

DSI Fellowships

Postdoctoral and Doctoral Student
Fellowships, Round 5

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Today's Infosession

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About the Data Sciences Institute



What is the Data Sciences Institute (DSI)?

A multi-divisional, tri-campus, multidisciplinary hub for data science activity at the University of Toronto.

Goal: To accelerate the impact of data sciences across disciplines to address pressing societal questions and drive positive social change.



Collaborative Research Teams & Supports

Catalyze new forms of collaboration by funding partnerships that bring methodologists and domain experts together at the inception of projects in collaborative research teams (CRTs).

Supports

- Catalyst Grant
- Critical Investigation of Data Science Grant
- Computational and Quantitative Social Sciences Grant
- Data Access Grant
- Research Software Development Support Program
- Emergent Data Sciences Program
- Postdoctoral Fellowships
- Doctoral Student Fellowships
- SUDS



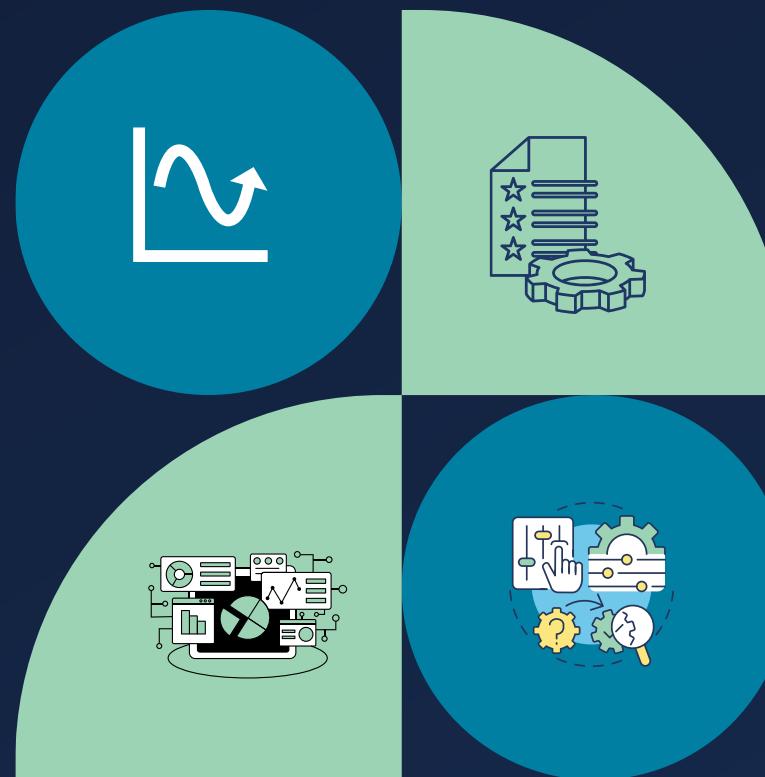
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Data Science Pillars

Concentrations in data science at the University of Toronto where we can have significant impact and can be international leaders

Predictive
Analytics & AI



Translation:
Visualization, Data
Communication,
and Policy

Heterogeneous
Data: Tools and
Feature Engineering

Causal Discovery
and Analysis

DSI Fellowship Overview

DSI Fellowships support multi/interdisciplinary training and collaborative research in data sciences that include faculty from the University of Toronto and researchers from DSI external funding partner institutions. To be considered for a Fellowship, applicants must pursue a research project that has a data sciences focus, through the development of novel methodology or the innovative application of existing approaches.

Postdoctoral Fellowship:

Value: \$63,000/year + up to \$7,000 in benefits.

Duration: 1 year.

Doctoral Student Fellowship:

Value: \$25,000/year.

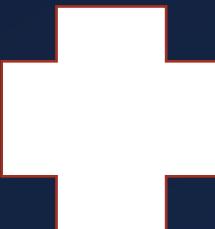
Duration: Up to three years.

Fellows can access \$1,500 CAD/year (September to August) to reimburse conference, workshop, or training course fees; travel by air, train, bus, or car; and accommodation.



Alignment with Program

Applicants must pursue a research project that has a **data sciences focus, through the development of novel methodology or the innovative application of existing approaches, to address major societal issues.**



Applicants identify **at least two faculty members from complementary disciplinary backgrounds** to serve as co-supervisors, who together can supervise the different multidisciplinary aspects of the research project. Co-supervisors can be drawn from the same academic unit, as long as they represent different disciplines.

The DSI is strongly committed to diversity within its community and especially welcomes applications from racialized persons / persons of colour, women, Indigenous / Aboriginal People of North America, persons with disabilities, LGBTQ2S+ persons, and others who may contribute to the further diversification of ideas.

Eligibility

Applicants

- Open to both domestic and international applicants. Successful international candidates must meet all Canadian immigration requirements.
- Doctoral Student Fellowship candidates must be in the second year of a University of Toronto PhD program at the time of application and be able to start the fellowship in September 2026.
- Postdoctoral Fellowship candidates must be able to start their fellowship between May and December 2026.
- DSI Fellows cannot concurrently hold another major fellowship.

Supervisors

- **Budgetary appointment** at U of T or at a DSI Funding Partner: For U of T, budgetary appointments are continuing, full-time academic appointments with salary commitments from a U of T academic unit.
- U of T supervisors must be Members of the School of Graduate Studies and be eligible Principal Investigators, according to U of T PI eligibility criteria.
- External funding partner supervisors must be appointed as a Principal Investigator and be eligible to hold tri-council funding at their institution and be Members of the School of Graduate Studies. Evidence that each supervisor has held or applied for tri-agency and external grants in the past 3 years is required.

Research Partner Institutes: Baycrest, The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital, The Hospital for Sick Children, Lunenfeld-Tanenbaum Research Institute, Ontario Institute for Cancer Research, Unity Health Toronto, University Health Network, and Women's College Hospital.



Application Sections

Applicants

- Title (project or thesis title)
- Applicant and co-supervisor information
- Candidate Statement (500 words)
 - Suitability
 - Training goals
- Project Description (1200 words)
 - Alignment
 - Objectives
 - Impact
- EDI Statement (500 words)
 - Integration of EDI into research
 - Social outcomes and/or impact
 - Promotion of EDI in research environments
- CVs for applicant and co-supervisors
- Name and email for one referee to provide a letter of reference

Supervisors

- Applicant Potential (250 words)
- Research & Training (250 words)
 - Expertise and contributions to the **development of novel statistical or computational tools, or the innovative use of existing methods, for data science applications and their application.**

Referees

- Letter of Reference

Demographic Surveys

- Surveys by team member as required.



Adjudication: Administrative Review

- Applications will be processed by the competition team upon submission. Late proposals will not be accepted.
- Referees and supervisors will be notified to submit their components.
- After the referee/supervisor deadline, proposals will undergo an initial review.



Administrative Review

- All candidate components complete.
- Letter of reference and supervisor form submitted.
- The candidate and all listed supervisors satisfy all eligibility criteria.
- All CVs have been submitted.

Alignment

- Proposal presents a novel or innovative solution to a data sciences problem. Proposals that are not aligned with the competition will not be sent out for scientific review.

Adjudication: Scientific Review

Applications will be assessed by a selection committee made up of researchers from the data sciences community using the following criteria.



- The extent to which the training and project are multidisciplinary.
- The extent to which the training and project have thoughtfully considered EDI in terms of impact.
- Alignment to the DSI mandate including thematic areas if applicable.
- Strong research record of accomplishment and future potential.

Important Dates

January 23, 2026: Application portal will close at 23:59 ET.

January 30, 2026: Supervisor Form and Letter of Reference portals will close at 23:59 ET. Outstanding demographic surveys due.

May 2026: Notification to applicants and supervisors.

September 2026-on: Fellowships begin.



Doctoral Student Fellowship Examples



Oreoluwa Kolade

Thesis Topic: Development of Predictive Models to Optimize Critical Quality Attributes of Mesenchymal Stromal Cells by Manipulating Critical Process Parameters and Donor Heterogeneity

Supervisors: Julie Audet, University of Toronto, Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering, Institute of Biomedical Engineering; Sowmya Viswanathan, University Health Network, Krembil Research Institute



Aarya Patil

Thesis Topic: Decoding the Evolutionary History of the Milky Way Galaxy

Supervisors: Jo Bovy, University of Toronto, Faculty of Arts & Science, David A. Dunlap Department of Astronomy and Astrophysics; Gwendolyn Eadie, University of Toronto, Faculty of Arts & Science, Dunlap Department of Astronomy and Astrophysics



David Veitch

Thesis Topic: Investigating Dynamic Functional Connectivity Networks of the Brain via Nonstationary Time Series Analysis

Supervisors: Zhou Zhou, University of Toronto, Faculty of Arts & Science, Department of Statistical Sciences; Jun Young Park, University of Toronto, Faculty of Arts & Science, Department of Statistical Sciences

Postdoctoral Fellowship Examples



Asma Ahmed

Project Title: Preterm birth, parental socioeconomic status, and long-term educational and economic outcomes: A novel application of multi-state modeling and causal inference methods on a national longitudinal cohort over 34 years

Supervisors: Petros Pechlivanoglou, The Hospital for Sick Children, Child Health Evaluative Sciences Labs; Eleanor Pullenayegum, The Hospital for Sick Children, Child Health Evaluative Sciences Labs



Madeleine Bonsma-Fisher

Project Title: Equitable prioritization of active transportation infrastructure in Canadian cities

Supervisors: Shoshanna Saxe, University of Toronto, Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering, Department of Civil & Mineral Engineering; Timothy Chan, University of Toronto, Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering, Department of Mechanical & Industrial Engineering



Orhan Kibrisli

Project Title: Machine Learning Accelerated High Throughput Synthesis of Novel Energy Storage Materials for Li-ion Batteries

Supervisors: Oleksandr Voznyy, University of Toronto, University of Toronto Scarborough, Department of Physical & Environmental Sciences; Gisele Azimi, University of Toronto, Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering, Department of Chemical Engineering and Applied Chemistry

F.A.Q.

What areas of research are a good fit for the position?

Research can be from any area—social sciences, humanities, life and physical sciences. Research can include any aspect of basic, applied, or clinical research.

Please define what data sciences encompasses

With increasingly larger and more complex data comes the challenge of **collecting, manipulating, storing, visualizing and extracting information from the data, in reproducible, fair, and ethical ways.**

What should research goals be focused on for this application specifically?

Proposed research projects should have a data sciences focus, through the development of novel methodology or the innovative application of existing approaches, to address major societal issues.

What makes a strong candidate?

Applicants will need to demonstrate academic excellence and high potential for success in their chosen fields (e.g., grades, awards, conference presentations, publications).

Should applicants already have strong background in data science, or will strong computational skills and research potential suffice?

This depends on the proposed project and research environment. The data science skills of the applicant should align well with the proposed project.



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F.A.Q.

Will you fund candidates who have completed their degree in another country?

We welcome applicants with degrees from both Canada and other countries.

Should my current thesis supervisor be one of my application's co-supervisors?

Yes. Typically, the expectation is that you are seeking out a data scientist to serve as a co-supervisor to complement your current supervisor's area of expertise.

Can my thesis supervisor, PDF supervisor, or a co-supervisor on my application be my referee?

No. Current supervisors cannot act as referees for this competition.

Do you have examples of previously funded research?

We do not have copies of the applications, but we have funded research in multiple disciplines and applied areas. Please check out our website under "Community."

Does the applicant follow up for the reference?

Applicants should notify their referee of the deadline and supply the structured reference form for their referee to fill out. The DSI will send the request to referees early during the week of January 26.



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F.A.Q.

I am a direct entry Ph.D. in my first year. Can I apply for a Doctoral Student Fellowship?

Yes. Students reclassifying to a Ph.D. may apply; however, confirmation of registration in a Ph.D. program is required before commencing the fellowship.

I am entering Year 4+ of my graduate degree program. Am I eligible to apply?

The duration of funding for successful post-year 3 applications may be determined by supervisors and program eligibility criteria. Please talk to your graduate unit about this award and whether you are eligible.

To what extent should proposals emphasize alignment with multiple methodological pillars versus focusing deeply on one?

It depends on the project, but the main determination for selecting any pillar is that your project clearly “moves the needle” in methodology within that pillar.

If my proposal is missing any components, can I submit after the deadline.

These competitions receive a high volume of applications and consequently we cannot keep proposals with missing or ineligible components viable.

I currently hold a fellowship. How do I know if it counts as a “major fellowship” that precludes me from being eligible?

Major Fellowships include all major Tri-Council awards, including Vanier, and any other award \$25,000+.



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THANK YOU!

✉ Send us your questions
awards.dsi@utoronto.ca

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<https://datasciences.utoronto.ca/mailinglist>

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