

TDAI AI and Data Science Graduate Fellows Program

Program of the Translational Data Analytics Institute at The Ohio State University

Position Description / Opportunity

The Translational Data Analytics Institute (TDAI) at The Ohio State University invites applications for our Graduate Fellows Program. This elite program is designed to advance artificial intelligence (AI) and data science research of PhD candidates from any discipline who have satisfactorily completed a candidacy examination. Fellows will join a community of scholars and researchers at TDAI who have excellent credentials in their fields and successes in advancing AI on campus and beyond.

We welcome applicants from any discipline who are engaged in AI and data science **interdisciplinary research, scholarship and creative expression with researchers across Ohio State to solve societal challenges.**

Up to two fellowships are available through this call. Appointments are scheduled to begin in Fall Semester 2026. The student can apply if they **complete a PhD candidacy exam prior to the application deadline**. For this two-year AI Graduate Fellows Program, TDAI funds 50% of student's salary, benefits, tuition, and fees as set by the home department and college, and up to \$1000 per year for conference travel.

Fellowship Award Timeline

Request for proposals released June 1, 2026

Application deadline: July 1, 2026

Application review: July 2026

Interviews: Late July/August 2026

Fellowship awards announced: Late August/September 2026

Translational Data Science Institute

The Institute

TDAI is an AI and data science researcher and practitioner community focused on open, interdisciplinary, data-driven research and creative expression. TDAI is a university-level leader in AI-inspired research that extends across all colleges. It connects faculty, students, and partners to solve global challenges using AI. TDAI also offers a Master's in [Translational Data Analytics](#), and provides data science services and resources for researchers.

In 2025, TDAI released a four-year strategic plan to further leverage its strengths for real-world impact by ensuring that AI not only advances as a technology but as a force for societal good. This elevation of AI research at TDAI within the broader realm of data science recognizes that

“[s]uccess in creating AI would be the biggest event in human history” (Stephen Hawking), that “AI will be the most transformative technology of the 21st century” (Jensen Huang, CEO of NVIDIA), and that “AI is a tool to amplify human creativity and ingenuity” (Fei-Fei Li).

In addition to concentrating AI transdisciplinary research at TDAI, The Ohio State University recently announced a new AI^(X) Hub, leads the NSF AI Edge Institute, and is part of an OpenAI consortium. AI Graduate Fellows at TDAI become part of this AI ecosystem at the university.

TDAI Director

Dr. Tanya Berger-Wolf serves as Director, Translational Data Analytics Institute. AI Graduate Fellows at TDAI have periodic opportunities to work directly with Dr. Berger-Wolf.

Emblematic of scholars committed to interdisciplinary and translational science, she is a professor across three departments at The Ohio State University (Ohio State) – Computer Science and Engineering, Electrical and Computer Science, Evolution, and Ecology & Organismal Biology. A pioneer in AI for nature, she leads several national and international initiatives and centers, and serves as a scientific advisor for many organizations, including the US National Academies Board on Life Sciences, US National Committee for the International Union of Biological Sciences (IUBS), the Global Partnership on AI (GPAI)/OECD, and The Nature Conservancy.

In 2025, Dr. Berger-Wolf was named to the inaugural AI100 list by H2O.ai, recognizing the top thought leaders in artificial intelligence for breaking barriers and driving innovation in the field. Her research has been honored for how it has leveraged AI to address societal change, promote sustainability, and create a positive impact on the world. Most recently, she received the OSU College of Engineering Lumley Interdisciplinary Research Award.

Faculty

For over a decade, TDAI co-funded the hiring of ~100 faculty doing pioneering research with data science and more recently AI across the 15 colleges at Ohio State. A complete roster of our faculty is [here](#).

Today, TDAI-affiliated faculty lead four strategic programs, two AI-focused investment programs, and several “labs in residence” at the Institute exploring, for example, how to develop new, robust, and scalable AI methods and how take hundreds of thousands of images that can be used to answer fundamental biological questions about ecology and evolution.

While maintaining their faculty advisor from their home departments, AI Graduate Fellows can collaborate with any of the TDAI-affiliated faculty. Several faculty members serve on an advisory board for the AI and Data Science Graduate Fellows Program. Others who are themselves conducting interdisciplinary AI and data science research have agreed to be available to mentor and/or train Fellows.

Program Coordinators

[Dr. Krishna Chaitanya Rao Kathala](#), TDAI Education Director, and [Dr. Alex Davis](#), TDAI Data Science Director, provide coordination for the program.

Expectations of a TDAI AI Graduate Fellow

Fellows are expected to be active, contributing, and visible members of the TDAI research community. For the mutual benefit of you and the community, you are expected to advance your research within the community using, sharing and learning leading-edge AI and data science methods and tools. To fulfill these expectations, you must

1. Spend approximately 5-10 hours per week at the Institute (Pomerene Hall) doing your work among other fellows and TDAI faculty/staff – serendipitous interactions with other researchers are expected to be one of the most valuable parts of the TDAI AI Graduate Fellowship Program
2. Establish and lead a working group (WG) that is closely aligned with your research interests and career goals, such as arranging talks by experts from academia or industry, coordinating a poster session, or producing a thought piece or whitepaper.
3. Participate in all TDAI AI Graduate Fellowship Program collaboration and training activities arranged by the Program Coordinators
4. Regularly attend other TDAI events (such as seminars and talks) for intellectual exchange
5. Present your research progress and challenges to other fellows and TDAI faculty annually, for example as a poster at the annual TDAI forum or summit.

Funding for a full two-year appointment is contingent on (1) fulfilling these expectations and (2) available funding for the program.

Eligibility and Applications Requirements

Eligibility

The student can apply for a fellowship if they are a PhD candidate at The Ohio State University from any discipline who has **satisfactorily completed a candidacy examination** and their research involves at least one of the following areas of AI and data science:

1. Foundations of AI and data science: computational, engineering, statistical and mathematical aspects of AI and data science.
2. Responsible and secure AI: trust, explainability, privacy, security, governance, and ethics.
3. Applications of AI in
 - a. computational health and life sciences
 - b. computational social sciences
 - c. cybersecurity, privacy and safety
 - d. nature and agriculture
4. AI-ready data: data federation, fusion, alignment, FAIR and CARE principles, synthetic data generation, data governance, validation, and trustworthiness.

5. Open-source software, open data, reproducibility, and open science

Advising faculty must be faculty of The Ohio State University and TDAI members. (See [website to join.](#))

Additionally, competitive candidates should welcome working in a team environment and be interested in developing productive research collaborations that grow the TDAI community of AI and data science researchers across campus and beyond.

Application Requirements

Candidates should submit the following information through the TDAI AI Graduate Fellowship Program website by **July 1, 2026**.

1. The following items should be included in a **single PDF file**:
 - Candidate **application letter** (2 pages maximum, single-spaced, 1" margins, 12-point font)
 - Description of current research and research that the student expects to do during the Fellowship Program (1 page)
 - The student should answer the following questions (1 page):
 - 1) How do you expect to advance your research at TDAI in ways that you could not in your current research environment?
 - 2) What are two specific activities or outcomes that you expect to contribute to the TDAI community?
 - Student's **personal statement** (1/2 page maximum)
Complete the statement, "I am committed to research that is ... and researchers who are ..."
 - **Curriculum Vitae** (CV)
 - {If applicable, the CV should include links to student's publicly available code (e.g., github), research papers (e.g., on repository like arXiv), and personal web page.}
2. When you submit the above pdf, you will be asked to include the name and email address of your OSU faculty research advisor. The review committee will then reach out to your OSU faculty advisor to obtain a nomination letter.
 - A nomination letter from the student's advisor indicating the student's qualifications for this fellowship is required. The letter should also state that the student has an active academic appointment for which funding is available for two years, and that the student will be able to participate and fulfill expectations of the AI Graduate Fellowship Program at TDAI, which are designed to enhance their graduate experience, grow their research network, and create opportunities to interact with the TDAI research community.

Application package will be fully reviewed by a fellowship committee. The committee will select a group of applicants to interview with the TDAI Director and others. Finalists will be invited for interview in late July/August and will be notified of their status in late August/September.

For More Information: Submit your questions to Cathie Smith, TDAI Managing Director (smith.4420@osu.edu), with the subject line "2026 AI Graduate Fellowship Program."