

FRIB Theory Fellows Guidance for Searches Feb 2025

This document provides guidelines for the FRIB theory fellow search procedure.

Description of the theory fellow position

FRIB theory fellows are highly selected individuals who develop high-caliber theoretical research that is relevant FRIB and other low-energy nuclear facilities. Fellows have initial appointments for 2 years, with possible extensions up to a total of 5 years. Fellows can be hosted by MSU or by a partner institution, however, in all cases, they remain 100% MSU employees, and as such enjoy full benefits, including a comprehensive health care plan and a basic retirement plan (<https://hr.msu.edu/benefits/index.html>). Fellows also administer their own separate travel budget. Fellows are expected to find, within 5 years, a permanent position in nuclear theory. As such, it is important that they develop their own research program and have exposure to university/laboratory administration. These individuals have the freedom to work on problems at the forefront of low energy nuclear physics that connect to the Facility for Rare Isotope Beams (FRIB) and other low-energy facilities, either in collaboration with the hosting theory group or leading theorists at other institutions. FRIB fellows have no teaching obligations, but they may participate in committees and graduate student training.

Description of partner institution

Prior to the advertisement for the fellow position, there will be a call for institutions that are interested in partnering with the fellow program. These institutions will contribute with 50% of the funding for the fellow (salary and travel) through a sub-recipient agreement with MSU (subject to MSU off-campus overhead), matched by the FRIB theory alliance 50% contribution. The institution should also identify a senior researcher that will act as the local host for the fellow and that will be the liaison with the FRIB theory alliance in all activities regarding the respective fellow.

No partner institution may host more than one fellow concurrently. A partner institution may not host a fellow if the selected fellow has been in the employ of the partner institution or otherwise stationed at the partner institution for a period longer than two calendar years prior to the date that the advertisement for the fellow position is posted.

In addition, for partner institutions that have hosted an FRIB Theory Fellow, those partner institutions are excluded from participating as a partner during the next FRIB Theory Fellow search following the termination of their hosted fellow.

Expectation for the fellow

Fellows hosted by MSU are expected to have active involvement in the laboratory and theory group activities. They have their own office, are encouraged to participate in the guidance of young researchers (including graduate students), participate in theory faculty meetings, and are encouraged to organize the theory seminars series. Partner institutions may adjust the arrangements of the theory fellow depending on the conditions of the local group, but need to make the fellows distinct from postdocs, and closer to faculty/staff.

Regardless of their home institution, fellows are expected to: i) spend a significant amount of time at FRIB and/or other low-energy facilities ii) contribute to the scientific program of FRIB and other low-energy facilities, and iii) be spokespersons for low-energy nuclear theory nationally and internationally.

Calendar for the search

- A. The FRIB TA managing director consults with the FRIB TA board to assess if funding permits an FRIB Theory Fellow Search in the calendar year.
- B. The FRIB TA managing director notifies the search committee of an upcoming search, who then establishes the timeline of the search with guidance from items C-L below.
- C. Call for partnership is sent out early in the Summer break and partners identified shortly thereafter.
- D. The advertisement for a fellow position is posted in the summer and includes explicit mention of possible partners. The deadline for applications is early in the Fall.
- E. Reminders are sent out 3 weeks and 1 week prior to the deadline.
- F. Reference letters are requested with the application.
- G. The search committee makes the shortlist for interviews in October and interviews are arranged.
- H. The interviews take place in November/December.
- I. The recommendations of the search committee are transmitted to the FRIB TA board immediately following the deliberations, with copies to the partner institutions.
- J. If FRIB TA board accepts the recommendation, FRIB TA managing director informs FRIB laboratory director, DOE program officer and partner institutions, and negotiates an offer between the top candidate and partner institution in December
- K. The results of the search are communicated to FRIB TA membership once the offer is accepted.

Search Committee composition

The search committee will be composed of a subset of members of the FRIB TA assigned by the FRIB TA board (up to five voting members who do not represent a partner institution, except for fellows hosted by MSU) plus a previous fellow. For searches involving a partner institution, one representative from each partner institution will augment the search committee. When MSU is the host, the committee will be augmented by a member appointed by MSU. The FRIB TA board will select the chair of the search committee. Search committee members representing a partner institution are full members of the search committee during the selection process and during the interviews. After the interviews, search committee members representing a partner institution may give their assessment of each candidate to the search committee, but are excluded from the final deliberations and the selection process. Since there is no apparent conflict of interest in the case of an MSU host, the full search committee will participate in the full selection process. In

years when there is only one (1) partner institution, the partner institution's representative will be allowed to participate in the full selection process.

The chair of the search committee will be briefed by FRIB Human Resources on best practices to ensure that all applicants are treated fairly during the search process. The committee will make additional efforts to draw a broad pool of applicants, and these efforts must be documented and reported to the FRIB TA managing director.

Interviews

The interviews take place at FRIB. Candidates are expected to appear for a one day interview consisting of a seminar, a one-hour meeting with the search committee, and to have one-on-one meetings with various local faculty (experiment and theory). The seminar will be broadcast to the FRIB TA membership. The chair of the search committee is expected to be physically present at MSU during the interviews, but other search committee members may join remotely. For the meeting with the search committee, all candidates will need to respond to a common set of questions, in addition to impromptu discussions.

Following the interviews, the chair of the search committee collects feedback on the candidates and shares with all members of the search committee.

Recommendations by search committee

Following the interviews, the search committee will meet to discuss the candidates and prepare a ranked list. The chair of the search committee will prepare a recommendation to the FRIB TA director that includes the ranked list of the candidates interviewed and considered above threshold for the position, as well as a brief justification for the ranking. The FRIB TA managing director will present the recommendations of the search committee to the FRIB TA board, who will then vote to accept or reject the recommendations of the search committee. If the recommendations of the search committee are not approved by the FRIB TA board, the search committee will reconvene to reconsider the recommendations in concert with the FRIB TA board.

Hiring procedure

Once the FRIB TA board approves the recommendations of the search committee, the FRIB TA managing director informs the FRIB laboratory director and DOE. The FRIB TA managing director then informs the partner institutions of the ranked list and solicits the interest of the partner institutions to host each ranked fellow candidate and confirm their commitments to act as host for any of the candidates. The FRIB TA managing director then notifies the top-ranked candidate and negotiates between the fellow and partner institutions until mutual acceptance is achieved and a formal offer can be made. In the event that the selected candidate declines the position, the FRIB TA managing director will proceed through the ranked list of acceptable candidates until a formal offer can be made. As an issue of fairness to the participating partner institutions, the FRIB TA managing director should adhere to the commitments obtained from the partner institutions prior to the issuance of the first offer. At any time, partner institutions and candidates may withdraw from the search by notifying the FRIB TA managing director in writing. Once the offer has been accepted and the hire is formalized, the FRIB Theory Fellow is announced to the membership.