

Carnegie Mellon University
Information Networking Institute

TECH FELLOWSHIP

STUDENT HANDBOOK

2026-27 ACADEMIC YEAR
INFORMATION NETWORKING INSTITUTE
COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING, CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY

TECH FELLOWS STUDENT HANDBOOK 2026–27

This handbook contains the most accurate information for INI students accepted to the TECH Fellowship for 2026-2027. 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.

VERSION TABLE

Version	Date	Description of edits
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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 the Technical Entrepreneur Coaching Hub (TECH) Fellows. We look forward to working with you and cheering on 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 University (CMU), 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!

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II. APPLICATION AND TIMELINE

ELIGIBILITY

For 2027 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 2027 and in Silicon Valley for Fall 2027. If you are in the Advanced study option, you must also reside in Silicon Valley for Spring 2028.

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 CMU Policy on Academic Integrity
- Complete all TECH Fellow requirements
- 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.

2026-27 TIMELINE

Fall 2026: Apply to be a TECH Fellow. The deadline to apply is October 19, 2026.

Spring 2027: Take the 6-unit elective course, 14-695: Technical Entrepreneurship.

Summer 2027: Gain hands-on experience, preferably by interning at a startup or venture fund.

Fall 2027: Complete your Practicum requirement (24-unit course), with the possibility of continuing to work with your internship employer if they sponsor a Practicum project.

After the application deadline, finalists will meet with the TECH Co-Leads. 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. Gain hands-on technical entrepreneurship experience by the end of your third semester.

If you take a leave of absence or otherwise do not complete the required course or hands-on experience 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

You must successfully complete 14-695: Special Topics: Technical Entrepreneur Coaching Hub. This is a 6-unit mini offered during Mini 3 (first half of the Spring semester). The course will count towards your Program Electives.

HANDS-ON ENTREPRENEURSHIP EXPERIENCE

There are three ways to gain hands-on entrepreneurship experience to satisfy the TECH Fellowship:

1. Intern at a startup during the summer
2. Work with a startup or on an entrepreneurial project for Practicum
3. Propose your own path for hands-on technical entrepreneurship experience

INTERNING WITH A STARTUP FOR THE SUMMER

The TECH initiative will help you 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 by 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), 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 Curricular Professional Training (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

TECH Fellows who intern with a startup for the summer may continue to collaborate with the startup for Practicum. This can often be an incentive for a startup to take you as an intern. Not all startup companies may be able to support a Practicum project. If your company is not able to participate, you will join another Practicum project.

We often have startups sponsoring Practicum projects and working with one of them for Practicum is another opportunity to gain hands-on experience. While we cannot guarantee you a spot with a startup-sponsored project, we will take it into account when assigning students to projects.

PROPOSE YOUR OWN HANDS-ON ENTREPRENEURSHIP EXPERIENCE

Entrepreneurship is about taking initiative, so we provide the opportunity to define your own path. You need to submit a proposal to the TECH Co-Leads. A proposal could include:

- Leading the exploration of a startup idea with others
- Working with the faculty to develop a Practicum project to explore a startup idea
- Working with a mentor

Any proposal must:

- Include someone committed to serving as an advisor/mentor
- Clearly identify stakeholders and expected outcomes

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- You will demonstrate an understanding of the expectations and skills required to be a technical founder or technical leader in an entrepreneurial organization
- You will model the impact of funding for a startup
- You will explore the challenges in serving as a technical leader of a startup (or entrepreneurial organization), addressing issues such as:
 - Scoping and executing prototypes in a resource-constrained environment
 - Scoping and executing Minimum Viable Products in a resource-constrained environment
 - Developing a cost-effective IP strategy for a startup
- You 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
- Retain access to the mentor network and programming at the Swartz Center for Entrepreneurship at Carnegie Mellon
- 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
- Pitch in to solve problems as needed

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

IV. POLICIES

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

You must adhere to [Carnegie Mellon UniversityCMU'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.

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