- The Faculty Awardee shall administratively be governed by the prevailing rules and regulations of the Host Institution, especially on all types leaves and other matters. There will be no separate rules provided by DST-INSPIRE.

i) Transfer or Change of Host Institution

- Transfer or Change of Host Institution either upon getting i) a permanent employment in another Institution or ii) for any other reason, in all such cases the Faculty Awardee needs to inform the DST-INSPIRE immediately with following documents to effect the change and smooth facilitation of funds etc. to Awardees:
 - Appointment Letter for 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 at same Host Institution),
 - Up to date Financial documents from the present Host Institute (also in case of permanent employment at the same Host Institute).

j) Roles and requirements of host institutions

- Host institutions are encouraged to provide a congenial atmosphere for the awardees to excel in their work, and should view them as potential assets for faculty development.
- INSPIRE Faculty position shall not be available for renewal after completion of 5 years' duration. Host-institutions are expected to consider "INSPIRE Faculty" 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 PhD students under this Scheme, specific justifications and commitment for development of independent directions of research should be clearly delineated.
- Minimum information/ commitment requirements from Host Institutions are:
 - Access to all common infrastructural facilities, acceptable laboratory and office space (independently or on shared basis), computing, library access, etc.,
 - Information on whether desirable new areas/directions of research are being introduced through this scheme,
 - Information on whether the INSPIRE Faculty will be allowed to supervise PhD students, hire research fellows, independently or jointly with a permanent faculty member,
 - Host-institution's willingness to consider the candidate for a permanent position in due course, subject to meeting statutory requirements.
