

Mitacs is a national not-for-profit organization that designs and delivers research and training programs in Canada. For 20 years, Mitacs has worked with over 65 universities and academic institutions, thousands of companies, and federal and provincial governments to build partnerships that support talent development and deployment.

Program overview

The **Canadian Science Policy Fellowship (CSPF)** is a pilot program that fosters relationships between government and academic researchers in support of building policy capacity among program fellows and science capacity in government. Fellows learn how to apply their research-based skill sets in a public policy context, while government host offices gain access to current, specialized academic expertise to address unique policy challenges.

The program offers a 12-month immersive fellowship into government, where fellows contribute their expertise to a broad range of issues and policy activities. Throughout, Mitacs provides professional development, training and networking opportunities to enhance fellows' policy-related knowledge, capabilities, and networks. The primary goals of the program are to:

- Forge strong relationships between government and academia
- Contribute to science policy capacity in government
- Develop a network of expertise in science policy among academic researchers
- Contribute to evidence-informed decision making in the Canadian public service

The CSPF program is modeled after the successful **Science and Technology Policy Fellowship (STPF) from the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS)**. The AAAS program, now in its 45th year, has developed an alumni network of over 3,000 fellows, many of whom have gone on to occupy leadership positions in government, academic, industry and not-for-profit sectors.

"Through our Canadian Science Policy Fellowship, the fellows will have the opportunity to experience first-hand the communication, collaboration, and capacity found in evidence-informed policy-making, while cultivating mutually beneficial relationships with their government hosts."

— Alejandro Adem, CEO and Scientific Director, Mitacs

Fellow eligibility

Fellows must:

- Be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident
- Have a PhD from any discipline
- Can also be a professor at a Mitacs Full or Associate Partner university
- Be able to commit to a full-time 12-month fellowship and relocate to the host office location if necessary
- Be passionate about learning how science is implicated in policy-making



Fellowship program cycle

Mitacs administers the fellowship cycle, including the call for fellow applications and the solicitation of host office position descriptions, the fellowship adjudication and matching process, and training and networking activities during the fellowship. The cycle generally unfolds as follows:

Call for fellow applicants

- The call for fellow applications launches in November and closes in early February
- Mitacs promotes the fellow call through its academic networks across Canada
- Fellow applicants submit their applications to Mitacs through the online webform
- All fellow applications go through an initial review for eligibility and completeness

Host office position submissions

- Interested government host offices develop a position description for a fellow for the upcoming September – August period and submit their position proposal to Mitacs
- The position description will outline the policy area or the policy file that the fellow will work on and the area of expertise sought for the position
- Fellow applicants see the position description for specific host offices once they have been selected for an interview with those hosts

Adjudication and shortlisting fellow applicants

- Each fellow application is reviewed by members of an adjudication committee, which includes prior fellows
- The adjudicators evaluate applications based on research excellence, leadership and communication qualities, and the applicant's commitment to the objectives of the program
- The adjudication committee develops a shortlist of semi-finalists and this list is presented to the host offices for review
- Government hosts will select those semi-finalists they would like to interview and will contact the applicant directly

Host and fellow ranking and matching

- After interviews, both semi-finalist fellow applicants and hosts submit rankings
- Mitacs will use the rankings to match hosts and semi-finalists based on mutual interest and fit
- Successfully matched fellows begin their placements in September of each year



Detailed program participation guidelines for fellows

Applying to the fellowship (November – February)

The call for fellow applications is open for approximately nine weeks, and applications are due on **February 3, 2019**. Fellow applicants must submit a complete application in the webform provided by the deadline. Applications received in any other format will not be accepted.

A complete application includes the following:

- Online submission with all fields filled in and all required documents uploaded
- Two letters of reference (either uploaded, or emailed directly to policyfellowship@mitacs.ca)

Please note: 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.

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

Applicants are responsible for ensuring that their references can meet the deadline. We suggest contacting references as early as possible so that they have time to prepare thoughtful letters of reference.

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.

Adjudication (February – March)

When the competition closes in February, applications are reviewed by the Mitacs adjudication committee. Each application is reviewed by multiple reviewers. Fellow applicants are evaluated based on their research distinctions, leadership attributes, communication skills, and a commitment to the fellowship's professional development opportunities and objectives. Candidates should show how the sum of their experiences and interests — research and otherwise — make them a good fit for the program.

After adjudication, applicants will be notified of their application status. Successful applicants will be placed on a shortlist for host offices and may be contacted for an interview.

Due to the individualized nature of the adjudication and matching processes, Mitacs cannot provide specific timelines about application status or feedback on the application itself. All fellow applicants will be informed whether they have been shortlisted as semi-finalists to the program as soon as practicable.

Host and fellow interviews (April)

The semi-finalist shortlist is sent to all hosts for review. Hosts will contact applicants directly to set up an interview and provide the applicant with a position description. The interview can be via tele- or video conference, or in person. Mitacs does not reimburse any travel costs for interviews as they can be done remotely.



The interview is an opportunity to learn more about the host office. Fellow applicants should treat the interview process as they would any professional interview. We suggest that fellows discuss how their expertise relates to the policy area of the host and to science policy in general and prepare any questions they may have about the role. As each host department has their own HR processes, the interview process will vary from host to host. Applicants who interview with a host office will be asked to rank their choices and return their rankings to Mitacs. The rankings will be considered as part of the matching process.

If you are not contacted for an interview, you may ask to be removed from the shortlist or you can keep your application active to be considered for second round matching (more details below).

Host and fellow matching (May – June)

Once hosts and prospective fellows have provided their rankings to Mitacs, Mitacs will match fellows and hosts based on their respective rankings. You will be notified of the outcomes of these matches in June.

Fellow applicants who are not matched with a host office will be provided the opportunity to apply to any remaining host positions which are not filled during the first round. Applicants will be asked to write a 500 word “pitch” as to why they think they would be a good match for the host office. Hosts will review the pitches and decide if they would like to interview the applicant. Mitacs will facilitate a second round of matching once these interviews have occurred.

Confirming fellowship remuneration and terms (July – August)

The host office will provide a letter of offer and determine salary (within the suggested range of \$70,000-80,000) plus any employee benefits with the fellow directly. The employment agreement must be finalized before the fellowship start date in September. Fellows are responsible for negotiating the employment agreement directly with the host office. Mitacs does not participate in the negotiation of the individual agreements.

At this point, you should prepare to relocate, if necessary. Fellows should inform their host office of any scheduling issues such as dissertation defense and/or convocation dates, or any required leave that may delay or disrupt the start date of the fellowship. They should also inform Mitacs if this prevents attendance at the September orientation session or any mandatory training sessions, as we may be able to make other arrangements for your participation.

Mitacs will send you a letter detailing the terms and conditions of the program. The letter must be signed and returned to Mitacs before starting your fellowship. Successfully matched fellows should promptly communicate any impediments to their full participation to Mitacs at policyfellowship@mitacs.ca as soon as possible. Should you choose to not accept the fellowship, it may still be possible for Mitacs to provide an alternative match to the host office, and we wish to facilitate an alternate match as quickly as possible.



Guidelines for fellowship success

Fellowships begin with an onboarding process in your host office, and an orientation in September to welcome the new cohort to the program.

There are several Mitacs training courses and networking events throughout the year, which will provide you with skills and knowledge to help you in your science policy role. These courses are mandatory, and fellows are expected to attend all Mitacs events and courses. Hosts are also aware of this requirement and should allow for the absences.

Before the fellowship begins (July – August)

- Sign and return the Mitacs letter
- Negotiate a leave of absence with your current employer if applicable
- Relocate as required
- Your host will provide you with the start date of your fellowship, details about any position changes, as well as begin any onboarding and security clearance processes

Throughout fellowship (September – August)

- Report to the host office and participate in the work. Fellows are expected to work in the host office location, as interaction with the team and with stakeholders is a key component of the fellowship
- Attend all courses and training provided by Mitacs. This may include (but is not limited to):
 - Orientation
 - Canadian Science Policy Conference
 - Networking Course
 - Project Management Course
 - Policy Briefings Course
 - Fellowship Impact Plan Courses 1, 2 and 3
 - Science Advice
 - Presenting with Impact Course
- Respond to all survey requests for feedback
- Develop and complete Fellowship Impact Plan, which captures the skills and knowledge gained and promotes deeper engagement with the host office. The fellow and host office work together to develop the plan
- Depending on the status of the host's policy file, their dedicated resources, or shifting priorities, a degree of ambiguity and flexibility should be expected as part of a fellowship experience

Conclusion of fellowship (August)

- Complete the Mitacs Exit Survey
- Submit Fellowship Impact Plan and other requested documents to Mitacs
- Provide Mitacs with up-to-date contact information so you can be reached after the fellowship ends

Thank you for your interest in applying to the Canadian Science Policy Fellowship. Please contact policyfellowship@mitacs.ca with any further questions about the fellowship process.

