OVERVIEW

Western's Postdoctoral Fellowship Program awards funding to postdoctoral scholars who contribute to the stimulation of research, scholarship, and creative activity across the institution.

Grounded in the guiding principles of the Western Research Strategic Plan "*Mobilize for Impact!*" (2022-2027) which fits within the broader context of the wider institutional goal "*Towards Western at 150,*" the Postdoctoral Fellowship program aspires to:

- attract diverse postdoctoral talent from a global candidate pool, who will contribute positively to research excellence;
- enhance support for promising research programs; and
- foster a vibrant and inclusive environment for scholars and position them for success as early career researchers.

Western Research, on behalf of the Vice-President (Research), will be administering the program which is jointly funded by Western University and individual Faculties across campus.

1.0 – Western Postdoctoral Fellowship Program

Postdoctoral scholars make significant contributions to the research environment and are vital and valued members of the Western research community. The Western Postdoctoral Fellowship opportunity will prioritize:

- **Research Excellence**: Promote outstanding research aligned with Western's strategic mission and values;

- **Recruitment**: Attract diverse postdoctoral talent (domestic and international) to Western while advancing representation of equity-deserving scholars;

- **Professional Development**: Provide recent PhD graduates with resources necessary to:

  - Conduct outstanding research programs; and
  - Develop the professional skills, knowledge, and abilities needed to lead and operate top-tier research programs and facilities as an independent researcher;

- **Collaboration**: Foster collaboration between Western's scholars across various disciplines through postdoctoral research, mentorship, supervision and training.

Postdoctoral scholars at Western participate in an Independent Professional Development Plan and mentorship program through the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies.

This program includes the following:

- Western Research Scholar Award package (see section 1.3)
- EDID training for selection committee members and faculty administrators
- Professional development opportunities,
- Networking opportunities for Western Postdoctoral Fellowship awardees to connect,
- Speaker Series to showcase the research and innovation of Western Postdoctoral Fellowship awardees,
- Awardees will be highlighted on Western Research's website and promoted through communication channels.

1.1 - Guiding Principles

The program seeks to support postdoctoral applicants and foster a culture of:

- **Interdisciplinary Collaboration**: Western is committed to supporting high-quality interdisciplinary collaborative research;

- **Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Decolonization (EDID)**: Western is committed to supporting high-quality research projects that advance EDID across the research ecosystem, engage equity-deserving groups, embed meaningful EDI principles, and adhere to relevant guidelines and policies adopted by the university (see "Western's Commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion" Canada Research Chair Program – Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan).

1.2 – Award Value and Allocation

The Western Postdoctoral Fellowship award is intended to allow recipients to conduct research-intensive projects on a full-time basis. Funding is available for a minimum of 10 awards for the 2024 competition. Each faculty will be awarded at least one fellowship, up to a maximum of two fellowships. Each Fellowship will provide a minimum stipend of:

- Year 1: $60,000, plus 14% benefits and a $5,000 research allowance

- Year 2: $60,000, plus annual increase (per union agreement), plus 14% benefits, and a $5,000 research allowance

Approximate total award value: $148,681 over two years.

Stipend:
Western Research will contribute up to 50% of the fellowship stipend cost for a total maximum contribution of $69,340.50 over 2 years. The host faculty and/or supervisor is responsible for securing, at minimum, the remaining 50% of the Fellowship stipend. Please note: This matching funding must be secured and confirmed at the time of application.

Western Research recognizes that the level of funding deemed competitive for attracting top tier postdoctoral scholars may vary by discipline and may also vary annually within disciplines according to shifts in job market supply and demand. Host supervisors and/or their faculties are permitted to contribute more than 50% of the stipend if they have access to available funding. The maximum amount of funding that will be provided by Western Research remains at $79,340.50including the research allowance over two years.

Sources of matching funding could include (but are not limited to) the following:
- Grants held by the supervisor and reserved for postdoctoral support
- Industry funding
- Departmental-level or faculty-level support

Research Allowance:
Western Research will cover the full amount of the research allowance for a total of $10,000 over the 2-year term.

Summary of Western Postdoctoral Fellowship Award Package

Source	Stipend		Research Allowance		Total
	Year 1	Year 2*	Year 1	Year 2	
Western Research	$34,200	$35,140.50	$5,000	$5,000	$79,340.50
Faculty	$34,200	$35,140.50			$69,340.50
Total	$138,681		$10,000		$148,681

*Year 2 stipend amount is subject to change based on union negotiations

Additional costs:
Faculties will be responsible for paying out any unused vacation benefits. Faculties will also be responsible for payment of the Employer Compliance fee for international students requiring a work permit, except in the case of applicants fully funded centrally by Western Research.

In a limited number of situations, Western Research may consider funding up to 100% of the Fellowship, to a maximum of $148,681 total over two years, based on demonstrated need and lack of available matching funding. Applications must demonstrate:
- the need for supplementary funding, and;
- that department and faculty resources have been exhausted.

1.3 – Western Research Scholar Award

Western Postdoctoral Fellows are encouraged to apply for the [Banting Postdoctoral Fellowship](#), or one of the Tri-Agency [Fellowship Awards](#). If a Western Postdoctoral Fellow is successful in securing an external fellowship through one of these opportunities that provide full salary support (minimum $40,000 per year) during the term of their Western Postdoctoral Fellowship, they will be awarded a "*Western Research Scholar Award*" for the duration of the externally awarded fellowship or the remaining duration of the Western Postdoctoral Fellowship (whichever is shorter).

Western Research Scholars will receive additional funding (over and above their total external award) from Western Research and the host faculty/supervisor as outlined below:

Western Research Scholar Award stipend package	*The greater of:* • A top-up to the total external award in the amount of $20,000 per year ($10,000 from Western Research and $10,000 from the faculty/supervisor), *OR* • A top-up to the total external award up to $65,000/year (based on 50% from Western Research and 50% from the faculty/supervisor)
Research Allowance	A travel/research allowance in the amount of $5,000 per year (provided by Western Research)

The top-up funding will be pro-rated for the remaining term of the Western Postdoctoral Fellowship from the start date of the external award. The remaining funding from the original award will be returned to Western Research and the host faculty/supervisor (or other source of matching funds).

Please forward the external award details to intgrant@uwo.ca upon receipt.

1.4 - Allocation

Western Research will be awarding a minimum of 10 Western Postdoctoral Fellowships, based on available funding.

Each faculty will be allocated a minimum of one fellowship which prioritizes applications from equity-deserving scholars in alignment with Western's goals to advance representation of groups historically and currently under-represented. See [Western Equity Census Report here](#).

1.5 – Award Period and Duration

Funding for successful applications will begin on a mutually agreed upon start date, typically within the July 1, 2024 to June 30, 2025 timeframe.

Funding will be awarded for a period of two years from the funding start date.

2.0 – Eligibility

Western University guidelines on Postdoctoral Scholars can be found here: https://grad.uwo.ca/postdoctoral_services/index.html.

a. The applicant's PhD (including PhD-equivalent or health professional degree) must have been granted (official convocation/graduation date) within five (5) years prior to the proposed start date of the Postdoctoral Fellowship. For applicants with a PhD in progress, it is expected that this documentation will be provided before the start date of the award. All PhD requirements must have been met by the start date of the award.

b. Various life events may interrupt and affect the applicant's project work, career trajectory and academic achievements within the outlined 5-year period (mentioned above). The 5-year window of eligibility could be extended:

   o Applicants can provide additional details in the application section "2.*5. Career Interruptions and Exceptional Circumstances*" outlining the nature and dates of these circumstances for consideration by the adjudication committee relating to applicant eligibility and relevant research progress.

   o Relevant circumstances may include parental leave, child-rearing, illness, disability, cultural or community responsibilities, socioeconomic challenges and context, or health-related family responsibilities and pandemic-related difficulties.

c. Applicants who currently hold a postdoctoral position at Western, or have previously held a postdoctoral position at Western, are **not** eligible to apply. Applicants are considered to currently hold a postdoctoral position at Western if they are registered as postdoctoral scholars with the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (SGPS) at Western prior to the application deadline.

d. Applicants **cannot** currently hold a permanent faculty position, or a faculty position leading to permanency.

e. Successful applicants **cannot** hold a postdoctoral position at another institution while holding this award. Applicants holding postdoctoral positions at another institution, if successful, will be expected to have formally ended such affiliations before the start date of the award. Applicants who secure a position at another institution during the tenure of the

Western Postdoctoral Fellowship must terminate their award prior to taking up their new position, and any remaining funding will be returned to Western Research and the faculty/supervisor.

f. Applicants must secure written commitment of a qualified faculty member at Western who has the expertise, experience, and capacity to act as the host Supervisor of the Postdoctoral Fellow and their proposed project (see instructions for the "Supervisor's Statement" attachment on the application form). Supervisors must also hold a research-eligible position at Western.

g. Western Research may consider applications where postdoctoral scholars are also retained by Western to teach one or more courses. In these cases, the proposed fellowship will be reduced proportional to remunerated teaching, on a case-by-case basis in consultation with SGPS.

h. Applicants who are not Canadian citizens will be required to secure all necessary permits, visas, or documentation required by all relevant jurisdictions. More information can be found on Western's School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies' website. Applicants may contact Mihaela Harmos (mharmos@uwo.ca) for any immigration or appointment-related issues.

3.0 – Adjudication

There is a two-phase adjudication process for the Western Postdoctoral Fellowship program. Applications must be submitted to the host supervisor's home faculty for evaluation and scoring, based on program adjudication criteria (see section 3.2). Scores will be averaged and weighted equally between each member of the faculty selection committee.

Each faculty will select their top three applicants to move forward to Western. Applications ranked as the top application by the faculty will be verified against eligibility criteria and awarded if eligible.

- Faculties are expected to inform applicants not moving to the next phase of the competition.
- Faculties should also be providing feedback from the internal review process to these applicants.

In the second phase, applications from nominated candidates who are equity-deserving scholars that ranked in the second or third position by the faculty will be forwarded for review to the central selection committee. This committee will consist of members of the College of Reviewers, be chaired by the Associate Vice-President (Research), and will utilize the same program adjudication rubric.

The selection committee will meet to finalize funding decisions. Applications that receive a score below 55 will not be funded. There is no appeal process for decisions.

3.1 – Selection Committee

Western Research is committed to ensuring that the central selection committee will consist of broad and appropriate representation. This committee will be composed of members from Western's College of Reviewers who participate in training to identify and reflect on barriers and biases which are commonly present in academic funding competitions. This training is designed to guard against the possibility of unconscious bias influencing the evaluation process when reviewing applications.

We highly encourage faculties to ensure that individuals involved in the evaluation of applications in Phase 1 of the adjudication process have also completed unconscious bias training. Please see *Section 7 – Resources* for additional information.

3.2 – Adjudication Criteria

In evaluating and ranking proposals, Faculties are expected to utilize the program adjudication rubric which incorporates relevant principles of Western's *EDI Action Plan* to the evaluation of all applications. Please note that the review of proposals including research by, or with, Indigenous Peoples must comply with the Government of Canada's Inter-agency Advisory Panel on Research Ethics guidelines published in *TCPS 2 - Chapter 9: Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples of Canada*. Faculties must also ensure that all proposals follow The First Nations Principles of OCAP. Western Research is available for consultation, guidance and assistance where required, please inquire with intgrant@uwo.ca.

Applications will be evaluated and ranked by individual Faculties based on the following three criteria[1]:

Criteria 1: Demonstrated and potential research excellence and leadership

The applicant should have demonstrated capacity for research excellence based on the quality of the applicant's research contributions and demonstrated capacity for leadership in the research domain as defined by the sphere of influence achieved to date by the applicant.

Indicators of research excellence and leadership include, but are not limited to:
- Research history
- Impact of their activities in the research community (within and outside of academia), including relationship development and engagement of diverse partnerships/partners.

---

[1] Evaluation criteria modified from the Banting Postdoctoral Fellowships evaluation criteria

- The applicant's level of influence according to the following spheres of impact:
  - research programs
  - mentorship
  - capacity building
  - institutions (e.g., research, cultural)
  - research communities (e.g., local, national, international)
  - society at large (e.g., regional, national)
  - accessibility and EDID.

- The stage and nature of the applicant's career path.

- Evidence of long-term community engagement, collaboration, reciprocity and/or research co-development.

  - Commitment to and evidence of advancing EDID within the research ecosystem and/or within their research.

  - Community and/or diverse group priorities are central to the research program with integration of diverse voices (community or otherwise) in the research.

Criteria 2: Quality of applicant's proposed research program

The application should provide evidence of excellence of the proposed research project. The proposed research project, executed in the proposed research environment, should have the potential to position the applicant to have significant impact through a research-intensive career.

Indicators of quality of the research include, but are not limited to:
- The quality of the proposed research:
  - novelty
  - originality
  - feasibility
  - significance

- The environment in which the proposed research will be conducted, including considerations of accessibility, accommodations, and inclusion

- The quality and appropriateness of plans to incorporate equity, diversity, and inclusion into the applicant's research proposal (if applicable).

  - Considerations of sex, - gender and diversity plus analysis (SGBA+) included in the research design, if applicable. Provide explanation, if not.

- o Advancing and incorporating EDI initiatives/considerations in the research that commits to addressing systemic barriers through concrete strategies and promising practices.
- o Respectful inclusion and engagement of Indigenous Peoples (if applicable), data, resources, and/or perspectives.
- o Inclusion and engagement of diverse groups throughout the research following the axiom "nothing about us, without us".

Criteria 3: Demonstrated synergy between applicant and supervisor's research program

The application should provide evidence of synergy between the applicant's proposed research program and the research program of the proposed supervisor.

Indicators of synergy include, but are not limited to:

- Commitment from the supervisor to champion the development of the applicant's research and leadership

- Professional development opportunities available to the applicant through association with the supervisor, faculty, and/or Western including exposure to EDID training and diverse role models

- Research capacity in the area of the applicant's proposed research program, providing an intellectually stimulating environment to position the applicant as a research leader

- Demonstrated balance between the applicant's research vision and strategic priorities of the supervisor, Western and/or faculty.

- How this award will enable the applicant to establish themselves as an independent researcher.

- Institutional potential to benefit strategically from engaging the applicant, including increasing research capacity in a Faculty, Department, or discipline, and providing mentorship opportunities for the host supervisor.

4.0 – Application Submission

This is a two-phase process for this competition.

Key Dates:

September 2023	WPDF Program Launch
January – February 2024	Individual Faculty deadlines
February 27, 2024, 3pm ET	Faculties forward top three candidates to Western Research; Host supervisors of top 3 candidates submit ROLA Proposal
March 2024	Central Selection Committee review
April 2024	Communication of Results
July 2024 – June 2025	Successful Candidates' Start Date

4.1 – Application Package

The **Postdoctoral Fellow applicant** must submit a complete Postdoctoral Fellowship Program Application Form to their Faculty Dean's Office with the following required attachments:

- Research Project Proposal (4 pages max.);
- Bibliography/References (2 pages max.);
- Host Supervisor Statement (3 pages max.);
- CV for the Postdoctoral applicant (5 pages max)*;
- Most significant contributions (1 page max.)*; and
- Proof of PhD (original document plus translation as required).
- Two Letters of Support (2 pages max. each)
  - If the applicant is engaging in community-based research a letter of support is required from the community partner be included as an additional (third) Referee letter.

  * Note: If the applicant is using a narrative CV format, these two sections may be combined for a total of 6 pages; section title should be CV/Most Significant Contributions.

See application form for full details.

4.2 – Faculty submission to Western Research

All faculty-level application submissions must be received by Internal Grants, Western Research **No later than February 27, 2024 at 3:00 p.m. ET.**

The submission must include:

- Postdoctoral Fellowship program complete application package for each candidate
- Summary PDF file indicating ranking and comments from the Faculty selection committee

The **Principal Supervisor** (in consultation with the Postdoctoral Applicant) must submit a Western University ROLA Proposal[2] for the application. The ROLA Proposal must be:

- Complete (i.e., all relevant fields are populated including the fields for identifying the source of the required matching funds);

---

[2] ROLA is Western's corporate grant management system, ROLA Proposals secure internal approvals and form the basis for a research account upon a successful application.

- The ROLA budget must only include the Western Research portion of the funding for the PDF (i.e. if the PDF salary support is to be $60,000, the funding from Western Research, including research allowance, would be $79,340.50 total (year 1: $39,200, year 2: $40,140.50) per the section 1.3 - Value).

- The matching funds section of the ROLA must include the amount being contributed by the faculty and/or from external funds (minimum $69,340.50) including the account speed code;

- Consistent with the application form; and

- Approved by all relevant parties through the ROLA system.

- If you are requesting additional funding for the match component, the ROLA Proposal budget should reflect the full amount being requested from Western Research and Additional Funding on the General tab should be checked and completed with $0 and include the explanation of the request in comments field.

Please contact rolahelp@uwo.ca if assistance required.

ROLA Proposals must be submitted by the Principal Supervisor no later than February 27, 2024.

Faculty offices should submit their nominations via the online submission portal for Internal Grants.

Please note:
- Late and/or incomplete submissions will not be accepted.
- Western Research, in consultation with an Associate Vice-President (Research), reserves the right to exclude from competition any submissions that are incomplete or inconsistent. Excluded applications will not be presented to reviewers for consideration.

5.0 – Award Process

The following procedures will be adhered to during the award process:

- Successful candidates will be notified along with their faculty and host supervisor.

  o Candidates who were ranked outside the top candidates by the central adjudication committee, but meet the central adjudication requirements for funding, will be informed that they were unsuccessful but are waitlisted, with a timeline for final decisions.

  o Candidates who do not meet the central adjudication requirements for funding will be informed via email (copied to faculty and supervisor) that they were unsuccessful with their application.

- Candidates must accept the award within 15 days from the date of receipt.

- Faculties will be permitted to circulate news internally but will be asked to avoid any public announcement until there is an announcement by Western Research/Western News.

Conditional Circumstances

a. If a candidate declines the position <u>before</u> September 1, 2024:
   - Where a faculty has received *one* Western PDF award, they may choose to offer the position to the candidate ranked next highest provided the candidate meets eligibility criteria (limited to the top 3 Faculty candidates); or

   - if the faculty has received two Western PDF awards, the position will return to Western Research and be reallocated according to program criteria.

b. If a candidate who had previously accepted an award later declines the position <u>after</u> September 1, 2024, the funding allocated to that PDF position will be returned to the source.

c. If a candidate takes up their award and resigns after their start date, any remaining funds will be returned to the source.

d. If there are significant delays to a start date (e.g., delays in work permit or completing PhD requirements), these will be assessed on a case-by-case basis by Western Research in consultation with the faculty and SGPS.

6.0 – Recognition and Reporting

All Western Research Postdoctoral Scholars should acknowledge the support of Western Research in all related presentations and publications.

Western Research seeks to collect information on outcomes and impact of this funding opportunity to evaluate the efficacy of Western's investments and the benefits to the research community.

It is expected that successful candidates and their host supervisors must submit:
- Interim progress report outlining any challenges and developments in the first year of the award.
- a final report to Western Research, no later than 3 months after the termination of the award. Final report forms are available on the program website.

- A program evaluation survey to help guide future improvements to the Postdoctoral Fellowship Award program and other initiatives.

7.0 – Resources

1. [Tri-agency Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Resources](#). Includes key resources on information and best practices for EDI and Indigenous Rights, and online training modules for researchers.
2. [NSERC Guide on Integrating Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Considerations in Research](#).
3. [San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment](#) (DORA) which recognizes that scholarly outputs are not limited to published journal articles but can include a broader range of outputs.
4. [Health Research Training at CIHR: Training Tools.](#) Includes Professional Development Offerings and Research Training Modules.
5. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine. [The Science of Effective Mentorship in STEMM](#). Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. 2019. If interested, an online guide and podcast can also be accessed from this website under *Resources at a Glance*.
6. Dr. Angela Byars-Winston's talk on Effective, Culturally Responsive Mentorship (Jan. 20, 2022), posted on the [Society for the Advancement of Biology Education Research (SABER) website](#).
7. Center for the Improvement of Mentored Experiences in Research (CIMER). [Culturally Aware Mentoring Resources.](#)
8. iBiology [Mentor Training to Improve Diversity in Science](#). Part 1: A Conversation on Culturally Aware Mentoring; Part 2: Resources and Strategies to Enhance Culturally Aware Mentoring.
9. Center for the Improvement of Mentored Experiences in Research (CIMER). [Resources – Including Materials for Mentors and Mentees](#).
10. [Project Implicit](#). Implicit association tests to measure attitudes or beliefs people may be unwilling or unable to report.
11. National Institutes of Health. Research Training and Career Development. [Resources - Career Guidance](#).

Source: [here](#) :

Banting Fellowship Resources
12. [SSHRC Guidelines for the Merit Review of Indigenous Research](#)
13. [Selection committee guide](#)
14. [CIHR's Research Involving First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples of Canada – Webinar](#)

Source: [here](#) :

Additional Resources:

1. Postdoctoral Association at Western (PAW): https://www.postdocs.uwo.ca/
2. Resources for supervisors:
   https://grad.uwo.ca/postdoctoral_services/resources_for_supervisors.html
3. Appointment process at Western:
   https://grad.uwo.ca/postdoctoral_services/the_appointment_process.html

8.0 – Program Contact

This program is administered by Research Grant Management and Services, Western Research. For assistance, please contact internal grants: intgrant@uwo.ca.

Other support is available:
The Postdoctoral Scholar appointment process at Western is administered by the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. Mihaela Harmos, Postdoctoral Services Coordinator, is the primary contact for all inquiries related to appointments.