

12th FICCI Higher Education Excellence Award 2026

Terms and Conditions

Awards	12th FICCI Higher Education Excellence Awards 2026
Awards Management	Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)
Jury	A group of sector experts appointed by Awards Management to determine the shortlisted participants and winners
Participant	Any eligible institution that participates by submitting an application form
Screening Jury/Interim Jury	The screening/Interim jury is a group of industry experts who shortlist finalists in each award category
Grand Jury	The Grand Jury is a group of sector leaders who select winners in each award category
Finalists	List of entries short-listed by the Screening/Interim Jury for the Awards
Terms and conditions ("T&C")	These terms governing the Awards, as may be amended from time to time
Website	https://www.ficcihighereducationawards.com/

- These Terms & Conditions are applicable to and govern the "12th FICCI Higher Education Excellence Awards 2026" organized and conducted by FICCI
- By participating in the Awards, Participant agrees to abide by and be bound by these terms. These terms may be modified without any prior notification. Participants are advised to regularly review these terms. If a participant does not agree with any of the terms and any amendments thereto, the participant must not participate in the Awards and withdraw its application from the Awards.
- **Awards Objective**
To felicitate the achievements of institutions and individuals for improving the quality of Higher Education in India. It is a part of FICCI's endeavors to drive the sector towards better employability, delivery of quality education, visionary thinking, use of technology, and partnerships in improving the Higher Education System at large.

- **Award categories**

Award categories as defined by the terms are as follows:

Sr No.	Name of Category	Sub-categories	Category definitions
1	Excellence in Creating Employment & Entrepreneurship		Institutions that have established sustainable systems for building students' skills in line with industry and society's needs. These institutions enhance students' employability by collaborating with industry, providing experiential learning, and keeping their curricula updated.
2	Excellence in Research & Innovation		Institutions which have established a sustainable ecosystem for research, innovation and entrepreneurship to strengthen collaborations among institutions, organizations, and communities to leverage talent across institutions for research.
3	Excellence in Globalization		Institutions which have established sustainable systems for integrating a international, intercultural or global dimensions on their campuses. They may demonstrate global partnerships, foreign campuses, joint initiatives, student-staff exchange programs and internationalization of their curriculum.
4	Excellence in Institutional Social Responsibility		Institutions which have established a sustainable system for community engagement and for inculcating values of social responsibility in their students and faculty. These institutions must demonstrate multi-year activities that result in positive impact on the communities that they serve.
5	Excellence in Financial Sustainability & Student Access		This award recognizes institutions that demonstrate robust financial health while actively fostering access to education through inclusive, sustainable, and innovative financing models. These institutions reduce financial barriers through scholarships, fee waivers, EMI options, income-share agreements, and partnerships with financial or EdTech platforms. Their commitment to affordability and responsible financial planning enables long-term stability and ensures education remains accessible to

			students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds.
6	Excellence in AI & Digital Transformation in Student Success		This category recognizes institutions that use digital systems and AI-enabled tools to improve student outcomes. It focuses on how technology is used to track student performance, support interventions, improve retention and progression, and enhance employability and overall student experience.
7	Excellence in AI & Digital Transformation in Teaching & Learning		This category recognizes institutions that have made significant progress in enhancing core infrastructure, capabilities and teaching practices, from curriculum design to content creation, classroom delivery, assessments, grading, student feedback & mentoring, analytics, faculty and inter-disciplinary collaboration and research using Artificial Intelligence.
8	University of the Year	<p>The award has two subcategories based on the number of years of establishment for both public and private institutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emerging (5- 15 Years) - In existence for more than or equal to 5 years and less than or equal to 15 years as on March 31, 2026. • Established (More than 15 Years) - In existence for more than 15 years as on March 31, 2026 	This award category celebrates universities that have erected enduring ecosystems and showcased unyielding dedication to excellence throughout every facet of university administration. Demonstrating a holistic approach, these universities have embraced a comprehensive range of endeavors, from enriching faculty development and pioneering curriculum design to fostering global engagement, conducting impactful research, spearheading student employability initiatives, forging robust industry partnerships, and pioneering social responsibility initiatives. Their consistent and outstanding performance has led to remarkable outcomes, leaving an indelible mark on the landscape of Indian higher education.
9	Lifetime Achievement Award (Jury Choice)		This award recognizes leaders who have changed the course of the Indian education sector through their vision, work, and evangelism. This award celebrates individuals with at least 30 years of experience who have contributed significantly to policy, advocacy, research, or reform.

10	Personality of the Year Award (Jury Choice)		This award recognizes leaders who have demonstrated thought leadership, delivered projects that have resulted in tangible outcomes and contributed to national level initiatives and worked in the higher education sector for 15 years. The participant nominated in this category should have taken initiative/ project and created impact in the last 1 year
11	Legendary Institution Builder Award (Jury Choice)		This award recognizes leaders who have founded and built one or more educational institutions that have achieved long-term academic, research, or societal excellence. This award honors visionary leaders whose enduring commitment and leadership have shaped institutions that now serve as benchmarks in India's education landscape.

- The award categories may be changed/modified/split/merged/increased or cancelled by the jury based on the number and quality of entries received in each category
- In the event that no participant in a category is found to be worthy of inclusion by the jury, the award category may be cancelled by the jury. The decision of the Jury in this regard will be final and non- contestable. The Awards management will not entertain any queries in this regard

Eligibility Criteria for participation in the Awards

- Only Indian institutions with a registered office in India are eligible to apply for the Awards.
- The participating institution must have completed and executed the initiative/project in their Indian operations.
- The institution must have a minimum of 5 years of operations in India as of March 31, 2026.
- The institution must have at least one graduate or post-graduate class in India as of March 31, 2026.
- The initiative/project described in the Awards application should have been implemented between April 01,2024 to March 31, 2026.
- The initiative/project should have demonstrated a measurable impact in the higher education sector/institution during the period April 01, 2025 to March 31, 2026.
- Participating institutions must primarily provide higher education services in India.
- Participants can submit multiple application forms for the same or different categories, provided it is for a different initiative/project. However, if multiple forms are received for the same initiative/project, only one form will be considered. The Jury will decide which entry will be considered for the awards.
- The final eligibility of the participant will be subject to the discretion and approval of the Jury.
- The initiative/project entered for the awards must have been implemented and not in the planning or conceptualizing stage.
- An institution cannot participate on behalf of its sister units, parent institution, or other institutions under the parent institution.

Timelines

- Efforts will be made to adhere to the defined timelines. However, the defined timelines are subject to change based on the decision of Awards management.
- Awards management and its sub-contractors shall not be held accountable/liable for any disruptions/stoppages/interruptions or cancellation of the awards or its ceremony or any part of its processes on account of any factors beyond its control.

Call for Entries & Participation

- The call for entries for the awards will be announced on one or more media platforms and / or by direct communication from FICCI with potential participants, and that shall be construed to be adequate notice for the call for entries
- A participant can apply in each category only once and detail out the initiative/ project taken in that category
- If, multiple partners apply for the same initiative/project, then they should agree amongst themselves who would be the rightful owner of the initiative/project. The awards management or any of its partners will not be involved in deciding the same
- Entries will be accepted in English language only
- In case if participant fails to submit the proof of registration of the institution, they may be disqualified from participation
- The jury has the right to reclassify application forms from one category to another or reject the application form, at its discretion. Jury also have a right to change/modify the eligibility criteria at any step of the awards. This is not contestable in any manner

Application Process

- A participant can apply for the awards by logging on to the website <https://www.ficcihighereducationawards.com/>
- The interested participants must fill the application form of respective Award Category on online portal itself.
- Receipt of application forms after last date of receipt specified may be permitted only at the discretion of the Awards management
- Awards management will not be responsible for application forms that are damaged / lost due to lack or lapse in communication on account of internet failure
- Participation in the Awards in any manner will be construed as an acceptance to the terms and conditions stated herein
- Awards management has the copyright to the applications, if the same been used by the participant in any form other than the awards than Awards management can take strict action against such participant

Completeness of Entries/ Disqualification

- All sections of the application form are mandatory. Participants would not be able to submit the form unless all sections are filled, all the fields of the application form need to be complete in all respects; else it may be disqualified from participation
- Entries will be accepted in English language only
- Institutions can provide supporting materials to assist the jury in evaluating their application such as photos, articles, awards and accolades and material under “Attachments” section.

Application Fees:

- Participant can apply for the Awards by submitting the application on the website <https://www.ficcihighereducationawards.com/>
- There is an entry fee as suggested below.

Type of entity	Fee per category per application (INR)
Private Institutions	INR 9,000 excluding taxes
Public Institutions	INR 5,000 excluding taxes

- The entry fee should be paid online to the management while submission of the entry
- The entry shall stand not be accepted if the fee is not paid while submitting the application
- Participants applying with multiple entries in the same category are required to pay for entry fee only once for that category
- The payment of the entry fee should be done through the payment link available on the website only
- Making the payment of the entry fee does not ensure winning of the competition
- The entry fee shall stand non-refundable in any case. Any decision regarding the deviation of the same shall strictly remain in the hands of the management
- The management shall not be responsible for any loss of entry fee due to incorrect name or details entered by the participant
- An Individual can provide more than one entry in an Award category if the entries are for different initiatives. The entry fee is to be paid only once for one Award category
- If separate application forms are received for the same initiative, for the same category, such entries will be treated as one
- The Jury has right to reclassify the application from one award category to another, at its discretion. This is not contestable in any manner
- All accepted submissions will be eligible for the Letter of Participation

Additional Information:

- Participants may be contacted for any additional information or / and Award management may conduct field visit(s) to verify the information provided. Such information sourced from the participants will become part of the original application
- Awards management has the right to ask for additional documentary proof. If such a request is made and the participant does not comply within 5 working days from the date the request is made, the Participant may be disqualified from participation in the awards
- Information provided by the participant will be confidential and will be used only for the limited purpose of evaluating the participant's entry to these awards
- Awards management or team appointed by awards management will try to contact the participant on best effort basis using the contact information provided in the application form
- In the event it is not possible to contact the participant to obtain additional or missing information, interview them, etc., such participant may be disqualified from further participation
- The participant hereby irrevocably authorizes the Awards management to use the data gathered during the Awards in respect of the participants. This shall be the property of FICCI and FICCI shall be entitled to use the same in its communications including marketing promotions and advertisements along with/without FICCI's brand. Further, awards management shall not be liable in any manner for any loss, damage, theft, or any other mishap caused during the awards

Validity and Correctness of Information:

- If at any time, including after the conclusion of any of the award ceremonies, any information provided by any participant(s), is found to be incorrect in any manner, then the participant will be liable to be disqualified and / or return the award and the monetary emoluments provided to the participant under this award, if any.
- Awards management may also take penal action against the participant for providing false information to participate in the awards
- Determination of whether information provided is fair and accurate rests with the jury and Awards management

Short-listing finalists for each award category from applications received:

- Application forms received would be collated under each award category for evaluation by awards management
- Determination of the Awards category to which an application belongs is at the discretion of the jury
- Awards management reserves the right to make the final judgment in case of any ambiguity in rules and regulations / disputes over suitability
- The Screening Jury will select top finalists per award category based on pre-defined evaluation parameters who will qualify for the final round
- Short-listed finalists will be contacted by FICCI to inform them of their shortlisting. Post shortlisting, the shortlisted finalists will be provided with the date and presentation format in which they would be required to present their application and case study to the Grand Jury
- The decision of the above short-listing is binding and final on all participants

Selection of the Winners:

- The final jury will score / rank / vote for the finalists on predefined evaluation parameters, based on the application form, supporting materials and presentation made by the finalist in person
- Only senior level management leading the initiatives of short-listed finalists would be required to make the presentation in front of final jury comprising eminent persons from education and related fields, for determination of winners. The grand jury round this year will be a physical meet, hence the participant must be available to present their initiative/ project on the day of jury at the designated venue. The details of the physical jury round will be shared by Awards management prior to the grand jury round
- There could be one or more winners in each award category, at the discretion of the jury
- The determination of who should receive an award for any award category rests with the jury
- The Jury's decision is final and binding on all finalists and winners
- Participation in the awards authorize FICCI to use the content submitted as part of nomination, in whole or in part and use and display such entry, which shall include trade publications, press releases, electronic posting to the awards website, electronic hyperlinks to the website of the participant, and any display format selected by FICCI during the awards ceremony or at a later point in time, for a period of five years

General:

- Participant agrees that the Participant is legally capable of entering and, if selected, participating in the Awards and agree to the Terms. Participant is competent (i.e., Participant are of legal age and sound mental capacity) and eligible to enter for the Awards
- Participant understands and agrees that merely participating in this Awards does not entitle the Participant to a prize or to any other form of consideration
- Participant warrants and represents to the Awards Management that all information including

any communications, software, photos, text, video, graphics, music, sounds, images and other material submitted or recorded in any manner by the Participant or the partners of Awards Management including Awards Management for consideration for the Awards are solely owned by the Awards Management and do not infringe upon any other individual or individual rights (including, without limitation, intellectual property rights).

- Participant shall be completely responsible for handling any infringement or alleged infringement and shall indemnify the FICCI, and the Awards Management from any claims, costs or damages from infringement or alleged infringement of the logo or trademark or the defence of a claim or any costs payable thereof
- Participant must enter the Awards at their own will and the Awards Management are not in any way obligated or liable for any loss or costs that the Participant may suffer or incur and nothing is payable to the Participants for participating in the Awards or any event prior to or following the Awards
- Participants for the purpose of entering the Awards, automatically grants FICCI a royalty-free, irrevocable, worldwide, non-transferable, non-exclusive right and license to use and display such entry, for participation in the Awards, and any intellectual property in relation to and arising out of such participation in the Awards and footage thereof, which shall include trade publications, press releases, electronic posting to the Website, the FICCI website in any display format selected by FICCI during the Awards or use by FICCI as it deems fit
- The Awards Management reserves the right to, at its discretion, withdraw or amend or add to the T&C of the Awards at any time, with prospective or retrospective effect, and does not take responsibility for any loss or damage that any individual or Institution may suffer because of participating or attempting to participate in the Awards, the Awards being withdrawn, or its terms amended
- Should a participant wish to withdraw from the Awards, kindly inform Awards management in writing at any time up to two weeks prior to the final awards ceremony
- All disputes relating to or arising out of the Awards shall be subject to the laws of India, and shall be subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of competent jurisdiction at New Delhi, India
- The Participants indemnify FICCI, its employees, officers, contractors, partner, or other persons used by them in relation to this Awards and hold them harmless against any loss, claim, demands, costs, damages, judgments, expenses or liability (including legal costs) arising out of or in connection with any or all claims, that may be brought against the Awards Management by any third party in connection with the Participants participation in or winning the Awards, which is inconsistent with any of the warranties and representations made by the Participants, or due to breach of these Terms and shall reimburse FICCI for any loss, costs, expense, or damage to which said indemnity applies. FICCI shall give the Participant prompt written notice of any claim or actions covered by this indemnity, and the Participant shall have the right, at its own expense, to participate in any such action
- Decision of Awards Management on all matters is final and binding on all Participants and no correspondence will be entertained on the same
- In the event these terms do not cover any question or complaint in relation to the Awards, the same will be concluded on by the Awards Management (for all other issues) or an independent body or legal team as appointed by the Awards Management as deemed necessary
- The Participant agrees to give full consent unconditionally for FICCI to share any information provided by the Participant with agencies working with them with regards to the program, its recording and broadcasting and related activities including agencies involved with FICCI
- The decision of FICCI in relation to the interpretation of any of these Terms shall be final and binding on the participants
- Institutions/Universities are not allowed to apply in any categories with the same initiative(s) as applied previously.

- Institutions that have previously won the award are not allowed to apply in the same category for the next three years

Website:

- The website is only an informational website <https://www.ficcihighereducationawards.com/> (the "Website") for the Awards. FICCI or its subsidiaries or holding entities are not liable or responsible for any action or decision taken by Participant or anyone acting on Participant's behalf or under Participant employment or under contract with Participant. FICCI shall not be under any obligation to Participant and Participant shall have no obligation or rights in relation to the Awards and shall have no claims whatsoever against the FICCI relating to the selection process or the running of the Awards

FICCI shall not be responsible for:

- Any delivery, failures relating to the registration or submission of videos/presentations;
- Any SPAM generated messages as result of Participant accessing the Website;
- Awards Management not receiving or rejecting any data.
- Any lost, late or misdirected computer transmission or network, electronic failures of any kind or any failure to receive entries owing to transmission failures or due to any technical reasons
- Other conditions/situations or failures beyond its control

Disclaimers:

- Awards Management has no obligation to screen the entry material in advance and is not responsible for monitoring entries for the purpose of preventing violation of intellectual property ownership rights, or violations of any law, rule, or regulation. If Awards Management is notified of submissions or materials that may not conform to the Terms, it may investigate the allegation and determine in good faith and in its sole discretion whether to eliminate such an entry from consideration. The Awards Management has no liability or responsibility to Participants or other users of the Website for performance or non- performance of such activities