

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 science capacity in government and policy capacity among program fellows. Government host offices gain access to current, specialized academic expertise to address unique policy challenges, while fellows learn how to apply their research-based skill sets in a public policy context.

The program offers a 12-month immersive fellowship for PhD holders in any discipline into a government office. Over the course of the fellowship, fellows can 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 45<sup>th</sup> 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

## Host office eligibility

Hosts must:

- Be a Canadian government office (federal or provincial)
- Host and support a fellow for 12 months, including paying a salary and providing benefits
- Have a policy-focused position that requires the advanced competencies and skills of a PhD holder

## 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, and fellow applicants submit their applications to Mitacs

### Outreach to government host offices and host position submissions

- The outreach to prospective hosts occurs over the fall and winter
- Interested government host offices develop a position description for a fellow for the upcoming September – August period and submit their position proposal to Mitacs between November and March
- 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

### Adjudication and shortlisting fellow applicants

- Mitacs administers the adjudication and shortlisting of fellow applicants
- All fellow applications go through an initial review for eligibility and completeness
- Following this, 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

### Host review and interviews

- From the provided list, government hosts will select those semi-finalists they would like to interview for a host position
- Hosts can interview as many applicants as they like

### Host and fellow ranking and matching

- After interviews, both semi-finalist fellow applicants and hosts submit rankings using the Mitacs-provided template
- 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 hosts

The success of the CSPF program will in large part be defined by the commitment and support of the host offices that welcome the fellows for their fellowships every September. By facilitating hands-on professional development experiences, host offices gain the scientific knowledge and analytical skills of academic experts, access to research networks, fresh perspectives, and the energy and initiative of their fellows. Together, hosts and fellows have the potential to make meaningful contributions in the public service, and ultimately to all Canadians.

Mitacs offers the following suggestions to outline the role of a host office in supporting a successful fellow selection process and placement.

### Host office position description development and submission (November – March)

- Create a position description for the year-long fellowship. This should include:
  - The policy issue/area and general scope of work
  - Policy processes that the fellow will be involved in (e.g., problem framing, policy formulation, supporting decision making, policy implementation, monitoring & evaluation)
  - Policy activities that the fellow may support (e.g., preparation of briefing and speaking notes, senior decision maker briefings, supporting work of committees, stakeholder meetings and/or consultation management)
  - Competencies and professional expectations of the fellow
- Submit the position description and complete the required information on the Mitacs webform before **March 3, 2019**
- Mitacs will review the submissions and work with host offices to ensure that the position descriptions provide appropriate opportunities for the fellows
- Internally, prospective hosts should identify administrative and Human Resources (HR) processes to be applied to the fellowship, including but not limited to:
  - Budget allocation of fellow salary (minimum \$70,000)
  - Type of employment
  - Entitled benefits of the fellow
  - Classification group and level of work to be performed
  - Security clearance requirements

### Shortlist review and interviews (April)

Hosts may conduct interviews with any of the short-listed fellow applicants to find the best combination of expertise, skills, and interests, as with any other job candidate. A fellow applicant will be provided with a host office position description once a host requests an interview with that fellow. Mitacs encourages hosts to be as flexible as possible on required expertise, as the success of fellowships is less dependent on academic discipline and more on broader skills that can be applied in the public service environment.

Host offices are encouraged to use their established HR processes for the interviews, however it is important for hosts to accommodate questions from fellow applicants, as this is the fellow's opportunity to evaluate the host office and fit for the work from their perspective. Interviews can take place via tele- or video-conference, or in person. Please note that Mitacs does not reimburse any travel costs for interviews.



### **Matching of fellows (May – June)**

After the interview, hosts provide Mitacs with a ranked list of preferred candidates which includes all candidates interviewed. Prospective fellows also provide a ranked list of their preferred host offices to Mitacs. Based on all rankings received, Mitacs will make final matches and notify both the host and the prospective fellow. Mitacs cannot guarantee that you will receive your top ranked candidate and we encourage hosts to rank as many candidates as possible who are suited to the role to ensure a match.

Should your interviews prove unsuccessful in identifying a suitable candidate, the process allows for a second round of matching. Unmatched semi-finalists will be given the remaining host office position descriptions and will have the opportunity to write a “pitch” to any host offices who do not have matched fellows explaining why they think they would be a good fit for the position. After receiving the pitches, hosts can decide if they’d like to interview additional candidates and Mitacs will facilitate a second round of matching.

### **Confirming fellowship remuneration (July – August)**

The fellowship will require an employment contract with the host office. Host offices 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 start date of the fellowship in September. Any impediments to a finalized employment agreement should be promptly communicated to both Mitacs and the fellow.

Fellows are responsible for negotiating the employment agreement directly with the host office. Mitacs does not participate in the negotiation of the individual employment agreements.

### **Guidelines for fellowship success**

Below are some tips for successful onboarding and integration of the fellow into the host office team throughout the fellowship, as well as some notes about administrative requirements from Mitacs. As with the interview process, host offices are encouraged to use their existing HR processes.

#### **Before the fellow’s arrival (July – August)**

- Provide an up-to-date position description to Mitacs and the fellow (if different from original submission)
- Confirm host supervisor contact information with Mitacs (if different from original submission)
- Introduce fellow and host supervisor to one another if they haven’t already met in the interview
- Begin onboarding process including outfitting of appropriate workspace with computer, phone, office supplies, etc., as well as computer network, email and voicemail accounts
- Remain available for direct and open communication with fellow as needed
- Provide information to fellow on when and where to report and how to access the office
- Sign the Mitacs Terms and Conditions for the program, and confirm expected fellow salary
- Respond to Mitacs’s pre-survey for hosts

#### **Onboarding of fellow (September)**

- Notify appropriate staff of the fellowship and upcoming arrival of fellow, including HR, IT, and security personnel
- Schedule any mandatory government onboarding and/or training
- Provide an organizational chart of the host office



- Arrange security details, including identification cards and building passes
- Collect required briefings and/or background material for fellow's arrival
- Provide a directory of useful contacts to the fellow, with particular attention to key people in the field of work relevant to the fellowship (can be outside host office)
- Provide an overview of restrictions or limitations on fellow's ability to represent the host office, office culture, work schedule, dress code, resources (i.e. administrative support, equipment), etc.
- Set up a formal meeting schedule for the first month with host supervisor, and any relevant introductory meetings relevant to the fellowship for initial weeks of placement
- Review fellowship expectations with fellow

#### **Throughout fellowship (September – August)**

- Create opportunities that maximize the educational background, career stage, and skills of the fellow based on competencies identified in the host submission and fellow selection process
- Meet with the fellow on regular basis, ideally ½ hour to 1 hour each week, to provide guidance, support, and input on the direction of the fellowship as well as performance and output
- Introduce fellow to resources and contacts that can enhance the success of the fellowship and overall performance of the fellow
- Remain available to troubleshoot problems or complications related to the fellowship
- Facilitate access to and necessary approvals for educational and/or professional development opportunities available to the fellow through the host office
- Provide time for the fellow to attend the mandatory orientation, professional development training and networking sessions offered by Mitacs (dates will be provided in advance of arrival of fellow)
- Attend host events associated with orientation or networking events, as availability permits
- Provide input to the fellow's Fellowship Impact Plan (which captures skills and knowledge gained over the 12-month period and communicates the value and impact of the fellowship to the host office)
- Provide financial confirmations to support Mitacs's fiscal year end reporting, as requested

#### **Conclusion of fellowship (August)**

- Serve as a reference for the fellow, if appropriate
- Respond to surveys and financial reporting as requested by Mitacs to aid in monitoring and evaluation
- Provide feedback on the experience and suggestions for continual program improvement
- Complete team member departure process according to your internal HR processes

Thank you for your interest in being a Canadian Science Policy Fellowship host office. Please contact [policyfellowship@mitacs.ca](mailto:policyfellowship@mitacs.ca) with any further questions about the fellowship process.

