

# Punjab college emulates IIT Gandhinagar fellowship

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AHMEDABAD: Inspired by the Explorer Fellowship of IIT-Gandhinagar (IIT-Gn), Punjab Engineering College (PEC) in Chandigarh has offered a similar fellowship its first- and second-year students.

Professor Sudhir Jain, the director of IIT-Gn, recently shared the news on social media, terming it the second initiative by the institute that has gained acceptance among engineering colleges across India. Earlier, the foundation programme — a five-week immersive introduction to the IIT — was emulated by a number of engineering institutes in India.

“The programme provides students an opportunity to explore India — it introduces them to different cultures, people, and places so that they can understand the diversity of the country,” said Prof Jain. “Since its inception in 2015, 260 students have availed the scholarship. In recent years, we have recorded an increase in women students’ participation. So far women have taken the fellowship.”

Open to all students above 18, the fellowship puts forth some stringent rules for participants. Fellows must travel in a group of two to three members during the summer break; must explore six or more states, including at least one each from southern, northern and northeastern parts of India; must travel continuously; travel sleeper class and/or on government buses and stay in budget accommodation. The teams are provided Rs 35,000 to Rs 40,000 per person. In an article in Current Science last year, Prof Jain said that the foundation programme has been followed up in different forms by institutes such as NIT Trichy and IITs in Patna, Mandi and BHU. The programme focuses on developing core capabilities such as values and ethics, creativity,

teamwork, social awareness, and physical fitness. The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) has recently recommended a three-week induction programme at the beginning of their undergraduate programme to improve skills of engineering graduates.