# Apply for the Microsoft Research Asia PhD Fellowship

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Background

Now with even greater rewards and incentives, the Microsoft Research Asia Fellowship Program offers even more competitive benefits for the outstanding support and encouragement of your research opportunities and interests.

The Microsoft Research Asia Fellowship Program identifies the next generation of research leaders with a unique program that offers a combination of mentorship, research, networking, and academic opportunities to promising young candidates. Since its inception in 1999, 373 outstanding PhD students have been awarded the Microsoft Research Asia Fellowship honor.

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Mission

* To recognize and award outstanding junior PhD students in the Asia-Pacific region with an opportunity to cultivate their skills and knowledge in their respective fields
* To empower and encourage students majoring in computer science, electronic engineering, information science, and applied mathematics to maximize their potential to become future research leaders

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Award provisions

The Microsoft Research Asia Fellowship Program offers some of the industry’s most competitive incentives and rewards, including:

* Cash awards of US$10,000 distributed at one time, which can be used to support research initiatives and academic endeavors including, but not limited to, attending international research conference/events, and subsidizing paper and patent application fees
* Opportunities to attend the sixteenth Computing in the 21st Century Conference—one of the most prestigious academic conferences in computer science in the Asia-Pacific region
* Opportunities for optional three-month internships at Microsoft Research Asia’s state-of-the-art R&D facility in Beijing—the largest Microsoft facility outside of the United States
* Opportunities for intensive and individualized mentorship programs with a dedicated senior researcher to help facilitate research until graduation
* An honorary plaque, to be presented at a formal recognition ceremony

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Eligibility

Enrollment is highly competitive and selective, reflecting the high criteria for participation. The conditions of eligibility listed below must be met:

* In order to qualify, the candidate must be in one of the following two stages of their educational career the time of nomination:
  + A PhD student who has completed a master’s program, and started their PhD program during or after 2014
  + A PhD student who has never completed a master’s program, and who started their combined master’s and PhD program during or after 2013

**Note:** Special cases may be considered at the discretion of the review committee

* The candidate must have no more than three years of research experience before having begun their the PhD degree
* The candidate must be specializing in one of the following fields: computer science, electronic engineering, information science, or applied mathematics
* The candidate must be nominated by an invited institution and recommended by a PhD supervisor and department head. Direct applications will not be accepted from individuals or universities without invitation from Microsoft Research Asia
* Candidates must be commended by their supervisor as having outstanding potential as a researcher
* Previous Microsoft Research Asia Fellows are ineligible
* A maximum of two applicants per eligible university will be accepted
* Multiple applicants from one supervisor will not be considered for acceptance

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Application

The application must include the following:

* **Application form** to be completed by nominated candidate
  + [Download the application form](http://research.microsoft.com/en-US/collaboration/global/asia-pacific/talent/fellowapplicationform-2015.doc) (Word .doc)
* **Two signed recommendation letters** from the applicant’s PhD supervisor and department head are required; each must address specific evaluation criteria. A scanned copy of the signed recommendation letters should be sent to [fellowRA@microsoft.com](mailto:fellowRA%40microsoft.com?subject=) directly.
* Either a **video *or* PowerPoint presentation with an audio introduction** (you are encouraged to use [Office MIX](https://mix.office.com/) to make an interactive PowerPoint video). It must be a maximum of 20 minutes and a include statement of purpose; previous, on-going, and future projects; research interests and accomplishments; and other relevant information.
* **Transcript** with academic grades
* **Research papers** (if candidate has published papers)

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Submission process

* Complete the application form and submit it to your academic institution. The institution must submit the candidate's completed application form by email to [fellowRA@microsoft.com](mailto:fellowRA@microsoft.com) before the submission deadline of **June 20, 2015.**
  + [Download the application form](http://research.microsoft.com/en-US/collaboration/global/asia-pacific/talent/fellowapplicationform-2015.doc) (Word .doc)
* Submit the following via the [online submission website](https://cmt.research.microsoft.com/MSRAF2015/) by **June 20, 2015**:
  + - The completed application form
    - Your CV (curriculum vitae)
    - A video or PowerPoint presentation with audio introduction (you are encouraged to use [Office MIX](https://mix.office.com/) to make an interactive PowerPoint video)
    - Your transcript with academic grades
    - Your research papers (optional)
    - Two signed recommendation letters, which can be submitted via the online submission website or sent to [fellowRA@microsoft.com](mailto:fellowRA@microsoft.com) directly

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Selection process and criteria

All applications from invited institutions and received by Microsoft Research Asia will be reviewed by the Microsoft Research Asia Fellowship Committee, which is composed of senior lab researchers and managers. A competitive review, based upon the following criteria, determines the award recipients:

* A clear research focus
* A strong academic record, including research publications, previous research experience, transcripts, honors, and awards
* Strong leadership qualities, such as demonstrated passion, commitment, creativity, cooperative abilities, and communication skills
* On-site interview with Microsoft Research Asia researchers may be arranged if needed

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Schedule and deadlines

* Application submission deadline: **June 20, 2015**, 5:00 P.M., Beijing Time
* Microsoft Research Asia review of nominees: **July–September 2015**
* Fellowship program awards announcement and ceremony at the sixteenth Computing in the 21st Century Conference: **October 28, 2015**
* Mid-term report submission deadline: **July 30, 2016**

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Commitments

Microsoft Research Asia Fellows are required to submit a progress report by July 2016 to [fellowRA@microsoft.com](mailto:fellowRA@microsoft.com). The report should include:

* A brief description of research projects
* Publications authored
* Conferences attended
* Microsoft Research Asia Internship interest

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Frequently asked questions

**What are the benefits of the Microsoft Research Asia Fellowship?**  
The Microsoft Research Asia Fellowship encourages and motivates junior PhD students to pursue their research interests while taking tangible and worthwhile steps toward building a successful career. The internship that comes with the fellowship offers a unique opportunity for young researchers to gain hands-on research experience in China. Generous financial support offers many opportunities to attend international conferences, network with like-minded peers and potential mentors, and creatively consider and pursue research topics and interests.

**If I am not majoring in computer science, may I still apply?**  
Yes, you may apply if your major falls within the broad scope of computer science, electronic engineering, information science, or applied mathematics. Our program is open to research areas outside core computer science, but we expect to see a strong computing component in an applicant’s proposed research.

Areas of interest:

* [Artificial intelligence](http://research.microsoft.com/en-us/groups/ai/)
* [Hardware computing](http://research.microsoft.com/en-us/groups/hcg/)
* [Human computer interaction](http://research.microsoft.com/en-us/um/beijing/groups/hci/)
* [Internet graphics](http://research.microsoft.com/en-us/groups/ig/)
* [Internet media](http://research.microsoft.com/en-us/groups/im/)
* [Knowledge mining](http://research.microsoft.com/en-us/groups/km/)
* [Machine learning](http://research.microsoft.com/en-us/groups/ml/)
* [Media computing](http://research.microsoft.com/en-us/groups/mcg/)
* [Mobile and sensing systems](http://research.microsoft.com/en-us/groups/mass/)
* [Multimedia search and mining](http://research.microsoft.com/en-us/groups/msm/)
* [Natural language computing](http://research.microsoft.com/en-us/groups/nlc/)
* [Software analytics](http://research.microsoft.com/en-us/groups/sa/)
* [Speech](http://research.microsoft.com/en-us/groups/speech/)
* [System algorithms](http://research.microsoft.com/en-us/groups/sysalgo/)
* [Systems](http://research.microsoft.com/en-us/groups/sr/)
* [Theory](http://research.microsoft.com/en-us/groups/msratheory/)
* [Visual computing](http://research.microsoft.com/en-us/groups/vc/)
* [Web search and data management](http://research.microsoft.com/en-us/groups/wsdm/)
* [Wireless and networking](http://research.microsoft.com/en-us/groups/wn/)

**Which university departments are eligible?**  
This program is open to students from invited universities with eligible computer science, electrical engineering, mathematics, information science, or automation departments.

**Are first-year students eligible to apply?**First-year students are eligible to apply if they have already enrolled in a PhD program by the time of the nomination.

**Are second-year students eligible to apply?**Only second-year students who have never attended any master’s program and who have enrolled in an eligible combined master’s and PhD program during or after 2013 are eligible to apply for the fellowship. Here are some example scenarios:

* John is a second-year PhD student in 2015 and has already received a master’s degree: he is *not* eligible.
* Lily enrolled in a combined master’s and PhD program beginning in the fall semester of 2013, right after she received her bachelor’s degree in 2013: she is eligible.
* Tom enrolled in a combined master’s and PhD program in 2011 and completed his master’s program in 2013: he is *not* eligible.

**Do I have to be nominated by my university or may I apply on my own?**   
To be considered for the program, you must be nominated by an eligible department within your university.

**How do I submit my application?**  
Complete the [application form](http://research.microsoft.com/en-US/collaboration/global/asia-pacific/talent/fellowapplicationform-2015.doc) and submit it to your academic institution. Your school contact must submit the completed application form by email to [fellowRA@microsoft.com](mailto:fellowRA@microsoft.com) before the submission deadline. In addition, you must submit your application, CV, and all required materials before the submission deadline by using the [online submission website](https://cmt.research.microsoft.com/MSRAF2015/).

**When will the nomination results be announced?**  
The award recipients will be announced at the next Computing in the 21st Century Conference to be held in China on October 28, 2015. Microsoft Research Asia will not notify participants individually.

**If selected, am I required to complete an internship at Microsoft Research?**   
Internships are encouraged, but not required. You may complete a three-month internship at any time after the fellowship awards are presented in October 2015. For more information about internship opportunities at Microsoft Research Asia, please visit [Asia-Pacific Internship Program](http://research.microsoft.com/en-us/jobs/intern/about_asia-pacific.aspx).

# Reminder:

Updates will be published through our official website, and if there’s any difference from this document, the website shall prevail: <http://research.microsoft.com/en-us/collaboration/global/asia-pacific/talent/fellowship-application.aspx>