



**AUSTRALIA  
INDIA  
INSTITUTE**



**Australian Government**  
**Department of Education**

# AUSTRALIA INDIA WOMEN RESEARCHERS' EXCHANGE PROGRAM (2024-25)

## GUIDELINES

### *Amended Eligibility Criteria for Australian Applicants*

Opening date	<b>21 October 2024</b>
Closing date and time for applications	Applications close at 23:30 Australian Daylight Standard Time <b>18 November 2024</b>
Administered by	Australia India Institute / ARCH-India (Australian Researcher Cooperation Hub – India) on behalf of the Australian Government Department of Education
Enquiries	Please contact <a href="mailto:admin@arch-india.org">admin@arch-india.org</a>

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## 1. Introduction

Research collaboration in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) disciplines has been a longstanding bilateral priority between Australia and India. There is, however, significant gender disparity within these disciplines in both countries. The Australian and Indian governments have introduced several domestic schemes to reduce gender disparity in STEM disciplines across all levels of education.

As per the Joint Communiqué issued from the first Australia-India Education and Skills Council (AIESC) meeting in November 2023, the education ministers of both countries noted bilateral commitment to the “*empowerment of women and girls*” through research pathways as fundamental to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Item 19). The AIWE Program aligns with this commitment. The Program also aligns with the Australia-India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP) which emphasises both countries’ commitment to deepening ties in science, technology and research collaboration in mutually beneficial areas.

The Australia India Institute will design, implement, and deliver the Australia India Women Researchers’ Exchange (AIWE) program on behalf of the Australian Government Department of Education (DE). The AIWE Program will serve as a bilateral pilot initiative contributing to the efforts made by both countries to improve gender equity in STEM research within their universities.

## 2. About the AIWE Program

The AIWE Program will contribute to the commitment and vision of both countries to improve gender equity for women researchers in STEM disciplines. The Program follows the Australian Standard Classification of Education to identify the following broad fields of qualification that pertain to STEM: Natural and Physical Sciences, Information Technology, Engineering and Related Technologies, and Agriculture, Environmental and Related Studies. Mathematical Sciences is considered a sub-field under Natural and Physical Sciences.

The aims of the program are to provide opportunities for AIWE Fellows to:

- develop their research agenda and networks with counterparts in the other country
- build on research publications and initiate new collaborative research
- expand their understanding of the higher education research environment in the other country
- become ambassadors for the Australia India academic research relationship
- promote research engagement beyond universities and higher education institutions located in major metropolitan centres and capital cities.

A single round of five (5) AIWE Fellowships is open to women postdoctoral scholars (early-career researchers) across STEM disciplines from Australia for short-term research exchanges of a duration between 6 and 8 weeks at an Indian higher education institution.

Five (5) fellowships will be awarded to Australian women STEM researchers employed at regional campuses of Australian universities to work with their counterparts at Indian higher education institutions.

The Australian AIWE Fellows will be expected to complete their necessary travel to India by **31 May 2025**.

The Guidelines for the AIWE Program have been reviewed and approved by a specially appointed Steering and Selection Committee comprising leading women STEM scholars from universities in Australia and India.

### 3. Eligibility criteria

#### 3.1 Eligible applicants

Applicants must be:

- Women early-career postdoctoral researchers employed at an Eligible Regional Campus of Australian universities (see item 3.5 for definition of regional campus), who have been awarded their doctoral degree within the **last five years**, i.e., between Jan 2019 and October 2024 in STEM fields (please refer to the definition of STEM disciplines in section 2 of these Guidelines). Applicants who have degrees in other disciplinary areas but who are conducting research directly related to these STEM fields may be considered.

#### 3.2 Non-Eligible applicants

The following individuals are **not eligible** to apply:

- Undergraduate students
- Masters by Research students, including Master of Science (MSc) and Master of Philosophy (MPhil)
- Masters by Coursework students undertaking a research subject or research component
- Doctoral research students, including Doctor of Philosophy (PhD and DPhil)
- Early career researchers with PhDs employed at campuses located in Australian capital city areas excluding Adelaide, Hobart, and Darwin
- Early career researchers with PhDs who have participated in or graduated from any joint Australia-India PhD program within the past ten (10) years
- Early career researchers with PhDs employed in full-time administrative or professional roles at their Home Universities
- Recipients of the 2022-2023 Australia India Research Students (AIRS) Fellowship

#### 3.3 Applicant employment

- Applicants must be employed full-time at the regional campus of their Home University at the time of applying and remain employed at their Home University for the duration of the Fellowship
- Applicants must be in an academic position focused on teaching and/or research at the regional campus of their Eligible Home University

#### 3.4 Applicant Nationality

Applicants must be:

- Australian citizens or permanent residents employed at an Eligible Regional Campus of an Australian University

#### 3.5 Eligible Regional Campuses

- Any Australian university campus located outside of metropolitan Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Canberra or Perth.

Successful applicants can, however, choose to undertake their Fellowship at any higher education Host Institution in India, regardless of its location.

## 4. Research project

Applicants will be required to provide details of the research project and other activities they will undertake during their Fellowship period at their Host Institution in India.

The research undertaken during the Fellowship can either be for a new research project or contribute towards the applicant's existing research project.

Preference will be given to research projects that align with the following broad critical research priority areas for collaboration identified in the Joint Communique issued by the 2023 Australia India Education and Skills Council (AIESC): critical minerals, artificial intelligence (AI) and related fields, logistics, healthcare, clean energy, and sustainable agriculture. The AIWE Steering and Selection Committee has also identified the following priority fields: quantum computing, water and waste management, nano science and technology, animal sciences, and biotechnology.

Applicants will need to provide the following details in the online application form:

- statement on why they are applying for the AIWE Program
- title of the research project
- alignment with priority fields (if applicable)
- alignment with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (if applicable)
- research topic field of study
- project overview
- research question
- research methodology
- research outline or structure
- communications summary
- exchange activities
- societal benefits of the research project
- alignment with the objectives of the AIWE program
- expected benefits for your career
- expected benefits for your Home University
- CV/Resume: **No longer than 3 pages**, including: education & employment history, research experience, honours & awards, professional affiliations and no more than 5 relevant academic publications authored/co-authored by the applicant.

## 5. Supporting documents

Applicants will also be required to submit the following completed documents. See templates for preparing the letters of support.

- Letter of Recommendation from applicant's Head of Department or equivalent [[PDF/docx](#)]
- Letter of Support from the Home University [[PDF/docx](#)]
- Letter of Support from the Host Institution [[PDF/docx](#)]

## 6. Letter of Recommendation

Prior to applying, applicants should obtain a Letter of Recommendation from their Head of Department or equivalent to participate in the program and submit this letter with their online application.

### 6.1 Template Letter of Recommendation [\[PDF/docx\]](#)

Using the template provided, applicants should obtain a Letter of Recommendation that attests to their suitability to participate in the AIWE Program and capacity to successfully undertake the research project and activities.

The Letter of Recommendation should confirm that the Head of Department or equivalent has approved the proposed dates of travel.

**NOTE: Applicants should discuss with their Home University academic or research supervisor how to arrange coverage for their teaching or other academic responsibilities during their Fellowship.**

## 7. Letters of Support

Using the templates provided, applicants must obtain letters of support from both their Home University and Host Institution and submit these letters with their online application.

Applicants should contact the International Office or equivalent at their Home University to seek assistance in identifying potential Host Institutions in India and to obtain Letters of Support from both the Home University and Host Institution.

Applicants are advised to seek their academic or research supervisor's help prior to contacting the International Office.

### 7.1. Letter of Support from the Home University

#### Template Letter of Support – Home University [\[PDF/docx\]](#)

Using the template provided, applicants should obtain a Letter of Support from the International Office or equivalent at their Home University, and include statements that the Home University:

- supports the applicant's travel to the Host Institution for the purpose of undertaking the research project and activities set out in the application and for the duration and the dates specified in the application
- confirms that the applicant received their PhD within the last five years and specifies the institution where it was awarded
- confirms that the applicant is employed at the regional campus of the Home University in a full-time academic position focused on teaching and/or research
- confirms that the applicant will remain employed by the Home University while undertaking the Fellowship
- confirms that the applicant will be covered for travel and health insurance for the duration of the Fellowship, including any quarantine or treatment for COVID-related or other viral illness, noting that the applicant will obtain all necessary insurances to meet their individual circumstances
- confirms ongoing support for the wellbeing of the applicant throughout the Fellowship
- confirms the applicant is an Australian citizen or Australian permanent resident and that their passport expiry date is at least 6 months beyond the completion of the Fellowship.

**NOTE: The Australia India Institute is managing the AIWE Fellowships program on behalf of the Australian Government Department of Education. The Institute does not have capacity to offer in-country support to Fellows.**

## 7.2 Letter of Support from the Host Institution

Template Letter of Support – Host Institution [[PDF/docx](#)]

Using the template provided, applicants should obtain a Letter of Support from the International Office or equivalent at the Host Institution, and include statements that the Host Institution:

- agrees to host the applicant for the purpose of undertaking the research project and activities set out in the application and for the duration and the dates specified
- will provide:
  - a research mentor to meet regularly with the applicant
  - access to a workspace, internet and library facilities, and reasonable support for applicants with disabilities or relevant medical conditions
  - support for the Fellow, including to ensure compliance with local rules and regulations
  - opportunities for the applicant to participate in the academic life of the host department or faculty and to connect with other researchers working in relevant research areas.

## 8. Fellowship awards

AIWE Fellows will receive a lump sum to cover all travel and standard living expenses for 6 to 8 weeks in India. Fellows are required to spend a minimum of 6 weeks and a maximum of 8 weeks at their Host Institution. **Requests for Fellowship periods shorter than 6 weeks or greater than 8 weeks will not be accepted.**

AIWE FELLOWSHIP AWARD	AUD 6 to 8 weeks (42-56 days)
Australian AIWE Fellows travelling to India	\$9,000

The Australia India Institute will transfer the Fellowship award in a lump sum to the Fellow's nominated Australian bank account (in AUD), subject to receipt of the signed Letter of Acceptance and the recipient submitting a valid proof of visa and travel bookings (i.e. plane ticket and travel and health insurance).

## 9. Eligible expenses

Fellows will be required to submit a short account for expenditure in their Activity Report.

Eligible expenses are:

- Single return international economy airfare
- India Visa
- Accommodation
- Travel and health insurance to cover all the individual requirements and contingencies for the full duration of the Fellowship
- Transport costs (e.g. to/from airport and to undertake Fellowship activities)
- Standard living expenses

- Language training and translation services
- Conference registration or costs of events directly related to the research. These events must occur during the Fellowship period.

## 10. Timing of travel

Fellows should consult with their research mentor at the Host Institution to align travel dates and confirm the Host Institution's capacity to receive them for the duration of the Fellowship period. AIWE Fellows can arrange to travel any time after they receive the Fellowship, but must complete their visit in India and return to their Home Universities by 31 May 2025.

## 11. Selection process

The Australia India Institute will screen all applications after the closing date and provide the AIWE Selection Panel with fully completed applications that meet the eligibility criteria and include all supporting documentation.

Eligible applications will be considered by the Selection Panel against the assessment criteria.

## 12. Assessment criteria

In assessing applications, the Selection Panel will review applications in relation to the following:

1. A well-defined research proposal
2. Expected outputs from the Fellowship such as joint authored publications, workshops, laboratory collaborations, and conference presentations
3. Statement of why you are applying for a Fellowship

The Selection Panel will also consider:

4. Applicant's CV/resume, including up to five key single- or jointly-authored publications related to the proposed research activity at the Host Institution
5. Letters of Support and Recommendation
6. Balance in Fellows across STEM disciplines and distribution of Fellows across regional campuses of Australian universities

## 13. Notification of outcomes

The Australia India Institute will advise applicants of the outcome once the Selection Panel has made its selection. Notifications are likely to be conveyed to all applicants by the end of November 2024.

## 14. Letter of Acceptance

Successful applicants will be required to sign and promptly return a Letter of Acceptance declaring that they agree to the terms and conditions set out in these Guidelines. The Fellowship funds will be transferred in a lump sum to the Fellow's nominated bank account (in AUD) in Australia prior to the date of travel to the Host Institution, subject to proof of a relevant visa and travel documentation (i.e. plane ticket, health and travel insurance).



## 15. Terms and Conditions

Fellows must:

- maintain their eligibility as set out in section 3 of these Guidelines
- submit true and accurate information in all documentation
- obtain approval from their Home University to travel to undertake the Fellowship and complete the Home University's travel risk assessment form
- maintain coverage for travel and health insurance for the full duration of the fellowship, including any quarantine or treatment for COVID-related or other viral illness, and obtain all necessary insurances to meet their individual circumstances
- advise their Home University and Host Institution of any pre-existing medical or other conditions which could affect their safe participation in the Fellowship. If required, provide a medical report confirming their capacity to proceed with the Fellowship
- make their own arrangements for travel, visa, accommodation and logistics
- ensure they meet country entry requirements
- comply with local public health requirements at any transit or host country, accommodation, host organisation, conference facilities or other places the Fellow will attend
- always comply with Indian and Australian Government advisories on public health guidelines
- travel to the Host Institution to undertake the research activity outlined in application
- spend a minimum of 6 weeks and a maximum of 8 weeks as an AIWE Fellow at the Host Institution
- use the funding only for the eligible expenses set out in these Guidelines
- complete the Fellowship by 31 May 2025
- submit an Activity Report in the template provided within 2 weeks of completing the Fellowship
- be willing to be an ambassador for the Australia India Women Researchers' Exchange (AIWE) Program and allow the AIWE and the Australian Government to use their name and image to promote the benefits of the program through testimonials, videos, podcasts, social media or other activities
- acknowledge the support of the AIWE Program and the Australian Government Department of Education in any academic presentation and publication generated as part of their Fellowship research project
- always conduct themselves in a professional manner while participating in the Fellowship and not engage in conduct that may harm or diminish the name or reputation of the AIWE program or bring the Home University or Host Institution, Australia India Institute or the Australian Government Department of Education into disrepute.

## 16. Privacy

The Australia India Institute respects the privacy of anyone who interacts with us and is committed to protecting and managing personal information fairly and lawfully. For information on how the Institute will collect personal information on the ARCH-India platform, please read the [Privacy Policy](#). Specific privacy collection notices will be provided to applicants at the time their personal information is collected which will provide further details on how personal information will be processed.

## APPENDIX A – APPLICATION CHECKLIST

**Applicants are strongly encouraged to start their applications early.**

<b>Applications open</b>	<p>The Australia India Women Researchers' Exchange Program applications will open on <b>21 October 2024</b>. Applications can only be made via the online application form (see link below).</p> <p><i>Applicants with disabilities who are unable to access the online application form may contact the Australia India Institute to discuss an alternative process for submitting their application: <a href="mailto:admin@archindia.org">admin@archindia.org</a>.</i></p>
<b>Read Guidelines</b>	<p>Please read all sections of the Guidelines, including the Terms &amp; Conditions before submitting the application.</p> <p>The Guidelines will be published on ARCH-India website (Australian Researcher Cooperation Hub – India) at <a href="http://arch-india.org">arch-india.org</a></p>
<b>Contact supervisor</b>	Applicants should seek advice from their academic or research supervisor on their participation in the AIWE Fellowship program.
<b>Obtain Letter of Recommendation</b>	Applicants should obtain a Letter of Recommendation [ <a href="#">PDF/docx</a> ] from their Head of Department or equivalent.
<b>Contact International Offices to identify potential Host Institutions</b>	<p>Applicants should contact the International Office at their Home University. The International Office can help to identify and contact potential Host Institutions.</p> <p>Applicants should seek advice from their academic or research supervisors for identifying appropriate research mentors at the Host Institutions.</p>
<b>Obtain a Letter of Support from the Host Institution</b>	Obtain a Letter of Support from the Host Institution [ <a href="#">PDF/docx</a> ] confirming they will host the applicant for the Fellowship and identify the academic staff who will mentor the Fellow at the Host Institution.
<b>Obtain a Letter of Support from the Home University</b>	The Home University issues a Letter of Support [ <a href="#">PDF/docx</a> ] for the applicant permitting them to take up the Fellowship if they are successful.
<b>Check government advisories relevant to all aspects of travel</b>	<p>Applicants should check with their Home University on relevant government travel advisories for international travel to the other country. This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For Australian applicants, the Australian Government Smartraveller advisory on India: <a href="https://www.smartraveller.gov.au/destinations">https://www.smartraveller.gov.au/destinations</a></li> </ul>
<b>Register on ARCH-India</b>	Before completing your application, register as a researcher on ARCH-India: <a href="https://arch-india.org/user/login">https://arch-india.org/user/login</a> . Please ensure your profile contains the following information:

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Profile image:</b> A clear, professional photo</li> <li>2. <b>Profile overview:</b> A brief overview of your background, expertise, and research interests</li> <li>3. <b>Research areas:</b> Specify your primary research areas and use topic keyword tags to detail your specific interests</li> <li>4. <b>Link to an external profile website:</b> Add a link to your university profile page or your LinkedIn profile</li> </ol>
<b>Check FAQs</b>	The <a href="#">AIWE Program webpage</a> will be regularly updated with new FAQs based on questions from interested applicants. Please check the FAQ section frequently to stay informed about the program.
<b>Complete the online application form</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Complete the online application form: <a href="https://arch-india.org/form/aiwe-application">https://arch-india.org/form/aiwe-application</a></li> <li>2. Upload supporting documents (upload in PDF): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CV/Resume: <u>No longer than 3 pages</u>, including: education &amp; employment history, research experience, honours &amp; awards, professional affiliations and no more than 5 relevant academic publications authored/co-authored by the applicant.</li> <li>• Signed Letter of Recommendation</li> <li>• Signed Letter of Support from Home University</li> <li>• Signed Letter of Support from Host Institution</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. e-Sign the Declaration that the information provided is true and correct</li> <li>4. Submit application</li> </ol>
<b>Applications close</b>	Applications close at 23:30 Australian Daylight Standard Time <b>18 November 2024</b>
<b>Acknowledgement of receipt</b>	Applicants will receive an automatic email acknowledging receipt of the application.
<b>Incomplete or ineligible applications</b>	<p>The Australia India Institute will review all applications after the closing date and provide the AIWE Fellowship Selection Panel with applications that meet the eligibility criteria and include all supporting documentation.</p> <p><i>Applicants that have not met the eligibility criteria or who submit an incomplete application will not have their application assessed.</i></p>
<b>Selection of Fellows</b>	The Selection Panel will assess applications against the assessment criteria set out in the Guidelines and select Fellows.
<b>Notification of outcomes</b>	<p>The Australia India Institute will advise all applicants by email of the outcome of applications by the end of November 2024 (anticipated).</p> <p>Individual feedback will not be provided to unsuccessful applicants.</p>

<b>Letter of Acceptance</b>	Successful applicants will be required to sign and promptly return a Letter of Acceptance.
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## APPENDIX B – INFORMATION FOR AIWE FELLOWS

<b>Funds transfer</b>	The Australia India Institute will transfer the Fellowship award in a lump sum (in AUD) to the Fellow's nominated Australian bank account, subject to receipt of the signed Letter of Acceptance and the recipient submitting a valid proof of visa and travel arrangements, including all necessary insurances.
<b>Check passport validity and ensure it meets all travel requirements</b>	<p><b>Fellows are advised to apply for a visa as soon as possible as visa processing may take some time.</b></p> <p>Some foreign governments require visitors to carry passports with a period of validity beyond their planned stay.</p> <p>Check the entry requirements for India and transit countries and ensure passport / travel documents comply with all government requirements.</p> <p>The Australia India Institute is unable to provide advice on passport requirements.</p>
<b>Ensure you have a valid visa for all stages of travel</b>	<p>Fellows are advised to liaise with the International Office of their Home University for guidance on the appropriate visa category to apply for and details of the visa application process.</p> <p>Official advice on visas for travellers to India can be found at: <a href="https://www.hcicanberra.gov.in/">https://www.hcicanberra.gov.in/</a></p> <p>The Australia India Institute is unable to provide advice on visas.</p>
<b>Check Government public health advisories for all stages of travel</b>	<p>Fellows are advised to liaise with the International Office of their Home University for guidance. This may include:</p> <p>For Australian Fellows, check with the Indian High Commission to Australia for information on government health advisories: <a href="https://www.hcicanberra.gov.in/">https://www.hcicanberra.gov.in/</a> or other official Government of India websites: <a href="https://mohfw.gov.in/">https://mohfw.gov.in/</a></p>
<b>The Fellowship</b>	<p>Fellows will travel to their Host Institution to undertake the research activity outlined in their application and signed Letter of Support from the Host institution.</p> <p>Fellows will remain at the Host Institution for a minimum period of 6 weeks and a maximum period of 8 weeks.</p>
<b>Last date to complete Fellowship</b>	Fellows must complete their fellowship and return by <b>31 May 2025</b> .
<b>Activity Report</b>	Fellows must submit an Activity Report on their fellowship activities within two (2) weeks after completing their

	Fellowship. A template will be provided to successful applicants.
<b>FAQ</b>	Questions can be directed to <a href="mailto:admin@arch-india.org">admin@arch-india.org</a> .