

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 to address pressing world needs through discovery and scholarship and to implement sustainable solutions in collaboration with external partners. 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 partners to speed the creation and delivery of viable 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 secondary 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 secondary 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 secondary 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 secondary 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 2015. The start date for new fellows will ideally be between January and August 2016, 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 21, 2015	Letter of Intent due
October 8, 2015	Full application due
November 30, 2015	Applicants notified
January 2016	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 21. A signed letter should be sent by email to acsf-postdoc@cornell.edu as a pdf file named: ApplicantLastName-LOI.pdf

The letter should identify the research focus area(s) and give a brief outline of the project. External collaborators and other collaborating ACSF faculty fellows do not need to be identified at this point. The candidate is expected to find an appropriate external adviser for the full proposal, but it is not necessary for the LOI. 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 partners, 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

The full application must be submitted [online \(www.acsf.cornell.edu/postdoc\)](http://www.acsf.cornell.edu/postdoc) as a **single pdf file** no later than 11:59 p.m. EST on October 8. The application must include: (i) cover letter from the applicant, (ii) proposal, (iii) CV, and (iv) letters from both the Cornell lead adviser and the secondary external adviser.

- 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.
- 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.
- The letters from the proposed lead Cornell adviser and secondary 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.

Letters of Recommendation

Applicants should arrange for up to three letters of recommendation to be submitted. These letters should be sent directly to acsf-postdoc@cornell.edu as pdf files named: ApplicantLastName-REF.pdf

The proposal and all letters of recommendation must be received by the Atkinson Center no later than 11:59 p.m. EST on October 8, 2015.

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 scalability and engagement with external partners to achieve impact. 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 2015.