

Mitacs Accelerate Application Guidelines

THE DOS AND DON'TS OF WRITING YOUR ACCELERATE PROPOSAL

DO:

- ✓ Consider the [adjudication criteria](#) that reviewers will use to assess your proposal.
- ✓ Write a clear, well-organized proposal in plain professional language, avoiding jargon and explaining specialized terms and concepts, so it is accessible to the intended audience.
- ✓ Clearly define your research question, objectives, methodology, and data analysis techniques with sufficient details to demonstrate feasibility and scientific merit.
- ✓ Consider numbering your objectives and sub-objectives, and using this numbering to refer to each throughout the proposal
- ✓ Demonstrate strong field knowledge, appropriate methods, and how the project will create new value for academia and the partner organization(s).
- ✓ Provide a clear work plan with no unexplained gaps in the timeline.
- ✓ Clearly describe participant roles and explain the benefits to the intern(s), including the quality of the supervision from both the academic institution and partner organization.
- ✓ Ensure alignment between the partner's operations, project, and academic expertise.
- ✓ Support claims with appropriate and accurate citations and include a complete and valid reference list (see [Mitacs Responsible Conduct of Research Policy](#)).
- ✓ Ensure any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest (COIs) involving project participants are properly declared. Note that being in a COI does not necessarily disqualify you from participating in Mitacs programs (see [Mitacs Conflict of Interest Policy for Program Participants](#)). However, undeclared COIs lead to follow-ups and delay proposal review.
- ✓ Ensure you have carefully reviewed and verified the content of your proposal, especially if you have used AI in the preparation of your proposal (see [Mitacs's Policy on the Use of Artificial Intelligence in Proposal Development and Review](#)).

DON'T:

- ✗ Submit a proposal that lacks a clear research component and reads primarily as consulting work, market research, or routine business development work.
- ✗ Assume reviewers are familiar with your project, organization, or specific field of expertise.
- ✗ Use abbreviations, acronyms, or technical jargon without defining them first.
- ✗ Provide vague or incomplete descriptions of the project plan, methodology, or participant roles, or submit an incomplete proposal.
- ✗ Submit a proposal with spelling, grammar, or formatting errors/inconsistencies, or prepare the proposal using a font that is difficult to read (e.g., light or bright coloured text).
- ✗ Submit a proposal on an altered or non-approved proposal template.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLICANTS

What type of a proposal is this?

This is a research proposal with no strict page limit. Before drafting your application, ensure that your research question and objectives are clearly defined. The proposed research must be feasible, aligned with the expertise of the project team, and appropriate to the degree level of the intern(s). The length of your proposal should reflect the scope and complexity of your project. To support high-quality internship experiences with impactful outcomes, applicants are encouraged to incorporate interdisciplinary approaches and consider principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion, where relevant. The Accelerate program does not support consulting or purely development-based projects, and therefore the primary objective should generate new knowledge that is relevant to both the partner organization(s) and the academic community.

Who are the project participants?

Projects involve three participant categories that make up the project team: (1) academic supervisor, (2) partner organization, and (3) intern. Each category can have one or more active participants. All partner organizations participating in or benefiting from the project, **including those not providing financial contribution**, must be identified and must provide the required information during submission. Individual employees or representatives do not need to be listed separately, but the participating organizations themselves must be included with a minimum of one contact per partner organization. Applicants must ensure that all required administrative participant information is complete and accurate prior to submission. Participants with multiple affiliations must declare any potential conflicts of interest (COI), as failure to declare them may delay the review process. For more information about COIs, please refer to the [Mitacs Conflict of Interest Policy for Program Participants](#).

Who will review the proposal?

Your proposal will be reviewed by at least one external subject matter expert. Reviewers assess the research merit, partnership quality, and overall feasibility of the project, including the applicant's understanding of the field, the proposed contribution to knowledge, and the strength of the research plan. Providing sufficient detail, context, and supporting citations will help reviewers accurately evaluate your proposal. **Proposals that lack clarity or necessary information may require revisions, which will delay funding decisions.**

Proposal accessibility

While the Accelerate template shared with participants strives for full accessibility, it also balances accessibility with the overall user experience. **Participants can request an alternative version of the Accelerate proposal template from Mitacs that is fully accessible** (remediated by Allyant). The fully

accessible template has incorporated additional accessibility considerations beyond those in the commonly shared template, especially in the timeline table.

To request the fully accessible Accelerate proposal template, please reach out to your [local Mitacs Advisor](#).

PREPARING EACH SECTION OF THE PROPOSAL

PROJECT TITLE

When preparing your proposal, keep in mind that it will need to be accompanied by a project title. The project title should be unambiguous, clear, and concise in summarizing the novel objectives of the proposed research project. It should provide a tailored snapshot of what the project will investigate and why it is important.

✓ Example of an ideal project title:

- Characterization and Mitigation of Backscatter Noise of 77GHz Automotive Radars in Heavy Precipitation

✗ Examples of ambiguous or generic project titles:

- Investigating Radars in Bad Weather
- Mitacs Internship project
- UniversityName ProfessorName Summer 2027 Mitacs Radar Project with IndustryPartnerName

Why this matters for the review of your proposal: A strong, informative title creates a clear first impression of the proposal's quality, clarity, and rigor, signaling professionalism. It can attract appropriate reviewers by conveying the topic and relevance, highlighting the project's significance and potential impact, and quickly increasing their engagement with the proposal. This supports reviewer–proposal matching and positively impacts the time to the funding outcome.

PROJECT KEYWORDS

The provided keywords should represent your project's specific focus and novelty (e.g., subfields of research, methodologies, or stand-out elements). When combined, the keywords should give a clear, precise idea about the topic of your project and help identify experts for peer review. You may want to consider which keywords a suitable reviewer would list on their profile—these could include a blend of a few broad keywords to understand the research discipline and more specific keywords to define the specific expertise within that discipline.

✓ APPROPRIATE, SPECIFIC KEYWORDS	✗ INSUFFICIENT, GENERIC KEYWORDS
Microplastics; PFAS; Water Treatment; Coagulation	Pollution; Water; Contaminants; Chemical Engineering
Solar power; Solar Cell; Energy Storage; Photovoltaics	Sustainability; Energy; Electricity, Electrical Engineering
Software development; Quantum computing; Large Language Models	Computer Science
Ethnography	Social Science
Integrated Healthcare	Interdisciplinary research

Why this matters for the review of your proposal: Keywords are critical as they define the project’s focus, methods, and novelty, and they convey its scope at a glance. Well-chosen and good keywords facilitate matching the proposal with appropriate reviewers with relevant expertise, positively impacting the time taken for effective review. Avoiding generic and ambiguous keywords prevents mismatches, allowing projects to reach the right experts quickly.

PROJECT SUMMARY (MAX. 300 WORDS)

This section will be used as an abstract to recruit reviewers and must provide a clear, concise, and accessible overview of the proposed project within the 300-word limit. The project summary must include the following elements:

- **Overview of the research problem:** This should be the primary focus of the project summary. Describe the research question, knowledge gap, or technical challenge (i.e., project objectives) and how it will be addressed (i.e., methods).
- **Details about the partner organization:** Provide a concise description of the partner organization(s) and their primary mandate, product, service, or area of operation. Specify how the proposed project is relevant to each partner and related to their activities.
- **Anticipated benefits and outcomes:** Describe the social or economic benefits that are expected from the project outcomes.

Why this matters for the review of your proposal: The project summary will be used by potential reviewers to determine if they have the appropriate expertise to review the proposal. Project summaries that are clear and sufficiently detailed will encourage potential reviewers to agree to review, ultimately reducing the evaluation timeline for your proposal.

PROJECT CONTEXT

Provide an overview of relevant prior research and explain how the proposed work will contribute to the field by addressing existing knowledge gaps.

- **Research Problem or Question (Max. 50 words):** Succinctly describe the research problem or question to be addressed and specify its significance within the broader field.
- **Background and Review of Relevant Prior Work:** Provide the necessary context for the project to situate it within the existing body of knowledge, identify the knowledge gaps that the project aims to address, and specify the project hypothesis. Describe the current state of knowledge in the subject area and support your discussion with references to relevant prior work with a focus on the key theories, findings, and methodological approaches that shape current understanding of the topic. Citations to academic literature in this section and throughout the proposal should appear in the text using a consistent citation style (with all cited references compiled in the Reference section).

Why this matters for the review of your proposal: This section should clearly convey the focus of the project to reviewers so they can understand and assess its relevance and novelty. Upon reading the project context, reviewers should clearly understand the state of the art and the key knowledge gaps that the proposed research will address. The section should demonstrate how the project will advance knowledge in the research field, and it should provide a strong foundation for evaluating the proposed research objectives.

OVERALL PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Define and describe the project's main aim, overall scope, and principal objective(s). The objectives should flow logically from the background section and should contribute meaningfully to addressing any previously established context elements such as research problems, questions, or hypotheses, as well as knowledge gaps and limitations in the field. It can be helpful to number your objectives and to use this numbering when referring to the individual objectives elsewhere in the proposal.

Why this matters for the review of your proposal: Reviewers will need a clear understanding of the project objectives so that they can understand the novelty of the project and review the feasibility of the work.

PROJECT SUB-OBJECTIVES & TIMELINE

The timeline is used to show when each task will be performed by each intern to achieve the project objective(s). Complete either the “*project timeline for single-year projects (1 year of less)*” or “*project timeline for multi-year projects (over 1 year)*” based on the length of your project. For clarity and readability, **delete the table that is not applicable for your project.**

- Sub-objectives noted in the timeline should stem from the overall project objective(s) and be specific to each intern or project.
- Sub-objectives and tasks for each intern should be specified in the leftmost column of the table, and the intern(s) responsible for the work should be noted in the column to the immediate right of the sub-objective or task.
- Fill in the relevant boxes by marking an “x” or highlighting in a colour that is easily visible (i.e., avoid using light colours that may be difficult to see on some displays).

Why this matters for the review of your proposal: Reviewers will be asked to consider whether the time allocated for each task is feasible for each intern, whether tasks are specified in an appropriate sequence, and whether the tasks are aligned to the project objectives. Ensure the duration in the timeline also aligns with the number of internship units listed for each intern under the Intern Summary. If there are any gaps in the project timeline, ensure that they are noted and explained to ensure the total project duration is clear.

METHODOLOGY/APPROACH

Describe what will be done, how it will be done, and what will be used to complete the work. Include relevant details on study design, data collection, analysis methods, equipment, procedures, and participant involvement, as applicable.

- Appropriate methods should be clearly defined and linked to each objective or sub-objective, including sufficient detail for reviewers to assess the project’s feasibility and merit.
- As applicable, include information such as variables to be measured, controls or comparison groups, sampling approaches, survey or interview design, participant recruitment, and data analysis techniques.
- The proposed methods should be fully explained, and any standard/established methods should be justified and supported by citing the relevant references. For novel or innovative methods, explain how they improve upon existing approaches.
- Where relevant, identify potential challenges and describe strategies to mitigate them.
- For multi-intern projects, ensure it is clear which intern(s) will be involved in or applying each of the outlined methods.

Why this matters for the review of your proposal: Reviewers will be asked to evaluate whether the proposed methods/approaches are appropriate to achieve the objectives and for the context in which the project will be conducted. Reviewers will also be asked to evaluate the feasibility of the proposed work, so the section should demonstrate that the project team has the appropriate background knowledge of the field, expertise in the methods to be employed, and access to appropriate resources to successfully complete the project.

DELIVERABLES

Indicate all expected deliverables for the project by selecting the applicable checkboxes. If you expect other deliverables that fall outside of these categories, summarize them under “Other”.

Why this matters for the review of your proposal: All Mitacs projects are expected to produce novel research outputs that advance their field of study and be published or disseminated in a format appropriate to their field. Projects should also produce tangible outcomes that are appropriate, quantifiable, and aligned logically to the project’s main aim and objectives. Reviewers will also consider the project deliverables when evaluating the novelty and feasibility of the project.

PARTNER INTERACTION

Partner activities and support:

- i. Describe the practical, research informed and/or applied activities each intern will carry out with the partner organization(s), demonstrating how these tasks align with the project goals and present an opportunity for the intern to be integrated into the partner’s operations during the internship.
- ii. Where possible, specify the names, positions, teams, or departments of key staff with whom the intern(s) will interact at the partner organization(s) to demonstrate a concrete mentorship and supervision plan. The description should indicate the experience or expertise that partner staff will contribute to the project, how frequently the intern(s) will interact with partner staff, and how they will actively support and champion the project.
- iii. Outline the resources the partner organization(s) will provide (e.g., tools, software, data, equipment, or workspace) and clearly explain the link between these resources and the ability for each intern to complete the project work. If any resources are located outside of the address specified for a partner organization in the application form, explain where they are located and under what conditions the intern(s) will have access.
- iv. Specify the physical location(s) and/or virtual platform(s) where the work will occur based on whether the interaction will occur on site, be virtual, or take place in a hybrid format.

Note: If the partner operates from a residential address and the intern(s) will be working on site, provide a detailed description of the workspace, including how the working area is clearly separated from the living space. For hybrid or fully virtual arrangements, outline how meaningful engagement between the intern(s) and the partner(s) will be facilitated. This should extend beyond basic or infrequent interactions (e.g., weekly check-ins) and instead demonstrate intentional collaboration and supervision. Please refer to the section on “Safe and Inclusive Internship Environment” in the [Responsible Conduct of Research](#) policy for more information.

For Accelerate Entrepreneur applicants ONLY:

Describe the incubator's involvement in supporting the project and the value they will bring to each intern's entrepreneurial experience and project success. Briefly outline the specific activities the intern(s) will undertake with the incubator and the nature of their interaction with incubator staff. Ensure that any resources the incubator will provide (e.g., workspace, mentorship, technical or business expertise, access to networks) are also noted.

Nature of academic supervision:

Outline the type and regularity of interactions between the intern(s) and supervisor(s). The academic supervisor(s) should be mentioned by name, and all academic supervisors should have a clear, structured approach to mentorship, ensuring meaningful and well-supported internships.

Alignment with each interns' academic studies:

Clearly explain how the project aligns with the academic training of the intern(s) while offering practical, applied experience beyond the classroom that will support further career opportunities.

Why this matters for the review of your proposal: Reviewers and Mitacs will use this section to assess whether the internship(s) will offer a meaningful experience to each intern. The section should demonstrate a clear integration of the intern(s) into real-world workflows, access to appropriate resources and expertise, and active, ongoing partner supervision. The section should give reviewers confidence that the partner's involvement is substantive, meaningful, and essential to achieving the project objectives while providing a high-quality, safe, and professionally enriching internship experience. It should also demonstrate that the partner and academic supervision will support learning, will enable progress monitoring, and will ensure the successful achievement of project objectives, ultimately strengthening future academic or career trajectories.

BENEFITS TO THE PARTNER ORGANIZATION AND TO CANADA

Specify the benefits to the partner organization(s) and to Canada by selecting all benefit categories that apply. Support these choices by explaining how the project addresses the specific needs or challenges of each partner organization in a tangible and unique manner. Additionally, describe how the project delivers broader benefits to Canada in alignment with its national priorities and research security guidelines (e.g., contributions to academic/scientific knowledge, economic growth, industrial R&D innovation, environmental sustainability, improved healthcare or social services, or greater equity and inclusion).

- Situate the benefits within each partner's core activities and align the expected outcomes with each partner's research or innovation aims.
- If applicable, define how these benefits can be measured by the partner(s), how the planned project supports and advances the project along the innovation continuum, and how the

internship(s) enable activities or outcomes that would not otherwise occur without Mitacs's support.

- Avoid generic or high-level statements that reference an entire topic, field, or Canadian facet without specific context, such as “improving machine learning, biomedical imaging, and healthcare/society” or “expanding the partner’s customer base/knowledge database”.

Why this matters for the review of your proposal: Reviewers and Mitacs are looking for direct, detailed, and meaningful benefits that demonstrate that the project will build innovation capacity to strengthen Canada’s productivity and global competitiveness.

INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT OR IMPACT (IF APPLICABLE)

This section must be completed whenever a project directly involves or impacts Indigenous communities. This applies to all projects that include Indigenous research, even if this is not the sole focus of the work. A Mitacs project is defined as Indigenous research or innovation if the project:

- involves or is expected to impact one or more Indigenous communities,
- involves Indigenous traditional knowledge or Indigenous cultural heritage, or
- involves Indigenous peoples or their data as the subject of the study.

Projects that involve or impact Indigenous communities must align with the Mitacs [Indigenous Research Policy](#), and this section must demonstrate:

- community support and involvement in shaping the project,
- plans for community access, use, and governance of generated knowledge or data, and
- the team’s background in Indigenous research (or planned training/mentorship).

Note that all three points must be addressed for all Indigenous research projects. Failure to complete this section when required or not providing sufficient details on community support and involvement in project design, access to and governance of data, and the team’s experience in Indigenous research may delay the review of your proposal.

Optionally, you may also submit 1-2 letters of support from Indigenous Elders, Knowledge Keepers, or Indigenous scholars who are members of the community (or communities) and possess the authority to speak on community interests to support this section.

Why this matters for the review of your proposal: Reviewers of projects that involve or impact Indigenous communities will expect that the proposed work is aligned to the [Principles of OCAP®](#) (ownership, control, access, and possession) and guided by the principle of “nothing about us without us”.

RELATIONSHIP WITH PAST/PRESENT MITACS PROJECTS

This section relates to Mitacs projects from any of the participants on the current submission. Do not include past, concurrent, or upcoming projects that do not involve Mitacs funding or those that do not involve any of the participants on the current submission.

Current or upcoming submissions to Mitacs:

Select **Yes** or **No** to indicate whether an academic supervisor or partner organization listed in this application is involved in a concurrent or upcoming Mitacs submissions to any Mitacs program. This includes submissions involving the same or different collaborators.

If **No**, no further explanation is required. If **Yes**, provide the relevant Mitacs identification number(s) (IT# or GMS#), where available, and briefly state whether the submissions are related or unrelated to the current proposal.

- For **related submissions**, explain how the projects differ or complement one another, how research activities are divided, and how supervision and project coordination will be managed.
- For **unrelated submissions**, briefly describe how they differ (e.g., different research area or objectives).

Past Mitacs projects:

Select **Yes** or **No** to indicate whether the current project is related to any past Mitacs projects involving an academic supervisor or partner organization involved in the current project.

If **No**, no further explanation is required. If **Yes**, provide the relevant Mitacs project identification number(s) (IT# or GMS#), where available, and briefly describe the relationship between the projects.

- For **related projects**, summarize the key outcomes of the previous project(s) and explain how the current project builds on, extends, or differs from that work.
- For **unrelated projects**, briefly describe how they differ (e.g., different research area, objectives, or scope).

Why this matters for the review of your proposal: This section will be used by external reviewers and Mitacs to understand how your current submission relates to, builds on, or differs from any past or concurrent submissions.

REFERENCES

List all bibliographic references cited in the proposal using any common formatting style in your field to allow reviewers to find references quickly and unambiguously. **Note that it is the applicants' responsibility to verify that all references are accurate and complete.**

Why this matters for the review of your proposal: Reviewers may consult the reference list when evaluating a project to understand the context of the proposal. Therefore, references must be identified in a clear, consistent, and accurate manner to facilitate ease of review.

ACADEMIC SUPERVISOR CURRICULUM VITAE (CV)

Academic supervisors are welcome to use any CV format (traditional, narrative, or custom), but we encourage you to focus on information that is most pertinent to the project. For example, it is not necessary to provide your full list of publications, conferences, and patents.

Why this matters for the review of your proposal: The academic supervisor's CV provides reviewers with context about the project team, the research environment, and the expertise available to support the planned internship activities to help them assess the project's feasibility.

SUGGESTED REVIEWERS

Provide suggestions of reviewers who are experts in the field of research addressed by the proposal, who could provide meaningful and constructive comments, and who do not present conflicts of interest with the applicants.

✖ Examples of conflict-of-interest reviewers:

- Collaborators with any applicants within the past 5 years or those with plans to collaborate in the immediate future
- Researchers from the same institution as the applicants
- Supervisors or graduate students of any applicants within the past 5 years
- Employees, consultants, or board members of a partner organization within past 5 years

Potential Conflicts of Interest/Excluded Reviewers:

If applicable, provide the contact information of specific reviewers who might have potential competing interests (e.g., financial, personal, professional) that could interfere with the objectivity and integrity of the review and therefore should not be contacted by Mitacs. Avoid vague descriptions such as listing industries, countries, or institutions/affiliations.

Why this matters for the review of your proposal: Providing detailed and specific information in this section will help Mitacs efficiently match appropriate reviewers to your proposal and helps to

facilitate the timely review of your proposal. Providing names of non-experts or those with clear conflicts of interest will delay the review of your proposal and the start date of the project.

REVISED PROPOSALS

If asked to revise your proposal, please review the feedback received in the outcome letter. All changes in the revised proposal should be highlighted, preferably in yellow, so that the updates can be clearly identified in the document. Refrain from highlighting with a dark colour, striking through the original text, using track changes, or adding comments to the document because this can make the revised proposal difficult to read and understand.

- A revised proposal must be accompanied by a cover letter. The cover letter should outline the revisions made to the proposal (including a note of the proposal sections in which the revisions were made) and include responses to the reviewers' comments and comments from Mitacs, as applicable.
- The revised version of the proposal should be updated to address the questions and concerns by providing a clearer overview of the planned project and more details about the project, as required.

Why this matters for the review of your proposal: Upon resubmission, your revised proposal and cover letter will be assessed to determine whether the reviewers' concerns were appropriately addressed and whether meaningful modifications were made to the project and proposal. Your revised proposal may be sent to one or more of the original external experts or to new external experts, if needed.

Note that it is not possible to predict if a revised proposal will be sent for another round of external review in advance because the decision to solicit external feedback on a revised proposals depends on the nature of the revisions requested, as well as the revisions made and the responses to the reviewers' comments.

RESOURCES

1. [Mitacs Responsible Conduct of Research Policy](#)
2. [Mitacs Conflict of Interest Policy for Program Participants](#)
3. [Mitacs Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Research and Innovation Policy](#)
4. [Mitacs Indigenous Research and Innovation Policy](#)
5. [Mitacs's Policy on the Use of Artificial Intelligence in Proposal Development and Review](#)
6. [Research Security](#)
7. [Adjudication Criteria](#)
8. [Full list of Mitacs Policies](#)