I'liī | **School of Engineering**

Postdoctoral Fellowship Program for Engineering Excellence

Frequently Asked Questions

Q1: Am I eligible to apply if I already hold a postdoctoral position at MIT or another institution?

Recent PhD recipients within one year of graduation who hold a postdoctoral position within MIT or other institutions and who satisfy all other eligibility criteria are welcome to apply.

Q2: Am I eligible to apply if I am currently a graduate student at MIT and will have earned my PhD by the start of the program?

This postdoctoral fellowship is primarily intended to introduce incredible new candidates to the MIT School of Engineering community as postdoctoral fellows. However, current MIT graduate students who are graduating with a PhD and who satisfy all other criteria are welcome to apply.

Q3: Am I eligible to apply if I am not a citizen of the United States?

The program accepts applications from international scholars. However, non-U.S. nationals who are offered a postdoctoral fellowship must hold appropriate non-immigrant status, such as J-1, F-1 OPT / STEM, or other employment authorization (EAD), for the duration of the fellowship appointment. Please note that H-1B and E-3 employment-based, non-immigrant visa sponsorship is not possible for this position.

Q4: Am I eligible to apply if I have not yet earned my doctoral degree by the time of application?

We will accept applications from those who will have earned their doctoral degree by the start of the program in September 2023.

Q5: What if I do not know which MIT faculty research supervisor I would like to work with?

We encourage all applicants to review School of Engineering faculty listings to get a sense of faculty and departments who may fit their postdoctoral research areas. A list of suggested faculty advisors is not essential but is desirable. The program will also help selected applicants

in finding a faculty research advisor. You can review the School of Engineering Faculty at https://engineering.mit.edu/the-mit-postdoctoral-fellowship-program-for-engineering-excellence/.

Q6: Do you require a MIT faculty member as a reference?

No, a reference letter from a MIT faculty member is not required to apply to the program. Your required three reference letters should come from previous advisors who can speak to your intellectual capabilities and your promise as a researcher.

Q7: How will faculty mentors be assigned to selected fellows? And when will fellows be informed of their mentor?

The program requires an MIT faculty member to affirmatively agree to be an advisor to the postdoctoral fellow. All fellows in the program will be associated with at least one School of Engineering faculty member and a School of Engineering department.

Q8: Will it be possible to have more than one faculty advisor?

Fellows will be matched with at least one faculty advisor but may name potential co-advisors. The program will also connect you with other mentors related to your career development interests.

Q9: Do I need to contact a faculty member for funding?

Applicants do not need to contact MIT faculty to apply for this fellowship funding and the program. In the application process, we ask applicants to name their faculty members of interest who may later serve as their faculty advisor. If an applicant is selected as a fellow, their fellowship award is contingent upon agreement from a MIT faculty member who will serve as their research advisor.

Q10: What are your expectations for the application research summary?

The research summary should include your current research and research vision. You should articulate your research vision for what you would like to do at MIT. The research summary is meant to be more of a research narrative than a proposal. The program intends the research summary to aid in identifying an appropriate research supervisor and core department for the fellow.

Q11: Are fellows required to participate in all of the professional development opportunities?

Fellows are admitted to the program as a cohort and expected to participate in research as well as the career development paths that are meant to expose fellows to opportunities within academia and out outside of academia.

Q12: Can fellows participate in the program remotely?

No, postdoctoral fellows are expected to work with MIT faculty and engage in the program activities *primarily* in person and on campus. They should arrive by the September start date of the program.

Q13: Can fellows conduct a joint postdoc in collaboration with another research university?

In this program a postdoctoral fellow's appointment and primary faculty advising will occur at MIT. While there may be opportunities for collaboration with external research advisors at other research institutions, it is important for postdoctoral fellows to consult with their faculty advisors and departmental human resources team to be aware of MIT policies regarding outside professional activities and conflict of interest.

Additional questions?

Contact us at soe-pfpfee@mit.edu.

MIT | School of Engineering

Postdoctoral Fellowship Program for Engineering Excellence

Established in 2021, the MIT School of Engineering Postdoctoral Fellowship Program for Engineering Excellence seeks to discover and develop the next generation of leaders to help guide the school toward a more diverse and inclusive culture.

This program is designed to help postdoctoral fellows develop in multiple dimensions. In addition to an emphasis on research, it will focus on providing resources and opportunities, and building a professional network for the fellows. The program will arrange a set of professional development opportunities as presentations and discussions for the cohort along three career paths: academic, engineering leadership, entrepreneurship.

Pursuing this postdoctoral position is an opportunity to deepen training, develop research independence, and pivot research direction. It also provides trainees time to explore career options and serves as a stepping stone for the next phase of their career. In the application process, we encourage applicants to come prepared with ideas for projects they wish to accomplish during their tenure in the program. Additionally, they identify leading researchers who can help them develop and pursue their research interests.

Funding

The program expects to select 12-15 School of Engineering Distinguished Doctoral Fellows per cohort. These fellows receive funding for two years, including a $75,000 stipend and $10,000 per year discretionary expense allowance. This allowance can be used to purchase health insurance and cover relocation costs among other items.

Eligibility

The program is open to individuals who:

1. are a member of an ethnic group, racial group or gender identity historically underrepresented in engineering at MIT (Black/African American, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian, or other Native Pacific Islander, Hispanic/Latinx, women);
2. have experienced overcoming significant challenges in their path toward graduate school or be a member of an underserved population;
3. are graduate students who are within a year of finishing their PhD;
4. are recent PhD recipients within one year of graduation; or
5. are scholars in industry within one year of earning their PhD who wish to pivot to an academic career.

Applying to the program

Application materials include:

- **Application survey** with biographical, demographic, and research interest information
- **Curriculum vitae**
- **Cover letter**: Include a statement (1-page maximum) on why this program is a good fit for you and how your identity and/or background has informed your pathway. Include which area of engineering you wish to work. Indicate a possible faculty advisor at MIT.
- **Research statement**: Include a research statement (2-page maximum) describing your accomplishments, current work, future research direction, and impacts of work with a faculty mentor.
- **Diversity statement**: Include a statement (1-page maximum) on how you think about diversity, have contributed to diversity, and/or how your research or other work has advanced or will advance diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- **Three reference letters:** Applicants should request their references and submit a letter of recommendation directly to the application portal. Referees will need the applicant's name and registered email address for the submission.

Key dates

Online application opens
November 1, 2022

Virtual info sessions
November 15, 2022
December 8, 2022

Application submission deadline
January 31, 2023 at 5pm ET

Interview status notification
Mid-February 2023

Virtual interview
Late February 2023

Notification of fellowship status
Mid-March 2023

Intent to accept fellowship deadline
Early April 2023

Fellowship start date
September 1, 2023

Additional questions?

Contact us at soe-pfpfee@mit.edu.

Learn more