

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Is a semester-long (4-6 months) internship possible through the program?

No. We are investing in people as much as in projects. This has high startup cost, and we also have an additional challenge of remote work. Hence, we will be looking for at least 1 year appointment for this to be meaningful, with preference given to candidates who aspire to engage with us on longer journeys.

2. Is it a paid position? How does the pay and benefits compare with the MSRI RF Program?

Yes, it is paid. The pay and benefit are same as that of the MSRI RF program. If you onboard as FTE, then it will be same as that of Microsoft India FTE position.

3. How is it different from MSRI RF program?

After the predoc appointment, we aspire to support a new career pathway for interested candidates to continue a full-time, research-track appointment with our team, working out of Microsoft India (an experience that can be compared with that of enrolling into a Ph.D. program at a top University, but with different pros/cons).

Our team is a hybrid of research and engineering. We aim to not only make research contributions (publications), but also have product impact. Our program provides opportunities to develop both types of skills, which can serve as a precursor to a career in either.

4. Should I apply to both the PROSE Research Fellowship and MSRI Research Fellowship programs?

Yes, we strongly encourage the candidates to apply broadly to maximize their chances of finding an opportunity that would be the best fit for them.

5. Do I get to go to Redmond, USA to work with the group now or in future?

Travel for business reasons has typically been supported by Microsoft, whether to present at a conference or for an in-person visit to collaborators. However, the appointment will primarily be based out of India. However, the candidates would be welcome to apply to any job posting inside Microsoft global if they would so desire, after they reach a certain tenure.

6. Is PROSE the one developing Co-Pilot?

We were not involved in development or release of Co-Pilot. However, we are connected with the Co-Pilot team, and have been regularly using their models to guide development of related and derived technologies. One such effort is our investment in AI-enabled code repair methods, which can repair not only AI-generated code, but also code written by humans.

7. How is the interview like? What references should I look at to best prepare for the research interviews.

Interviewing will consist of research discussions with few researchers on the team and an engineering round. You should be able to describe your own research work clearly. You can also ask us questions about our research work during the interviews.

8. Will there be a competitive coding round before the interviews?

The interviewing will include mostly researchers on our team but there will also be an engineering (coding) interview that will be led by engineers on our team and/or engineers in DevDiv India. More than competitive coding, we look for ability to (1) think on the feet, (2) write good and well-documented code, (2) design tests, and (4) debug code effectively. Coding is a tool to have impact, but not the end goal.

9. Will it be possible for me to pursue projects that might not align with the group?

The real fun in working with our group is to leverage the unreasonable advantage that we have, created by nurturing connections with certain product groups (to deliver impact and leverage customer feedback), and by building on top of the technologies that we have developed. There is always room for investing in newer technologies and to make new pitches to product leaderships for shipping impact through their products; and both are strongly encouraged! Within this scope, we expect the research fellow to both learn and innovate, to learn to deliver success as we know it, and to lead us to deliver success in new areas/ways. However, if the goal is to only write papers, a university environment would be better. If the goal is to create impact in areas where Microsoft doesn't operate in, then a better option might be to join those other organizations that operate in those areas.