

Request for Proposals

Atkinson Postdoctoral Fellowships in Sustainability

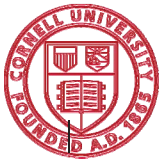
The [Atkinson Center for a Sustainable Future \(ACSF\)](#) seeks outstanding, creative, and highly motivated individuals to work with Cornell faculty to address pressing world needs through discovery and scholarship and to implement sustainable solutions in collaboration with external partners. Awardees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

Program Objectives

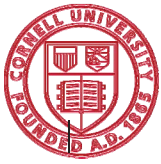
- Stimulate original cross-disciplinary research and development of sustainable solutions that address the world's most pressing problems in [six Center focus areas](#): sustainable agriculture and food systems, energy transitions, one health, sustainable communities, new materials, and computational sustainability. ([Strategic Plan, page 6](#))
- Develop and deepen connections with external partners to speed the creation and delivery of viable solutions.
- Build a corps of leaders capable of creating effective, workable approaches to the most serious sustainability questions.

Program Features

1. The program is offered through the Atkinson Center at Cornell University. Research projects must align with at least one of the six broad focus areas identified in ACSF's strategic plan.
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 successful scholars will be called Atkinson Postdoctoral Fellows. 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. The candidate will work with a lead Cornell faculty, selected from the Center's 360+ Faculty Fellows with research interests in the six core areas.



4. The fellowship term is two years. The second year is contingent on performance and on mutual agreement of the fellow and adviser.
5. 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. The office coordinates with other units at Cornell, such as the Center for Teaching Excellence and the Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching, and Learning to provide postdoctoral fellows with the opportunity to enhance their professional development and obtain certificates of teaching excellence.
6. Each fellow will have two advisers, a lead adviser from Cornell and another secondary adviser from an external organization. The Cornell adviser must be an ACSF Faculty Fellow with a tenure track or tenured position at Cornell. The lead 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 should be from an external organization that can add value to the proposed research, or leverage the project for impact.
7. 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 can contact a proposed Cornell adviser to express interest in working together. To be sure that the faculty member is appropriate for the applicant's interest in a particular focus area, the applicant can use the ACSF website to search for [Faculty Fellows](#), using the strategic focus area as a keyword in the search. Applicants can then directly contact the faculty member whose research is of interest.
 - 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.
8. The 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.
9. 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.
10. Applicants will be notified of decisions by mid-November 2014. The start date for new fellows could begin as soon as January 2015, but is flexible based on the agreement of the adviser and ACSF.



Application Timetable & Process

August 22, 2014	Letter of Intent due
October 13, 2014	Full application due
November 17, 2014	Applicants notified
January 2015	Fellowship can begin

Letter of Intent (LOI)

A letter of intent (no more than two pages) coauthored by the prospective Cornell lead adviser and the applicant is highly recommended. The LOI is due no later than August 22, 2014. A pdf of the signed letter should be sent by email to acsf-postdoc@cornell.edu.

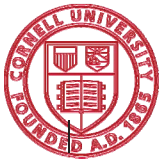
The letter should identify the research focus area(s) and give a brief outline of the project idea. External collaborators and other collaborating ACSF Faculty Fellows do not need to be identified at this point. The candidate is expected to find an appropriate external adviser for the full proposal,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

The 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 application must include a cover letter from the applicant, a proposal, complete CV, three letters of recommendation, and letters from both the Cornell lead adviser and the secondary external adviser. This package of materials must be received by ACSF no later than October 13, 2014, at acsf-postdoc@cornell.edu.

- The cover letter (no more than 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 science.
- The proposal (no more than 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 a primary focus area. It 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 prospective lead Cornell adviser and secondary external adviser (no more than two pages) 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 if successful, including potential paths to developing follow-on funding for the project.

Selection Criteria

The primary factors in making selections will be: intellectual merit, creativity, originality, broader impacts, the feasibility of the project, the expected outcomes of the work (significance, scalability, engagement with external partners to achieve impact, etc.), the qualifications and accomplishments of the applicant, and potential for the applicant's intellectual and professional growth.