



Atkinson Postdoctoral Fellowships in Sustainability Request for Proposals

The [Atkinson Center for a Sustainable Future \(ACSF\)](#) seeks outstanding, creative, and highly motivated individuals to work with Cornell faculty in collaboration with external parties to address pressing world needs through discovery and scholarship and to implement sustainable solutions. Atkinson postdocs will play a key role in the implementation of the Atkinson Center's strategic plan.

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Program Objectives

- Stimulate original cross-disciplinary research and development of sustainable solutions that address the world's most pressing problems in [six focus areas](#): sustainable agriculture and food systems, energy transitions, one health, sustainable communities, new materials, and computational sustainability (see [Strategic Plan](#)).
- Develop and deepen connections with external parties to speed the creation and delivery of viable sustainability solutions.
- Build a core of leaders capable of creating effective, workable approaches to the most serious sustainability questions.

Program Features

1. Research projects must align with at least one of the Atkinson Center's six focus areas.
2. The postdoctoral candidate must have completed a PhD in a relevant field by the start of the fellowship. We welcome applications from any scholarly field, including life and physical sciences, social sciences, engineering, business, and the humanities. The fellowships carry a salary of \$60,000 per year, full Cornell University employee benefits, and \$15,000 per year for research-related expenses.
3. Each fellow will have two advisers, a lead adviser from Cornell and a collaborating adviser from an external *non-university* organization. The Cornell adviser must be an [ACSF faculty fellow](#) with a tenure track or tenured position at Cornell. The Cornell adviser is responsible for the postdoc's programmatic and professional progress and for communications with ACSF and with the external adviser. The postdoc's "home" will be in the department of the Cornell adviser. The postdoctoral appointment and related financial transactions will be handled by the adviser's department. The collaborating adviser must be from an external *non-university* organization that will add value to the proposed research and leverage the project for impact.



4. There are multiple ways that an applicant can connect with proposed lead Cornell and external advisers:
 - Faculty at Cornell may seek applicants through their usual networks and reach potential applicants or collaborating organizations directly.
 - Applicants may identify a potential Cornell adviser by searching the [fellows list](#) on the ACSF website for faculty engaged in relevant focus areas.
 - External advisers can be from business, industry, nongovernment or civil society organizations (NGOs and CSOs), foundations, or government. Potential external advisers should be discussed by the applicant and the lead adviser before being invited to participate.
5. The fellowship term is two years. The second year is contingent on performance and on mutual agreement between the fellow and adviser.
6. Postdoctoral fellows can spend variable portions of their fellowship period in residence, with external collaborators, in other relevant facilities, or in the field as dictated by their research.
7. Two to four fellows will be chosen each year, so that at any given time, there will be four to eight fellows in the program.
8. Applicants will be notified of decisions in November 2016. The start date for new fellows will ideally be between January and August 2017, but is flexible based on the agreement of the adviser and ACSF.
9. All fellows will have access to [Cornell's Office of Postdoctoral Studies](#), which provides career services, including CV and resume writing and preparing for interviews, workshops designed specifically for postdocs including a postdoc leadership program, and social activities.

Application Timetable and Process

August 19, 2016	Letter of Intent due
October 6, 2016	Full application due
November 30, 2016	Applicants notified
January 2017	Fellowship can begin

Letter of Intent (LOI)

A letter of intent (maximum two pages) coauthored by the applicant and the Cornell lead adviser is *strongly recommended*. The LOI is due no later than 11:59 p.m. EST on August 19. A signed letter should be sent by email to acsfpostdoc@cornell.edu as a pdf file named: ApplicantLastName-LOI.pdf

The letter should identify the research focus area(s), one or more potential Cornell advisors, and at least a preliminary identification of one or more potential external advisers, and give a brief outline of the project, and other collaborating ACSF faculty fellows do not need to be identified at this point. Final choice of an external adviser is not expected until the full proposal. The letter must include contact details for the applicant and Cornell adviser and the applicant's current university or other affiliation and position.

The LOI process allows time for submitting teams to develop their ideas, work with external parties, and discuss details with ACSF leadership team members before the full application is due. Such discussions are highly recommended prior to submitting the full application.



Full Application

Applications must be submitted online no later than **11:59 p.m. EST on Thursday, October 6, 2016**.

Instructions for submission will be available online in August 2016 at <http://www.acsf.cornell.edu/postdoc>

A complete application will include the following:

1) **ONE PDF file** including:

- **Cover letter**

The cover letter (maximum two pages) should give a short summary of the applicant's PhD research and career goals, explaining how the postdoctoral training will enhance his or her career in sustainability research.

- **Proposal**

The proposal (maximum five pages) must address problems, challenges, or opportunities in one or more of the six focus areas outlined in ACSF's strategic plan. The proposal must identify the primary focus area. The proposal should include a clear statement of objectives and the significance and impact of the proposed research. The proposal must also include a summary of the approach, methods, and metrics by which progress of the research will be evaluated. Finally, the proposal must also outline one or more potential paths by which the research results could become incorporated in a sustainability solution, e.g., influence on natural resource management by government, the private sector, or civil society organizations.

- **Curriculum Vitae**

- **Support letters**

Two letters of support - from the Cornell adviser and the collaborating external adviser (no more than two pages per letter) should discuss the nature and purpose of the external collaboration, the potential for growth of the scope of and/or participants in the collaboration, the degree of interaction with the applicant in developing the proposal, and comments on the expected impacts of the project if successful, including potential paths to developing follow-on funding.

2) **Arrange for Letters of Recommendation**

Applicants should arrange for up to three letters of recommendation to be submitted. These letters should be submitted online.

The proposal and all letters of recommendation must be received by the Atkinson Center no later than **11:59 p.m. EST on Thursday, October 6, 2016**.

Selection Criteria

The primary factors in making selections will be intellectual merit, creativity, originality, the feasibility of the project, the significance of the challenge being addressed, and expected outcomes of the work, including engagement with external parties to achieve impact, and how scalable any impacts might be. We will also consider the qualifications and accomplishments of the applicant and the potential for the applicant's intellectual and professional growth. Decisions will be announced in November 30, 2016.