Carnegie Mellon University
Information Networking Institute

TECH FELLOWSHIP

STUDENT HANDBOOK

2024-25 ACADEMIC YEAR
INFORMATION NETWORKING INSTITUTE
COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING, CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY

TECH FELLOWS STUDENT HANDBOOK 2025

This handbook contains the most accurate information for INI students accepted to the TECH Fellowship for 2024-2025. If there is an inconsistency between the TECH Fellows Student Handbook and the INI Student Handbook, the policies in the INI Student Handbook will take precedence.

Please note that the information in this handbook may be amended at any time after initial publication. If major changes are made to the policies listed in this handbook, you will be notified.

Consult the version table to review post-publication edits made to this volume.

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I. WELCOME

WELCOME TO THE TECH FELLOWSHIP

On behalf of the Information Networking Institute (INI) faculty and staff, we are thrilled that you have chosen to join our inaugural cohort of Technical Entrepreneur Coaching Hub (TECH) Fellows. We look forward to working with you and cheering your future success as a technical entrepreneur.

As a TECH Fellow, you will pursue coursework and gain hands-on experience in the startup and venture capital industry. You will also be connected with various entrepreneurship resources at Carnegie Mellon, including programming at the Swartz Center for Entrepreneurship.

This TECH Fellows Student Handbook will provide you with guidelines and expectations as you progress through your fellowship.

Please familiarize yourself with the resources and policies outlined in this handbook. Reach out to the TECH Fellows team directly if you have any questions: tech-fellows@andrew.cmu.edu.

Again, welcome aboard!

TECH Co-Leads

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II. APPLICATION AND TIMELINE

ELIGIBILITY

For 2025 TECH Fellows Cohort, INI students enrolled in the MSIT-IS and MSMITE degree programs are eligible to apply for the TECH Fellowship.

Standard and Advanced study options are all eligible.

Spots are limited, and applicants must be selected for the Fellowship.

Once selected, you must be physically located: in Pittsburgh for Spring 2025; near your startup for a Summer 2025 internship; and in Silicon Valley for Fall 2025.

To remain eligible for the fellowship, you must:

- Maintain good academic standing, with core and cumulative GPAs of at least 3.0 or above;
- Abide by the Carnegie Mellon University Policy on Academic Integrity;
- Complete all TECH Fellow requirements; and
- Conduct yourself in a professional manner.

If you do not meet these criteria at any point during your degree program, you will lose the honorary title of TECH Fellow.

2024-25 TIMELINE

Fall 2024: Apply to be a TECH Fellow.

Spring 2025: Take the 6-unit elective course, 14-695: Technical Entrepreneurship.

Summer 2025: Intern at a startup or venture fund.

Fall 2025: If possible, continue working with your startup to fulfill your Practicum requirement (24-unit required core course).

SELECTION

After the application deadline, finalists will meet with the TECH Co-Leads in person. You will be selected by the TECH Admissions Committee and will be notified by early November.

III. PROGRAM DETAILS

REQUIREMENTS

There are three requirements for completing the TECH Fellowship:

1. Selection by the TECH Admissions Committee.

2. Successful completion of 14-695: Special Topics: Technical Entrepreneur Coaching Hub in the spring semester. If you are selected as a TECH Fellow you will be guaranteed a slot in the course.

3. Internship at a startup company or venture fund during the summer after taking 14-695: Special Topics: Technical Entrepreneur Coaching Hub. The internship must be reviewed and approved by the TECH Internship Committee, including TECH's Directors.

If you take a leave of absence or otherwise do not complete the required course or internship in the expected timeframe, you will be removed from the TECH Fellows cohort. You will be eligible to reapply to the TECH Fellowship in the future.

TECHNICAL ENTREPRENEUR COACHING HUB COURSE

Fellows must successfully complete 14-695: Special Topics: Technical Entrepreneur Coaching Hub. This is a 6-unit mini offered during Mini 3. The course will count towards your Program Electives.

INTERNSHIP

The TECH initiative will help TECH Fellows network and support you in finding the appropriate internship opportunities. However, it is your responsibility to secure your internship at a startup.

The definition of "startup company" is at the discretion of the TECH Internship Committee in approving appropriate internships. "Startup company" is intended to be a technology company that is at a stage prior to the company having the option to go public.

Internships must be approved as meeting the TECH Fellow criteria, before or in parallel with the standard INI internship approval process.

You are strongly encouraged to work with the TECH Internship Committee as early as possible to confirm that the company will meet the TECH Fellows criteria for a startup company. To request a TECH internship review, you will need to send an email to tech-fellows@andrew.cmu.edu with a link to your proposed internship company.

Once you have identified an appropriate internship and received an offer letter, you must submit the internship through the standard INI approval process on Canvas. The INI will review the offer letter to ensure the internship meets the standard departmental criteria for approval.

If there is a case where an internship opportunity does not meet the minimum INI requirements (e.g., standard number of hours worked) then you can petition for an exception, which will be handled according to standard INI practices. You will be notified if the internship is approved and registered for the INI Internship course.

For international students who need CPT for your visa, you will proceed through the standard process outlined in the INI Internship Canvas course. Tuition will be assessed for the 3-unit INI Internship course.

If you do not secure an appropriate internship, you will lose the honorary title of TECH Fellow.

PRACTICUM WITH STARTUP

Whenever possible, you will continue working with your startup for your Practicum project. The TECH Internship Committee will work with the startups offering TECH Fellows internships to define viable Practicum projects.

The Practicum will be the same course for TECH Fellows as other bicoastal students. However, the team size for Practicum will be smaller than a typical Practicum team. In these cases, you will also be part of a virtual TECH Fellows team. When appropriate, course assignments will be modified to reflect the commonalities in the students' experiences.

Not all startup companies may be able to support a Practicum project. If a your company is not able to participate, you will join another Practicum project and retain the honorary title.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the expectations and skills required to be a technical founder or technical leader in an entrepreneurial organization

- Students will model the impact of funding for a startup

- Students will explore the challenges in serving as a technical leader of a startup (or entrepreneurial organization), addressing issues such as:

  - o Scoping and executing prototypes in a resource-constrained environment

  - o Scoping and executing Minimum Viable Products in a resource-constrained environment

  - o Developing a cost-effective IP strategy for a startup

- Students will network with mentors from the startup and venture capital communities

BENEFITS

Upon the successful completion of the TECH Fellowship, you will:

- Be profiled on the INI site;

- Earn the privilege of listing yourself as a TECH Fellow;

- Gain access to a private network of startup mentors and advisors;

- Be invited back each cycle for networking events with other TECH Fellows, mentors and investors going forward; and

- Retain access to the mentor network and programming at the Swartz Center for Entrepreneurship at Carnegie Mellon.

IV. POLICIES

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

You must adhere to Carnegie Mellon University's policies on academic integrity and community standards. These policies, as well as the appeal process, can be found online at the links below.

You may be removed from the TECH Fellowship if you violate the academic integrity policy.

Review the CMU policies on Academic Integrity.

Review the Academic Integrity Appeal Process.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Fellows represent the best of Carnegie Mellon and you are expected to behave in a professional manner that reflects a proactive, entrepreneurial mindset. Startups typically feature a fast-paced environment in which creativity and communication are valued.

Professional conduct is especially important when working during your internship. You are a representative of CMU and the TECH Fellowship. We require that during your internship you:

- Are present and engaged during core working hours;

- Show up to meetings early or on-time;

- Notify others in advance if you are unable to attend meetings or will be out;

- Respond promptly to messages;

- Meet your deadlines;

- Proactively raise concerns if you are unable to meet a deadline;

- Use all the collaboration tools that your team does;

- Commit work to appropriate repositories on a daily basis; and

- Pitch in to solve problems as needed.

Failure to consistently demonstrate professional conduct will result in removal from the Fellows cohort and loss of the honorary title.