

CDI Spark Award - FAQ

Thank you for your interest in the CDI Spark Award.

Eligibility

What level of computational expertise is needed? Is the award targeted towards those with advanced knowledge of data science and machine learning?

The program is aimed at helping trainees' level up in their data science, machine learning (ML), and analytics skills. Trainees do not need to have advanced knowledge of data science or ML, such as random forests or convolutional neural nets. However, the program is also not meant to replace basic data science courses. **Some amount of coding experience in Python, R, or MatLab is needed.** Trainees need to know how to load data, have some understanding of basic functionalities of cleaning data, understand how different software is packaged and how they can be used.

Trainees can work with specialists during the award on advanced data and ML concepts.

Are Master's students who are transferring into a PhD program eligible for this award?

If you are a master's student who is transferring into a PhD program (2nd or 3rd year student), you will be eligible to apply. The award is for PhD2 and PhD3 students/candidates as of September 2022.

Are second year PhD students who are not yet a PhD Candidates eligible?

Yes. Applicants who are in their 2nd or 3rd year PhD, either as a student or candidate in September 2022, are eligible to apply.

Are first year PhD students eligible?

No, currently we are only accepting applications of 2nd and 3rd year PhD students or post-doctoral fellows.

Candidate Nomination

Are there restrictions on the number of awards a trainee can hold to apply for this award?

No, no restrictions.

How many trainees can each lab group nominate?

A PI can nominate as many students as they want, but the award will be **restricted to 1 trainee per lab**. The training sessions during the award are available to the trainees and their **entire lab**

How does co-supervision affect award allotment?

This will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Is the amount of award the same for postdocs and PhDs?

Yes. The same amount will be awarded to both.

Working as a CDI Spark Award Trainee

How can a trainee best reflect on deliverables in a widely non-linear scientific process? E.g., unexpected results that can change the path of a story/initially expected deliverables

With any grant application or project proposal, there must always be some consideration and anticipation regarding expected deliverables and milestones. There should be an outline of these deliverables in the proposal and during the project. However, there will be no accountability for the original deliverables should they need to change/ morph throughout the project journey.

Will trainees have a chance to connect with each other?

Yes. The CDI Spark Team is in the midst of planning and organizing events where all trainees will have the chance to connect, learn and work with one another. The goal is to foster a strong sense of community within the Spark community, and larger PM and UHN community.
