

SERB Indo-U.S. Postdoctoral Research Fellowship Program (2016-17)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1) Who is eligible to apply for this Fellowship Program?

Basic Eligibility:

- Age: Upto 35 years as on 31 December 2016
- Indian citizens who have completed their Ph.D. degree from a Public-funded R&D Laboratory/ Recognized Academic Institution / University /College in India. Those unemployed as on date should have completed their Ph.D. degree after 31 December 2014.

Disqualifiers:

- Unemployed candidates who have obtained their Ph.D. degree before 1 January 2015 are ineligible.
- Candidates who have completed their Ph.D. degree abroad.
- Candidates who have availed a Postdoctoral Fellowship abroad are ineligible.
- Candidates who have availed any overseas fellowship to the United States, sponsored by any Indian Federal Agency, for a period of more than 3 months after 1 January 2015 are ineligible.

Note: All applicants must submit a copy of their Ph.D. Degree Certificate or a Provisional Degree Certificate along with the application.

2) Do all candidates require a Statement from the Current Employer and should all the applications be forwarded through the Head of the Organization/ Department?

For unemployed/ temporary/ contractual employees, a Statement from the Current Employer is not required and the candidate can directly submit the completed application through the Online Application Portal.

However, a candidate holding a regular position should forward the application through the Head of the Organization/ Department and is also required to submit a Statement from the Current Employer in the following format:

(This should be given on the official letter-head of the parent institution/organization in the following format):

This is to certify that this institution has no objection for considering the application for SERB Indo-U.S. Postdoctoral Research Fellowship Program from Mr./Ms./Dr..... employee in the(name of the department/institute/ organization) for Postdoctoral research in the area of.....to be held at.....for the duration of.....months.

If the fellowship is awarded to him/her, Mr./Ms./Dr.....will be relieved from(name of the institute/organization) duties for said period from the date of his/her joining for research fellowship under SERB Indo-U.S. Postdoctoral Research Fellowship Program. During this period, the continuity of employment on the post presently held by him/her would continue to be applicable and rules governing payment of salary (basic pay and all allowances), leave, medical

benefits, gratuity, GPF, GIS, and pension etc. would continue to be applicable during the entire period of fellowship and he/she will join his/her present post on completion of tenure of his/her fellowship.

Date:

Place:

Name and Signature of Head of Institution
(Name in Block Letters)

Phone No.

E-mail:

3) What are the subject areas supported under this Fellowship program?

The Fellowship is limited to the following areas:

Advanced Manufacturing, Big Data, Bio-energy, Cognitive Science, Complex systems, Cyber security, Encryption and decryption, Energy, Genetic to Physiology, High Performance Computation in Physics, High Performance Computation in Chemistry, High Performance Computation in Biology, High Performance Computation in Mathematics, Humanoid Robotics, Materials, Mechanobiology / Physical Biology, Mechnotronics, Mental Health, Modeling, Imaging, Algorithms and Combinatorial Optimizations, Petroleum and Petro-Chemical Engineering, Quantum Computing and Spintronics, Science of Climate Change, Glaciology, Sustainable Chemistry, Theoretical Mathematical Science.

Areas other than those mentioned above will not be considered.

4) What would be the duration of the Fellowship?

Typically, the duration of the fellowship is 12 months. However, considering time-restrictions/limitations for candidates with regular employment, including faculty; the fellowship provides some flexibility with respect to the duration which may vary from 6-12 months.

Outstanding cases (close to 10% of the selected candidates) may be considered for extension for one additional year based on the assessment of progress by SERB/ IUSSTF at the end of six months of the approved fellowship period. The candidates will be notified three months ahead of completion of the fellowship period.

5) Please provide a checklist to be followed for the application process.

The completed Application Form should be submitted through the Online Portal along with the following attachments/ annexures:

- i. Detailed CV of the Applicant
- ii. CV of the U.S. Host Professor
- iii. Provisional degree/ final Ph.D. certificate
- iv. Letter of acceptance from the U.S. Host Professor
- v. Statement from the Current Employer (format provided)

- vi. Recommendation Letters (from 2 Referees)
- vii. 3 best research papers/ articles of your choice listing applicant name as first author/ co-author
- viii. Proof of DOB (Please attach scan copy of the supporting document, e.g. Birth certificate/ 10th class certificate/ passport)

6) How should a candidate obtain the Letter of Acceptance from the U.S. Host?

The candidate should himself/herself correspond with their proposed host in U.S for placement. There should be willingness on the part of the U.S institution to accept and extend necessary support to the candidate for the research proposed during the Fellowship.

Regarding the format, the applicant is required to produce evidence, in the form of a letter of acceptance on the letter head of the U.S Host Institution, duly signed/stamped by the host. The letter should also include the merits/uniqueness of that host institute in the proposed area of research.

7) Is it necessary to submit accepted and/ or previously published articles/ research papers/ reports along with the application?

The candidate will have to submit 3 best research papers/ articles of their choice listing his/her name as first author/ co-author. In addition to this, the candidate can list all the research papers/ articles in his/her CV.

8) What are the timelines for the Fellowship Program?

The tentative timelines for 2017 are as follows:

- SERB Indo-U.S. Postdoctoral Research Fellowship (2016-17) Call Announcement: 15 January 2017
- Online Application Submission Deadline: 28 February 2017
- **Award Announcement: Mid-August 2017**

9) What is the tentative time-frame for availing the fellowship after award?

The awardees have to commence their travel within six months from the date of the award announcement. No request for a waiver on this account will be considered for any reasons whatsoever. Failure to commence the fellowship within the stipulated period would cause the candidate to forfeit the Fellowship.

10) What would be the Fellowship Grant Disbursal Mechanism?

At the time of disbursement of the grants to the fellow/parent institution, total stipend amount due will be released in three to four tranches as per the description* provided below; and the balance 10% of the stipend amount for those financial tranches will be released after submission of UC/SE and the Fellowship Report along with all the supporting receipts/ vouchers. The grants as per the Award letter will be released based on the prevailing foreign exchange rate. The parent institution would be responsible for necessary foreign exchange disbursements against the grants provided by IUSSTF.

*For the SERB Indo-U.S. Research Fellow with no Institutional affiliation in India, the fund disbursement process will be as follows:

- 1) 1st tranche: 100% monthly stipend of 1 month along with 50% of Overseas Medical Insurance and 100% personal contingent grant
- 2) 2nd tranche: 90% monthly stipend of 3 months
- 3) 3rd tranche: 90% monthly stipend of 4 months
- 4) 4th tranche: 90% monthly stipend of 4 months

OR

*For the SERB Indo-U.S. Research Fellow with Institutional affiliation in India, the fund disbursement process will be as follows:

- 1) 1st tranche: 90% monthly stipend of six or twelve months (as approved) along with 50% of Overseas Medical Insurance and 100% personal contingent grant

For regular employed candidates, the advance grants will be released to the Parent Organization. In such cases, the Grantee Institution must submit a Utilization Certificate and Statement of Expenditure (UC/SE) for the grants received from Indo-U.S. Science and Technology Forum on completion of the fellowship period.

Further, for both the above mentioned fund disbursement process, Conference grant for the SERB Indo-U.S. Research Fellow will be released up to a maximum amount of Rs. 74,000.00 only. (The fellow seeks formal approval prior from IUSSTF for attending the conference. The amount will be released after receiving the supporting documents/ receipts and details of participation of the conference.)

11) What will the fellowship grant include?

The individual availing this fellowship would be called the **SERB Indo-U.S. Research Fellow**. The fellowship will include the following:

- Monthly Stipend (USD 3000/- per month which will cover the candidate's accommodation, food expenses)
- Personal Contingent Grant (upto INR 60,000 only to cover expenses for obtaining U.S. Visa, airport transfers. The grants will be settled at actuals on the conclusion of the award against supporting vouchers/receipts.)
- Overseas Medical Insurance in India and USA (Upto INR 20,000 only. The grants will be settled at actuals on the conclusion of the award against supporting vouchers/receipts.)
- Return Air fare (Air-tickets would be provided directly by the IUSSTF travel desk on Air India Airlines by economy class and shortest route from their place of work in India to the place of the U.S. host institute and back)
- Conference Allowance, if applicable (Up to a maximum amount of INR 74,000 only. The SERB Indo-U.S. Research Fellow seeks formal approval prior from SERB and IUSSTF for attending the conference)

12) Do the selected candidates need to sign any bond for the fellowship?

The selected Fellows are supposed to execute a bond stating that the fellowship would be treated as a grant-in-aid if the Fellows return to India after successful completion or else it

will be treated as a loan to Fellows who do not come back or discontinue the fellowship midway. Penal interest will also be levied on such candidates.

13) How should the application be submitted?

All applicants should submit the applications along with all supporting documentation via the **Online Application Portal**. (http://49.50.81.218/Applicant_Twelfth.aspx?ProgramFor=12)

Please note that IUSSTF reserves the right to adapt its policies and priorities over time, depending on circumstances. Revisions to these FAQs may be posted at a later date.