



Digital Policy Hub

Digital Policy Hub Program FAQ

Eligibility Information

1. Who is eligible?

- **Academic fellows — Enrollment at a Canadian post-secondary institution:**
 - o Academic fellows are those applying at the undergraduate, masters, doctoral and/or post-doctoral levels.
 - o Fellows must be able to demonstrate enrollment at a Canadian institution at the time of application and maintain their status as a current student at the institution for the full duration of the program. (This means, for example, that students in one-year master's programs are generally not able to demonstrate eligibility.)
 - o We welcome post-doctoral applicants, including recent Ph.D. graduates. To be eligible, candidates must have completed their Ph.D. at a Canadian institution within the past four years and have current post-doctoral status at a Canadian academic institution at the time of the application and for the duration of the program. The candidate must have documentation verifying existing and official post-doctoral status to access funding via their university.
 - o At the discretion of the program, Ph.D. students who successfully defend their dissertation during the fellowship may be able to transfer to post-doctoral fellowship status if ample notice is given and they continue on to a post-doctoral position with the same academic supervisor and academic institution.
 - o Canadian citizens, permanent residents and international students with a valid visa allowing them to work in Canada are eligible to apply.
 - o In addition to the requirements set by CIGI above, academic fellows must meet eligibility criteria for the [Mitacs Accelerate program](#).
- **Supervisors:** Students and post-doctoral applicants must have a supervisor at their academic institution who is willing to supervise them on their proposed project. They must also support their participation in the Hub, act as an applicant and signatory on the funding application, and hold and administer the funding at the academic institution. The supervisor must be eligible to hold a research account at their institution (for example, Tri-Council funding such as NSERC or SSHRC).
- **Disciplines:** All academic disciplines will be considered. The Hub cultivates disciplinary diversity in the cohort.
- **Visiting fellows — Government and private sector professionals:** Government practitioners and private sector professionals from within Canada are encouraged to apply and will serve as unfunded visiting fellows.
- **Location:** The Hub fellow must be based within Canada, and a mix of in-person, hybrid and remote participation is possible to facilitate geographic diversity in the cohort. As there are

benefits to in-person participation such as shared office space and meeting the cohort face to face, we strongly urge fellows within commuting distance to attend seminars and events onsite. All fellows will be required to travel to the CIGI Campus in Waterloo, Ontario, to participate in the end-of-term research conferences.

- **Applicants based at an academic institution abroad, please note:** At this time, funding only allows for applicants based in Canada and registered at a Canadian academic institution. CIGI is not able to sponsor participants for legal status in Canada.

2. Do I need a supervisor to apply?

- Academic (undergraduate, masters, Ph.D. and post-doctoral) applicants must have a supervisor at their academic institution who is willing to supervise them on this project and administer the funds through the home institution (they must be eligible to hold tri-council funding, as funding from the Digital Policy Hub's external funding partner qualifies as a research grant). Please see the Supervisor's Terms of Reference document for all supervisor expectations, found on [the Digital Policy Hub website](#).

3. What academic disciplines are eligible?

- All academic disciplines will be considered. The Hub cultivates disciplinary diversity within the cohort.

4. What is the difference between Academic and Visiting Fellows?

- Academic fellowships are offered to current undergraduate, master's, doctoral, and post-doctoral candidates who will maintain that status throughout the fellowship term. These fellowships are funded.
- Visiting fellowships are offered government practitioners and private sector professionals. Independent consultants may be considered on a case-by-case basis. These fellowships are unfunded.

5. Do I have to be based in Canada?

- Yes. All fellows must be based in Canada.
- Within Canada, a mix of in-person, hybrid and remote participation is possible facilitate geographic diversity in the cohort. As there are benefits to in-person participation such as shared office space and meeting the cohort face to face, we strongly urge fellows within commuting distance to attend seminars and events onsite.
- All fellows will be required to travel to the CIGI campus to participate in the end of term research conferences.

Application Information

1. What documents are required for the application?

- Candidates must provide a cover letter and CV outlining their qualifications, a description of their proposed research and how it relates to the Hub's focus areas, and two letters of support. Current students/candidates and post-doctoral applicants will also be asked to provide documentation verifying active status at their academic institution in the application portal.
- Requirements for the **two** letters of support:

- For academic applicants, one letter must show, beyond their recommendation, the supporter’s intent to provide research supervision and administration of Mitacs funding during the duration of your tenure at the Digital Policy Hub.
 - For visiting applicants, one letter must be from your current employer showing support for participation in the Hub program in conjunction with your current responsibilities. Independent consultants may be considered on a case-by-case basis.
 - Letters of support should be uploaded in the online application — if your references feel more comfortable sending in their letter directly, please have them send it to digitalhubinquiries@cigionline.org. Please ensure you have arranged to have all submitted letters at the time of filling out your application. **Applications are not considered complete until the Hub team has received all letters.**
 - Applications are open periodically, and information on openings will be posted to our website along with the link to the online application form.
2. When is the application deadline?
- **The deadline to apply for the 2025-2026 academic year cohort is Monday, March 3, 2025, 11:59PM ET.**
3. What is the process to select Hub fellows?
- Hub candidates will be screened first by determining whether they meet the basic eligibility criteria outlined above.
 - Applicants who are deemed eligible will then sent to the Hub Admissions Committee, who provide an initial review of submitted materials.
 - Select candidates will then be invited for an interview.
 - Some applicants may need to provide additional information to finalize their research proposals before starting the program.
 - Candidates are selected based on a variety of criteria. The research proposal weighs heavily in the process, but we do thoroughly review the entire application.
 - In addition to the individual merits of each application, we also consider the overall composition of the Hub fellowship cohort.
 - **All applicants will receive a response.** Ph.D. and post-doctoral applicants will also receive brief feedback on their research proposal.
4. What makes a strong research proposal?
- Research proposals must be two to three pages in length (excluding citations).
 - While we do not have a formal template, please be sure to include the following items in your proposal:

○ clear articulation of research question	○ originality of proposed research (especially at the Ph.D. and post-doctoral levels)
○ alignment to Hub research areas	○ research methods
○ research topic background	○ policy relevance
 - Research proposals should outline the overall direction and theme of research over the course of the fellowship, focusing most tightly on the first paper produced in the fall term. Participants are expected to produce 2 – 3 papers depending on the length of their fellowship. The first paper is expected to be aligned to and refine the proposal provided during the admissions process. Subsequent papers should be built on this research area but may also reflect new lines of inquiry based on learnings from the Hub. Please note that each paper is to

- be a distinct contribution with its own set of policy recommendations. Strong proposals articulate a clear central idea.
- Research proposals will be also evaluated on appropriateness given the academic and professional experience of the applicant.
 - Successful proposals will build on existing research/expertise and will be separate from ongoing research/dissertation work.
5. When can I expect a response to my application?
- You can expect to receive a response approximately 10 weeks following the application deadline.
6. Does the research proposal for the Digital Policy Hub require that the research be the same as what I am pursuing in my academic program? / Can the proposed research be in a different area than what I am focusing on in my academic program?
- **Re: Keeping same research focus(es):** Hub research can be aligned with the topic(s) your research focuses on in your current academic program. However, research produced for the Hub must be original and not resubmitted to your home institution for credit. Any instance of plagiarism will be taken seriously.
 - **Re: Diverting from current research focus(es):** Research outlined in your proposal does not need to be exactly aligned with what you focus on in your current academic program. However, your research proposal and your references must touch upon how you are a good candidate to pursue the new stream of research.
7. What administrative and supervisory support from my home academic institution is required?
- **Attend the Hub Supervisors' orientation meeting:** Ahead of the start of the fellowship term in the Fall, the Digital Policy Hub team will host an orientation meeting for Supervisors to provide an overview of the program, the supports in place for participants, as well as overall expectations for both fellows and supervisors. Supervisors should participate in this meeting to meet the Hub team, to ask questions, and to understand their roles and responsibilities.
 - **Research supervision and support:** Supervisors will be the primary source of research supervision and support through activities such as reviewing the Hub fellow's research project(s), providing guidance as to structure, content, and resources utilized for their research, and other activities as they see fit. This includes being familiar with the core research requirements for the fellows and helping make sure they successfully meet fellowship expectations.
 - **Administrative & funding support (students/candidates and post-doctoral Hub fellows):** Supervisors must be eligible to hold an account and accept tri-council funding at their academic institution and must agree to accept Mitacs funding to administer to the fellow. Supervisors also agree to serve as the institutional point of contact for the fellow, assisting them to navigate the systems at their own institution to access their funding.
 - **Direct Participation:** Supervisors will be invited to participate (unfunded) in Digital Policy events hosted by CIGI such as the end-of-term research conference, either in person or online.
 - **Time Commitment:** The time commitment expected by supervisors will largely be determined on a case-by-case basis and depend on the supervisor's external commitments.
 - **Note:** Please note that additional research supervision, mentorship, collaboration and feedback will be provided by the Hub team, cohort and CIGI fellows, as key features of the program.

8. Can I apply even though I am studying at an academic institution outside of Canada?
 - At this time, funding only allows for applicants based at a Canadian academic institution who already have legal status to work in Canada.
9. I currently work full time or part time. Can I still apply?
 - All Hub fellows will need to manage their time and commitments responsibly.
 - CIGI's expectation is that Ph.D. and post-doctoral fellows will be primarily focused on their research with the Hub while engaged as a Digital Policy Hub fellow.
 - Undergraduate and master's Hub fellows participate on a part time basis with the expectation that they are also engaged in coursework.
 - Participants may pursue outside part-time employment, as long as they are able to complete the requirements for both and engage fully in Hub activities.
 - If you are employed full-time, we encourage you to apply as a visiting fellow.

Funding and Amenities

1. Is the fellowship remunerated?
 - Funding for Digital Policy Hub fellowships is as follows:
 - o **Undergraduate:** \$23,000 per academic year (8 months).
 - o **Master's:** \$25,000 per academic year (8 months).
 - o **Doctoral:** \$52,000 per calendar year (12 months).
 - o **Post-Doctoral:** \$60,000 per calendar year (12 months).
 - o **Visiting Fellows:** At this time, visiting fellows must have full support from the organization or workplace they are affiliated with during their tenure at the Digital Policy Hub. CIGI does not provide funding for visiting fellows and there is no charge to participate.
2. How is funding dispersed?
 - Funding is considered a research grant that is provided by the Mitacs Accelerate program in partnership with CIGI.
 - Fellowship funding is dispersed in equal amounts each term to the Hub fellow supervisor's account at their respective academic institution. Supervisors then administer funds to the Hub fellow – the specificities of this final step vary based on institution.
 - Each academic institution has a designated Mitacs contact to help oversee these processes and to address any questions.
3. What amenities are offered?
 - For all fellows, shared office space with Wi-Fi access and parking is available at the [CIGI Campus](#).
 - **Please note:** The Hub fellow must be based within Canada, and a mix of in-person, hybrid and remote participation is possible to facilitate geographic diversity in the cohort. As there are benefits to in-person participation such as shared office space and meeting the cohort face to face, we strongly urge fellows within commuting distance to attend seminars and events onsite. All fellows will be required to travel to the [CIGI Campus](#) in Waterloo, Ontario, to participate in the end-of-term research conferences.
4. Are travel expenses covered by CIGI?

- CIGI will cover core expenses (travel and accommodation) for Hub fellows to attend the end-of-term research conferences held at the [CIGI Campus](#).
5. What housing/accommodations are offered?
 - All fellows are expected to arrange their own accommodations should they wish to live in Waterloo during their fellowship. There is no additional funding for local accommodation or living expenses beyond the fellowship remuneration levels listed above.
 6. Will I be provided with a CIGI/Hub email address?
 - Depending on a number of factors, Hub fellows may be given a CIGI email address to use during the duration of their fellowship. Fellows will have access to shared documents and CIGI will support access to research tools, as needed.
 7. What are the personal costs associated with the fellowship?
 - There are no tuition costs for Hub fellows to participate in the program and all fellowships are funded (with the exception of visiting fellows).
 - On-site amenities include shared office space, Wi-Fi and parking at the [CIGI Campus](#).

Program Structure

1. What is the structure of the program?
 - All fellows will meet (with the option to do so in person or virtually) at a joint core seminar held Tuesday afternoons (Eastern time), two hours in length, where they will share, compare and develop research (through presentations, etc.).
 - The seminars will also feature guest speakers who will discuss their research and field experience aligning with one or more of the Hub's core research areas, and who will host professional development sessions tailored to foster policymaking, analysis, and research mobilization skills.
 - In addition to participation in seminars and skills sessions, Hub fellows are expected to prepare research papers for publication during their tenure (one paper for every term/four-months of the fellowship), which will be made available on the Hub's virtual space.
 - All fellows take part in Digital Policy Hub research conferences held at the [CIGI Campus](#) where they present findings from their term papers in person. These conferences are open to the CIGI community, Hub fellow supervisors, and select external guests.
2. What are the program requirements?
 - Hub fellows must attend weekly seminars (either remotely or in person) and engage actively in discussion.
 - Hub fellows must also follow the research output expectations outlined in the term curriculum and onboarding processes. This includes:
 - o One research proposal per term
 - o One working paper per term
 - o Cohort member peer-review of working papers
 - o **Please note:** specificities on research output expectations based on fellowship tier (word/page count, style, etc.) are shared once the fellowship begins, and all works must adhere to CIGI's [Style Guide](#). The program offers opportunities to become familiar with the Style Guide with ample time for Hub fellows to plan for their

submissions (e.g., a Style Guide walkthrough with the organization's Publications team).

- Participants must communicate the roles and responsibilities of the program to their academic supervisor throughout the duration of their tenure at the Hub. These are included in the Supervisor's Terms of Reference document, found on [the Digital Policy Hub website](#).
- Participants must attend and present at the end-of-term research conferences held at the [CIGI Campus](#).
- Fellows are expected to support community building within their Hub cohort through active participation in discussions at seminars and in digital spaces such as the Hub Slack channel and LinkedIn group.

3. What is the time commitment for the program?

- All Hub fellows will need to manage their time and commitments responsibly.
- The time commitment does fluctuate throughout the course of the fellowship depending on deadlines and events. At minimum, there is a two-hour seminar each with required preparatory readings.
- Fellows are expected to be conducting independent work on their research throughout the term to complete their working papers on time, while meeting interim deadlines for drafts and peer reviews.
- For those who are pursuing a Hub fellowship in addition to active coursework, for example at the undergraduate or master's level, participation will typically involve approximately 20 hours per week.
- The expected time commitment is higher (approximately 30 hours per week) for doctoral and post-doctoral Hub fellows, for whom this should be their primary commitment.
- Specifics can be negotiated on a case-by-case basis, as applicable.
- Generally, the requirement of this fellowship is incompatible with full time employment unless the applicant is sponsored by their employer as a visiting fellow.

4. Are there teaching requirements for post-docs?

- No, there are no teaching requirements for any of the Hub fellowship tiers.

5. What networking opportunities are part of the fellowship?

- Networking opportunities include active community-building within the cohort through events hosted by CIGI and the Digital Policy Hub team; peer review from experts within the CIGI community; access to the private LinkedIn Hub fellows' group, to connect with past, present and future Hub fellows; and more.

6. Is the Hub program active during the summer months?

- The Digital Policy Hub will have limited programming during the summer months (May–August). This is to allow typical travel/vacation taken during this time for CIGI staff and Hub fellows, and in anticipation of limited availability of guest speakers. Working papers are still due at the end of August for those with fellowships that remain active during the summer months, and we expect fellows to stay on top of their research while seminars are paused.
- The program may still offer periodic special sessions, depending on guest speaker availability.
- Hub fellows are free to arrange optional drop-in sessions with the cohort should that be of interest.

Duration of Program

1. What is the duration of a Digital Policy Hub fellowship?
 - The Hub will operate and host fellowships year-round. While the length of fellowship can be negotiated, the general length of each fellowship is as follows:
 - o **Undergraduate:** 8 months (academic year).
 - o **Master's:** 8 months (academic year).
 - o **Doctoral:** 12 months (full calendar year).
 - o **Post-Doctoral:** 12 months (full calendar year).
 - o **Visiting Fellows:** To be determined on a case-by-case basis, generally aligned to the four-month terms of the academic calendar.

2. How many days, if at all, am I expected to be at the Hub in person?
 - All fellows will meet (with the option to do so in person or virtually) at a joint weekly seminar, two hours in length, with additional opportunities to engage and connect.
 - Participation in the Hub may be in person, hybrid or virtual; this will be determined on a case-by-case basis.
 - As there are benefits to in person participation such as shared office space and meeting your cohort face to face, we strongly urge fellows within commuting distance to attend seminars and events onsite.

Hub Virtual Space

1. What is the Hub's website?
 - The Digital Policy Hub website is: www.cigionline.org/digital-policy-hub/.

Collaboration with the Hub

1. How can we partner with the Hub?
 - For all Hub-related inquiries, including partnerships, please contact the Digital Policy Hub team at digitalhubinquiries@cigionline.org.

The latest information on the Digital Policy Hub program will be regularly posted to [our website](#). The Digital Policy Hub team can be contacted at digitalhubinquiries@cigionline.org.