

Introduction to Bio-Spark

Academic research scientists at an early stage in their career consider options outside the academic world but have no experience in the paths they wish to take. Many wish to go into Industry but are unsure which type of company would be the best fit. Similarly, some wish to become entrepreneurs, but the process of entrepreneurship is ill-defined.

Bio-spark provides support for such early-stage scientists, including but not limited to those engaged in a PhD or Postdoc. Bio-spark provides mentorship by inspirational individuals, gives opportunity to sample different company environments, and provides mentorship that may lead to the formation of companies. This programme gives a unique set of young scientists tools to progress in business and entrepreneurship.

Bio-spark fellows will be chosen in recognition of their entrepreneurial potential. They will be exceptional individuals who think beyond the normal boundaries, have an appetite for innovation, and are in search of the intellectual spark that will make a difference to human health. The fellowships should be considered as a stepping-stone for a career in in business and entrepreneurship, providing the very best young scientists in Cambridge with the experience and mindset to become leaders and innovators in healthcare.

There will be three types of Bio-spark fellows selected:

- **Challenge-solving fellows.** These fellows will participate in a challenge posed by Pharma, Biotech, or Venture Investor partners. These challenges are likely to be performed in groups of 2 or 3. Challenges will last for 6 months, but in some cases, there may be two challenges of 3 months duration. Applicants may not get your first choice of challenge, but the selection committee will do its best to fit the requirements and expertise of applicants to the challenges.
- **Company-seeding fellows.** This type of Bio-spark fellow has ideas for the formation of a company and needs mentorship and potential investors to take the idea forward. The idea may involve more than one person, in which case all contributors should apply so they can work together. If the idea comes from a single individual, the programme may attempt to find a partner to work with the applicant. Company-seeding fellows will own the rights to any ideas developed during the mentorship process. Company-seeding fellows will get mentorship for 6 months.
- **Exploring fellows.** This type of fellow is interested in exploring the entrepreneurial ecosystem within Pharma, Biotech and Venture Investment. They will take part in all the visits, presentations and networking that every type of fellows will be involved in. Exploring fellows may be at an earlier stage in their career and may wish to return and become challenge-solving or company seeding fellows in future years.

The Bio-spark Programme

Selection of fellows will take place on June 24th. The selection committee will include representatives of partner companies and additional entrepreneur advisors. The number of fellows to be selected will depend on the quality of the applicants. Every effort will be made to create groupings of fellows with similar interests, for the purpose of challenge-solving. A shortlist of challenge-solving and company-seeding fellows will be interviewed by the committee. Following the selection of fellows, mentors will be allocated that will engage and guide the fellows.

The programme will begin in late September/ early October 2022 with a networking event with presentations. All fellows will be invited, and representatives of companies and mentors, along with entrepreneur advisors will be present. There will be additional networking events throughout the course of the programme, and visits will be organised to the premises of company partners.

The programme will end in June 2023 with a presentation day where all fellows are invited. At this event challenge solving fellows present their solutions to challenges. Company-seeding fellows will be able to pitch to investors for funding. Where appropriate, fellows securing funding will be offered space at the Milner Therapeutics Institute for research associated with the formation of the company.

Important note: Fellows will be expected to work on Bio-spark related matters in their own time and outside their current employment.