



Careers begin with the
**Industrial R&D
Fellowships
Program**

Ready to embark on a rewarding career?

As a new Ph.D. graduate, finding employment in R&D can be a challenge, especially when you have limited experience in industry. That's why the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) created the Industrial R&D Fellowships (IRDF) program. It brings Canadian industry and recent Ph.D. graduates together, giving young researchers a way to gain valuable experience and offering companies a financial incentive to hire them.

How the program works

An eligible company applies to NSERC, proposing an R&D project with you as the researcher. If NSERC approves the project and you as the right candidate for it, we will pay the company \$30,000 per year toward your salary for up to two years. The company must top up that salary by \$10,000 or more. It's up to you to negotiate the extent of the company top-up and the employee benefits you will receive. With the agreement signed and sealed, you work on the proposed R&D while the company has up to two years to assess you as a potential full-time employee.

You can hold the fellowship at the Canadian-based research facilities of any Canadian private-sector company that NSERC has approved for participation in the IRDF program.

Who can be nominated for a fellowship?

To be nominated, you must be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident of Canada at the time of the nomination. You must hold a doctoral degree in a discipline of science or engineering that NSERC supports, or you must expect to have completed all the requirements for such a degree by the proposed date of appointment. Finally, you must not have been employed in an R&D position in Canadian industry since receiving your Ph.D.

You have to be nominated by a company that meets NSERC's eligibility criteria.

How does a company become eligible?

A company must apply to NSERC, verifying that it is incorporated in Canada, is financially viable, is engaged in natural sciences or engineering R&D, has its own research facilities and can apply the results of the research. If a company would like to hire you as an IRDF but has not yet submitted an eligibility request to NSERC, you have everything to gain by encouraging that company to apply.

Also eligible are organizations that represent a group of Canadian enterprises or producers (such as agricultural or fishing cooperatives, or trade associations), consulting firms, engineering firms and other enterprises that do not have production facilities. These types of organizations must demonstrate their ability to fund and apply the research through a Canadian company or association.

Approximately 500 companies and other organizations have been declared eligible to participate in the IRDF program. You can start by approaching those listed at www.nserc.gc.ca/companies.

What researchers say about the program

"The IRDF program allowed me to gain experience in an industrial environment, have a higher salary than an academic postdoc and see the technology developed during the program come to fruition as something practical and marketable."

Robert A. Cocciardi, Ph.D., Thermal-Lube Inc.

"As an NSERC Industrial R&D Fellow... I had the freedom to explore new ideas and conduct original research. At the same time, I learned how to convert research ideas into practical, industry-strength technologies."

Jianxiang Dong, Ph.D., IMDS Software

"I benefited from this NSERC program from 1995 to 1997, conducting R&D for Imperial Oil. That opportunity, my first in industry, launched me into a very interesting career. I am now celebrating my 10-year anniversary at the same company where I have enjoyed working on a variety of challenging oil sands research projects."

Michelle Young, Ph.D., Imperial Oil Resources

Views from industry

"The IRDF program gave us the opportunity to explore a discovery program without committing the internal resources that were critical to our current R&D agenda. The program helped us sustain our drug discovery pipeline and remain competitive while being able to train and evaluate potential future employees in a biotechnology environment."

Alain Boudreault, Senior Scientist, Aegera Therapeutics Inc.

"The NSERC IRDF program is excellent. Not only does it help small and start-up high-tech companies survive the turbulence and grow big, it also helps new Ph.D.'s gain relevant experience. This program provides them with a smooth transition from the theoretical academic world into the practical industrial world."

Dr. Chenglin Xu, R&D Director, Apollo Photonics Inc.

How and when to apply

An eligible company must prove it meets the eligibility criteria, describe the proposed research and submit the candidate's nomination. The application process is described fully on the NSERC Web site.

NSERC accepts applications at any time for the IRDF program and will inform companies of the results within six weeks of receiving an application, if all the required information is provided.

Contact

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