

Business Strategy Internship Toolkit: Information for program participants

2020



Collaboration
Innovation
Integrity
Quality
Respect



MITACS

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Welcome

On behalf of Mitacs and the Business Strategy Internship team, welcome to the program!

The following toolkit exists to provide answers to many of the questions that participants may have throughout the program. These guidelines should be your first stop when seeking information about the program.

Mitacs is committed to your success in the program and to providing a beneficial and rewarding experience to all participants. Thank you for your participation and your commitment to supporting research in Canada.

Acknowledgements

The Business Strategy Internship is made possible thanks to the Government of Canada and supporting government offices. A special thank you goes out to our [Full, Associate and Honourary academic partners](#) for their input and support.



Program overview

In partnership with Canadian business schools, Mitacs is launching the **Business Strategy Internship (BSI)** program. BSI is a 16-week internship program that will provide undergraduate and graduate students with the opportunity to develop a strategic project in partnership with a small or medium sized company in Canada. The award will provide \$10,000 to interested students who develop a project designed to help the SME restore or modify business operations in the new economic environment. Throughout the project, Mitacs provides online professional development opportunities to students. This exposure to a business internship at a Canadian SME is an effective means of complementing academic programming to build the practical skills needed for Canada's future economy.

Program features

BSI is a student-led program; the student will work with the host company to design a 16-week project addressing one or more business strategy components (i.e., marketing, operations, finance, etc.) dependent on the needs of the SME.

Partner companies will contribute \$2,500 along with the academic institution contribution of \$2,500 for a total award of \$10,000, which can be used for a student stipend. Participating member institutions will be allotted a select number of internship units according to their Mitacs membership status (Full, Associate, Honorary). Institutions will need to determine how many projects they can financially support under the funding structure.

Projects will be submitted to the academic institution and reviewed and approved by the institution prior to submission to Mitacs. The approved projects will be reviewed by Mitacs to confirm eligibility and completeness.

Each project will require oversight from a supervisor at the partner organization and an academic supervisor or a point person appointed by the institution to oversee the work and the student. Students are expected to meet weekly with their supervisors to report on the progress of their project. Virtual meetings are acceptable.

Both students and supervisors will be required to complete a Mitacs exit survey at the end of the project to report on the skills developed and provide feedback on their program experience. Students will also submit a Final report summarizing the work that was completed to their academic supervisor during the last week of the award term.

As part of the program, students will have access to Mitacs's online e-campus, EDGE. The training courses available have been designed to supplement the hands-on learning that students will experience over the course of their project.

Program objectives

The BSI program aims to:

- Provide students with the opportunity to apply business concepts and theories to real-world decision-making
- Provide support to SMEs who need additional assistance in modifying their business operations to adapt to the new economic reality



- Build students' skills (communication, problem solving, innovation, resilience, managing complexity, navigating change, business continuity planning, etc.) and apply their education through an experiential learning opportunity
- Provide new and broadened training and career opportunities for students by expanding their network with faculty, businesses, and community
- Build and strength connections and collaborations between companies and academic institutions

Program outcomes

As a result of participation in this program, Mitacs expects the following outcomes:

- Enhanced skills amongst participating interns
- Enhanced plan for company continuation and survival following the COVID-19 crisis
- Identification of new connections, potential for further collaboration, or project extension through other Mitacs programming

Program application review

The student application will be reviewed twice: first, by the academic institution for quality and adherence to program objectives in accordance with the criteria found below, followed by a Mitacs review for eligibility and completeness.

The review criteria for academic institution used are as follows:

- **Benefit to the student:** Is there potential benefit to the student by participating in the project with regards to skills development or new career opportunities?
- **Project design and rationale:** Is the project design clearly presented? Are the project activities clearly articulated and reasonable for the timeframe specified?
- **Project significance and impact:** Are the planned activities and final deliverables clearly linked to company needs? Is the significance and impact to the company clearly presented?
- **Development of new skills and knowledge:** Is the proposal tied to new skills development for the student?
- **Interaction and final deliverable:** Are the interactions with the academic supervisor and company supervisor clearly articulated and appropriate? Are the final deliverable and the potential for the utility of this project beyond the project term clearly explained?



Eligibility

Partner organizations must:

- Be a small to mid-sized Canadian company with less than 500 full-time employees
- Be a not-for-profit company with less than 500 full-time employees

Students must:

- Be a registered undergraduate or graduate student at a business school associated with a Canadian university
- Not be an active participant in another Mitacs program, or their current program must be on hold

Academic supervisors must:

- Be eligible to hold Tri-Council funding
- Be available for virtual or in-person meetings over the summer term and into the fall, where applicable

Academic institution must:

- Have a signed Mitacs funding agreement
- Be a Full, Associate, or Honourary Member

Program timeline

1. University Call for Student Applications

The call for project proposals will go out from partner academic institution according to their internal timelines. The academic institution will promote the call for proposals through their networks and ensure students, faculty and any SME networks have the appropriate information needed to support and submit a project proposal.

2. Adjudication by Academic Institution

Following this period, academic institutions will undertake a review of the submitted proposals to check for eligibility, completeness, and project quality. Once approved, academic institutions will submit their list of approved student projects including a sign-off letter from the Office of Research Services (ORS) or equivalent. Academic institutions will also notify the student applicants of their decision and send approved students a link so they can upload their project proposal into Mitacs's online Registration and Application Portal (RAP).

Once students have uploaded their project proposal, academic supervisors will also be electronically notified to sign into RAP to input their contact information and sign off on the project. Mitacs will review the uploaded project proposal for completeness and approve. Upon approval from Mitacs, students will receive an Outcome Letter notifying them of the approval. Once the financial contribution from both the university and the SME has been received at Mitacs, Mitacs will release \$10,000 in funding to the academic institution for each approved student, along with the official Award Letter.

3. Student projects underway

Students may start working on their project following the receipt of their Award Letter. Students and academic supervisors should meet weekly to discuss the project progress to ensure deliverables are met.



Mitacs will send out an Award Letter to the academic institution summarizing their approved Business Strategy Internships. There will be a Financial Report template included which academic institutions will need to complete and return to Mitacs.

4. Project completion and submission of final report and survey

Upon project completion, students will be required to submit a Final report and give a presentation to their academic supervisor outlining the project deliverables and outcomes. Students, academic supervisors, and partner company supervisors will be required to complete a Mitacs Exit survey. Mitacs will also receive a copy of the student's Final report.

HOW IT WORKS



Roles, responsibilities and expectations for program participants

Academic institutions: partner in program administration and program delivery

The partner academic institution is responsible for promoting the BSI program to its students and faculty and providing the appropriate documentation and information to interested applicants. The mechanisms of this will be left up to each individual institution.

The academic institution is responsible for:

- Providing \$2,500 in funding to contribute to the student stipend
- Putting out a call for project proposals to their student population and industry networks
- Reviewing submissions for quality and eligibility
- Submitting a list of approved student projects to Mitacs
- Providing the link to students for the Mitacs RAP
- Signing off on the project, through the ORS (or equivalent)
- Completing and returning the Financial Report included in the Awards Letter from Mitacs

Students: leaders of the project

The student is responsible for:

- Designing a 16-week strategic analysis project proposal in collaboration with the partner company
- Identifying an academic supervisor to oversee the project
- Creating an account by inputting their contact information into the Mitacs RAP and uploading their project proposal
- Inputting academic supervisor and company information into the RAP
- Signing off on the project
- Completing an Exit survey and a Final report outlining their project experience
- Creating an EDGE account to access Mitacs training courses

Academic supervisors: oversight and support

The academic supervisor is responsible for:

- Inputting their contact information on the Mitacs RAP once they receive the link through the student application
- Signing off on the student project
- Completing the Mitacs Exit survey following completion of the project

Partner companies: guidance and mentorship

The partner organization is responsible for:

- Providing \$2,500 in funding to contribute to the student stipend
- Inputting their contact information on the Mitacs RAP once they receive the link through the student application
- Signing off on the student project
- Working with the student to develop a project that responds to current business needs
- Completing the Mitacs Exit survey following completion of the project

Mitacs: program design and evaluation

Mitacs oversees the design, delivery, and monitoring of the BSI program.



Mitacs is responsible for:

- Invoicing the participating companies for their financial contribution to the project
- Releasing funding to the academic institution to be used for a student stipend
- Developing program delivery templates and tools for academic institution use
- Reviewing academic institution approved applications for eligibility and completeness
- Managing and administering courses through the Mitacs online learning platform, EDGE
- Performing quality audits on a random sample of approved student project proposals to ensure compliance with program criteria

Starting the program

Applications and adjudication

The academic institution will identify students and projects for this initiative on a rolling basis. Academic partners will collect and review all submissions prior to submitting their choices to Mitacs. Once approved, academic partners will work with Mitacs to release funds to the appropriate students as per the funding information section below.

Release of funds

At the start of the project, Mitacs will send \$10,000 to the home academic institution as a research grant in the academic supervisor's name. The academic supervisor will then release the funds to the student.

Documentation

Following the approval of the Business Strategy Internship, the student will receive an Outcome Letter from Mitacs confirming acceptance into the program.

The academic institution will receive an Awards Letter summarizing the projects and amounts and will need to complete a Financial Report and return it to Mitacs.

During the program

Program communications

Throughout the duration of the internship, ongoing communications and requests for evaluation will be managed by Mitacs.

Program evaluation and participant feedback

As program participants, students, academic supervisors, and partner company supervisors are required to participate in the ongoing evaluation of the program. The evaluation includes:

- An Exit survey (**students, academic supervisors, and companies**)
- A Final report (**students only**)
- Feedback surveys regarding training courses (**students only**)

Requests for feedback will be made via email and survey links. The input provided through these tools is invaluable for assessing the impact of the program, making improvements and ensuring the program's relevancy and usefulness for current and future participants.

Project cancellations



In rare circumstances, a participant may need to cancel their project. Mitacs must be informed of any cancellation. Please contact Mitacs as soon as possible to discuss the situation.

PARTICIPATION ACTIVITIES



At the end of the program

The end of the program is a time to acknowledge and celebrate the work completed and reflect on accomplishments and learnings for program participants. It is also an important time for Mitacs, as we gather exit surveys and feedback that will allow us to evaluate and further improve the BSI program. All students, company supervisors, and academic supervisors are expected to complete the program exit survey. Students are also required to complete a short Final report for Mitacs which captures additional qualitative information and feedback about their experiences.

General inquires and frequently asked questions

When should projects start?

Mitacs needs to receive funds from the partner organization and students may start working on their project following the receipt of their Award Letter.

Is it possible to have multiple students per proposal?

Each student should submit their own proposal. Academic supervisors can oversee more than one project as their schedule allows.

Should projects be submitted all at once or as they are approved?

It is up to the academic institution to decide the process for submitting to Mitacs.

Can academic supervisors supervise more than one project?

Yes, if the supervisor has enough time in their schedule to manage multiple internships, there is no limit to the number of internships they can support.

Can students do this program part-time?

The internship is 4-months (16 weeks) in duration but can be stretched over 6-months (24 weeks) to accommodate other responsibilities.

Program contacts

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns about the program, please contact the [Business Strategy Internship team](#) or your local [Business Development representative](#).

Who am I?	Why contact me?	Contact information
Your Mitacs Grant Management Specialist	Questions about funding, payments, invoicing, or evaluations	TBD by project after acceptance
Your academic supervisor		TBD by academic institution
Your company supervisor	Questions about the confidentiality of your work, publishing, which information can or cannot be shared with Mitacs, other participants, or training facilitators	TBD by company supervisor

Thank you for your interest in the Business Strategy Internship program!

