

Nucleate

[Nucleate](#) is the largest, free, trainee-led 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to empowering the next generation of biotech leaders by providing today's academic trainees the education and tools they need to translate their research. Since 2019, we have supported more than 300 trainee-founder led biotech companies including [Manifold Bio](#), [Concerto Bio](#), [Beacon Biomimetic](#), [EnPlusOne Bio](#), all of which are pioneering solutions in life sciences and sustainability.

The Activator Program

Nucleate is running its flagship **Activator program** across Canada in 2026–2027.

- The Activator is the world's largest open-access, equity-free biotech accelerator for graduate trainees interested in building their own life science venture
- Starting with a dedicated cross-disciplinary team matching event, teams are guided through 1-on-1 workshops on venture building by industry experts & mentors (Canada/US/Global), culminating in a final pitch showcase to program mentors, renowned science entrepreneurs, industry veterans, and investors
- **To date, the Activator Program has supported the creation of 300+ companies, raised \$650+ million USD for biotech ventures, and created 900+ new biotech jobs.**

Activator Program Tracks

The Activator Program has two tracks for academic trainees to apply:

Bio Track: Designed for trainees focused on therapeutics, diagnostics, research tools, or medical devices

Eco Track: Designed for trainees working on biology-rooted solutions to sustainability challenges in food & agriculture, chemicals & energy, or consumer products

Applicant Profiles

Applicants can apply to the Activator Program with or without an idea/project. The Activator Program accepts applications from three types of applicants

Scientific: MSc, PhD, Postdocs, Fellowships, or research scientists in academia/industry

Business: MBA, EMBA, MPH, JD, or professional graduate degrees

Clinical: MD, PharmD, clinical fellowships, or other graduate degrees with significant experience in patient care

Program Timeline

Preliminary Round

Late October – Mid November

Promising applications will be invited for a live interview.

Semi-Final Round: Team Formation

Mid November – Mid December

Accepted semi-finalists will advance into the team formation process. A team will comprise of (at minimum): 1 Technology applicant, 1 Business applicant, and 1 Clinical applicant. After team formation, all semi-finalist teams will have 2–3 weeks to prepare for their final interview.

Final Cohort: Activator Cohort, Workshops, and the Forum

January – May

Teams accepted into the final round will be part of the Activator cohort. Finalist teams will participate in a mentor matching event and a series of 6 workshops with industry and academic experts, culminating in a national pitch presentation (the Forum) in front of science entrepreneurs, industry veterans, and investors

Workshops are a guided discussion between teams and experts on the following topics:

1. Technical Risk & Scientific Plan
2. Application & Market Risk
3. Regulatory Strategy
4. Strategic Fundraising
5. Founder's Workshop
6. Practice Pitch

By the numbers: The Nucleate Activator Program

300+
COMPANIES
CREATED

\$650M+
USD RAISED

900+
NEW BIOTECH
JOBS

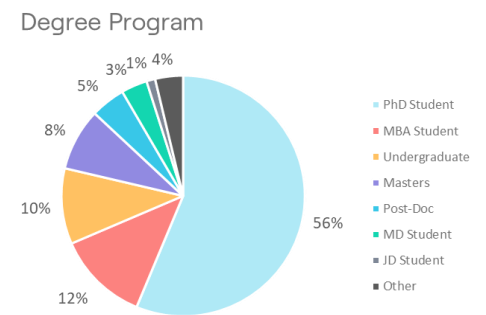
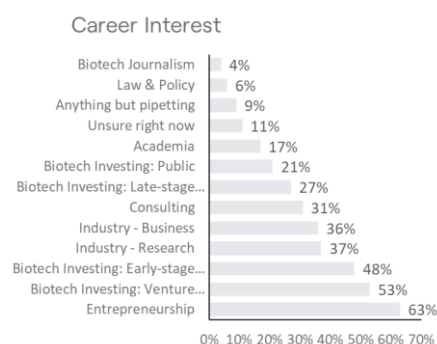
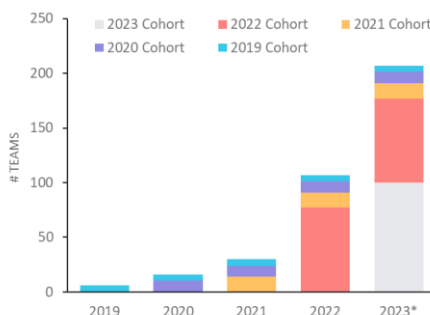
By the numbers: The Leadership

800
LEADERSHIP TEAMS
GLOBALLY

400+
INSTITUTIONS

40+
CITIES

Leadership comprises of PhDs, Postdocs, MBAs, MDs, JDs, MScs, and BScs with diverse career interests



By the numbers: The Community

120+
UNIVERSITY TTO
RELATIONSHPS

200+
EVENTS HELD
ANNUALLY

1
GLOBAL ANNUAL
SUMMIT

1789+
INDUSTRY
PARTICIPATION

1.5 M
SOCIAL MEDIA
IMPRESSIONS

Applications are now open until October 20th, 2026! Apply at [Nucleate Gateway](#). Learn more about Nucleate [here](#).

- **What stage should the technology be at?**

We welcome academic projects at the translational stage, even prior to incorporation. Proof-of-concept data, early preclinical results, or demonstrated technical feasibility is typically sufficient.
- **What kind of mentors or industry partners will I be potentially exposed to?**

Our participants gain exposure to a global network of leading mentors and partners from academia, pharma, biotech, law firms and venture capital. We have a database of over 3000 industry experts and mentors. Our past collaborators have included representatives from Eli Lilly, Sanofi, Genetech, Alnylam, Pillar VC, Amino Collective, and etc.
- **Can projects with prior funding apply?**

Yes. Teams who have raised less than \$1M in institutional capital are eligible. Projects supported by non-dilutive or academic funding are also welcome.
- **Are there regional restrictions?**

No. Nucleate supports applicants globally through 18+ chapters and the Global Virtual Activator. Apply through your local chapter or GVA if outside a chapter region.
- **Can I apply solo?**

Yes! Both individual contributors and pre-formed teams are encouraged. Team formation support is part of the program.
- **What is the time commitment?**

Plan for about 10 hours per month for workshops and mentorship that are mostly virtual. The program is designed to accommodate trainee schedules.
- **Does Nucleate take equity or fees?**

No. Nucleate is a non-profit and takes no equity or fees to participate. No new intellectual property is generated during the program.
- **Do I need academic affiliation to apply?**

We accept applications from current trainees, recent grads, and early career professionals at academic centers.
- **What types of technologies are a fit?**

We welcome innovations in either the Bio track focusing on areas such as therapeutics (e.g., biologics, gene therapy), diagnostics, digital or computational health solutions or biotech innovations addressing climate/sustainability/agtech/synbio challenges in the Eco track. Each region may offer one or both tracks annually, depending on local capacity.
- **Who owns the intellectual property?**

There is no inventive process attached to the Activator program. No new intellectual property is created during or as a part of the Activator program. All intellectual property rights remain with the respective academic institutions and individuals where relevant.

Still have questions? Contact us at asknucleatetech@nucleate.org.