

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship Component (IFF)

1. What is INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship?

INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship is a component under Innovation in Science Pursuit for Inspired Research (INSPIRE), which is a flagship programme of the Department of Science and Technology (DST), under the Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of India. It offers contractual research fellowships to young achievers and opportunity for independent research in the near term and emerges as a leader in future science & technology. The guideline of this component is available at <https://www.online-inspire.gov.in>.

2. Who can apply under INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship? What are the eligibility criteria for availing INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship?

Indian citizens and people of Indian origin including NRI/PIO status with Ph.D. (in Science, Mathematics, Engineering, Pharmacy, Medicine, and Agriculture related subjects) from any recognized university in the world. Those who have submitted their Ph.D. Theses and are awaiting award of the degree are also eligible. However, the Fellowship will be conveyed only after confirmation of the awarding the Ph.D. degree.

3. What is the tenure of INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship?

The INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship is tenable for a maximum period of 5 (five) years and no further extension will be given as per existing rules.

4. When should I apply for INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship?

Call for applications are advertised once in a year in the month of July/August on the online portal. The online application link can be found here: <https://www.online-inspire.gov.in>.

5. How should I apply for INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship?

One can apply for the Faculty Fellowship through online portal only. To apply online, please follow the link <https://www.online-inspire.gov.in>.

6. What is the upper age limit? Is there any age relaxation?

The upper age limit as on 1st Jan of the year of advertisement for General category applicants is 32 years. However, the upper age limit for SC/ST/Women candidates will be 37 years. For persons with bench mark disability the upper age limit, is 42 years. <https://www.online-inspire.gov.in>.

7. I am already having a permanent position. Am I eligible to apply?

Candidates who are employed at the time of application (in any form i.e. permanent, contractual etc.) with any organization within India are eligible to apply. However, they have

to relinquish their jobs for accepting INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship. No lien/deputation/ leave will be permitted.

8. I did not submit my Ph.D. degree certificate at the time of my application? Will I be considered for Faculty fellowship?

Yes. You will be considered. You may be called for presentation if found suitable under various selection criteria as fixed by the expert committee. In case of selection you will receive an intimation to submit your Ph.D. degree certificate within 3 months. Only after verification of your degree certificate, offer letter will be issued. Time taken for submission of Ph.D. degree certificate will also be counted in the joining time given by DST.

9. What is the method of Selection?

- a. INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship (IFF) is implemented through Indian National Science Academy (INSA), New Delhi which coordinates selection of candidates for awarding INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship.
- b. Selection process involves recommendations by Discipline-based Expert Committee followed by the Apex Level Committee.
- c. Discipline-wise committees evaluate and shortlist the candidates.
- d. Apex Committee shall finally recommend the short-listed candidates for offering INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship to DST.
- e. Candidates, who have not identified host institutions at the time of their application, should do so immediately after their final selection. All selected candidates should avail the INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship **within 3 months** of issue of offer letter.

10. If I am working as a Post-Doctoral Fellow in India/abroad at the time of offer of IFF, will I get an extension for joining as INSPIRE Faculty Fellow?

Maximum time duration of **six months** from the date of offer letter may be given after due evaluation of your request.

11. Where can I implement the INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship?

The INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship is generally required to be implemented at any recognized Institute/ University/ Laboratory in the country other than the Institute/ University/ Laboratory from where the candidate has received his/her Ph.D. degree or have undertaken Ph.D./post Ph.D. research activities.

12. How much is the INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship amount?

Faculty fellowship amount is Rs. 1,25,000/- per month with an annual increment of Rs. 2000/- and Research Grant of Rs. 7.0 lakh per year for 5 years period.

13. Is the INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship Amount Taxable?

Yes. As per Income Tax act, it is taxable.

14. Is there any Breakup of Fellowship amount?

Fellowship amount is consolidated (all inclusive). No Break-up will be provided by DST.

15. Do I need to sign any undertaking before implementation of the INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship?

Yes. Selected fellow must submit two undertakings. a) Duly signed “Undertaking from INSPIRE Faculty Fellow” and b) Undertaking duly signed by both the competent authority from the chosen Host institution and the INSPIRE Faculty Fellow. Both these documents may be found in the announcement page of the INSPIRE Web-portal.

16. What are the documents a selected Faculty Fellow need to submit for receiving the first instalment grant?

- a. Bank account detail of the Host Institute
- b. Joining Report
- c. Undertaking signed by the Faculty Fellow
- d. Undertaking signed by the Host Institute
- e. Budget breakup on usage of Research Grant

The blank formats are available at <https://www.online-inspire.gov.in>.

17. Do I have to wait for my host bank account details to be approved before submitting my joining documents?

No. The bank account detail submission page consists of a list already approved by DST in the drop-down menu. Fellows need to select the required bank detail from the list, and do not have to wait for its approval and can move forward directly to upload joining documents.

18. How will I receive Fellowship and Research Grant after submitting required documents?

Faculty Fellowship amount and Research Grant will be transferred to the Host Institute on annual basis. Copy of the sanction letter will be uploaded in the INSPIRE web portal. The Fellow should download the same.

19. How can I utilize the Research Grant?

The Research Grant of Rs.7.0 lakh per year can be utilized for expenditures under recurring and non-recurring budget heads flexibly. However, Expenditure under Travel and Contingencies Heads will be limited to 10% each (Rs. 70,000/- per year) and Overhead 5% (Rs. 35,000 per year). Each fellow needs to upload the estimated budget break up as above for utilization of Research Grant on the INSPIRE web portal at the time of joining.

20. Does the Research Grant of 7.0 lakh per year will be carry-forwarded (i.e. unspent balance amount) to next year?

No. The total Research Grant permissible for utilisation under each year is only Rs.7.0 lakh. If there is any unspent grant from the previous year it shall be adjusted in the next year sanction to top-up to Rs.7.0 lakh.

21. What do I do to get subsequent instalment(s)?

Fellows need to submit Utilization Certificate, Statement of Expenditure and Annual Report as per the formats available at <https://www.online-inspire.gov.in>, at the end of every year through Host Institute for receiving the next instalment.

22. What happens to my fellowship amount, if I get a permanent position during Fellowship tenure?

When a fellow finds a permanent position during the Fellowship tenure of 5 years, the fellowship amount shall be discontinued from the day the Fellow joins the permanent position. But the fellow may continue with the INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship availing only the Research Grant for the remaining period to carry out research at the new position.

23. Whether any provision for employing research staff exists out of the Research Grant?

Provision is available for supporting research staff out of Research Grant support during the fellowship tenure of 5 years. In the event of getting employment elsewhere other than the present Host Institute, the fellow may also be allowed to move the research staff along with him/her to new place within the country with the permission of the host institute(s).

24. During the tenure of Faculty Fellowship can I apply for projects from other funding agencies?

Yes. INSPIRE Faculty Fellow is eligible for applying for any competitive grants from all funding agencies during the tenure of the INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship.

25. During the tenure of Faculty Fellowship can I make National or International visits?

Fellow 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 in multiple slots during 5 years of Fellowship tenure. However, this period will be treated as part of the fellowship period and it can be availed only **after completion of one year of positioning at a Host Institute.**

26. What are the roles and requirements of Host Institutions?

- a. Host institutions should encourage and provide a congenial atmosphere for the fellows to excel in their work and should view them as potential assets for faculty development.
- b. Under no circumstances the “INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship” is renewable after 5 years. Host-institutions are expected to consider “INSPIRE Faculty Fellow” for permanent positions in due course, subject to meeting institutions’ performance assessment criteria.
- c. Host Institute(s) shall provide access to all common infrastructural facilities (including equipment), computational facility, library, acceptable laboratory and office space during the tenure of the Fellowship.
- d. Host Institute will undertake the financial and other administrative responsibilities for implementation of the INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship for 5 years on behalf of the Fellow and shall be responsible for all accounting purposes with the DST-INSPIRE Program Division. Host Institute will be required to provide Financial Statements every year to consider releasing subsequent instalment/s to the Fellow.

27. What is the minimum commitment required from Host Institutions while accepting to host an INSPIRE Faculty Fellow?

- a. Access to all common infrastructural facilities, acceptable laboratory and office space (independently or on shared basis), computing, library access, etc.
- b. Information on whether desirable new areas/directions of research are being introduced through this scheme/fellow.
- c. 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.
- d. Host-institution’s willingness to consider the candidate for a permanent position in due course, subject to meeting statutory requirements.

28. Does the INSPIRE Faculty Fellow entitled for any leave in a year?

During the INSPIRE Faculty Fellowship tenure, a fellow will be governed by rules and regulations of Host Institute regarding all type of leaves or for any other administrative matters related to Faculty Fellowship.

29. When do I need to submit research performance reports and when will performance evaluation be done by DST?

Fellow shall be required to submit Annual Progress Report to INSPIRE-DST on the INSPIRE Web portal after the completion of each year. Midterm/Periodic performance evaluation shall be done on the progress of research by a national level Expert Committee and further continuation of support to each fellow shall depend upon the performance assessment by the Committee. Fellow will be informed about this process through portal and email communications.

30. Is there any provision for transfer or change of Host Institution?

Transfer or Change of Host Institution is permissible under the Faculty fellowship upon getting permanent employment in another Institution. An unemployed fellow will be allowed to transfer the Faculty fellowship grant into a new **host institution only once** for any personal reason(s) including scope for better research.

31. What are the requirements for the Host Institute transfer?

Following are the main requirements:

- a. Appointment Letter in case of permanent employment or justifications for change of Host Institution.
- b. NOC from present Host Institute and Acceptance Letter from new Host Institute.
- c. Freshly Signed copy of the Undertakings (not required in case of permanent employment in the same Host Institution),
- d. Up-to-date financial documents from the present Host Institute (also in case of permanent employment in the same Host Institute).

All these documents need to be uploaded under the “transfer process” link on INSPIRE Web-portal.
