
J-WAFS Fellowships for Water and Food Solutions
AY2026 Call for Nominations

Background

The Abdul Latif Jameel Water and Food Systems Lab (J-WAFS) was founded in 2014 as an effort to amplify MIT's research in the water and food sectors in order to respond to the urgent global water and food challenges faced by our human community. J-WAFS catalyzes MIT research, innovation, and technology for ensuring safe and resilient supplies of water and food while reducing environmental impact, to meet the local and global needs of a rapidly expanding and evolving population on a changing planet.

J-WAFS is offering the following one-semester graduate student fellowships for the 2025-2026 academic year:

The **Rasikbhai L. Meswani Fellowship for Water Solutions** is a doctoral fellowship for students pursuing research related to water and water supply at MIT. Up to two outstanding students will be selected to receive fellowship support; the fellowship currently covers one academic semester. Through it we seek to support outstanding MIT students who are pursuing solutions to the pressing global water supply challenges of our time. This fellowship was made possible by Elina and Nikhil Meswani and family.

Eligibility

Students eligible to be nominated for a Meswani Fellowship must be MIT PhD students who are graduating no earlier than May of 2026. (Please note that no portion of awarded fellowships can be used for continuing postdoctoral appointments or other nondegree support if an awardee graduates early or before spending down the fellowship award). Students must have passed their qualifying exams by the nomination deadline, **March 3, 2025**. Nominees should be engaged in research focused on alleviating problems of water supply for human need, or other solutions-based research and innovation related to the water sector, or research related to food supply, agriculture, or other solutions-based research and innovation related to food systems. Nominees do not need to specify which fellowship they are applying for.

J-WAFS seeks students with outstanding academic credentials for these fellowships; candidates should be able to demonstrate a GPA of 4.5 or higher. They should also have a clear research question and plan that they are actively pursuing.

Eligible students must be in residence at MIT during the fellowship award period. The selected fellows will be awarded one semester of funding.

Nomination Process

Application to the Meswani Fellowship is by faculty nomination. Each MIT faculty member is invited to nominate one outstanding PhD student for consideration to both fellowship programs. Nominees may be enrolled in any PhD program at MIT. They should be working in an area of water and or food systems with a focus on solutions-based research and discovery, as demonstrated by a submitted statement of interest, subjects taken, and proposed research area.

Deadline

Complete nomination packets are due by email to J-WAFS no later than 5:00 p.m. ET on **Monday, March 3, 2025**.

Selection Process

Meswani Fellows are selected by J-WAFS with input from a faculty review committee representing a range of disciplines. Selection criteria include: academic credentials of the applicant, recommendation letters, relevance of the candidate's research to the human need for water and food, communication skills, and the candidate's demonstrated engagement with water and/or food challenges.

J-WAFS may invite finalists for an interview before the final decision.

At least two fellows are expected to be funded for 2025-2026. Award decisions will be announced in early spring of 2025. The successful recipients will be asked to provide a headshot photograph, a one-paragraph bio, one-paragraph research description, and a two-to-three-minute, self-made video summarizing their research for possible use on the J-WAFS website and in other J-WAFS materials.

Deadline and Submission Instructions

All nomination materials must be submitted by 5:00 pm ET on **Monday, March 3, 2025**, as follows: (1) The Nomination Form and Part 1 supporting documents (CV, transcript, statement of interest) should be submitted online. The form can be accessed at <https://webportalapp.com/webform/jwafsfellowship>. See below for what should be included in the statement of interest. (2) The nomination letter must be emailed directly to jwafsapPLY@mit.edu by the faculty member or their assistant.

Part 1 may be submitted by the student candidate OR by the nominating faculty (or her/his assistant). Part 2 (nominating letter) must be submitted by the nominating faculty or her/his assistant.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The webform doesn't have a save function. Please review all fields in advance and complete in one sitting. The fields and instructions from the webform are noted on the next page for reference, but must be completed online.

Questions? Please contact J-WAFS communications and program manager, Carolyn Blais Pinter at cblais@mit.edu.



AY2026 Meswani Fellowship Online Submission Webform Fields and Instruction

Listed below is the information that is needed for the online submission form. Please use the list below as a reference as you compile your application submission materials. **Note that the webform does not have a save function**, so we are providing this reference to the information you will need to have on hand when you are ready to fill out and submit the webform and uploads. Do not submit this Word form.

Access the webform at: <https://webportalapp.com/webform/jwafsfellowship>

Faculty Nominator Information

First Name:

Last Name:

MIT Department, Lab, or Center:

Relationship to student:

- Advisor
- Thesis committee member
- Other

Student Information

First Name:

Preferred First Name:

Last Name:

Gender:

- Male
- Female
- Other
- Prefer not to answer

Preferred Pronouns (optional)

- He/Him/His
- She/Her/Hers
- They/Their/Theirs
- Other (please fill in below)

Email address:

Postal mailing address:

Cell phone number:

Additional Information

MIT Department, Lab, or Center student belongs to:

Date student started doctoral program (month/year):

Date of completion of doctoral qualifying exam (must be before 3/3/25):

Anticipated Date of Graduation (month/year):

MIT graduate studies GPA:

Research topic (no more than six words):

Use this space to note any additional considerations for the review committee:

Application Submission

Via the online webform, you will upload the nominated student's CV, transcript, and statement of interest. Please note all instructions before proceeding. This form does not allow saving as you go.



AY2026 Meswani Fellowship Online Submission Webform Fields and Instruction

Tasks:

- **Upload student curriculum vitae**
- **Upload student transcript**
(Please upload a current, unofficial copy of the student's transcript. This can be obtained free of charge by emailing the Registrar's Office at records@mit.edu).

Student's statement of interest

This is not a research proposal, but rather an explanation by the student of their research and related interests as they pertain to water or food system challenges. The statement should have the student's name in the heading and should directly address the following three questions:

- What is your water/food-related research question? How do you plan to answer it (methods, work plan)? (2 pages maximum)
- How will your project contribute to solving the pressing challenges of our time that face global water supply or food systems to meet human need? (1-2 paragraphs)
- Why should we support you as a fellow: what is the history of your commitment to the topic of water or food? and/or, what are your plans for future work in this area? (1-2 paragraphs)

IMPORTANT NOTE: *Make sure your statement of interest addresses these three questions. The statement must be clearly written, with a multidisciplinary audience in mind. Reviewers may be from any discipline, and non-specialists should be able to clearly understand your work and its implications in the context of water supply or food systems. We are not looking for a technical research proposal. A dissertation proposal submitted to your department is not an appropriate submission for this fellowship.*

Tasks:

- **Upload student statement of interest**

Letter of Nomination (Please send by email)

A signed letter of nomination on MIT letterhead that provides an appraisal of the student's qualifications and capabilities and indicates why she/he believes the student should be awarded a Meswani Fellowship. The faculty member or faculty's assistant must submit this letter directly to jwafsappl@mit.edu.

Tasks:

- **Email letter of nomination to jwafsappl@mit.edu**

Questions? Please contact J-WAFS communications and program manager, Carolyn Blais Pinter at cblais@mit.edu.