

Writing your Proposal - Website Information

Who is the audience?

Your proposal will be reviewed by at least two external experts in the field(s) covered in the application. These reviewers will be active researchers who have been chosen to review your proposal because they are well qualified to make a judgment on the quality of the proposed research project. Therefore, you want to provide sufficient detail in your proposal to adequately convey to the reviewers that you have carefully considered this project and that you have the knowledge to carry it out. If your proposal is poorly written, it may be either misunderstood or misinterpreted, leading to a request for revisions or rejection. As the proposal writer, it is your task to clearly make the case for the value and feasibility of your research project.

What type of proposal is this?

This is a research proposal. Before beginning to write this application make sure you clearly know what your research question is. This is not a consulting proposal or a proposal for a development project. You are not simply helping your industry/organization partner to achieve a task. You are looking to expand the knowledge base in an area that is relevant to both your industry/organizational partner and the academic community. For more information about eligible research and assistance in reviewing/developing your proposal for Mitacs Accelerate (which may include an international component), please contact a Mitacs Business Development Advisor.

How long should my proposal be?

The answer depends on how many internships you are applying for: the larger the project the more information you will need to provide. There are no length limits on the application form because we want you to use the space you deem necessary to clearly present your research project and provide enough details so that it can be evaluated by external reviewers.

What is the format and style of the proposal?

Think about this proposal the way you would think about writing a scientific/academic article. The type of information that is required for these types of articles, including citations and a reference list, is also necessary to include in this application. Keep your statements concise, clear, and orderly. Abbreviations should be defined the first time they are presented, and jargon should be avoided as much as possible. Improper spelling, as well as poor grammar and punctuation will appear unprofessional and sloppy. Don't rely solely on spell-check for proof-reading to avoid these pitfalls.

Information about Specific Mitacs Accelerate Proposal Template Sections

Proposed Workplan for Internship Unit(s) (IU) – Section 1.A

This table outlines a high-level overview of the proposed research project and information about the intern(s) to reviewers. No further details beyond when each intern will work are required here, as further information will be provided in Section 2. Please find below example tables for distinct multi-intern projects.

Overall Objectives of the Research Project – Section 2.3

This section provides details on the main research objective(s) of the internship(s). The objective(s) should follow directly from the background described in the previous section and be positioned to address the research problem or question. It should be clear that achievement of the stated objectives will result in a meaningful contribution to investigating, solving, and/or answering the research problem/question. Larger research projects may have multiple objectives and/or an overall objective divided into several sub-objectives.

Details of Internships or Subprojects – Section 2.4

In this section we ask that you describe the proposed research in detail. It can be presented by intern (which is typical for smaller projects), or by subproject (which is often beneficial for larger and/or more complex projects).

Specific Objectives of the Internship or Subproject – Section 2.4.b

The specific objectives should stem from the general objective and be specific to each intern or subproject. If the project only includes one intern, the general and specific objectives can be identical. In such a case simply refer to Section 2.3. If Section 2.3 describes a larger research project in which a given intern is a participant, then list the objective(s) specific to this intern. It is good practice to divide a project into several sub-objectives.

Methodologies – Section 2.4.c

In this section you should describe the experimental, computational, field, or laboratory techniques relevant to your discipline that you will use in the investigation of your objectives, as well as any equipment, procedures, or participants required. For example, you might describe the experimental set up, what variables will be measured (and over what possible ranges), what controls will be employed, how data will be sampled, and how these data will be analyzed. If you will conduct surveys or interviews, you should explain how many participants you will target, how you will select or recruit them, the length of the survey or duration of interview session(s), the design of the survey/interview questions, how the data will be analyzed, etc.

The methodologies section is your chance to demonstrate to the reviewers that you are equipped to successfully conduct the research project and achieve its objectives. Ensure each objective or subproject is accompanied by descriptions of its experimental methods and how the methods you will use are suitable. If the methods are established, convince the reviewers that you are familiar with them and that sufficient resources are available. If the methods are innovative, explain how they represent an improvement on current approaches. If there are any anticipated challenges, highlight them and propose mitigation plans.

Tips

- Describe the methodology for each sub-objective, as it makes it easier for reviewers to assess each portion of your proposal. It will also facilitate a more straightforward composition of the Timeline (Section 2.4.d).
- Provide enough detail to enable reviewers to evaluate the proposed methods/techniques. Include citations to previous research in your field as necessary, ensuring these are listed in the References (Section 2.8).
- Avoid statements like “We will use standard techniques to measure (soil composition, electrochemical signals, consistency of participant responses, etc.)” Give detailed information about how samples will be collected, exactly what techniques will be used, what measurements will be taken, etc.
- Avoid using an overabundance of personal pronouns, for example “I/We will...”
- Ensure your proposal demonstrates that you:
 - Have an up-to-date understanding of the field
 - Understand the complexity of the subject and its corresponding methods of inquiry

- Clearly describe how you plan to analyze the data you collect. Reviewers will expect this information.
- Acknowledge any potential difficulties you foresee and how you will address them. There is always an element of uncertainty in any research project. Demonstrate to reviewers that you've thought about the uncertainties in your project and have concrete ideas on how you will adapt your approach as needed.

Timeline – Section 2.4.d

The timeline is used to show which task(s) will be performed when, and by which interns, to achieve the corresponding objectives. The timeline should clearly link the key methodological steps presented in section 2.4.c with their specific objectives presented in section 2.4.b. We suggest using a [Gantt chart](#) for clarity, but other formats are acceptable.

Expected Deliverables – Section 2.5

Every Mitacs project is required to produce a Final Report and Survey as its basic deliverables. In this section please list all other expected deliverables of the project (publications, theses, patents, prototypes, reports, conference presentations, exhibits, etc.). Please note that we expect the novel findings identified during the proposed research to be published or disseminated in a format appropriate to the field.

Partner Interaction – Section 2.6

In this section indicate the form of interaction that will take place between the intern(s) and partner organization, either regular *onsite* visits to the partner premises, exclusively *virtual* meetings and/or working conditions, or a *hybrid* of both approaches. Mitacs expects high-quality interaction and supervision by the partner organization regardless of where or how the interaction takes place, and still encourages on-site interaction at the partner when it is logistically feasible. Also, identify the types of activities the intern(s) will participate in, where or on what platform(s) they will work, special facilities/equipment/resources that the partner will make available to support the project, the partner staff that will work alongside the interns and champion the project, and the expertise possessed by the partner organization and its staff to ensure achievement of project objectives.

If applicable, applicants to the Accelerate Entrepreneur program [where the partner organization is a start-up company owned by the intern(s)] should describe support that will be provided by the pre-approved incubator, and the activities that will be performed there during the project.

Relevance to the Partner Organization and to Canada – Section 2.7

Research projects supported by Mitacs should convey clear and concrete benefits to both the participating partner organization and broader Canadian society. Use this section to describe these anticipated benefits. Examples of benefits to the partner could include development of a new or enhanced product/process/service, realization of cost savings or improved productivity, creation of novel policies/standards/regulations, etc. Examples of benefits to Canada could include reduced environmental impacts of industry, development of novel technology, improvements to social services, greater societal equity/inclusion, etc.

Indigenous Community Involvement or Impact – Section 2.8

As per the [Mitacs Indigenous Research Policy](#), projects that involve or impact Indigenous communities require greater oversight to ensure they meet additional criteria regarding i) community support and respect, ii) collaborative practices, iii) community access to and use of data, and iv) relevant applicant experience and expertise. Applicants must complete this section if their project involves or impacts Indigenous communities, involves Indigenous/traditional knowledge or Indigenous cultural heritage, or involves Indigenous participants.

Please disclose how your approach is explicitly supported by Indigenous communities affected by the project, has been shaped by Indigenous community input, accounts for community governance of resulting data, and will be conducted by participants with Indigenous research experience. Note that this policy applies to all projects which include Indigenous research, even if this is not the sole focus of the work.

Relationship with Past/Present Mitacs Projects – Section 2.9

Please indicate whether the project is related to any past or present Mitacs projects (across all Mitacs programs), pursued by any members of the present project team. If applicable, please note the Mitacs IT# identifier(s) of the past or present project(s) (listed in the corresponding award letter) and participating personnel. Further, explain how the work being presently proposed relates to the previous pursuit, and how it meaningfully advances past accomplishments. Note that if members of the present research group are in the process of submitting other applications to Mitacs programs this information should be disclosed as well.

References – Section 2.10

Please list the academic references cited in this proposal. You may use any citation format commonly employed in your academic field.

International Collaboration Form – Appendix B

Appendix B is required if the project includes travel outside of Canada to a foreign host academic institution in the same country as the partner organization premises (*recommended*), inbound travel of an international intern to a host Canadian academic institution and/or partner organization, or any other international collaboration, including a partner organization which is a Canadian subsidiary of an international company.

Suggested Reviewers

Provide the names and contact information for 6 individuals who are qualified to review your proposal. Reviewers are typically faculty members, but can also be PhD-level scientists conducting research in industry or government agencies. The suggested reviewers do not need to be Canadian. “Arms-length” means that they must be from a different academic institution, and that you and/or your supervisor and/or partner must not have collaborated with them in the last 5 years. Please **do not contact them yourself**, simply provide their names and information.

Public Project Overview

Please outline a brief summary of your project in this section. The title and public project overview will be posted on the Mitacs website, and as such should be written in plain language, as if you were explaining your project to a high school student (for example). Avoid using acronyms and scientific jargon. Writing a good lay summary is a very important skill to have. Funding agencies may use the lay summary for press releases/annual reports and also to attract potential donors. Lay summaries must be simple and direct while giving the reader a reason to care. Explain why the research is significant to the general public (people who don't do research for a living). Briefly explain the motivation for the project, the problem to be addressed, how you are planning to address it, and the anticipated impact to the partner. After you've written it, ask a friend to review it.

Budget and Invoicing (for non-digital applications only)

The budgetary information provided outlines the applicable stipend values and research expenses for each intern working on the project, and the corresponding contribution that the partner organization(s) will provide to support the endeavor. Your budgetary information is disclosed via a set of three worksheets, with instructions provided below. Please ensure financial information is accurate to avoid any delays to project adjudication, partner organization invoicing, and/or dispensation of research funds.

Program Guidelines to consider when completing the Accelerate Budget:

- A minimum contribution of \$7,500 (exclusive of tax) from the partner organization(s) for each internship of a **Standard** Accelerate project.
- A minimum contribution of \$6,000 (exclusive of tax) from the partner organization(s) for each internship of a **Cluster** Accelerate project. Cluster projects require minimums of 3 interns and 6 internship units (IUs).
- Contribution funds from the partner organization must be paid to Mitacs prior to the internship start date to facilitate efficient payment process for interns.
- Each intern **must** receive a minimum \$10,000 stipend/salary for each internship unit.
- Each internship unit **must** be no less than 4 months and no greater than 6 months.
- Interns may complete up to 6 internship units (4-6 months each) during a Master's degree, up to 12 during a PhD, and up to 9 during a postdoctoral fellowship. University undergraduate students, non-degree program students, college students, and recent graduates may all complete up to 3 internship units.
- Please structure the budget by term (January 1 – April 30; May 1 – August 31; September 1 – December 31). Mitacs invoices and releases funding on a term basis.
- **As per Mitacs Policy: The start date of each internship cannot predate the research approval of the project AND the receipt of partner funds for the internship.**

Worksheet 1 – Partners & Supervisors

- 1) Enter the Project Title (**cell B4**)
- 2) Input the name(s) of the partner organization(s) [**cell(s) B8-B#**]
- 3) Enter the name of the primary academic supervisor (**cell D8**) and their academic institution affiliation (**cell E8**), as well as any academic co-supervisor(s) [**cell(s) D9-D#**] and their corresponding affiliations [**cell(s) E9-E#**]

Worksheet 2 – Budget Details

- 1) Beginning on **line 9**, each line of the budget represents an individual intern
- 2) Enter the full name of each intern [**cell(s) B9-B#**], along with their corresponding degree level [**cell(s) C9-C#**]
- 3) For each intern also enter the following, using dropdowns that will auto-populate with information from **Worksheet 1**: primary academic supervisor [**cell(s) D9-D#**], academic co-supervisor [**cell(s) E9-E#**], academic institution [**cell(s) F9-F#**], and partner organization [**cell(s) G9-G#**]
- 4) Select the internship type from the dropdown in **cell(s) I9-I#** for each intern, defining their funding stream (ex. \$15,000 standard award, \$10,000 standard award, \$13 333 cluster award, etc.)
- 5) Define the internship unit (IU) length for each intern, from 4-6 months [**cell(s) J9-J#**], and estimated start date of the internship [ex. January 1, 2025 - **cell(s) K9-K#**]
- 6) Based on this collective information the following budgetary items will auto-populate:
 - a) Estimated end date [**cell(s) L9-L#**] – calculated based on the number of IUs, IU length, and start date
 - b) Base Partner Contribution [**cell(s) M9-M#**] – calculated based on the internship type
 - c) Total Partner Contribution [**cell(s) O9-O#**] – calculated based on the base partner and additional partner contributions (see definition below - [**cell(s) N9-N#**])

- d) Total Award / IU [cell(s) P9-P#] – calculated based on internship type and additional partner contributions
 - e) Minimum Stipend / IU [cell(s) Q9-Q#] – calculated based on the internship type
 - f) Research Expenses [cell(s) S9-S#] – calculated based on the internship type and minimum stipend. Mitacs defines eligible research expenses according to the same scheme as [NSERC](#)
 - g) Total Stipend [cell(s) T9-T#] – calculated based on the internship type and number of IUs
 - h) Total Partner Contribution [cell(s) U9-U#] – calculated based on the internship type and base contribution
 - i) Total Award [cell(s) V9-V#] – calculated based on the internship type and number of IUs
- 7) Regarding **Additional Partner Funds** – partner organizations sometimes desire to supplement the stipend and/or research budget in an Accelerate grant with additional funds. Such additional partner contributions are only permitted with academic institution approval and must be detailed in the proposal budget. They may only be used for stipends or direct costs of the internship and **a clear justification must be provided in the text of the proposal**. If the academic institution does not approve of the addition of unmatched funds to the grant, then these funds must be removed.
- a) If a partner organization is supplying additional contributions, enter the **per IU amount** for each intern into **cells N9-N#**
 - b) This will modify the total partner contribution, total award per IU, research expenses, total stipend, total partner contribution, and total award accordingly
 - c) By default the full amount of additional partner contributions are applied exclusively to increasing the research expense amount per IU (cells S9-S#). If the additional contributions are to be put toward increasing the minimum stipend of a given intern, enter the updated stipend amount per IU into the **Stipend Override (cells R9-R#** - up to a maximum of the minimum stipend plus 100% of the additional partner contributions per IU)
 - d) Use of the Stipend Override will recalculate the minimum stipend per IU, research expenses per IU, and total stipend, while leaving the total partner contribution and total award unchanged
- 8) The cumulative budgetary details for all interns will also be used to auto-populate the overall budget information in line 5: total award (**cell B5**), total stipend (**cell C5**), total research expenses (**cell D5**), total partner contributions (**cell E5**), Mitacs contributions (**cell F5**), number of interns (**cell G5**), number of internship units (**cell H5**), and project start date (**cell I5**)

Worksheet 3 – Verify with Proposal

- 1) The spreadsheet will initially be blank. Navigate to the Excel “Data” menu and click the “Refresh All” button to populate the built-in Gantt chart based on the estimated start and end dates for all internships.
- 2) Cross-reference this chart with the table in Section 1.1 of the proposal (Proposed Workplan for Internship Units) to ensure correspondence
- 3) This Gantt chart from Worksheet 3 can be optionally copied and pasted into Section 1.1 as a replacement for the default content