

OVERVIEW

The Western Postdoctoral Fellowship Program awards funding to a prestigious cohort of 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 Western Postdoctoral Fellowship program also incorporates the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion and aspires to:

- attract diverse postdoctoral talent from a global candidate pool, who will contribute positively to research excellence at Western;
- enhance support for promising research programs that advance Western’s strategic goals for research success; 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 supported by Western University and 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 Western’s research community. The Western Postdoctoral Fellowship opportunity will prioritize:

- **Research Excellence:** Promote outstanding research that embraces a strong equity, diversity and inclusivity focus and that contributes to Western’s strategic mission and values;
- **Recruitment:** Attract diverse postdoctoral talent (domestic and international) to Western;
- **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](#).

1.1 Award Distribution and Value

The Western Postdoctoral Fellowship award is intended to allow recipients to conduct research-intensive projects on a full-time basis. The award provides a minimum stipend of:

- Year 1: \$70,000, plus 14% benefits and a \$5,000 research allowance
- Year 2: \$70,000, plus annual increase (per collective agreement), plus 14% benefits, and a \$5,000 research allowance

Approximate total award value: \$171,994 over two years.

Summary of Western Postdoctoral Fellowship Award Package

Source	Stipend		Research Allowance		Total
	Year 1	Year 2*	Year 1	Year 2	
Western Research	\$39,900	\$41,097	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$90,997
Faculty	\$39,900	\$41,097			\$80,997
Total	\$161,994		\$10,000		\$171,994

**Year 2 stipend amount is subject to change based on the collective agreement.*

Stipend and Research Allowance

Western Research will contribute 50% of base fellowship (stipend and recoverable benefits) plus \$5,000 per year research allowance for a total maximum contribution of \$90,997 over the term of the postdoc (maximum 2 years). The host faculty and/or supervisor is responsible for securing, at minimum, the remaining 50% of the 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 encouraged to contribute additional funds to the stipend and/or research allowance if they have access to available funding. Independent of any additional stipend or research allowance from other sources, the maximum amount of funding that will be provided by Western Research remains at \$90,997 as detailed above.

Matching

Sources of matching funding could include (but are not limited to) the following:

- External grants held by the supervisor and reserved for postdoctoral support
- Industry funding
- Departmental-level or faculty-level support

VPR-funded internal grant programs cannot be used for matching support for this program.

In a limited number of situations, Western Research may consider funding more than 50% of the

salary stipend, but not more than a maximum of the award, based on demonstrated need and lack of available matching funding. In most situations there should be at least some matched funding provided by the supervisor and/or the faculty. Applications must demonstrate:

- the need for supplementary funding, and;
- that department and faculty resources have been exhausted.

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.

1.3 Allocation

Subject to available funding, Western Research is pleased to offer three streams of Western Postdoctoral Fellowship awards for the 2025 competition:

- Stream 1: Postdoctoral fellowship awards
- Stream 2: For projects in biotherapeutics (up to 3 awards)
- Stream 3: For projects that support PIs with active SSHRC Insight Grant (up to 2 awards)

1.4 Award Period and Duration

Funding for successful applications will begin on a mutually agreed upon start date, typically within the July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026 timeframe.

Funding will be awarded for a period of two years from the funding start date. Successful grantees must complete their two-year postdoctoral term at Western University in London, Ontario. Should a grantee leave their Western postdoctoral position earlier than two years, the award will be terminated on the last completed day of the postdoctoral position, and all funds for the remainder of the award term will be returned to source.

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 their award, unless documented career interruptions or special circumstances apply (see b) below). For applicants with a PhD in progress, it is expected that this documentation will be provided and that all PhD requirements will be 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:
 - Applicants can provide additional details in the application section "7. 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.

- 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 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 awarded a Western Postdoctoral Fellowship who hold a postdoctoral position at another institution must formally end that appointment 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 grantee 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 Harnos (mharnos@uwo.ca) for any immigration or appointment-related issues.

2.1 Subject Matter

Stream 1: Western Postdoctoral Fellowship Awards

Applications to this stream will be accepted through an open competition and awarded to postdoctoral scholars who have demonstrated research excellence, impact and leadership in the work they are undertaking. Applications are welcome from any discipline, thematic or subject area and interdisciplinary or intersectoral approaches are encouraged. Preference will be given to proposals:

- aligned with institutional strategic research priorities
- demonstrating excellent EDID principles in research and training environment and recruitment considerations

Stream 2: Biotherapeutics Awards (up to 3 awards)

To ensure that Western builds capacity in the strategic area of biotherapeutics, awards will be granted to postdoctoral scholars who have demonstrated research excellence, impact and leadership in alignment with this theme.

- Biotherapeutics is at the frontier of transformative healthcare, seamlessly merging cutting-edge molecular technologies. Through synthetic biology, sequencing, proteomics, and

revolutionary CRISPR advancements, it engineers bespoke therapies via synthetic organic methods and state-of-the-art bio-manufacturing like fermentation and bio-reactors. Precision medicine thrives within this realm, utilizing antibodies, cell therapies, and pioneering gene therapy, redefining the landscape of personalized drug innovations. Critical to the research area is also the use of advanced data techniques including artificial intelligence.

Stream 3: Support for SSHRC Insight Grant Recipients (up to 2 awards)

Applications for this award will be accepted from any PI/supervisor who currently holds an active SSHRC Insight Grant with at least two years of funding remaining on their project. Awards will provide additional support for postdoctoral scholars who demonstrate research excellence, impact and leadership in the social sciences, arts and humanities.

3.0 Adjudication

Eligible applications will be forwarded for review to the selection committee. This committee will consist of members of the College of Reviewers and will be chaired by the Associate Vice-President (Research).

The selection committee will meet to finalize funding decisions. Applications that receive a score below 11 (out of a possible 15) will not be funded. There is no appeal process for decisions.

3.1 Selection Committee

Western Research is committed to ensuring that the selection committee will consist of broad and appropriate representation. This committee will be composed of members from Western's College of Reviewers plus any expert reviewers that may be needed to review subject specific applications.

3.2 Adjudication Criteria

In evaluating proposals, the selection committee will apply the program adjudication rubric (see Criteria listed below) which incorporates relevant principles of Western's [EDI Action Plan](#). Applications involving Indigenous Research must comply with the [TCPS 2 - Chapter 9: Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples of Canada](#). Proposals should incorporate the information and guidance on [Western Research's website on Indigenous Research](#).

Applications will be evaluated based on the following three criteria¹:

Criteria 1: Demonstrated and potential research excellence and leadership in the research domain

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 their research domain (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),

¹ Evaluation criteria modified from the 2023 [Banting Postdoctoral Fellowships evaluation criteria](#)
Western Postdoctoral Fellowship Program Guidelines

- including relationship development and engagement of diverse partnerships/partners.
- 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 in their 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.

Quality of the research indicators include, but are not limited to:

- The quality of the proposed research in terms of its novelty/originality, feasibility and 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 an explanation if not applicable.
 - Advancing and incorporating EDI initiatives/considerations in the research that commits to addressing systemic barriers through concrete strategies and promising practices.
 - Respectful inclusion and engagement of Indigenous Peoples’, their data, resources, and/or perspectives (if applicable). Proposals must fulfill the pillars for respectful research engaging with Indigenous Peoples.
 - 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.
- Awareness and support by the supervisor of any collaborations involved in the proposed research (e.g., research respectfully involving and engaging Indigenous communities).

4.0 Application Submission

All applications should be written with a lay audience in mind. This will specifically enhance review quality reflective of a multidisciplinary committee.

Key Dates:

March 2025	WPDF Program Launch
April 29, 2025	ROLA Deadline
May 6, 2025, 3pm EDT	Application Deadline (including Reference Letters)
May-June 2025	Selection Committee Review
June 2025	Communication of Results
July 2025 – June 2026	Successful Candidates’ Start Date

4.1 Application Package

The **Principal Supervisor** of the postdoctoral applicant must submit a complete application form (written for a lay audience) and submit it via the [online submission portal](#) with the following required attachments:

- Research Project Proposal (4 pages max.);

- Bibliography/References (2 pages max.);
- Supervisor Statement (3 pages max.);
- CV for the postdoctoral applicant (5 pages max)*;
- Most significant contributions (1 page max.)*;
- Proof of the applicant's PhD degree (a scan of the original document; if the degree received is in another language an appropriate translation is required).
 - If the applicant has not yet received their PhD, we will require an official letter/document from their current institution that the applicant will be receiving their degree prior to the projected start date of the award; and
- 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 to 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 and requirements.

4.2 ROLA

The Principal Supervisor (in consultation with the postdoctoral applicant) must submit a Western University [ROLA](#)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);
- **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 \$70,000, the funding from Western Research, including research allowance and recoverable benefits would be \$90,997 total (year 1: \$44,900, year 2: \$46,097) per the section 1.2 – Award Value).
- The matching funds section of the ROLA must include the amount being contributed by the faculty and/or from external funds (minimum \$80,997) 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 the match amount and include the explanation of the request in comments field.

ROLA Proposals must be submitted by the Principal Supervisor **no later than April 29, 2025**.

Please contact rolahelp@uwo.ca if assistance required.

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.

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 by Western Research along with their faculty and host supervisor. A notice of decision will be issued along with the terms and conditions of the award. The research account will be set-up under the Supervisor.
 - Candidates who were ranked outside the top candidates by the adjudication committee, but meet the adjudication requirements for funding, will be informed that they were unsuccessful but are waitlisted with a timeline for final decisions.
 - Candidates who do not meet the 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 notification of award.
- 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 and/or Western News.

Conditional Circumstances

- a. If a candidate declines the position before September 1, 2025, 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 after September 1, 2025, 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 supervisor, 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 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](#).

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

1. [SSHRC Guidelines for the Merit Review of Indigenous Research](#)
2. [Selection committee guide](#)
3. [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 University: https://grad.uwo.ca/postdoctoral_services/the_appointment_process.html

8.0 Program Contact

This program is administered by the Office of Research 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 Harnos](#), Postdoctoral Services Coordinator, is the primary contact for all inquiries related to appointments.