

Welcome to the Future City Fellowship

The Future City Fellowship unites five undergraduate Fellows from diverse disciplines to tackle real-world challenges in innovation, engineering, and city planning. Working as consultants to a City Partner client, Fellows assess local electrification systems, pinpoint opportunities for improvement, and design a safe, sustainable future demonstrating change through 10-, 20-, and 30-year development phases. Each team narrows its focus to a specific electrification challenge or issue and presents practical recommendations to city leaders and partners. Their solutions must align with ULSE safety standards and draw on insights from the UL Research Institutes Standards Academy platform.

Fellows

Fellows serve as consultants to their client, the City Partner. The Fellows are responsible for liaising with the city representatives and any external partners, understanding the client's needs, narrowing the problem space to a manageable electrification challenge, and designing a feasible, standards-based solution. In their presentations to their city client and other stakeholders, Fellows demonstrate how their solution will evolve over 10-, 20-, and 30-year increments and how UL safety standards will ensure long-term safety, sustainability, and equity.

City

Serving as the Fellow's client, the city will share its electrification needs, available resources, and constraints, and offer feedback and critique as the team narrows the problem definition and develops potential solutions. The city's satisfaction is the ultimate indicator of success in the Fellowship.

Faculty Advisor

A Faculty Advisor will provide guidance, feedback, and critique to each team. The Faculty Advisor will ensure that the team is prepared to meet with the city and corporate sponsors and that they access the provided materials to best understand the challenge before them. The Faculty Advisor will use their expertise in engineering and education to encourage success through problem definition, design and modeling, standards application, and effective presentation.

ULSE

ULSE is the corporate partner to all Future City Fellows teams. ULSE will provide expertise on the application of safety and sustainability standards to the city's systems and products, as well as to students' design ideas.

Additional Partners

External Partners: Teams are encouraged to seek out additional stakeholders and partners.

DiscoverE Team: Available for support, clarifications, critique, and connections.

ULRI: Fellowship sponsor. Provides [StandardsAcademy.org](https://standardsacademy.org).

Frequently Asked Questions

Who is the client?

The city, or another designated municipal entity, is your client. Your client's stakeholders include the city government, citizens, local industry, and the city's environment. You will interact with your client in three explicit opportunities: the initial client interview, a presentation of your chosen narrow problem, and a final consulting pitch. You are encouraged to connect with other local or national stakeholders, experts, and resources as you investigate the depth and breadth of the narrow electrification problem that you choose to focus on.

What is the scope of the Fellowship?

The Fellowship includes three phases spanning six months. Each phase concludes in a Milestone.

Phase 1	Interview Client. Research and Assess Electrification Challenges and Opportunities.	Milestone 1	Problem Narrowed. Meet with DiscoverE.
Phase 2	Share Challenge Focus with Client. Design and Model Potential Solutions.	Milestone 2	Solution Chosen. Meet with DiscoverE.
Phase 3	Develop and Practice Pitch.	Milestone 3	Pitch Presented. Meet with DiscoverE.

Please refer to the *City Electrification Challenge and Fellowship Milestones* for support on each phase.

What support and resources do Fellows receive during the project?

- Each Fellow receives a \$5,000 stipend.
- Support from their Faculty Advisor, DiscoverE, and ULSE experts.
- The [ULRI Standards Academy](#) provides clear descriptions of the role of standards in society and case studies featuring electrification-related standards.
- Optional resources include a recommended Fellowship timeline, a project success rubric, questions to research and consider, and How to be a good consultant.

Mandatory Meeting and Milestones:

Here is a comprehensive list of all requirements to receive the full stipend:

- Project launch meeting on February 25, 2026, from 7 pm to 8 pm ET
- UL Standards & Engagement meeting on March 24, 2026, from 7 pm to 8 pm ET

- Team members and DiscoverE staff will schedule three milestone meetings.
- Milestone 1: Prepare for and conduct a consulting interview with the client and share the narrowed electrification problem with the DiscoverE Team.
- Milestone 2: Present two or more ideas to meet your narrowed challenge statement to the client and share with the DiscoverE Team for feedback.
- Milestone 3: Pitch your final proposal to the city, the DiscoverE Team, and distinguished guests.

What kind of modeling is required?

Your team has the latitude to choose how to model and test your solutions, as well as how to pitch your plan to your client. Quantitative and visual models should be used to convey the plan and its impact over 30 years clearly.

What do Standards have to do with it?

Standards are guidelines that define safe, reliable, and consistent ways to design, build, test, and operate systems. In engineering and civil planning, standards help ensure that infrastructure and technologies function as intended, protect public health and safety, enable different systems to work together, and reduce risk, costs, and uncertainty across projects.

Criterion five of the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET, 2022) requires undergraduate engineering students to understand and apply appropriate safety standards to their senior capstone design projects to complete the undergraduate engineering degree. This fellowship will help Fellows learn to use that application seamlessly.

Fellows must include UL Standards & Engagement safety and sustainability standards throughout the Fellowship:

- Your baseline research on electrification should determine which standards are currently in place in the city's electricity system. You may find standards embedded within regulatory codes.
- Your narrowed problem must include any relevant standards,
- Your solution and pitch must include standards. Specifically, your cost-benefit analysis must demonstrate increased safety or sustainability from adherence to standards.

Learn more about ULSE standards at the ULRI Standards Academy and on the dedicated Standards Webinar all-teams call, Tuesday, March 24, 7 PM ET. You may include standards from other organizations in addition to ULSE standards.

What makes a good solution?

A good solution will include a wide range of disciplinary perspectives, including public health considerations, industry-appropriate modeling, climatic considerations, and existing or potential civil regulations and engineering standards. A good solution is one that Fellows justify thoroughly to increase viability and mitigate risks. A good solution will address the trade-offs between engineered systems and legal, governmental, and social choices, demonstrating Fellows' appreciation for the world's complexity and making intentional, justifiable choices.