Canadian Science Policy Fellowship:
Guidelines for a successful fellow application
Bringing science and policy together

Mitacs CSPF application process

The success of the CSPF program is in large part defined by the commitment of the fellows to make connections between their scientific research and broader economic, social or political issues, and to contribute to a national network of science policy expertise. Through the fellowship, fellows create mutually beneficial relationships between government and the Canadian academic research community, enhance science communication, collaboration, and capacity in Canada, and grow access to a body of researchers uniquely trained to address policy challenges. Together, hosts and fellows have the potential to make meaningful contributions in the public service, and ultimately to all Canadians.

Mitacs welcomes application submissions from prospective fellows and hosts on an annual call cycle running from fall (November) through winter (February). Applications are received through a concurrent, double-blind process. Fellows apply through a competitive call to the Mitacs Canadian Science Policy Fellowship program, and host offices apply to host a fellow for the upcoming cohort year running from September to August.

The call for fellow submissions begins in November 2019 and closes on February 5, 2020 at 11:59 PST.

Fellows must submit an application through an online webform. All applicants will receive an automated electronic message confirming receipt of their application.

Fellow eligibility

To be considered for a CSPF fellowship, **eligible fellows** must:
- Be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident*
- Hold a PhD in any academic discipline at the start of the fellowship
- Participate full-time in a 12-month fellowship at the host office
- Secure accommodation in the host city, and relocate to their host office as needed
- Negotiate a leave of absence from their current employer, as applicable
- Meet any additional requirements as dictated by their hosts, including (but not limited to) security clearance requirements
- **Candidates cannot apply to multiple Mitacs programs at the same time**

***Please note that Canadian citizenship or permanent resident status is required to obtain a security clearance with a host office to begin a fellowship. All applicants must have Canadian citizenship or permanent residency prior to the start of the interview process (May 2020) to be considered for the 2020-21 fellowship cohort.

In addition to the requirements listed above, **faculty applicants** must also:
- Be a faculty member at a Canadian university
  - Faculty at Mitacs Honorary Partner universities must contact policyfellowship(at)mitacs.ca to determine eligibility
- Negotiate a leave of absence or sabbatical from the university

Candidates **cannot** be:
- A past or current Mitacs Canadian Science Policy Fellow
- A past or current employee of Mitacs

Fellow application overview

To apply for a fellowship through the Mitacs Canadian Science Policy Fellowship program, all prospective fellows must submit a complete application through an online webform.

A complete application includes the following:
- Online submission in the webform with all fields filled in and required documents uploaded
- Two letters of reference (either uploaded, or emailed directly to policyfellowship(at)mitacs.ca)
  - One letter should address the quality of your research work and experience
  - The other letter should focus on your suitability for the program by highlighting your leadership experience, communication skills, and capacity to make connections between scientific research and broader economic, social, or political issues
- Applicants are responsible for ensuring that their referees can meet the deadline. We suggest contacting the referees as early as possible so that they have time to prepare thoughtful letters of reference

Please note that the online webform for fellow applications does not allow you to save your work and come back to it. Please ensure your answers are fully developed before starting the webform.

Prior to submitting an application, Mitacs encourages applicants to read all sections of the CSPF web page to ensure an understanding of the program, the eligibility requirements, and the adjudication process. Applicants should allow enough time to develop comprehensive, well-presented statements and other documents that are free of errors and typos.

Prospective fellows must submit a complete application summarizing their relevant academic training and experience in the language(s) required for positions within the host department(s) that wish to be considered for. This includes:
- A brief biography
- A list of any publications, patents or other types of research contributions
- A list of any awards in recognition of your research activities
- An overview of past research experience
- A description of leadership experience and communication skills
- An applicant statement of interest to participate in the CSPF program

Prospective fellows will also be required to select the competency areas in which they have direct experience, and any competency areas they are looking to develop through the fellowship to support the matching process.

- To be considered for a fellowship with the **Government of Canada**, you may submit a complete application using the English or French fellow application webforms
- To be considered for a fellowship with the **Government of Manitoba**, you must submit a complete application using the English fellow application webform
- To be considered for a fellowship with the **Government of Quebec**, you must submit a complete application using the French fellow application webform
- Please submit two complete applications using the English and French webforms if you wish to be considered for a fellowship with the Government of Quebec and the Government of Canada and/or Manitoba

Please note that Mitacs does not guarantee that fellowships will be available in all host cities.

Applicants will receive an automated acknowledgement that their applications have been received. Once an application is received, it will be reviewed for eligibility and completeness. Applicants will be contacted directly if their application is missing any information within 2 weeks of the call deadline date (February 5, 2020). Applications that meet the eligibility requirements will be sent to the CSPF Fellow Adjudication Committee made up of past Canadian Science Policy Fellowship fellows to shortlist candidates as semi-finalists. Candidates are expected to be shortlisted in April 2020.

Please note that due to the individualized nature of each application and the review process, Mitacs is unable to provide qualitative feedback on fellow applications.

Fellow application checklist

Mitacs will review all fellow submissions to ensure that the submitted applications meet the program eligibility criteria prior to sending the applications to the Fellow Adjudication Committee of past fellows. The following are questions that fellows can use to ensure their application is thorough and complete.

1. Complete eligibility requirements
- Have you completed all the required fields for the program eligibility requirements?

2. Complete applicant information
- Have you completed all the required fields for your contact and personal information?

3. Complete academic background
- Have you completed all the required fields detailing your academic background?
- Have you provided a brief biography?

4. Provide fellowship availability
- Have you confirmed your willingness to physically relocate to the location of the host office?
- Have you confirmed which host offices you will consider for a possible placement?
- Have you confirmed your working abilities in Canada's official languages?
- If you are applying to both an English and French fellowship opportunity, have you submitted two separate webform applications in both English and French?

5. Describe your experience that makes you ideally suited for the CSPF program
- Have you included all relevant research contributions?
- Have you included any awards in recognition of your research activities?
- Have you clearly described your past research experience in way that a non-scientific audience can understand?
- Have you described your leadership experience and/or capacity, including any experience you may have working with stakeholders outside of the scientific community where applicable?
- Does your applicant statement include a demonstrated interest in science policy?

6. Select the competency areas required for a successful fellowship
- Have you selected the competency areas in which you have direct experience?
- Have you selected the competency areas in which you are looking to develop?

7. Have you included your letters of reference with your application?
- Have you uploaded your letters of reference to your application webform, or have you confirmed with your referees that they have sent the letters to policyfellowship(at)mitacs.ca?
  - Please ensure your referees include your full name in the subject line of their email, as well as in the name of their document for ease of reference.
- Does one of your letters of reference address the quality of your research work and experience?
- Does the other letter of reference focus on your suitability for the program by highlighting your leadership experience, communications skills, and capacity to make connections between scientific research and broader economic, social or political issues?

8. Have you read and agreed to the Mitacs CSPF Statement of Consent in the webform?

9. Have you submitted a webform in the language(s) required for positions within the host department(s) that you wish to be considered for?
- Have you submitted a webform in either English or French if you wish to be considered for positions with the Government of Canada?
- Have you submitted a webform in English if you wish to be considered for positions with the Government of Manitoba?
- Have you submitted a webform in French if you wish to be considered for positions with the Government of Quebec?

Points to consider
- The fellowship requires that you work in your host office fulltime. Please ensure you have factored relocation costs (if applicable) into your plans should you be matched for a fellowship
- Think about what you could bring to the fellowship and include this in your applicant statement. Try to think about how your experience could be applied in a government or science policy environment
- Review the JRC Framework for Skills for Evidence-Informed Policy Making to see what skills are important for working in science policy. Where applicable, refer your experience back to these areas of expertise
- Review your application for spelling and grammar mistakes, clarity and focus. Adjudicators take this into account when evaluating your communication skills

- Try to submit your application earlier than the deadline. If your application is incomplete, we will be able to remedy this in a timely manner if you submit your application ahead of the deadline
- In their letters, ask your referees to provide specific examples of your work, skills or abilities that correspond to the different sections of the application

Thank you for your interest in applying to the Canadian Science Policy Fellowship. Please review the CSPF web page and contact policyfellowship(at)mitacs.ca with any further questions about the fellowship process.