

INTERDISCIPLINARY INITIATIVES GRANT PROGRAM

Call for Applications | 2026–27

The Faculty of Arts and Humanities, the Faculty of Information and Media Studies (FIMS), and the Don Wright Faculty of Music invite applications to the **Interdisciplinary Initiative Grants Program**, a joint funding program established by the Deans of the three Faculties to foster new connections across research, research-creation, teaching, and community-engaged activities. Each Faculty brings distinctive but complementary expertise and approaches to cultural, technological, artistic, informational, and societal questions. The program creates opportunities for colleagues to bring these perspectives together, build new cross-Faculty relationships, and develop interdisciplinary ideas that may not readily emerge within a single discipline, department, centre, or institute.

The **Interdisciplinary Initiative Grants** support both the formation of new collaborations and the development of promising ideas into more substantial projects. Projects may involve research and research-creation, curricular innovation, community or external partnerships, or other collaborative work that draws meaningfully on the strengths of more than one participating Faculty. The program aims to build sustainable connections across Arts and Humanities, FIMS, and Music; foster innovative responses to cultural, technological, and societal questions; and help promising initiatives advance to an appropriate next stage, including external funding, further research or creative development, curricular initiatives, or expanded community engagement.

Two funding streams support projects at different stages of development. **Collaborative Incubator Grants** support colleagues in developing a shared question or emerging idea, establishing a common direction, and planning next steps. **Pilot Project Seed Grants** support more developed collaborations undertaking preliminary research, research-creation, curricular development, or partnership work that can establish the basis for a substantial next stage.

	COLLABORATIVE INCUBATOR GRANT	PILOT PROJECT SEED GRANT
AMOUNT	\$500–\$1,500	Up to \$15,000
PURPOSE	Bring collaborators together to develop a shared concept and plan their next steps	Test an idea through preliminary research, research-creation, curricular development, or community partnership work
APPLICATION TIMING	Applications open October 13, 2026; initial adjudication November 30, followed by rolling review while funds remain available	1 st Round deadline: November 30, 2026; 2 nd Round deadline: March 31, 2027
PROJECT PERIOD	12 months, beginning on the first day of the month after notice of award	1 st round: January 1–December 31, 2027; 2 nd round: May 1, 2027–April 30, 2028

WHO CAN APPLY

The lead applicant must be a research-eligible faculty member in Arts and Humanities, FIMS, or Music. Each team must include at least two eligible faculty members, with at least one from each of two participating faculties. Cross-appointed faculty members should identify which Faculty they represent for the application; one person cannot fulfil the two-Faculty requirement alone.

Postdoctoral researchers, students, community organizations, practitioners, and other external partners may also participate as co-applicants. Teams may apply directly for a Pilot Project Seed Grant; an Incubator Grant is not a prerequisite.

A faculty member may serve as lead applicant (PI) on one application per grant type per calendar year (January 1 to December 31). Faculty members may be co-applicants on any number of applications.

Priority will be given to first-time collaborations and to existing teams pursuing a substantially new interdisciplinary direction. Existing teams should explain what is new about the proposed work. Projects connected to an existing centre or institute are eligible when they represent a new collaboration or direction, rather than an ongoing centre activity.

WHAT THE GRANTS CAN SUPPORT

Collaborative Incubator Grants support the early work of forming an interdisciplinary team and developing a shared project idea. Funds may be used for one- or two-day planning meetings, workshops, and co-creation sessions with collaborators or external partners. Applicants should explain how the proposed activities will lead to a defined project concept and a plan for its next stage.

These grants cannot fund salaries or stipends for highly qualified personnel, or fees and related costs for invited speakers. Honoraria and gifts that support Indigenous research, including contributions from Elders or Knowledge Keepers, may be included where appropriate and in accordance with Western's policies.

Pilot Project Seed Grants support proof-of-concept work, preliminary research or creative development, partnership development, research travel in accordance with Western's policies, and research-integrated experiential learning. Funding for students or other highly qualified personnel must be tied clearly to the proposed work and its training benefits. Budget requests should be limited to direct costs required to complete the proposed work, and applicants should explain how each item supports the project activities and expected outcomes. Applicants are encouraged to consult program contacts in advance about unusual or substantial expense categories. Projects may contribute to one or more of the following areas:

- **Research and research-creation:** for example, pilot findings, scholarly work, performances, exhibitions, or preparation for an external funding application.
- **Curriculum:** for example, an interdisciplinary course, module, program proposal, or research-integrated experiential learning model.

- **Community engagement:** for example, a developed partnership, co-created program, public event, or knowledge mobilization output.

Pilot Project Seed Grants support preliminary work that can establish the basis for a substantial next stage. Depending on the nature of the project, this may include an external funding application, further research or research-creation, curricular development, an expanded community or external partnership, or another significant outcome.

HOW TO APPLY

Applications for both funding streams open **October 13, 2026** and must be submitted through the [online application form](#).

- **Collaborative Incubator Grants** are accepted on a rolling basis while funds remain available. Applications received by 11:59 pm Eastern Time on November 30, 2026 will be included in the first round of adjudication; applications received after that date will be reviewed on a rolling basis.
- **Pilot Project Seed Grant** applications must be submitted by 11:59 pm Eastern Time on November 30, 2026 for the first competition round. A second competition round, subject to available funding, will close at 11:59 pm Eastern Time on March 31, 2027.

Incubator applicants included in the initial adjudication round can expect decisions in December 2026; subsequent rolling applications will generally receive a decision within approximately three weeks. First-round Pilot decisions are expected in December 2026.

APPLICATION COMPONENTS

All applications will include the following components:

1. Project Information: Provide the project title, funding stream, amount requested, and the names, roles, and faculty affiliations of the lead applicant and collaborators. Identify any external or community partners, where applicable.

2. Project Summary (maximum 150 words): Provide a plain-language overview of the proposed collaboration, its purpose, and what the project aims to accomplish.

3. Project Proposal

- **Collaborative Incubator Grant (maximum 500 words):** Describe the shared question, idea, or opportunity bringing the team together; the perspectives or expertise contributed by the participating faculties; what is new about the collaboration or direction, where relevant; the activities the grant will support; and what the team expects to develop through the Incubator Grant.
- **Pilot Project Seed Grant (maximum 1,250 words):** Describe the project objectives and significance; proposed activities; the distinct contributions of the participating faculties and how they will be integrated; what is new about the collaboration or direction, where relevant; and the expected outputs and outcomes.

4. Project Timeline and Next Stage

- **Collaborative Incubator Grant:** Outline the planned activities and explain what the team expects to have developed by the end of the grant, including the anticipated next step for the collaboration.
- **Pilot Project Seed Grant:** Outline the key activities and milestones for the project and describe the anticipated next stage of the collaboration. Where external funding is anticipated, identify the likely opportunity and expected timeframe.

5. Budget and Justification: Provide an itemized budget showing how costs were calculated and explain how the requested expenses support the proposed activities and outcomes. For personnel requests under the Pilot Project Seed Grant stream, describe the duties, required qualifications, workload, and training or developmental benefits, and explain why the role is needed. Include the proposed rate of pay, hours or duration of employment, and applicable benefits. Identify any additional cash or in-kind funding, where applicable.

6. External Partnerships, if applicable: Describe the role of any external organizations, community partners, or practitioners involved in the project, including any cash or in-kind contributions they will provide.

REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT

Applications will be reviewed for eligibility and completeness, then assessed by a joint committee of Associate Deans Research from the three Faculties. Academic leadership with relevant expertise will be consulted on curricular proposals. Any reviewer with a conflict of interest will not participate in the discussion or decision on the affected application. Assessment will consider:

- **Strength of the cross-Faculty collaboration:** the extent to which the project brings together complementary expertise, perspectives, or approaches from the participating faculties and represents a new collaboration or a substantially new direction for an existing team.
- **Clarity, originality, and feasibility:** the strength of the project idea, the clarity of its objectives and proposed activities, and whether the work can reasonably be completed within the proposed timeframe and resources.
- **Fit with the funding opportunity:** how well the proposed activities align with the purpose and scale of the Collaborative Incubator Grant or Pilot Project Seed Grant.
- **Expected outcomes and next-stage potential:** the significance and usefulness of the anticipated outcomes and the extent to which the project is positioned to lead to a meaningful next stage, such as further research or research-creation, external funding, curricular development, or expanded community or external partnerships.
- **Appropriateness of the budget:** whether the requested funds are reasonable, well justified, and clearly connected to the proposed activities and outcomes.

Funding is subject to available resources. The committee may recommend funding below the amount requested. Where a reduced award is offered, applicants may be asked to submit a revised budget and activity plan before accepting the award.

AWARD ADMINISTRATION

Interdisciplinary Initiative Grant funds will be administered through the lead applicant's Faculty and must be used for the purposes described in the approved application and in accordance with applicable Western policies. Award holders are responsible for obtaining any required ethics, research compliance, or other institutional approvals before beginning the relevant activities.

Significant changes to the project scope, team, or budget should be discussed with the program contacts in advance. Requests for an extension must be submitted through the appropriate faculty research contact for approval before the project end date. Additional information about account setup, project changes, extensions, and the treatment of unspent funds will be provided in the award letter.

A ROLA is not required at the application stage. Following notice of award, faculty research staff will complete the ROLA data entry, after which the lead applicant will submit the ROLA so the award can be established.

REPORTING

Funded teams must submit a brief final report by email to the lead applicant's faculty research office within three months of the project end date. The report should summarize activities completed, outcomes, use of funds, and anticipated next steps. Reporting instructions will be included in the award letter.

For first-round pilot projects ending December 31, 2027, reports are due **March 31, 2028**. For second-round pilot projects ending April 30, 2028, reports are due **July 31, 2028**.

INFORMATION SESSION

An online information session will be held **October 28, 2026, at 12 pm**. The Deans and Associate Deans Research from Arts and Humanities, FIMS, and the Don Wright Faculty of Music, together with research staff, will provide an overview of the Interdisciplinary Initiative Grants, explain the two funding streams and application process, and answer questions from prospective applicants. The session will also provide an opportunity to discuss eligibility, project fit, collaboration requirements, budgets, timelines, and anticipated next-stage outcomes.

Zoom Webinar Link: <https://westernuniversity.zoom.us/j/99151659335>

QUESTIONS

For questions about eligibility or applications, lead applicants in Arts and Humanities should contact Jessica Schagerl at fahresearch@uwo.ca. Lead applicants in FIMS or Music should contact Chantal Lemire at clemire2@uwo.ca.