

Applied Policy Fellowship

AN ESYA-ORF INITIATIVE



Prospectus
2025-26

Learn, Practice, and Transition into the Policy Arena

The Applied Policy Fellowship (APF) is a 13-week, fully immersive and intensive programme designed for graduate students and early career professionals aspiring to build impactful careers in public policy.

The first of its kind programme in India, offered jointly by the Esya Centre and the Observer Research Foundation, runs in person in New Delhi, from late October to late January.

Participants will gain a strong foundation in contemporary policy themes while developing professional skills essential for practitioners.

As a unique career-launching feature, around half of each graduating cohort will receive job opportunities within the policy ecosystem.



Location: Ambedkar International Centre, New Delhi

Programme Offerings

Learn from real-world experience

Gather diverse insights from seasoned policy practitioners who have shaped decisions across government, industry, and civil society

Access global conferences and networking events

Upon graduation, gain access to global conferences, workshops and seminars, and powerful networking events organised by the ORF and Esya Centre

Master practical methods

Equip yourself with the tools, frameworks, and problem-solving approaches used by practitioners in their daily work

Benefit from personalised attention

Be part of an exclusive first-year cohort of around 20 participants, ensuring a unique, collaborative, and highly personalised learning environment

Engage with key stakeholders

Interact directly with leaders from the private sector, government agencies, think tanks, and non-profits

Leverage our integrated placements programme

Successful course graduates will have the opportunity to interview with prominent policy institutions



Join a community of
future thought leaders

Eligibility Criteria

The APF welcomes applicants from diverse academic and professional backgrounds. There is no minimum work experience requirement.

To be eligible, applicants must have completed a minimum four years of collegiate education.

In exceptional cases, we may waive formal academic thresholds for candidates who demonstrate outstanding public interest experience or professional excellence.

Educational Qualification	Minimum Grades/Marks
Five-Year Integrated Programmes	
Five-Year Integrated Programmes	CGPA: [3.7 out of 4.0; 5.0 out of 7.0; 6.0 out of 8.0 or 8.0 out of 10.0]
	Percentage: 70 per cent
Master's Degree Requirements	
Master's Degree Requirements	Upper First (1:1) or Distinction
Degrees from Foreign Institutions	
4-point GPA	Minimum 3.7
Letter Grades	Minimum A minus
ECTS (EU credits)	Minimum B and completed at least 180 ECTS

For universities with atypical grading or score distributions, we will convert results using recognised international equivalency methods (e.g. WES) to ensure consistency across disciplines and countries.

Admissions Process

We seek applicants who combine strong academic performance with relevant experience and a demonstrated commitment to public policy. While prior full-time work experience is not required, we value any form of relevant exposure -- including internships, apprenticeships, research assistantships, volunteering, or project-based engagements; that show intellectual curiosity and public interest engagement.

Application Requirements:

- **Curriculum Vitae** – detailing academic background, relevant experience (including internships, projects, or volunteer work), and achievements
- **Statement of Purpose** – explaining your interest in public policy, career aspirations, and why the APF is the right fit for you
- **Completed Application Form** – available on our website

Selection Process:

- **Initial screening** – A selection committee will review applications for academic qualifications, relevant experience, and alignment with the programme's goals
- **Interviews** – Shortlisted candidates will be invited for a virtual personal interview
- **Final selection** – Based on assessment of academic merit, skills, motivation, and potential, the committee will finalise the incoming cohort

The first-year cohort will be limited to around 20 participants to ensure a high-quality learning environment. We will not provide individual feedback to candidates who are not selected.



**You will receive a certificate of completion from
both ORF and ESYA Centre**

Course Structure

The APF combines ten weekly sessions interspersed with three intensive weeks. The design mirrors the pace and problem-solving demands of real-world policy work, with an emphasis on the role of technology in shaping today's policy landscape.

Weekly sessions take place on Saturdays, each lasting six hours split into three interactive classes. Participants engage through a blend of lectures, case discussions, simulations, workshops, and personalised feedback.

Technology is embedded into the learning process; whether analysing datasets, exploring digital governance tools, or examining technology-driven regulatory challenges. Preparation requires 10–12 hours per week for readings, applied exercises, and assignments.

Intensive schedules run from Friday to Sunday, with three sessions per day devoted to a single theme or policy challenge. These deep dives emphasise collaborative problem-solving and hands-on practice, often using real-world datasets, digital platforms, or technology-led policy case studies.

Learning is reinforced through assignment-driven assessment. Participants work individually and in teams on tasks that mirror professional policy projects such as drafting policy briefs, designing regulatory frameworks for emerging technologies, conducting stakeholder analyses, and interpreting complex data. Assignments are discussed and critiqued in-depth.

Week / Category	Theme/ Focus Areas
Week 1 (Intensive)	Foundations of Policymaking and Policy Research
Week 2	The Role of Stakeholders
Week 3	Policy Documents and Advocacy 101
Week 4	Regulatory Theory and Practice
Week 5 (Intensive)	Empirical Methods and Dissemination
Week 6	Policy Negotiations
Week 7	International Policies: Foreign and Economic Policies
Week 8	International Policies: Climate and Tech Policies
Week 9 (After Winter Break)	Winter Submissions Evaluation
Week 10	Narratives and Influence (I)
Week 11	Narratives and Influence (II)
Week 12	Media and Industry
Week 13 (Intensive)	Policy Expertise in Practice



What You Will Learn:

- How to research, interpret, and analyse policy-relevant documents and data from a practitioner's perspective
- The principles of regulation—when and why state intervention is needed, and how to identify both effective policies and regulatory failures
- Core approaches to policy and regulatory design, including frameworks for governing technology-driven sectors
- Practical methods for gathering, interpreting, and visualising qualitative and quantitative data using modern tools
- Global trade dynamics, value chains, and foreign policy, in a tech-driven world

Skills You Will Develop:

- **Writing for impact:** crafting policy briefs, analytical reports, and persuasive narratives for varied audiences.
- **Research and analysis:** identifying credible sources, structuring arguments, and presenting evidence effectively
- **Advocacy and stakeholder engagement:** mapping influence, developing proposals, and building thought leadership
- **Methods in policy:** designing and conducting literature reviews, surveys, and interviews
- **Professional competencies:** communication, collaboration, and networking in a policy environment
- **Technology fluency:** applying digital tools, understanding data-driven decision-making, and addressing governance challenges in technology-intensive industries



Gain insights and make
your own career pathway
in public policy

Evaluations

The APF is designed to prepare candidates for demanding roles in the public policy ecosystem. Performance is assessed through a combination of home-based and in-class assignments, all of which are directly linked to real-world policy work.

Participants are encouraged to complete every assignment they receive; however, to be eligible for successful completion of the programme and consideration under the APF Placement Programme, the following requirements apply:

- Participants must submit at least 10 of the 11 total assignments.
- A winter assignment is mandatory and carries higher weight in the overall evaluation. This must be completed regardless of the total count.

We set a high bar for performance. Not all participants are expected to pass the programme—those who do not meet our professional standards will not graduate from the fellowship. This ensures that the quality and credibility of our graduates remain uncompromised, especially given that more than half of the graduates will receive guaranteed job offers through our placement commitments.

For participants who do not successfully complete the programme, we will provide a 90 percent refund of programme fees ex GST.

Placement Programme

Graduating from the APF is a launchpad into the public policy ecosystem. We expect 50% of the graduating cohort will receive job offers within the policy sector, including opportunities with ORF, Esya Centre, and other partner organisations. These are predominantly entry-level positions within the policy field. Salaries for these roles will be set by the recruiting organisations and would be non-negotiable.

It is important to note:

- Eligibility for placements is conditional on successful completion of the fellowship, including meeting all academic standards and performance requirements
- Our commitment to job opportunities is matched by an expectation of rigour, professionalism, and readiness from each fellow
- Participants who do not meet the programme's standards will not be eligible for placement opportunities



Standards & Code of Conduct

The APF maintains high expectations of personal conduct, professional ethics, and academic integrity. These standards are essential to the credibility of the fellowship, the trust of our partners, and the employability of our graduates.

1. Respect and Professionalism

- Participants must treat peers, faculty, staff, and guest speakers with courtesy and respect at all times.
- We have a zero-tolerance policy for harassment, bullying, discrimination, or any form of misconduct. Violations may result in immediate removal from the programme and, where appropriate, referral to legal or institutional authorities.

2. Academic and Professional Integrity

- All assignments must be original and properly cited. Plagiarism, falsification of data, or misrepresentation of sources will result in disciplinary action, including expulsion.
- The use of generative AI tools or third-party work is permitted only if declared. Passing off AI-generated or another person's work as your own is considered a breach of integrity.
- In group projects, each fellow's contribution must be clear and authentic. Misrepresenting the work of others as your own is prohibited.

3. Accuracy in Representation

- Participants must be truthful in all self-declared grades, qualifications, and professional experiences in their applications and during the programme. All related claims are subject to verification.
- When interacting with prospective employers, participants may not misrepresent their role, skills, or the nature of the fellowship. Any such misrepresentation may lead to removal from placement opportunities or the programme itself.

4. Commitment to Participation

- This is an intensive, short-duration programme in which attendance and active engagement are non-negotiable.
- Absence, without a documented emergency or pre-approved reasons, will result in ejection from the fellowship, with no graduation and no access to placement opportunities.
- Participants who must withdraw due to illness or other unavoidable reasons will receive a refund of programme fees (ex GST), but will not graduate from the programme.
- Punctuality, preparedness, and consistent contribution are part of the professional evaluation that determines both graduation and placement eligibility.

5. Use of Programme Materials

- All readings, notes, presentations, and proprietary documents provided by the organisers are for personal, educational use only and must not be reproduced, published, or distributed without written consent.
- Participants retain ownership of their original work created during the programme, but grant the organisers a non-exclusive right to publish, archive, or display it with proper credit.



Fees & Payment

- **Programme Fee:** INR 75,000 (plus GST) for the full three-month fellowship. Wire transfer details will be shared with selected participants.
- **What's included:** All tuition, course materials, and participation in weekly and intensive sessions, lunch on all days with physical classes held at Ambedkar International Centre, New Delhi
- **What's not included:** Accommodation in New Delhi, transport to venues, meals (unless specified), and any personal expenses incurred during the programme.

Refund Policy

We will refund the 90 percent of the programme fee, minus the GST component, in the following cases:

- If a participant withdraws from the programme due to documented extenuating circumstances (medical or otherwise)
- If a participant does not graduate from the programme due to not meeting performance

We do not offer scholarships or funding options for the first edition of the programme.

Application & Evaluation Timelines

The detailed schedule for the application process, interviews, evaluations, and final offers are published on our official website. This includes:

- Application opening and closing dates
- Shortlisting and interview dates
- Final selection announcements
- Key programme milestones

Applicants are responsible for checking the website regularly for updates. All deadlines will be strictly enforced, and late submissions will not be considered.

SCAN TO APPLY



About APF Organisers



Esya Centre is a innovation and technology focussed think-tank, with specialises in empirical research. For more information please visit: www.esyacentre.org

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ORF is India's largest non-government multidisciplinary think-tank, with offices across the world. For more information please visit: www.orfonline.org

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For queries, write to us at admin@appliedpolicyfellowship.com

