

TalentEdge Fellowship Program (TFP)- AVIN

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Program Information and Eligibility Requirements

Overview and Benefits

The TalentEdge Fellowship Program (TFP) stream of the AVIN program provides support for PhD graduates and post-doctoral fellows, to work on industry-driven research and development projects related to Connected and Autonomous Vehicle (C/AV) technologies. Companies can tap into world-class talent coming out of Ontario's publicly-funded post-secondary institutions and strengthen their capacity to develop new products, services, and processes, while fellows receive hands-on industry experience and mentorship opportunities in areas such as software and hardware development, artificial intelligence, and data analytics.

- Along with applying directly for Fellowships, companies may also apply for Fellowships as part of the AVIN R&D Partnership Fund. The fund provides funding for company- or institution-based fellows working directly for a company or as part of a collaboration between a post-secondary institution and a company that is providing a C/AV-related solution. For more details refer to the R&D Partnership Fund Stream 1 and Stream 2 program guidelines.

Benefits to Companies	Benefits to Fellows and Post-Secondary Institutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gain access to cutting-edge knowledge, up-and-coming talent, and unique facilities and equipment to extend company R&D capabilities • Create solutions to current industry challenges, leading to increased productivity, cost savings, revenue and job creation • Develop and retain top talent in Ontario 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gain valuable hands-on experience and mentorship opportunities • Use knowledge and innovative ideas, to help solve real-world R&D challenges • Establish relationships with industry and within OCI's networks

How Funding Works

OCI Contribution	\$35,000 per 12-month unit for eligible project costs, up to maximum of \$70,000 (two units)
Industry Partner Contribution	<p>\$50,000 (\$25,000 cash plus \$25,000 in-kind) minimum per 12-month unit</p> <p>Of the total \$85,000 per unit, the fellow must receive a minimum cash compensation of \$52,500 (institution-based fellowship) or \$60,000 (company-based fellowship). The remainder may be used for direct project costs.</p>

Funding Recipient	Applicant: institution (for institution-based fellowships) or company (for company-based fellowships)
Institutional Overhead	Not eligible

Eligibility Requirements

Applicant and Primary Location of Fellowship

- The fellowship location should be mutually determined depending on the amount of time spent by the fellow at the company, how the funds will be administered, and the needs of the project. OCI funds will flow to the applicant organization.
 - Institution-based fellowships: Applicant is a principal investigator from the post-secondary institution and has an eligible company as the contributing Industry Partner. Fellows must spend a significant portion of their time on-site or in the field with the company.
 - Company-based fellowships: Applicant is the company

Fellow

- Recently graduated (within five years of graduation) with a doctoral degree (PhD) from an accredited, publicly-funded university during the fellowship period. (Current PhD students may apply to the AVIN - [TalentEdge Internship Program](#).)
- Eligible to work in Ontario and has employee status at the company (company-based fellowships), or has post-doctoral fellow status at the institution (institution-based fellowships), for duration of the fellowship
- Maximum of two TalentEdge Fellowships (consecutive, over lifetime)
- Not enrolled in a co-op program or other equivalent job placement/employment program
- Has no conflict of interest with the company, including, but not limited to, companies where fellows or their relatives have control as a major creditor, shareholder or governing board member
- Not a current or past employee of the company (including consulting, contract or part-time positions, etc.)

Company/Industry Partner

- For-profit, incorporated in Ontario or Canada, and has a valid [CRA business number](#)
- Is using or developing C/AV technology-based innovation or innovative processes for competitive advantage in provincial, national and/or global markets
- Has operations and/or R&D in Ontario related to the project

- Has the intent and potential to apply, exploit and/or commercialize the results of the project for the economic benefit of Ontario
- Has the necessary expertise and resources to put the project into effect within an appropriate time frame
- Company subsidiaries (organizations with headquarters outside of Ontario) are eligible, provided that the Ontario operations meet all of the above criteria.
- For institution-based fellowships, the applicant and industry partner must have an arms-length relationship
- All applicants and partners must be in good financial and reporting standing with OCI

Project

- Defined project with clear activities, milestones and outcomes, to be executed within the duration of the fellowship (not a “first job”-type placement)
- Has an R&D component related to Connected and Autonomous Vehicle (C/AV) technologies
- Fellows will receive on-the-job training in areas related to C/AV technologies such as software and hardware development, artificial intelligence and data analytics
- Commensurate with the fellow’s experience and expertise
- Maximum of **two units** per application/company in a year (i.e. maximum \$70,000 in OCI contribution per application)
 - Pre-approval by the OCI Program Manager is required to apply for more than two units
- Intellectual property (IP) arising from the project will be managed by the project participants; OCI does not claim or manage IP rights.
 - Institution-based fellowships: the parties are bound by the IP terms of the university, unless a separate agreement between the parties is in effect for the duration of the fellowship
 - Company-based fellowships: the parties are bound by the IP terms of the company where the fellow is an employee for the duration of the fellowship
- Participants must enter into an agreement with OCI and cooperate in providing project outcomes and metrics, annually at a minimum
- View a list of eligible expenses

How to Apply

Application Process and Timelines

Program Status: **Open for applications (accepted at any time)**

1. If you are ready to start applying for the AVIN – TalentEdge Fellowship Program stream, please click on the button below to complete the Eligibility Questionnaire*.

*The applicant (principal investigator at institution, or company) should complete the Eligibility Questionnaire when ready to apply for funding. Companies that do not have a research partner or fellow, or wish to find out more about AVIN or other OCI programs, should submit a [generic Client Intake Form](#).

Please note: completion of this Eligibility Questionnaire does not constitute an application for funding.

2. OCI will review the Eligibility Questionnaire within one to two business days. If the applicant/partner, fellow and project meet the program eligibility criteria, you will be sent a link to OCI's online application system, AccessOCI.
3. Complete the online application form, in collaboration with the industry partner if applicable, and upload the required supporting documents.
 - Required supporting documents:
 - Company Profile submitted by the applicant company/industry partner, including valid nine-digit CRA [business number](#), incorporation date and number of employees (globally and in Ontario)
 - Academic supervisor's CV or NSERC Form 100/103CV (institution-based fellowships only)
 - Fellow's CV
 - Fellow's official transcript
 - Reference letter from fellow's PhD supervisor, including:
 - Time period that the fellow was under supervision
 - Academic qualifications and expertise of the fellow
 - Track record of the fellow (e.g. supervision of other students, publications, patents, key achievements, etc.)
 - Potential of the fellow

For assistance, please see the following resources:

- [Sample application form \(for reference purposes only\)](#)
 - [OCI's Knowledge Base \(Frequently Asked Questions\)](#)
4. OCI will internally review the application within approximately one week for eligibility, completeness and financial compliance. A list of any deficiencies will be sent to the applicant for revision. Applicants will have only two chances to make all required changes to their application; if outstanding issues remain after the second revision, the application will be withdrawn.
 5. Eligible and complete applications will be sent for review by external, subject matter experts. A funding decision will be provided within four to six weeks.

Reference Documents

- Eligible Expenditures Guide
- Sample application template - this sample application template is for informational purposes only. Applications are only accepted through OCI's online system where full application requirements are listed.

Assessment Process and Criteria

The AVIN - TalentEdge Fellowship Program stream is a discretionary, non-entitlement program with limited funding. All eligible applications undergo a review process where the applications are assessed against program objectives and other criteria. Not all eligible applications will be approved for funding.

1. Complete applications will undergo a written external peer review by three subject-matter experts from academia, industry and/or government. Reviewers are contractually bound by confidentiality and conflict of interest requirements.
2. Recommendations from the peer review process will be assessed by OCI's Internal Review Panel, which will have responsibility for the final OCI decision.

Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be evaluated against assessment criteria including:

- Project Description: Clarity of project and objectives, and benefit to the company
- Project Plan: Clarity of objectives for the fellow, suitability of methodology, feasibility of timeline and milestones, plan for implementation of results at the company
- Fellow Qualifications and Experience: suitability of fellow's background and expertise for the project, benefit of the placement to the fellow, capacity of industry partner, and strength of interaction with the partner organization to provide the fellow with first-hand industry experience and/or exposure
- Overall quality and completeness of the application

Project Activation, Funds and Reporting

Project Activation

Institution-Based Fellowships

- All Industry Partner cash contributions must be provided directly to the post-secondary institution. The institution's Financial Officer must confirm the receipt of these funds to the Program Manager, in order for OCI to release its funds to the post-secondary institution.
- The applicant and partner organization(s) will also be forwarded a copy of OCI's standard funding agreement for execution. This funding agreement must be signed, via OCI's online electronic signature function, by the institution and partner and returned to OCI along with the EFT or cheque within fifteen days (15) of notification of an approved award.
 - A copy of the Funding Agreement can be downloaded for your reference. Please do not fill out this form; a copy of the agreement will be generated through OCI's online management system and sent to you upon approval of your project.
 - The purpose of the OCI funding agreement is to define roles and obligations for the project partners with regards to OCI's guidelines and funding contribution only. Project partners are encouraged to enter into a separate research agreement to ensure agreement on other roles and responsibilities specific to the project.
- Upon receipt of the signed funding agreement and required industry cash component, OCI will activate the project.

- The start date will be by default the date of activation and may not be changed.

Company-Based Fellowships

- Upon approval of a project for funding, the applicant will be forwarded a copy of OCI’s standard funding agreement for execution. This funding agreement must be signed, via OCI’s online electronic signature function, by the applicant and returned to OCI within fifteen days (15) of notification of an approved award
 - A copy of the Funding Agreement can be downloaded for your reference. Please do not fill out this form; a copy of the agreement will be generated through OCI’s online management system and sent to you upon approval of your project.
- Upon receipt of the funding agreement, OCI will activate the project.
- The start date will be by default the date of activation and may not be changed.

Reference Documents

- OCI Funding Agreement (institution-based and company-based)

Flow of Funds

- Upon activation, OCI will release a payment equal to 75 per cent of the OCI award, plus the industry cash contribution (for institution-based fellowships). The remaining 25 per cent of the OCI award will be held back until project completion. For example:

OCI award amount	\$35,000
Applicant/industry partner contributions	\$25,00 cash plus \$25,000 in-kind
Funds released upon project activation	\$51,250 (institution-based) or \$26,250 (company-based)
Holdback	\$8,750

- OCI will not release any funds until the project is activated, and will not be held responsible for any expenses incurred for the project prior to activation. If for any reason the requirements for activation are not met within fifteen (15) days from the date of release of the approval notification, the funding offer may be retracted.
- The holdback will be released upon project completion and receipt of the following: applicant and industry partner (where applicable) final progress and financial reports, outcomes, proof of payment for the fellow, and attestation from the applicant organization regarding the use of funds (see details in Project Reporting section).

Project Reporting

The following project reports will be required.

Please note that completion of all required reports is a contractual obligation to receive funding from OCI.

Final Reports

1. Forty-five (45) days prior to the scheduled completion date, the applicant and fellow will receive a notification of the project end date from OCI's AccessOCI system, with a link to the Final Project Report should the partners wish to begin entering data. If an extension to complete the project is required, the applicant must request it prior to the scheduled project completion date, using the Project Administration tab in their AccessOCI project file. A maximum extension of six months will be allowable.
 - As part of the final report, applicants must provide proof of payment for the fellow (must include fellow's name, company/institution name, payment periods and amounts, e.g. fellow pay stub, payroll print-out, T4/T4A).
2. On the scheduled project completion date, the applicant and fellow will receive notification and a link to complete a Final Project Report (including progress, financials and metrics) from OCI's AccessOCI system. For institution-based internships, the Finance Office of the post-secondary institution must also review and submit the applicant report to OCI. Both of the applicant and fellow reports must be received and approved by OCI within 30 days of project completion.
3. All required final reports by all partners must be submitted within thirty (30) days of project completion in order to release the holdback, and maintain good financial standing with OCI.

Project Metrics

4. If the project continues past a fiscal year end (March 31), the applicant will be required to complete an annual Metrics survey each April, for the part of the project that has been completed since the previous March 31. This annual report is mandatory for OCI to fulfil its contract with its funding Ministries. Required metrics reports from all partners must be submitted in order to maintain good financial standing with OCI.

Retrospective Survey

5. At one, two, and three years after project completion, the company will be sent a link to complete a retrospective survey to collect data on commercial outcomes from the project. This information is required by OCI for assessment of program impact and continuous improvement.

Project Changes

- In the event that the project has undergone a significant change, such as a change in principal investigator, the industry partner, the intern or fellow, scope of work, or eligible expenses, the

applicant must contact the OCI Program Manager as soon as the changes are known. Failure to do so can result in a loss of funding.

Contacts

[Search OCI's Knowledge Base of Frequently Asked Questions.](#)

For further questions regarding program guidelines, eligibility, and submitting the online application, please contact your [OCI Business Development Manager](#) or:

For inquiries related to application initiation, please contact:

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