Guidelines for Challenge Grant

Introduction highlighting the need

The "Challenge Grants" initiative aims to ignite innovative research by encouraging faculty members to submit more project proposals to external funding agencies. It also addresses issues that arise when sponsored projects receive insufficient funding for necessary equipment or tools essential for their effective execution.

Furthermore, this initiative seeks to fund interdisciplinary projects and collaborations across departments, promoting synergies between different fields within the institute. By doing so, it enhances the competitiveness of larger external grants from funding agencies or industry partners.

"Challenge Grants" play a crucial role in providing opportunities for promising faculty members to support their innovative ideas, thereby contributing significantly to their professional development. These grants are preferably available to teams of faculty members from at least two different departments or schools. Subject to fund availability, in exceptional cases, small funding may be considered even if a single Department/School is involved. The funding support against the "Challenge Grants" are only indicative and may be changed with time depending on the fund availability.

The "Challenge Grants" may be requested in the following conditions

a. Commitment letter from the Institute at the time of sponsored project submission. A commitment letter from the Institute submitted alongside the sponsored project can enhance the project's likelihood of securing funding.

b. In cases where a funding agency provides partial support and the non-funded portion is crucial for project execution.

c. With some additional funding through the "Challenge Grants", a better specification of equipment may be purchased.

d. Against a call from the Institute

Funding support

Post Project Sanction Challenge Grant

a) Funding support from "Challenge Grants" cannot exceed 25% of the external funding budgeted for the sponsored research project.

b) Typically, "Challenge Grants" are disbursed after the project has been approved by the funding agency and the funds have been received or are available.

c) The funding support is applicable as per the details given in the table below

Number of Investigators (P.I/Co-P.Is)	Number of Departments/Schools Involved	Amount of support through the "Challenge Grants" with a *maximum cap of 25% the project budget*
1	1	Nil
2	1	15 Lakhs
2	2	25 Lakhs
3	2	35 Lakhs
3	3	45 Lakhs
3+	3+	To be decided on a case-to-case basis

d) A faculty member can participate in a maximum of two research groups. If involved in two groups, their funding share (up to INR 10 Lakhs) will be divided between each group. However, such faculty members will not count towards forming a 'big group' (three or more faculty members).

e) A faculty member can avail "Challenge Grants" funding no more than once in two years.

f) Grant funds can be utilized for developing essential equipment facilities (non-recurring) for the project.

g) The grant must be utilized within the same financial year unless an extension is approved.

h) The Principal Investigator (PI)/co-PI and the participating departments or schools are responsible for providing the necessary space for housing and operating the equipment required for the project.

i) A minimum of 25% of the equipment usage time must be made available to other users within the Institute.

j) Collaboration with industry partners is encouraged to leverage additional funding and resources for the projects.

Challenge Grant against a call from the Institute

a. The Institute will Invite a call for proposals aligned with national missions, specific needs, and priorities of the institution and nation or other Important futuristic research proposals.
b. The proposed solution should be interdisciplinary in nature with the participation of a minimum two Departments / Schools
c. The Principal Investigator (PI)/co-PI and the participating departments or schools are responsible for providing the necessary space for housing and operating the equipment required for the project.

d. The maximum duration of the project is two years with a maximum non-recurring budget is typically 25 %

e. It is expected that the project investigators will submit a major project for external funding based on the data through the challenge grant.

f. The funding support is applicable as per the details given in the table below

Number of Investigators (P.I/Co-P.Is)	Number of Department/Schools Involved	Maximum amount of support through the "Challenge Grants"
1	1	Nil
2	1	25 Lakhs
2	2	35 Lakhs
3	2	45 Lakhs
3	3	55 Lakhs
3+	3+	To be decided on a case-to-case basis

Review Process and Approval:

Post Project Sanction Challenge Grant

Request for "Challenge Grants" will be evaluated through a committee based on the following criteria.

1. Sanctioned amount of the sponsored project and the need for the additional requested amount for the equipment/items through the post-sanction "Challenge Grant"

2. The review committee of the project is as follows:

Dean (R&D), IIT (BHU) Varanasi	:	Chairman
Associate Dean (R&D), IIT (BHU) Varanasi	:	Member
Heads/Coordinators of the participating Departments/Schools	:	Member(s)
One faculty nominated by the Director	:	Members

4. The Final approval of the "Challenge Grant" will be made by the Director

5. Post sanction, the same committee will evaluate the progress of the project every six months.

Challenge Grant against call from the Institute

Request for "Challenge Grants" will be evaluated through a committee based on the following criteria.

a) Merit and novelty of the project
b) Strength of the team
c) Possibility of future funding based on the project outcome
d) Alignment of the project with national mission or futuristic research potential

The review committee of the project is as follow:

Director or his nominee	:	Chairman
Dean (R&D), IIT (BHU) Varanasi	:	Member
Heads/Coordinators of the participating Departments/School	:	Member(s)
Two experts nominated by the Director (External/internal)	:	Members

4. The Final approval of the "Challenge Grant" will be made by the Director

5. Post sanction, the same committee will evaluate the progress of the project every six months.

Request Format for *Post-Project Sanction Challenge Grant*

1. **Title of the Sponsored Project:**

2. **Funding agency:**

3. **Details of the fund received (Item-wise)**

4. **Details of the Project Group**

Principal Investigator (PI):

a. Title : b. Name :		Sex
c. Full Official Address		
Mobile/Telephone Fax E-mail		
d. Position		

Co-Principal Investigator 1

a. Title : b. Name :		Sex
c. Full Official Address		
Mobile/Telephone Fax E-mail		
d. Position		

Co-Principal Investigator 2

a. Title : b. Name :		Sex
c. Full Official Address		
Mobile/Telephone Fax E-mail		
d. Position		

5. Need for "Challenge Grant" (up to 250 words)

6. Amount requested through "Challenge Grant" (item-wise; enclose quotation)

7. Are you ready to extend the equipment facility to other users in the Institute for 25% time: Yes/NO

8. Signature of P.I and Co-PIs

9. Recommendation of Head of the Department/School of P.I

10. Remark from Assistant Registrar (R&D) about fund receipt for the sponsored project

11. Recommendation of the review committee (enclose a copy)

12. Director, IIT (BHU) Varanasi

Approved/ Not Approved

Request Format for Challenge Grant against call from the Institute

1. Title of the Sponsored Project:

2. Hypothesis and alignment with national mission

3. Current state-of-art / review of the literature

4. Specific objectives

5. Deliverables

6. Time schedule

7. Details of fund requirement (Item-wise)

8. Details of the Project Group

Principal Investigator (PI):

a. Title :	Sex
b. Name :	

c. Full Official Address	
Mobile/Telephone Fax E-mail	
d. Position	

Co-Principal Investigator 1

a. Title :	Sex
b. Name :	

c. Full Official Address	
Mobile/Telephone Fax E-mail	
d. Position	

Co-Principal Investigator 2

a. Title :	Sex
b. Name :	

c. Full Official Address	
Mobile/Telephone Fax E-mail	
d. Position	

9. Need for "Challenge Grant" (up to 250 words)

10. Are you ready to extend the equipment facility to other users in the Institute for 25% time: Yes/NO

11. Signature of P.I and Co-PIs

12. Recommendation of Head of the Department/School of P.I

13. Recommendation of the review committee (enclose a copy)

14. Director, IIT (BHU) Varanasi

Approved/ Not Approved