

Mitacs Accelerate Guide for Reviewers



Mitacs relies on reviewers, as subject matter experts, to provide rigorous, fair, unbiased and anonymous assessments of proposals. Their evaluations play a critical role in ensuring that each application is assessed consistently, objectively and on its own merits. Mitacs's funding decisions are informed by the assessment of the project (which includes the proposal text itself) by qualified subject matter experts. While these evaluations are provided on a voluntary basis, reviewers are mandated to respect all applicable Mitacs and Tri-Agency Framework policies regarding research integrity, data security and privacy, and the protection of intellectual property. Each reviewer must agree to Mitacs's confidentiality statement before being granted access to a proposal. This includes agreeing to not disclose any information in proposals to anyone and to not input any part of the proposal into generative AI systems, considering the potential risk of data breaches or unauthorized information disclosure. As such, reviewers are prohibited from inputting content from Mitacs proposals into generative AI systems. Further details can be found in [Mitacs's Policy on the Use of Artificial Intelligence in Proposal Development and Review](#).

Conflict of interest (COI) guidelines for reviewers

A conflict of interest (COI) is a situation in which an individual has competing interests of loyalties that could potentially affect their decision-making. It is worth noting how broad the concept is. A COI is not just about money; it is about the presence of factors – actual, potential, or perceived – that a reasonable person might think are likely to bias a decision-maker's judgement. A COI is a situation, not an accusation. Being in a COI is not the same as accusing them of bias or lack of integrity.

Reviewers are asked to disclose any potential COIs with the applicants (i.e., academic supervisors, partner organizations and/or their representatives, interns). As such, a reviewer should not:

- Have collaborated* with any of the applicants (as defined above) within the past five (5) years or have plans to collaborate* in the immediate future
- Be from the same institution as the applicants (including adjunct or associate status)
- Have been a research supervisor/mentor or graduate student of the applicants within the past five (5) years
- Be employed by, consulted for, or be on the board of the partner organization or an organization with which the applicants have collaborated within the past five (5) years
- Be in any other potential conflict of interest (e.g., personal, financial, or competing interests)**

***Past collaborations (within the past 5 years) and, potential future collaborations include:**

- Joint grant proposals (including non-funded proposals)
- Past or possible future joint authorship of publications, book chapters, or conference presentations
- Co-supervising a student
- Giving or receiving money or in-kind support, exchanging data or materials
- Hosting or being hosted as a visiting scholar
- Research collaborations in an area distinct from the research area of the proposal

- Working with a different branch, department, or location at the partner organization

****The following situations are typically NOT considered to be a conflict of interest for reviewing:**

- Being an external examiner or committee member on a thesis or dissertation
- Being members of the same professional society, network, or association
- Interacting at conferences, organizing a conference or conference session together, or presenting at an event organized by one of the applicants
- Attending lectures or being invited to give a lecture by one of the applicants (as long as it doesn't involve a visiting scholarship or associate status, see above)
- Working/doing research in the same area (as long as there are no competing interests)

Confidentiality

Reviewers: The identity of all reviewers for Mitacs proposals is kept confidential.

Proposals: By agreeing to perform a review, reviewers acknowledge that the proposal provided to them for review contains confidential personal and technical information and agree to protect and treat as confidential any proposal and related information entrusted to them:

- Information provided in the proposal is to be used strictly to perform the review and for no other purposes
- Information in the proposal must not be disclosed to anyone without the prior written consent of Mitacs
- All electronic or physical copies of the proposal need to be stored securely. When the review is complete, all materials related to the proposal must be deleted/destroyed
- The outcome of the review must not be communicated to the applicants. All communication regarding the application and funding decision is the responsibility of Mitacs
- Content from Mitacs proposals must not be put into generative artificial intelligence (AI) systems or tools, due to the potential risk of data breaches or unauthorized information disclosure

Program Overview

Mitacs [Accelerate](#) connects for-profit corporations, not-for-profit corporations, hospitals, municipalities, and Indigenous governments in Canada with the high-quality research expertise of post-secondary researchers. Interns (graduate and undergraduate students, postdoctoral fellows, college students, or recent graduates under the supervision of a faculty supervisor) undertake a project to investigate a research question identified jointly by a research group within a post-secondary institution and a non-academic partner organization. The Accelerate program is open to projects from all disciplines.

Under Mitacs Accelerate, interns are expected to maintain meaningful interaction with both the post-secondary institution and the partner organization throughout the internship period. The distribution of

time may vary depending on the nature of the project, research activities, supervision requirements, and access to specialized resources or equipment.

The purpose of the peer-review is to:

- Assess the technical merit and overall feasibility of the proposed project
- Provide constructive and evidence-based feedback to help inform Mitacs funding decisions and for applicants to strengthen/improve their project

Proposals that meet the program requirements and successfully pass peer-review may be approved for Mitacs funding. If a proposal is not satisfactory or concerns are identified, reviewers are encouraged to provide helpful recommendations and constructive comments that could support improvement in a revised proposal or inform a subsequent application.

Reviewers are asked to provide clear and evidence-based evaluations supported by respectful, professional and well-reasoned comments. Constructive reviewer feedback explains the rationale for the ratings assigned, highlights both strengths and areas for improvement, and avoids overly brief, generic or unnecessarily lengthy comments.

Project Assessment

Mitacs Accelerate internships are expected to be research and development projects as defined by the discipline of the intern(s) and their post-secondary supervisor(s). The project should also be appropriate for the level of the intern(s) (Master's, PhD, postdoctoral fellow, college student, undergraduate or recent graduate).

In completing their assessment, reviewers are asked to consider whether the project demonstrates the following:

- Innovation expectations – demonstrates innovation through the development, application, or adaptation of new knowledge, methods, technologies, or processes
- Intern supervision and training – provides appropriate supervision, mentorship, and professional development to support the intern's academic, technical, and career growth
- Partner interaction – reflects strong collaboration between the academic institution and partner, with meaningful intern engagement and access to resources
- Benefits and impacts – delivers realistic and meaningful benefits for the partner, intern, academia, and society, aligned with the project objectives
- Indigenous Research considerations (if applicable) – demonstrates respectful engagement with Indigenous partners, integrating Indigenous perspectives, governance, and ethical considerations. Further details can be found under: [Mitacs Indigenous Research and Innovation Policy](#)

Further details about research that is eligible for Mitacs Accelerate can be found under [Mitacs's Responsible Conduct of Research Policy](#).

Applicant COIs

Any Mitacs program participant who has a COI is required to disclose it to Mitacs. Common examples of COIs involving Academic Supervisors and interns/postdoctoral fellows can be found in [Mitacs's Conflict of Interest Policy for Program Participants](#). In parallel to the peer-review process, Mitacs reviews each COI to determine if and how it can be managed.

A common question from reviewers concerns the Mitacs [Accelerate Entrepreneur](#) program, which funds student and postdoctoral entrepreneurs to achieve commercialization goals and further develop the research or technology at the core of their start-up business. In this program, student/postdoctoral entrepreneurship and ownership of the partner organization are core eligibility requirements of the program. Although this is expected, the COI must still be disclosed to Mitacs.

Many Accelerate internships result from pre-existing research collaborations between faculty and partner organizations. Please note that this is not considered a COI and does not need to be declared.

Relevant Mitacs Policies

We invite you to consult the following Mitacs policies to assist you with completing your review:

[Mitacs's Policy on the Use of Artificial Intelligence in Proposal Development and Review](#)

[Mitacs's Indigenous Research and Innovation Policy](#)

[Mitacs's Responsible Conduct of Research Policy](#)

[Mitacs Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Research and Innovation Policy](#)

[Mitacs's Conflict of Interest Policy for Program Participants](#)

Thanks to our funding partners.  Merci à nos bailleurs de fonds.